CELEBRATED ARTISTS AND POLITICAL NIGHTMARES:

Carl Zigrosser and a Reconsideration of the Enormous Vogue of Things
Mexican, 1920-1945

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ABSTRACT

Following the Mexican Revolution's end in 1920, the United States became increasingly fascinated with Mexican culture and its exotic revolutionary artists. The enormous vogue of things Mexican lasted until 1945 and the end of World War II. This vogue, however, describes only one of the many sides of the intricate relationship between the United States and Mexico. The political relationship between the two countries was very complicated during the decades following the Mexican Revolution. Mexico sought redefinition and assertion on the international stage. The United States was trying to determine its role in relation to Mexico. Both countries were in a constant state of flux in relation to the other; there were moments of great closeness and others of great tension. The political atmosphere of the time possessed an incredible amount of influence on the cultural vogue. Mexico and the United States' internal politics and their political practices with regard to each other both allowed the vogue to exist and dictated the manner in which the vogue progressed. Carl Zigrosser founded and directed the Weyhe Gallery, a small art gallery that became grew to prominence in the vogue, from 1919-1940, and then became Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Through Carl Zigrosser, the enormous vogue of things Mexican can be seen in a much more intimate manner. This thesis will use Carl Zigrosser and his correspondence with many individuals who were associated with the enormous vogue of things Mexican to illustrate that, whether intentional or not, political actions during this time had significant cultural implications.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the relationship between Mexico and the United States in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, from the 1920s through the 1944 José Guadalupe Posada show at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA). It focuses specifically on the collecting practices of Carl Zigrosser, an eminent figure in the Mexican art scene in the United States who was active throughout this era. Initially, Zigrosser ran the Weyhe Gallery, one of the premier art galleries of the 1920s and 1930s in New York City, and then moved to Philadelphia in 1940 to become the Curator of the Prints and Drawings Department at the PMA. In this latter capacity, Zigrosser acquired the majority of the Prints and Drawings collection through purchases and donations, including a significant amount of donations from Zigrosser's own private collection during and after his tenure. This collection has an incredible amount of Mexican art, making it a fascinating and understudied source of archival material on art collecting during the "enormous vogue of things Mexican" that became a fad in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s.

While my discovery of Carl Zigrosser and his role in the vogue of things Mexican took me away from my initial desire to do historical research on the famous Mexican printmaker José Guadalupe Posada, Carl Zigrosser represented an interesting topic on which little has been written. Much has been written on the phenomenon in which Zigrosser played so big a role in Helen Delpar's *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* and John Britton's *Revolution and Ideology: Images of the Mexican Revolution in the United States*, but Zigrosser himself has remained relatively unknown. The topic of this thesis was still not concrete, but the base had been set: Carl Zigrosser and his work would be
the lens through which some investigation of the United States' fascination with Mexican art after the Mexican Revolution would take place.

Upon reading Delpar's book, which discusses the side of the cultural exchange that saw Mexican art and artists head north to the United States, it became clear that the author had largely neglected the political atmosphere of the time. While culture and politics are very separate phenomenon, they are necessarily linked, especially among the artists who were very involved in the politics of the day and in Mexico where art played a key role in expressing political views. Delpar writes that the vogue was "rooted in cultural issues, but it would not have flowered without the marked improvement in diplomatic relations between the two countries that occurred in the late 1920s."1 This is Delpar's statement on the importance of politics during this time. While Delpar does concede that politics were significant, she does not go into any depth about the role the political atmosphere played, noting only briefly that the political atmosphere was indeed important.

Britton's book, which discusses American sentiment toward Mexico during and immediately following the Mexican Revolution, takes the opposite approach. His focus is primarily on the political side of the U.S.-Mexican relationship. His discussion of culture is brief, and it references Delpar. He writes, "As Helen Delpar has demonstrated, in the 1920s and 1930s Mexico became one of the first non-European nations to gain significant cultural influence in the United States. In the areas of art, anthropology, archaeology, education, and motion pictures and through the work of such varied individuals as Diego Rivera, Manuel Gamio, José Vasconcelos, and Dolores del Río,

1 Helen Delpar, The Enormous Vogue of All Things Mexican (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1992), 55.
Mexico achieved a new level of popular interest in the United States. The remainder of Britton’s book discusses the political relationship between the two countries, largely disregarding the cultural exchange except when it pertained to the political relationship between the two nations.

Outside of these monographs, no sources existed that discussed the whole situation, and the textbooks generally lacked depth in their discussion of the cultural relationship. With Carl Zigrosser as a lens, this thesis will discuss the greater cultural exchange. Analyzing the contribution of Carl Zigrosser narrows the focus of Delpar’s book. In order to maintain balance, this thesis will stress the political atmosphere of the time, using both Britton and sources pertaining to the American ambassadors to Mexico throughout the years. Finally, this thesis will show that, as Delpar has said, politics played a critical role in allowing the vogue of things Mexican to flourish, and that this needs to be fully explained.

Carl Zigrosser, who made his name during the vogue, was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Columbia University in New York City. He left school without finishing his graduate work in order to work on a farm, the location of which he neglects to mention in his autobiography. After tiring of this, he moved back to New York City to work at Keppel and Co., a “well-established firm of print dealers” where he learned the print business and developed his views on prints. He remained at Keppel and Co. until World War I started, at which point Keppel and Co. decided to not have men of draft age in their employ. While at Keppel and Co. he catalogued the prints

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as they arrived and eventually arranged exhibitions. There is no documentation on Zigrosser’s life during the war years, and Zigrosser himself did not leave any description of his life during this time. After World War I ended Zigrosser became a researcher for the United Engineering Society, a job that did not pertain to art or prints. While at this job, he was introduced to Weyhe’s Art-book Store, and presumably its owner, Erhard Weyhe.  

Zigrosser’s previous association with prints presumably made the Weyhe Bookstore a pleasant place to indulge a passion. After two years at the United Engineering Society, Erhard Weyhe approached him and offered him the opportunity to found and direct the Weyhe Gallery, which was to be attached to the bookstore Weyhe already owned.  

Carl Zigrosser founded the Weyhe Gallery in 1919 and quickly turned it into a major gallery in the New York City art scene. Originally specializing in American paintings and prints, the Weyhe Gallery quickly expanded to international works, with the first foreign prints coming from Europe. In the late 1920s, when the vogue of things Mexican was the main art trend, Zigrosser began to accumulate, exhibit, and deal in Mexican works, eventually transforming the Weyhe Gallery into a premier showcase for Mexican paintings and prints in New York City and throughout the United States. His correspondence with such Mexican artists as Rufino Tamayo and Diego Rivera and American artists working in Mexico such as Edward Weston and Paul Strand made Carl Zigrosser and the Weyhe Gallery a cultural force in the Mexican vogue of the 1920s and 1930s.

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4 Ibid, 36.
5 Ibid, 37.
Carl Zigrosser and the Weyhe Gallery only expanded their prominence and influence as the 1930s continued. Zigrosser traveled to Mexico in 1930 on a purchasing trip and saw Diego Rivera most days. He became friends with William Spratling, an American artist working with silver in Taxco, and Dwight Morrow, the American ambassador to Mexico. He expanded his correspondence to include all Mexican artists of skill, including David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and Leopoldo Méndez among others. Outside of museums, the Weyhe Gallery was one of the premier venues for Mexican art during this decade. It was located in a small, inconspicuous building above the Weyhe Bookstore, which specialized in art books, but it attracted guests that included figures of great prominence, including the Rockefellers.

In 1940 Carl Zigrosser was offered the position of Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He mentions that the years of 1938 and 1939 strained the relationship between him and Mr. Weyhe, and that he was glad to pursue something new. His time at the Museum was marked by remarkable acquisitions. His collecting method was one that would accept any donation no matter the quality, rarity, or beauty; all that mattered was that the Museum acquired it. The collection in his department increased from 15,000 pieces to over 100,000 when he left. In one significant acquisition, Zigrosser came to an agreement with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to have the Museum take over the care and exhibition of their entire print collection, which amounted to tens of thousands of prints.

He remained at the Philadelphia Museum of Art until his retirement in 1963. This thesis, however, will focus on his work at the Museum from his hiring through the

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7 Ibid.
Posada exhibition of 1944, which serves as a capstone event in Zigrosser's collecting and exhibiting of Mexican art. 1945 was an important year throughout the world, and the U.S.-Mexico relationship was no exception. By 1941, the fascination with famous Mexican artists visiting the United States to physically work and promote themselves in the American market had waned, but their work was still being exhibited throughout the United States. 1945 saw World War II draw to a close, and while Mexican art had become a collectible commodity it was no longer a focus of American culture. In 1946, the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana dissolved and became the Partido Revolucionario Institucional. The name change accompanied a policy shift in which Mexico followed a more capitalistic economic model, moving away from its socialist past, thus signaling an end to its revolutionary ethos as a living practice and the transformation of "revolutionary" art into historical artifacts and museum pieces. For Zigrosser, 1945 represented the high point in his work with Mexican art. His largest show, the José Guadalupe Posada show at the PMA in the winter of 1944, was both a cultural and political event. The show was a great success: large crowds and political guests from both countries attended. This show represented, in many ways, the end of an era in the U.S.-Mexican relationship, both politically and culturally, and Carl Zigrosser was the man to close out the previous era and usher in the new one.

Art produced by Mexican artists during this period had radical ideological content, though this is not the way in which this thesis will approach their work. This thesis will look to show that the vogue of things Mexican, which saw Mexican art become incredibly popular in the United States, was affected greatly by the political relationship that existed between Mexico and the United States. Mexican artists of this
generation grew up and worked in a world of political upheaval and turmoil, and the subject matter and viewpoint of their work reflects this. However, politics also affected how, where, and when they produced their work, and that often involved the United States, which, unlike their subject matter and viewpoint, were solely Mexican. Shifts in common political thought, shifts in governmental policies, and shifts in international relations all altered the enormous vogue of things Mexican. The Mexican artists most remembered for their work during the vogue hoped to transform the politics of their country by creating their art, but it was in fact the politics that transformed them and the way in which their art was created, distributed, and perceived.
SECTION I: 1919-1929

REDEFINING MEXICO AND CARL ZIGROSSER’S INTRODUCTION TO THE VOGUE

The Mexico of 1920 was in an interesting position. The country was still acclimating to the Constitution of 1917. The violence of the Mexican Revolution was waning but still visible as Mexico moved into a tense and incomplete era of national reconciliation. The army overthrew Venustiano Carranza, the first president elected after the implementation of the Constitution and the first president to ignore its words. His policy of excluding the peasants and workers in the political sphere was not tolerated. Adolfo de la Huerta became interim president, and General Alvaro Obregón took the presidency after Carranza was assassinated and de la Huerta left office. Under Obregón, Mexico could now begin the slow process of reconstruction and, more importantly, the process of defining itself. His stable, more egalitarian government promised reforms and progress for the nation. These reforms included preaching a nationalism both cultural and political in nature. Outside of Mexico, however, there was less optimism. The United States refused to recognize the new government based on Article 27 of the Constitution, which allowed for the expropriation of foreign-owned oil. And without the recognition of the United States, reconstruction would be difficult; the money that entered Mexico from the United States was necessary to drive the economy. 1920 was the beginning of a new era in Mexico, an era marked by the goals of reaching the ideals of the Revolution and becoming a nation respected on the national stage, and an era marked by the struggle to see those goals through.
While Obregón’s rise to the presidency was applauded by the workers and the peasants, Pancho Villa was still roaming the state of Chihuahua in the north, and the Zapatistas, even without their leader Emiliano Zapata, who had been murdered in 1919 by a member of Carranza’s army, were still controlling much of the state of Morelos, directly south of Mexico City. These two groups of rebels posed a problem for Obregón in his goal to preside over the country effectively, but in November 1920 he managed to negotiate Villa’s retirement. Soon after, he pacified the Zapatistas. Carranza’s enemies and other regional rebel groups were brought into the fold, opting to help work with the new president toward the shared goals of tierra y libertad. Obregón’s vision of reconstructed Mexico hinged on its ability to succeed in commercial agriculture and industry; it needed to modernize, and it needed to modernize without foreign aid. The United States had stated after Carranza was overthrown that its ambassador to Mexico would remain withdrawn until Mexico agreed to pay for damages to American property stemming from the Revolution, secure the investments of American oil companies, and offer them more advantageous financial situations.8

Obregón often opted for radical politics during his presidency, including giving the individual Mexican states autonomy to a degree they had never had before. Men interested in reform became governors and created labor unions for both the industrial and agricultural sectors. Unifying the working classes was an important goal of the Obregón presidency, and by allowing these governors some independence in their agendas he was able to maintain popular support and foster a nationalism that the people

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were willing to embrace. Obregón understood that “within Mexico’s vast and complex popular camp the labor movement always appears as the most dynamic and coherent social force.”

