

**Visual Culture in Colonial Latin American**  
**Fordham University**  
**Prof. Barbara Mundy**

The advent of the High Renaissance in Europe coincided with the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Colonists brought European art objects to the New World, and in the 16th century, indigenous peoples of the Americas (once known as the Aztec and the Inka) used these works to inspire their own artistic Renaissance in Latin America. It was a mestizo, or mixed, Renaissance, marrying the great art forms of native America to the best of the European Renaissance. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Baroque and Neoclassical styles in painting and architecture were also adapted and reinterpreted by artists in Latin America. This course looks at the development of this distinct visual culture in Latin America from 1500-1800, with a focus on important urban centers, Mexico City, Puebla, Cuzco and Lima.

By the end of this class, you should have gained experience in  
--writing about art  
--analyzing the connections between art and society  
--analyzing and evaluating scholarly texts

**Required course material:**

Dana Leibsohn and Barbara E. Mundy, *Vistas: Visual Culture in Latin America, 1520-1820*. Online at [www.smith.edu/vistas](http://www.smith.edu/vistas). Each theme has introductory material, a set of about 40 images with annotations (in the Gallery), and a suite of primary documents (in the Texts section). When a theme is assigned, students are responsible for the material in the "Surveying" section. On most days, we'll be zeroing in on a small group of primary documents (in the Texts section of the website, shown in red) and images (in the Gallery, shown in blue). For the Texts, read the document itself, and the explanatory "Visual Culture" and "History." For the Images, open up the small annotations in Luna (you'll find about 12-15 on each image) and read them as you look at the image. To prepare for class, think about connections among the members of each group.

**Other readings**

All readings listed in the syllabus are available on the course reserve page. A full bibliography appears below.

**Outline of classes**

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1. Introduction and course goals
  2. Conquest and the Foundation of Latin America  
Reading: Coe, "The Aztec Empire" and Morris, "Signs of Division."  
[Text/image: The conquistador Hernán Cortés marvels at the Aztec capital, 1520;](#)  
[The Foundation of Tenochtitlan, Codex Mendoza, ca. 1542. Bodleian Library,](#)  
[Oxford, U.K.; Map of Cuzco, \*Civitates orbis terrarum\*, vol. 1, 1576. Georg Braun](#)
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- and Franz Hogenberg. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain; Saqsawamán, mid 15th-early 16th c. Cuzco, Peru.
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3. Making Sense of the Pre-Columbian  
*Vistas*, Making Sense of the Pre-Columbian  
 Text/image: [A Nahuatl account of the pre-Hispanic events at Chicomoztoc, ca. 1550](#); [A primordial flood covers the Andes, ca. 1608](#); [Chicomoztoc, Historia Tolteca Chichimeca, ca. 1550](#). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; [Khipu, late 15th-early 17th c. Centro Mallqui, Leymebamba, Peru.](#)
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4. Feather arts  
 Russo, "Plumes of Sacrifice."  
 Text/image: [The arts and rituals of Nahua featherworkers, past and present, ca. 1570 \(in Mechanics\)](#); [Feathered Shield with Coyote, obverse and reverse, ca. 1525](#). Museum für Völkerkunde, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria; [Feather-working scenes, Florentine Codex, Book 9, ca. 1570-1585](#). Bernardino de Sahagún, and others. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy; [Christ as Salvator Mundi, mid to late 16th c. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán, Mexico.](#)
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5. Political Force of Images.  
*Vistas*, Political Force of Images.  
 Text/image: [Viceroy Toledo orders that designs on keros be destroyed, 1574](#); [The town council of Tlaxcala takes office, New Spain, 1627](#); [Kero with Inka Village and Planting Scenes, late 16th c. Museo Inka, Cuzco, Peru](#); [Nezahualpilli, Codex Ixtlilxochitl, ca. 1582](#). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; [Staff of Office, early 19th c. Denver Art Museum, Denver, USA.](#)
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6. Political Force of Images: 16<sup>th</sup> c. Architecture in Mexico  
 Reading: Edgerton, excerpt from *Theaters of Conversion*  
 Text/image: [How indigenous masons learned to create vaults, 1615 \(in Mechanics\)](#); [San Miguel, 16th c. Maní, Yucatán, Mexico. Photograph by Jorge Pérez de Lara](#); [San Martín, mid-16th century. Huaquechula, Mexico](#); [San Gabriel, ca. 1555-70. Cholula, Mexico.](#)
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7. Political Force of Images: 16<sup>th</sup> c. Architecture in Peru  
 Reading: Cummins, "A Tale of Two Cities."  
 Text/image: [Encomenderos in Cuzco petition the king after the great earthquake of 1650](#); [Korikancha, Cuzco, ca. 1630. Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamayhua. Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain](#); [Korikancha and Santo Domingo, 15th-17th centuries, Cuzco](#); [Map of Cuzco, 1643. Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Peru](#); [Map of Lima, La estrella de Lima convertida en sol, 1688.](#)
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8. Monastic painting  
 Reading: Peterson, excerpt from *Paradise Murals*  
 Text/image: [A Monastic Garden in Puebla, ca. 1760 \(in Patterns\)](#); [San Miguel, Cloister, ca. 1550-1570, Malinalco, Mexico](#); [San Pedro Apóstol, Andahuaylillas, Mural](#); [Hooded Flagellants, mid-16th c. San Martín Huaquechula, Mexico.](#)
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9. City planning and mapping  
 Reading: Mundy, "Spain and the imperial ideology of mapping."  
 Text/image: [King Phillip II dictates the layout of new towns, 1573 \(in Patterns\)](#); [The Jesuits plan a new town for the Guaraní in Paraguay's Amazon, 1613 \(in Patterns\)](#); [Map of Cholula from the Relaciones Geográficas, 1581. Benson Latin](#)
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American Collection, Austin, Texas; Description and Plan of the City of Havana, 1603. Cristóbal Roda. Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, España (Santo Domingo 20, 1603); Map of Atlatlauca, Tenango, 1588. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico.

