

An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of green, blue, and black. The composition is dynamic and layered, with various textures and colors blending together. The overall mood is intense and somewhat somber, with the dark tones dominating the lower and right portions of the frame.

IN RESIDENCE:  
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS  
AT DARTMOUTH

Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College

# IN RESIDENCE: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AT DARTMOUTH

The tradition of inviting practicing artists to Dartmouth College—to make works of art, to interact with students, faculty, and the local community, and to exhibit their work on campus—is a long-standing one. The artist-in-residence program at Dartmouth was established in 1931 when Churchill P. “Jerry” Lathrop received permission from President Ernest Hopkins to use a discretionary tutorial fund, generously provided by Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr., to bring the Guatemalan painter Carlos Sánchez back to campus for a year-long fellowship. A member of the Dartmouth Class of 1923, Sánchez had recently spent a year in Mexico assisting Diego Rivera on two major public mural projects. As a young Dartmouth graduate whose work was beginning to receive critical acclaim in both the United States and Mexico, Sánchez was the perfect choice to be the first artist-in-residence at the College. His selection also spoke to Lathrop’s aspiration to bring artists from around the world to campus, and this desire to create a program with an international reach continues to this day. Following the completion of his fellowship, during which he made paintings and engaged with students interested in the arts, Sánchez remained on campus for another two years as an assistant and translator for the second artist-in-residence, José Clemente Orozco. The Mexican muralist was invited to Hanover by Lathrop and fellow art history professor

Artemas S. Packard, with the full support of President Hopkins. Packard envisioned a series of residencies on campus for “the most competent artists available so that in the course of time we should have in this one place a sequence of original works such as no institution of our day possesses.”<sup>1</sup>

Between 1932 and 1934, Orozco painted a remarkable fresco mural cycle titled *The Epic of American Civilization* in the College’s Baker Library (figs. 1 and 2). Many of the Dartmouth students who witnessed the noted Mexican modernist creating this ambitious, brightly colored mural in the library’s lower-level reserve reading room never forgot the experience, and the mural’s impact is still palpable almost eighty years later. *The Epic of American Civilization* draws upon indigenous and European traditions to create a vast historical narrative devoted to pre-Hispanic and post-conquest civilizations, with recurring themes, such as human conflict, sacrifice, and regeneration, being used to suggest the cyclical nature of these events. The historical importance of Orozco’s mural was recently recognized by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior of the United States Government, which granted National Historic Landmark status to *The Epic of American Civilization* in March 2013.

Orozco was followed by the landscape painter and pioneer member of the Canadian Group of Seven Lawren Stewart Harris, whose uncle William Kilborne Stewart was a professor of comparative literature at Dartmouth. Harris was the artist-in-residence from 1934 to 1938, when he was succeeded by Paul Sample, a member of the Dartmouth

Luise Kaish’s *Sphere*, 1976, in the atrium of the Collis Center for Student Involvement, Dartmouth College (see also fig. 14).



ONE WHEELLOCK COLLIS MARKET