
HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

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HEMISPHERE is an annual publication edited and produced by graduate students affiliated with the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Although everyone involved in producing the inaugural issue of this journal is affiliated with the University of New Mexico, our objective is to eventually open participation to individuals from other institutions. *Hemisphere* provides a forum for graduate students to present scholarship and studio practice pertaining to all aspects and time periods of the visual and material cultures of North, Central and South America and related world contexts. In producing this journal, students promote their educational and professional interests as they gain first-hand experience in academic publishing.

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NO TOWN OF ITS CLASS IN SPAIN: CIVIC ARCHITECTURE AND COLONIAL SOCIAL FORMATION IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SANTO DOMINGO, HISPANIOLA

Paul Barrett Niell, Ph.D.

German art historian Erwin Walter Palm's (1910-88) research on the colonial city of Santo Domingo (founded in 1496 on the island of Hispaniola and now capital of the Dominican Republic) has noted the plurality of architectural styles employed by early settlers in the construction of the first European city in the Americas. In his work of the mid twentieth century, Palm systematically identified Iberian stylistic models, largely focusing on religious works, and described their adaptations in Santo Domingo. In fact, the scholarship on sixteenth-century Spanish Colonial architecture in the Caribbean typically operates on the assumption that architectural manifestations in the colonial city reflect a continuum of contemporary southern Iberian styles and practices. The pattern of seeing that Palm and others have established downplays the fact that the architecture of early Santo Domingo was the product of an American society. This problematic legacy is due to several factors: one, the similarity of Santo Domingo's architecture to contemporary Iberian styles, two, the apparent lack of Native American influence in this architecture and three, a perception of the *placeless-ness* of the Caribbean islands. Studies of colonial social formation in the early colonial Caribbean, particularly as it relates to architectural styles in the Americas, suggest locally-oriented formative processes. Indeed, on close examination, we find that new American ideological formations around issues of social identity, political power, the island's native population and the introduction of new labor systems played an inseparable and under-investigated role in the development of early Spanish Caribbean architecture.¹ Our contextual understanding of Santo Domingo's rich architectural heritage is augmented by establishing connections between the material fabric of the city and its socio-political and economic history.

A useful methodology to better understand the Americanization at work in the city's civic buildings is to examine how a plurality of *European* architectural styles was appropriated by local elites in the process of colonial social formation. By focusing on local adaptations, we find that the city contributed to the construction of early modern American identities, early colonial labor systems and relationships between town and countryside. These cultural, economic and socio-spatial domains had serious ramifications for later Spanish Colonial contexts. Clearly, the city became part of an ideological framework through which Europeans began to conceptualize the western hemisphere. The architectural forms generated in this process, therefore, represent a local idiom in their direct relationship to the gradual

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emergence of early modern American societies and economies. Substantial benefits to our understanding of American cultures will be gained by shifting our language, and thus our focus, on this material from its perception as a late Gothic, Plateresque and/or Renaissance phenomenon (all signifiers of European historical experience) to an early *American* idiom.

Civic architecture in early sixteenth-century Santo Domingo records how colonial governors and ambitious elites tested the limits of metropolitan power through architectural projects. Santo Domingo thus became an experimental city of the early Spanish Colonial enterprise: a testing ground for the role of architectural representation in establishing and maintaining power, constructing social identity and reinforcing new systems of production. The mandates of the Crown, in response to local building projects, reveal a power dialogue expressed through architectural representation, paralleling the initial conceptualizations of the enterprise of the *Indies* and emphasizing the disjuncture between Spanish policy and American implementation. A disproportionate focus on the religious architecture of the city, including its various mendicant complexes and remarkable cathedral completed in the 1540's, has inhibited such investigations. This essay examines the *civic* architecture of sixteenth-century Santo Domingo as a production of the first Euro-American urban society.

Established in 1496 by the brother of Christopher Columbus, the city of Santo Domingo was an attempt to create a permanent administrative center after a four-year campaign to map, settle and pacify the island that the Spanish named Española or Hispaniola (modern Haiti and the Dominican Republic). When Columbus landed on the island's northwestern shore in 1492, he encountered native *Taino* inhabitants, who attempted to initiate trade with the peculiar newcomers. The admiral quickly established the fort of La Navidad, where he left thirty-nine sailors behind when he returned to Spain with *Taino* captives and gold. His plan was to demonstrate to the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand I and Isabella II, that the precious metal could be found in the newly *discovered* territories and that a labor force was available for its extraction. Columbus returned in 1493 with seventeen ships and armed with the tools necessary to transform the island's *Taino* inhabitants into a slave labor force to work the Hispaniola goldfields. Upon his return, he found that the thirty-nine sailors had been killed by the warriors of a *Taino* chieftain in retaliation for the settlers' raping and pillaging of nearby *Taino* settlements.² Columbus then relocated the settlement to La Isabella on the island's northeastern coast in 1494, but within five years, the settlement had declined due to the discovery of gold deposits on the south coast in 1496.³ Simultaneously, a European conquest had begun cutting from north to south

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through the center of the island, establishing forts, which would become towns, such as Santiago and Concepción (both founded in 1495). The push inland was motivated by the search for gold (the principle preoccupation of the Spanish in the early years), the exploration of the remaining areas of the island, and the submission of the native population.

The mapping and conquest of Hispaniola corresponded to what Walter Mignolo has called a process of *emptying spaces* initiated by the Spanish in the Americas.⁴ Erasing Native territoriality and memory, combined with the introduction of new power relations, the sources of which were obscured by a bureaucratic apparatus and an elite power structure, represented formative events in the development of an Atlantic world economy, and, ultimately, modern capitalism. Mignolo and others have explored how America was transformed from the *unknown* to the *new* in the European imagination, positing that whatever did not exist on the European horizon, did not exist at all until it was *discovered* and named.⁵ The framework through which Europe conceptualized the Americas upon their *discovery* was one in which Europe assumed a hegemonic perspective, a domination of all other points of view. The *Taino* of Hispaniola, the *Indian*, as labeled by Columbus, became the European *Other* and was framed in a variety of ways in the European imagination and in contemporary representations of Native Americans by European printmakers. The Indian was imagined and represented as savage, naked, cannibalistic—without culture, yet well constituted physically—thus possessing a natural affinity, as perceived by Columbus, towards European servitude.

In 1496, a new town was founded on the island's southern coast nearer to the inland goldfields. It was named Santo Domingo, known unofficially as La Nueva Isabella, and located on the eastern shores of the mouth of the Río Ozama. Christopher Columbus then attempted to govern the island from this new settlement. Initiating a system of forced labor known as *repartimiento*, Columbus employed contractual labor to accommodate a rival faction headed by a Spaniard named Roldán. The faction led by Roldán had taken a defiant position against official authority, organized a following, and allied itself with several *Taino* groups. In this new labor system, Columbus allocated Natives to Roldánistas (followers of Roldán), who divided the *Taino* slaves and pitted them against each other.⁶ Columbus' deference to the demands of defiant settlers through the allocation of Indians as property enraged the Crown, which had mandated that Indians were not slaves but vassals who needed to be converted to Christianity. Columbus' defiance of royal authority—along with local complaints—overcame his credibility as an administrator. Consequently, the Crown ordered his replacement by an interim governor

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Francisco de Bobadilla, who arrived in 1500 and had Columbus put into shackles and returned to Europe.⁷

Bobadilla presided over a population of about 300 and reduced taxes on gold production; which, although it upset the Spanish monarchs, produced major gold returns. The Crown sent his replacement, Nicolás de Ovando (r. 1502-09), a member of the knightly Order of Alcántara from the town of Cáceres in Extremadura, in 1502, to gain control over the *Indies* and of royal revenues. The new governor arrived with 2,500 settlers to join the population of 300 already suffering food shortages. The hurricane that struck the island that year destroyed the largely wooden settlement of 1496. Ovando, realizing the possibilities of limestone deposits along the shores of the Ozama River, had the settlement moved to the western side of the river and initiated the construction of a stone city. A sixteenth-century urban view by Italian mapmaker, Baptista Boazio, depicts Santo Domingo's location on the western bank of the Ozama River (Figure 1).

This western location placed the city closer to the goldfields of San Cristóbal and Cibao. Yet, food shortages and disease killed off an estimated 1,000 settlers in just a few months of Ovando's arrival. Those who remained, many of them ill, began trading with the 300 settlers already on the island, who lacked basic sustenance but controlled land and Indian labor.⁸

Ovando faced some immediate dilemmas: his colonists' need for labor, the Crown's policy of Indians as vassals not slaves and the economic vitality of the 300 settlers already on the island dependent on Native servitude. The governor's solution was to reinforce the *repartimiento* and *encomienda* systems, the legal basis for which had been established by the Crown. In the *encomienda* system (a more refined version of the *repartimiento* system on Hispaniola), Native villages would supply seasonal labor to Spanish landowners in exchange for religious instruction; Indian labor was given to settlers willing to cooperate with official authorities. As the scholars Deagan and Cruxent point out, what actually emerged was a social system in which the governor gave the best lands and the greatest number of Indians to Spaniards of high social rank while those of lesser standing received less of both land and Indians.⁹ 'What emerged was a peculiar set of accommodations between Crown interests in religious conversion of the Indians..., the Crown's economic interests, the economic interests of the settlers, and Ovando's local problems of governance in a remote colony.'¹⁰ What the governor succeeded in creating was an early elite social echelon in Santo Domingo based on political alliances and favoritism in the acquisition of property.

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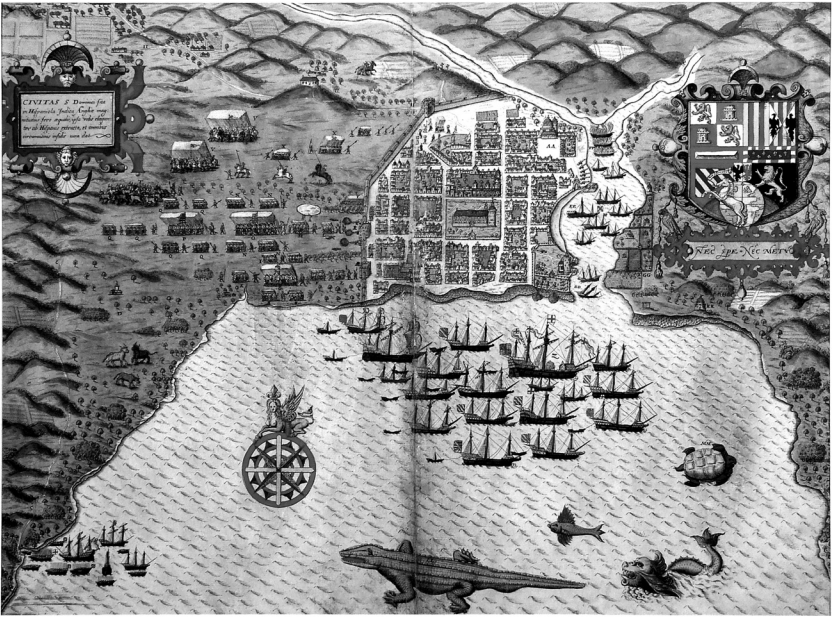


Figure 1. Baptista Boazio, *The Attack on Santo Domingo*, from *A summarie and true discourse of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage* (1589), 5×8cm. The Dallas Pratt Collection, The American Museum in Britain, Bath, England.

While enforcing royal mandates to respect the rights of Indians, the new governor dealt harshly with Native resistance. Ovando targeted the remaining Native political strongholds of the island, including the southeastern chiefdom of Higüey and the southwestern Xaraguá. A rebellion in Higüey was met with the execution of 600–700 *Tainos*, who were corralled into the chief's *bohío* (house) and stabbed to death by Ovando's soldiers. The governor ordered their bodies dragged into the neighboring plaza and formally counted. Ovando visited Chief Anacaona in 1503, a *Taino* woman who governed the last independent chiefdom of Higüey. She was compelled to organize a meeting in her *bohío* of eighty district chiefs, at which Ovando ordered his soldiers to seal the doors and burn them alive. Chief Anacaona was hanged out of respect for her status, and the remaining village inhabitants were executed.¹¹ The governor's brutality forcefully erased the remaining Native political structure on the island, further *emptying* Native space, in order to prepare the island for the advent of European urbanism.

Nicolás de Ovando's stone city of well-measured spaces reinforced the Spanish project to consolidate power on the island, which had begun with Columbus' earliest attempts to map and label the *West Indies*. Thus, the

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construction of the city as a physical and political space was interconnected with the imposition of a Spanish nomenclature on the physical geography of the Caribbean island. Ángel Rama has argued that Spanish Colonial urbanism involved the imposition of an *order of signs* on the American landscape, emphasizing the power of writing in the consolidation of territory.¹² Writing was the privileged domain of the city's *letrados* (literate classes), who wielded authority through the understanding and manipulation of language. Thomas B. F. Cummins and Joanne Rappaport, however, have extended Rama's earlier analysis to include a variety of intersecting *spatial spheres* in the construction of order in the colonial city, including alphabetic literacy, visual representation, architecture and urban planning, which worked together in the production of colonial ideologies.¹³ Early royal decrees and laws in Hispaniola were reinforced by a more comprehensive '*order of signs*,' including the construction of an ordered city, architecture, visual messages on buildings and visible ritual performances that established a European-style order of both space and time.

The ordered city of stone responded to the necessity for establishing control over various groups: to coordinate the distribution of property grants and to oversee both the extraction of gold and its shipment back to Spain. A city of stone construction actualized Spanish authority over the island's Native population in a permanent form and established a sense of the solidity of Spanish law over factional groups. *Taino* villages were built of wood and thatch construction; thus, Native leaders would have been awed and intimidated at massive buildings of stone. Such a city would also lend legitimacy to the enterprise of the *Indies* as a profitable endeavor, encouraging additional immigration with promises of material acquisition. The most desirable form of *property* that incoming settlers might acquire in this early period, according to Stuart Schwartz, consisted of a grant of *encomienda* that gave a participant in the conquest or an arriving Spaniard control of Indian labor and production. Schwartz states that, "These grants...were the key to the formation of the first elite after the conquest."¹⁴ Grants of Indian labor to work rural estates combined with an urban existence to create an early modern American city dweller of elite status. The stone city supported and sustained the claims of wealthy urban residents to rural estates and reinforced both the finality of Spanish law and a new American labor system.

The 2,500 settlers who arrived with Governor Ovando in 1502 included brick masons, stone masons and master craftsmen, who began the construction of fortifications and houses along the first streets of Santo Domingo. Most of these craftsmen, according to Pérez Montás, were trained in schools of craftsmanship under the royal patronage of the Catholic monarchs and helped develop a late Gothic style known as the Isabelline or *the style of*

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the Catholic kings on the Iberian peninsula.¹⁵ This idiom evolved into a style known as the *Plateresque* in the sixteenth century, a word derivative of the art of the silversmith, which involved intense surface ornamentation within traditional frameworks. The style of the Catholic monarchs was thus a transitional style and its visual traits can be identified in many architectural works in early Santo Domingo.

The Catholic monarchs had presided over the expulsion of populations of Jewish and Islamic descent on the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This period, one of extreme intolerance in Spain, also witnessed the ascension of the Spanish nation. This conquering mentality, coupled with ideologies of the ideal Christian community and the firm location of an *Other* against which fifteenth-century Iberian Christians defined themselves, was carried by the architectural forms of early Santo Domingo. However, in Hispaniola, the Indian replaced the Muslim and Jew, becoming an Ibero-American *Other*. The new divinely ordained mission became the conversion of Indians to Christianity and the expansion of Christian territories. Thus, Iberian visual forms that acted as ideological signals in Europe took on a reconfigured meaning in the Colonial Americas while maintaining a resonant power to delineate race, social hierarchy and over-arching political agendas.

Italian Renaissance aesthetics, also tied to political and economic motives, emerged in early Santo Domingo, including a more heightened concern for linear clarity and geometric harmony in architectural surface compositions and urban configurations. Italian Renaissance theorists, such as Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), propagated graphic models of correct proportion, believing that well-measured urban spaces endowed the city with a reflection of the divine order of nature and the cosmos. Correct proportion and ordered architectural surfaces intersected with the imagined space of the ideal Christian community, as that described in St. Augustine's City of God (begun c. 413 CE).¹⁶ Concepts of *ideal city planning* had reached the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century; however, the labyrinthine streets of cities, such as Toledo, left no possibility for realizing these ideas in physical form. Santo Domingo was built, by comparison, on what was perceived as a blank slate upon which ideal urban designs could be realized. Regular city planning and this plurality of architectural idioms (the Isabelline, the Plateresque and the Renaissance) coexisted with visual elements of Ibero-Islamic origin, all of which were appropriated in Santo Domingo as part of an emerging Spanish proto-national style in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. These ideal visions of the city also cohesed with more pragmatic approaches to urban planning learned in European warfare. Santo Domingo resembled the grid-planned siege town of Santa Fé, which was constructed

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in 1492 outside of Granada for the final assault against the Islamic kingdom of the Nasrids in al-Andalus or southern Spain by the armies of the Catholic monarchs.¹⁷ Thus, a variety of concepts, urban models, and architectural styles informed the urban configuration of Santo Domingo in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

The first street to be completed in Santo Domingo, *Calle La Fortaleza* (Fortress Street), ran the north-south stretch between the city gate on the river and its southernmost point facing the Caribbean sea, and became the city's early administrative center. The House of Ovando, built for the governor in 1502, reveals the appropriation of visual elements associated with wealth, power, and social status in contemporary Iberia (Figure 2). The walls were relatively unadorned, with surface decoration reserved for the doorways, the majority of which were accented by implied post-and-lintels in stone relief. The main entryway, however, consisted of a large door surmounted by stone relief Gothic tracery, visually aligning Ovando with the formal languages of Isabella II, who had appropriated French and Flemish Gothic idioms to represent the monarchy. Above this relief sculpture, an *arrabá* (a rectangular ornamentation of Islamic origin) symmetrically framed the doorway and defined the space between the door and the second-story window. Providing a backdrop for formal appearances by the governor, this doorway treatment resembled myriad examples in Ovando's hometown of Cáceres, where his family owned numerous urban mansions.¹⁸ A reminder of Ovando's noble lineage, the doorway in Santo Domingo presented imagery that incoming settlers from southern Iberian towns would have identified as a signifier of regional dominance. The *arrába* in this American context reinforced Ovando as purveyor of *encomienda*, as well as identifying him as the king's representative in Santo Domingo.

The *arrabá* was a traditional element evocative of the *reconquista* (re-conquest), the centuries-old Christian struggle to push back the Islamic frontier in southern Iberia. A substantial number of Spanish noble families had received their nobility for contributions to the *reconquista*. The *arrabá*, therefore, could have been used to reference such dedications to Christendom and/or memberships in prestigious knighthoods, like the Knights of Calátrava, Santiago or Alcántara (the last to which Nicolás de Ovando belonged). The *arrabá*, in Christian contexts, operated as a mechanism for signaling allegiance within the physical and ideological struggle against Islamic populations in Iberia. Similar motifs are found on other early sixteenth-century colonial buildings built during the administration of Ovando, such as the House of the Cord, located several blocks west of *Calle La Fortaleza*. While the carved cord connects the private house to the Franciscan order, the form that the cord took, echoing the Ibero-Islamic *arrabá*, formally mirrored the House



Figure 2. Exterior view: façade, detail of arrabá, The House of Ovando, Santo Domingo (1502). Photo by Author (2007).

of Ovando. These visual dialogues open up questions concerning alliances between powerful Spanish officials and local elites in the early days of the city. The distribution of *encomienda* in the early Spanish Americas involved an inherent favoritism, whereby the acting colonial governor gave grants to settlers from his hometown or province in Spain and to those of higher social status. Such practices existed in Santo Domingo as similar door frames on elite homes represented local alliances around colonial socio-politics and the acquisition of property.¹⁹

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While the door treatment of Ovando's house resembled Iberian models, the absence of other elements distinguishes this building from comparable houses in Iberian towns like Cáceres. The lack of towers, associated with family status in medieval Iberia, distinguished early houses in Santo Domingo from their Iberian equivalents. The *tower-less* colonial city indicates a concern for more regularity, linearity, and urban uniformity reflecting, too, the influence of Renaissance aesthetics. Other non-Iberian elements included the regular two-door bays, the increased number of doors and windows, and the uniform building profile. The tropical climate of the Caribbean resulted in a need for the increased number of doors for ventilation. However, the emphasis on regularity reveals an ideology of order brought by Ovando in response to the unstable society he was sent to govern. Emphasizing efficiency in the building's economic use of space and surface ornamentation, Ovando expressed his desire to make the colony profitable for the Crown. This attention to the ordering of the building's surface features is repeated in the house directly across *Calle la Fortaleza* from the House of Ovando, which was built at the same time. The House of Hernán Cortés, so named because it is believed that the conqueror of the Mexica stayed here before his departure for the mainland, reveals an unbroken cornice line, regular bays, strict correspondence between windows and doors, and implied door lintels. Like its neighbor across the street, the House of Cortés seems to suggest practical concerns, such as defense, in the small size of the second-story windows accompanied by the need for ventilation in the large ground floor doors. Heavy wooden doors could have sealed these passageways, reflecting the perceived threats felt by the colonial elite in the early city due to the presence of Natives and eventually, Africans, Spanish factionalism, and possible concerns for potential raids by pirates at sea. However, the impregnability of walls and the fortress-like qualities of private houses also served a symbolic function: these buildings became *spiritual fortresses* sanctifying their inhabitants as paragons of the ideal Christian community.²⁰ When taken together, these elements reveal an ideological agenda in which the material solidity of the buildings and the linear clarity of the street reinforced a harmonious community, efficient commerce, and good government.

