

ART AS A SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF
CENTRAL AMERICA, 1945–1975:
AN EXPLORATORY ESSAY*

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“Artists are originators who reflect their native land if they know how to understand the joys and sorrows in the soul of its people; if they interpret them in line, color, stone or clay, in music or by word. If they feel and comprehend its landscape. If they eternalize it.”¹

The student of Latin America, and more specifically Central America, has many sources available to him. Most obvious are the written primary and secondary sources; however, scholars are beginning to consult less conventional but equally important ones such as oral tradition, literature, and the film. A source that rarely has been utilized by either the historian or the social scientist is art. To show how art represents a unique and collaborating source for understanding the history of people and the development of nations, this article will examine the contemporary paintings and prints of Central America—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua—between 1945 and 1975.

The first date signifies the approximate beginning of the modern art movement in the various Central American countries. In Guatemala the contemporary plastic art movement began with the Revolution of October 1944, which overthrew the fourteen-year dictatorship of Jorge Ubico.² However, in no Central American country does one note a vibrant modern art movement until after World War II. During these last thirty years, Central American artists sought to establish their own national tradition by turning to pre-Columbian art, identifying with their nation’s past, and appealing to a unique history built upon a precolonial tradition. The founders who contributed to the development of modern Latin American art during these years were born in the late nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth; many are now dead and the survivors are in their sixties and seventies.³ Although the beginnings of the modern art movement in Central America can be clearly dated, the end is not yet in sight.

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Thus, 1975 represents not a significant date, but an attempt to define the limits of this research.

Understanding art as a source for history demands an examination of the function of art in its society, a consideration of the specific problems of its uses as a source, and the study of the specific characteristics of Central American art. Because the function of art is not necessarily to analyze or describe society, not all art provides equal insight into Central American life. Furthermore, different art forms demand different techniques of evaluation. Architecture, sculpture, and the folk arts represent useful sources for the understanding of Latin America, but are much more difficult to evaluate both in technique and subject matter. For example, although folk art, with its nonelitist orientation, will eventually provide new perceptions on the rural and urban masses, art critics have yet to solve the problem of classification.⁴ Thus, we will concentrate here on paintings and prints because their descriptive visual presentation makes them an easier source to use.

Latin Americanists who seek to use art for the understanding of Central America encounter difficulties comparable to those of historians who use traditional written materials: There are problems of evaluating the authority of the originator, analyzing the validity of the subject matter, and locating the material. Particular artists are more accurate, certain paintings may be of more value, and some prints far more relevant to a study than others. In using art as a source, one must consider how qualified is the artist to deal with a particular subject and the origin of his knowledge. Artists have different reasons for painting than historians for writing. The artist does not set out to write a piece of history. In this sense there is a similarity between artists and writers of travel accounts. The artist, like the traveler, wishes to convey an idea, a mood, or an impression. He is less concerned than the historian with accuracy per se except in its ability to accomplish his purpose. Just as not all works of history are of equal value for the historian, so not all works of art provide a valid understanding of the past. While the art critic may condemn the faulty technique, the poor composition, or the limited creativity of a painting or print, these weaknesses may not necessarily destroy its historical usefulness. The significance of the subject matter and the nature of the descriptive detail are more important for social scientists than art critics. Like historians in traditional disciplines, those wishing to study art in Central America face problems in locating material. With the exception of Guatemala, Central America lacks national art museums. Knowledge of art is thus dependent upon temporary exhibitions or private collections, both deficient in time perspective.

Although the evaluation of style and technique is more important to the artist and the art critic than to the historian, a similar analysis must be considered when art is used as a source to understand Central America. Both style and technique can distort the accuracy of painting. For example, Impressionism leads to certain distortions, but it also illustrates the European influence in Central America. What shaped the style of an artist or the location of the art world for the artist may tell us as much about the Central American past as the subject of the painting. The fact that a Guatemalan artist is more influenced by

Mexico City than by New York or Paris may indicate the international relations of Guatemala and most certainly its cultural connections.

Central America was later than most parts of South America in securing political and economic independence from Europe, and this dependence is reflected in the art. The Impressionism found in the work of Central American artists emphasizes the French cultural influences that are still significant for the elite of Central America and that historically have helped shape life styles. However, the inclination of Central American artists to do landscapes in an impressionistic manner is not simply the result of French influence, but represents the environmental dependence of the society. The return to nature is not made on European terms but rather underlines how the environment demolishes the individual and illustrates the dramatic struggle between man and his environment. Since the 1960s, Central American art reflects increasing economic and cultural dependence on the United States. Equally significant is the fact that many artists who seek to develop a national identity show a style influenced by the Mexican muralist movement.

Some techniques, like some styles, encourage the production of works that are useful to the social scientist. This is particularly true of the fresco—the painting on either wet or relatively dry walls with paints mixed with water and lime, or with pigment and egg. In effect, the size and location of the frescos encourages works that have a social function. The fact that murals must be systematically planned, laid out with precision, and allow little room for alteration means that the artist must do his research carefully. Because murals are often commissioned, care must be given in the evaluation of the bias of both the patron and the artist. Although murals have not been so significant in Central America as in Mexico, they still generally deal with social themes and represent a significant source. Those artists using an impressionist style in oils produce useful works for understanding Central America because the style accentuates the spirit of the subject matter. In contrast, the movement away from social realism toward International Modernism means that many of the paintings between 1945 and 1975 that are abstract, even when the artist maintains interest in preserving indigenous influences, are difficult material to use in the study of Latin America.

The typologies used to characterize Latin American art will further give insight into those art forms that are most useful as sources. Central American artists have presented different classification schemes. For example, Stanton Catlin suggests that since World War II the efforts of artists fall into two kinds of “artistic statement: the formal and the social.” In the formal statement they have sought spiritual renewal and the relationship between environment and existence. In the social statement artists have sought to say something about society in their art.⁵ Theodore Rabb submits that artists fall within three categories: those interested in commenting explicitly on their own age, those who give insight through the themes of their art but only because of the nature of their position and patronage, and finally those who make a personal statement on the eternal truths.⁶

In contrast, Pablo Zelaya Sierra divides modern artists into those who are

concerned with imitating the natural, and those who seek progress through impressionism and cubism and whose emphasis is on order and discipline and concern with laws of the universe.⁷ Still another scholar, Leopoldo Castedo, posits that there are two major groupings. The first are those who participate in the international areas thereby ignoring local traditions and customs. Then there are those who search for the essential distinctive aspect of Latin America⁸ and employ contemporary techniques and concepts to express that uniqueness.

