

Abstract

The thesis *Motifs of Pre-Columbian America in Muralism* focuses on Pre-Columbian motifs in the work of three representatives of Mexican muralism – Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Muralism is an art movement that is based on monumental painting with clearly defined social and educational function. It started to develop within an initiative of the post-revolutionary Mexican government, in the 1920s. Gradually, it gained international fame and today it is widely regarded as a uniquely Mexican style of art. An integral part of the muralist imagery form scenes from the life of Pre-Columbian cultures. The main objective of this thesis is to analyse these scenes, to identify the origin of particular motifs, their original meanings, and the new meanings they demonstrate in the context of the murals. The work also reflects where and how muralists acquired knowledge about Mesoamerican civilizations and focuses on analysing the nature of the overall image of the Pre-Columbian past they created within their murals. The work seeks to clarify the question of how specifically the muralist approach to Pre-Columbian cultures was innovative in comparison to previous tendencies in Mexican art. The paper uses qualitative methods of analysis of the available written sources and analysis of visual materials. The methodology in this work is based on iconography, postcolonial studies and visual studies.

Key words

muralisms, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexican art, Mexican Revolution, avant-garde, Pre-Columbian motifs, Pre-Columbian art, native cultures, indigenism, Aztecs, Mesoamerica, iconography, postcolonial studies, visual studies