Diego Rivera

I chose to write about a famous painter from Guanajuato, Mexico, Diego Rivera, because from what I researched of him it looks like he had made quite an impact on the society of Mexico in his time. He was one of the leading artists during the 20th century, so clearly, his artwork was of great importance to many people. Also, I specifically chose to look at his art piece known as “Creation”, a mural done at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria.

Rivera was born December the 8th 1886 in Guanajuato, Mexico. He passed away at 71 years old on November the 24th 1957 in Mexico City due to heart failure. Leading up to this he also suffered from complications to do with his cancer treatments. Before he became a famous artist he attended San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts located in Mexico. When he got to the age of 31 (in 1917) he traveled to Europe, following his passions of pursuing arts even further. His first influence as an artist was José Posada. His other influences included Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Georges Braque. Rivera always had a certain type of artwork that he knew he wanted to make. He was mostly interested in creating paintings that represented the lives of working class people and the native people of Mexico. Upon returning to Mexico, Rivera’s dream for making that kind art came true. He had received government funding to paint a series of murals on various building, which were the subject of the country’s people and history . The specific mural that I chose to research was the first of him murals to be completed… In 1922 the “Creation” was finished at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in Mexico City.

The creation was done at the “Escuela Nacional Preparatoria”, which was one of the biggest senior high schools in Mexico of it’s time, when it opened in 1868. Because of the location that was chosen for this mural it was aimed to inspire and teach soon to be young adults finishing high school and going out into the world on their own. It was created to show that it was okay to have your own opinion. In high school kids can be insecure and tend to sway their feelings and thoughts with what everyone else is doing, “following the crowd”. It can be scary to have a mind of your own especially when certain people with a strong opinion on one side bash the opinions opposite to theirs. This mural shows to opposite opinions and both opinions were blessed in the same way and are equal, showing it is okay for everyone to have an opinion, we’re all human.

All of rivera’s paintings greatly represented culture and his country’s society, so all his art was similar in that aspect. However, the rest of his murals aren’t as similar to the “Creation” as they are with each other. The mural was very popular but Rivera didn't care for it. He thought it showed too much of an Italian look and technique than what he would’ve liked. The Creation was the first of his series of murals so the style of the rest changed to how he liked after that one.

My reflection of the mural is that, like it is called, it is simply symbolizing the “creation” of our world. In the painting… At the top there’s a symbol, which is believed to represent divine and trinity with blessing hands, which is presenting to us our God and our Gods (the father, the son, and the holy spirit). This symbol also has a resemblance to the creative sun symbol, of old Egyptian iconography of Aton. Aton is a sun god who is known as the solar disk beaming rays terminating in human hands. At one time Aton was thought to be the only God and he rebuilt life, races, and nature, etc.

Adam and Even are also in this painting. The story of Adam and Eve follow the belief that God was our creator. They are believed to be the first man and woman.

On the left and right side of the mural you see the nine Muses. On either side you also see the Christian virtues. On the left there’s Love, Hope and Faith. On the right side there’s Prudence, Justice, and Strength. In the sky, inside the symbol at the top, is supposed to represent wisdom and science. All of these different symbols in the mural represent the beginning and creation of life, in all different aspects. Because it’s shown from the science aspect, as well as religions many people can appreciate it.

The Creation shows that in that time (1920s) the people of Mexico were more into spiritualism than politics, more so than other countries are. It could also be that the people were sick of all the politics because they were just coming out of the Mexican Civil War (1910-1920). However, I believe that it really shows how much spiritualism their culture has.

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