In the spring of 1923, the United States and Mexico came to an agreement on terms for damages to American property stemming from the Revolution and for the situation regarding American oil companies operating in Mexico. The United States formally recognized the Mexican nation and its government in August. This created a space between the two countries that allowed for cultural exchanges and facilitated the vogue of things Mexican. Days later, Plutarco Elías Calles, Obregón’s minister of the interior, was designated as Obregón’s successor to the presidency. While it has never been officially linked to Calles and Obregón, Pancho Villa was killed in July of 1920, and the accepted theory is that he was murdered so as to keep him from revolting again. Adolfo de la Huerta, who had been the interim president after Carranza was removed from office, became the leading figure of Calles’ opposition. In December 1923, de la Huerta led many generals, over half of the army, some provincial governors, and other local leaders in a great rebellion against Obregón and Calles. Due to Obregón’s support among the laboring classes, 120,000 workers showed up in central Mexico to fight for Obregón and Calles against de la Huerta. De la Huerta and his men were defeated quickly, by March of 1924. Three months later Calles was elected president.

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10 Benjamin, 475.
While Mexico was trying to redefine itself when Obregón's presidency began, the United States had one goal when it came to its relationship with its southern neighbor. It planned to continue with its usual tactic regarding its neighbor to the south, which meant continuing to exert its economic and political muscle in order to maintain its dominance and, to some degree, exploitation of Mexico. With the ratification of the Constitution of 1917, Mexico claimed the right to "regulate, to tax, and to expropriate foreign-owned oil properties," under Article 27, whenever it felt it was necessary or advantageous. To American businesses, this meant that their property and their property rights were no longer secure. Also, American businesses wanted compensation for the damage inflicted on their holdings during the Mexican Revolution. When Obregón took office after Carranza was overthrown, the United States withdrew its ambassador and refused to recognize the Obregón government until its demands were met. In 1923, when it seemed as though an agreement would not be reached, President Warren G. Harding "ordered troops on the border to be ready to protect American lives and property." In an effort to avoid an invasion, Mexico agreed two months later to recognize that all subsoil properties purchased before 1917 would not be subject to the Constitution of 1917 and an agreement was made for the payment of the damages done during the Revolution.

As may be inferred, the relationship between Mexico and the United States was "not a warm one." The United States was enraged by the possibility of expropriation of their oil properties. "The U.S. media were filled with derogatory depictions of Mexico

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11 Britton, 33.
13 Ibid, 594.
and its people,” Americans felt that “Mexico had to be saved from itself,” and many felt that the United States was the agent to see that through.\textsuperscript{15} Mexico, on the other hand, had been feeling belittled by the United States for almost a century. “Territorial dismemberment in 1848 [and] armed intervention in 1914” made the United States the most visible enemy of Mexico.\textsuperscript{16} The nationalism encountered by American businesses was built on decades of mistreatment and exploitation, with the United States as an entity that only wanted to “covet, penetrate, and pillage the Republic” of Mexico.\textsuperscript{17} Despite the animosity, however, economic realities existed that created spaces for cultural initiatives, which in turn carried the potential for improving the political relationship.

Mexico understood that it needed foreign capital in order to become an industrialized and modern nation. For this reason, “the 1920s marked a period of consolidation but also one of substantial achievement by American business in Mexico.”\textsuperscript{18} Charles Beecher Warren, along with John Barton Payne, had gone to Mexico in 1923 under the orders of President Harding to achieve an agreement concerning the various disputes between the two countries. Having succeeded, President Harding appointed Warren as Ambassador to Mexico when the United States formally recognized Mexico. After four months he resigned and James R. Sheffield, a prominent New York politician, was appointed. Sheffield has been described as a “narrow-minded, racist lawyer” and as someone who “belongs utterly to the school of thought which preaches

\textsuperscript{15} John A. Britton, 25, 48.
force, force and nothing but force.” Nevertheless, later that year President-elect Calles was attending a dinner in his honor at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, and he told the audience that he wished “to invite the cooperation of capitalists and industrialists of good will” in his goal “to secure the social and economic elevation of 12,000,000 submerged Mexicans.” The relationship seemed to be warming.

In 1925, however, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg called on Mexico to ensure the “protection of American lives and property rights in Mexico” and claimed that “the government of Mexico...is now on trial before the world.” Calles’ response was to use Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 retroactively and claim that American businesses had one year to sell enough shares of their holdings so as to put a majority stake in the business in Mexican hands. Kellogg shot back that this went against the conditions under which the United States had agreed to formally recognize Mexico. Calles stood his ground and, in response to the United States’ tactics, revoked American drilling permits and stated that no foreign company could hold land on the frontier or on the coast and that all subsoil property holdings would be converted to 50-year leases.

President Coolidge, who had taken over the dispute with his election in 1923, “had been unable to divert Calles from the determined reform policies which he regarded as more important than the legal rights of prosperous individuals and companies favored” during the Porfirio, the era in which Porfirio Diaz ruled Mexico. President Coolidge, in response to the recent demonstration by Calles that Mexico would not be embarrassed

19 Knight, 133.
20 Callahan, 596, 595-596.
21 Ibid, 596.
22 Callahan, 607; Knight, 132-133; Callahan, 596-607.
23 Callahan, 608.
or exploited by foreigners, "decided to adopt a more conciliatory and sympathetic course
of action in the negotiations for protection of American interests." President Coolidge
appointed Dwight W. Morrow as Ambassador in 1927 in an effort to focus on friendly
diplomacy and move away from the previous tactics that preached stubbornness and
force. Morrow's legendary deft diplomacy included an interest in Mexican revolutionary
art perhaps surprising for a Wall Street banker. Indeed, Morrow's support of Mexican art
in general and artists like Diego Rivera in particular played a crucial role in improving
the relationship between Mexico and the United States.

Morrow would be greatly helped by men such as Carl Zigrosser. Zigrosser stated
in his autobiography, "I felt that at Keppel's I would never be able to carry out some of
my more advanced ideas about prints. When, therefore, Erhard Weyhe asked me to
found and direct a print gallery as an adjunct to his art-book shop, I decided that it would
give my initiative wider scope, and I accepted his offer." Keppel's was a firm that
specialized in prints, and Zigrosser quickly became a very important within the firm for
his ability to catalogue prints and arrange successful exhibits. Zigrosser left that position
to become the director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York City. As he wrote at the time,
"The introduction of graphic art from abroad...was only one part of the gallery's
program; the other aim was to become a center for American prints, and to encourage the
native artist by creating a market for his work." And before the late 1920s, the only
foreign prints available in the Weyhe Gallery were those of European artists. Mexican
artists tried to break into the American market throughout the 1920s, putting on group

24 Ibid, 608.
26 Ibid. Pg. 38.
shows in New York galleries, but the “French art monopoly” proved too strong to allow the Mexican artists to be successful. This all changed by the late 1920s due to the intervention of figures like Dwight Morrow and Carl Zigrosser.

While Carl Zigrosser and the Weyhe Gallery did not become prominent dealers of Mexican prints until the late 1920s, art was still being produced in Mexico. When Obregón ascended to the presidency, former political untouchables were welcomed back with open arms. One of these men was José Vasconcelos, who was appointed rector of the National University before becoming Obregón’s secretary of state in the ministry of public education. Quickly, Vasconcelos proved to be the unofficial secretary of culture, as well. He began commissioning artists to paint murals all over Mexico City in an effort to create a sense of cultural nationalism that could be paired with the new political nationalism preached by Obregón. Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rufino Tamayo, Leopoldo Méndez, and Roberto Montenegro were commissioned by the government to create art that was inherently Mexican. The National Palace, the Secretariat of Education and various other schools and public buildings were covered with massive paintings depicting revolutionary ideals, historical events, and hopes for the future, all done in a style that was unique to Mexico. This national support of murals and their revolutionary content lasted until 1924, when Calles took office. Vasconcelos was not allowed to continue his mission, and his replacement, Francisco Iturbe, “had no interest in national or revolutionary art.”

28 Anita Brenner, Idols Behind Altars (New York: Payson & Clarke, 1929), 274.
became minister, only Diego Rivera and Roberto Montenegro were kept on as employees of the government.29

Vasconcelos' agenda, which included commissioning artists to paint murals in public buildings in Mexico City, exemplifies the way in which politics affected the manner in which art was distributed and perceived. The government gave these artists the platform on which they could reach a massive audience, and the artists were eager to please the public. The murals were politically charged, depicting images fitting a state hoping to maintain its revolutionary fervor in order to progress and modernize, and the government wanted to utilize these images as excellent promotion of their work. Much of the public applauded the works. However, when Calles became president, and Vasconcelos resigned in protest, the national political agenda was altered and it no longer called for a cultural nationalism as a tool to increase political nationalism. Only two artists, Rivera and Montenegro, were still sponsored by the state, thus affecting which art was viewed in the public sphere and also how the public responded to the artists that had formerly been state-sponsored.

Calles was more conservative than Obregón had been, and this was reflected in how the public viewed the murals that preached a socialist, more liberal outlook on politics and society. The public, who had elected Calles, wanted a more conservative government and no longer appreciated the messages delivered by the murals on their buildings. Indeed, almost immediately following the resignation of Vasconcelos, the murals of Orozco, Siqueiros, and Rivera were attacked in the press. Those who did not like their work claimed that their murals were artistically primitive and did not show

Mexicans in a positive light. It was also claimed that the artists were becoming too radical and moving too far to the left, entertaining the idea of socialism both personally and in their work. Their murals were defaced with stones, sticks, and tools. Rivera “sometimes wore a pistol and holster while painting.” Siqueiros brought a pistol to his walls and fired it “over the heads of the student mob” in order to scare them off. Orozco wrote to Vasconcelos, “Siqueiros and I were thrown into the street by the students and our murals were gravely damaged.”

Mexico’s cultural nationalist project was no longer appreciated or desired by many sectors of the Mexican population. As with all revolutions, a backlash developed as the situation polarized. While Rivera continued to paint for the government, he, Orozco, and Siqueiros looked for new venues. Siqueiros became a labor “leader and organizer of peasants and miners in the state of Jalisco,” which he continued to do into the 1930s before he was jailed for his political actions. He was no longer employed by the state, and this made the creation of art secondary to political action, ending the distribution of his work and polarizing him as a figure. Orozco continued to paint and create art, and, upon finding a negligible market in Mexico, moved to America in 1927 to try his luck there. Ironically, the United States, through its cultural atmosphere, appeared to be a safe haven for Mexican artists. The political authorities in Mexico no longer

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32 Leonard Folgarait, 58.
33 Anita Brenner, 265.
34 This will be discussed later in this section.
appreciated the art being produced by many Mexican artists, and the government limited their ability to produce and distribute their work.

No one understood that when Calles took office he never planned on ceding his power, or at least his influence. Calles was quick to institute reforms aimed at modernizing and industrializing Mexico. He appointed the head of the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana, or Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers, as his minister of industry, commerce, and labor. This move created a wide base of support among the workers. Calles continued his reforms by redistributing land at a faster pace than Obregón had done, by building rural schools, by expanding and railroad system, and by creating the Bank of Mexico in 1925. Calles also sought to consolidate power by reducing the size of the military and removing governors he did not feel represented his ideals. He afforded the states much less autonomy and he began to enforce the anticlerical laws that existed in the Constitution of 1917 but had not been enforced under previous presidents. This caused the Church to suspend mass in Mexico beginning in 1926. By 1927, a war had begun between supporters of the Church and supporters of the government, called the Cristero Rebellion or the Cristero War. While this war was waging outside, Calles amended the constitution to allow for one nonconsecutive reelection and created a presidential term of six years, augmented from the original four years specified in the Constitution of 1917. This, however, would not take effect until after Calles left office. His predecessor, Obregón, began his campaign for reelection.35

Dwight Morrow wanted to help ease both the tensions between separate Mexican parties and between the United States and Mexico as a whole. Ambassador Morrow went

35 Thomas Benjamin, 475-476.
in to Mexico with the objective to be "direct, frank, and friendly" in his dealings with the Mexican government.\textsuperscript{36} Morrow's "mission proved a turning point in U.S.-Mexican relations."\textsuperscript{37} He also hoped to show the Mexican people that the United States was worthy of being called a good neighbor and of being a trustworthy partner in all business dealings. Before he left the States, he claimed, "I know what I can do for the Mexicans. I can like them."\textsuperscript{38} Morrow's goal before he left was to avoid fitting the stereotype that would be given him. He had previously worked for J.P. Morgan in New York, and he was cast as an agent of American businesses in the Mexican press. With one phrase, that he "would be careful...to respect the dignity of the Mexican nation," most fears were dispelled.\textsuperscript{39}

Upon arriving, he seemed like a child, full of wonder and joy at being in an exotic place. Morrow's first task was to gain the confidence of President Calles. His only instruction from President Coolidge, with whom he had gone to college and considered a close friend, was "to keep us out of war with Mexico."\textsuperscript{40} President Calles, when Ambassador Morrow arrived in 1927, was struggling. Pressures from the landowners, from the United States, and from the Church were weighing on him. At their first meeting, Ambassador Morrow simply listened as President Calles told him of his situation. Morrow asked questions when he had them, but refrained from making any judgments or bold statements, choosing instead to applaud the president for goals he had accomplished, including improved irrigation and the creation of rural schools. While his

\textsuperscript{36} Callahan, 614.
\textsuperscript{37} Knight, 137.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 309.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 314.
purpose was to discuss the questions surrounding American oil properties and American claims, he refrained from these controversial issues, hoping that by gaining the confidence of the President that future negotiations would be smoother. To Calles, Morrow represented “an American who trusted him and whom he could therefore trust.”

