

Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World

Cecelia F. Klein, University of California, Los Angeles

Suffer the Little Children: Contested Visions of Child Sacrifice in the Americas

This talk will address the ways that artists over the centuries have depicted the sacrifice of children in the preconquest Americas, and what those images can tell us about the politics of visual representation in complex arenas where governments and social factions struggle to negotiate a more advantageous place for themselves. The focus will be on the formal differences between New and Old World representations of Aztec and Inca child sacrifice and the ways in which western artistic conventions and tropes long used in Europe to visualize its “Others” were deployed in the making of images of Native American child sacrifice. Colonial and early modern images of the subject, it will be argued, were largely shaped, not by the desire to record historical “truths” about child sacrifice among the Aztec and the Inca, but by their makers and patrons’ own ambitions at home, as well as the pressing concerns and understandings of their times.

Richard Townsend, Art Institute of Chicago

Aztec Sacred Mountains: A Cycle of Obligations

Rising in the center of the Aztec city-state, Tenochtitlan, a great dual pyramid was crowned by two temples. The first temple was dedicated to the deified Aztec ancestral hero, Huitzilopochtli, and was the focus for royal coronations and the sacrifice of war prisoners; the second was dedicated to the ancient rain-god Tlaloc, concerning regeneration and the abundance of crops, corresponding to the summer rainy season. Likewise, the massive dual body of the pyramid represented the conflation of two symbolic mountains: the mythic mountain of

Huitzilopochtli’s magical birth and victory, and the world-mountain of cosmic renewal. Such contrasting, alternating themes, the subject that I explore here, were similarly expressed at other sacred mountains in the Valley of Mexico. The juxtaposed celebrations of conquest and tributary rulership, alternating with the call for world regeneration, were complementary aims engaged in the annual cycle, expressing the dynamic obligations of Aztec kings in maintaining the integration of society and nature.

Carolyn Dean, University of California, Santa Cruz

Inca Transubstantiation

In Pre-Hispanic times the Inca believed that objects could host spiritual essences. Although rocks were the most common hosts, a wide variety of things (including living bodies) were capable of housing sacred anima. Even though Roman Catholicism recognizes transubstantiation as dogma – albeit in highly circumscribed ways – early modern Christians were not inclined to acknowledge the practice in Andean religions. The inability to recognize Andean transubstantiation increased the consternation of extirpators of idolatry and others who sought to identify and destroy idols, not understanding that sacred essences could be transferred readily to new hosts once the old ones had been destroyed. This paper considers the inherent conflict between Spanish and Inca perceptions of transubstantiation, with a particular interest in the ways the Inca deployed embodiment to keep their ancestors physically present once the mummified remains were confiscated by Spanish authorities.

Stella Nair, University of California, Riverside

Theaters of Power and Façades of Secrecy: Inca Architecture under Imperial Inca and Spanish Rule

In this presentation I examine Inca architecture and its transformation under Inca and Spanish rule. I highlight the distinct ways in which these Imperial states, as well as distinct individuals, manipulated Inca design and construction for highly theatrical political and religious performances. In addition, I show how Inca architecture served as dynamic façades that shielded the complexities of private life, both Spanish and Inca, during the violence of the colonial period.

Elizabeth H. Boone, Tulane University

Ideology in Translation: The Graphic Presentation of Catholicism in Sixteenth-Century Mexico

This paper focuses on the confluence, in sixteenth-century Mexico, of two broad categories of European and Mexican cultural production: religious thought and praxis, and graphic notation. Much has been written about the confrontation between sixteenth-century Catholicism, especially as it was defined and practiced by the mendicants, and the deep tradition of Aztec religious thought and action. It is increasingly clear that Catholicism became Mexicanized in the environment of the mendicant schools for indigenous youth and through the translation of religious texts into indigenous languages. Almost all of this scholarship, however, has concerned itself with how concepts and tenets were verbally configured in texts recorded alphabetically. This paper will instead analyze the impact of indigenous pictographic writing and graphic expression on early colonial Catholicism by looking at the graphic reproduction of Catholic doctrine, especially in the form of catechisms presented in symbols and figures rather than in letters and words.