Finally, Fernando de Szyszlo divides present day Latin American art into three large classifications: Transfigured Reality, Geometrical Abstraction, and Lyrical Abstraction. Painters who fall within the first category use elements taken from the real world and transform them to serve subjective expression, a tendency that is tied to European expressionism. After World War II Central American artists used reality to subjective ends with clear social commentary. In the 1950s the reality became more subjective and came to be separated from any social concerns. In Geometrical Abstraction close collaboration existed between development in architecture and painting and many of the artists had architectural training. The Lyrical Abstraction painters employed a nonfigurative language, although they did not necessarily depart from reality.⁹

An assessment of the typologies of style underscores two major points. First, Latin Americanists, like the art critics, must recognize the significance of technique, influence, and subject matter in the evaluation of art. Second, an appraisal of the various classification systems demonstrates that those paintings that are most useful as sources for understanding Latin America are those that make a statement about Central American society, comment explicitly on their age, imitate nature, and seek to portray the uniqueness of Central America.

To understand art as a source, the Latin Americanist must evaluate not only the various typologies but should consider the general characteristics of national art. Art produced between 1945 and 1975 reflects a number of general tendencies. The artists have made use of rich vibrant colors, an influence of climate and light. Consciously or unconsciously, the artists have sought to identify with an indigenous or pre-Columbian heritage to the extent that most of them have experimented with pre-Columbian designs at some point in their artistic career and sought to relate historical traditions to the present. Since World War II, Central American art, influenced by the major trends of Europe and North America, has been a part of artistic internationalism. The artists have illustrated in their work widespread interest in various movements from non-objective abstract art through Cubism, Expressionism, Pop, and Op Art. Concern with recognizable subject matter continued alongside abstract expressionism. Interest in the expression of the unique heritage and culture of their nations has dominated the artists' experimentation with abstract art and their interest in social realism.

Further, one finds in Central America a concern for the integration of the arts. Cooperation among painters, architects, and sculptors is revealed in structures such as Guatemala's new municipal complex. Government support for the arts has strengthened the movement. In contrast, Roberto Gonzales Goyri argues that it has not truly occurred because modern life is fractured rather than uni-

fied.¹⁰ In spite of the difficulties, Central America has placed more emphasis on the integration of the arts than the United States. This interest represents an attempt to develop a national art that reflects the various influences—Spanish, Indian and African—and at the very least encourages the collaboration of artists who work in varied media.

The search for a unique national art has not clearly revealed the differences among the Central American nations, perhaps an affirmation that Central America is a nation divided.¹¹ The dissimilarity among individual artists within a single country as to style, technique, and subject matter can be greater than the differences between given artists of any two Central American countries. Although the national differences among the art traditions are not clearly defined, the existence of pre-Columbian tradition or the absence of it has resulted in a variety of attitudes toward the colonial and precolonial traditions. Historical traditions create distinctions between the art of Guatemala and Honduras and that of Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Both Guatemalan and Honduran art are particularly interesting because the influence of the three traditions—the pre-Columbian, the Spanish, and the Mexican—are apparent in the painting produced between 1945 and 1975. Artists have been working in Guatemala and Honduras since man inhabited the area. The indigenous art has been strong enough to provide a basis on which the artist could build. Guatemala was the center of the Maya culture and subsequently the Spanish colonial capital of Central America. Sites such as Tikal and Copán are renowned for their precolonial art, sources of inspiration for artists. Further, the Guatemalan Indians have retained their handicrafts, especially weaving and ceramics. Wherever the artist goes or looks he can find indigenous sources of colors, forms, and patterns.¹²

The Spanish and Mexican influences also remain significant in Guatemalan artistic style. Spaniards taught at the major arts schools and inspired the young artists. It was the Spaniard, Jaime Sabartes, who at the beginning of the twentieth century encouraged discussion of art, while as late as 1951 the Spaniard, Jesús Matamoros Llopis, was named professor of engraving at the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Spanish influence without the imposition of colonialism remains part of the necessary identification with the past and significant in the search for the Guatemalan identity.¹³ The Mexican influence, while a newer one, is of significance by its encouragement of muralism and themes of social realism. A large number of Guatemalan artists have spent some time studying in Mexico. Some, such as Carlos Mérida (b. 1891), studied with José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949) and other major muralists and are considered Mexican by the art critics. The pre-Columbian, Spanish, and Mexican influences present in Guatemalan art underline the significance of these factors in its culture and society.

The adaptation of European forms to Guatemala reflects the increased awareness of this rich artistic tradition. Between 1900 and 1944, painting dominated sculpture, naturalism defined the physical and human landscape, and the indigenous picturesque fascinated some artists. From 1945 on, Guatemalans showed less concern with describing man and his environment and more of an

interest in the quality or substance of ideas. They moved away from the eclectic and from the pretense of collecting traditions that had resulted in a mixture of styles that was neither Mayan nor Colonial and even less modern. Painters adopted the form and spirit of indigenous art rather than the picturesque, while sculptors improved the quality and quantity of their work. Artists attempted to absorb past traditions and reflect them in their art rather than simply to give a descriptive presentation of the past. The works of artists such as Mérida, Arturo Martínez (1912–56), González Goyri (b. 1924), Roberto Ossaye (1927–54), and Rodolfo Abularach (b. 1933) represent a conscious effort to achieve a Guatemalan means of expression while striving for universal significance. In the 1940s, artists such as Humberto Garavito (1897–1973) and Alfredo Gálvez Suárez (1899–1946), connected with the National Academy of Fine Arts, concentrated on Guatemalan themes.¹⁴ Guatemalan painters have been more successful than other Central American artists in using their traditions to create a unique national art.

Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez argues that five factors—geography, economy, religion, race, and politics—define the environment of the Guatemalan artist and explain the distinctive aspects of Guatemalan art.¹⁵ In turn, the evidence of these five themes in the artist's work enables the Latin Americanist to use art as a source for understanding Central America. The work of the Guatemalan artist indeed reflects the existence of the different climates, varied altitudes, and uneven population distributions within the country. For example, its diverse geography results in frequent explosions of color and intense tones within the paintings. The Guatemalan artist, submerged in nature, expresses in his art a contemplative temperament.

Art also can provide some understanding of the Guatemalan economy, which is marked by social and economic inequalities between the indigenous and ladino (mestizo) societies. In the Indian area, with its subsistent economic system, artisans produce the art. In the ladino art one detects the European economic influences illustrated through style and technique. The ladino artist, enamored with European art, with rare exceptions ignores the Indian folk arts. Economic factors are not decisive in the production of Guatemalan art except in the negative sense. The dual economy of Guatemala is preserved in the production of art. The religious factor also seems to be negative in that the Roman Catholic Church encourages religious forms to follow representative European colonial styles and hence to express nothing uniquely Guatemalan. Yet, the Guatemalan artist remains concerned with religious themes. While the folk art expresses the traditional religious influences, modern works of sculpture diverge from the traditional European. The mestizo Christ of Guillermo Grajeda Mena (b. 1918), the profoundly human Christ of Yela Günther (1885–1942), and the torn, twisted Christ of González Goyri represent uniquely Guatemalan interpretations. Symptomatically none of these Christs is found on church altars.