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10. Mechanics of the Artworld

*Vistas*, Mechanics of the Artworld

**Text/image:** Regulations for the sculptors' guild of Mexico City, 1589 (in Mechanics); Melchor Pérez Holguín takes on an assistant in Potosí, 1678; Architectural drawing (obverse), 1685. Diego de la Sierra. Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Spain; The Flight into Egypt, ca. 1720. Melchor Pérez Holguín. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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11. Andean textile traditions

Phipps, "Cumbi to Tapestry"

**Text/image:** Garcilaso de la Vega remembers the Inka way of dressing, 1609 (in Pre-Columbian); José de Acosta praises the textiles of the Andes, 1590 (in Mechanics); Unku with Heraldry Lions and the name "Diego Dias," back view, 17th century. Museo Inka, Cuzco, Peru; Chinese-Influenced Cover, late 17th-early 18th century. MFA, Boston, USA; Coca Leaf Bag, 17th c. San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, USA.

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12. Silver as art and specie

**Text/image:** Smelting silver in the New World, ca. 1586; The interior of a church in Lima, ca. 1740; The marquesa remakes her gift in Potosí, 1749; The Furnace for Smelting Silver, Natural History of the Indies, ca. 1586. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, USA. Eight-escudo coin, 1700. American Numismatic Society, NYC, USA. Saint Michael, 18th c. Museo Popol Vuh, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala City, Guatemala; View of Potosí, Tarih-i Hind-i garbî veya Hadîs-i nev, late 16th-early 17th c. The Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, USA.

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13. Asia and Europe meet

Leibsohn, "Made in China/Made in Mexico."

**Text/image:** Chinese goods are to be properly taxed, 1746 (in Mechanics); Jar with Serpentine Handles, ca. 1660. Attributed to Damien Hernández. Hispanic Society of America, New York, USA. Biombo with Scenes of Conquest and Scenes of Mexico City, 17th c. Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City. Cabinet, ca. 1680. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA.

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14. Otherworldly Visions.

*Vistas*, Otherworldly Visions.

**Text/image:** Christopher Columbus's chaplain encounters the zemis of the Taíno, ca. 1496; Bartolomé de las Casas protests the seizing of idols, 16th century; Zemi, front and back, ca. 1500. Museo Nazionale Preistorico ed Ethnografico "Luigi Pigorini," Rome, Italy. Burning of "idols," Description of the City and Province of Tlaxcala, ca. 1581-84. Diego Muñoz Camargo. Glasgow University Library, Department of Special Collections, Scotland.