Kevin Terraciano, University of California, Los Angeles

History in the Eye of the Beholder: Writing and Painting the Conquest of Mexico

This paper examines how Nahua writers and artists remembered a pivotal event in the Conquest of Mexico, the Spanish massacre of unarmed Nahua elites in the ceremonial precinct of Tenochtitlan, and demonstrates how Spanish writers and artists remembered the same event differently, or not at all. In highlighting different accounts of this event, I argue that Spanish and Nahua artists and writers advanced their own versions of the past in response to others' competing claims. Finally, I consider the potential effect of these different visions on their intended audiences, the beholders of History.

Juan Carlos Estenssoro Fuchs, Université Charles de Gaulle Lille 3

Apropiaciones cruzadas: las mascapaychas de los conquistadores y las coronas de los incas

La necesidad de apoderarse de las figuras políticas indígenas pasó por el doble proceso de apropiación de atributos de poder local y de su traducción en términos hispanos. Estos “descubrimiento y conquista” simbólicos, cargados de una fuerte dosis de invención, se sirvieron ampliamente de representaciones plásticas y no fueron proyectos y acciones unilateralmente hispanos. En estos juegos no sólo se equipararon, sustituyeron o fusionaron mascapaycha y corona en una suerte de sincretismo político. La corona es el emblema por antonomasia del poder del rey y de la cabeza política de un estado, pero las identificaciones no fueron ni tan generales, ni tan simples y evidentes como podríamos creer. Esta ponencia se propone hacer una filiación de las fuentes utilizadas para la representación de las coronas de los incas como una forma de acercarse a la historia de la constitución de las relaciones coloniales de poder en la temprana sociedad peruana.

Amy Buono, Southern Methodist University
Fuzzy Caps, Tiny Tunics and the Materiality of Featherwork in the Americas

Featherworking as an art form was widely practiced across the ancient and colonial Americas for millennia, a result of the sacredness conferred by many cultures on birds and their feathers. The methods and manner of fabrication, and the materiality of the resulting artifacts, however, vary widely. In this presentation, I will explore technical aspects of featherworking in the ancient Andes and in colonial Brazil, with particular attention to critical characteristics of texture, scale and color. As I will show, these aesthetic choices provide insight into the ritual and social significance of these brilliantly colored artifacts and the complicated ways in which these objects negotiated between the corporeal and spiritual worlds of humans and birds. Ultimately, these qualities of feathered objects also speak to the socio-politics of imperial power and colonial rupture.

Elena Phipps, Independent scholar, formerly Metropolitan Museum of Art
Materials, Materiality, and Transformation in Andean Colonial Textile Traditions

Textile traditions in the Andes combine value systems that imbue the quality of materials with specific cultural meaning. For example, the hairs of special camelids bred since the time of the Inca, were valued for their degree of whiteness; the direction of spin of a yarn was auspicious when positioned in a certain way within a woven cloth; and the sheen of a densely woven warp-faced mantle catching the sunlight, was designed to match the glimmer of European silk garments worn by Spanish administrators and symbolized power. This paper will explore the combination of various elements in the textile tradition of the sixteenth century, a period characterized by new developments and cultural transformations related to the new social order.

Thomas B. F. Cummins, Harvard University
The Materials of Conversion: Sand, Gold, Resin, and Feathers and the Arts of Colonial America

This talk will look at the various instances in which the Pre-Columbian materials of artistic production were reformed to become the materials of the artistic expression of conversion. In some instances, such as featherwork in Mexico, this transformation seems rather obvious and feather-workers as well as *tlacuiloque* (painters /scribes) were retrained to produce new types of images. In other instances, however, the transformation required destruction and annihilation in order to create anew. Or new categories, such as spolia, were introduced to re-orient the value and meaning of materials and the images they carried. The materials of Pre-Columbian America were addressed through a dialectical process that took different concrete forms according to the arts of the different cultures that the Europeans encountered.