The racial factor is central to the understanding of Guatemala; that the process of *mestizaje* failed to produce a completely homogeneous population is reflected in the nation's art. The ladino artist, anguished by the process of *mestizaje*, expresses in his art Indian traditions that are absent in his life style.

The art of Ossaye, Dagoberto Vásquez (b. 1922), and Rafael Pereyra (b. 1935) illustrates the intense pain and agony resulting from the destruction of Indian traditions. Finally, the political factor has influenced the artist by forcing him to be introverted. Thereby, he attempts to create the personal stability and freedom of development that the political environment has too often failed to encourage. The limited aspects of the political system are reflected in an apolitical art. The artist has generally left political concerns to the politicians and focused on other interests.

The traditions found in Guatemala also exist in Honduras. The Mayan tradition is significant, particularly in ceramics; and the Spanish tradition is rich, especially for the eighteenth century. It is a country that offers great diversity because of its varied terrain and climate, intense color, and multi-racial population from three traditions: Spanish, Indian, and African. In spite of this artistic potential, geographic isolation insulated Honduras from involvement in the international art movement. Only in 1951 did Honduras send abroad its first major exhibition to Madrid for the *Bienal Hispanoamericana*. Further, within the country there are few places where paintings can be exhibited, although a National School of Fine Arts was established in 1940. As in Guatemala, Spanish painters, often of second rank, have exerted influence in the twentieth century through their residence in Honduras, their teaching, and their demonstrations of new techniques.

Isolation has been of more significance in Honduras than Guatemala because of the limited availability of European originals that could serve as inspiration to young artists. The absence of a national art museum has made it difficult for the young artists to know either the international schools of art or the works of their own country. In spite of that isolation Honduran paintings became increasingly original in the 1950s as students began to graduate from the *Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes* and obtain opportunities to study abroad. Although Honduran painting shows the dramatic influence of Arturo López Rodezno (b. 1906), who has been responsible for broadening and inspiring its artistic tradition, four styles are apparent in the work of Honduran artists. These styles include naturalism illustrated by the Italian school, expressionism influenced through Mexican painting, surrealism, and primitivism. The absence of interest in abstract art and the particular styles of the Honduran artists makes their work useful for the Latin Americanist in studying the country. That is if he can find enough examples to examine.¹⁶

Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador all lack the artistic continuity of Guatemala and Honduras. Their artists are still seeking to adapt the European technique and style to the national expression. In each country groups of young artists are struggling to adapt international styles to their own personal expression and the schools of fine art are trying to inspire and to teach young artists. A limited awareness of a pre-Columbian tradition, the absence of an art museum, fragile international contacts except through the immigrant Spanish painters, and an underdeveloped sense of national tradition all suggest that the movement toward a unique national art in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador will proceed slowly.

Examination of the art history and paintings of Central America suggests three specific ways that artists may provide sources for understanding Latin America. First, an artist may write history through his art. Through the depiction of the past in paint rather than print, Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera (1887–1959) and José Clemente Orozco have perfected the art of painting history. Although murals have been less significant than in Mexico, frescos do provide Central American artists with an effective medium of expression. The three Central American artists who have come the closest to writing history through their murals are Francisco Amighetti of Costa Rica (b. 1907), López Rodezno of Honduras, and Gálvez Suárez of Guatemala.

Although Amighetti specializes in woodcuts, he has encouraged the creation of murals in Costa Rica. His murals tend to be more romantic than his prints. A case in point is Amighetti's 1948 mural for the dining room of the Costa Rican presidential residence. The fifteen-by-five-foot mural emphasizes the significance of the nation's agriculture. Individuals are working in the fields with the corn at various stages of development and taking the crops to the market. The painting depicts Ticos as mestizos of strong, healthy bodies. The vibrant colors and the presence of a woman representing mother earth show a prosperous Costa Rica. In contrast, Amighetti's woodcuts depict individuals who despite their pride are often sad, even anguished. Yet in both media Amighetti is concerned with the everyday activities of the masses of the population, and thereby he provides a solid commentary on one aspect of Costa Rican society about which little has been written.

López Rodezno, like Amighetti, has encouraged the creation of murals in his country, with a particular emphasis on social and economic themes. His earlier works, in the 1940s, were frescoes, but more recently he has created mosaics of glazed tiles. López Rodezno executed a series of early murals at the Tegucigalpa electric plant. The paintings show the importance of electrification in providing heat, light, and power. Clearly, from the perspective of government planners, electric power improves the quality of human life more effectively than does either wind or horse power. A series of his murals in fresco done in the Duncan Mayan Restaurant presents a romantic picture of Mayan women against a background of Indian motifs. López Rodezno's more recent mosaic works continue his previous themes. Commissions in both the Banco Atlántida and the Hotel Maya of Tegucigalpa show romanticized Mayan figures and motifs in vibrant colors. More mythical than realistic, they point up the significance of Mayan tradition and art for the study of Honduran history. The artist depicts economic themes in a series of mosaics at the Tegucigalpa Banco de Fomento, which present scenes of rural Honduras from fiestas through daily life. Planting corn, picking coffee, and harvesting bananas clearly provide the basis of the nation's agricultural economy; the tractor, the oxen, and the machete are the tools of the trade; the street vendor, the local guitar player, and the traveler appear.

In 1944 the Guatemalan, Gálvez Suárez, represented the tradition of the artist as historian in a series of five murals done in the National Palace on Guatemalan Nationality. His themes were "The Message of Popol," "The Reli-

gion of the Mayas," "The Technical and Spiritual Language of the Mayas," "The Clash between the Spanish and the Indians," and "The Fusion of the Cultures." Clearly, Gálvez Suárez's interpretation of history emphasized the Mayan influence at the expense of the Spanish. Known for his concern with detail, this artist analyzed the Mayan contribution to Guatemalan history. This sense of detail also gives anthropological value to his oil paintings of Indians, particularly those of the Atitlán region. Those familiar with Guatemala between 1920 and 1946 can determine from which towns the people come by their clothing style. A number of his works, for example, "Waterboys of Chichicastenango" and "The Paz Family of Quetzaltenango" are held by the Guatemalan National Museum of History and Fine Arts.

In addition to painting history, the Central American artist can also provide a source for understanding his region by depicting its various customs, social and economic activities, and life styles. Especially valuable are the works of artists who clearly distinguish between the traditions of the urban and rural areas and the customs of the upper and lower classes. The artist as a social historian can vividly and accurately describe his nation.

