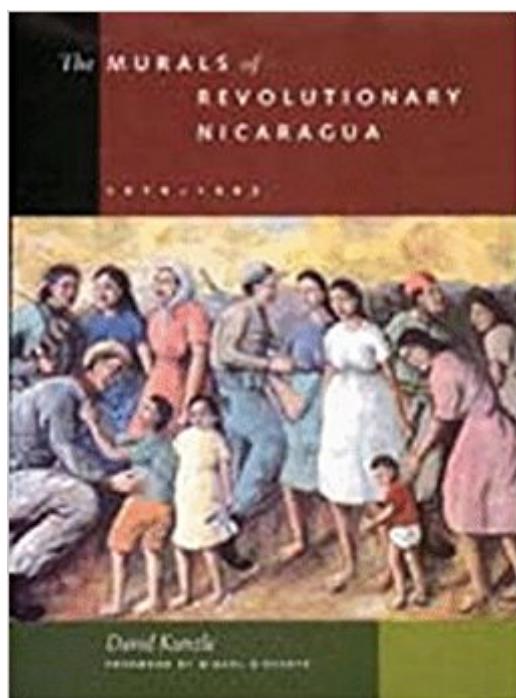


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The Murals Of Revolutionary Nicaragua, 1979–1992



Synopsis

In the years following Nicaragua's 1979 Sandinista Revolution, more than three hundred murals were created by Nicaraguan and international artist brigades. David Kunzle was profoundly moved by the aesthetic and political power of these murals, and when he saw that they were being destroyed after the Sandinistas were voted out in 1990, he resolved to document them. This visually exciting, emotionally compelling book is the result of his efforts. Today many of Nicaragua's murals have been obliterated, and Kunzle's book may be the only record of these works. Approximately eighty percent of the murals are reproduced here, many with extensive commentary. Artistic styles from the primitivist to the highly sophisticated are represented, showing themes of literacy, health, family, and always the Revolution. Kunzle outlines the historical conditions in Nicaragua—including U.S. interference—that gave rise to the Revolution and to the murals. He chronicles the politically vindictive destruction of many of the best murals and the rise and fall of Managua's Mural School. Kunzle also refers to other Nicaraguan public media such as billboards and graffiti, the great mural precedent in Mexico, and the more recent attempts at socialist art in Cuba and Chile. Nicaraguan murals became blackboards of the people, a forum for self-image, self-education, and popular autobiography. Kunzle pleads for the restoration of the surviving murals and for the revival of the mural movement, for it is, he says, "art that belongs to and benefits us all."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The use of large public wall murals was an important component of the Sandinista drive to change Nicaraguan society during the conflict torn years of the 1980s. Inspired by the powerful and

artistically superior work of the Mexican muralists of the first half of the century, the Nicaraguan murals present a trite array of muscular peasants, workers, and martyrs familiar from a host of American post office walls and Soviet posters. As the political climate of Nicaragua changes following the elections which toppled the Sandinistas many of the murals are being effaced. If the shrill and partisan text can be ignored, the catalog of photographs presents our only record of the foreign and native agitprop which colored a turbulent era in Nicaragua. For academic collections with an interest in political art. *?David McClelland, Temple Univ. Lib., Philadelphia* Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Public murals are, by their very nature, art of the people and are almost always political in content and tone. This is particularly true in Nicaragua, where the Sandinista Revolution inspired more than 300 murals depicting the insurrection and expressing the Sandinistas' beliefs and social goals. These powerful murals were painted by Nicaraguan and international artist brigades who overcame many obstacles, including such prosaic problems as a severe shortage of paint and other materials. For one passionate decade, these large-scale, vigorously composed, stylistically varied, and brilliantly hued murals inspired and enshrined change, then the Sandinistas were voted out in 1990, and the opposition began to destroy these emblems of anger and hope. Kunzle, a professor of art history at the University of California, resolved to document as many murals as he could and managed to photograph and research 80 percent of them. His book may stand as the only record of these vanished works. Kunzle provides an in-depth historical and political context for the creation of the murals, then describes and interprets each in detail. *Donna Seaman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.*

I remembered Chile's composer Victor Jara was killed during the first days of the fascist dictatorships in that South America nation. Jara represented a member of the people whose songs made become anger several military officials because of the high revolutionary contents they expressed. A similar concept happened with the murals in Nicaragua and well... what can I say when hospitals and medical centers were classified as military targets and the murals...too? Nothing.

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