

## Before

The inherent nature of muralism might lead one to assume that this would bring little to the art market, due to the immovability of the work. This was art that was not created to be sold, but to broadcast a new political stance and bring power back to the Mexican people. However, despite this, muralism was the movement which allowed Mexican artists to be introduced into a more global art market. 'By the mid-1920s, interest in Mexico was growing abroad among artists, photographers and writers'.<sup>1</sup> The art scene that now occupied Mexico was seen to be as vibrant and exciting. Bold shapes and colours were being used to convey Pre-Colombian roots and aesthetics, and soon wealthy Americans began to commission the muralist artists to create similar works in the United States. This is to some extent an ironic outcome as the idea of muralism was that it was meant to be art to be shared with the people. Furthermore, the nationalist themes that were both expected and welcomed in Mexico, were often a cause for outcry in the US. Indeed, Rivera was commissioned by the Rockefellers to create a mural entitled *Man at the Crossroads* at the Rockefeller Centre in Manhattan.<sup>2</sup> Rivera's vision, which included an image of Lenin, was denounced at Communist and quickly destroyed, but not before sparking outrage amongst Rockefeller family and the American public.<sup>3</sup> Later, Rivera recreated a smaller version in Mexico City, and renamed it *Man, Creator of the Universe*.

Despite some such setbacks, there were often exhibitions shown in the US of the muralists work. In order to supplement their income from the government, many muralists also produced easel paintings and drawings to sell. Rivera was prolific in this sense and 'it is said that he created some 3000 oil paintings and about 25,000 drawings'.<sup>4</sup> These were mostly scenes of Mexican life, which would have been appealing and accessible to his public, although they did still carry an undercurrent of

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Riding, "Mexico: A Revolution In Art", *RA Magazine*, 2013  
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<sup>2</sup> Diego Rivera, *Man At The Crossroads/Man, Creator Of The Universe* (Mexico City: Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1934).

<sup>3</sup> Allison Keyes, "Destroyed By Rockefeller, Mural Trespassed On Political Vision", *Art And Design*, 2014  
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<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Forgey, "At The Vortex Of Art &", *The Washington Post*, 1986  
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his politically charged views. This work through other mediums was indeed helpful when it came to showcasing Rivera's work in exhibitions across the US. Even though it were his murals which had made him famous, he had now paved a way to be known as one of the most in demand Mexican artists of the time. Indeed, his international success became clear when 'Rivera became only the second artist, after Henri Matisse, to be granted a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, muralism can be seen as the catalyst for getting Mexican artists recognised on a global scale, and it has been suggested that 'for the first time in its history Latin American art can be said to have dramatically altered the history of Western art'.<sup>6</sup> Artists came from all over Europe and the US to study Mexican muralism and this can be seen as laying the foundations for a Mexican art market.

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<sup>5</sup> "Diego Rivera — Artist, Revolutionary, Storyteller", *Christie's*, 2018  
<<https://www.christies.com/features/Diego-Rivera-Artist-revolutionary-storyteller-9521-1.aspx>> [Accessed 18 March 2019].

<sup>6</sup> "Latin American Art - Postindependence, C. 1820–The Present", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2019  
<<https://www.britannica.com/art/Latin-American-art/Postindependence-c-1820-the-present>> [Accessed 18 March 2019].

## With track changes

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## After (clean copy)

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