Obregón won the presidential election in July of 1928 but was assassinated two weeks later. Calles brought Obregón’s supporters into his new political party, which eventually became the National Revolutionary Party, and nominated Emilio Portes Gil as his successor, a candidate who was supported by former followers of Obregón and by followers of Calles. Emilio Portes Gil ascended to the presidency, becoming the first of three puppet presidents who took office from 1928 until 1934, a time period which became known as the Maximato, named for Calles, who came to be known as the Jefe Máximo, or Supreme Chief of Mexico. Every political action that took place during the Maximato went through Calles.

While the question of American oil holdings was never settled under Morrow, and while Morrow was never considered a very adept politician, he was able to accomplish two significant feats. He was able to advise Calles, and his successor, Portes Gil, on how to best handle the compensation of Americans for land expropriated and designated for redistribution. He advised President Gil to pay cash and to agree to terms for the gradual payment of all outstanding debts. Gil was impressed by Morrow’s financial knowledge and the genuine sincerity of his advice. Morrow was able to secure Mexico’s agreement to pay off its debt, and Gil was able to say he felt Mexico had been treated fairly and as

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42 Benjamin, 476-477.
an equal in the negotiations. He also helped to resolve the Cristero Rebellion. Harold Nicolson writes, “He did not solve the Catholic question in Mexico. All he did was to ease the deadlock.” When the churches resumed services and rang the bells for half an hour in celebration, he yelled to his wife, “Betty,…do you hear that? I have opened the churches in Mexico.” While this is likely an overstatement of his role in the conflict, Dwight Morrow’s time in Mexico helped usher in a new era of Mexico-United States relations, an era with more mutual respect.

A new era occurred in the cultural relationship, as well. Carl Zigrosser and the Weyhe Gallery moved to a larger building in 1923, occupying the entire floor above the Weyhe Bookstore, which specialized in art books. When it opened at its new location, Mexican art was present, but it was not promoted in the same manner in which it would be later in the decade. Prints and paintings by Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and David Alfaro Siqueiros were jumbled with the other artists, including more popular names, such as Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, Matisse, and Picasso. Zigrosser claimed, however, that the Weyhe Gallery helped to “introduce the graphic art of the…Mexican School into this country.”

Zigrosser’s correspondence with Mexican artists began in the late 1920s. Rufino Tamayo and Diego Rivera were the first Mexican artists he contacted. While there are lists of prices for works by Orozco, there was no contact with Mexican artists outside of Tamayo and Rivera before 1930. On February 28 of 1928, Zigrosser received a price list

43 Nicolson, 346.
44 Ibid, 347.
45 Zigrosser, 38-42.
46 Ibid, 44.
for twenty watercolors done by Tamayo. Tamayo wrote to Zigrosser on March 22 of 1929: “Please let me know how things are going on and if you have sold enough to get the money you lent me (I hoppe [sic] you have)...Please give my regards to Mr. Weyhe the nicest dealer in America.” And on August 16 of 1929, Tamayo wrote, “I am wondering if there is still a chance for me of having a show in the coming season...I should like to have the show to be done within the months of December [sic] and march [sic] if possible” and included a price list for twenty watercolors. While Zigrosser was very interested in having Tamayo’s work in the Weyhe Gallery for sale, it is not apparent that he was interested in having a Tamayo show. Tamayo, on the other hand, seemed very interested in having a show and in creating a close working relationship with the Weyhe Gallery.

Zigrosser, through his papers, seems to have focused on acquiring works by Diego Rivera, putting on one-man Rivera shows, and on creating a close relationship with the famed Mexican muralist. On September 22 of 1927, Rivera wrote to Zigrosser, “I have sent thirteen drawings with my friend the architect William Spratling. Enclosed you will find a list of the titles and prices of the drawings. For your commission you may deduct 33 per cent from the prices.” Zigrosser responded six days later: “What we really wanted was recent paintings of yours...We are very anxious to represent all phases of your work in your first show in America.” A telegram dated September 29 from Rivera to Zigrosser states, “Can send six recent canvasses drawings watercolors Oct. 20th

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47 Carl Zigrosser Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
please answer my first cable discussing old canvasses.” In an effort to reach him, Zigrosser wrote to Rivera’s friend, the American architect William Spratling, who lived in Taxco: “If you see Diego Rivera tell him that we most urgently need drawings, watercolors, and paintings. Can he not let us have some? And if you could persuade him to make a group of lithographs or woodcuts I would be extremely grateful [sic] to you. Let me know if there is any possibility along this line.” In this relationship, Diego Rivera plays the desired celebrity, while Zigrosser assumes the role of the anxious, desperate fan. Zigrosser understands how important a Rivera show could be for the Weyhe Gallery, but Rivera understands that he can have a show wherever he wants and thus feels he can dictate what works should be sent to which galleries and museums and when they should be sent.

The vogue of things Mexican, explained so well in Delpar’s work, is demonstrated in Zigrosser’s correspondence with Edward Weston, a photographer who traveled to Mexico seeking a new subject and finding an exotic country filled with beautiful landscapes and striking people. Zigrosser wrote to Weston on May 29 of 1928: “Although we could not plan to have an exhibition of your photographs at present, we might possibly be able to sell a few separately. Would you consider sending us a little group on consignment?” On August 16, Zigrosser wrote again: “You promised to send me a group of the photographs. I should like to see what I can do with them and if they go at all we might possibly be able, at some future date, to have an exhibition.”

Zigrosser continued on September 15: “If you will send us about twenty-four of thirty

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid, 30 Nov. 1929.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
photographs we will try to do something with them. You might include a number of the
nudes, a number of the portraits, including those of Rivera and [the artist Miguel]
Covarrubias, several shell forms, Mexican studies, and desert pictures. There were
studies of more or less abstract forms which I thought were interesting."56 Weston,
understanding the position of the Weyhe Gallery in the New York art scene, wrote on
August 22 of 1928, "I want to be represented with you—and will—the first leisure I
have. Having seen my work, you may be able to suggest suitable prints to have on
hands—and how many."57 Weston is a strong representative of the vogue of things
Mexican among artists in the United States. He was entranced by Mexico, and his best
photographs are of Mexican subjects. Zigrosser, by the late 1920s was fully invested in
the vogue. He knew that Mexican art, and art with Mexican subjects, was selling, and he
wanted to get the Weyhe Gallery as involved in the vogue as possible.

Dwight Morrow, himself supportive of Mexican artists, is most remembered for
his ability to bring the two nations closer together and to create an atmosphere of mutual
respect and understanding. By moving towards strategies based on equality, Morrow was
able to remove most of the negative stigmas associated with the United States. He
brought Will Rogers to Mexico and had Charles Lindbergh, the famous pilot, fly from
New York to Mexico City to show the goodwill of the Americans. These simple
diplomatic gestures went a long way in the eyes of the Mexicans. And the reception
garnered by both the politicians and celebrities went a long way in the eyes of the

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
Americans. In the United States, “the word ‘Mexico’ came to represent a neighbor nation and not a recurring problem.”58

Carl Zigrosser and his work at the Weyhe Gallery, especially in the late 1920s, allow insight into Delpar’s vogue of things Mexican. Through Zigrosser, the United States’ interest in Mexico is obvious. Zigrosser saw the rising popularity of Mexican art, Mexican artists, and art involving Mexican subjects. What Zigrosser saw was not merely a cultural shift; it is indicative of the impact the political atmosphere had on art and its production and distribution. In 1924 Plutarco Elías Calles became president of Mexico, and the cultural nationalism that was promoted under Obregón was supported much less on an official basis, which decreased many artists’ abilities to produce art and to have an audience. At the same time, the United States’ political atmosphere was very amicable to Mexican artists. While the United States was not in favor of communism, even politically militant artists from Mexico could find work in the United States, in spite of occasional difficulties. In the late 1920s, Carl Zigrosser began to seek out Mexican works for the Weyhe Gallery, which is representative of the United State’s fascination with and desire for Mexican art. Dwight Morrow, the American ambassador to Mexico, was very supportive of Mexican art, and his position on the subject gave the vogue a sense of legitimacy. His stance that a cultural exchange could only strengthen the political relationship allowed Mexican art to move freely into the United States, which gave Mexican artists the opportunity to create works for a new market. Politics, both in Mexico and in the United States, played a major role in how Mexican art was produced, where it was produced, and where it was distributed during the decade of the 1920s.

58 Quotation: Knight, 2; Paragraph: Ibid, 139.
SECTION II: 1929-1939


*Idols Behind Altars*, Anita Brenner’s groundbreaking book that discusses Mexican art from its Mayan beginnings through the 1920s, was published in 1929. It was very indicative of its time; the United States was fascinated with anything related to Mexican culture. Mexico’s government did everything it could to promote itself positively to America, including displaying “carefully contrived hospitality and propaganda” that “contributed to an outpouring of pro-Mexican essays” in American publications.\(^{59}\) Mexico became a country seen as “a safe yet unspoiled destination for travelers who would enjoy its quaintness, natural beauty, and artistic treasures.”\(^ {60}\) Books published in the first years of the decade were tales of escape from the materialistic United States and adventures into the exotic, untamed landscapes of Mexico.\(^ {61}\) Due to the Depression, American culture was in need of a new source of inspiration. In 1933, a *New York Times* article described “the enormous vogue of things Mexican,” claiming that Americans, due to the Depression, were rejecting the material culture that had failed them in favor of something primitive and exotic.\(^ {62}\) As Delpar writes, “Mexico lay close at hand.”\(^ {63}\) Part of this fascination was directed at the semi-socialist practices of the Mexican government. Many Americans, noting the failure of the capitalist system in 1929, sought a new form of government. Again, Mexico was close at hand. Once Mexico’s struggles

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\(^{59}\) Britton, 71.
\(^{60}\) Delpar, 58.
\(^{61}\) Britton, 105.
\(^{62}\) Delpar, 55.
\(^{63}\) Ibid.
became visible and the political relationship between Mexico and the United States had
grown tense, the political admiration dissipated, though the artistic relationship remained.
Throughout the 1930s, the “vogue of things Mexican” was a driving force in the art world
of the United States. Much like the political relationship, however, it did have its
controversies and limits. And much like the political relationship, certain events almost
led to the demise of the relationship as a whole. In this way, the artistic relationship
mirrored the political relationship. Both sides wanted a beneficial alliance, but specific
convictions, which led to certain decisions and events, threatened the relationship and
caused great tensions to arise.

The decade of the 1930s, especially the years following the election of Lázaro
Cardenás in 1934, were a time of great social reform in Mexico. While Cárdenas’ era
paralleled Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “New Deal” politics, which created some
admiration for Cárdenas in the United States, Mexico’s political action often led to the
aggravation of the United States as a whole. Mexico at the beginning of the 1930s was
still in the middle of the Maximato, the time period from 1928-1934 during which “three
presidents wrestle[d] politically with the strongman Calles,” the Jefe Máximo of
Mexico. None of them utilized art or culture to promote their political nationalism to
the same degree as Obregón and Vasconcelos had during the early 1920s. Álvaro
Obregón had been elected to the presidency in 1928, but he had been assassinated before
he could take office. Emilio Portes Gil was the first man to take the presidency. He
lasted two years, leaving in 1930. Calles chose Pascual Ortiz Rubio to be Gil’s
replacement, but he resigned two years later after he struggled to take orders from Calles.

64 Benjamin, 477.
His replacement, Abelardo Rodríguez, who served until the end of Obregón’s original term expired in 1934, “knew how to take orders,” but this is a controversial claim. In 1933, Lázaro Cárdenas gained the nomination of the National Revolutionary Party and, after some apprehension, the support of the Jefe Máximo, Calles. In July 1934, Cárdenas won the election and became the president of Mexico. He pushed forward more land reform and allowed striking workers to demonstrate, making him popular with the lower classes but losing him the support of Calles, the one man whose support everyone thought he needed. In 1935, Cárdenas removed from his cabinet all men loyal to Calles. In 1936, Cárdenas forced Calles into exile in the United States. Having removed the shadow of the Jefe Máximo, Cárdenas set forth an agenda of social reform, including an improved education system, more land reform, and an increased international presence. Cárdenas, while very different from his predecessors, followed their lead and did not promote arts and culture as a means to strengthen his calls for national unity. This nationalistic agenda was very capable of straining Mexico’s relationship with the United States, on multiple occasions to a nearly irreparable point. Cárdenas sought to strengthen his country, and he did so by attempting to right wrongs done to Mexico, including those perpetrated by the United States.

