

OROZCO, JOSÉ CLEMENTE, social-protest painter whose frescoes ushered in the Mexican mural renaissance of the 1920s; b. Zapotlan, Jalisco, Mexico, Nov. 23, 1883; d. Mexico City, Sept. 7, 1949. After graduating in agricultural engineering, and training in architecture, he turned to art, studying at San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts. Unable to bear arms because of a childhood accident in which he had lost his left hand, he was active as a political cartoonist during the 1910 revolution and followed President Carranza into exile in Vera Cruz. In return, Carranza commissioned his monumental painting, "The Last Spanish Troops on Mexican Soil Surrender at San Juan de Ulua," which



José Clemente Orozco, "The Martyrdom of St. Stephen," oil on canvas.

initiated the mural revival (*see* FRESCO). From 1922, when he began his decorations at the National Preparatory School, Mexico City, he never lacked commissions, most of them on a gigantic scale. In the U.S., 1927-32, he produced much-discussed murals at Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.; Pomona College, Claremont, Calif.; and the New School for Social Research, New York City.

While his strongly dynamic style may suggest superficial affinities with German *expressionism, his cartooning experience accounts sufficiently for the boldness of his distortions. An avowed freethinker opposed to all established order, and preoccupied with Marxist social goals, he never stopped to please either political friends or aesthetic foes. His frescoes in praise of St. Francis of Assisi were painted on public walls and paid for by a government actively engaged in persecuting the Church, and his Golgothas and Martyrdoms equal those of the Catholic *Rouault in spiritual content.

See also LATIN AMERICA, ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN.

Bibliography: J. C. OROZCO, *An Autobiography*, tr. R. C. STEPHENSON (Austin, Tex. 1962). A. REED, *Orozco* (New York 1956). L. CARDOZA Y ARAGON, *Orozco* (Mexico City 1959).

[J. CHARLOT]

NOTE:

After receiving the galleys in 1965, Charlot wrote the editors:

The two opening lines of the Orozco article are surely not mine and do not sum up truthfully the article that follows. If my name is to appear with the article it is imperative that the following wording be used:

OROZCO, Jose Clemente, social-protest painter whose frescoes contributed essentially to the Mexican mural renaissance...

From a draft in the Jean Charlot Collection.