

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART



Luis Arenal (Mexican, 1908-1985). *Cabeza de indígena* (Head of an Indigenous Woman), 1947. Lithograph. Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund

NUESTRA
IMAGEN
ACTUAL

OUR
PRESENT
IMAGE

MEXICO AND THE
GRAPHIC ARTS
1929-1956

October 3, 2020 to February 14, 2021

The exhibition is co-organized by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art and the Portland Art Museum.
Support provided by Art Bridges, and by members and donors to the JSMA.

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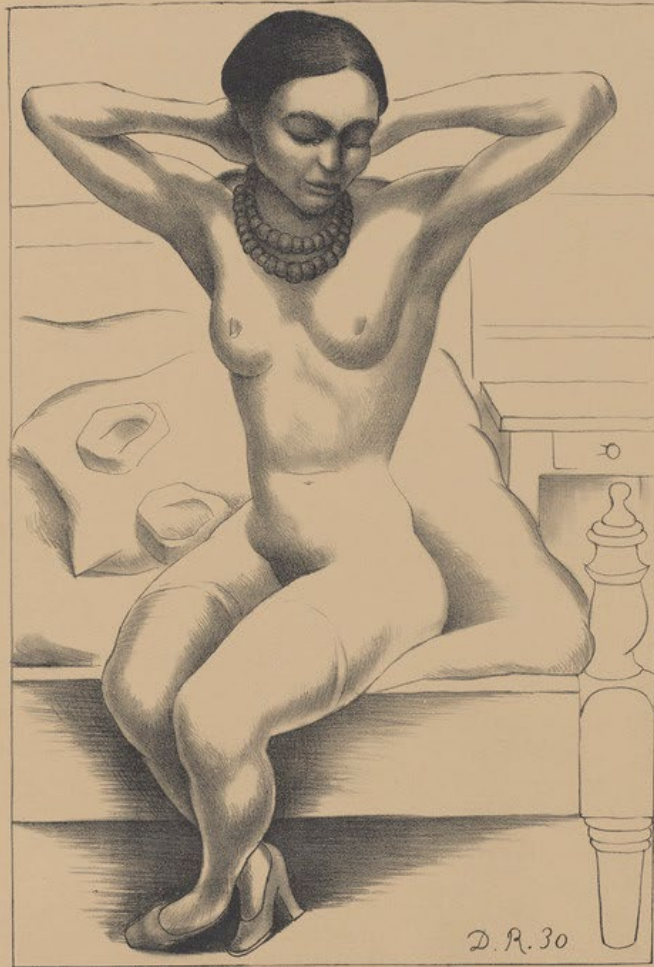
A remarkable artistic outpouring ensued after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Printmaking flourished as artists continued to demand land, labor, and education reforms, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Because they are multiples, prints could be widely distributed to raise awareness about social justice issues and advocate for change. Artists made posters and leaflets for the masses in Mexico, as well as prints to satisfy a growing audience for images of Mexican history and culture in the United States. This exhibition aims to deepen and broaden the understanding and appreciation of the graphic art of post-revolutionary Mexico, a landmark in the history of twentieth-century printmaking and modern art.

Nuestra imagen actual | *Our Present Image: Mexico and the Graphic Arts 1929-1956*, co-organized by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) and the Portland Art Museum (PAM), presents sixty-two prints by twenty-two artists including the leading Mexican muralists José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, and members of Mexico's world famous Popular Graphic Art Workshop (est. 1937). PAM's rich and exceptional Mexican print collection was the impetus for the exhibition, and fifty prints in *Our Present Image* hail from this institution.

The earliest lithographs and woodcuts are by Orozco, Rivera, and Rufino Tamayo, who made their first prints for a U.S. market. Their works feature details from their murals in Mexico, imagery related to the Mexican Revolution, and powerful symbols of Mexican identity. David Alfaro Siqueiros' 1947 print, *Our Present Image*, is a timeless and universal representation of subjugation and torture and it inspired the title of the exhibition. The impact of the father of modern Mexican printmaking, José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913), is evident in works that critically interpret historic events and popular Mexican life, especially through lively skeletons that dramatize social ills.

Two works present a fluid dialogue between imagination and reality. Leopoldo Méndez's twenty-five wood engravings featuring anthropomorphic animals for human subjects illustrate a story of life and death, oppression and struggle that is an allegory for a Marxist revolution. Diego Rivera's rare self-portrait, *The Communicating Vessels*, named after a 1932 book by the French writer, poet, and leader of Surrealism, André Breton, captures Breton's concept of dreams as a free and liberating exchange between sleep and wakefulness.

The JSMA thanks the following lenders to the exhibition for their generosity and support: Portland Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum, Cecily Quintana and Quintana Galleries, Dr. Li Ravicz, and University of Oregon Libraries' Special Collections. The JSMA greatly appreciates the work of University of Oregon student Wendy Echeverría García on this project. *Nuestra imagen actual* | *Our Present Image: Mexico and the Graphic Arts 1929-1956* is curated by Cheryl Hartup, Curator of Academic Programs and Latin American and Caribbean Art at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, with the assistance of Mary Weaver Chapin, Curator of Prints and Drawings at Portland Art Museum. All labels are written by Cheryl Hartup unless otherwise indicated. Support provided by Art Bridges, and by members and donors to the JSMA.



Diego Rivera 1930

82-100

This nude portrays Diego Rivera's third wife, artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954). It was one of the first of five lithographs Rivera made at the request of Carl Zigrosser, the director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York City. Rivera depicts Kahlo in the act of getting dressed, an important daily ritual that was part of her artistic practice and a carefully considered, political expression of her identity. Kahlo wears one of her favorite possessions, a double strand necklace she made from ancient indigenous jade beads unearthed in Mexico. This bold, strong statement contrasts with her physical frailty. Kahlo crosses her left leg over her right to conceal the effects of polio on this limb. The day Rivera completed the lithograph, he and Kahlo relocated to San Francisco temporarily for Rivera to complete two public mural commissions.

Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886-1957)

Nude with Beads (Frida Kahlo), 1930

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Gift of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff



Rufino Tamayo (Mexican, 1899-1991)
The Virgin of Guadalupe (vertical), 1931
 Woodcut
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion
 McGill Lawrence Fund



Rufino Tamayo (Mexican, 1899-1991)
Mermaids, c. 1930-31
 Woodcut
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill
 Lawrence Fund

Rufino Tamayo came to New York City in 1926, and he lived and worked there intermittently for the next twenty-four years. Like Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, Tamayo made and exhibited prints in Manhattan at the suggestion of Carl Zigrosser, the director of the Weyhe Gallery and an early champion of Mexican art. Tamayo's early block prints express a raw immediacy through rough forms and surface textures. His subjects and style synthesize modern art and popular art and stood in contrast to narrative, socially driven work. His individual approach to Mexican daily life included powerful symbols of identity and faith, song and music.



Luis Arenal (Mexican, 1908-1985)