In general, however, the political relationship between the United States and Mexico during the 1930s was cordial and beneficial to both countries. There were, as stated before, moments of great tension between the two countries. Throughout this period, Mexico displayed a “wary suspicion of Uncle Sam.” The United States did no

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid, 478-479.
67 Knight, 31.
better in its thinking, seeing “Mexico as barbarous and corrupt, overbreeding and impoverished, opulent but not modern, and now arrogant and aggressive” despite the pro-Mexico essays described by Delpar.\(^6\) Despite these unfavorable views, the United States “expanded the dimensions of its Good Neighbor Policy” during this period and looked to improve its relationship with its southern neighbor.\(^6\) This was done for multiple reasons, including an attempt to keep Mexico satisfied with the issue of foreign-owned petroleum and, later in the decade, to keep Mexico as an ally during World War II.

While the vogue of things Mexican was necessarily influenced by politics, Carl Zigrosser rarely discussed the political policies of either nation; he focused on art. Zigrosser recalls, “In 1930 I went to Mexico on a purchasing trip for paintings, drawings, and prints of the Mexican school.”\(^7\) He recalled, “I saw a great deal of Rivera during my visit to Mexico,” and “I bought paintings by Siqueiros, who was then in jail” for political actions.\(^8\) He also spent time with Ambassador Morrow, William Spratling, an American architect and artist living in Taxco, and René d’Harnoncourt, an early proponent of the Mexican vogue.\(^9\)

Zigrosser’s purchasing trip to Mexico is indicative of the role of politics in the art exchange between Mexico and the United States. Zigrosser was unable to meet with Siqueiros because he was in jail for his political action. Siqueiros was unable to produce art while in jail, which shows that the government had affected his ability to distribute his

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\(^6\) Fagen, 347.
\(^7\) Zigrosser, 42.
\(^8\) Ibid., 83, 87.
\(^9\) René d’Harnoncourt was also the father of Anna d’Harnoncourt, who served as director of the PMA from 1982 until her untimely death in 2008.
ideas. Zigrosser’s friendship with Ambassador Morrow is also indicative of the manner in which the United States government affected the production and distribution of Mexican art. That the American ambassador supported Mexican artists and art indicated that it was a commodity worth looking into, and helped legitimate it back in the States. While Morrow did not enact policies that affected Mexican art production, he supported artists that were of very different political views, and by doing so he made their political leanings an afterthought to their artistic abilities, which helped create opportunities for them in the United States and allowed them to be viewed in a positive light as great artists and not as political pariahs.

Upon his return from Mexico, Zigrosser was a major player in the growing interest in Mexican art in the United States. His correspondence with William Spratling, Edward Weston, and other Americans during the 1930s denotes his devotion to the vogue of things Mexican and his desire to make the Weyhe Gallery a cornerstone of the Mexican art market in the United States. Zigrosser wrote to Spratling on March 10, 1930, “We should like to have an exhibition of your work for next autumn and we are anxious to get from you a fine group of water colors, and drawings, and a number of small recent paintings in oil.” While Zigrosser was interested in work by Americans in Mexico, he was always more interested in work by Mexican artists working in the Mexican school. On May 3, he wrote, “I was truly delighted to hear from you that the prospect of getting some materials from Rivera was favorable.” In September he asked Spratling, “What about Diego’s assurance that we were to be his New York agents?”

73 Carl Zigrosser Papers.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
On October, 1931, Spratling asked, “Can you show [Siqueiros] this winter?” 76 Zigrosser responded, “I shall do my best about a show of Siqueiros, but I can not promise definitely. I certainly can include him in a group show.” 77 Spratling did not want to only be a connection for Rivera and other Mexican artists, however. He wanted to promote his own work. In March of 1932, after receiving an offer for some of his works from Zigrosser, he wrote, “Your [sic] were a peach to come through with offer and check included so promptly.” 78

Edward Weston was one of the most notable Americans who became involved in the Mexican art scene by producing his own art. His photographs of Mexican scenes and Mexican people proved very popular in the United States. In April of 1930, he wrote to Zigrosser, “I have had a definite offer for an exhibit in New York, but since you were the first to write me, I would prefer to hear from you before answering. Would you care to exhibit my work this coming winter?” 79 While he did not travel to New York during the early part of the decade, he was interested in becoming known there. On October 23, 1934 he wrote, “I am ready to make connections in N. York. The first place worth considering is Weyhe’s. Are you interested? If so, have you any open dates for an exhibition after the first of the year.” 80 By 1934, it can be seen, the Weyhe Gallery had become an important agent for Mexican art. The popularity of Mexican culture allowed not just Mexican artists to flourish in the States, but also for American artists to flourish by producing art with Mexican themes.

76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
Ambassador Morrow, whom Zigrosser had befriended during his trip to Mexico, returned to the United States in 1930, and President Herbert Hoover sent John Reuben Clark to replace him. Clark had been involved in the negotiations between the United States and Mexico to address claim disputes in 1926, and had been working in the State Department as Under Secretary since 1928. Outside of negotiations regarding Mexican immigration to the United States and the usage of water from the Rio Grande and the Colorado River, no serious political actions occurred. In 1933, Clark returned to the United States. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had been elected in 1932, appointed the former Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, under whom Roosevelt had been Assistant Secretary, as ambassador to Mexico.

The Mexican people initially met Daniels’ nomination with open hostility. Daniels and Roosevelt were confused by the outrage, but Daniels’ wife reminded them, “Don’t you remember Vera Cruz? Have you forgotten that you sent the fleet to Vera Cruz in 1914 and as a result a number of Mexicans were killed by the Navy’s landing party?” They had both forgotten, but the Mexicans had not; they stoned the embassy in Mexico City in protest. Upon his arrival in Mexico City, Daniels spoke on “the equality of sovereignties” and declared that “we can expect relations between his country and our own to continue respectful, cordial, and beneficial;” these remarks were seen as genuine and many Mexicans appreciated his sincerity, realizing that he was an ambassador focused on bettering the relationship between the United States and Mexico.

81 Callahan, 586.
83 Ibid, 9.
not just focused on bettering the lives of Americans living abroad and the businesses they owned.\textsuperscript{84}

While Clark made an effort to seek out and acquaint himself with members of the Mexican cabinet, congress, and the inspector general of the police, he warned the Americans living in Mexico City to “ask nothing for themselves here except what their own nation guarantees to Mexicans residing in the United States.”\textsuperscript{85} This was not meant as a threat, but it indicated that Daniels was not in Mexico in order to aid American businessmen; he was there instead to fulfill Roosevelt’s promise that the United States would be a good neighbor and nothing more in its relations with Latin America. Indeed, Daniels was the first true agent of President Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy,” which called for the United States’ “renunciation of the role of policeman in Latin America” and for an end to politics that indicated the use of a “Big Stick policy” and instead focused on peaceful diplomacy that respected the sovereignty of all Latin American nations.

“Ambassador Daniels got along well with President Rodríguez and other high Mexican leaders, but he continued in the belief...that General Calles was the real power behind the government.”\textsuperscript{86} This turned out to be a slight misjudgment of the situation. In reality, Rodríguez asserted himself much more often than he was given credit for. He listened to Calles, but he had his own ideas. He “compared the Mexican Six-Year program with the New Deal and said they have a common objective.”\textsuperscript{87} When Cárdenas had Calles sent into exile in the United States, Daniels wrote that “a New Era had dawned in Mexico”

\textsuperscript{84} E. David Cronon, \textit{Josephus Daniels in Mexico} (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 25.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, 57.
\textsuperscript{86} Cronon, 75; Daniels, 101; Cronon, 61.
\textsuperscript{87} Daniels, 48.
and he "hoped...that the New Deal in Mexico, embodied in the Six-Year Plan, would run concurrently with Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States." Within a year of Cárdenas' election, the United States and Mexico signed a "convention on special claims and the protocol covering future disposition of general claims," with Cárdenas stating that "we will pay as much on the agrarian claims as we possibly can, and when payments are begun, they will be kept up."

The new cultural era was already in full stride. Zigrosser claimed, as can be seen in the first section of this thesis, that part of the mission of the Weyhe Gallery was to promote American artists. While Edward Weston and William Spratling, among others, were very important in the vogue, the vogue was truly focused around things Mexican, meaning Mexican art produced by Mexican artists. Throughout the 1930s, Zigrosser was constantly in contact with Mexican artists in an effort to get their work into the Weyhe Gallery. He corresponded with many Mexican artists, but most of his letters indicate a desire to purchase work and nothing more. He wrote letters to Rufino Tamayo, Miguel Covarrubias, Leopoldo Méndez, and Roberto Montenegro. All of these artists were popular during the vogue, but they were not considered headliners. They were able to exhibit their works, and they were able to have solo exhibitions, but there was stratification in the Mexican art world. During the 1930s, only three names in Mexican art could command an entire show and make it a success. They were José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The Weyhe Gallery reserved its limited number of exhibitions for artists guaranteed to draw a crowd. Orozco, very early during his stay in the United States, connected with Alma Reed from Delphic Studios,

88 Ibid, 59.
89 Cronon, 81. Daniels, 69, 123-124.
who became his agent and was responsible for all things Orozco in the United States, including all of his solo exhibitions. The Weyhe Gallery still sold some of his works, but from Zigrosser’s papers, it is clear that the Weyhe Gallery was interested in solo shows, so Zigrosser focused his attention on Rivera and Siqueiros, who were well enough known to support such shows.

In April of 1930, Zigrosser wrote to Siqueiros, “I am interested in your work and in the possibility of having an exhibition of your paintings and drawings next season. Would it be possible for you to come to New York to continue negotiations regarding the exhibition and sale of your paintings?”

About a month later, Siqueiros was arrested for marching during a May Day parade, which explains why Zigrosser was unable to meet him during his purchasing trip to Mexico. Siqueiros “was not released until November 6, 1930”, and upon his release he was exiled to Taxco, where he became fast friends with the American William Spratling. Upon receiving an offer from the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles to visit as a lecturer and as an artist-in-residence, he moved himself and his family to California. During his stay in California, his wife, Blanca Luz Brum, wrote to Zigrosser, “David would very much appreciate if you could sell three of his canvases ‘at once’ (and please, excuse our impatience, but we are in such hard conditions).” This note was in response to Zigrosser’s letter explaining how the Weyhe Gallery, due to the financial situation of the early 1930s, “could not undertake to have an exhibition of Siqueiros.”

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90 Carl Zigrosser Papers.
91 Stein, 67.
92 Ibid, 72-73.
93 Carl Zigrosser Papers, 6 June 1932.
94 Ibid, 28 March 1932.
While a Weyhe Gallery show did not materialize, Siqueiros had exhibitions in Los Angeles as soon as he arrived. After these exhibitions, he “turned his attention to his job of teaching fresco technique” and to his project “to produce a mural with the help of the students.” After this mural was destroyed for its political content, he created two more before he left. One was public, on a wall at the Plaza Art Center building, and the other was private, in the home of film director Dudley Murphy. Later that year, Siqueiros became involved in protests supporting the Scottsboro Nine, the nine black teenagers accused of rape in Alabama in 1931. Partially due to this, and partially due to his general political leanings, he was forced to leave the United States. He had been in California for less than a year. He could not return to Mexico, though. He took his family and went to Montevideo and then to Buenos Aires. In 1933, he was expelled from Argentina. In December of that year, he and his family were on a freighter headed back to the United States, this time to New York.

Immediately upon arriving in New York, Siqueiros arranged an exhibition at the Delphic Studios, a rival to the Weyhe Gallery. Siqueiros desired to be in the Weyhe Gallery, but he took it personally when Zigrosser appeared to prefer the work of Rivera, with whom Siqueiros was openly hostile, and he took his work elsewhere as somewhat of a swipe at Zigrosser and the Weyhe Gallery. In May of 1934, Siqueiros and Rivera had a public debate about their works. This debate was put on after Siqueiros gave a lecture that attacked Rivera and his work, an event at which Rivera pulled a pistol and demanded

95 Stein, 74.
96 Ibid, 78-79.
97 Ibid, 80, 82, 84, 91.
98 Ibid, 92.
the opportunity to respond to Siqueiros’ claims. In June, Siqueiros wrote to Zigrosser, “It was impossible for me to finish the lithographs.—I formally promise you to send them from Mexico.—I ask you to forgive me.” Siqueiros, however, did not return to Mexico. He stayed in New York until 1937. In 1936, he created the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop, a group of artists that, as the name suggests, experimented with different artistic techniques. A young Jackson Pollock was a member of the Workshop. He also gave works to a group show of Mexican artists at the American Artists’ Congress. This led to the creation of a studio of Mexican artists in New York, under the patronage of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR) in Mexico.

In January of 1937, he was persuaded by close friends to give up his obligations in North America and head to Spain to fight with the government against Francisco Franco. He fought in Spain for two years, until January 1939, when he arrived back in Mexico City. By the time he had returned to Mexico, Leon Trotsky had been there for two years. Exiled from Russia, Mexico welcomed him after being persuaded by Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Siqueiros, an ardent Stalinist and opponent of Rivera, was infuriated.

