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Horatio Renteria Rocha

(1912 - 1972)

Horacio Rentería Rocha was born on the 21st of October 1912, under poor conditions, in the district of Analco of the Mexican city Victoria de Durango, where he later completed elementary and middle school. Already as a child, Horacio Rentería Rocha has painted rustic landscapes and faces on faded house facades of his hometown. Preferably, he painted in his infantile creative period with clay, lime, and pieces of burnt coal.

As a young artist Horacio Rentería Rocha became a student of the famous painter William de Lourdes. From his teacher he learned how to prepare the materials for wall paintings/murals and how to make use of these special diluted colors. When the depictions/ murals in the Government Palace of Durango were designed in 1935, Horacio Rentería Rocha was the main assistant to his famous teacher. The wonderful wall painting/mural on the first floor of the Palace with the title 'With open arms the country protects the people' was painted by Horacio Rentería Rocha along with William de Lourdes.

In 1936 Horacio Rentería Rocha was commissioned to upgrade the artistic value of the inner courtyard at the majestic Palace of Government in Durango. On each pillar, he designed a coat of arms from municipalities of the State of Durango. In addition, he painted at this time with the support of his loyal way companion Rodrigo D'avalos, draughtsman and watercolorist from Durango, a mural in the children's school "Challito Perez Gavilin" in Durango. A year later he was authorized to paint a mural under application of the style which he learned from his teacher and well-known painter William de Lourdes, in the garden of the children's School of the 18th of March in the town of Gomez Palacio. During his occupation as a teacher, he produced several murals in this institution. He created frescoes of unique beauty - some of them with legendary themes such as 'Red Riding Hood' based on the story by Charles Perrault, Miguel des Cervantes's "Don Quixote" and others of children and their surrounding environments. The children and their lifestyles were thematic precursors of what later labelled him and made the famous Latin American artist.

Horacio Rentería Rocha exhibited his paintings 1943 in the town of Gomez in the gallery for art decoration. His oil paintings are mostly small panels representing idealized and magnificently dressed children. Typically, these are surrounded by beautiful Mexican cultural objects such as for example Piñatas. Pets, especially dogs and cats, are also frequently depicted with the children in the oil paintings. This is shown in his works with the children at their most beautiful moments of the game. Often, the magnificently dressed children are embedded in romantic landscapes.

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The composition of human figures within beautiful regional landscapes often occurs and gives his paintings a homely touch/soul. Especially mountains, hills, volcanoes, striking buildings such as churches and streets of his domestic surroundings/life were artistically included. The traditional customs of the people play a special role in his paintings and convey unity between tradition, social customs and human beings. Horacio Rentería Rocha had a passion for light, clean lines and shapes which are mirrored in his landscape paintings. His vision of a pure nature with children in magnificent costumes from their cultural heritage away from the constraints of modern civilization with its excitement and joy, is reflected by the high-contrast clarity in his paintings.

In 1948 Horacio Rentería Rocha met an art dealer who bought all of his existing and later created works of art. These were offered abroad as works of the 19th century. The art dealer honored Horacio Rentería Rocha's works with hardly a peso and made sure to include the specific clause, that Horacio Rentería Rocha has to stay anonymous as a painter of such works by making his signature illegible. The works, which were sold by the dealer at very high prices, were soon appreciated worldwide. Horacio Rentería Rocha did not benefit at all from this, but was fobbed off with some few pesos and exploited in the truest sense of the word. Especially in New York and Paris the works of Horacio Rentería Rocha became well known and famous as "The children of Horacio".