Pan-Americanism and the Art of Diego Rivera

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San Francisco Museum of Modern Art



The Marriage of the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on this Continent (Pan American Unity),

Diego Rivera, 1940

- o "Western Hemispheric solidarity in relation to social, economic, cultural, and political issues."
- Earliest roots in the philosophy and independence efforts of Simón Bolívar (El Libertador)
- oEvolved from emphasis on Latin American unity to a U.S.-dominated reality in the Americas
- o Monroe Doctrine (1823)
- o "Good Neighbor Policy" (1933)
- Increased solidarity during and after WWII, punctuated by U.S. efforts to control Latin American governments

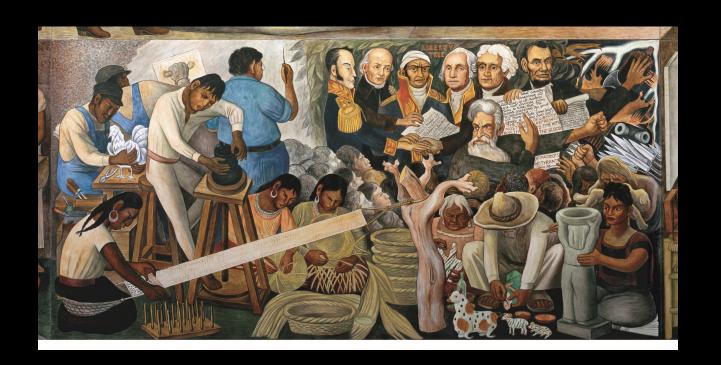
What is Pan Americanism?

- Art's role in "basic human needs"
- o"Keeps alive man's desire for independence, freedom, and resistance"
- Artistic works of the Americas "the work of free men, endowed with extraordinary vitality"
- O Usefulness of art in cultivating Pan American unity, "a democracy that will put an end to semicolonial goals, imperialist pride and abuses, racial discrimination, and national divisions"

Rivera on Pan Americanism in Art

- Move from cubism in his early career towards Mexican folk art traditions
- oRivera co-authored (with Andre Breton and Leon Trotsky) "Towards a Free Revolutionary Art" in 1938
- ORadical art in SF, partly facilitated by earlier Rivera residency
- Victor Arnautoff and Bernard Zackheim
- Chinese Revolutionary Artists' Club
- Mine Okubo
- Rivera contending with inter-Communist politics
- Alliance, and later break, with Trotsky (assassinated just after Rivera comes to SF)
- "Communist revolution leads only to totalitarian dictatorship," "Democracy is the only way." (Sep. 1940)

Political Context of Pan American Unity



Pan Americanism in the *Pan American Unity* mural



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