

**Exhibition:** *Painted in Mexico, 1700–1790: Pinxit Mexici*

**On view:** November 19, 2017–March 18, 2018

**Location:** Resnick Pavilion



Image captions on page 6

(Los Angeles, CA, July 5, 2017)—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Painted in Mexico, 1700–1790: Pinxit Mexici*, the first major exhibition to reposition the history of 18th-century Mexican painting, a vibrant period marked by major stylistic changes and the invention of compelling new iconographies. Co-organized by LACMA and Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C. in Mexico City, this exhibition foregrounds the connections between Mexican painting and transatlantic artistic trends while emphasizing Mexican painting’s internal developments and remarkable pictorial output. More than 100 paintings are presented in the exhibition, many on view for the first time and restored for this exhibition.

In the 16th century, European artists immigrated to Mexico to decorate newly established churches and complete artistic commissions. Some of these artists and their families formed workshops in Mexico that endured for several generations. By the 17th century, a new generation of artists born in the Americas began to develop their own pictorial styles that reflected the changing cultural climate as well as the desires of their patrons, both religious and secular. The 18th century ushered in a period of artistic splendor as local schools of painting were consolidated, new iconographies were invented, and artists began to group themselves into academies.

During the 18th century, painters were increasingly asked to create mural-size paintings to cover the walls of sacristies, choirs, and university halls, among other spaces. The same artists produced portraits, *casta* paintings (depictions of racially mixed families), painted folding screens, and finely rendered devotional imagery, attesting to their extraordinary versatility. The volume of work produced by the four generations of

Mexican artists that spanned the eighteenth century is virtually unmatched elsewhere in the vast Hispanic world.

Painters also became more aware of their own contributions, largely owing to the sizable number of pictures that were exported to Europe, throughout Spanish America, and within the viceroyalty itself. This awareness led many educated painters not only to sign their works and emphasize their authorship but also to make explicit references to Mexico as their place of origin through the Latin phrase *Pinxit Mexici* (Painted in Mexico). This expression eloquently encapsulates the painters' pride in their own tradition and their connection to larger, transatlantic trends.

*Painted in Mexico, 1700–1790: Pinxit Mexici* is presented as part of the Getty's *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* initiative and is one of a handful of historical exhibitions focusing on the legacy of Latin American art before the 20th century. The exhibition is curated by Ilona Katzew, curator and department head of Latin American art at LACMA, with guest co-curators Jaime Cuadriello, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and Paula Mues Orts, Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía, both of Mexico City, and Luisa Elena Alcalá, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid of Spain. The exhibition opens in Mexico City at the Palacio de Cultura Banamex-Palacio de Iturbide (Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.) (June 29–October 15, 2017), before traveling to LACMA (November 19, 2017–March 18, 2018) and subsequently to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (April 24–July 22, 2018).

“This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime undertaking of an engrossing chapter in art history,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “Over the last six years, the co-curators have traveled all over Mexico to uncover new materials; many restored specially for the exhibition and photographed for the first time. This is a groundbreaking reassessment of the field, and we are proud to be at the forefront of this important undertaking and advancing new scholarship.”

Ilona Katzew, exhibition curator and project director, and a noted expert in the field, stated, “The eighteenth-century is a particularly rich period in the history of Mexican art, which has not yet received its due attention. In organizing this exhibition, we hope to open up a vista on a sophisticated and innovative body of work, one that is contextually rich and highly rewarding to look at and study, and share our collective enthusiasm for this fascinating chapter of global art history.”

## Exhibition Themes

The exhibition combines a chronological and thematic approach, and includes seven major sections:

**Great Masters** introduces the works of some of the leading painters of the day around which others congregated; the notion of a local tradition and intergenerational ties is emphasized. Since the 16th century, educated painters in Mexico City had organized themselves in guilds. By the 18th century, their most distinguished members (some of whom descended from long lines of illustrious painters) also established informal academies. The academy organized by the brothers Juan and Nicolás Rodríguez Juárez around 1722, for example, evidences the artists' growing interest in revitalizing their art.

**Master Story Tellers and the Art of Expression** illustrates how works were designed to convey complex stories. Conceived as series, these works decorated the interiors of churches, convents, colleges, and other public spaces, where they became activated through their particular arrangement, including as part of altarpiece-ensembles. During the 18th century narrative painting underwent a resurgence, which is evident in its more organic and idealized (and at times idyllic) sensibility. The artist's increasing interest in emphasizing domestic interiors and details of everyday life helped to establish a more intimate connection with the viewer.

