

PRESS RELEASE



# Diego Rivera and His Contemporaries

October 21 — December 10, 2017

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, SAITAMA / JAPAN

Exhibition: Diego Rivera and His Contemporaries  
Venue: The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama  
Location: 9-30-1 Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi, 330-0061, Japan  
Dates: October 21 — December 10, 2017  
Press contact: [kouhou@aria.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:kouhou@aria.ocn.ne.jp)  
Tel. 048-824-0111 Fax. 048-824-0118  
<http://www.pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

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*This exhibition is organized by THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, SAITAMA, LA SECRETARIA DE CULTURA / INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES Y LITERATURA, THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN and THE JAPAN ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUMS.*

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## ■ EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

In the post-revolutionary period of the 1920s and 30s, Mexican art evolved in a unique manner, flourishing and attracting attention from around the world. No discussion of this history would be complete without mention of the painter Diego Rivera (1886–1957). Blessed with artistic talent, Rivera began attending art school at the age of ten. In 1907 he went to study in Europe, where he experimented with the latest styles such as Cubism and met Pablo Picasso. Upon returning home in 1921 he turned his attention to developments in Mexican society, becoming actively involved in the Mexican mural movement. Rivera also left behind a large number of fine portraits and genre paintings incorporating themes peculiar to Mexico.

Organized in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBA), this exhibition traces Rivera's career from beginning to end through around 30 works including paintings, drawings and prints. In addition, it looks back at the dreams upheld by Mexican modern art by introducing José María Velasco, one of the pioneers of Mexican modern painting and a teacher of Rivera's, a variety of contemporaneous Mexican art movements, and Japanese artists such as Tsuguharu (Léonard) Foujita and Tamiji Kitagawa who had connections with Rivera.

## ■ THE EXHIBITION IS COMPOSED OF EIGHT SECTIONS:

### **1. Prologue**

In the first of these sections are introduced Mexican artists on the previous generation who influenced Diego Rivera: José María Velasco, José Guadalupe Posada, Gerardo Murillo/Dr. Atl, and so on. Diego Rivera's early works depicting Mexican landscapes are also exhibited in the section.

### **2. Diego Rivera in Europe**

The second section is devoted to the works Diego Rivera had created during staying in Europe between 1907 and 1921. These works show how he absorbed and reacted upon European latest styles of Impressionism, Post-impressionism, Symbolism and Cubism. In Paris, he met many foreign artists such as Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian and Tsuguharu (Léonard) Foujita. On the other hand, he became interested in and influenced by European old masters such as El Greco.

### **3. Murals**

After Diego Rivera visited Italian cities in 1920, the following year he came back to Mexico. Then he started on creating murals in 1922. This section refers to Diego Rivera's murals in Mexico. While his paintings related to his murals are exhibited, some of his important murals are introduced through Tina Modotti's photographs and some other photographic documentation. The section also includes the works of David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco known as other famous muralists.

### **4. Open-Air Painting Schools / Art Education / Folk Art**

Open Air Painting Schools which Alfredo Ramos Martínez established were unique institution. The drawing method Adolfo Best Maugard created based on the folk art tradition was also influential to artistic teaching. Both played quite important roles in the educational system, which promoted the appearance of unusual artists in 1920's and 1930's in Mexico. The forth section deals with this movement, featuring a Japanese artist, Tamiji Kitagawa involved in the context of Open Air Painting Schools

### **5. Mexico's Avant-garde – from Estridentismo to i30-30!**

The fifth section presents Mexico's avant-garde movements in 1920's and the early 1930's, referring to Estridentismo and the i30-30! group. Estridentismo was a literary movement centering around Manuel Maples Arce and German List Arzubide, which attracted some plastic artists like Jean Charlot, Ramón Alva de la Canal and Fermín Revueltas. Inspired by Italian Futurism and Spanish Ultraism, they were in sympathy with the urbanized modern culture.

Some artists related with Estridentismo formed another avant-garde group, i30-30!, which criticized the conservative institutions and academism through the manifestations. Tamiji Kitagawa also joined this group.

## **6. Diego Rivera and Japanese Artists**

This section refers to Japanese artists having relationship with Diego Rivera. For example, Tsuguharu (Léonard) Foujita went to Paris in 1913 and had met Rivera there, posing for Rivera's painting. He also traveled through Latin American countries in 1930's and stayed in Mexico between 1932 and 1933. The section also includes the works by Tamiji Kitagawa and Isamu Noguchi who had acquaintance with Rivera.

## **7. Portraits**

The portrait genre was one of the important themes for Diego Rivera. He made a lot of portraits in his life: friends, lovers, wives, historic figures and patrons. The portraits of Rivera reflected the essential character of his models sometimes through the exaggeration of physical traits and at other times by using attributes to identify the models. This section presents the several selected portraits by Rivera together with the portraits by a few other artists.

## **8. Universality and Diversity**

The eighth section covers the universality and diversity of Mexico's modern art, which was contrasted with the nationalistic muralist movement. There were the artists who inclined toward aestheticism, irrationality, unconsciousness and sexual diversity. It includes not only the artists associated with the literary circle, *Contemporáneos* but also the artists involved in the international avant-garde movement, Surrealism. This section deals with the cosmopolitan perspective which can be seen in Mexican modern art.

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*Diego Rivera and His Contemporaries* includes artworks by **Diego Rivera, Ramón Alva de la Canal, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Abraham Ángel, Adolfo Best Maugard, Jean Charlot, Joaquín Clausell, Francisco Díaz de León, Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, Tsuguharu (Léonard ) Foujita, María Izquierdo, Frida Kahlo, Tamiji Kitagawa, Agustín Lazo, Fernando Leal, Amador Lugo, Tina Modotti, Gerardo Murillo (Dr. Atl), Isamu Noguchi, Juan O'Gorman, José Clemente Orozco, Carlos Orozco Romero, José Guadalupe Posada, Alfredo Ramos Martínez, Fermín Revueltas, Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rufino Tamayo, Francisco de la Torre, José María Velasco, and Edward Weston.**

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## ■ EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAM

### Lecture

'Interstices of Modernity in Mexico' by **Magdalena Zavala Bonachea**

Date: October 22, 15:00~16:30 pm

Magdalena Zavala Bonachea (Coordinadora Nacional De Artes Visuales, Instituto Nacional De Bellas Artes) is co-curator of this exhibition.

### Symposium

Museum College: Mexico and Art of the 20th Century

- ① October 28, 15:00~16:30 pm      **Itaru Hirano**
- ② November 4, 15:00~16:30 pm      **Toshino Iguchi**
- ③ November 11, 15:00~16:30 pm      **Masayuki Tanaka**
- ④ December 2, 15:00~16:30 pm      **Zara-Papp Zilia**

### Curator's Gallery Talk

- ① November 18, 15:00~15:30 pm
- ② November 25, 15:00~15:30 pm

## ■ EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A illustrated catalogue with c.214-pages accompanies the exhibition of *Diego Rivera and His Contemporaries*. The publication features a lead essay by Magdalena Zavala Bonachea (exhibition co-curator) and contributions by Itaru Hirano and Hisako Okoshi (exhibition curators) .

## ■ ADMISSION FEE

Adults: 1,200 yen

High school and university students: 960 yen

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