Siqueiros’ experiences exemplify the constant contact between politics and art. After his release from jail, he was exiled to Taxco, which limited his creativity, and thus

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99 Ibid, 95.
100 Carl Zigrosser Papers, 13 June 1934.
101 Stein, 98-99.
102 Ibid, 96.
103 Ibid, 96.
104 Ibid, 102.
105 Ibid, 110.
affected his artistic output. He received an offer to work in Los Angeles, and seeing that the United States was open to having him and allowing him to create his work on his terms, he went north. But the States were not as lenient as he had perhaps originally thought. After he protested American political action, they had him deported. He was however, not welcome in Mexico, either. Whether intentional or not, which was more likely, both countries' governments affected the manner in which Siqueiros was seen. He was viewed as a politically radical artist who had been removed from two countries, including his home country. A few years later he was expelled from Argentina, which again must have altered how he and his art were viewed. He was allowed back into the United States after his expulsion from Argentina, but he eventually chose to leave art behind to fight against Franco in Spain. Politics, this time in Spain, had affected his ability to produce and distribute art.

While the fascination with Mexico remained strong in the United States, political problems were arising in the Mexico. Religious conflicts flared up between 1934 and 1937, and the United States government took their Good Neighbor Policy to heart and refrained from acting. Despite the precedent set by Ambassador Morrow during the Cristero conflict, Ambassador Daniels kept his religious ideas to himself, and President Roosevelt wrote, “In respect to the rights enjoyed by Mexican citizens living in Mexico, it has been the policy of this administration to refrain from intervening in such direct concerns of the Mexican government,” implying that disagreements over the Church’s place in society did not concern the United States, and thus Roosevelt had no desire to get involved.106

106 Daniels, 190.
During a labor strike at the American-owned Guanajuato Reduction and Mines Company in early 1936, Daniels urged the business owners to follow Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which “specifically required foreign businessmen to promise not to call upon their home governments for help in disputes with local authorities” and stated that these businessmen should “submit to the ruling of the Mexican authorities.”

The political relationship between the United States and Mexico was proving very strong; the Good Neighbor Policy gave Mexico the respect and autonomy it felt it deserved and portrayed the United States as a friendly brother nation. They maintained close contact and cordial relations, but all of that was to be tested beginning in 1936 with a proposed law that allowed for the expropriation of all foreign-owned land regardless of previous agreements, which augmented Article 27, the article that had caused so much American outrage in the early 1920s.

While Roosevelt and Daniel were adamant about maintaining their position as a good neighbor, the proposed expropriation law of 1936 worried both of them. “It granted sweeping authority to expropriate all classes of property. Moreover, it fixed, as the basis of compensation for property taken, the value declared by the owner for tax purposes.”

The last part was especially cunning because it caught American businessman in a bind. For years they had undervalued their properties in order to pay less taxes. Cárdenas, realizing this, set their valuations for tax purposes as the official valuations, thus giving American businessman two options: admit that they had dubiously undervalued their Mexican holdings for many years, or accept much less compensation than their land warranted. Privately, Daniels feared for the damage this proposed law could inflict on

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107 Cronon, 121.
108 Ibid, 123.
the relationship between the United States and Mexico. Publicly, however, he refused to intervene until the law was enacted.

The situation worsened in 1937, when strikes began in the oil fields. Workers demanded higher wages. According to Daniels, “The oil operators told President Cárdenas they could not pay the increased wages demanded.”\(^{109}\) After an examination of the books, it was found that the American businesses could easily afford to pay the increased wages but that they simply assumed that everything would work out in their favor, as when Díaz or Calles were in power. The situation became a quagmire. Mexican workers continued in their demands, soon backed by the Supreme Court of Mexico. American businessmen refused to acquiesce to their demands, leaning on historical precedent to aid their case. President Cárdenas, in June, nationalized the Mexican National Railways, a “foreign-owned company operating about 55 per cent of the railroad trackage of the country.”\(^{110}\) The situation grew more and more tense until March 18, 1938. President Cárdenas “announced on the radio that he issued a decree expropriating the properties of American and British oil companies in the republic, accusing them of ‘a conspiracy’ against Mexico.”\(^{111}\) To the Americans, this came out of nowhere. In 1936 Cárdenas had assured foreign businesses that Mexico “would not, for instance, endeavor to take over the oil fields” as it would be “impractical and place the Government in the situation with regard to foreign investment which it intended to avoid.”\(^{112}\) Cárdenas had been a strong advocate of foreign investment, particularly American, in Mexico from the beginning of his presidency; this decision seemed to

\(^{109}\) Daniels, 223.
\(^{110}\) Cronon, 127.
\(^{111}\) Daniels, 227.
\(^{112}\) Cronon, 125.
undermine that in every way. Josephus Daniels recalls that “in the oil world there was unrestrained wrath as executives of the oil industry in the United States demanded that Uncle Sam ‘do something’ to compel restoration of the property to the owners at once or else;” the else involving boycotting Mexican silver, imposing economic sanctions, and, if necessary, starting a war with Mexico on the businesses behalves.113

The end of the 1930s seemed to be steering the Mexico-United States relationship toward armed conflict, but the cultural relationship remained strong. In fact, Diego Rivera was a celebrity in the United States. Pete Hamill writes, “in the end, what mattered was brand name. Diego Rivera was the most famous Mexican artist in the world. They wanted a Rivera.”114 This was the prevailing sentiment for most of the 1930s when it came to the Mexican vogue in the United States. Orozco and Siqueiros were popular, but their work was abstract and often less palatable than Rivera’s brand. The goal of most art collectors was to get works from famous artists. Many collectors had their own tastes and had works from less well-known artists that have favored themes, but art collecting, for the majority of persons involved, was about owning a rare piece of art that someone could be proud to own. Zigrosser, Spratling (on Rivera’s behalf), and Rivera himself were engaged in a constant correspondence throughout 1930. Rivera was in Mexico until November of that year, finishing the mural commissioned by Ambassador Morrow in Cuernavaca. By this time he had been expelled from the Communist Party in Mexico for being a Yankee sympathizer. Seeing few prospects

113 Cronon, 190, 192; Daniels, 227.
remaining in Mexico, he traveled to San Francisco to paint murals and put on exhibitions of his work.\textsuperscript{115}

His murals in San Francisco were for the Pacific Stock Exchange, the city’s School of Fine Arts, and a small moveable panel for Sigmund Stern, a wealthy patron who had been influential in securing Rivera’s visa.\textsuperscript{116} While Rivera was still in San Francisco, the Weyhe Gallery issued a press release: “The Weyhe Gallery is Diego Rivera’s agent in New York City and have constantly on hand examples of his work in all media.”\textsuperscript{117} Before leaving California, he had agreed to a commission to paint two walls at the Detroit Institute of Arts.\textsuperscript{118} When Rivera returned to Mexico to complete his murals in the National Palace, Zigrosser wrote to him, “I trust that you will be able to finish your task during the summer and that you will come to New York next fall prepared to give an exhibition.”\textsuperscript{119} Rivera returned to the United States in November of 1931 for a one man retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art and to paint the mural in Detroit.\textsuperscript{120}

After the MoMA show, which the Rockefellers attended, Rivera made good on his promise and traveled to Detroit to paint murals at the Institute of Arts. When he arrived, it became apparent that the Institute was not able to pay Rivera what he had been promised. Edsel Ford, Henry Ford’s son, put up the money to cover all costs.\textsuperscript{121} When finished, the mural caused quite the stir. One panel depicted what appeared to be Joseph

\textsuperscript{115} Marnham, 231.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 232-234.
\textsuperscript{117} Carl Zigrosser Papers, 1931.
\textsuperscript{118} Marnham, 237.
\textsuperscript{119} Carl Zigrosser Papers, 24 June 1931.
\textsuperscript{120} Marnham, 237.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 240.
administering a vaccination to the baby Jesus while Mary looks on. Edsel Ford calmed
the storm by stating that he “liked the murals.” \(^{122}\)

While in Detroit, Rivera was approached by the Rockefellers about the possibility
of painting a mural in the newly built RCA Building in Manhattan. Rivera’s plan for the
mural, which focused around the role of science in the world, was approved. Rivera gave
Zigrosser a card that allowed him to visit the RCA building while the mural was being
painted. \(^{123}\) During the painting stage Rivera diverged from the plan and added the head
of Vladimir Lenin to the work, and this outraged everyone involved in commissioning the
work. When Rivera refused to change his work, he was paid in full for his services and
dismissed. Rivera wrote to Zigrosser, “I want to fix in my letter how much I esteem your
sympathy and your aid. If it is true that I have shown to the rich that above all one cannot
be bought, you also have show in to me with your attitude in a more noble fashion,
because I defend my own work and you have supported my position to defend a
friend.” \(^{124}\) The mural was completely destroyed. \(^{125}\) His next commission, to paint the
General Motors Building at the Chicago World’s Fair, was cancelled. He painted one
more time, for the New Workers School in New York, before leaving New York
forever. \(^{126}\) Rivera returned to Mexico with his wife Frida Kahlo in 1934. He remained
relatively quiet for his first two years back in his homeland. Then, in 1936, he urged
President Cárdenas to give refuge to Leon Trotsky. Trotsky arrived in January of 1937,
moving with his wife into Rivera and Kahlo’s Blue House. This friendship lasted until

\(^{122}\) Ibid, 245.
\(^{123}\) *Carl Zigrosser Papers*, no date.
\(^{124}\) Ibid, 17 May 1933.
\(^{125}\) Hamill, 252-255.
\(^{126}\) Ibid, 256-257.
1939, when Rivera found out that Kahlo had been having an affair with Trotsky. Trotsky and his wife moved to a house nearby.\textsuperscript{127}

Ironically given his experience with Rockefeller, but accurately in terms of his business dealings, Diego Rivera was labeled as a Yankee sympathizer at the beginning of the 1930s, a political label that ruined his credibility as both an activist and as a political artist in Mexico. He had painted a mural commissioned by Ambassador Dwight Morrow, a move that seemed to temporarily exile him from the communist and artistic scenes in Mexico. For these reasons, he traveled to the United States to work under more favorable conditions. But America was predominantly interested in his artistic abilities, thinking of his political leanings as more of an intriguing personal characteristic that made him an exotic character. When he added Vladimir Lenin's head to his mural in the RCA building, he was fired, his next commission was cancelled, and he returned to Mexico. The political sentiments of the United States had effectively terminated his ability to produce art in the United States, albeit a temporary termination. Rivera then petitioned the Mexican government to grant asylum to Leon Trotsky and then invited Trotsky to live with him and his wife Frida Kahlo. The political implications, and the work required to get Trotsky into the country, necessarily affected Rivera's artistic production and how he was viewed. He was certainly communist again, though the communist movement was irreparably fragmented by this time and the Stalinists opposed Rivera and Trotsky. Among non-Communists, which included the vast majority of the Mexican population, this was also sensational, which again must have altered how Rivera was regarded.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 189-190.
The political relationship between the United States and Mexico seemed to have taken a step back by the end of the 1930s. Most of the progress made in the earlier part of the decade appeared to have been forgotten in the wake of the oil expropriation of 1938. According to Daniels, "Two American public officials...kept their heads while all about them were losing theirs. They were Franklin Roosevelt in the White House, who had proclaimed the Good Neighbor doctrine, and Josephus Daniels." They maintained that they would not act until all possible attempts had been made within the Mexican courts. Secretary of State Cordell Hull claimed that it was "extremely dangerous" for the United States to take the position that Americans "were under no circumstances 'entitled to better treatment in foreign countries than the nationals of those countries.'" Hull was stating what most of the businessmen were thinking; the United States had for so long received special treatment in foreign countries, including Mexico, that the idea that this was not the case anymore was preposterous. Roosevelt responded by stating that it was "our common determination to solve our problems in a spirit of friendly cooperation." Daniels was of the same thinking as Roosevelt; his goal was to "try to understand the Mexican side of the complicated oil question," to avoid allowing "the needs of the oil companies to dictate American policy," and to reject "any form of coercion."

While the Mexican people celebrated the expropriation as an action that gave them a new, invigorated sense of national pride, the Americans were struggling with determining a next step. The businessmen wanted retaliation and a renunciation of the expropriation. Daniels and Roosevelt called not for renunciation or retaliation but fair

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128 Daniels, 228.
129 Cronon, 146.
130 Daniels, 242.
131 Cronon, 154.
compensation. As Daniels had noted before, a new era was dawning, and not just in Mexico but in Mexico’s relationship with the United States. It was clear that President Cárdenas clearly had no intention of being bullied into submission by Washington. Daniels summed up the United States’ view when he said that they now took the stance that one should “never draw unless you mean to shoot,” implying that America had no intention of threatening intervention unless it planned to see it through, and, through the Good Neighbor Policy, that it had no intention of intervening in Mexican matters unless they involved American soil. When Cárdenas promised to compensate the oil companies, Roosevelt saw it as “a very satisfactory thing.” In Daniels’ eyes, Cárdenas had a “determination to accomplish that which other Mexican politicians only promised.”