The size and surface articulation of these early stone houses reflects a high level of elite self-consciousness in the early city. Anthony Pagden attributes the search for social status as one of the primary impetuses for Spanish immigration to the *Indies* in the early sixteenth-century.²¹ As Pagden and others have theorized, since the Catholic Kings had placed serious curbs on the privileges of the traditional nobility and decreased the chances for the lesser nobility (known as gentlemen, or *hidalgos*) of attaining noble status in Spain, the American colonies offered a territory free of Spanish restrictions

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and were imagined as a utopia where many *hidalgos* felt they could fulfill their dreams of becoming noble. The ideal of nobility, as Ida Altman points out, included the acquisition of coats of arms, titles, a grand town house, an obedient wife and children, an entourage of servants and slaves, alliances through marriage and seats on the local city council.²² This ideological framework of elite status took root in the Spanish Caribbean where we find a similar combination of features in the construction of social identity. For example, political involvement benefited a town actuary in Santo Domingo named Francisco Tostado, who built a house in the first decade of the sixteenth century that departed somewhat from Ovando's architectural language of power and social status. The House of Tostado, a corner house with a truncated tower (added in later centuries), possessed a single ground floor doorway with implied lintel, surmounted by a skillfully worked Gothic tracery window of stone.

Directly beneath the window sill are two recessed square panels, and beneath the door lintel are small, pearl-like ornamentations associated with the style of the Catholic monarchs. Erwin Walter Palm noted that, 'this ornament is well known from other constructions of the Catholic King and Queen. These balls, which are a translation into stone of the iron or bronze nailheads in *Mudéjar* adornment on wooden doors, have to be associated with similar motives in the articulation of entire walls...'²³ A horizontal band of spherical ornamentations combined with the tracery window firmly connected this elite resident to the monarchs and the local governor through architectural signs. Imagery associated with the Catholic monarchs, repeated throughout the city, functioned to convey a variety of messages and could have been received in a variety of ways. Reinforcing alliances with the monarchs legitimated official authority, as well as noble status, raising the prestige of the entire city by giving it a royal seal of approval. However, given the frustrations with the Crown among individuals who contributed to the conquest, some residents of Santo Domingo must have despised monarchical imagery. As Anthony Pagden has argued, ambitious early settlers resentful of monarchical restrictions on their access to political involvement in the *Indies* would have seen such imagery as a reminder of the limits of power.²⁴

Stone houses of the wealthy and powerful in early Santo Domingo reflected attempts to construct a sophisticated image for the colonial city, to convey social identities in urban space, and to create local alliances for the consolidation of power. Spanish-American cities, however, differed significantly in their urban and rural orientation from their Iberian equivalents. As Ángel Rama has observed, the fact that the development of the Spanish Colonial city preceded the development of the countryside

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created a paradigm of urban existence.²⁵ Early Spanish-American elites in Santo Domingo were obsessively urban creatures, seeking to shun manual labor, maintain visible town homes, and build their grand urban existences on the backs of *Taino* and, eventually, African slaves, who labored in the countryside. Thus, consolidations of power through the use of consistent architectural elements served not only to forge alliances in the colonial city, but also to normalize and legitimate a colonial society of dramatically unequal social relations and new systems of production.

Aristocratic consolidation of the city in Santo Domingo also involved attempts to dominate urban visibility by one elite family. Rodrigo de Bastidas owned a large house on *Calle la Fortaleza*, which was built in the first decade of the sixteenth century and sited within the fortification complex that guarded the city's southeastern flank facing the water. The fortress-like courtyard house built of Roman style brick, the House of Bastidas followed the line of opulent mansions established by the House of Ovando, but it exhibited a different southern Iberian source. A one-story structure with regular windows and grand entryway (the present portal was added in the eighteenth-century), the Bastidas house became the seat of one of the first Euro-American aristocratic families. The descendants of Rodrigo de Bastidas went on to occupy positions of prestige throughout the Spanish Americas, and the family eventually bought up most of *Calle la Fortaleza*, including the House of Ovando after the governor's retirement. This urban territoriality proves that the more a family could spread their visibility through the colonial city, the higher their social status. In Shelley Hales' work on the relationship between the Roman house and social identity, the author lucidly articulates the practice of urban house building in ancient Roman society as, 'the construction of memory.'²⁶ The elite residence became a sign and mnemonic device by which not only was an elite family's social status constructed in the city through the presence of the house, but also their urban existence. These Roman patterns entered Iberian urban and architectural practice due, in part, to the historical Roman presence on the Iberian Peninsula. A similar pattern existed in Santo Domingo, where the Bastidas family attempted to monopolize urban visibility within the original colonial city core. Evidently, the more houses a family possessed in the colonial city, the more memory they could construct and the greater likelihood of their family's continued prosperity. The existence of the private house as a semiotic vehicle for family identity is an under-investigated but extremely important aspect of the development of Colonial social structure in Caribbean and mainland contexts.

In 1510, a new image of elite authority appeared in the city of Santo Domingo. The city's third governor, Diego Columbus (1509-24), who had arrived in 1509 following Ovando's retirement, ordered the construction of a palace in

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an area removed from the former governor's residence. Sited across a loosely defined open space from *Calle la Fortaleza* and near the city's entrance, the new governor's palace consisted of a two story rectangular structure built of local limestone (Figure 3). The building possessed a five-arch double-loggia defining the central portion flanked by two rectangular stone masses. Diego's palace resembled the modality of an Italian Renaissance villa and was sited with commanding views of the city to the west and the river to the east, and with identical loggias on both sides. Service facilities were located on the ground floor, along with bedrooms, offices, a music room and a grand hall on the *piano nobile* (the noble floor). The central grand hall created a breezy space between the eastern and western loggias where Diego held banquets in which guests could stroll onto either side for views of the city and the river. Columbus' new domestic environs represented the most ostentatious statement of aristocratic entitlement to emerge in the city of Santo Domingo at this time.

The story of the governor's socio-political ascendancy explains the architecture of his aristocratic ambitions. The eldest son of the admiral Christopher Columbus, Diego was dismayed at his father's humiliation and loss of family prestige in 1500. After his father's death in 1508, he was resolved to restore the family name, in which he succeeded through his marriage to María de Toledo, the daughter of a powerful Spanish aristocrat. Through this union, Diego gained entrance into the Spanish nobility and was able to convince the Crown to allow him to restore his family's legacy in the *Indies*



Figure 3. Distant exterior view: Palace of Diego Columbus, Santo Domingo (1509-10). Photo by Author (2007).

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by making him governor of Santo Domingo in 1509. Diego Columbus, María de Toledo and a great entourage arrived that year in Santo Domingo to a large public celebration.

The fanfare with which the citizens of the colonial city received this European noble as their new governor would leave a legacy in the Spanish Americas, as future arrivals of Captain Generals and Viceroyes would take place amidst immense urban spectacles. Columbus' entourage consisted of many women of *pure* Spanish blood (lacking any Jewish or Muslim traces), who were to marry into the high society of Santo Domingo. *Calle la Fortaleza* was renamed *Calle Las Damas* ('The Ladies' Street) referring to the daily strolls by María de Toledo and her many maids-in-waiting. From these documented rituals and the opulence of Diego's palace, we see that a new level of aristocratic performance was imposed on the city in 1510 to reinforce ideals of tranquility, good government, domesticity and social hierarchy. Santo Domingo would be a Christian community of *pure-blooded* Spaniards, a place where refined ladies could walk the streets unharmed, as well as a place where an aristocracy could grow. The construction of these urban images, both real and imagined, not only reinforced social stability but also intended to entice more Spanish women to the *Indies*. The conquest of Española had been a male-dominated venture and led to Spanish men taking Native women as wives and concubines. Such practices could never consolidate an aristocracy in the *Indies*, which explains the influx of Spanish women with the entourages of Ovando in 1502 and Columbus in 1509. The city of Santo Domingo became a space for centralized administration and the formulation of Spanish law, as well as a stable environment in which to generate and reproduce a white American aristocracy.

Columbus brought additional masons and master craftsmen to assist him in constructing this architectural image of local authority and familial legacy. The Palace of Columbus contained several flattened arch windows similar to those found in Ovando's buildings. Directly below the balustrade of each loggia, small pearl-like ornamentations—also found on the House of Tostado—visually reasserted Columbus' allegiance to the Spanish Crown. On the western façade, the central doorway situated symmetrically beneath the ground floor loggia was accented with Gothic door jamb articulations, an elaborate vertical framework filled with vegetal relief sculpture and surmounted by Gothic banderole ornamentation. These elements belonged to the transitional style of the Catholic monarchs, employed here to emphasize the legitimacy of Columbus' governorship to the general colonial population by connecting him to pre-existing visual vocabularies in the city. Columbus' recognition of his place in the official hierarchy was counter-balanced by his overt statements of aristocratic privilege. An elegant Renaissance staircase

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complemented the space of leisure embodied by the *piano nobile*, which was built for the palace's northwest side connecting the upper and lower loggias. Based on a square module, the staircase was as much a space for social exchanges as a means of getting from one floor to another. A window and built-in ledges for seating are found on the second landing of the staircase for leisurely repose while overlooking the city below. Contrasting the opulence of this Renaissance stair, was the functionalism of a medieval spiral staircase situated near the kitchen on the palace's southeast side, likely used by servants and slaves.

The aristocratic sophistications of the Palace of Columbus furnished colonists with a new architectural image of the lifestyle and social identity of a wealthy American elite. This image was reproduced in the nearby Española countryside, as seen in the formal configurations of the façades of several sixteenth-century estates. These estates included main houses with similar arrangements of surface elements, including the arched loggia (single and double) flanked by rectangular building masses. Furthermore, such architectural idioms for communicating the leisurely life of an American aristocrat, first articulated in Santo Domingo, were later appropriated and integrated on the American mainland. Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of the Aztec empire, had initiated his career in the *Indies* on Española, where he was a notary in the town of Azua during the governorship of Nicolás de Ovando. Scholars of Dominican architectural history, such as Eugenio Pérez Montás, believe that the house across from the residence of Ovando on *Calle las Damas* to have once been occupied by Cortés before his departure for the mainland and arrival on the east coast of what today is Mexico. In such case, Cortés, who participated in the conquest of Cuba but returned to Santo Domingo before embarking on his historical expedition, would have seen the Palace of Columbus, completed in 1510. The Palace of Hernán Cortés in Cuernavaca, completed in 1532, possessed a similar configuration of two double loggias on each side flanked by rectangular building masses. Overlooking the town of Cuernavaca (*Cuauhnahuac* in its original Nahuatl), the palace lorded over a massive estate that Cortés had secured from the Crown in honor of his achievements. This example reveals the early role of Santo Domingo in both colonial social formation and in the production of forms to represent ideologies of power and regional dominance, as they related to the construction of the feudal, patriarchal, Spanish-American nobility.

As a governor and aristocrat, Diego possessed a coveted place in the society of early sixteenth-century Santo Domingo. The palace he constructed reinforced his position as lord over the extraction of raw materials from the countryside

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and their shipment back to Spain. In an era that witnessed the beginnings of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the introduction of non-native crops into the Caribbean for cultivation and shipment elsewhere, and the establishment of mining (three crucial steps in the advent of the Atlantic world economy), social hierarchy and aristocratic privilege received lucid formal articulation in the Palace of Columbus.²⁷ Art historians Reinhard Bentmann and Michael Müller, in their classic study The Villa as Hegemonic Architecture (1970), have argued that the Venetian Renaissance villa transformed social divisions within systems of labor into ideological constructions.²⁸ The perfected forms of the Venetian villa communicated that the surrounding social relations, tied to the inherent hierarchy of agricultural production in the Venetian countryside over which the villa presided, were part of the order of Nature and ordained by God. Similarly, Diego's palace in Santo Domingo reinforced the moral authority he held over the social ranks occupied by elite and common Spaniards, Indians, eventually Africans and ultimately the racial mixtures of these groups. The building's symmetry, geometric clarity and use of classical ornamentation associated it to an abstract space of perfection, suggesting a divinely ordained social hierarchy in the Americas. The building reinforced social and racial segregation by the symbolic divisions inherent in its arrangement of spaces (*piano nobile* over ground service floor) and the reference to these separations through surface articulation. The work of art historian, Charles Burroughs on the Renaissance palace façade has shown that the façade could serve as an index for a variety of social divisions, including internal organizations and delineations between house interior (the space of nobility) and street (the space of commerce).²⁹ In Santo Domingo, Columbus's palace defined a boundary between elite and non-elite space, as both a physical locus and as a sign system that demonstrated these divisions on the building's surface.³⁰

The opulent imagery utilized by Diego Columbus, together with the stigma of Italian (i.e. non-Spanish) ancestry, produced many enemies for the governor during his administration. Rival elites and civic officials sent warnings to the Crown that Columbus was trying to declare his own sovereignty over the *Indies*. In 1520, the monarchy ordered the construction of *Las Casas Reales* (The Royal Houses) at the end of *Calle las Damas*, a project that would take four years to complete (Figure 4). The new structure served as a means of dividing the functions of colonial administration among a group of officials rather than leaving all of the power in the hands of one governor. A high court was established for the *Indies*, known as an *audiencia*, whose courtroom was located in the Royal Houses. The completion of the building complex in 1524 corresponded to the Crown's establishment of the *Consejo de Indias* (Council of the Indies), an administrative body headquartered in Seville, which was responsible for presiding over the Spanish-American enterprise.

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The creation of the Council of the Indies reflected a broader metropolitan concern to institutionalize the administrative apparatus in Spain's New World holdings now that substantial territory had been conquered and pacified. The Royal Houses in Santo Domingo consisted of two large courtyard structures (resembling the plan of the Ovando House), which were joined to create one monumental building. Situated across the open, plaza-like space facing the Palace of Columbus, the Royal Houses followed the line of residential structures on *Calle las Damas* but stylistically, the complex recalled the austerity of the Ovando House. A grand, brick cornice visually united the two-story limestone buildings, creating a symbolic and architectonic crown. The entrance along *Calle las Damas* was surmounted by a large *arrabá* surrounding a second-story window, which was ornamented by flanking columns and entablatures, as reconstructed in the 1980's. By joining with the architectural idiom established on *Calle las Damas*, the Royal Houses represented a reaction against the individualistic opulence found in the Palace of Columbus. This new urban orientation introduced by a civic institutional building signified a shift in the conception of the colonial city. The Crown was clearly sending a message: the American territories were to be subject colonies and not equal kingdoms of Spain.



Figure 4. Exterior view: The Royal Houses, Santo Domingo (1520-24). Photo by Author (2007).

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The role of civic architecture in colonial social formation in Caribbean urban areas, like early sixteenth-century Santo Domingo, reveals embryonic socio-spatial relationships. The urban experiment in Santo Domingo would have major ramifications on subsequent urban-rural configurations in the Caribbean and on the American mainland. Previous scholarship on this material, having attained high degrees of formal analysis, could be extended to situate the architecture of Santo Domingo within the development of new American cultural patterns. We learn that the buildings of the early elite functioned in the maintenance of colonial alliances centered on the distribution of *encomienda* and the consolidation of elite society. Colonial civic architecture provided visual representation to discourses of power and social identity, and assisted in establishing ideological signs that were meant to reinforce socio-political hierarchy and new labor systems. Architectural historians of the Caribbean have under-appreciated the extent to which the construction of Santo Domingo in 1502 was a response to *Taino* and European challenges to centralized authority in the *Indies*. Santo Domingo was a formative experience in the establishment of an order of architectural signs (after Rama) and the concretization of power relations within an emergent Spanish imperial system.

The significance of Santo Domingo, given its early date and formative qualities, enhances our understanding of the development of patterns concerning the relationship between town, countryside, and labor in the Caribbean, as well as throughout the early modern Americas. A further question, beyond the parameters of this article, would be to connect these observations on civic architecture to religious structures and consider how the two functioned in unison (or in opposition) in early Colonial societies. The governor of Santo Domingo in the mid sixteenth century, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, in his General and Natural History of the Indies wrote that, 'this city [of Santo Domingo] is so well built that there is no town of its class in Spain that is better constructed generally, aside from the renowned and very noble city of Barcelona.'³¹ In an attempt to attract settlers and advance his own career, Oviedo constructed the image of a new urban paradigm for the Americas.

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NOTES:

1. This article grew from research carried out in a seminar titled, *Changing Concepts of Space, Land, and Landscape in the Early Modern Americas*, led by Ray Hernández-Durán, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Ibero-American Colonial Arts and Architecture at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. As advisor and mentor, Professor Hernández-Durán has contributed greatly to my appreciation for the social and conceptual dimensions of Ibero-American architecture, particularly as they relate to the production of early modern American identities.
2. Irving Rouse is the preeminent anthropologist of the *Taino*. For an in-depth analysis of *Taino* material culture and the impact of the Spanish in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Hispaniola, see Irving Rouse [The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus](#) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 139-150.
3. The recent book by Kathleen Deagan and José María Cruxent draws on ten years of archaeological research at La Isabela in the Dominican Republic. This study reveals much that was heretofore underappreciated about the relationships between the Spanish and the *Taino*. The authors emphasize the impact of American realities on the Spanish conquest and settlement of Hispaniola that raises questions on early modern American identity formation. See Kathleen Deagan and José María Cruxent, [Columbus's Outpost among the Tainos: Spain and America at La Isabela, 1493-1498](#) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 201-212.
4. Walter Mignolo's work on the colonization of languages, memory and space in the early modern Americas probes the complexities of the conquest era to understand a process he calls 'the darker side of the Renaissance'. Mignolo's findings suggest that this process began from the first moment of the encounter, thus calling attention to the importance of appreciating the civic architecture of Santo Domingo as the product of an early modern American society. Walter D. Mignolo, [The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization](#) (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 35.
5. Mignolo discusses Renaissance epistemology as functioning within a process of filtering the Americas, as Europeans applied new signs to previously unknown things. The way in which Europeans selectively processed the Americas into the *known* contributed to the *invention* of a new American landscape in actual space and within the European imagination. *Ibid*, pp. 30-50.
6. The conspiracy of Roldán gives us a Caribbean case study that relates to Anthony Pagden's theory of Spanish factional and aristocratic ambitions, which he claims emerged immediately following the conquest. See Rouse, pp. 150-161.
7. Columbus' willingness to negotiate with recalcitrant settlers infuriated the Crown as much as his failure to protect the Natives from exploitation and convert them to Christianity. *Ibid*.
8. Deagan and Cruxent, pp. 202-205.
9. *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*, p. 206.
11. *Ibid*, pp. 153-54.
12. Ángel Rama has argued that the Spanish-American city took on a new *order of signs*, one oriented towards a future, i.e. utopian vision. Ángel Rama, [The Lettered City](#) (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 1-16
13. Thomas B.F. Cummins and Joanne Rappaport, [The Reconfiguration of Civic and Sacred Spaces: Architecture, Image and Writing in the Colonial Northern Andes](#), [Latin American Literary Review](#) XXVI (52), 1998, pp. 174-200.
14. Stuart Schwartz, [The Landed Elite](#), from Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow, [The Countryside in Colonial Latin America](#) (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), p. 98.
15. Eugenio Pérez Montás discusses the architectural forms of Santo Domingo in detail and

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mentions various craftsmen and architects that have emerged from historical documents. His work represents the most contemporary study of this material in English. See Eugenio Pérez Montás, Casas Coloniales de Santo Domingo (Santo Domingo, 1980), pp. 20-36.

16. St. Augustine, Concerning the City of God against the Pagans, translated by Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

17. Robert C. Smith, *Colonial Towns of Spanish and Portuguese America*, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. 14, No. 4, Town Planning Issue, (Dec., 1955), pp. 3-12

18. The urban landscape of Cáceres contains many notable examples of medieval architectural façades that combine the arrába, the coat of arms, and Classical door articulation. This source contains many illustrations. The winding streets, irregular public spaces, and dramatically uneven architectural surfaces in Cáceres reflect that the city was *unplanned*. See Carlos Callejo, Cáceres Monumental (Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1960).

