

Las Paredes Oyen English Transcript

1. Introduction:

For Lucienne Bloch Who saved the mural

2. Beginning Titles:

In 1933 Mexican artist Diego Rivera was commissioned to create a mural in the grand lobby of Rockefeller Center. Diego Rivera, was trying to say something and he was abruptly interrupted. The mural was destroyed.

3. Juan Coronel Rivera:

My complete name is Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, and I am Diego Rivera's grandson. The mural in a sense is actually divided in two pieces. It is the communist world that was developed in peace, trying to make some laws for protection of the workers and the other side we have the capitalism with the wars, with invasions and the science working for the development of machine guns, and armament in general.

4. Laura González:

The mural is important in our understanding of the positive ways in which Rivera was viewing both technology and Marxist thought.

5. Gabriel Figueroa Flores:

Its very difficult to for any visual artist to represent what human consciousness means

6. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

What would those people tell each other about the situation today?

7. Lucienne Allen:

He came in and he said, Stop Work! And he was wearing plain cloths. Immediately when they saw him in plain cloths they were taken aback. So then he says stop work and he says we've been told to stop work and then he explained to them, he says and she was, my grandmother was really upset. She just thought this was awful. And he put his arm around her shoulder and he says. He said, "Now the Battle Begins".

8. Juan Coronel Rivera:

When the Rockefeller family hire a communist artist obviously the result of whatever you are going to get is a communist painting.

9. Lucienne Allen:

It was when a lady came into take photographs for a newspaper article and she made a big deal about it, and he said well you're going to make a big deal about it, well let me just put him right front and center then.

10. Juan Coronel Rivera:

The Rockefeller family, especially Abby, she knew that Lenin was going to be in the mural. And there are some scholars that also state that maybe she was the one who says to Diego that she wants Lenin in the mural.

11. Lucienne Allen:

And of course she really didn't believe that anything would happen to the mural. It was covered, that was bad enough but about a year later when she and my grandfather were, I think they were coming home from a movie, and they decided they would go by, jus to check out the old place, and they walked past these 55 gallon drums and they looked inside and there was the mural, in pieces.

12. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

In general it seemed to be unconstitutional to destroy the work of art, because it goes against the first amendment, which is the primary communicative right, guaranteed by the constitution.

13. Juan Coronel Rivera:

If you are doing a mural in the most important point, of the most important city, of the most powerful nation, obviously the American government was involved in the complete concept of all the structure of the Rockefeller Center. This was not just a rich man trying to develop a landmark in New York. This was part of the complete idea of the country as the United States developed.

14. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

If I was Rockefeller I would say alright I trust the artist I ask the artist to unleash all of his passion and mind, put together a project which may go beyond my imagination, even if I disagree some aspects of it, I should embrace it, because maybe in that disagreement will be the greatest, deepest value of it.

15. Juan Coronel Rivera:

The first thing that we have seen in this mural is that the mural of the Rockefeller Center is not a mural related to Mexico. This is a mural related to the United States. And its what Diego established there, it is the science, the universe, and the myth of man.

16. Gabriel Figueroa Flores:

Its very difficult to for any visual artist to represent what human consciousness means or caring for the other or compassion for the other and maybe it was more appropriate at that time when scientists and all these new technologies, communication technologies were discovered and developed to portray that as a hope for human kind to become a better human kind.

17. Laura González:

In this mural there is an interesting dialectic between the symbols, like masses and women and technology, have like almost these feminine passive quality and man and his instruments and theory and war are like more of an active masculine quality.

18. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

It is clearly quite admirable project because it is so complex, because it has so many elements that seem to be irreconcilable. The viewer is in crossroads, not only man in crossroads.

19. Juan Coronel Rivera:

Yes its too crowded but that was his style. If we see it in sections there some portraits that are masterpieces, there are some heads so strongly well painted that its amazing how he can develop how he can develop all the states of being of the humanity.

20. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

So its difficult to say exactly what would happen today with the equivalent of this mural, not the same mural, but a mural that would have, lets say similarly controversial figures and ideas and or attributes in it.

21. Juan Coronel Rivera:

If Diego has to develop this mural again, he will, I think, he should not put an Anglo Saxon person, as the leading control of the machine, he should put something from Latin America, because right now the complete social structure is changing and you can notice this everywhere.

22. Noam Chomsky:

There are two fundamental respects in which Latin America has to work towards integration, both of them residues of the colonial conquests and the aftermath. One is that the countries have been separated from one another. I mean it's even true of transport systems and so on, very little interrelation among them. Furthermore there is an internal dichotomy, a very sharp dichotomy,

one of the worst in the world, between quite small, very wealthy, mostly Europeanized, often white elite, on the one hand, and amass of the population, sometimes with extreme poverty.

23. Gabriel Figueroa Flores:

When a nation becomes so powerful as the United States are at the moment. The real concern is not about others, the real concern is about themselves and how they can acquire more power. I think, to me, its really stupid how the most powerful nation in the world cannot make a migrant treaty with his neighbor.

24. Noam Chomsky:

The problem of, the question of immigration is a complex one, but it cannot be looked at, seriously, in isolation. There's a reason why migration's coming from south to north not from north to south. And now the Clinton's Operation Gate Keeper has now been expanded to a wall.

Immigration from south to north is not only Mexicans. But also many people fleeing from the devastation, caused by the US terrorist wars in Central America in the 1980s which practically destroyed four countries, killed hundreds of thousands of people and led to economies that can barely survive, without remittances from the north

25. Gabriel Figueroa Flores:

I think that whatever the next step of humanity should be, it should be by re- looking at the essence of the Renaissance to see again through the man, not through economics, or armaments or oil, we have to see again through the soul of humanity otherwise we are going to become extinct and that's a fact, its happening.

26. Krzysztof Wodiczko:

So man in the crossroad today is maybe the one who is trying to figure out how to deconstruct in a daily work, in a daily life, in various forms of micro resistances and refusals, or seeking conditions for more dynamic discourses how to make better the world in which we live.

27. End Titles:

2008 marks the 75th anniversary of the censorship of Diego Rivera's Rockefeller Center mural. This vision to propose an ethical future for the world is more relevant than ever.

28. SPECIAL THANKS

Luciana Pereira

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