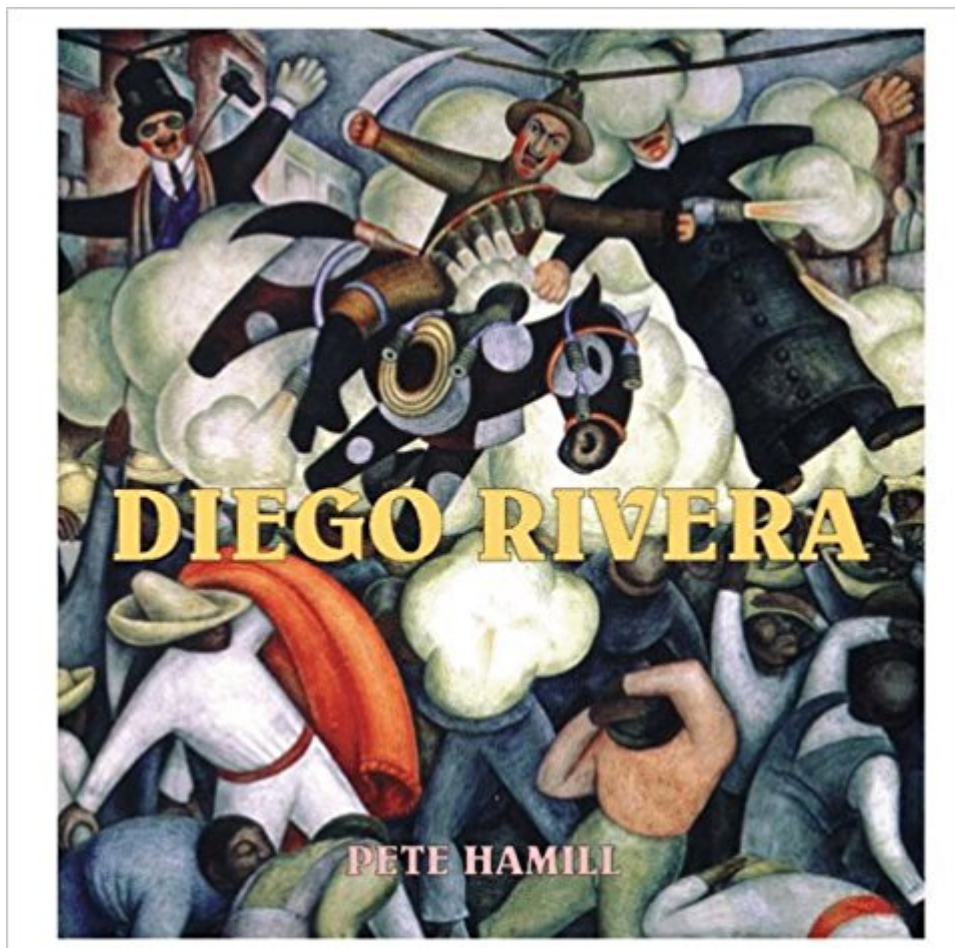


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# Diego Rivera



## Synopsis

Diego Rivera is regarded as one of the greatest Mexican artists of the 20th century - an audacious muralist, voracious lover and ardent leftist who befriended Picasso, married Frida Kahlo and quarrelled with Leon Trotsky. In this part-biography, part-appreciation, writer Pete Hamill turns a novelist's eye to Rivera's tempestuous career. In this volume filled with reproductions and documentary photographs, Hamill shows how, despite the political passions, Rivera created a body of work that still astonishes. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In another life, before becoming one of the best known and most popular journalists in New York and the author of the bestselling memoir *A Drinking Life*, Pete Hamill studied art on the GI Bill in Mexico City. Upon seeing the monumental work of Jos   Clemente Orozco, however, he abruptly lost his nerve: "It seemed an act of self-delusion to try to be a painter." After 44 years, Hamill has found a way to integrate his early affair with art, his lifelong love of Mexico, and his narrative gifts in this riveting and lushly illustrated book on Diego Rivera, Mexico's best-known, widely loved muralist. Hamill's text, he says, was completed before the publication of Patrick Marnham's *Dreaming with His Eyes Open: A Life of Diego Rivera*. This one is less scholarly but respectably researched, and Hamill's fervent opinions on which of Rivera's works are worthy and which are the sad effluvia of a Communist Party hack are remarkably persuasive. Hamill's esthetic judgment has led him to avoid reproducing any second-rate clunkers. He has chosen the great murals, paintings, and drawings that suit the godlike stature of this outsize artist who lied, cheated, womanized, and evaded

responsibility his entire life, but who worked like a demon in the service of his art. Rivera's shabby genteel childhood; his flight to France during the 10-year Mexican Revolution, during which nearly a tenth of his countrymen died; his callous abandonment of his first wife; his ugly political gambits and high-flown society contacts; his ultimately sad relationships with both men and women--Hamill weaves it all into a fantastic read. The book is not as balanced as *Dreaming with His Eyes Open*, but is nonetheless a passionate first look at an artist whose complicated life will probably still be examined decades from now. --Peggy Moorman