Primitive painters often excel at portraying the detail and spirit of a life style. Three of particular interest are José Antonio Velásquez of Honduras (b. 1906), Asilia Guillén (1887–1964) of Nicaragua, and Jorge Gallardo (b. 1924) of Costa Rica. Velásquez paints his home town of San Antonio de Oriente where he has served as telegraph operator and mayor. Although his perspective in oil is defective, he is attentive to detail and faithful in color. "The World of a Primitive Painter," a film directed by Rafael Hurtado for the Organization of American States, proves the accuracy of Velásquez's depiction of San Antonio. Guillén, faced by the restriction imposed on women of her generation, applied her artistic talent in embroidery. Not until the age of sixty-five did she, with the encouragement of friends, begin painting in oil. Similar to Velásquez, her works detail the life of her nation in primitive style, vibrant colors, and spontaneous authenticity.

Artistically less satisfying, yet also capturing the life style of his country, Costa Rica, are the oils of Gallardo. Although he formally studied art on scholarships in Madrid, Florence, and Rome, he has chosen a primitive style. Gallardo's works reveal three basic characteristics. First, as a Costa Rican painter, he is concerned with the essence of his nation and her people. Second, Gallardo seems particularly interested in both the rural and urban poor. He depicts the struggles, hopes, pains, anxieties, passivity, and courage of the lower classes, thereby emphasizing the virtues and defects of the impoverished rather than the romantic aspects of their plight. In pure color and simple lines he portrays the people that wait at the bus station, those that load the trucks, and the many who drink at the cantinas. In his paintings and drawings one may encounter the man who collects the garbage, the woman sipping a soda, the mother standing at the door of her home holding a baby, or the family transplanting coffee plants. Third, Gallardo emphasizes the racial mixture of Costa Rica, and his drawings suggest the contributions of the Indian heritage, the African ancestry, and the European tradition.



Boys of the Night, woodcut by Camilo Minero (El Salvador: 1972)

Contrasting with Gallardo's work is that of his countryman Teodorico Quirós (b. 1897). Although his early training was in architecture, Quirós's major works are in water color, oil, or pencil. His primary concern is not depicting social themes but rather the spirit of a place. Like many Central American artists, Quirós was interested at one time in pre-Columbian art forms, but now he prefers landscapes in the Impressionist style. Through line and color, shade and light, "Quico" (as he is known in Costa Rica) portrays his nation's geographic environment in both form and spirit. His paintings convey the lushness of the altiplano in winter, the dryness of the summer plains, the beauty of the beaches and the tropical seas, the strengths of the mountains, and the varieties of the tropical plants. The El Salvadoran artist Camilo Minero (b. 1917) combines the interests of both Gallardo and Quirós. Rich in color and sensitivity, his paintings are concerned with both the daily lives of individuals and the geographic environment. His oils and woodcuts show the rural teacher or the country market, the woodcutters or the boys of the street.

Contrasting with the European influenced art of Gallardo, Velásquez, Quirós, and Minero is the work of two other Central American artists: César Izquierdo (b. 1937) and Armijo Maltez, a young Honduran artist. Both of them try not only to portray a life style but also to convey the tragic element that dominates the lives of so many Central American peoples. Izquierdo's drawings and his work in oil and sand of dark earth colors show tortured mangled bodies ravaged by pain. Both nature and man cause this unmeasurable suffering. Izquierdo's work leaves one depressed and sensitized to the cruelty and agony of man. Although Maltez expresses the same pessimistic theme, he does so in bright colors and sharply defined forms. First glancing at his work, one might assume extensive influence in his style from the Mexican muralists. Yet a closer examination reveals an individual style, the result of art training obtained entirely within Honduras. Notwithstanding his need for further training, Maltez convincingly portrays the optimistic fatalism of the lower classes. Although death is a major theme of Maltez, he communicates well the hope, faith, and love of the morrow of those who accept without question or blame the difficulties of life. That sense of optimistic fatalism is seen in the stoic Indian faces in works such as "Brothers." The painting shows two parents sharing the sorrow over the death of their sons whom they hold while awaiting the sale of a basket of watermelons. Maltez also conveys the sorrow of death in both the "Wake of Juanito" and the "Burial of the Child," while in "The Musician" and "The Bohemian Painter" he shows that sorrow and discouragement encompass life. In the work of Armijo Maltez one senses how well an artist can present the customs, social and economic activities, ways of life, and the feeling of the Central American people.

The third way that artists can enhance our understanding of Latin America is by emphasizing in their work certain themes that are important to their respective nations. The choice of themes by Latin Americans can provide new perspectives on Central America. The limitations on Latin American materials, especially works in English, increase the importance of art for teaching as well as research. Students unable to read Spanish or Portuguese are dependent upon the works by United States academics or books in poor translation. Art, which



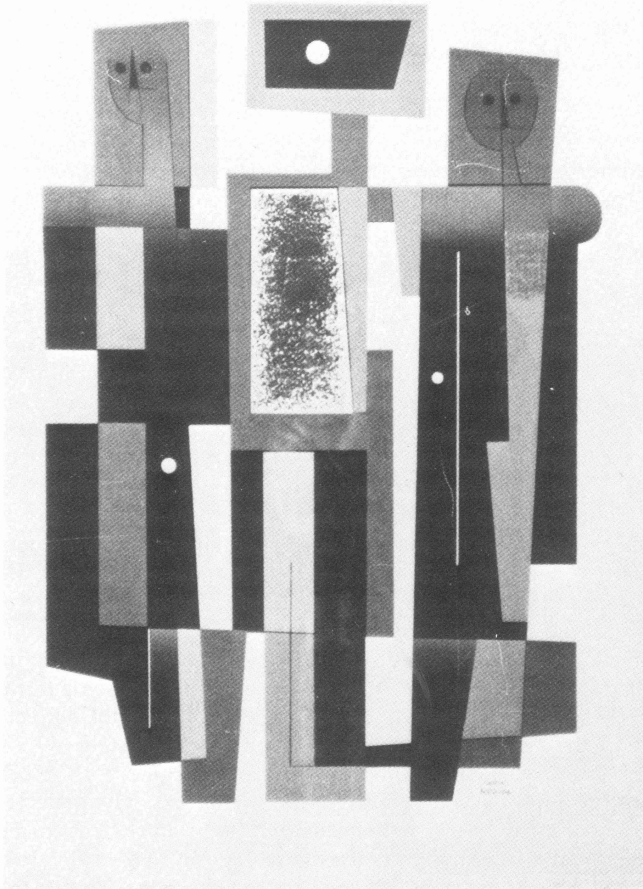
Brothers, oil on canvas by Armijo Maltez (Honduras: 1973)

requires no translator, can communicate in an international language. A survey of Central American artists between 1945 and 1975 reveals five themes that seem to stand out in most of their works: the significance of the Indian tradition, particularly the Mayan tradition, in influencing the development of Central America; the importance of agriculture and the relationship between the export economy and subsistence agriculture; the influence of Europe and the United States on Central America; the common unity of the Central American nations; and the insignificance of the political life to the artist.