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15. Otherworldly Visions.

Dean, "The Renewal of Old World Images."

**Text/image:** Nahua curers invoke the Catholic saints, 1629; A Catholic priest rebuts

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- [Quechua beliefs, 1649](#); [Corpus Christi Procession, Parish of San Cristóbal, ca. 1680. Museo de Arte Religioso, Cuzco, Per](#); [Our Lady of Cocharcas under the Baldachin, 1765. Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, USA.](#) [Santiago Matamoros, ca. 1750. New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, EE.UU.](#) [Santiago Matamoros, 17th c. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán, Mexico.](#)
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16. The Virgin of Guadalupe  
Peterson, "Reproducibility of the Sacred."  
[Text/image: \*Nican Mopohua: The Virgin Mary appears to Juan Diego in Mexico City, ca. 1695\*](#); [Virgin of Guadalupe, possibly mid 16th c. Basílica de Guadalupe, Tepeyac, Mexico.](#) [Virgin of Guadalupe, late 17th c. Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City, Mexico.](#)
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17. Patterns of Everyday Life  
*Vistas, Patterns of Everyday Life*  
[Text/image: A Maya woman divides her possessions, 1766](#); [Antonio de Ulloa's account of the clothing of worn in Quito, Ecuador, 1746](#); [Maya House, late 18th-19th c., Hacienda Ake, Mexico](#); [Palacio Torre-Tagle, 1735. Lima, Peru.](#)
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18. Life in the convent  
Córdova, "Clad in Flowers."  
[Text/image: An archbishop cracks down on the dress of Hieronymite nuns, 1673](#); [Childhood virtues of St. Rose of Lima, 1711](#); [A nun dreams of a house of horrors, Quito, ca. 1760](#); [Luisa Manuela del Sacramento, ca. 1809. Collection of the Banco de la República de Colombia \(Accession #3463\), Casa de Moneda, Bogotá, Colombia](#); [Cloister and Plan, Convent of Las Capuchinas, ca. 1730. Antigua, Guatemala](#); [Nun's Cell and Cloister, Santa Catalina, 17-18th c. Arequipa, Peru](#); [Nun's Shield, mid-18th c. José de Páez. Museo Soumaya, Mexico City, Mexico](#); [Ex-voto of the Alférez Diego de la Parra, ca. 1711. Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City.](#)
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19. Reckoning with Mestizaje  
*Vistas, Reckoning with Mestizaje*  
[Text/image: The marriage of the heiress to the Inka throne, 17th century](#); [Black slaves and white owners in Guatemala, 1648](#); [Portrait of an Indian Lady, Daughter of a Cacique. 1757. Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City, Mexico](#); [Union of the Inka Royal Family with the Houses of Loyola and Borgia, 18th c. Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima, Peru](#); [The Mulatto Gentlemen of Esmeraldas, 1599. Andrés Sánchez Gallque. Museo de América, Madrid, Spain.](#)
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20. Art and race: Casta Painting  
Reading: Katzew, "Casta Painting"  
[Text/image: The Viceroy of Peru sends casta paintings to Spain, 1770](#); [Should Indians be allowed to wear silk ? Quito, 1593 \(in Mestizaje\)](#); [Casta Painting: "De Español y Mulata, Morisco," ca. 1770. Denver Art Museum, USA.](#) [Casta Painting, 1777. Ignacio María Barreda. Real Academia Española, Madrid, Spain.](#)
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21. Order in the city  
Mundy, "The Images of Eighteenth-Century Urban Reform"  
[Text/image: A night watchman's account of a riotous tavern in Lima, 1822](#); [View of Imperial Mexico City, ca. 1772. José Antonio Alzate y Ramírez. Museo Franz Mayer, Mexico City, Mexico](#); [Map of Havana, Neu und verbessenter Plan der St.](#)
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- und Hafens Havana, ca. 1741. Pierre Chassereau. Nuremberg: Heirs of Johann Baptist Homann. University of Chicago Collection, Chicago, USA; Cockfight, La obra del Obispo Martínez Compañón sobre Trujillo del Perú en el Siglo XVIII, ca. 1780. Real Biblioteca, Madrid, Spain.
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22. The icon in the New World  
Bargellini, "Originality and invention..."
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23. Enlightenment ideas in the New World  
Bleichmar, "Visible Empire..."  
**Text/image:** Chimborazo seen from the Tapia Plateau, Voyage of Humboldt and Bonpland, 1810. Alexander von Humboldt. British Library, London, UK. Passiflora Adenopoda, Royal Botanical Expedition of the Kingdom of New Granada, ca. 1783. José Celestino Mutis and Nicolás Cortes. Biblioteca del Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid, Spain.
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24. Academies  
Deans-Smith, "Noble and illustrious art..."  
**Text/image:** Portrait of Manuel Tolsá, ca. 1795. Rafael Jimeno y Planes. Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City.
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25. The nation and the pre-Columbian  
**Text/image:** León y Gama interprets a statue of the Aztec Coatlicue, 1792; Why is there no worthy ancient sculpture in Oaxaca? 1806; Aztec Serpent Head, 16th century, set in the Palacio de los Condes de Santiago de Calimaya, 1778. Mexico City. Coatlicue, Historical and Chronological Description of the Two Stones that were Discovered in Mexico City's Main Plaza, 1792. Antonio de León y Gama. General Research Division, New York Public Library, NYC, USA.
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26. Art and Revolutions  
**Text/image:** The wife of the rebel Tupac Amaru II is executed in Cuzco, 1781 (in Political); Portrait, King Philip V repainted as Santiago Matamoros, 18th century. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia. Belt with the execution of Tupac Amaru II, Gregoria Pumayalli Awkakusi, 2002. Brooklyn Museum of Art. Portrait of King Ferdinand VII, ca. 1810. New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, USA.
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### Reading list