Much like most other Mexican artists, José Clemente Orozco and Leopoldo Méndez survived the turbulent political atmosphere and were successful in the United States. However, Orozco and Méndez had little contact with Zigrosser during the 1930s. Orozco lived in New York from 1929 until 1934. He became close with Alma Reed and was subsequently loyal to her and to her Delphic Studios. His shows in 1929 and 1930 were very well received, and his popularity grew each year. He completed a mural for Pomona College in Los Angeles in 1930. He also completed murals for the New School for Social Research later in 1930 and for Dartmouth College in 1932. These murals, in addition to the shows he did throughout the country (New York; Chicago; Dartmouth College; La Porte, Indiana), made Orozco very popular. He was invited to work for Frank Lloyd Wright, an offer he declined on the principle that he did not want to decorate

\[132\] Ibid, 203.
\[133\] Ibid, 201.
\[134\] Ibid, 113.
houses. He painted politically charged work, but it was more social commentary than an attempt to spur change and create a scene as Rivera did. In 1934 Orozco returned to Mexico to paint a mural in the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. He continued to have shows in the United States, and he returned to New York for the American Artist’s Congress with many other Mexican artists, including Siqueiros and Leopoldo Méndez. After this show, he remained in Mexico until 1940.\textsuperscript{135}

Méndez traveled to California in 1930 for a short time and then returned to Mexico to become the director of the Section of Drawing and Plastic Arts in the Secretaria de Educación Publica, a position that kept him from traveling far from Mexico City. In 1933, he helped form the LEAR, discussed earlier, whose shows in the United States increased Méndez’s popularity. He had shows in Wisconsin, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Méndez’s work, in its artistic importance, is as important as the work of the Big Three. He was, however, much more focused on what he could do for Mexico. His shows in the United States were important to him, but his goal was to better his home country, and this meant staying primarily in Mexico. At the end of the decade, in 1939, he returned to the United States, traveling through the American South up to New York City on a Guggenheim Fellowship.\textsuperscript{136} While he had shows in the United States, his inability to travel there more often and his time-consuming work of producing art for the LEAR definitely altered how his art was perceived; his politics and the political atmosphere of Mexico dictated how, when, and where his works were distributed.

\textsuperscript{135} Reed, 93, 97, 107, 130, 169, 227, 266, 272, 275, 278.
\textsuperscript{136} Deborah Caplow, \textit{Leopoldo Méndez: Revolutionary Art and the Mexican Print} (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2007), 85, 89, 93, 134, 152, 153.
In 1932, Roosevelt began his attempt to pull his country out of the Great Depression. In 1934, Cárdenas began to tackle the same issue in Mexico. Their strategies were similar, but their goals of economic recovery did not necessarily benefit the neighbor; tensions were bound to arise. This tension manifested itself throughout the decade, most notably in the oil expropriation of 1938 and its aftermath. Perhaps most notable about the American reaction is the hesitancy with which they relinquished their former role of policeman in Latin America. Mexico under Cárdenas asserted itself in a way it had not done before. The United States protested, but it did not intervene. While American businessmen and many politicians were outraged, the U.S.-Mexico relationship did not crumble as many predicted. The power dynamic between the two countries had begun to shift, with Mexico asserting itself more forcefully and America choosing not to intervene when it was deemed unnecessary.

While the expropriation could have destroyed the relationship between the two nations, the cultural exchange remained vibrant. As Delpar notes, “The presence of Orozco, Rivera, and other artists in the United States, coupled with the promotional efforts of their supporters, contributed to an explosion of interest in Mexican art” throughout the 1930s.137 And this explosion of interest was not just found in a small group of elite members of society. Mexican art was exhibited all over the United States to record crowds.138 This interest was not without its problems. Mexican art was politically charged. Early in the decade, this was intriguing and exotic to capitalist Americans. However, when American businessmen sponsored the art, overtly communist messages were not appreciated. Diego Rivera placed Lenin’s head in his art,

137 Delpar, 86.
and Rockefeller, the patron, cancelled the work. Rivera was soon forced to leave the States due to the backlash. And when Mexican artists dabbled in American political controversies, the situation was worse. David Alfaro Siqueiros called for justice in the case of the Scottsboro Nine, and he was deported and not allowed to return to the United States for many years. When Mexico did not support the Mexican artists, mainly due to political policy shifts, Mexican artists sought out a home and an audience in the United States. When the same Mexican artists who had left Mexico for political reasons became entangled in American politics, they were forced to leave the United States. The political atmosphere of the time had an incredible impact on the production and distribution of Mexican art throughout the 1930s.

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139 See footnote 97.
PART III: 1939-1945

WORLD WAR II AND THE 1944 POSADA SHOW AT THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

When the decade of the 1940s began, Carl Zigrosser was still the director of the Weyhe Gallery in New York City. He had been there since the gallery’s inception in 1919, and he had turned it into a powerhouse in the art scene in the United States. In the late 1920s, when Mexican art became increasingly popular, he positioned himself and the Weyhe Gallery at the forefront of the “vogue of things Mexican,” establishing relationships with important Mexican artists and important Americans, including artists, dignitaries, and businessmen, involved in the Mexican art world. In 1930 he traveled to Mexico on a purchasing trip, using the experience to create more connections and strengthen the position of the Weyhe Gallery in its goal to be a major dealer of Mexican drawings, paintings, and prints throughout the rest of the decade.

While Mexican art was still popular in 1940, the American public was more focused on the events of World War II, which the Americans would not join until 1941. While the prevailing sentiment was that the United States would eventually need to join the war, the hope was that they could wait as long as possible to avoid as many American deaths as possible. The relationship between the United States and Mexico, both culturally and politically, were strained in the years preceding 1940. The United States’ Good Neighbor Policy seemed to be working during the 1930s, but in 1938 Cardenas announced the full and irrevocable expropriation of all oil in Mexico that was held by foreign companies. In many ways, the onset of World War II forced both Mexico and the
United States to alter their positions in relation to each other in order to unite against the Axis powers.

Carl Zigrosser was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1939 “for research on American prints.” Zigrosser did not leave much in his autobiography about his final years at the Weyhe Gallery, presumably because, as he puts it, “the last few years at the Gallery were in many ways unpleasant and oppressive.” He notes for example that Weyhe’s response to his receipt of a Guggenheim Fellowship was “to reduce my salary.” After Zigrosser returned to the Gallery from his travels around America, he was contacted by Fiske Kimball, the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, about Zigrosser’s interest in becoming the curator of the Print Department at the Museum. Zigrosser “accepted it gladly.” On June 20, 1940, Zigrosser wrote to Kimball, “I am writing to tell you that I accept with pleasure the post of Print Curator at the Philadelphia Museum…I would appreciate it if you would hold my acceptance absolutely confidential until such time as I can inform Mr. Weyhe of my decision.” This note lends itself to the idea that the relationship between Zigrosser and Weyhe had grown tense and that time was needed to figure out how to break the news about his acceptance of a new job.

Zigrosser states in his autobiography, “at the beginning of the year 1941 I took over the direction of the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.” While Zigrosser’s correspondence from the years 1919-1939 reflected a goal of private collecting, in the form of purchasing for the gallery so as to sell to private

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140 Zigrosser, 58.
141 Ibid, 58.
142 Ibid, 58.
143 Ibid, 58.
144 Carl Zigrosser Papers.
145 Zigrosser, 104.
collectors, his correspondence after beginning his work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art changes drastically. He writes, "I resolved that I would not buy prints for myself when I became a curator. Before I came to Philadelphia I had acquired a sufficient number of art works to decorate my home. Henceforth the Museum would be my collection." His goal was now to buy so that the Museum, and thus the public, would benefit. Private collecting, his previous profession, would be critical to his work, however. Much of his correspondence during this period is addressed to wealthy men and women who had amassed huge collections of art and whom Zigrosser felt would want to donate some or all of them to the Philadelphia Museum.

Much the same way in which the United States art scene and Mexican art were still invested in a strong relationship, the United States and Mexico desired a favorable atmosphere in their political relationship. In 1940, Mexico saw Avila Camacho, the candidate endorsed by Cárdenas, win the presidential election. The White House and the State Department recognized Avila Camacho before the presidential elections in the United States and before the inauguration in Mexico. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, riding the progress made since the stock market crash in 1929 and championing the Good Neighbor Policy, won the 1940 election and remained the president of the United States. The majority of conflicts between Mexico and the United States had been resolved by November 1940, and, in order to show how seriously Roosevelt took the issue of United States relations with Mexico and to demonstrate how much Mexico meant to the United States as an ally during the war years, U.S. vice president-elect Henry Wallace attended

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146 Ibid, 108.
the Mexican presidential inauguration in December 1940 as the United States' representative.\textsuperscript{148} Days after this, the United States and Mexico agreed to military, naval, and air defense pacts. Both sides were eager to remain close during the war. Mexico could offer raw materials and minerals while the United States could offer military and industrial technology. John Britton states, "the residue tensions surrounding the oil dispute slid to the background as collaboration took priority."\textsuperscript{149} For Mexico, two central benefits steered their political decision: hemispheric protection during World War II and the economic benefits of being close to the thriving U.S. economy.\textsuperscript{150} Josephus Daniels, the ambassador to Mexico who was in office until Roosevelt's second term ended in January 1941, summed up his country's position in relation to Mexico: "With Germany triumphant in Europe, and Japan hungrily eyeing south-east Asia, Washington had reached the sound conclusion that the time had come to mend fences below the border, significantly, through a 'global settlement' and that "an unfriendly Mexico, as it was from 1914-1918, could create manifold and difficult problems for us."\textsuperscript{151} For both nations, the U.S.-Mexican relationship was an immediate priority due to the dangers of World War II and the potential economic gains that a good relationship could create.

Just as the political relationship moved forward despite tense moments during the 1930s, the cultural relationship remained strong despite some harmful moments during the previous decade. Mexican art did not face a strong setback in the American market. However, despite the continued popularity of Mexican art in the United States, 1940 saw none of the famous Mexican artists residing in America. Diego Rivera, David Alfaro

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 534-535.
\textsuperscript{149} Britton, 184.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, 196.
\textsuperscript{151} Cronon, 258.
Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and Leopoldo Méndez were all in Mexico in the beginning of the year, painting and pushing political agendas. While Siqueiros and Méndez never made it to the United States in 1940, Rivera and Orozco returned in the middle of that year, both to paint murals, but under very different circumstances. To understand why Rivera was so quick to return to the United States after stating his dissatisfaction with the way America had treated him on his last visit, it is necessary to explore Siqueiros and his activity during 1940. Diego Rivera had been the man who brought Leon Trotsky to Mexico as a political refugee. Diego had allowed him to live and work at his house in the Coyoacan neighborhood of Mexico City. Sometime in late 1938 or early 1939, Trotsky began an affair with Frida Kahlo, Rivera’s wife.\(^{152}\) Kahlo, for her part, pursued the affair both due to Trotsky’s celebrity and as a way to exact revenge on Rivera for sleeping with Kahlo’s sister.\(^{153}\) When Rivera found out, he separated from Kahlo and forced Trotsky to move out of the house.\(^{154}\)

Siqueiros, who had returned from Spain a year earlier, was outraged over Trotsky’s presence in Mexico. To Siqueiros, “Trotsky was enjoying the protection of the Mexican government and under that protection was directing operations against the Soviet Union and its aid to the Spanish Republic.”\(^{155}\) Siqueiros took matters into his own hands and organized an attack on Trotsky’s compound, the one he moved into after his falling out with Rivera. Early in the morning of May 24, Siqueiros and 25 others entered the compound, by paying a guard, tied up the five guards on duty, fired off around 200

\(^{152}\) Hamill, 190.
\(^{153}\) Marnham, 295.
\(^{154}\) Hamill, 191.
\(^{155}\) Stein, 116.
shots into Trotsky’s bedroom and study, and fled before the police showed up.\textsuperscript{156}

Trotsky, who hid under his bed with his wife lying on top of him, was unharmed.\textsuperscript{157}

Siqueiros' central role in the attack was soon discovered, and a manhunt began to find him.\textsuperscript{158} Rivera and Trotsky had recently fallen out in a bitter sequence of events, and “fearful of being dragged into the case, Rivera hurriedly packed his bags” to seek “refuge in the north.”\textsuperscript{159} Due to the Rockefeller fiasco, it would be easy to assume that he was going to be denied access to the United States. However, Rivera had been working secretly as an informant for the State Department of the United States for many months before the attack. When he wanted to flee, he used his position to arrange for a Border Crossing Card and received a one-year visa at the border.\textsuperscript{160}

