
La muerte en el impreso mexicano

Report by: Christina MacSweeney

Images of Death in Mexican Prints is a work which will greatly appeal to any reader interested in Mexican history and art. The text is composed of a 5,000-word essay and 387 monochrome and colour prints which chart the development of the 'calavera' tradition (images and text associated with death and skeletons) in Mexican prints from the 18th century to the 1960s. The bilingual essay (Spanish/English) which accompanies the text is both readable and informative and Dechant's English translation is admirable. However, the work centres on the prints themselves, which are beautifully reproduced, allowing the reader the possibility of scrutinising every detail. The works of an extremely wide variety of print artists are included, going well beyond the Posada images which may be familiar to many. Through the scenes depicted here, readers can follow the course of Mexican history and politics as well as developments in print technology. The influences of artistic movements such as Symbolism, Cubism, Surrealism and Constructivism can be traced in the changing styles of the artwork and, since many of these images originally appeared in satirical broadsheets and magazines, there is also a great deal of humour to be found in this text.

This fascinating book provides a thoroughly-researched picture of Mexican life over two hundred years: it is Mexico as the Mexicans themselves see it and thus gives a wonderful insight into the psychology of the people's of that nation.

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