Entrenched in Mexican national consciousness, muralism has played an important role in the political and artistic discourse of the country. This tradition continued even after the death of the Tres Grandes or the “Three Great Ones” (Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros) and continues to this day. The two books in this review examine multiple aspects of the movement and its ongoing dialogue with current and historical events.

*Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* contains fourteen annotated essays by leaders in the field (including an essay by Mary K. Coffey, author of the second title in this review). The essays are divided into four sections that address the rise and ideology of the muralist movement in Mexico, muralism’s international influence, and muralism after the death of the generation of the Tres Grandes. The last section includes a detailed chronology, translations of primary documents never before published in English, an extensive bibliography, and an index. This reviewer found the title to be successful at addressing numerous aspects of muralism and including twenty-first century muralist practices in Mexico and the United States. The only drawback in this volume is its almost complete reliance on black and white images to illustrate the text.

A common theme repeated throughout *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History* is the relationship between the artists who saw themselves as revolutionary and a government seeking ideological unification of its population. Muralism had commonly been hailed by critics as a revolutionary art informed by populist ideals that would act as the voice of the oppressed. More recently, however, the movement has been criticized for its reliance on state sponsorship and for helping to propagate official rhetoric. It is this paradox that is further explored in *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture* by Mary K. Coffey.

Coffey is ultimately concerned with exploring how a so-called revolutionary art form helped promote the state-sponsored, post-revolutionary myths of homogeneity and modernity. Coffey begins each of her chapters by citing the work of Octavio Paz, a vocal critic of the first-generation artists of the muralist movement. In this publication the author chronicles the rise of the movement, the cultural politics of the era, the institutionalization of muralist works, and the
development of museology. It is this last topic that ultimately allows Coffey to present a solid narrative that blends artistic practices, controversial political events, and the display of national cultural objects. Throughout the book, Coffey isolates individual works of art, projects, or artistic events and discusses them at length to illustrate her point.

*How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture* is printed on glossy paper. Its attractive design is easy on the eyes of the reader. Quality color reproductions, maps, and plans illustrate the text. Coffey’s chapters are also richly annotated. This title includes an extensive bibliography and an index.

Although *Mexican Muralism: a Critical History* covers a much wider range of topics, the two publications complement each other well. Both are appropriate for advanced undergraduate and graduate level readers and are recommended for libraries supporting research on museum studies, modernism, and Latin American and Chicano art and history.

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