Rivera had already been to San Francisco, ten years earlier, to paint a mural for the Pacific Stock Exchange. He accepted an invitation to create a work for the Golden Gate International Exposition and painted his rendition of the Exposition’s theme of ‘Pan-American Unity’ on ten panels on movable steel frames.\textsuperscript{161} He painted outdoors everyday for six months at Treasure Island, an island off the coast of San Francisco, where thousands of tourists watched him work throughout the summer.\textsuperscript{162} On August 21, Rivera was informed that Ramón Mercader, an ardent Stalinist, had driven an ice pick into the back of Trotsky’s head.\textsuperscript{163} In response, Diego had Kahlo come to stay with him in San Francisco and he employed “an armed guard to stand beside the scaffold, later

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 118-119.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, 119.
\textsuperscript{158} Hamill, 192.
\textsuperscript{159} Stein, 119; Hamill, 192.
\textsuperscript{160} Hamill, 192-194.
\textsuperscript{161} Marnham, 295.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, 295.
\textsuperscript{163} Hamill, 194.
explaining that he feared reprisals from Trotskyists who suspected him of being involved” in the murder.\textsuperscript{164} This mural featured Stalin “as a hooded assassin. Trotsky does not appear at all.\textsuperscript{165} These panels, when political, were anti-Communist, but they were “more light-hearted, almost apolitical,” a noticeable break from all of his previous work, which overwhelmed the eyes with its political messages.\textsuperscript{166} After the Golden Gate International Exposition, Rivera returned to Mexico and did not travel to the United States again. According to Hamill, Rivera became a champion of “Mexico’s lost Indian culture,” “inspired by his own need to reconcile his account of the Indian experience of the Revolution and the reality of that experience.”\textsuperscript{167} While Rivera had long been fascinated with Mexico’s indigenous culture, it truly became the central theme of his work after he moved away from creating ideologically communist art. In 1947, he painted possibly his most impressive mural in the Hotel del Prado, just south of the Alameda Park in Mexico City. In this mural he painted Mexico’s history through its most notable figures. In the middle of the mural is a young Rivera, standing in front of Frida Kahlo, acting as his mother figure, and holding hands with \textit{la calavera Catrina}, wearing a boa meant to represent Quetzalcoatl and who in turn has her arms linked with her creator, José Guadalupe Posada, the “father of Mexican art.”

Orozco also returned to the United States in 1940, although he went to New York to paint a mural for the Museum of Modern Art. As Alma Reed notes, “Orozco’s mural was the featured exhibit in the contemporary section of the vast panorama of Mexican

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\textsuperscript{164} Marnham, 295. \textsuperscript{165} Ibid, 295. \textsuperscript{166} Ibid, 299. \textsuperscript{167} Ibid, 303.
\end{flushright}
aesthetic creation entitled Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art.\textsuperscript{168} After the exhibition ended, Orozco returned to Mexico, where he painted a mural in the Supreme Court of Justice in Mexico City.\textsuperscript{169} He, much like Diego Rivera, would not return to the United States, although he would continue to paint and his art continued to be popular in both countries.

Leopoldo Méndez, known for his printmaking and for helping found the Taller de Gráfica Popular, did not travel to the United States in the 1940s. He remained in Mexico working on anti-fascist art in response to Germany and its actions. Deborah Caplow writes, “a photograph from the early 1940s shows a group of TGP artists, Méndez among them, posed in front of a wall of antifascist prints displayed at the Taller’s workshop.”\textsuperscript{170} Méndez then helped prepare \textit{El libro negro}, the Black Book, which “brought together an enormous amount of written and visual evidence about Nazi activities throughout Europe.”\textsuperscript{171} In response to the Holocaust, Méndez created \textit{Deportación a la muerte (Tren de la muerte)}, a print that depicts Jews being crowded into trains to be sent to Nazi concentration camps.\textsuperscript{172} This image was created in 1942. Méndez continued to create anti-Nazi, anti-fascist prints until the end of the war, but his illustrations for \textit{Incidentes melódicos del mundo irracional} were much less grave and severe, and this book sold thousands of copies in both Mexico and the United States.\textsuperscript{173} While there was no direct communication between Zigrosser and Méndez at this time, it can be assumed, as Méndez was a famous printmaker working in the Mexican style and Zigrosser was ran a

\textsuperscript{168} Reed, 289.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, 290.
\textsuperscript{170} Caplow, 159.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, 163.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, 165.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, 177.
gallery that specialized in Mexican prints, that the Weyhe Gallery had Méndez prints in stock throughout this period.

Siqueiros, after his attack on Trotsky, spent four and half months hiding before his capture, after which he spent six months in jail before his trial began. Instead of sentencing him to further time in prison, President Camacho had Siqueiros exiled to Chile. Chile, however, did not want him. Camacho struck a deal with Chile to allow Siqueiros to remain in an isolated town 400 miles south of Santiago and paint a mural at a new elementary school donated by the Mexican government after a recent earthquake.

Siqueiros stayed in Chile into 1941, but he desired to return to the United States to continue his art career. “Nelson Rockefeller offered to sponsor a mural to be painted in New York by Siqueiros and a team of Latin American artists at the end of a planned speaking tour” through Latin America in support of the Allies in World War II.

Siqueiros made good on his end of the deal, traveling all over Latin America speaking in support of the Allies and against fascism and Nazism. Siqueiros was not allowed back in the United States, and he often “conveyed...his great disappointment at being deprived the opportunity to paint once again in New York City.” In November 1943 Siqueiros returned to Mexico, disappointed and poor, after years spent traveling through Latin America in support of the Allies. Once back in Mexico, however, he was able to find many commissions and, although he was unable to return to the United States as he had desired, he was able to continue painting.

174 Stein, 125.
175 Ibid, 132-133.
176 Ibid, 137.
178 Ibid, 140.
179 Ibid, 145.
While World War II dominated the international political stage, national politics were never far from the art produced by Mexican artists. Rivera's falling out with Trotsky and subsequent flight to the United States to avoid being implicated in Siqueiros' attack on Trotsky, changed his platform and his audience. Siqueiros was sent to jail, and then exiled to Chile as a way to keep him from causing more trouble for the Mexican government, which altered his ability to produce and distribute his art as he may have wanted. For Méndez, art and politics were inseparable, each one influencing the other. To him, it was the artist's obligation to speak out against these horrifying injustices.

Josephus Daniels, who had established a solid base for the Mexico-United States relationship during the early years of World War II and who had done so much for the Mexico-United States relationship in general, was set to return to the United States in 1941. Before he left, and before George Messersmith took the position, he worked hard to achieve a few agreements between the two nations. Mexico agreed to stop selling oil to Japan in January 1941, a move that hurt Mexico economically but bettered its relationship with the United States. In April of 1941 an agreement was signed that gave the United States access to military bases in Mexico. Messersmith, who arrived later in 1941, helped arrange for Mexico's declaration in January 1942 that it would break all diplomatic relations with the Axis powers.

The United States declared war with Japan, Germany, and Italy in December 1941, and they gave Mexico the option to be "in the war as an ally or out as an

181 Cronon, 260.
182 Stiller, 172.
enemy." In May 1942 German U-boat sank two Mexican ships, the *Portero de Llano* and the *Faja de Oro*, killing a total of 12 Mexicans. On May 28, Camacho decided to act, and “an extraordinary session of Congress assembled to hear the president’s war message. The legislature approved by a 53 to 0 vote.” The Mexicans had joined World War II on the side of the Allies. The Mexico-United States relationship was very amicable due to both economic factors and the anti-Axis sentiment shared by the two nations. In January of 1944, “Cárdenas said he would be open to ‘constructive changes’ to the petroleum law.” The man who had said that the expropriation would be permanent and irrevocable was willing to amend it; the relationship grew warmer. A month later, an agreement was signed that ended “a century-old dispute over the control and apportionment of three international rivers: the Colorado, the Tijuana, and the Rio Grande.” Messersmith stated that the only way to have positive negotiations with Mexico was “on the basis of full equality and complete understanding,” an idea championed by Roosevelt, Daniels, and now Messersmith. This policy allowed the United States to negotiate a new deal on Mexican oil and end a century-old river dispute. Mexico felt that the collaborative “anti-Axis crusade laid a foundation for postwar cooperation.” This foundation would help guide negotiations on a much more equal playing field and would keep the two nations closely bound economically.

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183 Ibid, 177.
184 Ibid, 176-77.
185 Ibid, 177.
186 Ibid, 205.
187 Ibid, 217.
188 Ibid, 193.
189 Ibid, 175.
George Messersmith's career was politics, but he was forthright with his views on culture and art. He felt that, in Mexico-United States relations during this period, there were two categories of cultural exchange: "worthy ones, like artistic exchanges…and unworthy ones, like…Hollywood movie stars on tour, that smacked of cultural imperialism, insulted Latin intelligence, and probably converted not a single soul to the Allied cause." Carl Zigrosser was most likely a man of similar thinking. Dealing in Mexican art was a significant part of his career at the Weyhe Gallery. And in his new job at the Philadelphia Art Museum, that trend continued. His goal was "an ever-increasing collection of masterpieces in all schools, even the unfashionable, together with, in equitable proportion, the works of young and living talent." While Zigrosser was very interested in American prints, as his Guggenheim fellowship to study American printmaking would suggest, he did not have a preference between the American, Mexican, and European schools. His work was dictated by popular opinion, which meant his efforts went to collecting all schools of art so as to appeal to the widest audience. His thought was that if it was available at a reasonable price it should be gotten, and if it can be gotten for free it is even better. Zigrosser's correspondence throughout this period represents his shift from directing the Weyhe Gallery to running the Prints and Drawings Department at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. There is little to no correspondence with artists, except when there is a possibility of an exhibition and those letters only ask for permission to use certain pieces. The other letters are directed at people who could potentially help the Museum in some way, whether it be giving advice or, more likely, giving private collections to the Museum as gifts. All correspondence before the middle

190 Ibid, 182.
191 Zigrosser, 105.
of 1943 discusses a variety of topics, but they are all related to the Museum and to increasing its collection. In 1944, Zigrosser arranged a massive show on José Guadalupe Posada at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and almost all of his correspondence from this year relates to this show and its execution.

After Zigrosser had agreed to take the job in Philadelphia but before he had finished his time at the Weyhe Gallery, Fiske Kimball was sending him letters about situations at the Museum. On October 4, 1940, Kimball wrote, “It is generally supposed that Mr. [Frank] Thomson’s will leaves a very large sum to Harvard, of which he is a most active alumnus. I was therefore interested when he said that he is very much distressed about Harvard, which is becoming ‘all Communists and Jews’...Accordingly I should judge that, for the first time, there might be some chance for the Museum with him.”

One of the most important things for Zigrosser and the Philadelphia Museum of Art was the ability to find men and women who were willing to donate either money or art to the Museum; this letter describes a situation that most likely ended in failure, but Kimball and Zigrosser were obliged to look into it. Zigrosser, when he had funds to use, called upon the contacts he made during his time at the Weyhe Gallery to provide him with bargains.

On September 30, 1941, Zigrosser wrote to George Biddle, “I have managed to obtain a small amount which I have to make go a long way. I would like to buy some of your prints but the sum at my disposal would amount to only a token payment for the kind of adequate representation that I would like.”

On November 5, Zigrosser wrote, “I have $50 to spend and I should like to assemble a representative group of prints from

192 Carl Zigrosser Papers.
193 Ibid.
all periods.\textsuperscript{194} While Zigrosser wanted to be able to pay adequately for the works he desired, he was forced to lean on friends he had made earlier in his life to be able to accept less simply because they were friends. J.B. Neumann, the director of the New Art Circle Gallery, wrote to Zigrosser on May 8, 1942, "I am very pleased that you like the prints. More will follow."\textsuperscript{195} Zigrosser was in contact with Neumann about purchasing art displayed in the New Art Circle Gallery, and Zigrosser, as stated earlier, used contacts made during his time at the Weyhe to help in his quest to amass a huge collection in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{196}

Interestingly enough, a man who donated much to the Museum was Zigrosser himself. On May 25, 1943, Zigrosser received a letter of receipt and gratitude over the donation of a few works by Diego Rivera. As stated earlier, Zigrosser during this period was rarely in contact with artists directly. One exception to this was his correspondence with Jean Charlot. Jean Charlot was a French artist who was raised in Mexico, making his style Mexican. He was also a writer and art critic. On June 25, 1943, Zigrosser wrote, "I have $50 with which I would like to buy some of your prints for the Museum collection. By what would you like to be represented in the Museum?"\textsuperscript{197}

At this point, Zigrosser turned his attention to preparations for the Posada show he wanted to hold in the winter of 1944. Perhaps due to the artists involved in the popularization of Mexican art during the 1920s and 1930s, Posada became an almost mythological figure in Mexican art; he became the first man to create truly Mexican art, the common ancestor to all post-Revolution artists working in Mexico. In the first half of

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Neumann also donated a large amount of Mexican art to the PMA.
\textsuperscript{197} \textit{Carl Zigrosser Papers}. 

