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# Artful Assassins: Murder as Art in Modern Mexico

By *Fernando Fabio Sanchez*



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**Artful Assassins: Murder as Art in Modern Mexico** By Fernando Fabio Sanchez

Violence as a way of life, and murder as a political tool. This philosophy is nothing new to Mexico, most recently demonstrated in the wave of assassination and indiscriminate killing brought on by the drug war gripping the country. In *Artful Assassins*, author and scholar Fernando Fabio Sanchez unveils the long record of violence inspiring artistic expression in Mexico, focusing on its use and portrayal in film and literature. Sanchez is uniquely positioned to explore this topic, through his work as a novelist and poet in Mexico before entering academia in the United States.

Sanchez argues that the seemingly hopeless cycle of violence experienced by Mexico in the 20th century, as reflected in its "crime genre," reveals a broader intrinsic cultural and political failure that suggests grave implications for the current state of crisis. Tracing the development of a national Mexican identity from the 1910 Mexican Revolution onward, Sanchez focuses on the indelible presence of violence and crime underlying the major works that contributed to a larger communal narrative.

*Artful Assassins* ultimately offers a panoramic overview of the evolution of Mexican arts and letters, as well as nationalism, by claiming murder and assassination as literary and cinematic motifs. The collapse of post-revolutionary political unity was presaged all along in Mexican culture, Sanchez argues. It need only to have been sought in the art of the nation.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"*Artful Assassins* makes an important (and intriguing) contribution to our understanding of the role of crime fiction in the construction and deconstruction of narratives of national identity in Mexico since the 1910 Revolution."

--Robert Buffington, University of Colorado, Boulder, author of *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico*

#### From the Inside Flap

The grim role of violence in shaping modern Mexican identity

#### About the Author

Fernando Fabio Sanchez is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Portland State University. He received his Ph.D. from University of Colorado at Boulder. He specializes in 20th- and 21st-Century Latin American literature, culture, and film, with an emphasis on Mexico. He teaches courses on this area and related subjects both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Professor Sanchez has also published fiction and poetry.

Stephen J. Clark is Associate Professor of Spanish at California State University Channel Islands.

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