**Noble Pursuits and the Academy** explores the efforts of artists throughout the 18th century to form art academies. The introduction of academic principles in Mexico is generally connected with the arrival of Jerónimo Antonio Gil from Spain and the establishment of Mexico's Royal Academy of San Carlos in 1783. This perspective has overlooked the earlier trajectory of local artists, who long sought to have painting recognized as a noble, as opposed to a mechanical art. In the 18th century painters organized several independent academies (c. 1722, 1754, and 1768), where they actively engaged in discussions about the theory and practice of their art. They also attempted to elevate the status of painting by writing and referencing art treatises, by equating their task with that of the supreme creator, and refashioning their image through their self-portraits.

**Paintings of the Land** brings together a compelling group of works representing local subjects. The expression "paintings of the land" (*pinturas de la tierra*) recurs often in contemporary panegyric literature and artistic inventories to describe works unique to Mexico—either made there or representing aspects of life in Mexico. Many of the works included in this section, such as *vedute* (large-scale paintings of a cityscape or vista), *casta* paintings (depictions of racially mixed families), folding screens with *fête gallant*

scenes (amorous figures in pastoral settings), and depictions of Indian weddings, are peppered with colorful local elements. The works brilliantly exemplify how Mexican painting could simultaneously fulfill artistic, political, and documentary purposes.

**The Power of Portraiture** illustrates the various modalities of the portrait genre. In the 18th century, Mexico saw an upsurge in portraiture associated with the economic growth of the viceroyalty, and different social groups, particularly within urban contexts, commissioned artists to paint their likenesses. In a hierarchical society such as New Spain, which placed a premium on nobility of birth, piety, wealth, titles, and merits, portraiture had the power to convey both corporate and personal messages. Through portraiture people could fashion and refashion their identities and project them onto society. Portraiture also fulfilled a genealogical role, designed to preserve the memory of families and institutions—religious and secular. Dress and other attributes became an essential part of the genre.

**The Allegorical World** looks at a highly inventive group of works that became prevalent in the 18th century. Often commissioned by ecclesiastical orders to instruct in issues of faith, allegorical images are fascinating manifestations of a culture that relied increasingly on its own visual metaphors. These images became particularly popular, in part, because of the versatility of allegorical language that could express many things simultaneously. Allegorical paintings can be broadly divided into four categories: guides to inner spirituality for nuns and monks within cloistered life, teaching or mnemonic tools to aid in the practice of piety, symbols that promoted local devotions, and commentaries to extol (or even criticize) figures of power. Some allegories were conceived as large-scale paintings that covered the walls of different institutions and religious spaces, while many smaller ones were designed to awaken piety within the context of cells and oratories.

**Imaging the Sacred** features a stunning selection of paintings that copied holy effigies, many considered miraculous. Copying holy images became part of a long tradition that engaged the best painters of the day. Although most subjects were universal, sacred painting saw significant developments in 18th century Mexico. Painters updated age-old formulas: the resulting richness of themes, pictorial approaches, and devotional complexity is noteworthy. The most visible public images were large paintings representing specific sculptures that were known for performing miracles. Intimate devotional experience was more commonly channeled through smaller paintings, many on copper, in which painters demonstrated great precision and skill. These works reflect the extent to which art, belief, and society were inextricably connected.

### **List of painters in the exhibition (in alphabetical order)**

Juan Francisco de Aguilera (Spain [?], active Mexico, first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century)  
Manuel de Arellano (Mexico, 1662–1722)  
Ignacio María Barreda (Mexico, c. 1754–1800)  
Ignacio Berben (Guadalajara, 1733–c. 1814)  
Miguel Cabrera (Mexico, c. 1715–1768)  
Francisco Clapera (Spain, 1746–1810, active Peru and Mexico)  
Nicolás Correa (Mexico, 1657–c. 1708)  
Nicolás Enríquez (Mexico, 1704–c.1790)  
Rafael Joaquín Gutiérrez (Mexico, c. 1750–1792)  
Fray Miguel de Herrera (San Cristóbal de la Laguna, Canary Islands, 1696–c. 1789, active Mexico)  
José de Ibarra (Mexico, 1685–1756)  
Andrés López (Mexico, 1727–1807)  
Francisco Martínez (Mexico, 1687–1758)  
Manuel Montes y Balcázar (Guadalajara, active, c. 1727–1760)  
Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz (Mexico, 1713–1772)  
José de Páez (Mexico, 1721–c. 1790)  
Rafael Ximeno y Planes (Spain, 1759–1825, active Mexico)  
Pascual Pérez (Puebla, d. 1721)  
Juan Rodríguez Juárez (Mexico, 1675–1728)  
Nicolás Rodríguez Juárez (Mexico, 1677–1734)  
Antonio de Torres (Mexico, 1667–1731)  
Francisco Eduardo Tresguerras (Mexico, 1759–1833)  
Francisco Antonio Vallejo (Mexico, 1722–1785)  
Miguel Jerónimo Zendejas (Puebla, 1720–1815)  
José Joaquín de la Vega (Mexico, active second half of the 18th century)