The Indian heritage, particularly the Mayan tradition, is a theme that surfaces in the art of Guatemala and Honduras. The best known Central American artists who deal with the pre-Columbian theme are Mérida of Guatemala and López Rodezno of Honduras. Mérida has lived extensively in Europe and Mexico so that much of his work is located abroad. Although his work is not always easy to interpret, it does represent a good source for Guatemalan history. Mérida's aim is to incorporate the rich heritage of Guatemala into the modern art movement through the idiom that he has learned abroad. It is his use of color, form, and design that suggests the Mayan theme, while his subject matter emphasizes the mixing of the races. That the Mayan tradition appears strongest in Guatemala and Honduras should not be surprising. An examination of pre-Columbian influences in Central America suggests that the more advanced the Indian civilizations, the greater their influence in the development of the nation.

The second theme emphasized by Central American artists is the importance of agriculture as the economic base of their society. The artists recognize both the dominance of the export economy, with its dependence upon coffee and bananas, and the significance of the internal subsistence economy. Among the many artists who deal with the theme of agriculture, often with a few paintings, are the Hondurans López Rodezno and Velásquez; the El Salvadoran, Maya Salarrué; and the Costa Ricans, Carlos Valenzuela and Gallardo. Many of the artists dealing with this theme are relatively unknown, deficient in training, and express themselves through an impressionistic style or some form of primitivism. Yet the variety of styles and of sophistication do not detract from the significance of the agricultural motif. Rather these circumstances mean that to use art as a source the Latin Americanist must examine both good and bad paintings and the work of known and unknown artists. The general failure of the artists to deal in any depth with industrialization, in contrast to agriculture, reflects the infancy of Central American industry. Yet two works, both by well known Central American artists, do reveal some concern with this theme. One is a landscape by Margarita Bertheau (b. 1913), a Costa Rican who painted a factory with its polluting smoke stacks set against a background of cultivated fields. The other is the government commissioned fresco by López Rodezno that lauds electrification.

The third theme that stands out in Central American art, the region's dependence on the United States and Europe, reveals itself in both style and subject. Central American art reflects and emphasizes dependency in much the same manner that Latin American constitutions, companies, and culture show United States and European domination. Contemporary Central American art



Musical Variation, enamo-serigraph by Carlos Mérida (Guatemala: 1975)

too often mirrors the schools of art of Europe and the United States. Among the artists who show this motif are the Guatemalan Roberto Cabrera (b. 1937), the Hondurans Gregorio E. Sabillón and Dante Lazzaroni Andino, the Nicaraguan Armando Morales (b. 1927), and the Costa Rican, Zulay Soto. Although a superficial perusal of twentieth-century Central American art has led some critics to interpret it as a simply inferior version of North American art, one must be careful not to assume that dependency necessarily leads to suppressed creativity. For example, a careful evaluation of the work of Cabrera shows that out of his adaptations of new styles has come art that is powerful and unique. In effect, the art of Central America may show dependency but equally the possibilities of modifying that dependency.

Marta Traba notes that too often the style of Latin American artists reflects North American domination of their culture. The degree of cultural dependence varies among regions and between decades. Moreover, the extent of dependence correlates with the degree to which countries constitute "closed" or "open" areas. Central American countries are classified as closed areas with little foreign immigration, limited interaction with foreign cultures and technology, and egregious inequalities. These contrast with the open areas represented by such countries as Argentina, which feature progress, a capacity to absorb foreign ideas and immigration, and an emphasis on industrialization. In the 1950s and early 1960s the closed areas presented the most interesting and original art. But by the 1970s the process was reversed as artists of the Central American countries sought to prove that they were not provincial, while artists of open areas increasingly sought to resist dependence on North American culture. Artists such as Abularach and Mérida certainly illustrate the successful resistance to North American culture. Within Latin America the rebirth of drawing, the increase of eroticism, and the nationalization of Pop Art are reactions against national cultural dependence on North America. However, the responses of artists in both style and content illustrate the perceptions of the elite and not of the masses.¹⁷

The fourth and fifth themes that surface in the works of Central American artists are Central American unity and the apolitical nature of art. That these themes are significant is an impression based on the evaluation of a large number of works. The motifs are difficult to document with specific illustrations. The common unity of Central America is revealed by the fact that its artists know one another and their works. Guatemalan artists are as likely to be exhibited in Honduras or El Salvador as in their own country. This theme parallels the common efforts at unity from the Audiencia of Guatemala through the Central American common market.

Except for the occasional nonconformist, the Central American artist, unlike the Mexican, has been satisfied to leave politics to the politician. The artist's lack of criticism of the government shows the nature of government and the limited amount of popular participation in the political system. Between 1960 and 1970, a few Central American artists moved from apolitical and theoretical discussions to outspoken militancy and true anguish over the problems of their society. However, in no way did the masses see the artists as proponents of justice or depicors of suffering. The public generally was both ignorant of the

artist's activities and distrustful of his elite status. In fact neither society nor the art critic encourages the artist to be political.¹⁸

Although the Central American artists have tended to be apolitical, the exceptions, generally found among Guatemalan artists, are revealing. About 1970, Guatemalan artists determined to condemn the actions of their government through a series of paintings. Roberto Cabrera, Efraín Recinos, and Elmar Rojas produced a series of water colors describing the machine gunning of a congressman in his home. Each painting, identically entitled "Fito Mirangos, Martir," depicted the crippled professor in his wheel chair surrounded by uniformed hoodlums. These mobsters represented the government personnel, whom it was believed had committed the crime.¹⁹

Although the political paintings of Central American artists are not common, it may be valid to conclude that increased social awareness has forced them to compromise their beliefs or go into exile. Whatever the political expression of artists, it remains too subtle for the masses, and artists appear to generally continue to reflect the apolitical nature of the mass of the society. The inclination to imitate North American styles that are not applicable to Latin American social problems, the dilemma of the Latin American artist within the class system, the nature of the Latin American public, and the aesthetic values of critics all encourage the Central American artist to depict apolitical subjects.²⁰

This examination of Central American prints and paintings suggests that art provides three insights for understanding Latin American society. Artists may directly write history through their art. They can also provide a valid picture of national customs, social and economic activities, and ways of life. Finally, they sometimes reveal general themes important for the understanding of Central America: the Mayan tradition, the agricultural economy, regional dependency, the common unity of Central America, and the apolitical outlook of the masses.

