

and the theoretical directions taken in archaeology. Here the chapters on Mexico and Panama make an excellent contrast between highly centralized and extremely decentralized governmental oversight of archaeological practice.

In contrast to these politically sensitive considerations, the four chapters by North American authors underplay socioeconomic and political contexts of research and focus instead on substantive issues, even when they effectively integrate North and South American research results. These valuable and well-written historical summaries perhaps best illustrate the Latin Americans' main point: foreign influence has produced excellent research but is out of touch with local national interests.

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*Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona.* By MARIO T. GARCÍA. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. Photographs. Index. xviii, 369 pp. Cloth. \$30.00.

There is much to learn from this *testimonio*, as the authors call it, a collaboration between the scholar and the activist. We learn about the life and times of one of the Latinos' most important leaders, a man who is to the urban labor movement what the late Cesar Chávez was to the farm workers' struggles. After many years as a community and labor organizer, Bert Corona expanded his sphere of influence to focus on the rights of undocumented workers as well.

Mario García tell his readers that his purpose was not to write a biography using the usual scholarly formula. Instead, he and Corona agreed that they would talk, with Corona as subject, but prompted and guided by the historian. Compiled between 1988 and 1990, this account is very personal and never fails to credit the men and women who have contributed to the Chicanos' struggle. The result is a very readable, chronological narrative, ostensibly about Corona's life but also about the struggles of working people in general and Mexicanos-Chicanos in particular.

It is a tale of highs and lows, of victories and defeats; but ultimately, it is the story of a man who believes in the perfectibility of humankind. To call Corona's narrative "inspiring" seems patronizing, but it is just that. His story is challenging, pitting academics against activists, would-be "saviors of the community" against the community itself. Corona makes it very clear that he believes that any community struggle has to begin with the community in question, not with outsiders. Yet perhaps he has mellowed with the years, for his tone is almost conciliatory.

A child of the Mexican Revolution, Corona was born in 1918. His story is epic in scope as he takes us from the very roots of his existence forward through the decades of activism that have been his life's work. García's introduction and afterword are truly excellent, setting the tone for the narrative and concluding with appropriate scholarly and critical observations. García sometimes cites FBI reports

that contradict Corona's accounts, adding a sense of tension between the subject and the "official report." This is "oppositional history," García tells us, exposing all manner of injustices, the greatest of which has been the "official" history books' exclusion of people like Corona.

At times the narrative is a bit redundant, mentioning details that have already been covered. This reader forgave the collaborators, choosing instead to place himself with García, "listening" attentively as one would to a respected elder, regardless of the repetitions. This is a labor of love that successfully introduces the reader to the perspectives of a unique individual as it expands knowledge of the Mexicanos-Chicanos in this society.

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*Cuban Art and National Identity: The Vanguardia Painters, 1927–1950.* By JUAN A. MARTÍNEZ. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994. Plates. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiv, 189 pp. Cloth. \$34.95.

Este libro constituye la primera presentación general de los artistas que introdujeron el arte moderno en Cuba. Aunque existen monografías y estudios específicos, se sentía la carencia de un volumen integral sobre el tema. Lo ha hecho un historiador de arte cubano-americano radicado en Miami, profesor de la Universidad Internacional de la Florida. Resulta significativo que en poco más de un año hayan aparecido en Estados Unidos dos libros panorámicos acerca de procesos cruciales en el arte y la cultura cubanos. El otro es *New Art of Cuba* (1994), de Luis Camnitzer, que fue comentado por el propio Martínez en el número 14 de *Art Nexus*.

*Cuban Art* consta de cuatro capítulos. El primero presenta la aparición de la pintura de vanguardia en la isla, el segundo hace un enfoque histórico del contexto social, el tercero se concentra en la construcción de identidad nacional que realizaron aquellos pintores—tema fundamental del libro—y el cuarto analiza la obra de Víctor Manuel, Gattorno, Abela, Ponce, Enríquez, Amelia, y Lam desde esa perspectiva. El volumen incluye además un apéndice con biografías analíticas de los artistas considerados más importantes, además de una bibliografía.

Esas biografías bastan para caracterizar el valor del libro como utilísima presentación de pintores de gran importancia y del proceso del modernismo en Cuba. Martínez se destaca por su facilidad para estructurar su material e ideas, su claridad expositiva y su poder de síntesis. Este carácter directo le da a *Cuban Art* un sabor muy norteamericano, en cuyas antípodas estarían tantas floridas aproximaciones literarias que encontramos en textos de historia del arte en América Latina. El volumen es fruto de una investigación seria, tanto visual como erudita, y consigue una introducción al tema muy bien ordenada, donde se discuten obras, poéticas, e ideas. Aunque el discurso se articula desde los puntos de vista del autor, Martínez mantiene la contención de un buen profesor, situándose un poco al margen en afán de objetividad.