Head of an Indigenous Woman, 1947

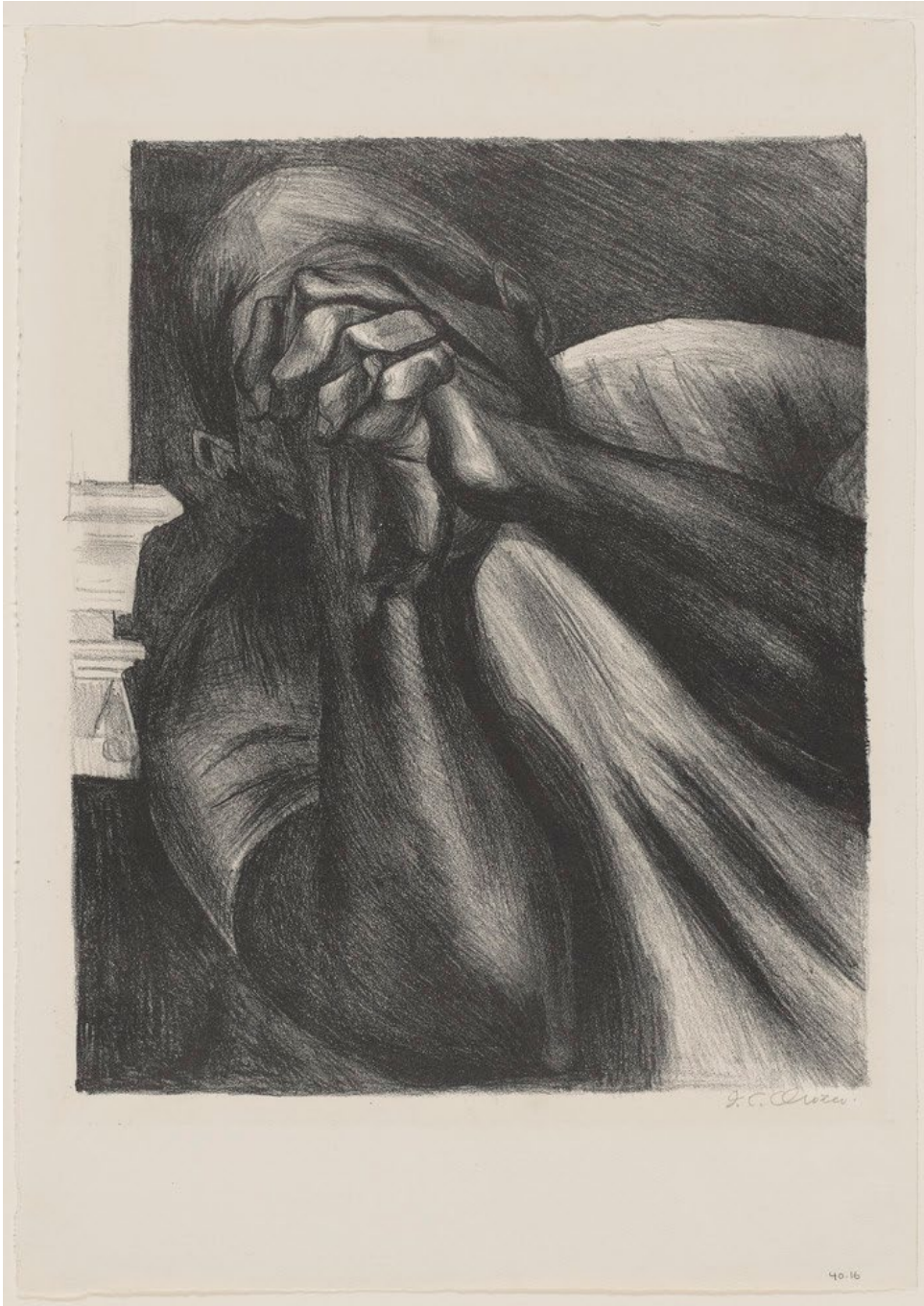
Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Jesús Escobedo (Mexican, 1918-1978)
The Female Revolutionary, c. 1940
Lithograph
Courtesy of Cecily Quintana and Quintana Galleries

Jesús Escobedo idolizes the women fighters who took up arms during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) to revolt against tyranny. During the revolution, thousands of women foraged for food, cooked meals, nursed the wounded, washed clothes, set up camp, cleaned weapons, and cared for children, husbands, and companions. A few achieved recognition for spying, smuggling arms, fighting, and delineating revolutionary ideology. Some women held the rank of colonel and others were rebel leaders and commanders. Mexico's visual arts, photography, film, and popular songs have been instrumental in remembering *la revolucionaria* and at the same time deforming her legacy. Images of women soldiers, like this one, took the place of real women in Mexico's history who were left unrecognized and unpaid.



José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883-1949)
Mural Detail (Grief), 1929
 Lithograph
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen
 Thurston Ayer Fund



José Clemente Orozco
Revolutionary Trinity, 1923-1924
 Fresco, Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico City



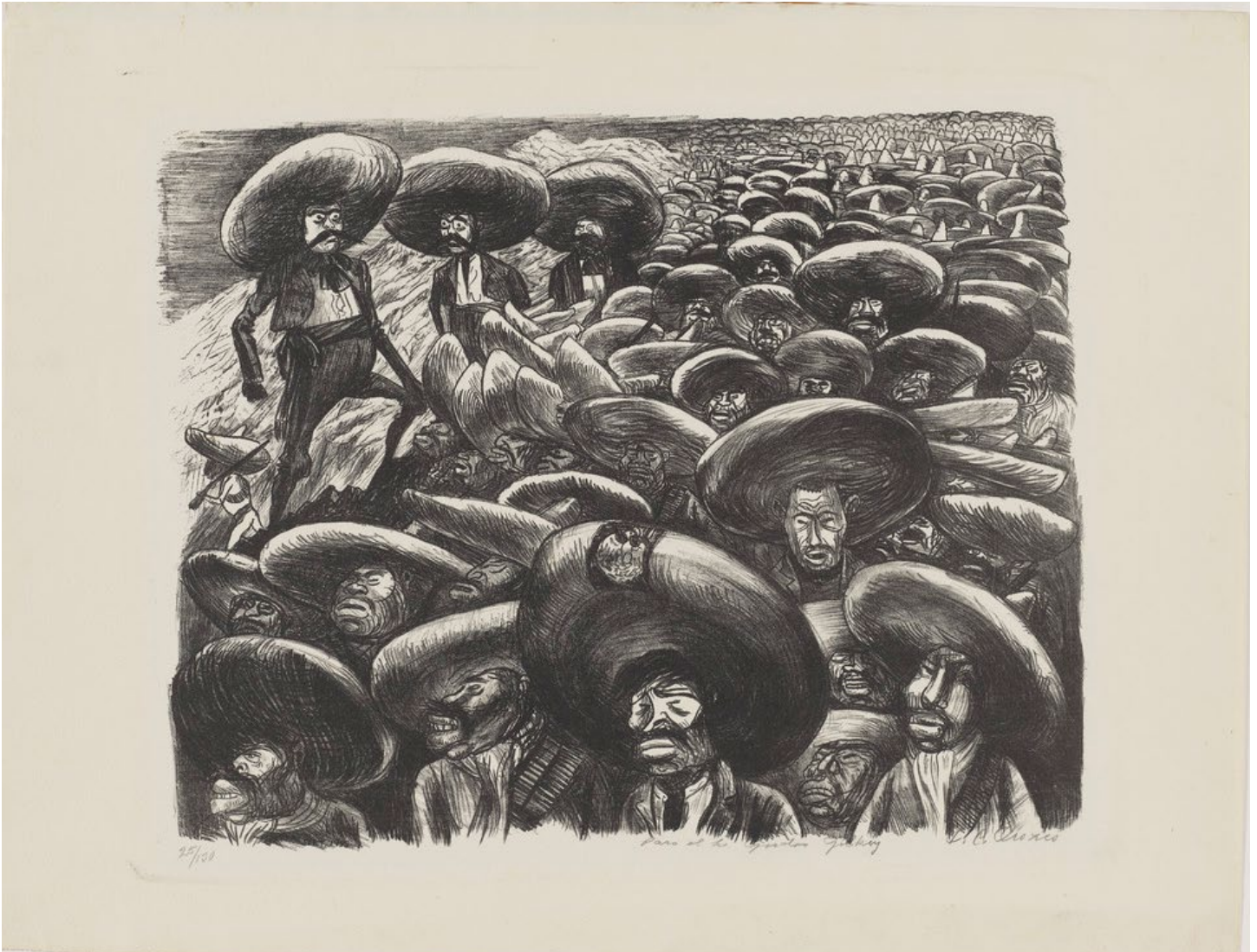
José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883-1949)

Rear Guard, 1929

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection

In this work, José Clemente Orozco chooses stark contrasts of light and dark to express alternating sentiments of hope and despair. The artist renders such touching details as the young woman on the right, the baby strapped to a woman's back, the tenderness of a caress, and the child astride a man's shoulders in bright white. In contrast, he portrays the soldiers as a dark huddled mass trudging onward. The curved backs and bent heads of these figures convey the bruised spirit, as well as the determination of the Mexican peasantry, during the hardships of the revolution.



José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883-1949)
Zapatistas (Generals, as translated by the artist), 1935
 Lithograph
 Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection

José Clemente Orozco's print features Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), the leader of the agrarian reform movement during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), standing dramatically on an incline and looking out over a surging mass of followers with intense, bulging eyes. The artist used strong, expressionistic lines to depict the Zapatistas. Some of the harsh faces in the crowd recall the blistering satires of European artists from an earlier era, such as Francisco Goya (1746-1828) in Spain and Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) in France. During the Mexican Revolution, Orozco drew caricatures for three newspapers. His images of the civil war, which he witnessed firsthand, portray what the artist called the "naked bestiality" of people accustomed to killing. Note how Orozco's image of Zapata differs from Diego Rivera's *Zapata* from 1932 on page eleven.



Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886-1957)

Left: *Boy and Dog*

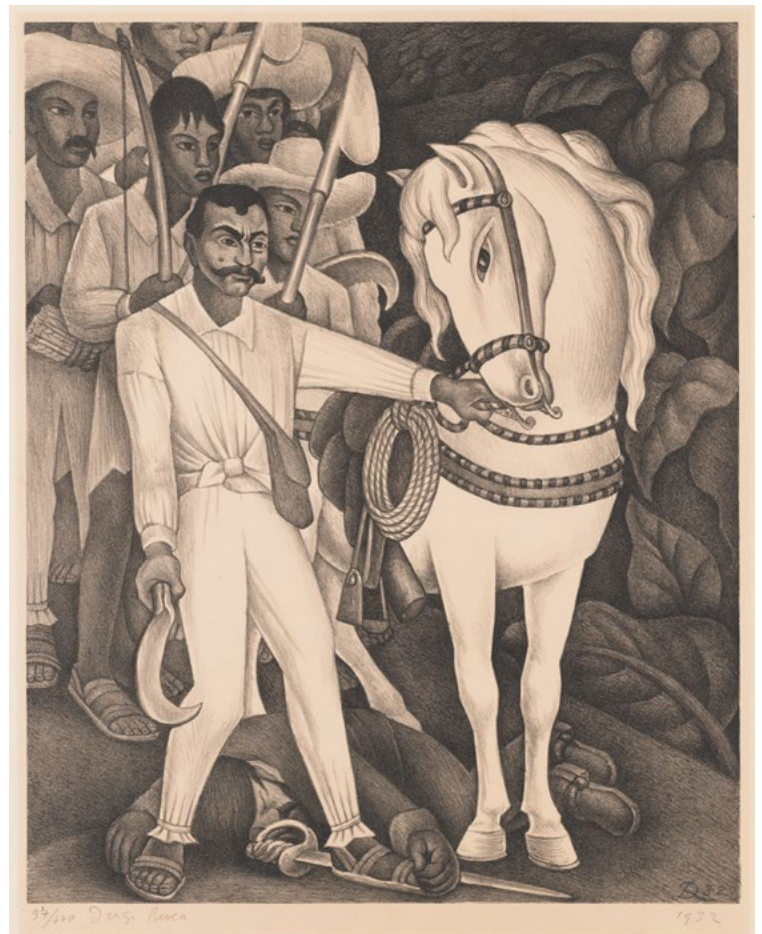
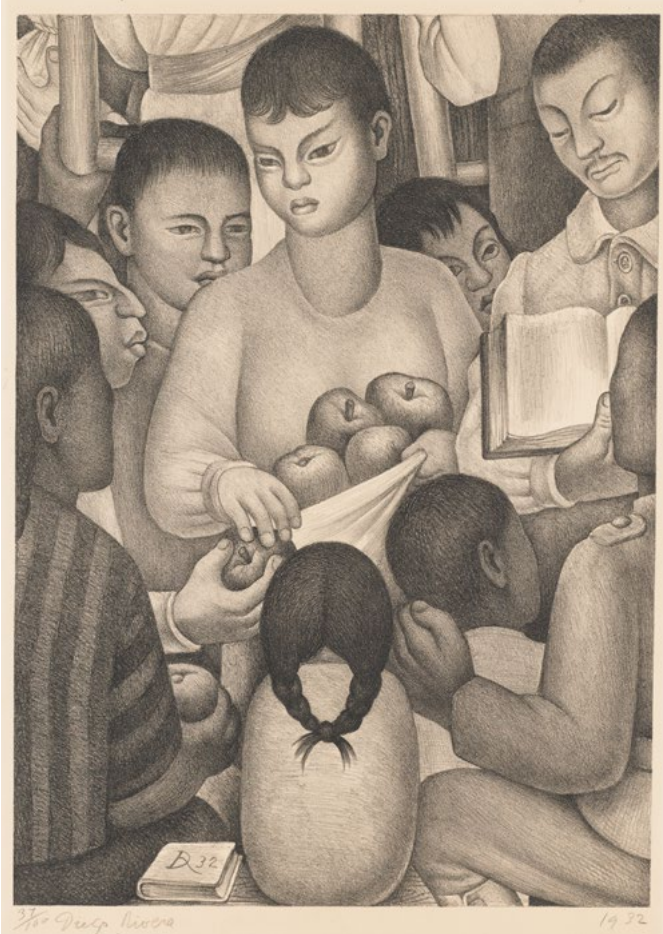
Right: *Sleep*

1932

Lithograph

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 44.619 and 44.620

Following on the success of Diego Rivera's first solo exhibition in the United States at The Museum of Modern Art, Carl Zigrosser, director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York City, arranged for Rivera to work on a series of prints. Rivera based his lithographs on details of murals he had painted in Mexico, thus allowing those who could not see his frescoes in person to appreciate their form and content in the artist's original prints. Lithography, which allows the artist to draw freely on a prepared stone with a waxy crayon, was an ideal medium for Rivera's refined draftsmanship. After he completed *Zapata*, Rivera left New York with his wife Frida Kahlo, to start working on a mural commission at the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886-1957)

Left: *The Fruits of Labor*

Right: *Zapata*

1932

Lithograph

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 44.621 and 44.623



Fanny Rabel (Mexican, born Fanny Rabinovich, Poland, 1924-2008)

The Drought, 1952

Linoleum cut

Courtesy of Cecily Quintana and Quintana Galleries

Fanny Rabel's prints, drawings, and paintings often depict the suffering of children, indigenous peoples, and Mexico's poor. She calls attention to their struggles against environmental racism, including food and water instability and pollution. Born Fanny Rabinovich, the daughter of travelling Yiddish actors, she studied in France. In 1938, her family migrated to Mexico City, to escape Nazi aggression in Europe. Rabel enrolled in art school and assisted David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera on various mural projects. She also painted several large public murals of her own and historians consider her Mexico's first modern female muralist. She was a student of Frida Kahlo, and the only female member of Los Fridos (a title given to Frida's four students). In 1950, Rabel joined Mexico's Popular Graphic Art Workshop.



Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886-1957)
Open Air School, 1932
 Lithograph
 Portland Art Museum, Gift of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff

In *Open Air School*, Diego Rivera pays homage to José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), Mexico's secretary of public education. Vasconcelos inaugurated the country's mural movement in 1921, as well as a rural education program. At the top left of the image, an armed guard watches protectively in the distance. During Mexico's *Cristero* rebellion (1926-1929) and into the late 1930s, militias of religious Catholics murdered rural schoolteachers to revolt against the government's anticlericalism and secular education.

At the bottom of the print, Rivera wrote a dedicatory inscription to artist Lucienne Bloch (1909-1999), whom Rivera had recently met at the opening of his exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1931. Bloch later assisted Rivera with his monumental fresco murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts (1932-33) and Rockefeller Center (1933).



Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)

Teacher José Martínez Ramírez, assassinated in Cuautomatitla, Tochimilco, Puebla, the 28th of February, 1938 from the portfolio *In the Name of Christ*, 1939

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund

Working with Mexico's Ministry of Education, Leopoldo Méndez and the Popular Graphic Art Workshop's publishing house editioned a portfolio of seven lithographs that depict the murders of rural schoolteachers by the *Cristeros* or Soldiers of Christ. In the 1920s and 30s, the *Cristeros*, a Catholic paramilitary group, mounted an armed rebellion against the government's anticlericalism and secular education reform and assassinated over two hundred rural teachers.

Méndez accompanied each print with a brief description of the documented atrocity. For instance, the placard around José Martínez Ramírez's neck announced that he was killed to stop him from "perverting the innocent youth" and proliferating "bad ideas to other teachers." These images may have circulated as leaflets, as part of a campaign against the *Cristeros*, and to change the opinions of their supporters.



Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)

I Buy Your Corn, 1949

Linocut

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Gift of Dr. Don E. and Carol Steichen Dumond

In 1947, Leopoldo Méndez began making prints as a backdrop for the beginning and ending credits of films during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema (mid-1930s to 1960). Many of these films explored unresolved issues fought for during the Mexican Revolution, like the oppression of the landless and the need for agrarian reform. *I Buy Your Corn* appears at the beginning of director Emilio Fernández's *Pueblerina* (1948). The artist places the viewer in the position of the *campesinos* who have to sell their corn at the meager price offered or suffer violent consequences. *I Buy Your Corn* implies that for the buyer, a sack of corn had more value than the life of the person who planted and harvested it.



Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)

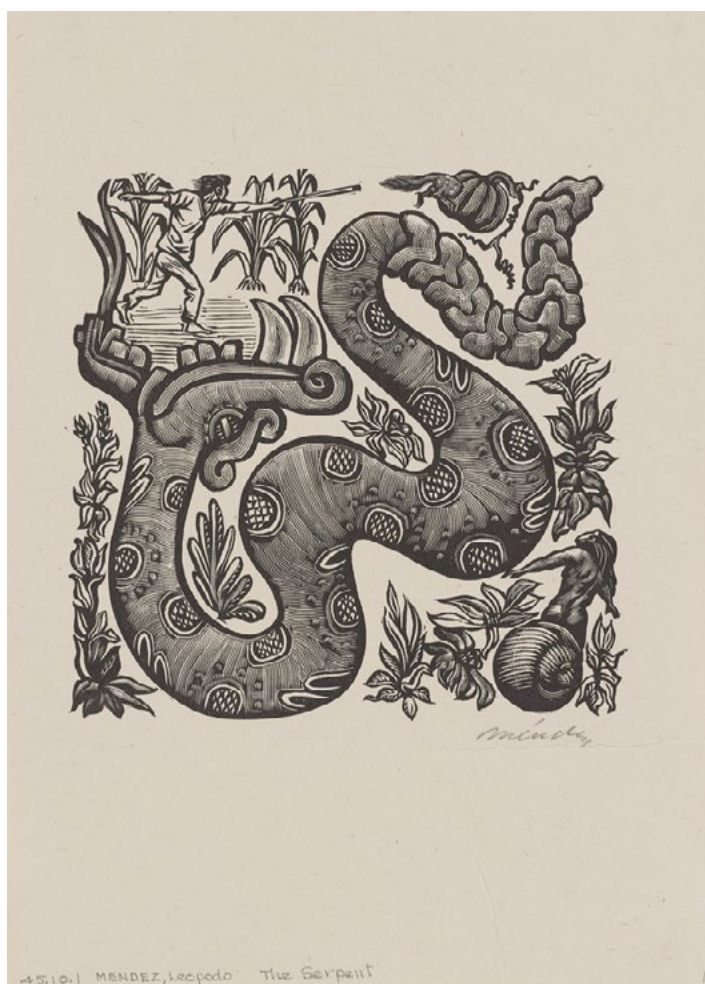
The Brute, 1947

Linocut

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund

During the Golden Age of Mexican cinema (1930s-1960), Leopoldo Méndez's prints appeared as full-screen backdrops for the credits in ten films. Through his friendship with the cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa (1907-1997), Méndez collaborated with famous directors Emilio Fernández (1904-1986) and Roberto Gavaldón (1909-1986). Méndez created *El Bruto* for Fernández's movie *Río Escondido* (1947). Here the local *cacique* (political boss) terrorizes a community and a rural schoolteacher by destroying the school. This work was part of a portfolio of ten linocuts Méndez made to generate empathy, courage, political awakening, and popular uprisings for social change. Shown on the big screen, Méndez's prints became a kind of temporary mural shared with national and international audiences.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Serpent, number 1



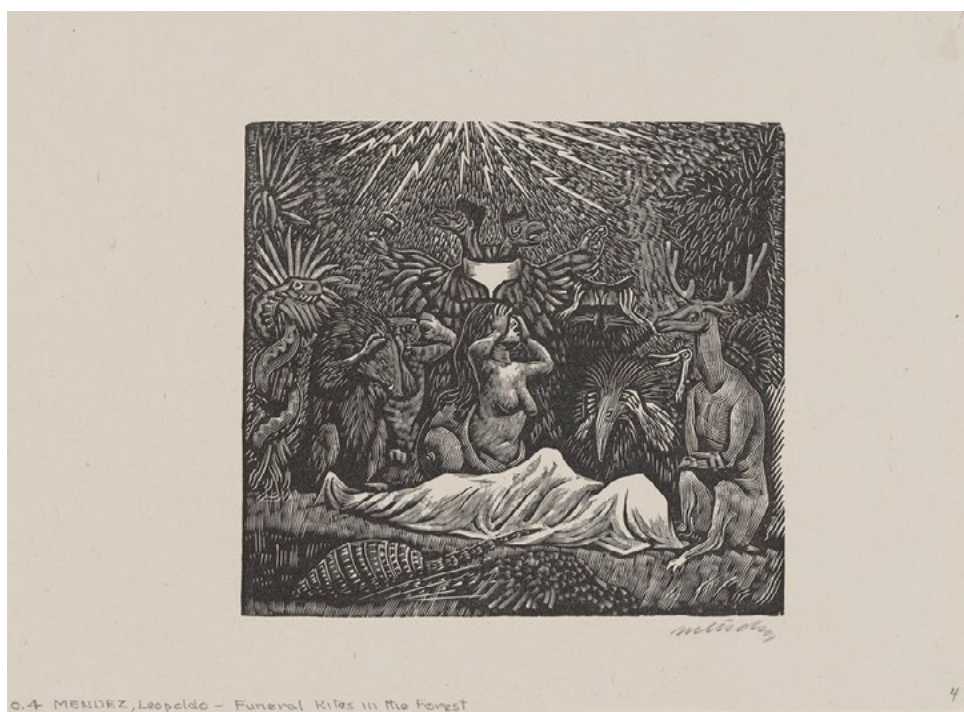
The Friendly Wild Boar, number 2

In addition to producing inexpensive political posters and flyers, Leopoldo Méndez worked on several successful print projects geared to libraries, museums, galleries and private collectors in Mexico and the United States. In 1944, he made forty wood engravings to illustrate the book, *Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World*, by Mexican writer Juan de la Cabada (1899-1986). A year later, Méndez selected twenty-five of the forty wood engravings for a print portfolio. The portfolio is on view in its entirety on two freestanding walls in the center of the gallery.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Armadillo, number 3



Funeral Rites in the Forest, number 4

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



The Armadillo Completes His Task, number 5



The Reply of Madame Snail, number 6

Cabada loosely based his tale of life, death, oppression, and justice on Mayan folk songs and a blend of myth and fantasy. Madame Caracol, a snail-woman who lives in the forest, mourns the death of her husband Sir Ardilla, a squirrel. She sings a heartfelt lament with Mayan speech scrolls emitting from her mouth.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



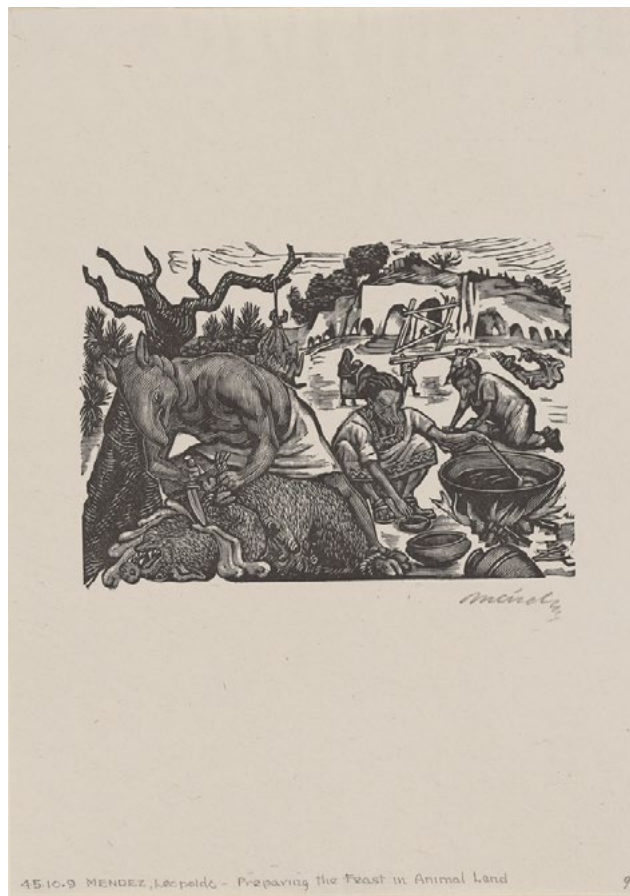
The Buzzard Waits to Devour the Scraps, number 7



Flight to Conquer the World, number 8

Mr. Zopilote, a vulture, is a nefarious character in the 1944 novel, *Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World*, by Mexican writer Juan de la Cabada (1899-1986). His top hat, white-collar shirt, and dark suit, suggest he is an opportunistic capitalist. Mr. Zopilote convinces the grieving widow and talented singer Madam Caracol, a tiny snail, to fly off with him to the capital city and perform with him.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Preparing the Feast in Animal-Land, number 9