19. These arguments have been developed, in part, through studies on the relationship between medieval society, power, and image reception with Justine Marie Andrews, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Medieval Art History at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

20. Clara Bargellini argues that early twentieth-century scholars who researched sixteenth-century Spanish Colonial architecture, particularly monasteries, over-emphasized defensive functionality. Bargellini notes that the arrangement of seemingly defensive elements, such as crenellations, on monastic buildings often seemed inappropriate to the function of defense. Rather, she suggests, “the redefinition of the massive buildings, once generally thought to have fulfilled real military needs, as spiritual fortresses, expressions of the church as heavenly Jerusalem” (p. 94). I suggest that civic architecture could have carried this symbolic function as well, within the Christian ideologies of early Spanish settlers. See Clara Bargellini, *Representations of Conversion: Sixteenth-Century Architecture in New Spain*, The Word Made Image: Religion, Art, and Architecture in Spain and Spanish America, 1500-1600 (Boston: Trustees of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, c.1998), pp. 91-102.

21. Anthony Pagden argues for the immediate emergence of local identity and aristocratic ambition in the early modern Americas, similar to the phenomenon seen at Santo Domingo with the conspiracy of Roldán. See Anthony Pagden, *Identity Formation in Spanish America*, from Nicolas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 60-61.

22. Ida Altman’s work treats the under-investigated reality of Spanish returnees (sixteenth-century Spaniards who became wealthy in the Americas before resettling in their native Iberian towns). Thus, this source provides a compelling comparison of early modern connections in Iberian and American contexts. Ida Altman, Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and America in the Sixteenth-Century (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 126-164.

23. By *Mudéjar* Palm employed a term that has come to mean the visuality of Islamic people living under Christian domination. However, we are neither always sure that these particular groups were producing this imagery nor exactly what the imagery meant to populations living in post-1492 Iberia. I suggest noting that such formal elements were of *Ibero-Islamic* origin and concede that they could have been used by different individuals and groups in different ways and could have carried a multiplicity of meanings. See Erwin Walter Palm, *Plateresque and Renaissance Monuments on the Island of Hispaniola*, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. 5, Latin American Architecture (1945-46), p. 2.

24. Pagden, p. 62.

25. Rama, p. 11.

26. Shelley Hales gives dramatic accounts of how exiled Romans would actually have their

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houses torn down to erase their identities from the urban landscape and public view. These practices did not exist in the Colonial Americas as house building generally served to *civilize* the perceived *barbaric* frontier and sustained ideologies of the good Christian community. See Shelley Hales, The Roman House and Social Identity (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 40-60.

27. These and other reflections owe much to conversations with David L. Craven, Ph.D., Professor of Latin American Art History, and Ray Hernández-Durán, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Ibero-American Colonial Arts and Architecture, both at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

28. In this classic study, the Renaissance villa is discussed as a means of inscribing celestial order onto an agricultural landscape. The proportional system at work in the villa, its mathematical harmonies and its integration into a geometrically conceived landscape served to legitimate an unequal set of social relations including that existing between master and slave. Exploitative economic practices were thus suggested as constituting part in God's divine plan. See Reinhard Bentmann and Michael Müller, Trans. Tim Spence and David Craven, The Villa as Hegemonic Architecture (London and New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992), pp. 27-37, 50-59.

29. Charles Burroughs deconstructs the complex semiotic structures at work in the Italian Renaissance palace façade drawing attention to the indexical codes found on building surfaces, the relationship between these codes and social order and the façade's function in communicating social values in the broader urban landscape. In light of Burroughs' work, it is apparent that in Santo Domingo, the construction of buildings with Italian Renaissance-inspired façades, such as the Palace of Columbus, served complex functions of signage in the developing city. See Charles Burroughs, The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1-38.

30. This discussion of the social artifice inherent in Renaissance forms as it relates to the loss of tectonic transparency in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe owes a great deal to my studies with architectural historian Christopher Curtis Mead, Ph.D. of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

31. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés lived in Santo Domingo from 1514 to 1557 and became a chronicler of the *Indies* after 1532. His chronicles reflects his enthusiasm for the developing city of Santo Domingo. Throughout his work, while acknowledging the sovereignty of the Spanish Crown, Oviedo captures a spirit of Spanish optimism on the economic, social and cultural possibilities of the Americas. His exaltation of Santo Domingo as rivaling all towns in Spain except for Barcelona speaks to a relatively early (c.1550) pride of place in the Spanish Americas. Don José Amador de los Rios, General and Natural History of the Indies, Islands, and Mainland of the Ocean, by Captain Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (Madrid: Royal Academy of History Printing House, 1851), p. 211.

THE FUTURE OF DEATH AT THE TEMPLE OF THE INSCRIPTIONS, C.E. 683, PALENQUE, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Elizabeth Olton, Ph.D. Candidate

Death and Life are opposites that complement each other. Both are halves of a sphere that we, subjects of time and space, can only glimpse. In the prenatal world, life and death are merged; in ours, opposed; in the world beyond, reunited again.¹ The Temple of the Inscriptions, an ancient Maya funerary monument in Palenque, ca. C.E. 683, exemplifies a paradox: commemorating a death while celebrating the future. The temple housed the elaborate burial of ruler, Janaab' Pakal, and presents an iconography signifying the convergence of parent, child and ancestor. In this article, I examine the Temple of the Inscriptions in its entirety through a comparative analysis of three carved programs from the structure. I suggest that the imagery on the cover of the sarcophagus found in the burial chamber and that of the four exterior piers in the temple's façade present iconographic analogues: parent/child, death/life and renewal/new birth. This message was expressed in the carved inscriptions and depicted in representations of the body of the king, as well as in the body of his heir and son, Kan B'alam. As such, the Temple of the Inscriptions was more than a funerary monument commemorating Pakal; it reflected the Maya sense of time as a cyclical phenomenon and positioned death and life as interdependent states. By approaching these programs as an ensemble, I suggest that the temple might have been seen as a harbinger of future rule.

Although we are exploring an ancient Maya context, a useful interpretive frame concerning the concept of renewal is found in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas considers the passage of time and the experience of death in his collection of essays, titled, Time and the Other (1947). According to him, to die is to create the future; this is most eloquently expressed in his notion of paternity: 'Paternity is the relationship with a stranger who, entirely while being Other, is myself...I do not have my child; I am in some way my child.'² Although emerging out of an alien, Western perspective, this proposition, referencing a universal human experience, provides one analytical tool with which I suggest we can begin a preliminary examination of the Maya concept of death and lineage found at the Temple of the Inscriptions.

By employing the extensive archaeological, iconographic and epigraphic work done by Alberto Ruz Lhullier, Merle Greene Robertson, Linda Schele and others, the temple will be examined as a coherent artistic narrative, allowing new questions to be asked about the building's messages.³ Does the temple represent a coherent message? If so, then, what was that message, and what was its purpose? How do the visible—and implied invisible—sculptural programs

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convey meaning? These inquiries are comprehensible only when a funerary monument, like the Temple of the Inscriptions, is approached as a complete statement or system of signs.

Palenque, a central site during the Classic Maya period, is located on a limestone shelf high above the Chiapan plain. It dates from the mid fifth century to the beginning of the ninth century C.E.⁴ The city is nestled against two groups of mountains bisected by the Otolum River. Many monumental structures were built on this narrow flat plateau. One enters the city from the West, moving East through an open space bordered on the South by a series of steep hills; to the North, the ground rapidly descends to the valley below. A system of esplanades and terraces topped by cut-stone, range-style structures and multi-platformed temples guided an ancient visitor through its spaces.⁵

The Temple of the Inscriptions is a focal point in the urbanscape of Palenque (Figure 1). The temple, which would have been painted red in the seventh century, is composed of nine receding platforms, which culminate in a rectangular superstructure.⁶ In line with many other indigenous architectural constructions, the lower sub-platforms of the temple correspond to the form of the mountain that abuts the South end of the temple. A broad staircase on the exterior of the central North-South axis of the temple connects these platforms with the superstructure and directs or leads the viewer's eye up along the nine tiers of the superimposed platforms. The stairs terminate at the base of the



Figure 1. The Temple of the Inscriptions (ca. C. E. 683), Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. Photo by author (July, 2003).

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superstructure: a low rectangular building whose basal platform forms an open porch that leads to several interior chambers. The superstructure's sculptures are composed of both modeled limestone stucco and cut-stone.⁷ Significantly, the variety and complexity of the sculpture manifests an interest in narrative.

The superstructure of the Temple of the Inscriptions is characterized by a pronounced horizontality, emphasized along its East-West axis by a lattice roof comb and a mansard roof and below these features, a North-facing, columned porch. Its interior space is divided lengthwise by a three-chambered space located at the South end; to the North, a portico gallery containing six exterior piers frames five openings to the outside. The bilateral symmetry of the façade stairway, which bisects the temple's nine sub-platforms, is mirrored in the floor plan of the superstructure. The perpendicular line of the stairway ascends from the basal platform to the opening framed by the third (Pier C) and fourth (Pier D) sculpted piers; this is the main entrance into the superstructure. The line of the stairway continues through the portico gallery and terminates at the back (or South) wall of the central chamber. The design and position of this interior space suggests that it was the most prominent of the temple's three southern chambers. This feature is highlighted by the presence of a carved panel on the chamber's back wall that contains a lengthy hieroglyphic inscription. Two similarly carved panels located in the portico gallery flank the middle room's entrance. These inscribed panels contrast the figurative sculpted piers of the exterior portico. The geometry of the superstructure created a line of sight between the carved panel on the central chamber's back wall, the portico's flanking panels and the main entrance framed by Piers C and D, which opened out to the plaza below.

Six sculpted piers frame the five doorways of the superstructure (Figure 2). The four in the center are decorated with life-sized figures fabricated out of stucco. Although the stucco-sculpted piers are not in what must have been their original seventh century condition, prevailing formal features such as standardization and repetition of visual elements are apparent. Each relief includes a number of basic elements: a skyband frame, a zoomorphic pedestal, a standing figure in a frontal pose and a reclining infant with a serpentine foot. The four sculpted piers are organized in pairs that mirror each other. This organization is seen in the orientation of the imagery: Piers B and C face West, while Piers D and E face East. In addition to these sculptural features, color is standardized. Greene Robertson has suggested that the standing figures and the background were painted in various hues of red, while the infant was painted blue/green.⁸ These visual elements emphasize the juxtaposition of the standing adult and recumbent infant, which enhance the piers' visibility from a distance.⁹

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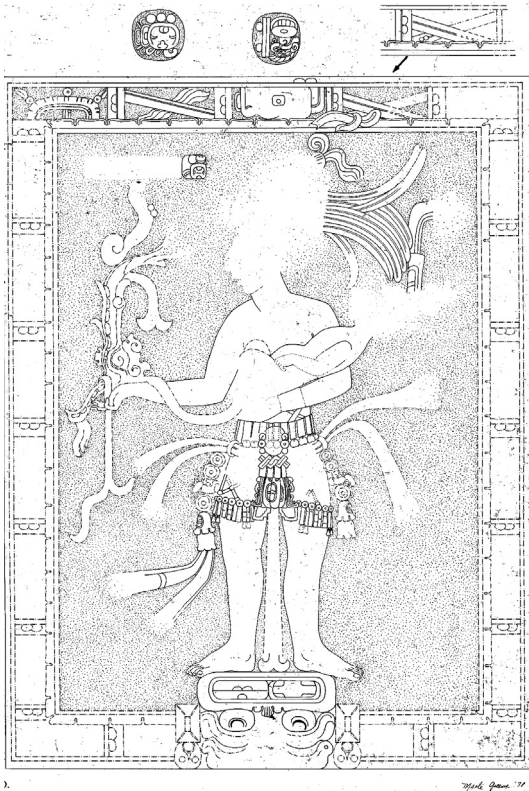


Figure 2. Pier D. *The Temple of the Inscriptions* (ca. C.E. 683), Palenque. Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson (1978). Image courtesy of Merle Greene Robertson.

individual events described in the three panels, there are still unanswered questions.¹³ The inscriptions from the East panel are a dynastic chronology, and recount the sacred obligations of these rulers, while the Central and West panels describe Pakal's accomplishments and his eventual demise.¹⁴ Geraldo Aldana has examined the Central panel containing the political biography of Pakal, which concludes on the West tablet, in relationship to its location in the superstructure.¹⁵ Distinctive features in the superstructure plan, the placement of the pier sculpture, and the *unseen* elements in the central chamber's floor emphasize the central inscription panel and might have given it prominence.

Since the sarcophagus cover design is central to this study, the object must be placed within the context of the temple. The stone coffin is the so-called *termination* point of a circuitous interior passageway composed of a switchback stair and an interior corridor that begins directly beneath a flagstone in the

The Temple of the Inscriptions' name refers to the hieroglyphic text on the three interior panels in the portico gallery and central chamber. Although the inscriptions might have constituted a continuous narrative and appear to have been read from the East to West, it is possible that each panel contained a related but distinct theme, thereby allowing for multiple readings.¹⁰ This long written narrative recounts the story of the Palenque dynasty and thus centers on the births, accessions and ritual obligations of its dynasts.¹¹ The inscriptions' structure employs the use of sacred time and *katun* cycles (twenty year cycles), as a chronological anchor.¹²

Scholarship on the inscriptions is ongoing, and, although much is known of the story and

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floor of the superstructure's central chamber.¹⁶ A second *passage*, consisting of a small cut-stone tube or psychoduct,¹⁷ outlines the course of this path, which functions as a physical link or conduit between the exterior and interior of the temple. One part is connected to Pier C and progresses along the floor through the center of the superstructure before descending along the left side of the interior stair to the tomb chamber, while the other end terminates adjacent to the south side of the sarcophagus.¹⁸ The sarcophagus itself is made of two solid pieces of limestone: the coffin or box is a hollowed out shell in the shape of a human form and the cover is a single flat slab measuring 3.79x2.20 meters.¹⁹ According to Ruz, the tomb chamber was built around this monolithic stone container.²⁰ He also discovered that the paved floor of the burial chamber was elevated 30 cm toward the North end.²¹ This feature might have been utilitarian, as well as providing a visitor a clearer view of the carved imagery, as he/she approached the sarcophagus from the tomb's South entrance.

The sarcophagus lid's imagery consists of an array of complex forms organized around a focal point, which is bound by a frame (Figure 3). Its composition can be examined in sections, each of which is reminiscent of the imagery found on the superstructure's pier sculptures.²² The first formal element is the skyband, which can be compared to a similar frame on the pier sculptures.²³ The remainder of the composition is organized around a dominant vertical or North-South axis, which is composed of a series of *stacked* motifs. The trunk of a cruciform tree denotes the axis; objects placed along this line include a plate containing various objects balanced on a zoomorphic skeletal head or quadripartite mask.²⁴ The vertical line passes through the mask and ends at the triangular beard of the open maw. Horizontal elements that balance this dominant line include the figure of the elaborate bird perched at the North end of the cover and the branches of the cruciform tree with which a bejeweled, bicephalic serpent is intertwined. Horizontal and vertical lines are repeated in the square frame of the gaping mouth of the underworld serpent. This figure also serves to secure the south end of the composition and provides a context for the presentation of the reclining figure inside its jaws.

The figure of Pakal composes the final layer of imagery. The ruler's depiction suggests that it might have been the focus of the entire composition. He is represented life-size and reclines in a flexed, infant-like pose, which seems familiar yet new, if not altogether unusual.²⁵ His body is tilted laterally, his head is arched backwards and his legs and hands are in opposed, bent positions like that of a newborn. Pakal seems to be in a state of suspension, just as the jade necklace appears to gently drift in space. Pakal, on his back and in a fetal position, is supported by the plate and quadripartite mask. He is both encased in the open maw-like form and superimposed on the cruciform tree. This placement serves as a visual foil by emphasizing the horizontality of his body and creating

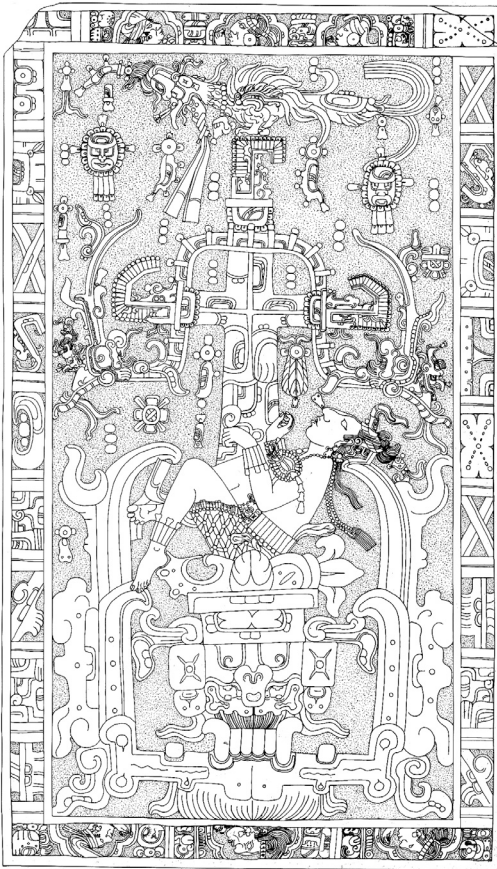


Figure 3. *Drawing of Sarcophagus Cover. Tomb of Janaab' Pakal, Temple of the Inscriptions (C.E., 683). Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson (1975). Image courtesy of Merle Greene Robertson.*

of the Temple of the Inscriptions as a whole, since its imagery depicts cycles of birth and new birth. A comparison of the sculptures from the piers and the imagery carved on the sarcophagus cover reveals an unexpected feature shared by both programs. Prominently depicted and central to the iconography of each work is a flexed, supine figure. The four pier sculptures present a reclining infant, whom Schele and Greene Robertson have identified as Pakal's son and heir, Kan B'alam.³⁰ Correspondingly, the cover of the stone sarcophagus portrays Pakal, the deceased ruler.³¹ Both figures—the dead ruler and his infant son—are placed in identical poses. The self-reflexive (to echo or reflect in form and meaning) iconography of these images highlights a narrative of convergence

the center axis of the whole composition. Pakal's funerary portrait and the presence of his body inside the sarcophagus create a compelling juxtaposition of life, death and new birth.

Emmanuel Levinas argued that, "time is not the achievement of an isolated and lone subject," but rather, is, "the very relationship of the subject with the Other."²⁶ He explored this relationship through a variety of themes, one of which—his discussion of death as a new birth—may provide a schema for interpreting the iconography of the Temple of the Inscriptions.²⁷ He resolves the incomprehensible nature of death becomes tangible in a future that is transcendent and most cogently realized in the creation of a child.²⁸ Consequently, Levinas defines time as the progression of a cycle—in this sense, the past, present and future can be examined as a coherent totality.²⁹ This insight can be applied to an understanding

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between parent, child and ancestor as well as conveying valences that address lineage, accession, renewal and sacrifice.

References to death in the imagery from the Temple of the Inscriptions prefigure the future of the lineage. The iconography depicts the Palencano line of descent as sacred and eternal. Molded stucco figures of nine former dynasts line the walls of Pakal's burial chamber, just as a grove of verdant trees, featuring bust length portraits of his immediate ancestors, frame the sides of his sarcophagus.³² In contrast to these vigilant sentinels, the pier sculptures portray Kan B'alam's ancestors in active poses, as nurturers who confirm and literally uphold the future of the family line.³³ The Temple's iconography thus presents the ancestor as an embodiment of the transformative power of death. Although Kan B'alam is cradled by human figures on the pier sculptures, and Pakal seems to float in a suspended state on the sarcophagus cover, the two sculpture programs can be interpreted as homologous.³⁴ Morphologically, the representations of Pakal and Kan B'alam are identical: both figures are depicted on their backs with tightly drawn limbs and bodies that are slightly off balance. Their wrists and hands share a limp pose and each figure's head is tipped backward at a similar angle. These parallel images of Pakal and Kan B'alam stress their shared kinship; however, they also contain visual clues that reveal complexities in a bond which is not seen in other reliefs from the structure. The communion between ancestors and their progeny is a leit-motif repeated throughout the temple in its pictorial and written references.

The supine portrait of Pakal is as striking as it is enigmatic. His recumbent pose is unprecedented for a ruler.³⁵ Depictions of kings in Maya art characteristically show them in hieratic scale, physically elevated, and often standing on other captives and sacrificial victims, who assume prone, subordinate and vulnerable positions. Maya scholars have linked Pakal's reclining and flexed figure to an iconography of birth, apotheosis and sacrifice.³⁶ The cradled infant from the piers is less ambiguous. Greene Robertson and Schele have interpreted the pier figures as a series of portraits commemorating Kan B'alam's heir designation ceremony before an audience in the North Plaza.³⁷ These depictions of Pakal and Kan B'alam, although in different contexts (e.g. interior/exterior and death/life, respectively), express an iconography that unites parent, child, and ancestor in continuous cycles of renewal.