In his introduction to the 1973 exhibition at the Galeria de Forma, Rojas summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of art as a source for understanding Latin America:

Art is the product of the environment. The artist is one who bears in his eyes two great binoculars, windows sensitive to social reality. We cannot divorce ourselves from the people when we belong to them ourselves. We cannot, as responsible artists, forever express trends when we have the responsibility of an art for the people. Nevertheless, let us not be misled into thinking that artistic creation is only the reflection of life, the people or social content. It is talent, technique, expression, language, honesty, experience, sensitivity—all these ingredients go to make up a work of art.²¹

NOTES

1. "Los artistas son creadores de patria si saben comprender las penas y alegrías que hay en el alma del pueblo; si las interpretan en la línea, el color, la piedra o el barro, la música o el verbo. Si sienten y comprender el paisaje. Si lo eternizan." Joaquín García Monge, Costa Rican literary critic (1881–1958) was quoted in Luis Ferrero, *Arte Costarricense: grabados en madera de F. Zúñiga* (San José: Librería Imprenta y Litografía Lehmann, S.A., 1973), p. 15.
2. Roberto González Goyri, "Integración de las artes plásticas en el siglo XX en Guatemala," in *Arte Contemporáneo*, ed. Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez (Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1966), p. 99.
3. Pan American Union, *Esso Salon of Young Artists* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1965), pp. 15–16.
4. Daniel Robbins, "Folk Sculpture without Folk," in *Folk Sculpture USA*, ed. Herbert W. Hephill, Jr. (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1976), pp. 20–21. Also see in the same volume "A Sorting Process, the Artist as Collector: A Conversation between Sarah Faunce, Curator of Painting and Sculpture, the Brooklyn Museum, and Michael D. Hall, Sculptor," pp. 44–45.
5. Stanton Loomis Catlin, *Art of Latin America since Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 126.
6. Theodore K. Rabb, "Historian and the Art Historian," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1973):116.
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14. Dagoberto Vásquez C., "Medio siglo de arte Guatemalteco," in Alonso de Rodríguez, *Arte Contemporáneo*, pp. 11–14. Also see Lionel Mendez Dávila, *Arte vanguardia: Guatemala* (Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1969), pp. 14–15.
15. Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez, "En torno al arte Guatemalteco contemporáneo: los factores ambientales," *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 2, no. 3 (Sept. 1961):57–60.
16. Luis Mariñas Otero, *La pintura en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, 1959), pp. 5–9, 17.
17. Marta Traba, *Dos décadas vulnerables en las artes plásticas latinoamericanas* (Barcelona: Editoria Iberia, 1953), pp. 36–37, 49–51, 117–18, 154–71; and *Arte latinoamericano actual* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1972), pp. 109–10.
18. Traba, *Dos décadas*, pp. 98–99, 116–17, and *Arte latinoamericano*, pp. 53, 59–61, 114–15.
19. Selden Rodman, "Painting and Politics in Central America," *New Leader: American Labor Conference on International Affairs* (East Stroudsburg, Pa.) 54, no. 16, 9 (Aug. 1971):11.
20. Traba, *Arte latinoamericano*, pp. 39–59.
21. "El arte es producto del medio. El artista es el hombre que lleva en los ojos dos

grandes binoculares como ventanas sensibles a la realidad social. No podemos, como artistas conscientes, balbucear constantemente en corrientes foráneas cuando tenemos la responsabilidad de un arte para el pueblo. Sin embargo, no equivoquemos que la creación artística es solamente vivencia, pueblo y contenido social. Es talento, caligrafía, expresión, lenguaje, sinceridad, experiencia, sensibilidad, en fin lo que hacen los ingredientes de la obra plástica." Program introduction to the Elmar Romas exhibition held at the Galería Forma opening 25 July 1973.

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This annotated bibliography, partial rather than exhaustive, represents the major materials available on Central American painting for the era 1945 to 1975. It should be emphasized that the best material, other than general surveys, is found in Central American cultural journals, often government publications, or in catalogs of exhibitions. With a few exceptions, the material on Central American artists is weak, tending toward short laudatory articles with rather limited description and analysis of the artist's work. The most useful part of the articles is generally the illustrations, too often in black and white. There are, of course, a few exceptions. For Costa Rica, the articles by Jorge Losada, Rómulo Tovar, and Salarrué on Max Jiménez give the spirit and the sense of the artist's work. The monograph prepared by the Dirección General de Artes y Letras of Costa Rica surveys fairly Costa Rican art. For El Salvador, the October-November-December 1970 issue of *Cultura* on Noe Canjura seeks to provide some depth of analysis on the artist and his work. Ricardo Martel Caminos' article on Salarrué, Herodier's article on Carlos Cañas, and José Sanz y Diaz's article on Salvadoran painters seek to provide depth of analysis and breadth of understanding.

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- ORANTES, ALFONSO. "Dos épocas en un pintor." *Cultura* (Revista del Ministerio de Educación, El Salvador), no. 4 (jul.-ag. 1955):94–102.
- . "Noe Canjura: Inmortal." *Cultura* (Revista del Ministerio de Educación, El Salvador), no. 58 (oct.-nov.-dic. 1970):24–28.
- . "La pintura en el X Certamen Nacional de este Año." *Cultura* (Revista del Ministerio de Educación, El Salvador), no. 34 (oct.-nov.-dic. 1964):100–101. Discussion of exhibition with ten plates.
- "Pintores Salvadoreños." *Cultura* (Revista del Ministerio de Educación, El Salvador), no. 7 (enero-feb. 1956):86–94. Sixteen plates illustrate the work of various El Salvadoran artists.
- REYES, RAÚL ELÍAS. "Pintores de El Salvador: Noe Canjura." *La Universidad* (Universidad de El Salvador, San Salvador) 96, no. 4 (jul.-ag. 1971):125–34.
- SALAZAR, ANTONIO. "Noe Canjura." *Cultura* (Revista del Ministerio de Educación, El Salvador), no. 58 (oct.-nov.-dic. 1970):9–11. Notes that both the geography of the region where he was born and the Mexican school have influenced his work.
- SANZ Y DÍAZ, JOSÉ. "Pintores salvadoreños contemporáneos." *Ars* (Revista de la Dirección General de Bellas Artes, El Salvador), no. 8 (enero-dic. 1957):53–69. Notes, plates, and lengthy description of nine El Salvadoran modern painters with short comments on the works of another fifteen artists.

GUATEMALA

- ABASCAL, VALENTÍN. *Los artes plásticas en la escuela secundaria*. Guatemala: Editorial Escolar, "Piedra Santa," n.d. [1960]. A secondary text that includes a short section on Guatemalan art.
- "Acuarelas y dibujos de Carlos Mérida." *Contemporáneos* (México) 2, no. 38 (jul.-ag. 1931):80–86. Watercolors and drawings, no text.
- "Algunos juicios sobre la obra de Carlos Mérida." *Revista de Guatemala* (Guatemala) 1, no. 2 (oct.-nov.-dic. 1945). Fourteen plates of the work of Mérida from 1928–44.
- ALONSO DE RODRÍGUEZ, JOSEFINA. *Elmar Rojas*. Guatemala: Impreso Talleres Gráficos, "Examen," 1963. A short essay with nineteen black-and-white plates.
- . "Pintura Guatemalteca del siglo XX." *Arte Contemporáneo*, edited by Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez. Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1966, pp. 69–84. Emphasis on the institutional developments of art in Guatemala starting with the attempts of the government to establish schools and continuing with a discussion of those groups that have influenced Guatemalan art development in the twentieth century.
- . "En torno al arte Guatemalteco contemporáneo: los factores ambientales." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 2, no. 3 (set. 1961):57–70. An excellent article that argues that each country's art is influenced by the particular political, racial, religious, economic, and geographic climate of the nation.
- ALONSO DE RODRÍGUEZ, JOSEFINA (ED.). *Arte Contemporáneo*. Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1966. An excellent survey of contemporary Guatemalan art by a series of Guatemalan artists and critics.
- ALVARADO RUBIO, MARIO AND RODOLFO GALEOTTI TORRES. *Índice de pintura y escultura*. Guatemala: Unión Tipográfica (Ministerio de Educación Pública), 1946.