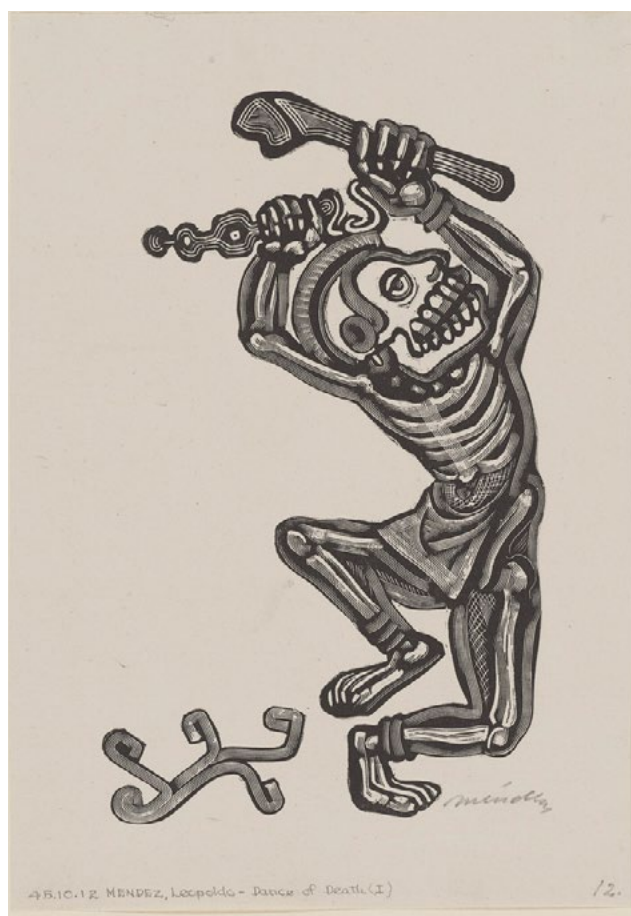


Pollen, number 10

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Remembrance of the Things of Youth I, number 11



Dance of Death I, number 12

In the middle of the story, Madam Caracol sings a Mayan song about the Festival of Hunger or Desire during Carnival. Artist Leopoldo Méndez accompanied the poetic lyrics in a Yucatecan Mayan language and Spanish with vertical wood engravings that feature Mayan gods, birds, trees, bodies of water, and traditional dances including the Dance of Death.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Dancing at the Foot of the Plum Tree, number 13



The Sun, the Rainbow and Dancers, number 14

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



The Tiger's Skin, number 15



Remembrance of the Things of Youth II, number 16

Contemporary Mayan cultural traditions and ancient Mayan ceramics, stone carvings, and painted books known as codices inspired Leopoldo Méndez's imagery for the 1944 novel *Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World* by Mexican writer Juan de la Cabada (1899-1986).

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



Dance of Death II, number 17



The Capers of the Drunken Buzzard, number 18

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



The Conceited Buzzard, number 19



Political Badgers, number 20

At the festivities proclaiming the vulture, Mr. Zopilote, an honorary citizen, the top-hatted charlatan hides Madam Caracol, a snail with an extraordinary voice, under his wing and has her sing while he moves his lips. After a while, Mr. Zopilote becomes drunk and unruly and the crowd discovers that he is a fraud and cannot carry a tune.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund

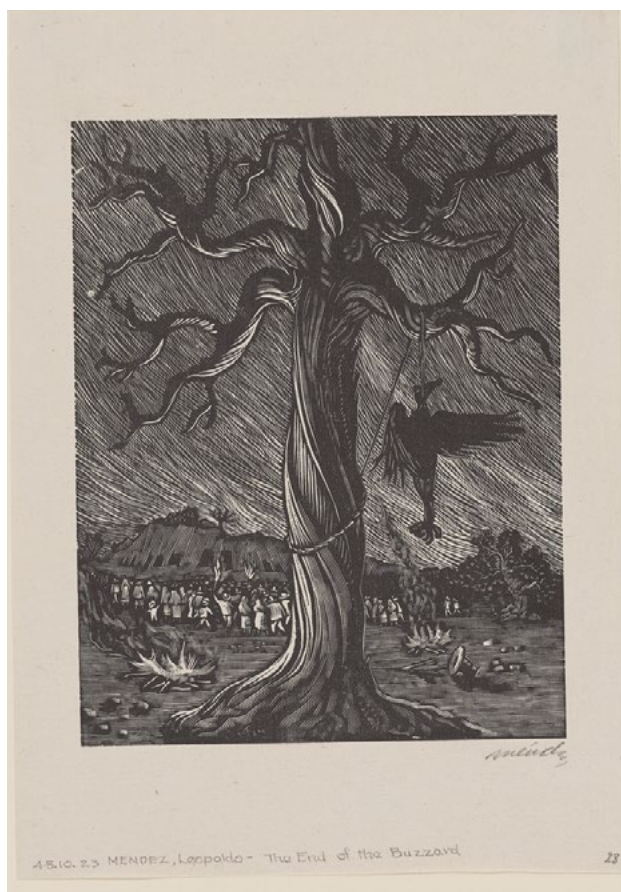


The Mayor Talks, number 21



Revenge, number 22

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



The End of the Buzzard, number 23



The New Song, number 24

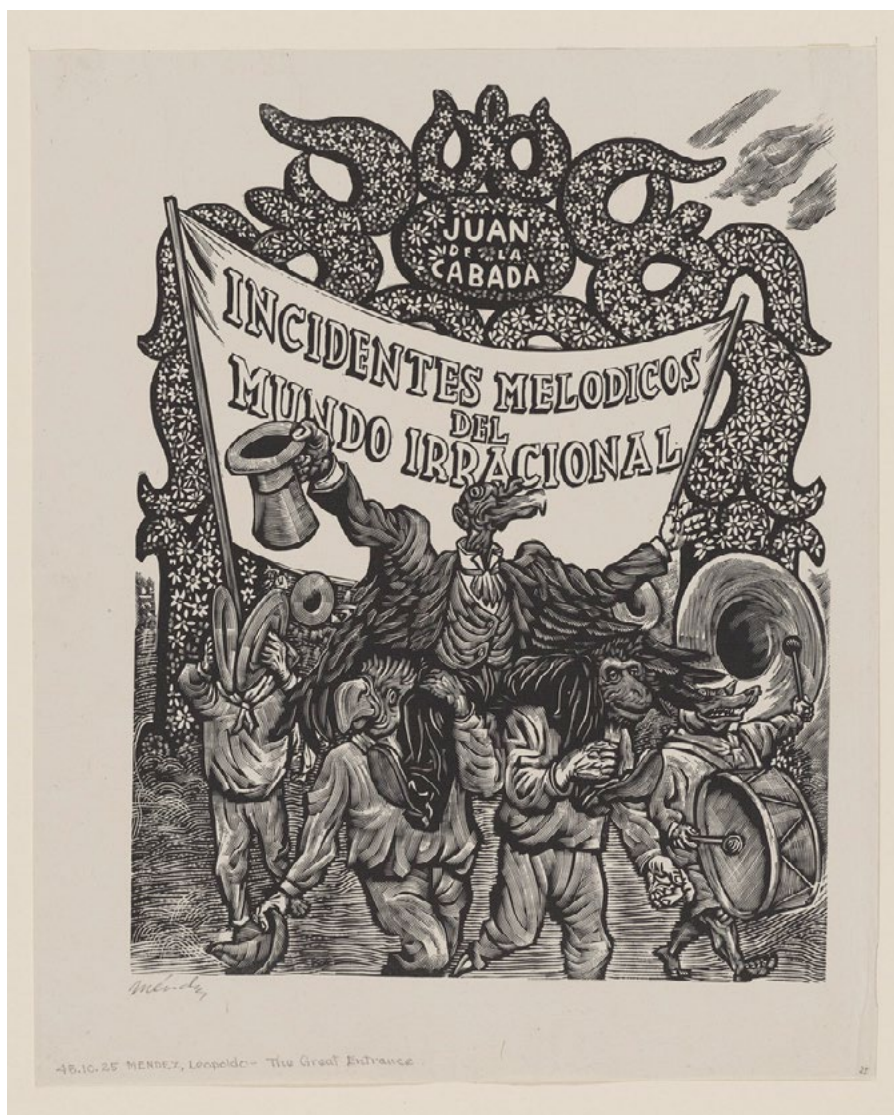
Leopoldo Méndez's twenty-five wood engravings featuring anthropomorphic animals for human subjects illustrate a story of life, death, oppression, struggle that is an allegory for a Marxist revolution. At the end of the 1944 novel *Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World* by Mexican writer Juan de la Cabada (1899-1986), an angry mob kills Mr. Zopilote, a vulture, who tricked and used Madam Caracol, a talented snail woman, to increase his power and reputation. Madam Caracol, liberated from her oppressor, sings to the sun and the dawning of a new day.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)

Melodic Incidents of an Irrational World in the portfolio *Méndez 25 prints*, 1945

Wood engraving

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund



The Great Reception, number 25



David Alfaro Siqueiros, a militant social activist, was familiar with oppression and subjugation. By the time he made *Our Present Image*, a figure with bound hands and face, he had fought in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and against fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). In addition, he had experienced several periods of imprisonment and exile because of his labor union work and his Communist political activities.