Hamill, former editor-in-chief of the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post*, has lived, worked, and studied art in Mexico. This lively, if not definitive, biography of the pioneering Mexican muralist recounts the king-sized Rivera's real-life escapades without romantic embellishment and with a critical eye. In particular, Hamill is suspect of the seemingly universal admiration for Rivera's "narcissist" wife, artist Frida Kahlo. Coming on the heels of renewed scholarly interest in Rivera and the Mexican muralist movement, Hamill's work must inevitably compete with other studies. It relies more on secondary sources than Patrick Marnham's dependable, more thoroughly researched *Dreaming with His Eyes Open* (LJ 10/1/98), which it could serve to complement. With 100 very fine illustrations, 50 of which are in color; suitable for large library systems. [BOMC selection.] A Mary Hamel-Schwulst, Towson Univ., M.-A Mary Hamel-Schwulst, Towson Univ., MD Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Nice overview of Rivera's work in a historic context however the amateurish prose which is more akin to a 10th grade writing project on Diego Rivera distracts from the scholarship. The writing has a 'Daily Mail' feel to it. Choppy, like a cut-and-paste project from other sources. The writer clearly tries to give a biography of Rivera from the standpoint of anti-communism or anti-socialism. That would make for interesting reading as Rivera was a communist and a communist sympathizer. However, it fails to frame this convincingly in a historic context of Rivera's era, and reads more like a (bad, unverified and unedited) wikipedia entry. The writing and the works selected seems to be disjointed - the significance of the highlighted works are not made clear and no real insight can be gleaned. When writing a biography of an artist, one would expect the prose and the cadence to reflect the artist's style and sensibilities. Regrettably, this book does not make for enjoyable reading and is full of clichés and redundancy. i.e. "fresco- the word means 'fresh' in Italian...". For a reader reading about Diego Rivera one would assume the reader would know what is 'fresco'. The most glaring deficiency in this biography is almost the total lack of bibliography. Again, a mistake most often

found in 10th grade reading assignments.

I buzzed through this book. Journalistic writing is usually more concise and clear than academic writing or expert opining. Hamill makes no apologies about presenting his own view on Rivera and his work. I like that he is not gushing nor over analyzing. Hamill states he was not initially taken with the artist's work and goes about presenting what he saw and learned that won him over. He makes distinctions between the man's behaviors and how he sees his creations. I think the author does a good job of staying on task and giving a broad view of Rivera's art. Rivera was a polemicist. Whatever gets written is probably going to bother someone. The reproductions are first rate and cover a broad swath of murals, paintings, and drawings. Someone said they wished for more of his portraits, me too - so I will find another book that covers more of that because that was not what this book was about. This book taught me what further details of Rivera's life and work I wish to explore. Good read, great viewing.

Hamill has Diego's artistic and personal facets in camera. This is a brilliant study of a very complex and troubling artist. It's difficult to stop reading Hamill's work. The book came at a great price and delivery.

NY journalist/writer Pete Hamill presents a (somewhat surprisingly) insightful and well-written overview of the masterful Mexican's life and artistic career. This very readable volume offers-up many behind-the-scenes tidbits that are not included in the other mainstream bios of the multifaceted and always controversial Rivera. Mr. Hamill is definitely not shy when it comes to his personal opinions about Rivera's aesthetic achievements, both good and bad. He also tends to be frankly judgemental about Rivera's character, or, oftentimes, lack thereof. Whether the reader agrees with these subjective assessments or not Mr. Hamill's book is consistently informative, and is highly recommended to supplement the more comprehensive standard biographies of this always fascinating subject.

It is a beautiful book and full of history about this very talented and important artist. I would have liked to have seen more of his amazing portraits.

If you admire Rivera, buy this book. It sits on our coffee table and is very alluring. It makes a great gift for any fan of this extraordinary artist. Submitted by the author of "I'm Living Your Dream Life."

Enjoyed the book for the reproductions of Rivera's painting and drawings, some of which were new to me. Agree with others that Pete Hamill's understanding of the Russian revolution is lacking, however I did learn something new about Rivera and Trotsky. FBI kept a file on Rivera. According to Professor William Chase, who did research on Trotsky found that Rivera met with the State Department 3 times and gave names of communists who were Stalinists in the Mexican government. He also mentioned possible assassinations to gain control over the Mexican president. State Department notes showed Diego and Trotsky were willing to testify before the Dies Committee in DC. What also disappointed me about the book was Hamill failed to mention the painting Rivera did in San Francisco at City College of San Francisco. I attended City College in the 1960's, studied Spanish, and many times visit the huge painting in its Arts Building. As Rivera described it " as the fusion between the great past of the Latin American lands ... and the high mechanical developments in the United States. The 40' by 80' painting depicted panels of Mexico's indigenous past, ancient culture, with the mixture Detroit's of the stamping machine of the Ford Motor Company, along with American workers, engineering works like the Shasta Dam, and so much more. Every viewing I did turned into a history lesson.

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