Jeanette Favrot Peterson, University of California, Santa Barbara
Metonymy, Metaphor, and the Matter of the Sacred

There is no greater conundrum for many religious traditions than the matter of the sacred, or when matter becomes the sacred. The debate quickened in light of the sixteenth-century Reformists' charges of idolatry. Christian anxieties about the sacred in matter were reinforced and up-ended when religious images were refashioned in the colonial Americas. In this paper I consider two American devotions: one dedicated to the "Black Christ" of Chalma (Mexico), and the other to the Virgin of Guadalupe in Sucre (Bolivia). Although these devotions belong to different regions, there are fascinating parallels in their evolution: both had roots in the early colonial period, their cult objects were remade in the eighteenth century, and they are still popular today. The images also speak to a religious piety that, while Christianized, is still shaped by traditional concepts of sacrality as embedded in the material matrix of the objects: cornpaste and blackness, textiles and brilliant gems.

Charlene Villaseñor Black, University of California, Los Angeles

Contested Visions and Conversion in Colonial Mexico: The Cult of Saint Anne

In a 1611 catechism written in Náhuatl, the Dominican friar Martín de León complained that Mexican converts in Tlaxcala feigned devotion to Saint Anne, while they continued to worship Toci, the matriarch of the Pre-Columbian pantheon of deities. According to the cleric, some natives even converted the names of Catholic holy persons into their own languages, citing the famous example of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the city of Mexico: “they were adoring an idol of a goddess that they called Tonantzin, which means Our Mother, and they give the same name to Our Lady” As these and other similar claims demonstrate, suspicion, tensions, and anxieties accompanied the mass religious conversion that emerged from the fall of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) in 1521. This paper looks closely at such claims circulating around the figure of Saint Anne in New Spain.

Luisa Elena Alcalá, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Material Choices: Representing the Virgin’s Domesticity in Colonial Mexico

The cult to the Virgin of Loreto in colonial Mexico grew significantly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Legend held that the house of the Virgin in Nazareth had been miraculously transported by angels to the site of the church on the Adriatic coast of Italy at the end of the thirteenth century. Because of the magnetic presence of the house and its copies – the dwelling where the Annunciation took place and Christ spent his infant years – the cult to the Virgin of Loreto leant itself to the promotion of Christian family values. The Jesuits imported these values to Spanish America through replicas of the house and the materials used in constructing them. This paper explores the relationship between materiality and the Jesuit project of directing the cult of Loreto in the Church of San Gregorio, Mexico City, a Jesuit institution founded for the instruction of the indigenous population.

Rosario Granados Salinas, Harvard University

Remedies for Mexico City: The Urban Devotion of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios

The significance of Our Lady of Remedios (named first patroness of New Spain in 1575) was such that her cult was backed early on by the city council, and by 1830 her feast day was called “la fiesta de la nación.” Ironically, the shrine was not within the city’s physical boundaries but located roughly seven miles to the northeast, in the center of a large Otomí area. This situation caused jurisdictional disputes over the stewardship of the image between the city authorities, different religious orders, archbishops, viceroys, local governors (of the neighboring towns of Tacuba and Naucalpan), and the indigenous population who lived near the shrine. This paper investigates how this cult was appropriated by Mexico City – despite the shrine’s distance from the capital – through processions, the display of the image in the Cathedral’s main altar, sermons, a change of date in the Virgin’s main feast, and devotional imagery modeled after her effigy.

Ilona Katzew, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

“Parody of the Long-Gone America”: The Construction of Festive Rites in Colonial Mexico

Soon after the conquistador Hernán Cortés defeated the Mexica in 1521, their capital, Tenochtitlan, with its striking ceremonial center, was transformed into a Spanish city, the new locus of Spanish power and the setting for the emergence of a host of new political and religious rites. Focusing on the recent acquisition of LACMA’s striking *Folding Screen with Indian Wedding and Flying Pole* (c. 1690), this talk examines a number of texts and images that underscore the participation of Amerindians in festive rites in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Mexico, including Indian dances or mitotes. Panegyric texts such as those describing the entry of a new viceroy or the ceremony of allegiance to a new monarch were carefully constructed to spread the idea of good governance. Native participation remained a fixture of many of these celebrations, although how they were represented and by whom are more complicated questions that have not received sufficient scholarly attention.