Although Siqueiros challenged himself and his contemporaries to experiment with innovative art techniques, he printed this work using traditional stone lithography at the Popular Graphic Art Workshop in Mexico City. Siqueiros based this image on photographs of a young male model taken by his collaborator in Mexico at the time, Leo Matiz (1917-1998), from Colombia.

David Alfaro Siqueiros (Mexican, 1896-1974)

Our Present Image (Originally titled *México, 1947*), 1947

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



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D. Alfaro Siqueiros

David Alfaro Siqueiros (Mexican, 1896-1974)

Latin America, 1945

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



David Alfaro Siqueiros (Mexican, 1896-1974)
Guardian of Peace, 1945
 Lithograph
 Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase:
 Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Torment of Cuauhtémoc* (detail), 1950-51, pyroxylin on celotex. Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City.

David Alfaro Siqueiros's subject faces the viewer head on, charging the space between the lithograph and the spectator with dynamic tension. Even within the relatively small spaces of his prints, the artist managed to convey the monumental depths of his public murals. One may assume from the title and date of the lithograph that the ferocious mongrel is protecting the hard-won peace after World War II. Another version of this aggressive canine appears again in Siqueiros' mural *Torment of Cuauhtémoc* (1950-51) as a vicious Spanish war dog trained to participate in the genocide of indigenous peoples.

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LIGA PRO-CULTURA ALEMANA EN MEXICO

Jesús Escobedo (Mexican, 1918-1978)

Fascism. 8th Lecture. How to Combat Fascism, 1939

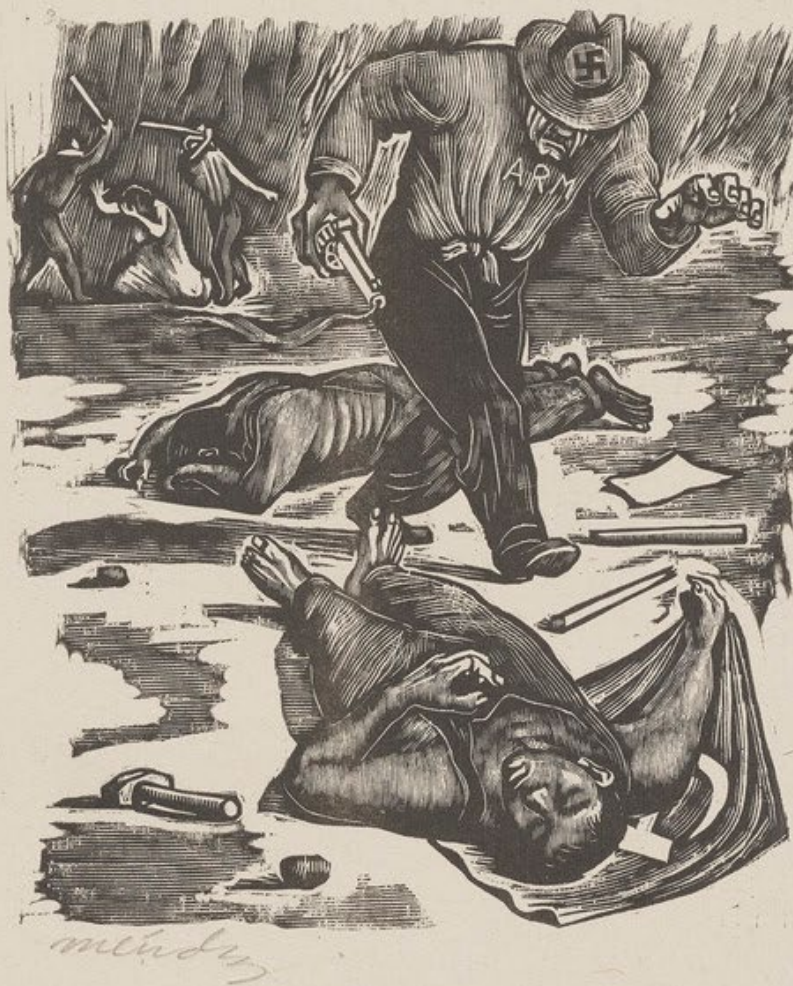
Lithograph in red and black (poster)

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund

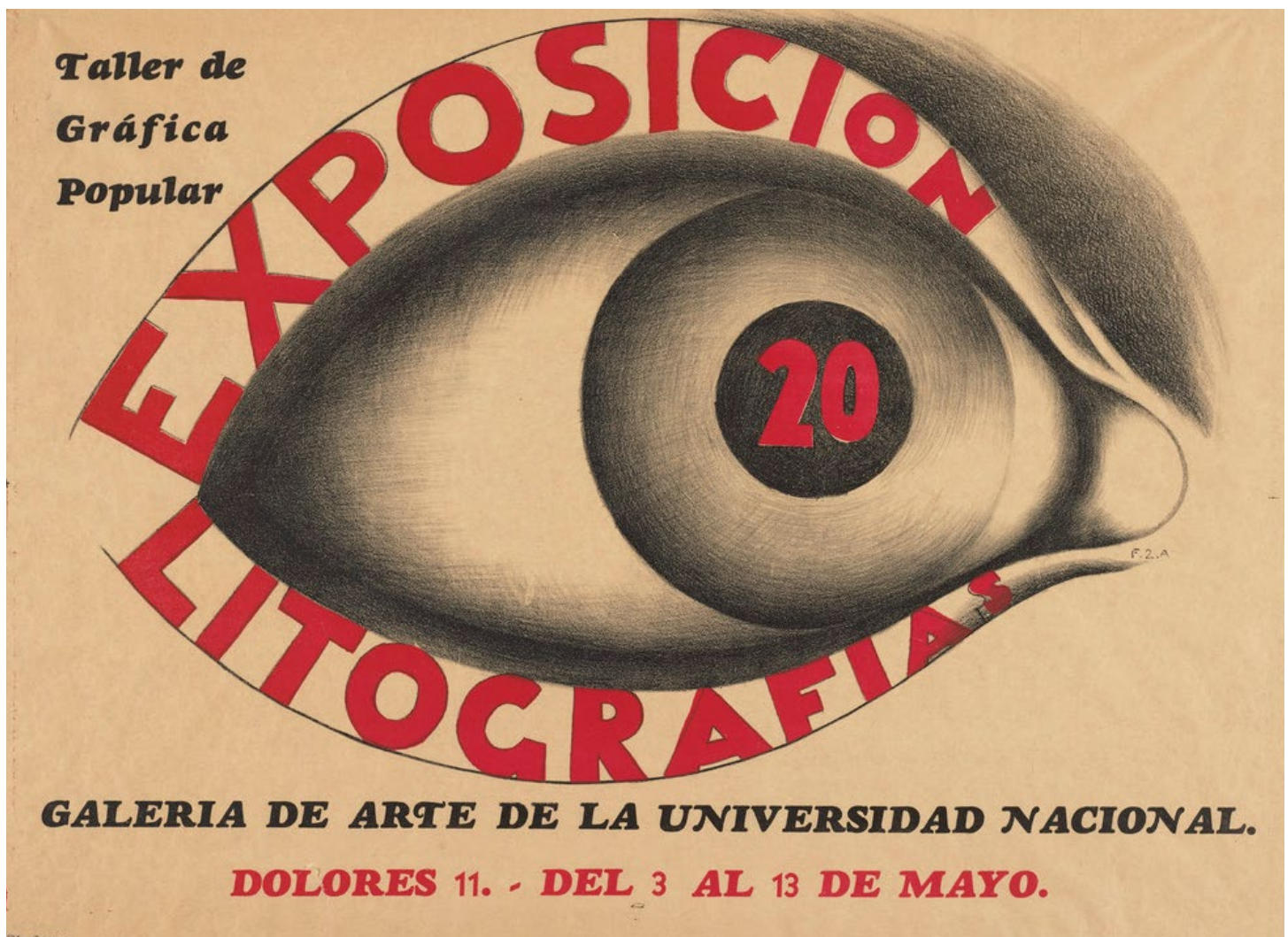


Emilio Amero printed this lithograph while living in Seattle, Washington. From 1940 to 1946, he taught at University of Washington and was director of the Cornish College of the Arts. His work as a cinematographer influenced the unusual perspective, depth, and mystery of the image's environment, which seems to be simultaneously the interior of a home and a city in ruins. In 1929, Amero collaborated with the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca who wrote a script for a surreal film, *Viaje a la luna* (*Trip to the Moon*), which Amero never produced. The central motifs of the film—anxiety and fear of sex and death—reappear in the shocking intensity of Amero's image of a violent rape.