### **Catalogue**

*Painted in Mexico, 1700–1790: Pinxit Mexici* is accompanied by a groundbreaking catalogue that offers the first in-depth assessment of 18th-century Mexican painting, making accessible an extraordinary body of images, alongside compelling new scholarship. The impressive 512-page volume, published by DelMonico Books/Prestel is edited by Ilona Katzew and includes contributions by the exhibition co-curators Luisa Elena Alcalá, Jaime Cuadriello, Ilona Katzew, and Paula Mues Orts. Exquisitely illustrated with newly commissioned photography of never-before-published artworks, the book includes fascinating essays on a number of themes, such as the tradition and

innovation of Mexican painting, the mobility of pictures within and outside the viceroyalty, the political role of images, and the emphasis on ornamentation. Rounding out this volume are over 130 catalogue entries that offer new and authoritative interpretations. A Spanish edition is also available.

### LACMA App

Spanish translations of exhibition wall text are available for viewing on the LACMA App. Download the app for free from the App Store or Google Play, or visit [mobile.lacma.org](http://mobile.lacma.org).

### Programming

#### February 2018

#### International Scholarly and Conservation Symposium

An international symposium will be co-organized with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), enabling established and junior scholars to present new research. Given the extensive restoration undertaken for the exhibition, part of the symposium will be dedicated to presentations by leading conservators from Mexico, the United States, and Europe, who will discuss the techniques, materials, and pictorial processes employed by Mexican painters, and their wider art historical implications.

Please visit [lacma.org](http://lacma.org) for more information.

### Credit

This exhibition was co-organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.

*Painted in Mexico, 1700–1790: Pinxit Mexici* is part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles, taking place from September 2017 through January 2018 at more than 70 cultural institutions across Southern California. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.



Major support is provided by the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation. The project is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, and by the Bryce R. Bannatyne Jr. and Elaine Veyna de Bannatyne Living Trust.

All exhibitions at LACMA are underwritten by the LACMA Exhibition Fund. Major annual support is provided by Kitzia and Richard Goodman, with generous annual funding from Lauren Beck and Kimberly Steward, the Judy and Bernard Briskin Family Foundation, Louise and Brad Edgerton, Edgerton Foundation, Emily and Teddy Greenspan, Jenna and Jason Grosfeld, The Jerry and Kathleen Grundhofer Foundation, David Schwartz Foundation, Inc., Taslimi Foundation, and Lenore and Richard Wayne.

### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes more than 130,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art; Latin American art, ranging from masterpieces from the Ancient Americas to works by leading modern and contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over one million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement. LACMA is located in Hancock Park, 30 acres situated at the center of Los Angeles, which also contains the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum and the forthcoming Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. Situated halfway between the ocean and downtown, LACMA is at the heart of Los Angeles.

**Location:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036

Webpage: [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

### **Image captions:**

(Left) Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz, *Portrait of Doña María Tomasa Durán López de Cárdenas*, c. 1762, oil on canvas, 40 3/16 × 33 1/16 in. (102 × 84 cm), Galería Coloniart, Collection of Felipe Siegel, Anna and Andrés Siegel, Mexico City, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA/Fomento Cultural Banamex., A.C., by Rafael Doniz

(Center Left) Miguel Cabrera, *The Divine Spouse*, c. 1750, oil on canvas, 42 1/2 × 58 1/16 in. (108 × 147.5 cm), Fundación Cultural Daniel Liebsohn, A.C., Mexico City, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA/Fomento Cultural Banamex., A.C., by Rafael Doniz

(Center Right) Juan Rodríguez Juárez, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1719, oil on canvas, 26 × 21 1/4 in. (66 × 54 cm), Museo Nacional de Arte, INBA, Secretaría de Cultura, Mexico City, photo: © D.R. Museo Nacional de Arte/Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, 2015

(Right) Antonio de Torres, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1719, oil on canvas, 52 3/4 × 27 15/16 in. (134 × 71 cm), Museo de Guadalupe, INAH, Secretaría de Cultura, Zacatecas, Mexico, photo: © Museum Associates/LACMA/Fomento Cultural Banamex., A.C., by Francisco Kochen

**Press Contact:** [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522

**Connect with LACMA**



@lacma #pstlala #pstatlacma

### **About Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA**

Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles taking place from September 2017 through January 2018. Led by the Getty, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a collaboration of arts institutions across Southern California.

Through a series of thematically linked exhibitions and programs, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA highlights different aspects of Latin American and Latino art from the ancient world to the present day. With topics such as luxury arts in the pre-Columbian Americas, 20th century Afro-Brazilian art, alternative spaces in Mexico City, and boundary-crossing practices of Latino artists, exhibitions range from monographic studies of individual artists to broad surveys that cut across numerous countries.

Supported by more than \$16 million in grants from the Getty Foundation, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA involves more than 70 cultural institutions from Los Angeles to Palm Springs, and from San Diego to Santa Barbara. Pacific Standard Time is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.