The corresponding figures of Pakal and Kan B'alam are potent models for cycles of renewal and the regenerative power of death; furthermore, the parent-child analogue is consistently depicted in association with portraits of these two dynasts. By closely examining the formal qualities of the father-son and ancestor programs, it becomes clear that representations of the parents of Kan B'alam and Pakal are being emphasized. The standing sculptural figures from pier

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sculptures C and D portray a female and a male. Greene Robertson and Schele have identified the woman on Pier C as Kan B'alam's mother, Lady Tzak' Ahaw, and the Pier D figure as his father, Pakal.³⁸ Their postures are reflections of each other, as each figure faces towards the entrance and to one another. A visitor entering the temple, therefore, passed the pair of figures, one on either side, and would thus have been obliged to acknowledge their positions of honor.

Pakal's parents, likewise, are also singled out and given prominence on their son's sarcophagus.³⁹ Pakal's mother, Lady Sak' K'uk', and his father, K'an Mo-Balam Choh Ahaw, are shown as a pair of anthropomorphized trees on the North and South ends of the sarcophagus.⁴⁰ Their images coincide with the central axis of the cover's iconography. Inscriptions carved into the edge of the South end of the sarcophagus lid are positioned directly above the images of Pakal's mother and father—these inscriptions are the birth and death statements of their son. The juxtaposition of their images with the inscriptions poignantly amplifies their relationship to him. Furthermore, these messages of intergenerational renewal are further underscored by their prominence on the sarcophagus' southern edge, which faced the entrance to the tomb chamber.⁴¹ These examples from Piers C and D, the sarcophagus portraits and the cover's inscriptions present an iconography of lineage that—going beyond a *parentage statement* which traces lineage to confirm legitimacy—expresses the cyclical nature of time and the unification of parent, child and ancestor.

As Schele and Mathews have noted, the king lists from the edges of the sarcophagus cover and those from the East and Central inscription panels of the temple's superstructure convey parallel lineage histories.⁴² These two related chronological narratives are organized within a matrix of nine *katuns* (20 year periods) or 180 years, with each dynastic event corresponding to a *katun* period's conclusion.⁴³ In accordance with the themes of succession depicted on the pier sculptures, the *katun* histories from the inscription panels state the birth and accession dates of each former dynast.⁴⁴ Corresponding to a mortuary theme, the East, North and West inscriptions on the sarcophagus cover recount the death dates of the same rulers named in the inscription panels. In both sets of king lists, Pakal's birth, accession and death are related to the culmination of the ninth period.⁴⁵ By noting Pakal's birth and death dates, the passage on the cover's South edge breaks with the narrative model, which typically only states a ruler's death date.⁴⁶ By including the birth date of Pakal, the South edge highlights the transformative powers of death, which would include accession events and a new birth. The final three glyphs of the South edge, which immediately follow Pakal's birth and death dates, might allude to an act of succession overseen by ancestors and a Vision Serpent.⁴⁷ This reading by Schele and Mathews, and more recently by Stanley Guenter, employs a glyphic phrase that signifies change in time and ruler.⁴⁸ Although parts of this inscription remain obscure, episodes of

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change, expressed as dynastic succession and the transitions between death and life; parent and child; and death, new birth and accession, are parallel themes throughout these programs.

The superstructure's West panel offers another example of corresponding messages that bolsters the parallels seen in the iconography of the sarcophagus cover and the pier sculptures. In passages from the middle of the West panel (lines E, F and G, H), Pakal's implied birth date (set into a period that roughly corresponds to his biological date) and his accession or new birth date (corresponding to his political birth) are presented as the centerpieces of a narrative that characterizes his reign—and by association, his dynasty—as eternal.⁴⁹ The implied birth and re-birth dates link two episodes in time: one, a period of time extending backwards, from the seventh century C.E. to one million years in the past, and two, a period of time that begins with the seventh-century C.E. and telescopes 4000 years into the future.⁵⁰ Schele, Mathews and Guenter agree that Pakal's accession on the Calendar Round date of 5 Lamat 1 Mol (C.E. 615) was explicitly linked to an ancient accession of a distant deified ancestor.⁵¹ The second episode describes an event in which Pakal will be newly born on C.E. 4772; a date that is the product of his implied birth date extended 80 calendar rounds (80x52 years) into the future.⁵² This future date coincides with the anniversary of his accession to the throne.⁵³ It is significant that Pakal's two *births* (biological and political) are the pivots of this vivid and compelling narrative. Lines E-F and G-H of the West panel describe dynastic convergence over immense spans of time. Pakal, the Ahaw of Palenque, is presented as both the beginning and the future of the dynasty, revealing that he is ancestor, ruler and child.

These examples demonstrate how texts and imagery found on/in the Temple of the Inscriptions communicate parallel narratives of the cyclical movement of time and the coalescence of parent, child and ancestor, as well as lineage, accession and renewal. The unified nature of these three narrative programs (sarcophagus, inscriptions panels and piers sculptures) suggests that the ancient Maya of Palenque may have apprehended the continuity of existence without regard to such boundaries as *visible* and *invisible*. By exploring the temple in its entirety: its inner precincts in conjunction with its exterior spaces, these self-reflexive programs emerge as components of a larger message that explicitly confirm the bond between death, comprehended as ancestor, and *new birth*, regarded as future.

Representations of trees and references to agricultural cycles create yet another layer of imagery conveying a message of convergence on the four pier sculptures. It has been established that the adults represented on the pier sculptures are the ancestors of the cradled child.⁵⁴ The standing adult in Pier D, although identified

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as Pakal, could also be interpreted as a figure akin to an anthropomorphized *Axis Mundi* or World Tree. The significance of this interpretation derives from the fact that the ancient Maya equated their ancestors with trees.⁵⁵ In Pier D, Pakal appears to stand firm and resolute, like a tree rooted in the earth that bears progeny like fruit sprouting from his limbs.⁵⁶ In this guise, Pakal confirms the act of dynastic succession and Kan B'alam's royal bloodline.⁵⁷

Pakal's sarcophagus cover features a corresponding image of a tree that can be interpreted as an anthropomorphized figure.⁵⁸ He and the animated cruciform tree are shown in close proximity and thus can be viewed as conflated entities. The position of Pakal's limbs and head and the swinging of his jewelry suggest a figure poised for birth or emergence.⁵⁹ The bend of his wrists and neck coincides with the lip, or outermost opening, of the skeletal maw. This orientation suggests that his head and hands are emerging out of the enclosed space of the maw rather than descending down into the gullet of the Underworld or ascending upward to the heavens. Pakal is reclined in a lateral motion, as if twisting and shifting his weight like an infant. His limbs and jewelry seem to rest on a supporting medium, as if floating in amniotic fluid or implanted like a seed or rhizome in the soil. Given his orientation towards the opening of the enclosed space, he appears as if he is sprouting from the earth or emerging in the act of new birth.

The cruciform tree furnishes a series of polyvalent guises: Pakal's figure is reminiscent of the pier sculptures of his son, depicted as cradled by an ancestral tree. Simultaneously, Pakal's body and the cruciform tree are shown as merged entities. The tree on the sarcophagus cover has been variously interpreted as an indigenous ceiba tree (*Yax Che'* in Yucatec Maya), the *Axis Mundi* World Tree, and the wakah-chan.⁶⁰ The *Yax Che'* is symbolic of both the beginning of time and creation and of ancestors.⁶¹ Today in Chiapas, Mexico, the ceiba tree continues to be revered by modern relatives of the ancient Maya. Among vast tracks of maize fields that were once jungles, the ceiba stand alone in the fields, a reminder of the longevity and power of this ancient emblem of lineage. The World Tree or *Yax Che'* is also a representation of the ruler; it forms a quincunx or center of the sacred environment and the ancient Maya worldview.⁶² The anthropomorphosis of the sarcophagus' tree and the presence of the bicephalic serpent or ceremonial bar, a traditional symbol of rulership that is intertwined in its branches, emphasize the connection between ancestor, ruler and *Yax Che'*.⁶³ Schele has suggested that the tree and the ceremonial bar represent the Milky Way and the ecliptic.⁶⁴ In this view, the imagery on the sarcophagus cover presents a cosmogram of cycles of time, lineage and agriculture. The environment of the tomb chamber and sarcophagus is further sanctified as a center of renewal by the arboreal portraits of Pakal's ancestors that populate the sides of his sarcophagus. These themes are

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reiterated in short-hand form in the iconography of the pier sculptures, where an ancestral tree holds up Kan B'alam just as the cruciform tree on the cover and the ancestral trees from the sides of the box sustain Pakal, his father.

Although Pakal was in his eighties when he died, his figure on the sarcophagus cover is of an idealized male in the prime of life; however, the form of this depiction is suggestive of a vulnerable newborn.⁶⁵ This seemingly discordant iconography—merging death and birth, vigor and fragility—becomes a coherent message when placed in a context of agricultural renewal. Karl Taube has identified Pakal on his sarcophagus cover as the *Tonsured Maize God*.⁶⁶ Correspondingly, the written texts from the southeast corner of the cover edge also name him the *Maize God*.⁶⁷ As this youthful deity, Pakal is symbolic of a fresh and robust maize plant.⁶⁸ In yet another guise, Pakal is adorned with the smoking axe or tube, which is embedded in his forehead; he is depicted as K'awaiill, the infant-like symbol of Maya kings.⁶⁹ Schele, Nikolai Grube and Simon Martin have noted that part of K'awaiill's full title includes the word *Ch'ok*, which in Yucatec Maya means 'child' or 'sprout'.⁷⁰ Alternatively, Kan B'alam has also been identified as K'awaiill on the pier sculptures.⁷¹ Although not all reclining figures from the piers are intact, the remaining imagery reveals a consistent pattern depicting infants with a left serpent-foot and a smoking axe embedded in their foreheads. Greene Robertson has indicated that the infant figures were painted blue-green, which suggests that the infants were depicted as a new maize sprout or *Ch'ok* of the ancestors, who hold them in their arms.⁷² Pakal is also the new *Ch'ok* of the ancestral trees that are gathered on his stone coffin, and he is the new sprouting *Yax Che'*.

Concepts of convergence and renewal are depicted in the representations of the *Yax Che'*, K'awaiill, and the *Ch'ok* from the parallel programs of the sarcophagus cover and pier sculptures. An iconography that merges the continuation of human life with agricultural renewal is depicted in an environment constructed to honor a dead ruler. Death and decay, then, become the engine for the cycle of life. For the ancient Maya, the ruler symbolized human dependence on the supernatural. Humans experienced this dependency in the uninterrupted movement of time and in the growth of maize. The imagery from the sarcophagus cover and pier sculptures depicts the ruler as the cultivator. In death, he becomes the *activator* and is transformed into ancestor or *advocate* of the sacred cycle.

The inscriptions from the West panel, on the right wall of the portico of the Temple of the Inscriptions, report that Pakal died on August 29, C.E. 683.⁷³ Scholars believe that although Pakal initiated the first construction campaign of his burial temple, it was his son, Kan B'alam, who actually completed the monument at a later date.⁷⁴ During the interregnum, Kan B'alam interred

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the former ruler in a *muhkaj* event, 'at an altar-place in the House of the Nine Figures.'⁷⁵ Months or years after Pakal's death Kan B'alam finished the construction of his father's funerary monument; in so doing, he concluded the dynastic history carved on the West panel by giving special care to the tomb of Pakal.⁷⁶

The rituals of interment honored Kan B'alam's father and marked the continuation of a lasting dialogue between multiple generations. The discourse between Kan B'alam—the son and heir, and Pakal—the father, deceased ruler and ancestor, was unending and timeless.⁷⁷ Illustration of this continual exchange between rulers, ancestors and their progeny is depicted in the pier sculptures and the sarcophagus lid, as well as the inscription panels. The Temple of the Inscriptions in its entirety portrays and records a cosmology of new birth through the noted convergences. A similar paradigm is expressed in the Maya belief of inter-generational substitution and sacrifice, known in Yucatec Maya as *k'ex* and, among the Tz'utujil speakers, as *Jaloj-K'exoj*.⁷⁸

Ethnographers Robert Carlson and Martín Prechtel, working with the Maya of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, have examined the tradition of *Jaloj-K'exoj* from both a pre-Columbian and late twentieth century perspective.⁷⁹ Carlson and Prechtel propose that the tradition of the *Jaloj-K'exoj*, although ancient, has shaped the worldview of modern Maya and is a factor in their cultural survival.⁸⁰ Similarly, Taube in his influential examination of birth imagery in ancient Maya myth and ritual, recounts ethnographic examples of *k'ex* and relates them to ancient imagery. Taube has interpreted the exposed and vulnerable depiction of Pakal on the sarcophagus cover, as the, 'supreme *k'ex*' sacrifice that would ensure the survival of Palenque and the continuation of his dynastic line.⁸¹

Taube defines *k'ex* as a type of ritualized substitute-sacrifice that was an integral element in rites marking transitions between states of being or such political change as celebrations of births and royal successions.⁸² These moments of change upset the equilibrium of existence or the continuity of life and lineage; consequently, to counteract the imbalance the cosmos required a gift in exchange, such as an offering of blood or corn.⁸³ The *Popul Vuh*, a fundamental Maya creation story, includes several examples of *k'ex* events in its narrative. The tradition of *k'ex* is also depicted in Classic period painted polychrome vessels and accession stelae.⁸⁴

The theme of the continuity of life and lineage is reiterated in the public spaces of the Temple of the Inscriptions and in the more private tomb chamber. The interior stairway and psychoduct reunite these spheres of the living and dead. The poses of Pakal and Kan B'alam are key elements in this interpretation. Although Pakal can be interpreted as a polyvalent icon, his posture and

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placement on a plate atop the Quadripartite Monster has led many scholars to identify him as a figure of sacrifice.⁸⁵ He lies prone, although tensed, on a sun or kin marked platter surrounded by offerings, including a shell and a stingray spine. These imported items are commonly excavated in royal interments and are often placed near the deceased; however, in Pakal's example, they are integrated into the narrative scene. The stingray spine, in particular, is a tool for royal auto-sacrifice; thus, there are two references to sacrifice in the iconography surrounding Pakal: Pakal's recumbent posture on the plate and the stingray spine. The stingray spine refers to the sacred duties of a once-living ruler. Combined with the stingray spine, the reclining posture of the former king signifies that he is the *k'ex* to the future. Although the pier sculptures do not denote a message of sacrifice, this meaning is connoted in the prone posture of the infant Kan B'alam. Kan B'alam's pose and the parallel posture of his father are akin to representations of Jaguar Baby infant sacrifices commonly depicted on polychrome painted vessels.⁸⁶ In these examples of *k'ex* from the sarcophagus cover and pier sculptures, Pakal and Kan B'alam represent self-reflexive images of the continuing cycles of life.

With these considerations in mind, another look at the structural and iconographic relationships between the portrait of Pakal on his sarcophagus cover, his image on Pier D and his cradled son is warranted. The convergence of parent, child and ancestor are touchingly depicted in what could be considered *three* images of Pakal. On his sarcophagus cover (in death) Pakal is shown as an infant.⁸⁷ On Pier D, he is a king presenting his son and heir to the public. Finally, the generational convergence comes full circle in the reiterated form of the infant from the pier sculpture: the child Kan B'alam is the future of the dynasty and the future of death, and he is the result of his infant father's symbolic immolation.⁸⁸ By looking at the singular relationship between Pakal and Kan B'alam on Pier D and the portrait of Pakal from the sarcophagus cover, the conceptual importance of *k'ex* becomes apparent.

Carlson and Prechtel describe the analogous *Jalok-K'exoj* in a two-fold manner. The term *jal* commemorates life cycles observed in humans and in agriculture.⁸⁹ The corresponding word *k'ex* simultaneously represents change and rebirth; it signifies the transfer of life within multiple generations in a family.⁹⁰ Carlson and Prechtel argue that *k'ex* is the basis for the Maya notion of the continuity of life and the primacy of ancestors in both the ancient and the contemporary cultures.⁹¹ By applying the *jal* component of Carlson and Prechtel's compound term to the sculptural programs of the piers and sarcophagus cover, another aspect of the duality of birth and death comes to light. Pakal's figure from the cover has been interpreted as both the Maize God within a *k'ex* event and as the Maize God reborn.⁹² Similarly, Kan B'alam as has been discussed above, is like a 'sprout,' *Ch'ok* of his ancestors; however, in this particular context Kan B'alam,

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like his father, can be identified as a new Maize God or new ruler—here, rebirth is understood as an agricultural metaphor.⁹³ This analogue of Pakal and Kan B'alam is illustrative of the *jal* method of change. Pakal and Kan B'alam are both the *jal* of their lineage and thus, are defined as cycles of maize, part of a human life cycle, and reborn in future generations. These examples are reminiscent of the trials of Hun Hunaphu, the Maize God, from the *Popul Vuh*.⁹⁴ In both text and imagery, Hun Hunaphu is depicted continuously reliving, 'a cycle of life, death and resurrection.'⁹⁵

These themes of birth, death and accession are some of the primary subjects depicted on the inscription panels and pier sculptures.⁹⁶ Moreover, although the sarcophagus functioned as a container for the deceased king, the iconography conveys messages of a new birth and the continuity of life, rather than death.⁹⁷ Birth was an event that encompassed the delivery of a child from its mother and changes in status, such as the accession of an heir to the office of ruler. For the ancient Maya, one of the most dangerous times for a mother and child was during the process of giving birth.⁹⁸ In turn, a ruler went through a second *birth* at his accession to the throne, rendering this phase equally as dangerous for him and his people.⁹⁹ The larger paradigm of *Jalaj-K'exoj* could have been an integral part of this liminal interregnum period. The iconography of the Temple of the Inscriptions explored in its entirety presents a poignant dialogue in text and imagery: between rulers, ancestors and their progeny. These interrelationships were akin to the ideas of *Jalaj-K'exoj* and might have worked to reconcile the past, present and future within a cohesive totality. Carlson and Prechtel compare the continuum of *Jalaj-K'exoj* to creation themes from the *Popul Vuh*. In doing so, they invoke Dennis Tedlock's metaphor of a Möbius strip to describe the cyclicity of the, 'sowing and the dawning,' of maize and of human life.¹⁰⁰ A Möbius strip is characterized by a surface, the two *sides* of which are unbound. Tedlock's metaphor is, indeed, illustrative of the ancient Maya belief in the uninterrupted, unbound continuum of death, life and lineage. Transcendence of the paradox of death is one of the functions of the Temple of the Inscriptions. It reframes death as something that is essential to the preservation of sacred cycles of lineage, accession as a new birth and the paradigm of *k'ex* or intergenerational substitution. The message of convergence is comprehended when the temple is interpreted in its entirety and the apparent boundaries of interior/exterior and visible/the implied invisible have been erased.

The ancient Maya expression *och-b'ih*, 'he entered the road,' has been translated as the experience of death or, 'to die.'¹⁰¹ Interestingly, a common Yucatek Maya salutation is *bix a beel*, translated as, 'how is your road?' or, 'how are you?'¹⁰² Although separated by geography and time, these complementary phrases describe both death and life as *b'ih /beel* or road, which implies a journey that, like the Möbius strip, is an unbound continuum. Analogous transitions between

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death, life and renewal are depicted in the interolarity of Pakal and Kan B'alam. The necessity of a convergence between death/life and infant /ancestor is made explicit in the iconography of the sarcophagus cover and pier sculptures and in the presence of the interior stairway and psychoduct. These symbols (physical and visual) function as markers, not of death or the end of things, but as a projection into the future and the continuation of life.

