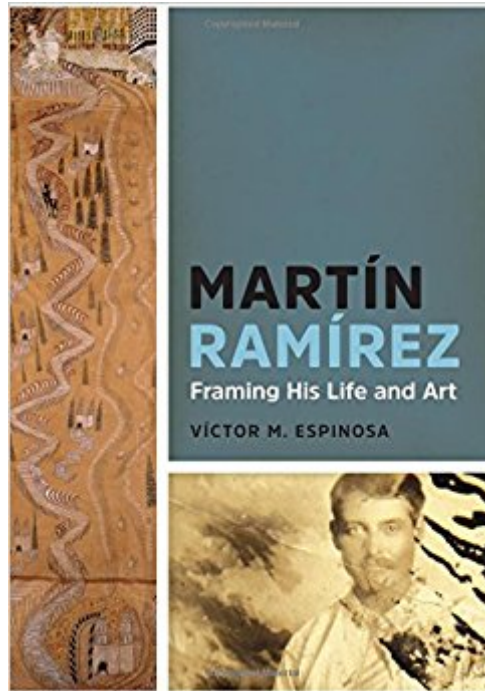


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Martín Ramírez: Framing His Life And Art



Synopsis

Martín Ramírez, a Mexican migrant worker and psychiatric patient without formal artistic training, has been hailed by leading New York art critics as one of the twentieth century's greatest artists. His work has been exhibited alongside masters such as José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, Salvador Dalí, Marc Chagall, Paul Klee, and Joan Miró. A landmark exhibition of Ramírez's work at the American Folk Art Museum in 2007 broke attendance records and garnered praise from major media, including the New York Times, New Yorker, and Village Voice. Martín Ramírez offers the first sustained look at the life and critical reception of this acclaimed artist. Víctor Espinosa challenges the stereotype of outsider art as an indecipherable enigma by delving into Ramírez's biography and showing how he transformed memories of his life in Mexico, as well as his experiences of displacement and seclusion in the United States, into powerful works of art. Espinosa then traces the reception of Ramírez's work, from its first anonymous showings in the 1950s to contemporary exhibitions and individual works that have sold for as much as a half-million dollars. This eloquently told story reveals how Ramírez's three-decades-long incarceration in California psychiatric institutions and his classification as a "chronic paranoid schizophrenic" stigmatized yet also protected what his hands produced. Stripping off the labels "psychotic artist" and "outsider master," Martín Ramírez demonstrates that his drawings are not passive manifestations of mental illness. Although he drew while confined as a psychiatric patient, the formal elements and content of Ramírez's artwork are shaped by his experiences of cultural and physical displacement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Elegant in both prose and argument, Espinosa's book untangles Ram rez's work from the conditions within which it has been defined in order to celebrate the radical complexities of the artist's aesthetics and the power of recognizing him as an example of resistance, survival, and artistic agency from the perspective of a subaltern subjectivity." (20150803 Publishers Weekly)"Intellectually rigorous and deeply moving . . . As Espinosa tracks the path of Ram rez's work out into the art world in this meticulous, corrective, and humanizing portrait of a remarkably persevering artist, he raises disquieting questions about immigration, race, mental illness, creativity, and how we categorize and value art." (201511 Booklist, starred review)"Mart n Ram rez is an important and much-needed work in the messy, at times superficial, and often contradictory field of "outsider" art. There are actually very few knowledgeable, serious, and sensitive works assessing the whole field or a particular artist. With both considerable knowledge and passion, V ctor Espinosa fervently tells the story of Mart n Ram rez and his role in the making of the outsider myth in all of its poignant and pathetic glory. This book will take its place as one of the handful of truly important works in the outsider field." (Norman Girardot, University Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Lehigh University, and author of *Envisioning Howard Finster: The Religion and Art of a Stranger from Another World*)"V ctor Espinosa's passion for Mart n Ram rez's life and his art has led to this illuminating volume. Espinosa details new biographical information about this important twentieth-century artist, and introduces previously unknown participants in the artist's story, particularly during the time of his stay in Auburn, California. For anyone interested in American art, this is an essential read." (Brooke Davis Anderson, Executive Director, US Biennial, and curator of the exhibitions *Mart n Ram rez* and *Mart n Ram rez: The Last Works*)

One of the foremost experts on Mart n Ram rez and an authority on transnational migration and art, Victor M. Espinosa holds a PhD in sociology from Northwestern University and currently teaches at the Ohio State University. He is the author of *El dilema del retorno: Migraci n, g nero y pertenencia en un contexto transnacional*.

All went well.

Finally an intelligent approach to "outsider" art that frames it in a biographical rather than mental health context. Espinosa has written a book that will stand with Jim Elledge's work on Darger as one

of the major artist biographies of our time.

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