Emilio Amero (American, b. Mexico, 1901-1976)
War, 1944
Lithograph
Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 44.84



Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Fascism (2), no. 20 from 25 *Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*, 1943
Wood engraving
Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection

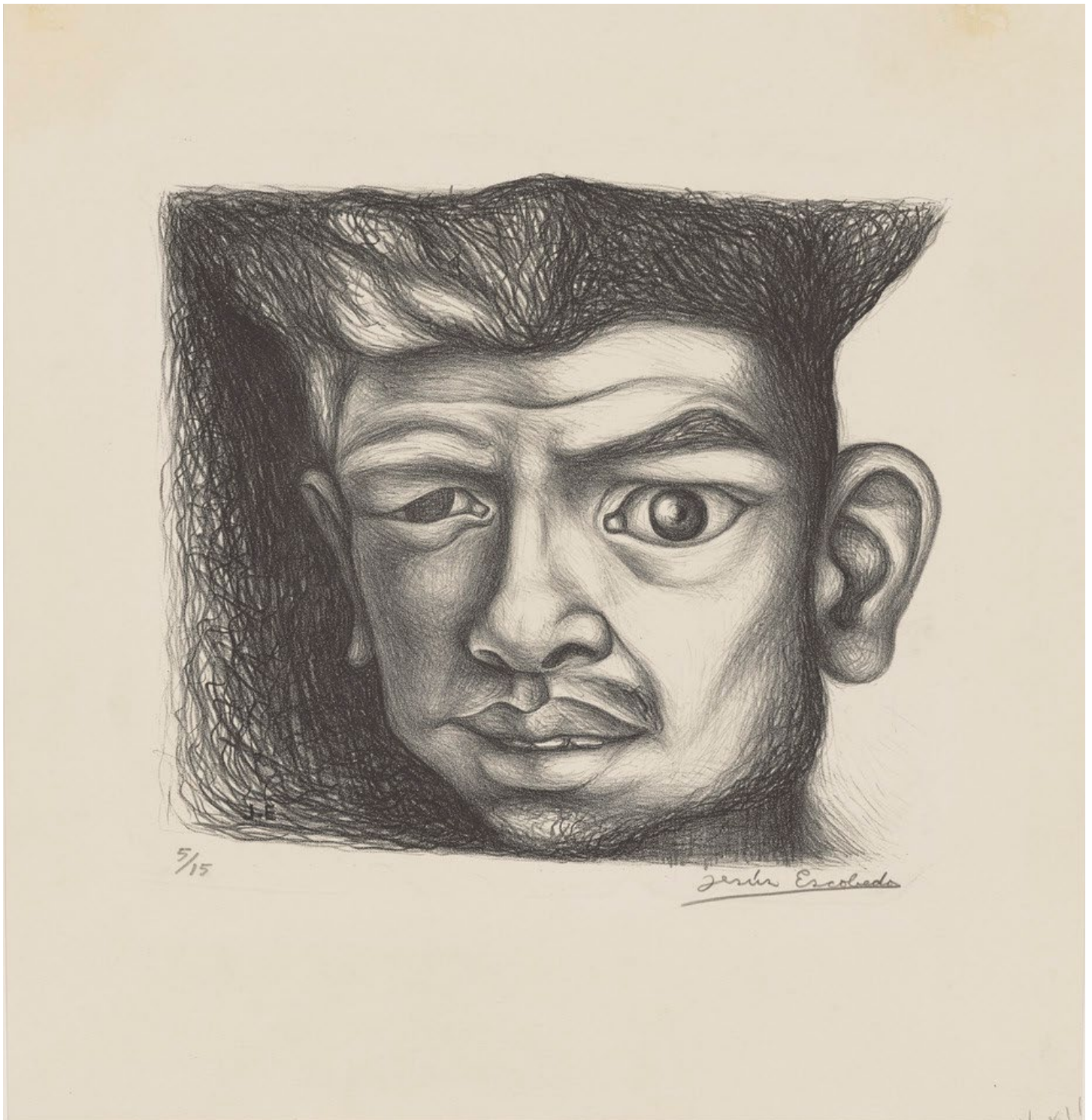


Francisco Dosamantes (Mexican, 1911-1986)

Popular Graphic Art Workshop: Exhibition 20 Lithographs, 1939

Lithograph in red and black (poster)

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Jesús Escobedo (Mexican, 1918-1978)

Man's Head (Self-Portrait), c. 1940

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886-1957)
The Communicating Vessels (Homage to André Breton), 1938
 Linocut
 Courtesy of Dr. Li Ravicz

In 1938, the French writer and leader of Surrealism, André Breton (1896-1966), travelled to Mexico to give a series of lectures. He and his wife, artist Jacqueline Lamba (1910-1993), stayed with Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, who were also hosting the exiled Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) and his wife Natalia Sedova (1882-1962). Rivera made this self-portrait to publicize one of Breton's lectures and he titled the print after Breton's 1932 essay *Les vases communicants* (*The Communicating Vessels*). The artist portrayed Breton's concept of dreams as a shared dialogue between sleep and wakefulness, interior emotions and exterior facts. Rivera's face is an imaginative hybrid of flesh and nature where arteries, veins, and capillaries are roots, the bridge of his nose is a tree trunk and a human body, and the leafy top is a brain.



Raúl Anguiano (Mexican, 1915-2006)

They Make Them Bend...Because They Ride Them from Early On, from *Popular Sayings*, 1939

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund

These prints are striking because of their strange and unsettling scenes. Artist Raúl Anguiano combined popular sayings with images of dark humor to comment on gender relations, dominance and domestic violence. The image of women riding men reminds me of a traditional Mexican wedding dance I saw that provoked discomfort and amusement among guests. It is called "*el baile del mandilón*," meaning the dance of the emasculated man. During the dance, the bride whips the groom with a belt while the groom sweeps the floor with a broom. There are many popular sayings in Spanish that reinforce and question gender roles. Growing up I remember hearing, "*El matrimonio funciona porque uno manda y el otro obedece*" (Marriage works when one gives the orders and the other obeys), "*El hombre llega hasta que la mujer lo permite*" (A man gets as far as a woman permits), and "*Calladita te ves más bonita*" (A woman looks prettier when her mouth is shut).

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Raúl Anguiano (Mexican, 1915-2006)

Oh Rope, Don't Bust on Me Now...This is the Last Pull, from *Popular Sayings*, 1939

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Ángel Bracho (Mexican, 1911-2005)

The Bridge and the Peddler (The Nonoalco Overpass), 1944

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



LAZARO CARDENAS, ilustre ex-presidente de México, hombre del pueblo y símbolo de sus mejores luchas. Por sus labios, la patria ha expresado sus más claros y rotundos anhelos de libertad y justicia social, amistad, comprensión y paz para todos los pueblos. El eco internacional de su invariable actitud pacifista ha conquistado, para él y para México simpatía, prestigio y respetabilidad. Este gran mexicano ha sido distinguido con el Premio Stalin de la Paz. Unámonos todos en el justo homenaje que los hombres de cinco continentes le rinden por su ejemplar actitud.



FIEL A LAS MEJORES banderas revolucionarias, LAZARO CARDENAS supo encauzar por canales de beneficio popular los recursos de la nación. En Zacatepec, donde aún se escucha el grito de Zapata, así como en tantos otros rincones del país, asucido por la heroica lucha de nuestros campesinos, Cárdenas puso el poder al servicio de los sectores mayoritarios de nuestra población. Tierra y libertad, para que el campesino encuentre en el trabajo su liberación y no su esclavitud. ¡Honremos al mexicano ilustre!