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NOTES:

1. Octavio Paz, (New York: Grove, 1961), Labyrinth of Solitude, p. 61.
2. Emmanuel Levinas, Time and the Other [and additional essays], trans., Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1987), p. 91. The emphasis is Levinas'.
3. Alberto Ruz Lluillier, El Templo de las Inscripciones, Palenque. Colección Científica no. 7, Arqueología (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Universidad Autónoma de México, 1973); Merle Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach to the Identity of the Figures on the Piers of the Inscriptions, Palenque," in Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Vol. IV, ed. M.G. Robertson and D.C. Jeffers (Monterey: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, Herald Printers, 1979); Merle Greene Robertson, The Sculpture of Palenque. Volume I: The Temple of the Inscriptions (Princeton: Princeton University, 1983); Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller, The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1986); Schele, Linda Schele and David Friedel, A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya (New York: William Morrow, 1990); Linda Schele and Peter Mathews, Chapter 3, "Palenque: Hanab-Pakal's Tomb," in The Code of Kings: The Language of Seven Sacred Maya Temples and Tombs (New York: Scribner, 1998).
4. Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube, The Chronicle of Maya Kings and Queens (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), pp. 154-155.
5. George Kubler, Art and Architecture of Ancient America (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 219.
6. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 23.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 52.
9. Ibid., p. 25. Merle Green Robertson has done sight-line studies of the sculpted piers and she postulates that these standing figures were to be seen by a viewer, in the north plaza, from a distance of between 100 and 10 meters.
10. The left to right reading order is related to the general order of reading Maya hieroglyphs. For additional information see, Robert Wald, A Palenque Triad, second edition, revised and updated, ed. Peter Keeler (Austin: Maya Workshop Foundation, 1999), pp.1-76. This book is an updated volume of the Maya Workshop Notebooks from 1986, 1987, and 1988, written by Linda Schele; Schele

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and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 102-108; Michael Carrasco, "Temple of the Inscriptions: The *Katun* Histories and Period-ending Rites of the Temple of the Inscriptions" *Unaahil B'aak: The Temples of Palenque* http://learningobjects.wesleyan.edu/palenque/glyphs/temple_inscriptions/, 2006; Stanley Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal: The Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque. Mesoweb: www.mesoweb.com/articles/guenter/TI.PDF, 2007.

11. Geraldo Aldana, *Oracular Science: Uncertainty in the History of Maya Astronomy, 500-1600*, (PhD. Diss., Harvard University, 2001), pp.110-132; Gerardo Aldana, *The Apotheosis of Pakal: Science, History, and Religion at Classic Maya Palenque* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007), p. 128

12. Wald, *A Palenque Triad*; Carrasco, "Temple of the Inscriptions: *K'atun* Histories"; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.106; Michael Carrasco, "Of How they Pleased the Hearts of their Gods: The Architectural, Sculptural, and Literary Legacy of K'inich Janaab Pakal and K'inich Kan B'ahlam" (lecture, Minnesota Mayanist Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, Fall, 2007); Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Jaanab Pakal." Schele and Mathews, "Palenque" and Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p. 54, state that these texts may have been precursors to the post-Classic stories of the Chilam Balam, from Yucatan.

13. Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," p. 2.

14. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque;" pp.101-108; Wald, *A Palenque Triad*, pp. 17-69; Guenter, "The Tomb of Jaanab Pakal," pp. pp.7-62; personal communication, Michael Carrasco, February, 14, 2007.

15. Aldana, *The Apotheosis*, pp.131-132; *Oracular Science*, p. 132.

16. Ruz, *El Templo*, p. 210; Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, pp. 23-24; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 108-109.

17. Ruz, *El Templo*, pp. 92, 99, 209-211, Fig. 126; Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," pp. 135-139; Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p.56; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.131.

18. Ruz, *El Templo*, pp. 92, 99, 209-211, Figs. 126, 257; Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," pp. 135-139; Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p.56, Fig. 101; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.131.

19. Ruz, *El Templo*, p.83-85; Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p.55.

20. Ruz, *El Templo*, pp. 216-219, Figs., 248, 249.

21. Ruz, *El Templo*, p. 83, Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p. 55.

22. Space does not permit a more detailed discussion of the formal features of the cover. See Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, pp.56-74; Schele and Miller, *The Blood*, pp. 282-285; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 100-132.

23. Ruz, *El Templo*, p. 174; Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p. 62.

24. Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p.58.

25. *Ibid*, p. 57.

26. Levinas, *Time and the Other*, p. 39.

27. *Ibid*, p. 81.

28. *Ibid*, p. 91.

29. *Ibid*, p. 80.

30. Linda Schele, "Accession Iconography of Chan-Balam in the Group of the Cross at Palenque." *In Segunda Mesa Redonda de Palenque Part III*, edited by M. G. Robertson, (Pebble Beach: Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1976) p. 15; Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," p. 130, 131. Whereas Pakal is identified in the inscriptions from the south edge of the sarcophagus cover, which states his birth and death dates and explicitly link him to the guise of "maize god"; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.118; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," p. 57.

31. Greene Robertson, *The Temple of the Inscriptions*, p. 55; Peter Mathews and Linda Schele,

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- “Lords of Palenque—The Glyphic Evidence,” Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Part I, ed. M.G. Robertson (Pebble Beach: Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1974); Floyd Loundsbury, “Pacal,” Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Part I, (Pebble Beach: Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1974).
32. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 66-73; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 119-130. Gunter, “The Tomb of K’inich Janaab Pakal,” p. 5 has identified the infants from above as images of Pakal, linking their form to the portrait of the ruler on his sarcophagus cover. I have independently come to the same conclusion and presented this interpretation in the paper, *Representations of Transformation at the Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico, A.D. 683: The New King and the New Ancestor*, at the 20th Annual Graduate Symposium on the History of Art, Boston University and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, March, 20, 2004.
33. Greene Robertson, “An Iconographic Approach”; Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 27-51; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 99-100.
34. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 57; Schele and Miller, The Blood, pp. 282-284; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp.115-17; Mary Miller and Simon Martin, Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), p.207. The “action” of the sarcophagus cover is a source of healthy debate in the academic community; this image is mostly likely polyvalent.
35. Mary Miller, Maya Art and Architecture (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), p. 112. Michael Carrasco, personal communication, 2008, has noted that this pose is not unusual for the Maize God, however.
36. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 56-63. Schele and Miller, The Blood, pp. 282-284, Aldana, The Apotheosis; Miller and Marin, Courtly Art; 199-207; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” p.132; Karl Taube, “The Birth Vase: Natal Imagery in Ancient Maya Myth and Ritual,” The Maya Vase Book Vol. 4, Ed. Justin Kerr (New York: Kerr and Associates, 1994) pp.672-675.
37. Greene Robertson, “An Iconographic Approach;” Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp.42-44; Schele and Friedel, A Forest, p. 235; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 99-100.
38. Greene Robertson, “An Iconographic Approach;” Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 42-44; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 99-100.
39. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 66; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” p. 121.
40. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 66-73; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 120-122.
41. For drawings of Pakal’s parents’ portraits and this inscription, see Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, plates, 174-202; 170-172; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 120-122.
42. Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” p.117.
43. Ruz, El Templo, p. 112, Wald, A Palenque Triad, pp. 6-70; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 101-108.
44. Wald, A Palenque Triad, pp. 6-70; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 101-108.
45. Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp.104-106, 117-119.
46. Wald, A Palenque Triad, pp. 35-37; Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” 117; Guenter, “The Tomb of K’inich Janaab Pakal,” p.57.
47. Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” pp. 119, 131; Guenter, “The Tomb of K’inich Janaab Pakal,” pp. 57, 58.
48. Guenter, “The Tomb of K’inich Janab Pakal,” p. 58.
49. *Ibid*, p. 41-44. This date is implied because it is associated with a period ending, rather than the actual calendrical date of his birth. For additional information see, Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” p. 103, 106.
50. Schele and Mathews, “Palenque,” p. 107; Guenter, “The Tomb of K’inich Janaab Pakal,” pp. 41-44.

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51. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.106; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," p. 43.
52. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp.106, 107; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," pp. 43, 44.
53. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp.106, 107; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," p. 43.
54. See note 37.
55. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque;" Patricia Mcanany, Living with the Ancestors (Austin: University of Texas, 1995).
56. Robert Carlson and Martín Prechtel, "The Flowering of the Dead," The War for the Heart and Soul of a Highland Town (Austin: University of Texas, 1997), p.55.
57. Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic approach," pp. 132-33; Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 37; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque."
58. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.113.
59. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 62.
60. Schele and Friedel, A Forest, pp. 66, 67, 231; David Friedel, Schele, Joy Parker, Maya Cosmos, (New York: Scribner, 1994) pp. 53-55, 75-79; Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 59.
61. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 122-123, 127; Robert Carlson and Martín Prechtel, "The Flowering of the Dead," pp. 52-56.
62. Schele, Friedel and Parker. Maya Cosmos, pp. 135-138, 414, n.36, 418, n.21; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 120-23.
63. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p. 113-115.
64. Friedel, Schele, Parker, The Maya Cosmos, 76-80; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 114, 115.
65. Vera Tiesler and Andrea Cucina, Ed. Janaab' Pakal of Palenque: Reconstructing the Life and Death of a Maya Ruler (Tucson: University of Arizona, 2006), p. 9.
66. Karl Taube, "The Classic Maya Maize God: A Reappraisal," Fifth Palenque Round Table (San Francisco: PreColumbian Art Research Institute, 1983) pp. 171-181; Taube, "The Birth Vase" p. 674.
67. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p. 118; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal," p. 57.
68. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," 116.
69. Green Roberston, "An Iconographic Approach," p. 135; Friedel, Schele and Parker, Maya Cosmos, pp. 193-202; Schele and Miller, The Blood, p. 49; Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, p. 59.
70. Schele, Nikolai Grube, Simon Martin, Notebook 22nd for the University of Texas Hieroglyphic Forum (Austin: Maya Workshop Foundation, 1997) p. 43; Wald, A Palenque Triad, p. 107; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p. 99; Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 33, 36-40.
71. Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," pp.129-131, Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 33, 36-40; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p. 99.
72. Greene Robertson, The Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 51-53.
73. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque;" Tiesler and Cucina, Janaab' Pakal of Palenque, p. 123.
74. Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," p. 132.
75. New evidence presented by Markus Eberl suggests that dynastic funerary rites could have lasted for years after the initial burial, Tiesler and Cucina, Janaab' Pakal of Palenque, pp. 104, 123; G. Bernal, "K'inich Janaab' Pakal," Arqueología Mexicana (16), 2004, p.19.
76. Tiesler and Cucina, Janaab' Pakal of Palenque, p. 105; Greene Robertson, "An Iconographic Approach," p. 132; Bernal, "K'inich Janaab' Pakal," p.19.
77. Kan B'alam was declared the ruler in January 7, C.E. 684, five months after his father's death. Martin and Grube, The Chronicles, p. 168.

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78. Friedel, Schele, Parker, Maya Cosmos, p. 193-94; Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 669-675; Carlson and Prechtel, "The Flowering of the Dead," p. 47-67.
79. Carlson and Prechtel, "The Flowering of the Dead," pp. 47-67.
80. Robert Carlson, The War for the Heart and Soul of a Highland Maya Town, p. 5.
81. Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 674.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 674.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 672-674.
84. *Ibid.*
85. Green Robertson, "The Quadripartite Badge—A Badge of Rulership," Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Part I, Ed. M.G. Robertson (Pebble Beach: Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1974); Green Robertson, Temple of the Inscriptions, pp. 58-62; Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 674.
86. Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 672, Martin, "The Baby Jaguar: An Exploration of its Identity and Origins in Maya Art and Writing," Memoria de la Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Vol. I, Ed. V. Tiesler, R. Cobos, and M. G. Robertson (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2002), p. 56.
87. Pakal's image on the sarcophagus cover is exceedingly polyvalent, therefore, he is depicted as many things; in this section I am exploring his infant identity.
88. My interpretation here might present an alternative idea when compared to Karl Taube's from "The Birth Vase," p. 673. Taube states that, "a replacement in the world of the dead," is necessary.
89. Carlson and Prechtel, "The Flowering," p. 50.
90. *Ibid.* This transfer is most often recounted in inter-generational *k'èx* exchanges between a child and grandchild.
91. *Ibid.*
92. Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 673; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p. 132; Friedel, Schele, Parker, Maya Cosmos, p. 139, associate him with the First Father and Maize.
93. Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 674, Martin, "The Baby Jaguar," p. 56.
94. Karl Taube, "The Classic Maya Maize God: A Reappraisal."
95. Mary Miller and Marco Samayoa, "Where the Maize May Grow," RES (33) (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, 1998), p. 57.
96. For a detailed transcription of the panel inscriptions see Wald, A Palenque Triad, A more thematic translation appears in Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," pp. 95-132; and Stanley Guenter has most recently contributed to another transcription and translation in "The Tomb of K'inich Jaanab Pakal"
97. Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.132.
98. Taube, "The Birth Vase," p. 671
99. *Ibid.* p. 672.
100. Carlson and Prechtel, "The Flowering," p. 58.
101. Wald, A Palenque Triad, p. 66; Schele and Mathews, "Palenque," p.115; Guenter, "The Tomb of K'inich Jaanab Pakal," p. 54.
102. Robert W. Blair and Refugio Vermont Salas, Spoken Yucatec Maya, Book I. Rev. Edition, Program in Latin American Studies (Chapel Hill: Duke University-University of North Carolina, 1995) p.2. Also thanks to Michael Carrasco for his Yucatec Maya edits.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & ART HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON AWA TSIREH & THE SAN ILDEFONSO EASEL PAINTING MOVEMENT

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The global influenza epidemic of 1918 had severe and lasting impacts at San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico. The pandemic was, in fact, only the latest in a series of misfortunes dating back to the late 1800s that had produced catastrophic population declines at the village.¹ Like the other Tewa Pueblos, the theo-political² life of San Ildefonso society had centered on the Winter and Summer moieties, each of whom oversaw village governance during their respective half of the year.³ However, because of influenza fatalities, 'the already small Winter moiety was reduced to two families. As a result the people were confronted with the unalterable fact that they could no longer operate on the basis of the traditional Winter and Summer moieties.'⁴ The fallout of this radical social upheaval still reverberates at San Ildefonso today.

At the same time these unsettling events were unfolding, San Ildefonso artists became instrumental in the appearance of two emerging artistic traditions. María and Julian Martínez experimented with creating and decorating reduction-fired black ceramics, and a number of easel painters started producing watercolor images of ceremonial and genre scenes. Both of these nascent artistic movements were heavily indebted to the support of both individual and institutional patrons in Santa Fe.⁵ Undoubtedly, these patrons saw the death and turmoil at San Ildefonso as an opportunity to enact the salvage paradigm, whereby museums and a wealthy Anglo intelligentsia felt that they could actually save the material evidence of a dying culture, and possibly the people themselves, by their benevolent intervention. However, Jerry Brody has argued that these patrons' *benevolence* was hardly benign. In Indian Painters and White Patrons (1971), Brody described this system of patronage (and its concomitant economic imbalances) in more stern terms, calling the Santa Fe patronage of Pueblo artists, 'paternalistic racism.'⁶

Since the publication of Brody's Indian Painters and White Patrons, many art historical treatments of Native arts have utilized studies of patronage. Brody's own work on early Pueblo painters and others' critical treatments of the supposed *revival* of polished black ceramics at San Ildefonso have produced indispensable analytic insights.⁷ Yet it is somewhat surprising that there has been almost no attention paid to the ramifications of the 1918 flu epidemic and the subsequent cultural disruptions and reconfigurations as key factors in the emergence of these artistic movements.⁸ Even more

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troubling is that after 150 years of ethnographic studies of Pueblo peoples, art historical examinations of twentieth-century Pueblo arts have failed to fully engage Pueblo concepts and perspectives on the production of these arts, especially easel painting. It is astonishing that studies of San Ildefonso arts have altogether ignored one of the most important works of interpretive, symbolic anthropology—Alfonso Ortiz's The Tewa World; indeed, Brody's study of the patronage of Pueblo painting does not even include The Tewa World in its bibliography. Anyone dealing with a topic involving a Tewa Pueblo simply must account for Ortiz's work or he/she commits a grave interpretive oversight.

Therefore, in this essay I argue that studies of Native American art history, and San Ildefonso easel painting specifically, are caught in a methodological bind brought about by an over-emphasis on the patronage model pioneered by Brody. I will interrogate how this predicament came to be and propose approaches for overcoming the limits of extant methods. I suggest that patronage studies are not incorrect, but rather incomplete and, therefore, must be supplemented by indigenous explanatory frameworks, which are derived from local knowledge. Too often, Native perspectives on Native arts are seen as one more thing in need of an explanation. However, I advocate that local knowledge must be engaged as an interpretive or analytical methodology, what we might call an ethnotheoretical or indigenous epistemological approach to the creation of art historical explanations.⁹ To achieve this end, I will examine several works by Alfonso Roybal, often known by his Tewa name, Awa Tsireh, in light of local concepts that structured Tewa thought and action. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that changes in Roybal's work, both in terms of stylistic attributes and content, must be understood as products of the intersection of external patronage and internal matters, such as the reconfiguration of the moiety system at San Ildefonso and Roybal's ascendancy to a key theo-political position in the Pueblo.

Though from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, Indian Painters and White Patrons can seem a bit dated, it must be recognized that it was truly revolutionary when it was published. Not only did Brody's dissertation-turned book put the sub-field of Native American art history on the disciplinary map, it also radically challenged prevailing approaches to dealing with Native American art. Native arts were treated, at best, as artifacts, and, at worst, as the products of peculiar collective racial minds.¹⁰ Brody was among the first to seriously address Native works of art as Art, and by focusing on the impact of external patronage, he was able to reveal the intellectual (and arguably moral) bankruptcy of racialized discourses about Native-made objects. Brody's argument was simple: the social, political

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and economic power wielded by Euro-American patrons produced visible consequences in the formal qualities (and to a lesser degree, the content) of early twentieth-century Native easel paintings.¹¹

One of the most clear-cut examples of the impact of Euro-American patronage on Native art production can be seen in the work of Alfonso Roybal. Around 1919, he painted an ambitious composition depicting several Pueblo women firing pottery in one of the plazas of San Ildefonso.¹² This painting is noteworthy insofar as the plaza is meticulously represented, as are the adobe structures at its margins, which reveal Roybal's experimentations with three-dimensionality and linear perspective. Likewise, the mountains in the background are painted in a hazy gray, as Roybal was grappling with how to render atmospheric perspective. However, Brody notes that the artist's use of a background, landscape, and three-dimensionality in his images was not seen by Santa Fe patrons as *authentic*, instead they believed that it revealed some sort of *contamination* from European pictorial traditions.¹³ By late 1919 or early 1920, Roybal had removed the background from his images, even when dealing with identical subject matter (Figure 1). If Roybal wanted to sell his paintings to individual or institutional patrons in Santa Fe, the images needed to conform to their notions of *authentic* or *traditional* Pueblo painting. Clearly, in this case an analysis of patronage provides a convincing explanation for the formal changes in Roybal's work.

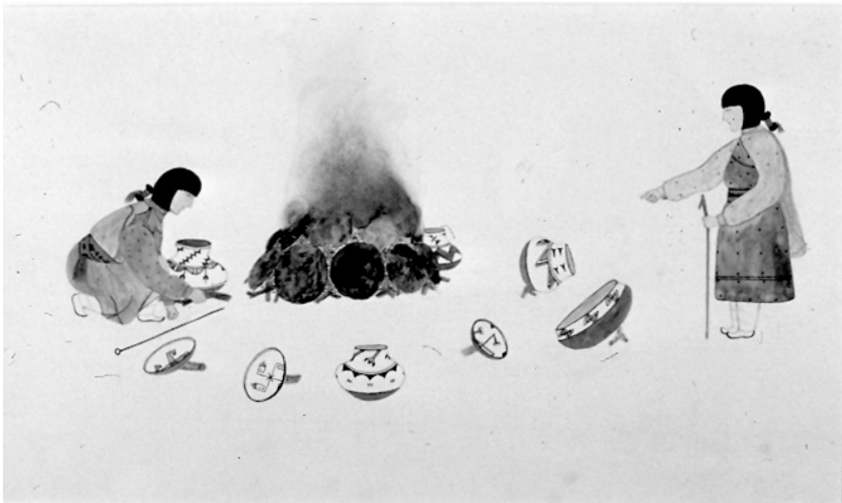


Figure 1. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh—San Ildefonso), *Firing Pottery* (c. 1919).
Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 15.