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1944, the Art Institute of Chicago had a large Posada show. On February 23, Katharine Kuh, the Public Relations Counsel at the AIC, wrote to Zigrosser, "I am writing to ask you a great favor, because I know that you are the best person in the United States to advise me on Mexican prints. You know that we are having a large Posada show...I am wondering if the Philadelphia museum has example by Orozco, Zalce, Chavez Morado, O'Higgins, etc., which obviously derived from Posada's influence...Have you by chance got one or do you know where I might find one." On March 8, 1944, Daniel Catton Rich, Director of Fine Arts at the AIC, wrote to Zigrosser, "We are planning a Seminar on the Posada Exhibition and the date is Friday, April 28. We should like to invite you to speak on Posada as a Printmaker. This might include his relation to modern Mexican prints as well as a discussion of his technique and style. We are also asking René d'Harnoncourt, Fernando Gamboa, and Walter Pach." Zigrosser agreed to speak, and his ability to see the show in Chicago was very helpful as he arranged his own Posada show in Philadelphia.

In order to prepare for his speech, and in order to gain some more information on Posada for his own show later in the year, Zigrosser wrote to Leopoldo Méndez, "I have to give a lecture on Posada, his style and technique, and his relation to other Mexican printmakers, at the opening of the big Posada show at the Art Institute of Chicago on April 28...there are a number of points about the development of his style which are not very clear to me." At the end of this note Zigrosser added, "I own several of your wood engravings, and so does the Museum. I am also very much interested in the Taller

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198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid, 27 March 1944.
de Grafica Popular and consider it one of the important movements of today. The Museum purchased a few prints from the Taller and I wish we could have bought more." He also wrote to Jean Charlot for advice: "There are still a number of points about the development of his style that are not clear, particularly the chronological record and the medium in which he worked." Much like his note to Méndez, he added, "Quite a while ago I wrote you that I had $50 for which to buy some of your prints. I still would like to do so." His final note for advice went to Fernando Gamboa, another speaker at the event. He sent Gamboa a letter with seventeen questions about Posada's style.

On March 31, Charlot responded to Zigrosser's letter, "I did answer your last letter by sending you two of my latest color lithographs" and then wrote out a long description of Posada's style and stylistic evolution. Zigrosser also received a letter from Gamboa titled, "RESPUESTAS SOBRA ALGUNOS ASPECTOS DE LA OBRA DE POSADA," which gave answers to the seventeen questions Zigrosser had posed in his letter dated March 28. After giving his speech, Zigrosser turned his attention to the Posada show in Philadelphia. A press release from the Museum states,

"On November 11th the art museum will open an exhibition of prints by José Guadalupe Posada...Posada has been called the Printmaker of the Mexican people. He functioned in the same way the Currer and Ives served the people of the United States...One section, which might be called Posada the Printmaker, covers every aspect of his prolific career as a graphic artist. The second, called Posada's Mexico, throws light on his background and time, and is rich in material

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201 Ibid.
202 Ibid, 28 March 1944.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid, 28 March 1944.
205 Ibid.
206 Ibid.
illustrating his life, customs, outlook, and aspirations of the Mexican people... [The show] will run from November 11th to December 10th."

In a note dated October 28, Zigrosser describes some information about the private viewing that would take place before the exhibition opened to the public. He called for American and Mexican flags to be at the platform, where the mayor of Philadelphia and the Mexican Ambassador to the United States would say a few words. Zigrosser also called for a Mexican flag to be flown outside the Museum, but it was to be smaller than the American flag and flown at a lower height. These details are important in that they stress the political implications of the Posada show. This show, with guests including the Mexican ambassador and the mayor of Philadelphia, was a chance to demonstrate the great cultural relationship between the two nations, to show that America appreciated Mexico’s cultural and artistic history, and to show that the Philadelphia Museum of Art wanted to prove itself as an important actor in the U.S.-Mexico cultural relationship. Once again, the worlds of art and politics were intertwined.

The Posada exhibition in Philadelphia displayed hundreds of works by Posada, and the show was well received by visitors. After the show in Philadelphia was over, it was shipped to Mexico to be exhibited at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The Philadelphia show is very representative of the relationship between the United States and Mexico during this period. The years preceding it brought the two nations together, but the years after, and after World War II ended, saw a noticeable change in the attitude. 1940 saw the Mexican artists most known during the vogue make their last visits to the United States. Diego Rivera went to San Francisco and José Clemente

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207 Ibid, no date given.
208 Ibid.
Orozco went to New York City. When they left to return to Mexico, they would not return. Helen Delpar writes that the “enormous vogue of things Mexican” really ended in 1935, but as can be seen through the work of Zigrosser, it was alive and well through the middle of the 1940s. While it was not nearly as strong as it was during the 1930s, it remained as a lingering presence on the art scene in the United States well into the 1940s. The José Guadalupe Posada show in Philadelphia is a fitting manner to mark the end of an era. It was an impressive exhibition that displayed not just Mexico’s cultural history but also its political past. While the art of Mexico during and after the Mexican Revolution contained political subject matter, the exhibitions of the United States during the 1920s and 1930s were focused strictly on the art and ignored the political situation that helped shape the works. The Posada show in Philadelphia embraced the political situation that so greatly influenced his works. “Posada the Printmaker” discussed the art for its artistic qualities. “Posada’s Mexico” shed light on the Mexico in which Posada lived and worked, the atmosphere, both cultural and political, in which Posada created his prints. The Posada show did what no show had done before: it acknowledged politics, it acknowledged the influence of politics on art, and it presented this influence as part of its exhibition.

Zigrosser’s departure to the Philadelphia Museum of Art occurred around the same time that a shift took place in the Mexico-United States cultural relationship. No longer were the artists needed; only their art was necessary. Galleries still existed, but they were losing the prominence they had held in the 1930s. Museums were taking over, becoming the preferred venue for artists. The Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art held more clout than
any gallery could; they represented the cultural pulse of an entire city, not only that of a single collector or collecting agency. These museums altered the cultural relationship between the two countries. The focus was no longer on private collectors amassing huge caches of Mexican art. Instead, the main issue was now obtaining these collections for museums in order to show them off to the public. Mexico and the United States were drawn close by the onset of World War II, and this changing political environment probably at least temporarily revitalized the fading Mexican vogue. However, art trends change quickly. Mexican art could not be “in” forever. The war period extended the years of the vogue of things Mexican, but the world, and the art world along with it, was changing.
CONCLUSION

In 1954 Harry F. Guggenheim appointed Zigrosser a trustee of the Guggenheim Museum. While the Guggenheim was searching for a new director, Zigrosser “practically ran the museum” himself. When James Johnson Sweeney became the Director Zigrosser remained a trustee but focused his attention on his duties at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1955 Henri Marceau became Director of the PMA and he appointed Carl Zigrosser Vice-Director. Throughout Zigrosser’s time at the PMA he served as a consultant to the Carnegie Study of the Arts of the United States. Zigrosser served in his positions with the Carnegie Study, the Guggenheim Museum, and at the PMA until his retirement in 1963. After his retirement, he continued to work with the museum as a curator emeritus and as an advisor the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. He also continued to play a role in the art world by staying active “as a critic, historian, writer and lecturer” and he “was associated with the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art in the organization of exhibitions.”

While at the Weyhe Gallery, Zigrosser became prominent as a respected collector and dealer of prints, and he became especially well known for his work within the “enormous vogue of things Mexican.” When he became the Curator of the Department of Prints and Drawings at the PMA, Zigrosser became prominent in the wider art scene in the United States, working with national organizations and other museums even after he retired in 1963.

209 Zigrosser, 116.
210 Ibid, 115-122.
211 Photographs were added to this department during Zigrosser’s tenure.
212 “Carl Zigrosser, Prints Curator At Philadelphia Museum, Dies.”
Carl Zigrosser was deeply involved in the popularization of Mexican art that occurred in the United States during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. In the late 1920s he began to contact Mexican artists who had been involved in the cultural nationalist project promoted by President Álvaro Obregón. These artists were facing a difficult situation in Mexico after the election of Plutarco Elías Calles to the presidency.

Obregón’s Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education was José Vasconcelos, and he was the man who had designed the cultural nationalist program. He resigned in protest after Calles’ election, and Francisco Iturbide, his replacement, kept only Diego River and Roberto Montenegro on the government payroll. The revolutionary Mexican art was often communist ideologically, and the United States found it very exotic and entrancing. The artists involved in the production of this art now called on the United States to grant them asylum and a space to create new works. Ironically, the ardently anti-Communist United States came to be viewed as a safe haven for these ardently Communist artists.

The end of the 1920s saw many Mexican artists travel to the United States for shows, and one of the preferred spaces for an exhibition was the Weyhe Gallery under the direction of Carl Zigrosser. Political sentiment in Mexico initially embraced the art being produced for the cultural nationalist project, but when Calles took office the voices that disapproved of the art being produced became more prominent and the artists were forced to search for new spaces in which to create and exhibit their work. To them, the United States, although ardently anti-Communist, was this space.

The 1930s saw the Weyhe Gallery rise to new heights. It became a central institution in the developing infatuation with Mexican art and culture. In 1930 Zigrosser traveled to Mexico on a purchasing trip, and while there he met many figures important
to the vogue, including Ambassador Dwight Morrow, René d’Harnoncourt, Diego Rivera, and William Spratling. Throughout this decade politics and culture were constantly intertwined. Mexican politics was often very eager to satisfy the desires of the United States, but some events, most notably the Oil Expropriation of 1938, threatened to destroy the entire relationship, both cultural and political, between the two nations. The political leanings of the Mexican artists so popular in the United States, and the political content of the work they produced, often tested the tolerance of American patrons. Diego Rivera was deported after refusing to remove the head of Vladimir Lenin from his mural for the Rockefellers. David Alfaro Siqueiros was deported after he protested in favor of the Scottsboro Nine. While Zigrosser and the art world were only interested in the art being produced as art, and saw the political leanings of the artists as fascinating characteristics and nothing else, the political atmosphere between the United States and Mexico, and the ideologies of the artists involved in creating Mexican art were incredibly influential in how and where art was produced during this time.

The 1940s saw a shift in all of this. Politically, both Mexico and the United States were interested in cooperation during World War II. Culturally, art was used as a way to unite the nations against fascism and Nazism. Culture was geared toward political goals. And a shift also occurred in that museums were beginning to monopolize the art world, leaving the majority of galleries struggling to survive. Carl Zigrosser became the Curator of Prints and Drawings at the PMA in 1940. The shift in his mindset, in that the museum was now his collection, represents a common trend during this period. Museums represented entire cities; they were the cultural conscience of the city in which they resided. Galleries could not claim this; they represented the tastes of one man or
company, and they could not compete with the resources of large museums. Mexican artists no longer traveled to the United States after 1941, although their art remained popular throughout the early part of this decade. World War II, and the call for Pan-American Unity, gave Mexican art, especially that art which promoted Pan-American ideals, a few more years of popularity in the United States.

Carl Zigrosser is excellent as a lens into the cultural exchange on an individualized basis. Helen Delpar's *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* is very broad, and Zigrosser helps make the vogue more understandable and accessible. John Britton, in *Revolution and Ideology: Images of the Mexican Revolution in the United States*, describes the politics that Delpar omit from their works, but it does not present a complete picture. Neither work discusses in any depth the control, whether intentional or not, that politics had over the production and circulation of the art being produced by Mexican artists. Throughout this thesis, many examples have been given that help us fill in this gap. Carl Zigrosser, both in his correspondence with artists and important figures active during this period and in his autobiography, avoided becoming involved in the political side of the vogue of things Mexican. Despite this, he gives an inside view into the political restraints on the cultural exchange between Mexico and the United States. He was unable to see Siqueiros during his 1930 trip to Mexico because Siqueiros was in jail for his political activities. Zigrosser received a letter from Diego Rivera that discussed the Rockefeller incident. Zigrosser refrained from discussing politics, but whether he wanted to be involved or not, his work necessitated navigating the political atmosphere of the time.
The José Guadalupe Posada show in Philadelphia is a fitting event to mark the beginning of the decline in the vogue, an impressive exhibition that displayed not just Mexico's cultural history but its political record, as well. It was an exhibition that acknowledged Mexico as the cultural force it was, and it was an exhibition that finally acknowledged Mexican history. For almost its entire existence, the United States had viewed Mexico as a lesser nation, and the United States only focused on how it could benefit from Mexico, what Mexico could provide. In this exhibition, Carl Zigrosser created an exhibit that displayed Mexican history for what it was: complicated and violent. And he created an exhibit that described what Mexico had been through, what Mexico was in its current, and what Mexico was striving for in the future. He created an exhibit that displayed Mexico in exactly the manner in which Mexico wanted to be displayed. The José Guadalupe Posada show of 1944 portrayed Mexico as a legitimate nation, as a nation with a history and with goals that were understandable and recognizable to the United States. Carl Zigrosser's desire was to exhibit art for art's sake; he did not want to be entangled in the world of politics. Zigrosser's endeavors, however, were intimately linked, for better or worse, to the political atmosphere of the times in which he worked. Perhaps it is fitting then that Carl Zigrosser, the man who never discussed politics, would be the one to demonstrate so clearly how interrelated the political and cultural spheres were during the "enormous vogue of things Mexican."
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