- APARACIO, ERNESTINA DE. "El arte guatemalteco en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York: I. Roberto Ossaye." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 1, no. 1 (feb. 1960):24–32.
- ARÉVALO MORALES, RAFAEL. *Apuntes sobre la vida y la obra de Alfredo Gálvez Suárez*. Guatemala: Festival Permanente de Cultura Antigua, 1971.
- "Art in Guatemala; Casual Survey of a Tourist." *Tidewater Art Review* (Norfolk) 7, no. 2 (1940):2–3, 10. Essay too general and contains little information on either Guatemala or art.
- BEALS, CARLETON. "Art of a Guatemalan Painter." *Arts and Decoration* (New York) 26, no. 5 (feb. 1927):63, 100. A useful short study on the early work of Carlos Mérida.
- BEANTRO, ISAAC. "Carlos Mérida: A Brief Analysis of His Works." *Mexican Life* (Mexico) 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1930):25–29.
- BRENNER, ANITA. "An Artist from the Maya County: Carlos Mérida." *International Studio* (New York) 83 (Apr. 1926):85–87.
- CABRERA, ROBERTO. "Carlos Mérida en la plástica latinoamericana—exposición homenaje." Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación, Dirección General de Cultura y Bellas Artes, 1971.
- . *El Grabado Guatemalteco*. Guatemala: Dirección General de Cultura y Bellas Artes, 1973. A short written history of Guatemalan engravings illustrated by a substantial number of plates. A good summary.
- . "Otras realidades." *Instituto Nacional de Electrificación de Guatemala*, no. 4 (oct.-nov.-dic. 1972), pp. 27–28.
- . "La pintura de Arturo Martínez como expresión plástica Guatemala." *Artes Plásticas* (Guatemala) (oct.-nov. 1970):2–12. Review of an exhibition in 1970 of work of Arturo Martínez with an introduction by Cabrera.
- CARDOZA Y ARAGÓN, LUIS. *La nube y el reloj: pintura mexicana contemporánea*. México: Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1940. Includes a chapter on Carlos Mérida.
- CASTELLANOS, J. HUMBERTO R. "Relación sintética del desarrollo del arte en Guatemala." *Boletín Museo Bibliográfica* (Guatemala), época 2, vol. 1, no. 2 (jul. 1941):73–92. Pre-twentieth century emphasis.
- CHINCHILLA AQUILAR, ERNESTO. *Historia del arte en Guatemala (1524–1962): arquitectura, pintura y escultura*. Guatemala: Centro Editorial José de Pineda Ibarra, Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1963. Strongest on architecture and sculpture with a good bibliography.
- CIFUENTES, JOSÉ LUIS. *Algunos pintores contemporáneos de Guatemala*. Guatemala: Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1956.
- CRESPO DE LA SERNA, JORGE JEAN. "El pintor Carlos Mérida." *Antorcha* (México) 2, no. 3 (oct. 1925):16–17.
- DARDON CÓRDOVA, GONZALO. *Series guatemaltecas en el campo de la humanidades 1886–1962*. Guatemala: Instituto Guatemalteco-Americano, 1962.
- DE LEÓN R., ZIPACNÁ. "Nuestro Camino." *Artes Plásticas*, no. 4 (jul.-ag. 1971):3–15. The black-and white plates are fine, the article has little substance.
- DÍAZ, VÍCTOR MIGUEL. *Las bellas artes en Guatemala*. Folletín del Diario de Centro América, Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1934. Much better on colonial and nineteenth-century art than twentieth; tends to discuss individuals rather than their works.
- GALEOTTI TORRES, J. RODOLFO. "Disertación de don J. Rodolfo Galeotti Torres al ser inaugurada su exposición de cuadros del Popol Buj, el sábado 23 de enero de 1937, en la sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala." *Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* 12 (1937), pp. 379–87.
- GÓMEZ-SICRE, JOSÉ. "Drawings at the PAU." *Américas* 11 (June 1959):22–25. Rodolfo Abularach represents Guatemala in this collection.
- GONZÁLEZ GOYRI, ÓSCAR. "Julio Urruela Vásquez." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 3, no. 3 (set. 1962):55–65. Discusses artist's main work of stained glass windows in the National Palace of Guatemala City.
- . "Rafael Rodríguez Padilla." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 13, no. 1 (marzo 1962): 55–65.
- GONZÁLEZ GOYRI, ROBERTO. "El arte guatemalteco en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York: IV Carlos Mérida." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 1, no. 4 (nov. 1960):50–64.

