

Interesting Display Of Mexican Art Now At Michael's

**Siqueiros, Orozco and
Riviera Paintings
Comprise Exhibition**

By JEAN CHARLOT

The exhibition of Mexican art now current at Michael Bros., is a group show of the work of three painters, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Clemente Orozco and Diego Rivera, whose names are better known on this side of the Rio Grande than those of their companions.

They are part of a movement known as the Mexican Renaissance, that started circa 1920 as a new social order began to take shape out of the turmoil and anarchy of the military stage of the revolution.

Both Orozco and Siqueiros took an active part in it before putting what they had seen and felt into paint. The subject matter of their pictures that seems strange, violent or forbidding to Athenians, is very close to the Mexico torn by civil war that they had known.

In his "Ethnography" Siqueiros mixes together the body of a modern Indian peasant and the head of an Aztec mask, illustrating the way in which the ancestral instincts of the Indian rose to the surface, as stark and fierce as in pre-Spanish days, to become one of the guiding forces of modern Mexico. In his "Peace" Orozco represents the aftermath of the revolt, groups of people still exhausted by the effort, too tired to

(Continued on Page Three)

Interesting Display Of Mexican Art Now At Michael's

(Continued From Page One)

start the reconstruction, but pervaded with the blessings of a new found peace.

Story of Rivera

The story of Rivera is somewhat different. He was in Paris while the revolution raged, engrossed in technical researches with the group of Parisian cubist painters. He rose to some eminence as a member of the School of Paris until the call of his "patria," his home land, urged him to return. His "Offering" represents children hidden in a jungle of cactus and maguey plants, arranging a toy altar with paper streamers and food offerings as their elders are wont to do, one knows not if for God or for their ancient gods. Underlying the naive appearance of the work, the geometric basis of the cubist discipline is perceived in the circular arrangement of leaves that describes an oval within the square of the picture.

At its best, the renaissance featured group work rather than any individual artist, as had the guilds of painters of the Middle Ages that decorated anonymously the great Gothic cathedrals. It was an active protest against the Parisian system that featured the individual only and confused greatness with originality. This group work found its best expression in mural painting that has always been the natural outlet for collective effort since the days of Byzantine mosaics. Public walls gave to the artist the masses of men that had found in the revolution for his public. It was a more satisfying channel for what he had to say than easel painting, that addresses itself only to the wealthy few.

Ancient Techniques

As the oil medium is not the best for murals, Mexican artists resurrected ancient techniques that best fitted their new needs. One was encaustic or painting in wax, the favorite medium of Greek and Roman antiquity, where the pigment is applied melted with the help of a blow torch, and solidifies as it cools. The picture by Rivera in this show is done in this medium. Another technique revived by the Mexicans was that of fresco, with which Athenians are more familiar — having the fresco in front of the Fine Arts Building and others. As such medium does not lend itself easily to easel pictures, none is included in this show, but many of the exhibits are connected with it: the oil painting by Orozco, his lithograph "Three Generations," three lithographs by Rivera, "Boy Eating," "Open Air School," "Japata", are small replicas of details of their large frescos in Mexico City and in Cuernavaca.

A thorough representation of the work of these artists can be seen only in Mexico on the walls of buildings such as the Escuela Preparatoria, the Ministry of Education. But something of the monumental quality of their art can be felt nevertheless in these examples.

Looking at Mexican art is not only to acquire a timely knowledge of what our 'good neighbors' are doing, but helps us understand the striking development of mural painting within these last years in the United States. General critical opinion admits that our own country owes much to Mexico in regard to its mural development, not only for the fact that walls are being painted, but in regard to style as well.