Michael Coe, "The Aztec Empire: Realm of the Smoking Mirror" in *Circa 1492: art in the age of Exploration*, edited by Jay A. Levenson (Washington: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Craig Morris, "Signs of Division, Symbols of Unity: Art in the Inka Empire," in *Circa 1492: art in the age of Exploration*, edited by Jay A. Levenson (Washington: National Gallery of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Alessandra Russo, "Plumes of Sacrifice: Transformation in Sixteenth-Century Mexican Feather Art," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 42 (2002): 226–250.

Samuel Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2002).

Tom Cummins, "A Tale of Two Cities: Cuzco, Lima, and the Construction of Colonial Representation," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, Diana Fane, ed. (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996), pp. 157-170.

Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

Barbara Mundy, "Spain and the imperial ideology of mapping," from *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Elena Phipps, "Cumbi to Tapestry: Collection, Innovation, and Transformation of the Colonial Andean Tapestry Tradition," in *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830*, E. Phipps, J. Hecht, C. Esteras Martín, and L. E. Alcalá, eds. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), pp. 72-99.

Dana Leibsohn, "Made in China/Made in Mexico," in *At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America and Early Global Trade*, Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka, eds. (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2012), pp. 11-40.

Carolyn Dean, "The Renewal of Old World Images and the Creation of Colonial Peruvian Visual Culture," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, Diana Fane, ed. (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996), pp. 171-182.

Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "The Reproducibility of the Sacred: Simulacra of the Virgin of Guadalupe," in *Exploring New World Imagery: Spanish Colonial Paper from the 2002 Mayer Center Symposium*. Edited by Donna Pierce (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2005), pp. 41-77.

James M. Córdova, "Clad in Flowers: Indigenous Arts and Knowledge in Colonial Mexican Convents," *Art Bulletin* 93 (2011): 449-467.

Iлона Katzew, "Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico," in *New World Orders* (New York: Americas Society), pp. 8-29.

Barbara E. Mundy, "The Images of Eighteenth-Century Urban Reform in Mexico City and the Plan of José Antonio Alzate," *Colonial Latin American Review* 21, no. 1 (April 2012), pp. 45-75.

Clara Bargellini, "Originality and Invention in the Painting of New Spain," in *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521-1821*. Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, and Clara Bargellini, eds. (Denver: Frederick and Jan Mayer Center for Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art at the Denver Art Museum, 2004).

Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions & Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

Susan Deans-Smith, "'This Noble and Illustrious Art': Painters and the Politics of Guild Reform in Early Modern Mexico City," in *Mexican Soundings: Essays In Honor of David A. Brading*, eds., Susan Deans-Smith and Eric Van Young (London: Brookings Institute Press, 2007): 67-98.