PAINTINGS
BY
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AKind lady once exclaimed, "How I love your picture of the woman kneeling." I said, "Thank you, madam, only she is not kneeling, she is standing." Unlike Greco who elongates verticals, my fancy runs to a widening of horizontals. His people are made to look like flames, mine to resemble mud pies.

In Mexico the Indian sits on the ground, not on a chair. Man gathers his knees to his chin, folds his arms over them, conceals the gathered limbs and body under a sarape too tough of texture to break into folds. Thus seated, man duplicates the sign "tepetl" the Aztec glyph for mountain. Woman kneels, feet under her eggshaped bulk, like an Aztec sculpture that retains the shape of the matrix stone.

Having absorbed the beauty of the Indian pose in its prenatal compactness, the chance is that Greek forms will seem somewhat fleshy, somewhat brittle—as they are. Shorn by the critical ire of nature of curls, fingers, and nose, a Greek fragment tends to be a hunk of marble again, approaches the esthetic of the Mexican carving.

In turn a lover of Greek art is quick to dismiss Mexican shapes as rustic, unwashed and still heavy with loam.

It is true that the plastic arts deal perforce with bodies, with what constitutes the visible world. It is
also true that, unlike the ethics of cattle shows and
leg contests, bodies are not in art the aim, but sign-
posts that point to concepts. The tortuous contra-
punto of Greco expresses man crushed by sanctity,
as grapes need be trampled to become wine. The
Hellenic poise flatters us into believing that the fruit
eaten in paradise rendered us truly godlike. Mexico
adds its own version to enrich this gigantic concord-
ancy. It carves and paints a human body shaped by
the acceptancy of daily tasks, life givers in their
humbleness, cooking, washing, teaching a child to
walk. Hemmed in between powerful natural forces
and overpowering spiritual strains, man appears
heroic enough as he stays upright, resists awhile the
pull of gravity towards earth’s center.

The pictures in this show are mainly of folk festi-
vals and biblical subjects, though it is hard to find
a clean cleft between them. We sing our religion, the
Indian dances his. The “Flight Into Egypt” series
was suggested by my trek on mule back and over
mountains, with all the inhabitants of an Indian vil-
lage, to what was once the place of Tezozomoc, Lord
of the Caverns, where now dwells the miraculous
crucifix known as Our Lord of Chalma.

— Jean Charlot