Edward W. Osowski, John Abbott College, Montreal
Past Performances: Indigenous Processions in Colonial Mexico

This presentation discusses how colonial Mexican indigenous people re-enacted their history through the performance of religious processions. From the 1530s through the 1580s, Nahuas in Tlaxcala and Mexico City adopted Corpus Christi and Holy Week rituals, first brought by the Franciscan order, as public expressions of conversion to Christianity. In their new Mesoamerican context the meanings of these processions changed. These annual spectacles came to memorialize the pre-conquest foundations of communities, connecting the stories to audiences' lives in the new Christian age. As visual and non-written forms of expression, rituals and religious processions pose methodological problems for historians as tricky traces of the past. The talk will, in part, theoretically explore the possibilities and limitations of history as "muscular memory."

Gabriela Ramos, Cambridge University
Ritual, Public Space, and Indigenous Engagement in the Colonial Andes

Taking as a point of departure the differential use of public space for ritual purposes in the colonial Andes, this paper interrogates what type of rituals were performed in which places, and who attended them. By examining a range of accounts about ceremonial life and focusing on indigenous participation, the paper will draw some conclusions about how native integration to and exclusion from colonial public rituals operated.

Frank Salomon, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Cords of Memory, from Viceroyalty to Village

When one thinks of the *quipus* or knotted-cord record, one thinks first of Incas. But this mysterious "lost script" began long before the Inca Empire and lasted long after – indeed, into our times. In post-Inca times the *quipus* have been many things to many people. Up to about 1600, they formed the database for resistance to colonial tribute, and the medium for popularizing an Andean version of Christianity. In later centuries, Spanish speakers never understood them. The art of "writing without words" defied European intellectual resources. But villagers redeveloped it as the inner – and therefore faithful – record of their own merits. Ethnography can still reveal how patrimonial *quipus*, held as treasures of the community, were the memory-vehicle supporting a social contract among both people and gods.

Mónica Domínguez Torres, University of Delaware
Lineage and Leadership: The Portrait of Doña Juana María Cortés Chimalpopoca

On May 2, 1734, Juana María Cortés Chimalpopoca took the veil at the convent of Corpus Christi in Mexico City. Founded in 1724, this religious house was created for *indias cacicas* (noble women of indigenous blood) who had been denied the right to profess vows for centuries. As it was customary, a portrait of the young nun-to-be was commissioned to commemorate the occasion, probably by Don José Cortés Chimalpopoca, Juana María's father. The upper left corner of the painting includes a faithful reproduction of the coats of arms that Philip II granted in 1564 to Antonio Cortés Totoquihuaztli, governor of Tacuba from 1550 to 1574. Don José claimed to be a descendant of the pre-Conquest rulers of this important Tepanec settlement. Taking this painting as a starting point, this paper explores the long and complicated history of this indigenous lineage, and its efforts to preserve its privileges throughout centuries of Spanish domination.

Eduardo de Jesús Douglas, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Lines of Descent: Indian, Mestizo, and Criollo in the “Genealogical Tree of the Royal Line of Texcoco”

This paper considers a mid-eighteenth-century “indigenous” pictorial genealogy from New Spain. The genealogy, painted in the form of a European family tree, visually connects the colonial period descendants of the pre-Hispanic rulers of Texcoco, one of the capitals of the Aztec state, to their royal ancestors. Analysis of the genealogy’s iconography, compositional structure, and pictorial style demonstrates how it images the pre-Hispanic past and re-figures indigenous heritage in order to articulate a viable, multi-faceted social identity – and sustain economic privilege – in contemporary New Spain.

Janet Stephens, Georgia State University

Christian Nobles and Noble Christians: Paintings of the Inca and the Social Strategies of Indigenous Elites in Cuzco and Lima

Paintings depicting the dynasty of Inca rulers were popular in colonial Peru. The works were commissioned by indigenous elites, Creoles, and the colonial administration. This talk examines indigenous patronage of this pictorial genre in Cuzco and Lima. Though the paintings were a useful tool to advance the title of the indigenous elite to special status in colonial society, the manner by which the works articulated those claims was distinct. In Cuzco the indigenous community emphasized the continuity of Inca dynasty, thereby positioning themselves as direct heirs, to take advantage of the role of nobility in Spanish society. In Lima indigenous elites used paintings of their ancestors to appeal to the Crown additionally through a sense of Christian duty. In recognizing these strategies, the paper argues that scholars need to be more attuned to Peru’s colonial indigenous elites as a group that was neither monolithic in its goals nor homogenous in its identity.