- . "El arte guatemalteco en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York: III Rodolfo Abularach." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 1, no. 3 (ag. 1960):43–56.
- . "Integración de las artes plásticas en el siglo XX en Guatemala." *Arte Contemporáneo*, edited by Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez, Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1966, pp. 93–101. Argues that the integration of arts—painting, sculpture, architecture—does not exist in twentieth-century Guatemala in the same sense as the Gothic cathedral because modern life is not integrated.
- GRAJEDA MENA, GUILLERMO. "La evolución del arte plástico en Guatemala." *Artes Plásticas* (Guatemala), no. 4 (jul.-ag. 1971):35–46. Short article that traces the historical development of the arts in Guatemala.
- . "Rafael Rodríguez Padilla, 1890–1929." *Artes Plásticas* (Guatemala), no. 6 (jul. 1973):19–23. Rather laudatory article.
- GUATEMALA. DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE CULTURA Y BELLAS ARTES. *El Diseño, la composición y la integración plástica de Carlos Mérida*. Guatemala: Organismo de Promoción Internacional de Cultura, 1966. In reality this is a catalog of an exhibition with a short introductory essay and black-and-white plates. Of particular use is the location of the murals done by Mérida between 1948 and 1965.
- GUATEMALA. MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA, DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE CULTURA Y BELLAS ARTES. *Pintores de Guatemala*, vol. 1, 1968. Includes thirty-one plates, twelve in color.
- IRIARTE, AUGUSTÍN F. "La pintura en Guatemala." *Ars* (México) 1, no. 5 (mayo 1942):9–20. Summary of Guatemalan pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern painting.
- MÉNDEZ DÁVILA, LIONEL. *Art in Latin America Today: Guatemala*. Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1966. An excellent short summary of Guatemalan art with emphasis on the twentieth century and seventy-six black-and-white illustrations.
- . *Arte vanguardia: Guatemala*. Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1969.
- MÉRIDA, CARLOS. "Art Interpretations." *Mexican Life* (México) 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1926):16–17.
- . "Carlos Valenti." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 2, no. 2 (mayo 1961):38–50. Valenti, who died at twenty-two, is seen as an important figure in the Guatemalan modern art movement. Of particular interest are the plates, since it is difficult to find examples of his work.
- . "Self-Portrait." *Américas* 2 (June 1950):25–27, 44–45. Mérida discusses his life, interests, and the reasons for his style of painting.
- NELKEN, MARGARITA. *Carlos Mérida*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1961. Although the author spends too much time trying to prove that Mérida is within the Mexican school and Mexican, the eighty-four plates redeem the work.
- NÚÑEZ DE RODAS, EDNA ISABEL. *El Grabado en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Talleres Litográficos del Instituto Geográfica Nacional, 1970. A thorough history of engraving in Guatemala from pre-Columbian to 1970. Includes footnotes, documents from the archives on engraving, and 128 black-and-white illustrations.
- "Obras de Mérida." *Contemporáneos* (México) 1, no. 6 (nov. 1928):266–71.
- ONTAÑÓN, MADA. "La pintura abstracta de Carlos Mérida." *Hoy*, no. 288 (ag. 1942):60–63.
- PARKER, HOWARD. "Las nuevas acuarelas de Carlos Mérida; Mérida's New Watercolors." *Mexican Folkways* (México) 7, no. 3 (jul.-set. 1932):148–53.
- RIVERA, WILLIAM M. "Rodolfo Abularach." *Américas* 12, no. 4 (Mar. 1960):32–34.
- ROJAS, ELMAR. *Oleos de Elmar Rojas*. Guatemala, n.d. [1964].
- "Sentir y pensar del artists." *Artes Plásticas* (Guatemala) (oct.-nov. 1970):18–24.
- UNIVERSIDAD DR. MARIANO GÁLVEZ. *Seminario sobre el maestro de artes plásticas en Guatemala*. Guatemala, 1972.
- VÁSQUEZ C., DAGOBERTO. "Medio siglo de arte guatemalteco." *Arte Contemporáneo*, edited by Josefina Alonso de Rodríguez, Guatemala: Universidad de San Carlos, 1966, pp. 9–17. Discusses various Guatemalan painters of significance in the 1950s, suggests two stages in contemporary Guatemalan painting—1900–1944 to the present, notes two parallel developments in Guatemalan art—one national-indigenous, the other international.
- VELÁZQUEZ, ALBERTO. "Semblanza de Miguel Arcángel de León." *SALON 13* (Guatemala) 3, no. 2 (jun. 1962):46–70.

- WARD, CONSTANCE ALLEN. "The Guatemalan Art Renaissance." *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* (Washington) 75, no. 5 (May 1941):282–90.
- WESTHEIM, PAUL. *La Obra de Carlos Mérida*. Guatemala: Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno/ Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Departamento de Artes Plásticas, Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1961. Short essay on Mérida, four colored plates plus thirty-six black-and-white ones.

HONDURAS

- ACOSTA, OSCAR (ED.). *Imágenes de Honduras*. Edición Extraordinaria, no. 74, año 7 (set. 1971). Tegucigalpa: Editorial Nuevo Continente, 1971. Chapters on various aspects of Honduras including a chapter on painting.
- AMIGHETTI, FRANCISCO. "La exposición del pintor hondureño Arturo López Rodezno." *Brecha*, año 3, no. 10 (jun. 1959):22–24. Although main discussion is on López Rodezno, he is compared with other artists of this century.
- CASTILLO, MARIO M. (ED.). *El Arte contemporáneo en Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Servicio de Información de los Estados Unidos de América, 1968. Includes biographies and illustrations of seventeen artists, with seventeen colored plates; excellent introduction to contemporary art of Honduras.
- LARA CERRATO, FAUSTO. *Aspectos culturales de Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Tipografía Nacional, 1951. Very limited material on art.
- LUARCA, FRANCISCO. "Pablo Zelaya pintor hondureño." *Repertorio Americano* 33 (26 jun. 1937):386.
- MARIÑAS OTERO, LUIS. *La pintura en Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Departamento de Extensión Universitaria, 1959. Satisfactory survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art in Honduras.
- SÁNCHEZ, PASTOR EDGARDO. "Historia del arte en Honduras." Tesis escuela superior del profesorado "Francisco Morazán," departamento de formación docente sección de ciencias sociales, Tegucigalpa, D.C., 1967. For the twentieth century, heavily dependent upon Luis Marinas Otero.
- SÁNCHEZ, ROBERTO M. (ED.). *Arte: órgano de divulgación de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes*. Tegucigalpa: Imprenta Calderón, 1972. Of most interest in this collection of articles is the one by Pablo Zelaya Sierra, which is concerned with the three groups of artists that are the basis of a modern school of art.
- ZEPEDA, MARIANA. "Galería de arte del Instituto Hondureño de Cultura Interamericana—su primera década, 1961–1971." Tegucigalpa: Imprenta Calderón, 1971. A pamphlet that includes biographies of various artists.

NICARAGUA

- BEALS, CARLETON AND REBECCA KAYE. "The New Genre of Robert de la Selva." *Mexican Life* (Aug. 1934), pp. 28–30. Illustration of the artist's work with emphasis on the Mexican influence.
- COMPTON, GEORGE D. "A Word with Armando Morales." *Américas* 9, no. 6 (June 1957):17.
- CUADRA, PABLO ANTONIO. *Nueve pintores nicaraguenses*. Madrid, 1974. A catalog of an exhibition of nine Nicaraguan painters presented in Spain in 1974 by the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica and the Spanish Embassy of Nicaragua. Included among the artists are Alejandro Aróstigui, Omar D'Leon Lacayo, and Orlando Sabalvarro.
- . "Nicaragua's New Artists." *Américas* 6, no. 2 (Feb. 1954):16–19. Discussion of nine Nicaraguan artists with illustrations of their work.
- GÓMEZ-SICRE, JOSÉ. "Embroidery in Oils: Asilia Guillén of Nicaragua." *Américas* 14, no. 10 (Oct. 1962):17–20. An illustrated article that discusses this primitivist change in media from embroidery to oil.
- PENALVA, A. "La pintura en Nicaragua." *Américas*, Revista de la Asociación de Escritores y Artistas Americanos-La Habana (set. 1939), pp. 19–21. This weak, general article comments on colonial, nineteenth-century, and twentieth-century artists.