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. 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

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 Tenoctitlan, Codex Mendoza, ca. 1542. Bodleian Library,
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.

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; Featherworking 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.

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.

6. Political Force of Images: 16th 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.

7. Political Force of Images: 16th 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.

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, Andahuayllillas, Mural; Hooded Flagellants, mid-16th c. San Martín Huaquechula, Mexico.

9. City planning and mapping

Reading: Mundy, "Spain and the imperial ideology of mapping."

**Text/image:** King Philip 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
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 Atlaltluca, Tenango, 1588. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico.

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, Seville, Spain; The Flight into Egypt, ca. 1720. Melchor Pérez Holguín. Museo Nacional de Arte, La Paz, Bolivia.

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.

12. **Silver as art and specie**


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.

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.

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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>16. The Virgin of Guadalupe</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peterson, “Reproducibility of the Sacred.”</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> <em>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.</em></td>
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<th>17. Patterns of Everyday Life</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vistas,</strong> Patterns of Everyday Life</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> 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.</td>
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<th>18. Life in the convent</th>
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<td>Córdova, &quot;Clad in Flowers.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> 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.</td>
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<th>19. Reckoning with Mestizaje</th>
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<td><strong>Vistas,</strong> Reckoning with Mestizaje</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> 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 Gallique. Museo de América, Madrid, Spain.</td>
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<th>20. Art and race: Casta Painting</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Katzew, “Casta Painting”</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> 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 Maria Barreda. Real Academia Española, Madrid, Spain.</td>
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<th>21. Order in the city</th>
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<td>Mundy, &quot;The Images of Eighteenth-Century Urban Reform&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Text/image:</strong> 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.</td>
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22. The icon in the New World
Bargellini, "Originality and invention..."

23. Enlightenment ideas in the New World
Bleichmar, "Visible Empire..."

24. Academies
Deans-Smith, "Noble and illustrious art..."

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.

26. Art and Revolutions

Reading list