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The problem here is that form, framed as a consequence of external interventions, is privileged over content or other contextual concerns. Brody is by no means a Greenbergian formalist and he is meticulous in his attention to the social and economic processes underwriting systems of patronage; however, he gives only cursory treatment to questions of content, noting patrons' preference for ceremonial scenes. Patronage becomes a motivating force for painters, who then struggle with formal pictorial problems resolved in the aesthetic qualities of particular paintings. The content of early San Ildefonso paintings (and by extension, the culturally situated positionality of the painters) has likely been avoided out of a fear of being anthropological. Brody points out that the works of one of the first San Ildefonso painters, Crescencio Martínez, were purchased precisely for their ethnographic content—a practice that was in part motivated by bans on photography at Pueblo ceremonies starting in 1913.¹⁴ In both, Indian Painters and White Patrons and Pueblo Indian Painting, Brody was consciously writing against this ethnographic grain, thus seeking to answer debates over the art/artifact status of so-called non-Western arts.¹⁵

The art/artifact debates presented historians of non-Western arts with a false dichotomy. Authors could, on one hand, frame non-Western (and specifically, Native American) objects, as art through the deployment of various kinds of formalist, modernist, art-for-art's-sake rhetoric—emphasizing the aesthetic dimensions of any particular object; on the other hand, scholars could situate works of art within particular non-Western cultural contexts or illuminate the culturally salient dimensions of those objects, but such approaches committed the cardinal sin of treating indigenous works as artifacts. In the sub-field of Native American art history, this avoidance of supposedly anthropological information is heightened due to a disciplinary awareness of the authority that anthropology has historically exercised over Native arts. That same anthropological authority produced ongoing antagonisms between Native (particularly Pueblo) people and anthropologists. Those tensions may have a great deal to do with art historical avoidance of anthropological information about Native peoples: *we* want to avoid *their* disciplinary missteps. In what may be the supreme irony of the art/artifact debates, as art historians moved increasingly toward formalist rhetorics to legitimate Native American works as art, their colleagues in other fields increasingly embraced contextualizing tools often derived from anthropological models; after all, Michelangelo's David was not merely a particular reinvention of Classical aesthetics, it was also a politically charged critique of the socio-economic power of the Medici family, and can thus only be fully understood through a nuanced analysis of Florentine socio-cultural

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contexts. One of the legacies of this perspectival shift is the emergence of the discipline of Visual Culture studies, which often simultaneously parallels and challenges more orthodox art historical theory and practice.¹⁶

The art historical utilization of aestheticizing, art-for-art's-sake discourses in dealing with Native arts is a kind of vindicationism;¹⁷ that is, Native arts are *vindicated* by being positioned as equivalent to Western arts insofar as they can be described using the formal language developed by canonical art historical practice. Of course, the aesthetic concepts derived from European artistic traditions are framed as natural and universally applicable, ultimately masking their own historical contingency. Hence, many discussions of Native arts have actually reinforced a Eurocentric concept of aesthetics via formalist, modernist discourses; this is little more than ethnocentrism masquerading as anti-ethnocentrism. As Nanette Salomon has noted, simply squeezing non-canonical works of art into an exclusionary narrative is insufficient; what is needed is a far-reaching reconfiguration of discursive structures so that exclusionary tactics become obsolete.¹⁸

In the wake of new and social art histories, patronage studies (following Brody's influential lead) asked important new questions about Native American arts. As noted above, examinations of the impact of patronage have resulted in significant contributions; indeed, patronage studies have enabled critical analyses of the ways in which patrons imposed their supposedly universal, but thoroughly Eurocentric, aesthetic ideas on Native art and artists. This is clearly an important step toward the kind of disciplinary reinvention that Salomon advocates. However, this approach certainly has its limits, not the least of which is an emphasis on what the patrons, rather than the Native artists, said, thought, and wrote. Patronage studies, therefore, are by definition partial, both in the sense of being grounded in a particular angle of vision and in the sense that they are always incomplete. This partiality is an entrenched condition of empiricist art historical strategies: some non-Native art patrons left documentation that is more easily incorporated into existing methodologies of art historical production, but that only reflects the limits of evidentiary standards and says nothing about the range of available sources that might fall outside of those limits.¹⁹ To reconfigure Native American art historical narrative structures and de-center Eurocentric aesthetic ideals, a far more rigorous and sustained engagement with Pueblo (and other Native) epistemologies is clearly needed.

Deploying local knowledge as an effective intercultural explanatory apparatus requires, above all, a base of knowledge from which to work. How then can we (meaning anyone, Native or non-Native, who did not

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experience a traditional upbringing in San Ildefonso culture) approximate a San Ildefonso epistemology from which we can launch an analytic endeavor? For the purposes of this essay, I rely heavily on Alfonso Ortiz's seminal text, The Tewa World, a study, which is truly indispensable for gaining a *very* basic understanding of the symbolic and philosophical foundations of Tewa Pueblo culture. Given Ortiz's firsthand experiential knowledge of his subject matter, simultaneous breadth and detail, analytic ingenuity and unmatched ability to effectively translate complex Tewa concepts and logic into English locutions, the fact that this book has not been more frequently utilized as a theoretical model is quite shocking. In short, The Tewa World opens the possibility of reading Alfonso Roybal's paintings as conscious expressions of the conceptual system articulated by Ortiz.

Of course, there are clear problems with this approach. Ortiz wrote specifically about San Juan Pueblo, his home community. Each of the six Tewa Pueblos (San Juan, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Nambe, Tesuque and Pojoaque) practice slightly different versions of the basic model outlined by Ortiz; the anthropological tendency toward generalization that Ortiz employs does not always capture the complexity of particular socio-historic experiences at any given village. This contrast between ethnographic generality and historical particularity is nowhere more pronounced than at San Ildefonso, precisely for the reasons outlined in the introductory paragraphs above. The flu epidemic and the subsequent social upheavals, signifying localized circumstances, clearly problematize any application of Ortiz's ideas to Roybal's paintings. Nonetheless, one of the key points that Ortiz makes about San Ildefonso specifically is how, in the aftermath of the flu epidemic, the people of the Pueblo consciously attempted to recreate their social order based on one of the fundamental social, cultural, theo-political concepts, which is common to all of the Tewa Pueblos, namely: the duality in the division of society into moieties.²⁰ Consequently, I suggest that, despite clear differences between the six Tewa villages, Ortiz's information allows us to examine the ways in which paintings by Roybal were impacted by these circumstances, especially since Roybal played an important role in the reorganization of San Ildefonso society.

We might ask whether The Tewa World actually constitutes *local knowledge* at all. After all, even though Ortiz was from San Juan, his text is probably more accurately described as local knowledge filtered through the lens of symbolic anthropology. In fact, Ortiz wrote this book (originally, his dissertation at the University of Chicago), as a challenge to the more static structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss, who had claimed that truly symmetrical moieties did not exist. Symbolic anthropology was a more fluid dynamic advancement over prior structuralisms; the University of Chicago *school* was highly interpretive (due to the influence of Clifford Geertz) and argued

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not for universal structural laws, but rather for the primacy of local cultural systematicity. Ortiz's book typified this strategy. A fellow graduate student of Ortiz's at Chicago was Gary Witherspoon, who utilized a parallel approach in framing the Navajo language as the fundamental tool for understanding the conceptual symbolic system structuring Diné art.²¹ Nonetheless, The Tewa World and Witherspoon's Language and Art in the Navajo Universe represent early attempts to utilize indigenous epistemologies, as explanatory frameworks—literally trying to wed local knowledge with anthropological theory.

Art historians must be aware of a fundamental critique of the Chicago school of symbolic anthropology, specifically its ahistorical quality. Both Witherspoon and Ortiz fail to fully engage socio-historic processes, presenting their work as timeless—a flaw too common in ethnography, generally speaking. Hence, Witherspoon treats Navajo textiles from the mid-1800s in the same broad strokes as trading-post era rugs without examining the intervening social, economic and political factors that clearly impacted Navajo aesthetics over time. Likewise, Ortiz barely mentions the radical changes wrought in Pueblo societies due to both Spanish and U.S. colonialism. Such avoidance of historical questions explains why Peter Whiteley proposed that, 'anthropology needs more history.'²² Furthermore, some scholars have suggested that interpretive ethnography, which is focused on symbolic systems, imagined symbolism everywhere and treated all of it with the same level of importance.²³ Ortiz's work may be less susceptible to this critique, given its focused attention to detail and overall analytic rigor. Art historians are in a unique position to use our own disciplinary strengths to address and resolve these problems. Therefore, our subsequent examination of Alfonso Roybal's work will proceed from the assumption that Ortiz did a reasonably convincing job describing the broad philosophical, conceptual, social and theo-political currents of Tewa culture in the twentieth century, thereby enabling a deployment of these ideas as our theoretical matrix.

Most early San Ildefonso easel paintings depicted the buffalo dance, which Brody says was the most, 'comprehensible to outsiders of all public ritual dances,' thereby locating the impetus for this subject matter in the voyeuristic interests of external patrons.²⁴ However, it must be noted that Alfredo Montoya (a day-school classmate of Alfonso Roybal) made his first paintings of that subject around 1911–1913.²⁵ By 1918, both Alfonso Roybal and Crescencio Martínez (Roybal's uncle) were also making frequent images of the buffalo dance (Figure 2). This is precisely the time when photographic bans went into effect among the Pueblos;²⁶ probably, as a result of these bans, Edgar Hewett commissioned twenty-four paintings by Martínez in late 1917 and early 1918 as ethnographic documents.²⁷

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Figure 2. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Buffalo Dance* (c. 1918).
Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 10.

Certainly, external patronage had a marked role to play in the invention of this new painting tradition at San Ildefonso. However, the participation of men from San Ildefonso, while surely based on economic imbalances and voyeuristic tendencies (as Brody suggests) may have also been motivated by purely internal rationales. The fact that one of Montoya's, Martínez's and Roybal's most frequent subjects was the buffalo dance points to such internal motivations.

Rather than being *comprehensible* to outsiders, Alfonso Ortiz has noted that among Tewa people the buffalo dance holds an anomalous place among all of the recurring ceremonial dances, both public and private. Because buffalo lived and were hunted outside the boundaries of the Tewa world, the buffalo dance is not controlled by the Winter Moiety or the Hunt Chief, as are all other hunting rituals.²⁸ The willingness of easel painters to represent this dance, although certainly encouraged by external patronage, may well have been dependant on the lack of strict rules placing the dance under the direct control of established religious officials. Therefore, to understand why this subject matter was so popular requires an understanding of the control of ritual prerogatives among Tewa people. Any of the San Ildefonso painters—regardless of their membership in either the Summer or Winter moiety—could paint this dance, since it was not *owned* by the moieties. This suggests that the painters, even while negotiating external patronage, were highly conscious of Pueblo concepts regarding the instrumentality of images. In short, graphic representations of ceremonial events have real effects and consequences in the world, especially the possibility that they might reveal socio-ritual knowledge that is not meant for public circulation.²⁹ The photographic bans emerged in part from this concern; arguably, when a Tewa painter depicted the buffalo dance, he was able to circumvent any question about the appropriateness of that painting, insofar as this dance existed in Tewa public domain.

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By late 1918, the global influenza pandemic had taken its toll on the people of San Ildefonso. Crescencio Martínez had been among the victims of the outbreak,³⁰ which was so widespread that the traditional social system, based on shared and alternating governance by the Winter and Summer moieties, was in danger of total collapse at San Ildefonso. Alfonso Ortiz elaborates with the following statements:

[T]he already small Winter moiety was reduced to two families. As a result the people were confronted with the unalterable fact that they could no longer operate on the basis of the traditional Winter and Summer moieties. Consequently, the Summer moiety divided into a north and south division, on the basis of residence, with the north side absorbing the two Winter families. On this basis they attempted to reconstitute the dual organization much as it had existed in the past. Some other factors, including antagonism between members of the two groups, were involved in this split, but the lesson I wish to derive from this brief sketch is that the people of San Ildefonso regarded the dual organization as the only way they could operate meaningfully in social relations, and the only way they could impose order on their world.³¹

Thus, the dual organization and the realignment of the moieties into North plaza people and South plaza people have to be central features of any analysis of San Ildefonso easel painting.

Roybal was a member of the new North plaza moiety;³² however, it is not clear what his prior moiety affiliation had been. Suggestively, one striking feature of his paintings is the frequency with which he represented Winter moiety dances between 1918 and 1925. For example, in *Turtle Dance* (1918), he painted one of the key Winter solstice dances conducted under the authority of the Winter moiety (Figure 3). I would suggest that this painting actually functioned as a claim of ownership by the new North plaza moiety over the ritual prerogatives of the former Winter people. Once again, the content here may well be motivated by internal questions rather than by external interventions. The sudden ability of former Summer moiety people to gain access to Winter moiety ceremonialism—now in the control of the North plaza people—was no doubt disturbing, and this painting may have been part of an internal debate about questions of religious patrimony. One of the important qualities of this painting is Roybal's use of realism, a trend that would increase in his work until about 1922, when he started experimenting with abstract geometric compositions. This realism can be read as a visual demonstration that Roybal had a fundamental understanding of at least the visual dimensions of this important solstice ritual; such a demonstrated understanding could ultimately help quiet any concerns held by the surviving Winter moiety people over the exposure of their ritual knowledge to former Summer people.

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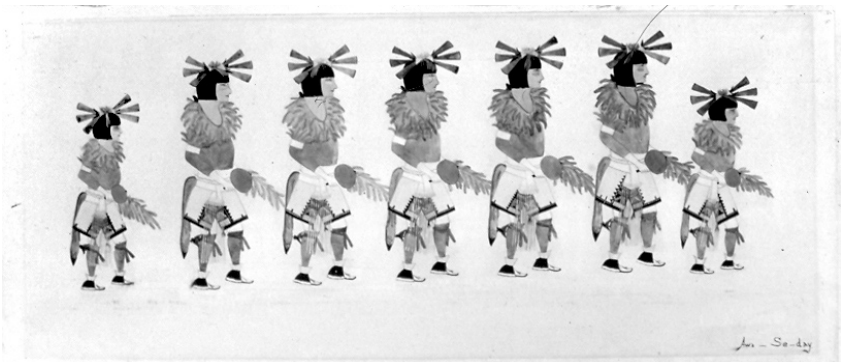


Figure 3. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh – San Ildefonso), *Turtle Dance* (c. 1918-1919). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 1.

Roybal's realism was heightened by his adaptation of formal tools, such as shading and modeling. Likewise, although he had earlier abandoned backgrounds and pictorial devices, such as linear perspective, he increasingly arranged the figures which he was painting in such a way as to suggest spatial depth. We can clearly see these tactics at work in *Corn Dance* (c. 1920), wherein three-dimensionality is suggested by the staggered arrangement of the dancers: those who are farther from the viewer are slightly higher in the picture plane (Figure 4). Although the corn dance was formerly a Summer moiety dance, this image may nonetheless again be addressing the manner in which the people of San Ildefonso sorted out the ritual implications of the moiety reorganization.

Realism was not merely a tool for depicting what existed in the world; rather, it was, 'an interventionary way of structuring artistically an ideologically framed...interpretation of reality.'³³ David Craven argues that realist artists, 'attempt to unify in art what is fragmented in modern society.'³⁴ Certainly, San



Figure 4. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Corn Dance* (c. 1920). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 11.

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Ildefonso was a fragmented society after the pandemic; therefore, Roybal's realism—even when he paints images belonging to another moiety—must be seen as an indigenous imagining of a proper social order where questions of ritual and political authority are settled in such a way that they resemble an ideal functioning of the moiety system.

In 1922, Roybal began investigating an abstraction based on geometric pottery designs. Even though he continued to paint more or less realistic figures, he did so with flat applications of color and highly stylized compositions—in contrast to his early use of shading, modeling and illusionistic spatial depth. Likewise, his use of purely geometric abstractions became much more pronounced after 1925. I argue that this stylistic shift is indicative of a resolution to some of the internal debates about the new moieties' proprietorship of ritual activities. Ortiz notes that at San Juan, the Winter moiety holds crucial initiation ceremonies once every four years;³⁵ if the Winter moiety at San Ildefonso held its last initiation around 1918, then 1922 would mark its next round of initiations. Therefore, by 1922, the North plaza people would have had to substantiate their claim to the prior ritual knowledge and practices of the former Winter moiety. Roybal's shift towards more abstract imagery may well indicate that any debates over stewardship of religious practices may have been reaching a conclusion, as realism's utility for demonstrating moiety specific knowledge was decreasing.

Roybal's shift toward abstraction and geometricized imagery was most notable in his works after 1925. For example, Roybal's painting of an abstracted geometric bird was painted between 1925 and 1928 (Figure 5). If there were any lingering debates over the social and religious relationships between the new moieties, they may have been settled around 1925. Again, Ortiz notes that Summer moiety initiations at San Juan, which are the ritual equivalent of the aforementioned Winter initiations, are held every seven years, in contrast to the four year cycle of the Winter moiety.³⁶ 1925 was seven years after the flu epidemic and three years after the probable initiations into the new North plaza moiety; therefore, it is likely that the South plaza moiety had recently conducted its first initiation, again demonstrating its authority over the rituals of the prior Summer moiety. San Ildefonso society was slowly becoming less fractured; as a result, idealizing realist paintings was less necessary.

By 1925, the North plaza was economically better off in comparison to the South plaza, since the North moiety had a disproportionate number of artists, including Roybal and María and Julian Martínez, whose work was patronized by the Santa Fe art establishment. That same year, Julian Martínez became governor and Roybal became a war chief.³⁷ Both Martínez's and

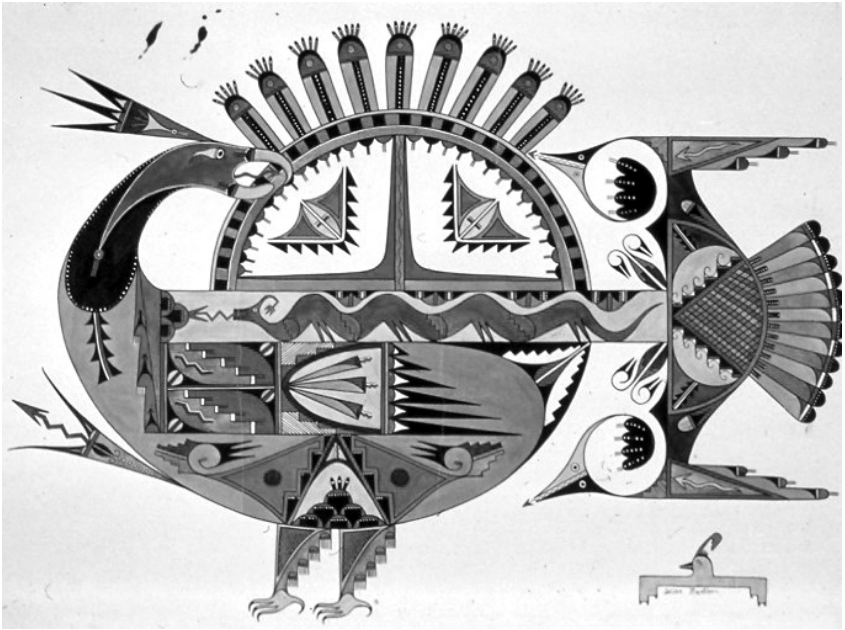


Figure 5. Alfonso Roybal (Awa Tsireh–San Ildefonso), *Bird in Geometric Design* (c. 1925-28). Courtesy of the School of Advanced Research, Indian Art Research Center, IARC P 221.

Roybal's ascendancy to these positions of leadership within the pueblo may have helped to settle any debate about the theo-political authority of the North plaza moiety. Importantly, Ortiz notes that the Governor's office (as a governmental position introduced by Spanish colonial systems) alternates between the moieties every year.³⁸ The war chiefs, on the other hand, function as a pair, one selected from each moiety, and are thus equated with the twin war gods of Pueblo theology. Most importantly, Ortiz points out that for the Tewas, the war chiefs are called *Towa'é*, and serve as intermediaries between ordinary people and the high ranking religious officials within each moiety's hierarchical structure. Furthermore, the *Towa'é* are enforcers of the directives issued by theo-political leadership, and given their own association with the twin war gods and other supernatural beings, their authority is beyond question.³⁹

Any internal disputes over the socio-religious implications of the realignment of the moieties could easily have been settled through an alliance between Roybal and Martínez, both North plaza men in prominent leadership positions. Such an alliance is suggested by *Bird in Geometric Design*, which (according to Brody) although clearly painted by Roybal, is signed by Julian

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Martínez (Figure 5).⁴⁰ This curious signature probably parallels María Martínez's practice of signing other people's pottery—her actions insured that other members of the Pueblo shared in the economic gains brought about by her fame and also deflected any criticism of her own economic gains. The economic power derived from external patronage was transformed into Pueblo political capital.

As a *Towa'e*, Roybal may have also been grappling with Pueblo rules about the production of images, specifically, with ideas about the instrumentality of graphic representations. His shift toward abstraction and away from realistic illustrative paintings can be seen as an enforcement of Pueblo rules against the creation of certain kinds of images. When he did make paintings of ritual scenes, they were often based on other Pueblos' dances, heavily abstracted and framed by geometric designs to de-emphasize the realism of the overall depiction. Clearly, reading Roybal's paintings in light of Tewa epistemologies allows us to see these works in radical new ways that are simply not accounted for by patronage studies.

In the introduction to Pueblo Indian Painting, Brody wrote, "The comparative silence of the artists concerning their lives and work makes it infinitely harder to discover a parallel motivating philosophical principle,' to motivations expressed in the documentary evidence left by patrons."⁴¹ An ethnotheoretical approach, as demonstrated above, can indeed help reveal the motivations of some artists, filling in the gaps left by their textual silence. This methodology could be fruitfully applied to a range of Native arts and artists, from historic and traditional arts (where this task might be a bit easier) to contemporary cutting-edge Native artists who are working in the present. For example, the painters of the Artists Hopid group, as well as a concurrent wave of Hopi photographers, such as Vistor Masayesva and Owen Seumtewa, have self-consciously created works based on Hopi philosophical, ethical and aesthetic principles. Of course, not every contemporary Native artist does that, but the point remains that a careful utilization of indigenous epistemologies can be an important explanatory tool with which to generate truly intercultural dialogue and understanding. The narrative above, about Roybal and his fellow painters' work—which was motivated by both patronage and internal cultural concerns—is radically different than extant scholarship on the early twentieth-century San Ildefonso painting movement. From this point forward, it is clear that a serious engagement with indigenous epistemologies must be a fundamental part of Native American art historical practice.

