



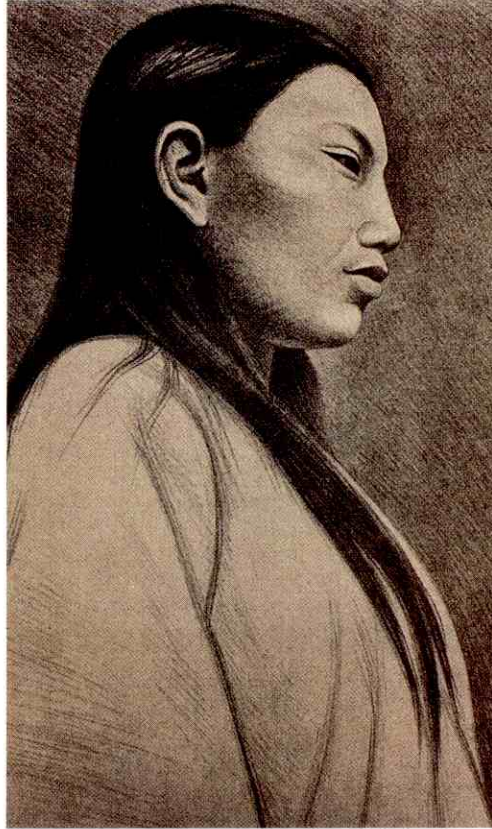
Photos reprinted courtesy of Raúl Anguiano

*The Earth*, 100 x 130 cm, 1956 (oil on canvas).

## Raúl Anguiano A WORLD IN PERPETUAL MOVEMENT

*Beatriz Vidal\**

**T**he splendid world of Raúl Anguiano bursts forth before our eyes. Yet again, we can envisage a whole gamut of creative possibilities that the artist has been able to shape in an ever-renewing process, painting and changing reality, extending its limits to all real and possible universes, transforming his world into something lucid, sensitive, accessible. In other words, he humanizes his surroundings, the cosmos.



*Na-Kin*, 1950 (lithograph).

Raúl Anguiano is known both in Mexico and abroad for the originality of the topics he deals with and for clear, defined visual language, easily comprehensible because his proposal is based on events, characters or facts of our folk culture that identify us and differentiate us from other countries.

He began in graphics in 1937 as one of the main founders of the Popular Graphics Workshop, together with Leopoldo Méndez, Luis Arenal, Pablo O'Higgins and Alfredo Zalce, among others. There, according to his teacher and friend José Sánchez,

he did his first lithograph, a portrait of Emiliano Zapata. Even today, Raúl Anguiano has two parallel careers, each developed with unlimited capacity enriched day by day: easel painting and graphics.

The art of Raúl Anguiano is not aesthetic recreation, but a personal, sponta-

neous response to the realities of our age. To approach his painting, the viewer must have a cultural background as vast as the artist himself. At 83, he helps anyone in need of it. He loves and admires Mexico and his generosity funds social services at the same time that he enriches our country's artistic and cultural patrimony. Anguiano works untiringly; he is a man of his land and his age. The charm of his figures, his objects, his dreams emanates from his infinite energy, and he recreates in each of his works the traditions, customs, myths and aesthetic and social interests that have motivated him all his life.

He found a vast folk typology and his art reflects Mexican life in its different aspects: work, fiestas, myths, silences, as well

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\* Director of Mexico City's National Print Museum.

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*Fishing Nets*, 101 x 179 cm, 1956 (oil on canvas).

as a permanent homage to Mexican women, always present in his craft.

In his murals and other visual art he communicates his great concern for daily things. It is on this that he bases his critique of the problems society faces. His graphic production expresses situations overlooked by many in this increasingly technical world subject to the media, since, constantly running, we do not have the time to discover who we are or what we are like.

Mural painter, sketch artist and engraver, Raúl Anguiano takes nourishment from the sources of traditional Mexican art, simultaneously using the precepts of modern painting. The motifs and influences in his work combine the ancient and the contemporary Mexican art as something specific and at the same time universal.

His work shows us Mexico City as a place where revelry and tragedy, hopelessness and a tenacious will to survive, and even the illusion of happiness all coexist. His paintings and engravings offer us a brisk nocturnal stroll through the corners of the metropolis that in the 1940s began to experience the frenzy of modernization at any cost: musical reviews and vaudeville

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in theaters and tents, whorehouses, the Sal6n Mexico (for dancing the *danz6n* and the mambo) and Garibaldi Square, the alleyways where some of his characters wander.

The feminine figure in Anguiano's work is the emblem of ancestral greatness that can be guessed at in the strong but tender faces of his women: women from the Lacandon jungle, Juchit6n, Veracruz and Cuetzala. His women are earthy, terrestrial; they are the mother and the source. The solid, heavy volume of their bodies give them a sculptural beauty; these are bodies which are temples of clay and *tezontle*, Mexico's red porous stone. They are aspects of a reality in which women are a basic element, a gravitational center around which the universe is organized.



*The Spinner*, 145 x 205 cm, 1958 (oil on canvas).

This artist's work, through a lifetime of training, constancy and an intimate relationship with his times and his people, shows a major commitment to social questions as well as a formidable command of sketching and color. Anguiano is one of the most genuine representatives of Mexican painting in the grand tradition, a current that, despite the changes in fashion over the years, has not painted itself out and whose influence continues in the expression of other pictorial movements.

His work includes the elements that have characterized Mexico's most outstanding visual artistic currents throughout its history: colors, themes, biographical and political itineraries, as well as variety, originality and his own style, common to the other great Mexican artists.

His style's spiritual particularity can be seen in the serenity that would almost seem like detachment if it were not for the after-effect of concern in his portraits, including his self-portraits. The colors share that same characteristic: even when they seem bright, they betray a certain circumspection.

As a participant in the main political and artistic events that have determined

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the life of Mexico in the postrevolutionary period, he devoted himself to group activism which helped define the indigenist and social nature of his work. Cautious of content and rigorous of technique, his painting has maintained an equilibrium which has given it both mastery and authenticity.

Although engraving demands a smaller format, Anguiano always tends toward monumental works because they echo a cosmogony animated by perpetual movement. His work fully deserves the special place it has attained in Mexican visual arts. His genius and openness has allowed him to sojourn peaceably through a world sometimes competitive and jealous of art. **MM**