HOMENAJE A CARDENAS

DOMINGO 26 DE FEBRERO A LAS 10 HORAS



Su reconocida convicción pacifista, que dió jerarquía al nombre de la patria en el mundo entero, lo hace hoy objeto de una distinción mundial: el Premio Stalin de la Paz. Cárdenas representa hoy a los hombres que, en todo el mundo, están luchando por la paz y por el entendimiento entre los pueblos. ¡Unámonos al homenaje del mundo pacifista a Cárdenas.



EN LA CHOZA MAS HUMILDE de nuestro país, hay siempre un lugar de veneración para LAZARO CARDENAS. Alejado de las urgencias y responsabilidades de la vida pública, Cárdenas sigue haciendo honor a su historia y su voz es siempre un llamado a la paz, a la concordia, a la tolerancia, en un mundo amenazado por la guerra. Hoy, el nombre de Cárdenas es pronunciado con respeto y simpatía. Su designación como acreedor al Premio Stalin de la Paz, es el reconocimiento de su limpia y leal militancia por la paz para todos, sin tolerancias.

NUEVO TEATRO IDEAL — SERAPIO RENDON 15
Movimiento Mexicano por la Paz

Mexico City's famous Popular Graphic Art Workshop emerged during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Artists documented and commemorated Cárdenas's socialist reforms that reallocated land to *campesinos* (peasant farmers), reinstituted unions, established higher wages, and nationalized foreign oil companies. This poster invites Mexicans to a tribute honoring Cárdenas for his selection as a recipient of the Stalin Peace Prize in 1956.

Three women artists contributed to this work. Mariana Yampolsky, a printmaker and photographer from Chicago, was the first woman to join the Popular Graphic Art Workshop in 1945. She invited Andrea Gómez, a Mexican printmaker and muralist, to join the collective. Elizabeth Catlett, a sculptor and printmaker, and the granddaughter of slaves, moved from the United States to Mexico in 1946, and joined the Popular Graphic Art Workshop. Yampolsky and Catlett brought to Mexico a social and political consciousness shaped by their early years. They became Mexican citizens and settled there permanently.

Upper left: Oscar Frías (Mexican, 1920-?)

Upper right: Elizabeth Catlett (Mexican and American, b. United States, 1915-2012)

Lower left: Andrea Gómez (Mexican, 1926-2012)

Lower right: Mariana Yampolsky (Mexican, b. United States, 1925-2002)

Homage to Cárdenas, Sunday, February 26, at 10 a.m., 1956

Linocut

Special Collections, UO Libraries. Broadside T35 .H66 1956. Paulson Investment Company Endowment Fund Purchase



Francisco Mora (Mexican, 1922-2002)

Silver Mine Worker, Plate 2 from the portfolio *Mexican People* (Mexico City: El Taller de Gráfica Popular and Associated American Artists), 1946
Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Gift of John Henry Rock



Isidoro Ocampo (Mexican, 1910-1983)

Win a Million, 1939

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Pablo O'Higgins (Mexican, born Paul Higgins Stevenson, United States, 1904-1983)

The Brickmakers, Santa Cruz Neighborhood, Mexico City, 1946

Lithograph

Seattle Art Museum, SC2009.8.7

Pablo O'Higgins' vigorous, fluid lines bring these brickmakers to life. O'Higgins left the United States in 1924, and settled permanently in Mexico City. He devoted his art and his life to the proletariat, helping to establish three artist-worker groups, including the famous Popular Graphic Art Workshop in 1937, which fought fascism, racism, and the exploitation of the working class.

O'Higgins' art and political activism led to commissions in the United States. In 1945, the ship scalers union in Seattle, Washington, commissioned him to paint a sixty-foot long portable fresco titled "The Struggle Against Racial Discrimination" for their union hall. In 1959, the union donated O'Higgins' mural to University of Washington. After the artist restored it in 1975, the university installed it in Kane Hall, where it can be seen today.



Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969) with Alfredo Zalce (Mexican, 1908-2003)
Strangling Calaveras, 1942
 Linocuts
Ballad of Stalingrad Leopoldo Méndez
The Serial Killer Gregorio Cárdenas Hernández Leopoldo Méndez
Truck Drivers and Shopkeepers Alfredo Zalce
 Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection

Calaveras (skeletons) were broadsides produced for Mexico's Day of the Dead festivities. They featured animated figures of death to make comic-serious political statements about humanity. José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913), one of Mexico's most famous printmakers, was the first to employ the popular symbol of the skeleton to satirize known personages and contemporary social and political issues.

Broadsides told the sensationalized news stories of the day to an illiterate public through ballads, often sung in the streets, and bold, dynamic imagery. On the left, General Semyon Timoshenko (1895-1970) of the Soviet Red Army defeats the Nazi forces besieging Stalingrad. The ballad and image on the lower right tells the story of a recently imprisoned serial killer. Above, truck drivers and shopkeepers shake the money out of their clients.



This print first appeared in 1934, on the cover of the inaugural issue of *Frente a Frente*, the journal of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists. The journal's title refers to the concept of "class against class," which Leopoldo Méndez makes plain in his scornful critique. Seated on the right is Carlos Riva Palacio (1892-1936), the president of the newly formed National Revolutionary Party, who consorted with fascist interests. On the left is Diego Rivera, who artists criticized for his close ties with the Mexican government and wealthy patrons.

The setting for the print is the opening of the luxurious Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. While the playbill on the floor announces a concert of proletarian ballads, the price of admission is well beyond what the working-class can afford. This detail furthers Méndez's commentary on class.

Leopoldo Méndez (Mexican, 1902-1969)
Calaveras' Symphony Concert, number 8 from the portfolio *25 Prints of Leopoldo Méndez*, 1943
 Wood engraving
 Portland Art Museum, The Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Graphic Arts Collection



José Chávez Morado (Mexican, 1909-2002)

The Three Dancers, 1939

Lithograph

Portland Art Museum, Museum Purchase: Marion McGill Lawrence Fund



Jean Charlot's grandfather was a native of Mexico City, and Charlot grew up in Paris surrounded by Mexican antiquities his family collected. In 1921, he moved from Paris to Mexico City, where he participated in the mural movement. From 1926 to 1929, Charlot was an artist on the archaeological staff at Chichén Itzá in the Yucatán. His experience copying Mayan bas-reliefs (low-relief sculpture) and painted surfaces informed his smooth, rounded, and weighty sculptural forms.

After Charlot moved to the United States in 1928, he became a master lithographer and continued to depict the ancient cultural traditions of Mexico, like *Flying Dancer*. At the top of a 100-foot-tall pole, a dancer faces one of the four cardinal directions. The white bird in the sky symbolizes the four men "flying" around the pole suspended from ropes.

Jean Charlot (French and American, 1898-1979)
Flying Dancer, 1948
Lithograph
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. G. James Arens



Art Terms taken from the International Print Center New York (IPCNY) glossary

Baren: Hand tool used to firmly rub the back of the sheet of paper in order to pick up ink from the matrix.

Brayer: A roller used to spread ink on a matrix.

Linocut: A relief technique using a sheet of linoleum from which shapes are gouged away using chisels or knives, leaving the printing image as the raised surface. Ink is transferred from the surface of the block by the application of pressure. Linoleum is softer and therefore easier to carve than wood; however, it exhibits neither wood's characteristic grain nor its durability.

Relief printmaking: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR8yK_aKb2Q

Lithography: A planographic technique that can print a variety of drawn and painterly marks. Traditionally, a grease pencil or tusche (greasy watercolor) is applied to a flat slab of limestone, selectively filling the stone's pores. A chemical mixture securely bonds the stone before water is used to fill the remaining pores. The oil-based ink used is attracted only to those areas that have retained grease. Damp paper is laid on the face of the stone, and they are run through a press together, transferring ink from the surface. Aluminum plates may also be used.

Lithography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-PFEbQ5UGc>

Matrix: A physical surface that can be manipulated to hold ink, which is then transferred to paper. Most, though not all, matrices are able to print the same image many times. Matrices used in printmaking include blocks of wood, sheets of linoleum, metal plates, sheets of Plexiglas, and slabs of limestone.

Public programs related to the exhibition

Almuerzo y arte | Lunch and Art Part I: <https://youtu.be/nDYvf1R5GMA>

Almuerzo y arte | Lunch and Art Part II: <https://jsma.uoregon.edu/events/almuerzo-y-arte-lunch-and-art-part-ii>

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MEXICO AND THE GRAPHIC ARTS

1929-1956

Art  Bridges

The exhibition is co-organized by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art and the Portland Art Museum.
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