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NOTES:

1. See William Whitman, "The San Ildefonso of New Mexico," in Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, ed. Ralph Linton (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1940); Elsie Clews Parsons, "The Social Organization of the Tewa of New Mexico," American Anthropological Society Memoir, no. 36, (1929).
2. This rather awkward neologism is meant to approximate the imbrication of political and religious authority in traditional Pueblo socio-cultural contexts. The fusion of political and religious authority permeated every realm of Pueblo life, from extravagant ritual dramas to mundane issues such as the tenure and stewardship of agricultural plots. This is a point that has been made eloquently by Peter Whiteley, Rethinking Hopi Ethnography (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998); and by Alfonso Ortiz, The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in a Pueblo Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969).
3. Alfonso Ortiz, "Dual Organization as an Operational Concept in the Pueblo Southwest," Ethnology, Vol. 4, No. 4, (Oct., 1965), pp. 389-396; Ortiz, Tewa World.
4. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 135, based in part on Whitman; Parsons states that there were three Winter moiety families in the early 1920s, but her definition of 'family'—nuclear versus extended, or described in Euro-American versus Tewa terminologies—may account for the discrepancy here. Nonetheless, Ortiz's larger point – the centrality of the moieties—is not undermined and will be taken up again later in this essay.
5. The literature on Maria and Julian Martinez is extensive, but for a good general introduction, see Edwin L. Wade, "Straddling the Cultural Fence: The Conflict for Ethnic Artists within Pueblo Societies," in The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution, ed. Edwin L. Wade (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), pp 243-254; and Stephen Trimble, Talking with the Clay: The Art of Pueblo Pottery (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp 37-54, who notes that black ware was still being made at Santa Clara, so the Martinez's did less to *revive* such forms than to innovate the decorative technique of matte slip painting on a polished surface; on the emerging easel painting tradition at San Ildefonso, Jerry Brody, Pueblo Indian Painting: Tradition and Modernism in New Mexico, 1900-1930 (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1997) is the definitive source to date.
6. Jerry Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), p 90.
7. Brody, Pueblo; Trimble; Wade; additional works that have made highly perceptive contributions to our understanding of the relationship between native artists and their patrons include Marvin Cohodas, "Washoe Innovators and Their Patrons," in The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution, ed. Edwin L. Wade (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), pp 203-220; and Greta J. Murphy, "Chief Blankets on the Middle Missouri: Navajo Artists and Their Patrons," in Painters, Patrons, and Identity: Essays in Native American Art to Honor J. J. Brody, ed. Joyce M. Szabo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), pp 241-261, where she has convincingly demonstrates that relationships between artists and patrons were not merely a function of Indian versus white contacts, showing that Plains Indian aesthetic preferences had an incredible impact on the formal qualities of Chief's blankets woven by Navajo women for external trade.
8. Wade, pp 248-254, comes closest to this idea in discussing the developing black ware ceramics

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at San Ildefonso; however, though he briefly addresses the issue of north versus south plaza factionalism, he does not adequately explain its origins in earlier social upheavals and therefore ends up with a rather anemic narrative of these complex socio-political issues. Likewise, Brody, Pueblo, p 47 only discusses the 1918 epidemic insofar as one of the first San Ildefonso painters, Crescencio Martinez, died of the flu that year.

9. I borrow this idea of an *ethnotheoretical* approach primarily from Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 13-15 and passim; there is a less rigorous use of this term (and its variants) in some disciplines, wherein an *ethnotheory* is simply a specific local understanding of some particular phenomenon, as in an *ethnotheory* of disease. What Whiteley argues is that local knowledge is produced by a particular hermeneutic epistemology that is by definition rigorous, encompassing, and systematic. In slightly different terms, Whiteley is talking about indigenous epistemologies, a phrasing that is more popular in studies of Oceanic topics or in explanatory frameworks derived from Oceanic indigenous/aboriginal perspectives.

10. See, for example, the racialized discourse in Oscar Jacobson, "Indian Artists from Oklahoma." Oklahoma Almanac 7, no. 5 (1964); Dorothy Dunn, American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968).

11. Brody, Indian Painters, passim; these themes were also taken up in more detail throughout Brody, Pueblo.

12. See Plate 5 in Brody, Pueblo, pp 36-7.

13. Brody, Pueblo, passim.

14. On Crescencio Martinez's paintings, see Brody, Pueblo, pp 55-6; on Pueblo bans of photography, see Luke Lyon, "History of the Prohibition of Photography of Southwestern Indian Ceremonies," in Reflections: Papers on Southwestern Culture History in Honor of Charles H. Lange, ed., Anne van Arsdall Poore, (Papers of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico). 14 (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1988). In part, these photographic bans were motivated by Pueblo concepts about the instrumentality of graphic representations, an issue which is incorporated below, see Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 163-87.

15. On the art/artifact distinction and debates surrounding exhibitions of non-Western arts, see Sally Price, Primitive Art in Civilized Places (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

16. On the emergence of visual culture and the very utility of art as a classificatory term, see Carolyn Dean, "The Trouble with (the Term) Art," Art Journal 65:2 (2006), pp 24-32.

17. My thinking on the issue of *vindicationism* is influenced by Adolph L. Reed, Jr., W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp 10-12 and passim.

18. Nanette Salomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission," in The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp 344-355.

19. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 55-57, and chapter three generally, but especially pp 82-83, 88, 95-96

20. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 135.

21. See Gary Witherspoon, Language and Art in the Navajo Universe (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977).

22. Peter Whiteley, "Why Anthropology Needs More History," Journal of Anthropological Research, 60:4 (Winter, 2004), pp 487-514.

23. See Kathy M'Closkey, Swept Under the Rug: A Hidden History of Navajo Weaving, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp 211-2 and passim, for a rather unconvincing critique of Witherspoon on those grounds.

24. Brody, Pueblo, p 61; the following account is based on a synthesis of Brody, Pueblo, Wade, and Ortiz, Tewa World; though he deals with the Hopi, Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 80-104 greatly

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informed my reading of Pueblo political motivations.

25. Brody, Pueblo, pp 20-21.

26. Lyon, "Photography."

27. Brody, Pueblo, pp 55-6.

28. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 172-173n19.

29. Whiteley, Rethinking, pp 163-87 and passim.

30. Brody, Pueblo, p 47.

31. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 135.

32. Wade, pp 248-254.

33. David Craven, "Realism Revisited and Re-theorised in 'Pan-American' Terms," Third Text 21:3 (May 2007), p 308.

34. Ibid., elaborating on ideas put forth by Terry Eagleton.

35. Ortiz, Tewa World, p 37.

36. Ibid., p 39. Ortiz explains the seemingly asymmetrical relation between the two initiation ceremonies from several different angles which are far too complex to explicate here.

37. Wade, pp 248-54, but see Ortiz, Tewa World generally on the functioning of both *Spanish* officials such as the governor and *Native* officials such as the war chiefs.

38. Ortiz, Tewa World, pp 62-68.

39. Ibid, chapter 4, pp 61-77 and passim.

40. Brody, Pueblo, p 194.

41. Ibid., p. 14.

LABORIOUS ARTS:

EL TALLER DE GRÁFICA POPULAR & THE MEANING OF LABOR IN *LAS ESTAMPAS DE LA REVOLUCIÓN MEXICANA*

Theresa Avila, Ph.D. Student

The *Taller de Gráfica Popular* (Popular Graphics Workshop) or TGP, is a graphic art collective founded in Mexico City in 1937. A recurring theme in the work of the TGP is manual labor, as a result of members' concerns for the living conditions of the Mexican worker. The workshop artists not only participated in various labor movements, they were patronized by key figures and groups associated with labor reform. Representations of labor in the work of the TGP appear, at times, to be a trope for a universal figure that signifies a particular social class or specific political issues. The focus of this essay is the conception and application of the image of labor within the TGP's 1947 portfolio, *Las Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*.

The TGP's intentions were explicitly outlined in their 1937 *Declaration of Principles*.¹ In this document, the members of the collective articulated several things: one, they pledge to preserve and contribute to Mexican national culture; two, they express their willingness to collaborate with various cultural and political groups, regardless of geographic location; and three, they vow to, 'defend freedom of expression and artists' professional interests.' For the TGP, image production was directed by the ideological values informing these guiding principles. Although the development of a personal style was encouraged, common meaning and intent was required. Their mode of evaluating workshop art production was based on a democratic group process termed *críticas colectivas*, or collective critiques. This process of decision-making occurred at weekly meetings and assured broad unity of purpose among members, but not necessarily mechanical conformity. However, the collective work produced by the TGP is also profoundly inflected by the individual interests and ideologies of each of the artists. Members negotiated their own distinct beliefs and opinions with the ideological parameters of the workshop and those of their patrons, even when contradictions arose.

The TGP produced graphic imagery intended to engage, inform and/or educate the people of Mexico, as well as audiences abroad. Political and social issues, both domestic and international, therefore, were the focus of TGP productions. Topics addressed by the group include: Mexico's divided heritage and fragmented history, the poverty and oppression of the Indian population, human rights for the popular classes, defending nationalization of natural resources and the civil liberties for the workers movements.² The legacy of the TGP is of far-reaching cultural significance because its work, which also promoted political and social change on a global level, circulated

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worldwide and involved, as well as impacted, international artists. As such, important to the TGP was the legibility of an image, the relevance of an image to the global predicaments of marginalized citizens and the role of the work in fostering action. Distribution of TGP graphic work was accomplished through a variety of venues, which included the plastering of information on walls throughout the city, publication in news journals, the circulation of public posters and illustrated leaflets and the production of cinematic illustrations, calendars, books and portfolios.

The Mexican Revolution, which took place between 1910 and 1920, is one of the definitive historical events in the Americas, if not of the twentieth century. The popular uprising involved various political and social factions, concerned with issues ranging from instituting a democratic political system to supporting agrarian reform. Beyond the armed conflict, revolutionary demands yielded ongoing national programs that promised to address and fulfill the demands of the Revolution's ideologues. In the 1920s and 1930s alliances between distinct political groups that had at one point been at odds during the Mexican Revolution and the blending of rival traditions began to produce overarching narratives of the Mexican Revolution. As a result, an institutionalized national narrative of the Mexican Revolution emerged, but it was altered by the individual interests and ideologies of each succeeding post-revolutionary presidential administration.

Many of these perspectives both informed and were incorporated into the pictorial production of the TGP, such as in the series of prints dedicated to the Revolution known as *Las Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*. This portfolio consists of eighty-five prints, accompanied by explanatory text, that illustrate Mexican history from the late nineteenth century up to the 1940s. The images depict figures and events associated with various political periods, including the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911, known as the *Porfiriato*), the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), and projects of national reconstruction promoted by post-revolutionary governments. As such, the TGP portfolio memorializes many of the heroes and villains of Mexican history.

A salient narrative in the print series is the institutionalized idea of *La familia revolucionaria*, or revolutionary family, allegedly comprised of such political figures as Francisco Madero, Venustiano Carranza, Álvaro Obregón, and Emiliano Zapata; all of whom can be seen portrayed together in print number 82. *La familia revolucionaria* was a non-existent alliance whose construction was initiated by the post-revolutionary governments including Álvaro Obregón (1920-1924) and Plutarco Elias Calles (1924-1928).³ In reality, each of these figures represents different groups, which

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were in opposition during the Mexican Revolution and whose objectives often remained in conflict after the Revolution, just as they had during the decade long insurrection.⁴ The revisionist unification between members of disparate parties demonstrates the development of a singular, overarching national narrative of the Revolution that developed over time.⁵ The problem of a single narrative of Mexican history, however, is that it implies that Mexico was a unified nation—particularly after the Revolution—which indeed was not the case.⁶

The portfolio is often interpreted or understood as a simple narrative of Mexican history, due to its loosely structured, chronological and linear format. A cinematic-like approach illustrates a sequence of historical events and figures that actually convey the history and legacy of the Mexican Revolution. Concerned with accuracy, the group conducted research and consulted archives before creating the images for the portfolio. For example, the illustrations in this collection directly refer to photographs from the Casasola Photographic Archive and to film stills from movies by Salvador Toscano, all of which were familiar to many Mexicans, as to people elsewhere. The incorporation of recognizable events and figures, in particular as captured by photography, validated the mediated images in the portfolio by enhancing their truth value and thus the perception of historical accuracy.

The version of history, which *Las Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* portfolio presents is directed by the prevailing ideologies of the collective, commemorating as it does the tenth anniversary of the founding of the workshop. Therefore, the album can be read as exemplifying the group's principles and efforts, as well as its contradictions and conflicts. The portfolio illustrates what and who the TGP artists felt were the most significant in Mexican history at the time, thus they present a selective, edited content.⁷ Through the images in the portfolio, the TGP developed a nationally and culturally specific visual language that illustrates reconstructed versions of Mexican history. The revisioning of the national past and present by post-revolutionary leaders and the TGP is made obvious in the sequential relationships of individual prints and the interventionary presentation of the portfolio, which brings to light the juxtaposition of its conflicting themes. Therefore, rather than solely depicting a one-dimensional, linear narrative of the Mexican Revolution, as is typically assumed, the portfolio actually highlights multiple, competing narratives.

The adept marketing and circulation of the portfolio greatly expanded its popularity and widely promoted this distinct narrative of the Mexican Revolution. The TGP made a conscious effort to circulate the portfolio and its images nationally, as well as internationally, which expanded its audience.

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However, the price of the portfolio, at fifty Mexican pesos, equivalent to \$15.00 U.S., would have been prohibitive for the working and rural classes of the time. The price of the portfolio, therefore, effectively limited it to groups with expendable cash, namely the middle and upper classes. Additionally, half of the portfolios were produced with texts in English. The price, combined with the language, implies that the intended market for at least half of the total production was an international one.⁸ To reach the masses in Mexico, who otherwise could not afford the portfolio, the TGP, during the early months of 1949, published individual prints from the collection in *El Nacional*, a widely distributed newspaper. The combination of historical narrative and easy reproducibility made these prints ideal for a wide range of educational and historical publications, ensuring the wide dissemination of its ideological content. The importance, as well as the familiarity, of these images to the larger population was due to their inclusion in many publications that addressed the Mexican Revolution, including texts on Mexican history and art.

Historical events, political figures and social issues make up the content of the portfolio. The theme of manual labor is represented by references to the oppression and injustices faced by Mexico's rural populations during the *Porfiriato*, various figures involved in and activities that were part of the Mexican Revolution, as well as post-revolutionary programs of reconstruction. Thus, representations of labor in the portfolio appear, at times, to be a trope for a universal figure that signifies a particular social class or specific political issues. Images I examine in this essay address a variety of categories of labor, which reveal the multi-layered meanings attached or ascribed to the image of labor, both traditionally and by the TGP. Central to these representations of labor are portraiture, landscape and narrative scenes.⁹

In Mexico, specifically from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, portraiture had been reserved for the representation of religious figures and the institutional elite, such as ecclesiastic officials and nobility. Eventually, the wider affluent classes turned to portraiture as a way of representing, elevating and/or reifying their social status. With the development of photography, portraiture became more common and accessible to the popular classes. The visual vocabulary employed to signify power, leadership and status in photographs, consequently, can be seen as based on the compositional precedents found in painting. Historically, portraiture played an important role in substantiating a subject's social position. The sitter was normally idealized in order to enhance his/her own attributes and/or to construct and represent an identity. Linking the subject to idealized qualities resulted in the pictorial suggestion of nobility. Over time, particular formal elements became standardized, constituting a codified visual vocabulary tied to character and status. The meanings ascribed to certain visual elements, such as physical

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characteristics, gestures, facial expressions, posture, attire, space and other signifiers, therefore, transmitted and constructed a particular impression of the subject. Different messages about a given subject are thus dependant on the formal configuration and genre, and are transformed by the site of display, as well.

Traditional portraiture was staged according to a formula that depicted a subject in a formal and inactive pose. Life-size, full-length representations were the standard format for the elite male portrait.¹⁰ The sitter would be centrally located in the picture space, highlighting his importance as subject and individual, and presented in three-quarter turn. Usually, the subject stands with his legs apart, suggesting an active stance. Faces are economically rendered, resulting in stylized generalizations. The hands are positioned in a variety of ways: placed on hips, resting on a table or chair, holding a staff or other object signifying power, or gripping a sword-hilt, as a gendered, often martial, reference. In most portraits, irrespective of gender, the sitter gazes straight ahead and exhibits a rigid posture, communicating a formal, authoritative attitude. High social status was depicted through such expression of indifference. Contributing to this reading, the perspective of the viewer is low, resulting in the monumentalization of the figure and highlighting his/her importance in relation to the viewer.

The subject of a traditional portrait is often framed within a fairly closed composition. Backgrounds include both indoor and outdoor settings, which also refer to and construct desired notions regarding the sitter's status, activities and abilities. The occasional use of chiaroscuro creates dark and ambiguous interior settings that provide minimal visual information, thus highlighting the subject. When furniture is present, it consists of tables, armchairs and curtains.¹¹ Additional visual elements might include windows and columns.¹² Landscapes, when visible, could also refer to wealth, status, ownership and travel. Animals are sometimes included, such as dogs, which possess hunting or military associations—canines were identified with hunting and preparation for military activities. Horses in equestrian portraits, following an ancient imperial tradition, can be read as symbolizing gendered power, strength and military ability.¹³ In colonial portraiture, text cartouches and heraldic emblems contributed to the recognition of a sitter's noble status by providing personal and familial information. In line with such traditional idioms, similarities can be seen between portraiture and TGP images of labor, revealing that workshop artists drew from earlier languages.

The TGP normally depicted the working class as actively engaged in a variety of tasks. A distance between the subject and the viewer provides relative information about the tools and materials specific to particular types of labor,

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geographic location/quotidian environment of the laborer and social and political issues related to labor. TGP images rarely seem staged, appearing spontaneous and/or realistic in their portrayal of the manual laborer. By reconfiguring these pictorial elements of traditional portraiture TGP artists transform the visual and ideological representation of power, the Mexican Revolution and Mexican laborers.

The first section of the portfolio, which consists of fourteen prints, presents the period of the dictatorship of President Porfirio Díaz—these images are consistently associated with oppression. An example of labor as a form of Díaz' domination is *Trabajos Forzados en el Valle Nacional, 1890-1900* (Forced labor in the National Valley, 1890-1900), print number seven in the portfolio, by TGP artist Alfredo Zalce (Figure 1). The scene and the text refer to actual hard labor camps that existed during the *Porfiriato*, where those who opposed the President were incarcerated. In the foreground, a heavy set, uniformed male figure is seated on a boulder with his rifle across his lap. This soldier, representing the Díaz regime, menacingly stares at a laborer, whom he appears to be vigilantly guarding. The peasant wears ragged

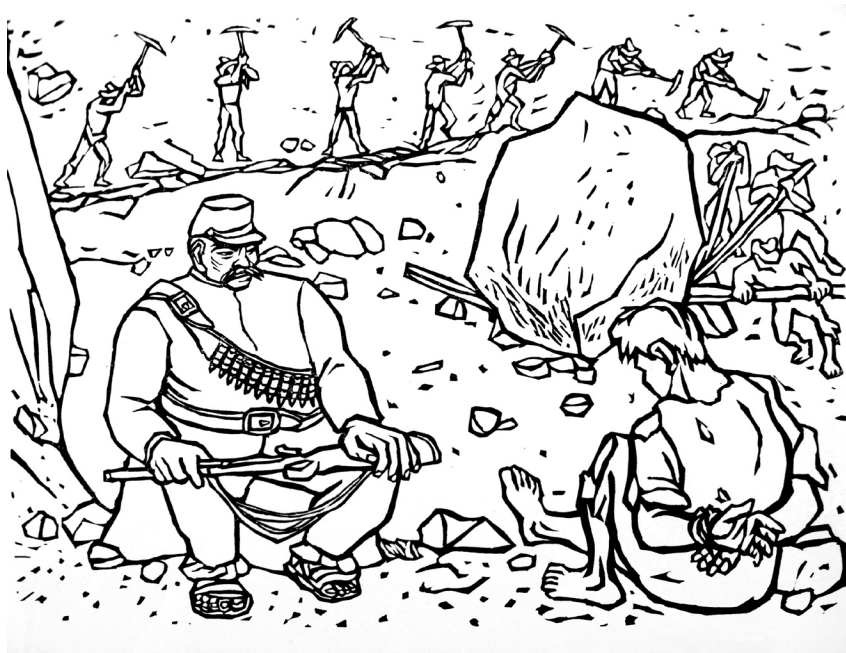


Figure 1. Alfredo Zalce, *Trabajo Forzados en el Valle Nacional, 1890-1900*, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, No. 7 (1947), Linocut (Used by permission of University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque)

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clothing, is barefoot and is seated on the ground with his hands tied behind his back. The prisoner, with his back to the viewer, draws the viewer into the scene, as if s/he were also facing the guard and experiencing a similar fate. In the middle ground, three prisoners struggle as they attempt to move an enormous boulder using wood slabs. The figures are illustrated by outlines, and thus simplified and without detail. Eight other prisoners, located in the background, wield picks and are each at a different stage of a swing cycle as they break the ground. This series of figures, as a representation of the larger population of Mexico, alludes to the hopelessness of their plight and of the nation's dire situation. All of the figures, with the exception of the soldier, are faceless and generalized, possibly a reference to their perception and treatment as worthless and disposable. The disparity of clothing between the soldier and the prisoners communicates, not only the living conditions of the camps, but the disparity between their stations, not only socially but politically.

