

“law” was not the ultimate source of order but a tool, and a token, of negotiating parties, a framework that would further help to intellectually normalize *pronunciamientos*. And it might also help to answer the question of the origins of the *pronunciamiento* itself, by the way. On the other hand, it would render unnecessary the attempt by some of the contributors to this book to construe the Spanish liberal revolt of 1820 as the “model” for everything that happened in Mexico, *pronunciamiento*-wise. This position seems to me absurd anyway, since Riego’s revolt did not really rely on a manifesto, and Mexican *pronunciamientos*, as Germán Martínez Martínez points out in his essay, were all about written texts.

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Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution. By Rick A. López. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Pp. x, 424. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

Crafting México is a major contribution to the growing literature on nation, revolution, and *indigenismo* in postrevolutionary Mexico. Part One of the book offers perhaps the most insightful discussion to date of the origins and development of what author Rick López calls the *ethnicization* of Mexican national identity. In Part Two, López travels to the town of Olinalá, Guerrero, home to lacquer craftsmen and women whose work has figured prominently in the ethnicization of the postrevolutionary state and nation. López’s discussion of urban, cosmopolitan policy and policy-makers connects very well with his “bottom-up” study of rural, indigenous artisans and their relations with national and transnational trends and markets.

The book’s first chapter deepens López’s analysis of the 1921 India Bonita contest. As he notes, the Mexican state was too weak at the time to impose a “state project”; the contest was sponsored by the newspaper *El Universal*. Readers were invited to submit photographs of beautiful young indigenous women and were coached to identify those women with “authentic” indigenous traits. The winner, María Bibiana Uribe, appeared on the front page of *El Universal Ilustrado* holding a lacquered gourd from Olinalá. The press described her as being simple, passive, and melancholy. López concludes that the India Bonita became part of a conservative narrative of Mexican femininity and indigenous authenticity at a time when reformers claimed to be promoting a revolutionary reordering of society.

The following chapters explore the transnational and often-overlooked nature of the ethnicization of Mexican national identity. Mexicans who had spent the revolution abroad sponsored the 1921 Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Art. Influenced by European romantic modernism, they had returned to Mexico with a fresh appreciation for its indigenous peoples and their *artesanías*. Like the India Bonita contest, the Exhibition of Popular Art involved an education campaign, since state gover-

nors initially reported that their *indigenas* produced no art. Doctor Atl (Gerardo Murillo), who wrote the exhibition catalog, claimed that “Indian” art was a natural, agentless manifestation of Mexico’s collective racial and spiritual unconscious. This view denied indigenous artisans a political, economic, and creative voice, just as María Bibiana’s imposed authenticity denied her agency.

In the 1920s, American patrons Frances Toor, Anita Brenner, Frederick Davis, Frank Tannenbaum, Dwight Morrow, and others played major roles in promoting Mexican *artesanías*, improving U.S.-Mexican relations, and publicizing an ethnic Mexican national identity. This combination of state and private initiatives, national and transnational currents, and Mexican and foreign-born cultural promoters produced a “remarkably successful” integration of the Mexican population. By the 1940s, the efforts were paying off: “Intellectuals and state officials who in the 1920s had wrung their hands over the country’s cultural fragmentation now safely presumed that Mexico had achieved a compelling collective self and a high level of integration” (pp. 292–293).

The work of artisans—including lacquer work from Olinalá—was an important part of this process. Olinaltecos had nearly abandoned lacquer production in the late nineteenth century, but during the revolution, in the midst of a desperate struggle for survival, they returned to the craft that had distinguished the town since the time of the Aztecs. Olinalá’s artisans rediscovered the long-forgotten, exquisite *rayado* style in 1927, after the Austrian-born Count René d’Harnoncourt—one of many foreigners who celebrated Mexico’s postrevolutionary ethnic nationalism—showed them antique pieces.

Starting in the late 1930s, Olinaltecos struggled to maintain quality workmanship in the face of a market that favored low prices and high volume over quality. In the 1970s, the *laqueros* used their Indianness to ally themselves with the populist administration of president Luis Echeverría. They formed a cooperative and sold to state buyers who paid good prices for their crafts. Today, Olinalá’s artisans do not consider themselves to be indigenous, even if they insist that their art is. “This seems like a contradiction,” López writes, “but it points, instead, to the contingent nature of indigenosity, and the degree to which it has emerged through the negotiation of local politics and elite nationalist discourses” (p. 260).

If the format and scope of this book is novel, so too is much of the research. López worked in roughly two dozen archives and interviewed a host of Olinaltecos as well as the daughter of the original India Bonita. This fascinating and richly illustrated book is a fitting testimony to over a decade of exhaustive research and careful writing. It will surely serve as a model for future work.

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