Zalce embraced the material characteristics of linoleum. Line in his work is minimal and limited to the outlines of figures and objects. The continuous line is very likely due to the soft, pliable quality of the synthetic matrix. Linoleum has no grain and offers a smooth surface, which is highlighted by the artist's choice not to model any of the figural elements, resulting in a very simple and direct image. In turn, the flatness of the composition is emphasized and serves to communicate notions regarding the conditions found at the labor camps, where space was closed, limited and cramped. The composition is framed on either side by boulders, the soldier and by the prisoners in the background, whose bodies imply a horizontal line. Thus, all of the framing devices function as barriers that encircle the prisoners in the camp.

The soldier and boulder are equal in size and mass, and thus mirror each other and balance the composition. The soldier represents the obstinate, menacing, and armed presence that persecuted and victimized Mexico's poor during the *Porfiriato*. The boulder through its scale and placement seems to embody a looming and inflexible presence. The futile act of trying to move the boulder without the proper equipment and little more than sheer physical strength echoes the plight, frustration and grimness that many confronted during *Díaz'* dictatorship. Similarly, the figures in the background can be read either as representative of the multitudes who suffered in the labor camps or as a single figure forever locked in the cyclical act of fruitless labor. The decreasing size of forms within each plane, largest in the foreground and smallest in the background, creates a shallow space and thus a sense of limited depth within the composition. However, the height of the horizon line enhances the

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sense that nothing exists beyond the camp. The visual construction of space evokes the dismal reality that the prisoners faced at these camps. Trying to escape oppressive circumstances, they now find themselves in an even more hopeless situation.

In *La Juventud de Emiliano Zapata: Lección Objetiva* (The Youth of Emiliano Zapata: An Important Lesson) Mariana Yampolsky, a female TGP member, confronts the tyranny of Díaz' regime by scrutinizing the hacienda's role in this system (Figure 2). In the eighth print of the portfolio we see the revolutionary leader, Emiliano Zapata, as a youth wearing calzones, the uniform of the *campesino* or agrarian laborer. Zapata stands in the foreground, on the right side of the picture space, and observes the harsh working conditions and mistreatment of the peones on a large agricultural estate. He takes an active stance: his face is taut as he faces the scene before him, his arms are bent at the elbow, his left hand appears to be in a fist, his torso leans toward the scene, his knees are bent and his feet are spread wide apart. Zapata is anchored in the picture space by what appears to be a stone wall and shrubbery behind him. Both landscape elements are rendered in dark tones and frame Zapata's figure through the contrast of the figure/ground relationship.



Figure 2. Mariana Yampolsky, *La Juventud de Emiliano Zapata: Lección Objetiva*, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, No. 8 (1947), Linocut (Used by permission of University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque)

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A number of activities capture Zapata's interest, beginning with a man and a woman who walk past him. The couple is stooped over due to the heavy weight of their loads. The hunched posture of these two figures leads the viewer into the image. The central plane consists primarily of thickly incised, parallel lines suggesting rows prepared for seeding; they also direct the viewer further into the picture space. Three sets of figures, in profile and silhouetted, are situated in the central plane. The hierarchical scale contributes to a reading of spatial perspective and emphasizes their location in the scene and the order in which the viewer encounters them. The first group is centrally located and is the closest and largest of the three. This group consists of a *cacique* or hacienda boss on horseback, and two laborers, who appear to be tilling the fields. The *cacique* appears about to strike the laborers with a whip. The second group, which is set further back to the right and reduced in scale, is made up of four men. Three of the men slowly walk towards the left while carrying heavy loads, as a figure on horseback follows them.

The viewer, following the directional movement of the second group in the middle ground, encounters the final group of figures, who are seated on a carriage. The carriage is either pulling up to or leaving the palatial home of the *hacendados*, the owners of this large agricultural estate.¹⁴ The high social status of these figures is indicated by their method of transportation and their hats, which identify them as the agrarian elite. The location of the home allows its owners to overlook the estate, embodying the magisterial gaze, which implies not only their endorsement of the abuse that is taking place, but their disregard for the laborers. To the right of the *casa grande* or great house, one finds a number of single room structures or hovels, which most likely function as housing for the *campesinos* in the scene.

This is the first of eight times that Zapata appears in the portfolio. Many images of Zapata are creative depictions and not modeled from photographs. Notably, photographs of the early years of Zapata's life are rare. Poetic license allows Yampolsky to visually produce a very common myth about Zapata as a youth. This biographical anecdote, narrated in the text that accompanies the image, describes Zapata as a child who promised his father that he would take back the lands that had been stolen from his people by the *hacendados*.¹⁵ Depicting Zapata in the traditional clothing of the *campesinos* indicates his intimate association with the agrarian community and their way of life. Zapata, of indigenous heritage, grew up in the village of Anenecuilco in the state of Morelos. Most members of the community were members of the agrarian labor class. The male *campesino* generally wore loose white cotton shirts and pants, which were particularly suited for the physical demands of their activities and environment.¹⁶ As Samuel Brunk has noted, Zapata's parents

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were *campesinos* and the family worked a plot of village land; therefore, we can assume that Zapata may have donned the typical attire while performing this type of labor.¹⁷ However, the Zapata family was part of a small rural middle class of Anenecuilco; as such, and unlike many of his neighbors, Zapata never had to work as an agrarian laborer on haciendas.¹⁸ There are numerous photographs dating from 1910 to 1919 that depict Zapata wearing calzones, which is quite suggestive of the identity politics at work.

In the image, the hacienda is placed at a diagonal to Zapata. This juxtaposition harkens back to Zapata's personal experience with the hacienda system and foreshadows Zapata's role in the rebellion against local *hacendados* and the Porfirian regime. As one of the leaders of the Mexican Revolution, Zapata promoted agrarian reform and regional autonomy in the form of grassroots self-government. Zapata's involvement in the Mexican Revolution began as a fight for the reclamation of land and resources on behalf of the disenfranchised villagers of his hometown, Anenecuilco. Hacendados had been methodically expropriating *campesino* lands as they expanded their agribusiness enterprises. As a result, villagers were displaced and forced to work as sharecroppers or as field hands on the haciendas, often suffering from personal abuses at the hands of the caciques. The wealthy *hacendados*, in contrast, lived opulent lives, while most villagers, subjected to abject poverty and living under horrid conditions, barely survived.¹⁹

This image incorporates elements of traditional portraiture, but also represents a non-traditional subject in the portrayal of Zapata. Although a non-elite, Zapata is placed in the foreground in an active stance. His clothing, associated with the peasantry, indicates low social status and the whole scene is located in a specific outdoor setting. Zapata's off center position within the composition, his profile view and his low social status as a member of the agrarian community contradict the norms of traditional portraiture produced between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, which focused solely on the socio-political elite. Zapata is represented in a shallow space and is the largest figure in the image, thus emphasizing his importance. His scale, in hieratic fashion, foreshadows his destiny and his eventual fight against the deplorable conditions he is witnessing. Zapata's reactive posture and the linear pattern in his face arms, and clothing create tension, reflecting an emotional response of distress and anger, unlike the aloof remoteness of earlier elite portraiture. The silhouetted figures are not meant to suggest a social distance between them and the main figure, rather, they signify Zapata's identification with the *campesino*.

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Generally, in elite portraiture, the status of the subject is echoed through surrounding property and objects of wealth or education; in this case, the depiction of land and labor reflect the oppressive hacienda system and its abuse of power. Additionally, rather than situating Zapata in a closed space, Yampolsky renders an expansive distance that stretches across the middle ground and reveals the type of labor being performed and the working or living conditions of the laborers. The difference in the activities performed by the figures within the scene, their distinct clothing and the opulence of the *hacendados'* home compared to the poor housing conditions of the *campesino*, clearly communicates the class-based inequality. The horses in the image, too, signify the social stratification on the hacienda and the harsh distinctions between overseer and *campesinos*.²⁰ Silhouettes in portraiture are typically linked to attributes of individual character.²¹ The use of the silhouette as a pictorial frame for the laborers reduces them to beasts of burden alluding to their status in Mexican society during the Porfirian regime as comparable to that of animals.

The abuse of the *campesino* is ubiquitous throughout the first section of the portfolio; in this print, for instance, the *campesinos* are whipped. Similarly, in the second print of the portfolio, an Indian is beaten by a soldier, wielding a saber. The act of violence in this image refers to the forced removal of Yaquí from their land, which was then turned over to a U.S. corporation, also referenced in the image. The visual phrases of figures carrying heavy matter on their backs and the tilling and harvesting of the land, as seen in print eight, are reiterated in print three. This repetition of visual references to labor on haciendas emphasizes the magnitude of abuse during the *Porfiriato*, as well as establishes a symbolic language evoking the plight and conditions suffered by Mexican *campesinos* on haciendas.

Also documented and illustrated in the portfolio are issues related to the mining industry in Mexico. In 1906 a strike by Mexican miners, who were working for the Green Consolidated Copper Company of America in Cananea, Sonora, protested the unequal treatment of Mexican citizens and United States citizens working at the Cananea mine. Mexicans were paid far less than their U.S. counterparts, as well as being routinely assigned to more undesirable and dangerous posts. The exchanges between workers, employers and U.S. forces were intense and escalated into open violence. Print eleven of the portfolio, *La huelga de Cananea: Los obreros Mexicanos reclaman igualdad de derechos frente a los obreros yanquis* (The Cananea strike: The Mexican workers demand rights equal to those of the American workers), by TGP artist Pablo O'Higgins, refers to the initial collision between striking Mexican miners and the men defending the Green Consolidated Mining Company (Figure 3). The image text describes the event and states that

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Manuel M. Diéguez and Esteban Baca Calderón, among others, organized the strike. The text explains that the uprising was violently met by forces, which included American military troops. Afterwards, the leaders of the movement were imprisoned.

In the upper left corner of the composition, five vertical geometric forms can be seen. These forms can be read as smoke stacks that allude to buildings that were part of the industrial mining complex. The left side of the image contains a group of miners who are marching towards a mining company building, led by the only two legible figures in the image, who may represent Diéguez and Calderón. The other miners, located directly behind the kneeling figure, are depicted by silhouettes and linear patterns that suggest an anthropomorphic mass; their intensity and motion are conveyed through the gestural lines that illustrate them. The two legible figures' attire is distinct—they wear small brimmed hats, button down shirts, and closed leather shoes. The figure on the left is crouched and holds a sign in his left hand that reads, 'UNIDAD OBRERA IGUALDAD;' (LABOR, UNITY, and EQUALITY). The figure at the center of the image is at the head of the miners group. He appears to have stopped directly before the entrance to a mining company building



Figure 3. Pablo O'Higgins, *La huelga de Cananea: Los obreros Mexicanos reclaman igualdad de derechos frente a los obreros yanquis*, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, No. 11 (1947), Linocut (Used by permission of University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque)

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marked by a wide rectangular doorway with a sign that states, 'GREEN CONSOLIDATED MINING COMPANY'. The miner holds a pick in his right hand and waves what appears to be a flag in his left hand. Finally, numerous bayonettes project through the entrance and are aimed, defensively, at the miners.

Following traditional pictorial idioms, the lead miner, in a rigid full-length pose, is centrally placed in the foreground with feet separated. The axe not only functions to signify the laborious tasks that mining requires; it is also a weapon. The miner is in the act of swinging the axe and striking the door. Although the face is framed by a thick outline, it is not idealized. Instead, it is shaded via the application of multiple lines that suggest the soot covered faces of miners. Dissimilar to most traditional portraiture, the lead miner is depicted in profile view. The architectural and industrial elements in the background, instead of highlighting the company's or the miners' accomplishments, are an oppressive presence. In this instance, the subject of labor is raised through protest, as a proactive demonstration of workers' rights. The image directs attention to the de-nationalizing policies of *Díaz'* regime and its practice of serving and protecting foreign interests over those of Mexico's working population. This event, along with a series of others, identifies one dimension of the social unrest in Mexico which motivated the revolution.

Following the armed conflict of the Mexican Revolution, labor remained an important issue and thus continued to be an important theme within the portfolio's narration of Mexican history. Rebuilding the nation involved a variety of activities, including the (re)construction of architectural structures and the development of educational programs for the rural populace, both of which are enacted in print sixty of the portfolio, entitled *Escuelas, caminos, presas: Progama y realización de los gobiernos de Álvaro Obregón (1920-1923) y Plutarco Elias Calles (1923-1928)* (or Schools, roads, dams: Programs and realizations of the governments of Álvaro Obregón (1920-1923) and Plutarco Elias Calles (1923-1928)), by Alfredo Zalce (Figure 4). The title and image directly reference contributions made by Obregón and Calles during their distinctive presidencies in the areas of building and education. During Obregón's presidency, federal spending on education and the construction of rural schools and public libraries increased.²² During Calles' administration 1,000 new schools were added to the federal government's rural education system.²³ In addition to listing accomplishments of both men's administrations, the text labels their governments as revolutionary, which raises the issue of post-revolutionary governments and their relationships to the Mexican Revolution.

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In the image, women and men are represented as equally involved in the betterment of society. The style of each figural group within the image is distinct. The two women in the foreground are illustrated in great detail and are well modeled. They evoke costumbrista paintings and prints in terms of the different social types they represent. Each is a member of the working class: the student is a rural laborer and a mother, and the instructor is an educator; yet, both are engaged in the labor of the mind.



Figure 4. Alfredo Zalce, *Escuelas, caminos, presas: Programa y realización de los gobiernos de Álvaro Obregón (1920-1923) y Plutarco Elías Calles (1923-1928)* *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana, No. 60* (1947), Linocut (Used by permission of the University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque)

The student is seated and concentrating on the material before her as the teacher stands behind her and guides her reading. The seated woman, with child on lap, is draped in what can be assumed to be a traditional indigenous shawl, yet there is no indication of regional specificity; as such, she may be an exemplar that stands in for all indigenous female workers. The student's hair is pulled back and most likely in braids. With her right arm, she embraces her child and with her left, she mimics the gestures of the instructor. This depiction of the female student multi-tasking perhaps suggests the improbability, or at least the challenges facing many women pursuing their education, due to familial and other domestic responsibilities.

The instructor, through her stance and pose, creates a hierarchy between herself and her students in terms of social position. Her blouse is urban in design with its collar and buttons down the front. She wears her hair in a bun, which is a modern hairstyle typical of professional women. The attire

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and hairstyle of the instructor not only distinguishes her from her students, but it also evokes the secularization of education and the engagement of urban activist teachers in rural schools, as part of the education programs of the reconstruction phase of the 1920s. The instructor's facial expressions and hand gesture present her as invested in her efforts to teach.

Neither figure in the foreground is depicted in full-length. Although the student is centrally positioned, what is also centrally framed and pushed to the forefront is the educational material on the table. This compositional emphasis focuses our attention on the central theme of the image: the education of the indigenous. The women in the middle ground echo the actions, as well as the style of dress and hair of the student in the foreground, but they are illustrated with less detail. Although there are men in the background, they are depicted as laborers, underlining the absence of men from the group of students, suggesting gender-specific activities, as well as the reality of the demands of other responsibilities that interfered with participation in the educational programs.

The scene in the background suggests the concept of *action pedagogy*, learning through doing, which was adopted by the Ministry of Education (SEP) during the Calles administration. For instance, construction trade was taught to *campesinos* through the construction of their own school buildings, according to plans supplied to them by the SEP.²⁴ Thus, the men who appear involved in various tasks of construction can be interpreted as engaged in a process of educational self-empowerment, as they erect a school building. The fact that there are no regional or geographically specific references may very likely speak to the widespread nature of Obregón's and Calles's educational programs. Additionally, the active task of construction alludes to the theme of nation building.

All of the figures in the image are consumed by the activities set before them, so that none are looking at or engaging the viewer. Instead, the viewer is positioned as observer or witness to what is taking place, namely the fulfillment of revolutionary ideals and the achievements of government. On the surface, the image reads as a celebratory presentation of reconstruction projects in general, and education programs in particular, which were enacted by Obregón and Calles. Another interpretation, however, is that this is an illustration of governmental idealism, rather than everyday reality, since the *campesinos'* experience and everyday demands to survive often prevented them from taking advantage of all that the governmental post-revolutionary projects offered. One has to consider the impact and price of educating and *modernizing* the rural, indigenous population of Mexico: were the needs and concerns of the people were taken into consideration and being attended

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to through these projects? Rural, federal schools were administered by government officials with the intent of promoting citizenship and social efficiency, and ultimately, as an avenue for the integration of rural communities into Mexican mainstream society. The successful implementation of such a program would also create a power base in the countryside.²⁵ In his discussion of the Callista education project, Andrae Michael Marak asserts that, '*campesinos* who spent the vast majority of their time merely trying to earn or produce enough to eke out a living,' were also expected to attend night classes, as well as perform civic duties. Marak observes that in the end the inability of *campesinos* to accomplish all that was set before them resulted in the failure to drastically alter the *campesino* lifestyle, thus contributing to the perceived shortcomings of Calles' program.

By mid-century, Miguel Alemán, Mexico's president between 1947 and 1952, directed an administration that was focused on the industrialization of the country. In relation to Alemán's interests to industrialize Mexico, the TGP emphasize, in the text for print eighty-four, that in order for Mexico to build financial independence, it must independently industrialize, process, and manage its own natural resources. *La industrialización del país* (or The industrialization of the country) by TGP artist Arturo García is a statement aimed at Alemán's program of industrialization (Figure 5).

In this print, a dark and shadowy factory looms in the background. The negative impact of industrialization, such as pollution, is signified through the stylized treatment of the sky. The middle ground contains a crowd of figures wearing



Figure 5. Arturo García, *La industrialización del país* Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana, No. 84 (1947), Linocut (Used by permission of the University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque)

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urban attire and the *obreros'* (urban laborer) uniform. The group resembles an angry mob as they march towards the factory—the intensity of their emotions is emphasized through exaggerated gestures and expressive lines. The frustration of the group culminates with the figure in the foreground clutching a machete as he points and marches towards the factory. What are the people of Mexico—or more correctly put—what are the TGP members angry about in terms of Alemán's administration and his industrialization project for Mexico? Alemán's push for capitalist industrialism in Mexico was intertwined with and dependent on strengthening relations with the United States. This undermined much of what had been gained as part of the socialist reforms that were fought for during the Mexican Revolution and pursued by post-revolutionary administrations.

Visual elements in this image seem to quote earlier prints in the portfolio. In print eleven, *La huelga de Cananea...* a similar tenebrist treatment of the factory was applied to the mining industry building in the upper left corner. Another similarity between the two prints is the illustration of a focal figure tightly gripping a tool as a weapon. In print thirteen, *La huelga de Río Blanco: Los Obreros Textiles Se Lanzan a la Lucha, 7 de Enero de 1907* (The Rio Blanco Strike: The Textile Workers Jump into the Struggle, January 7, 1907), by Fernando Castro Pacheco, the body language of the striking textile workers is similar to that of the crowd in print eighty-four and print eleven; in each image the crowd is angry and has been provoked by injustice to rebel. Both the position of print eleven in the portfolio sequence and the location of the viewer in the print, at the head of the striking miners, allude to the beginnings of revolution. In print eighty-four, however, the artist presents the figures in backside profiles that draw the audience into the crowd. Significantly, this particular image at the end of the portfolio sequence is a statement about the unending cycles of government corruption in Mexico and the cyclical nature of revolution.

Post-revolutionary leaders of Mexico maintained their allegiance to the Mexican Revolution in order to assert legitimacy, yet each did so in distinctive ways. Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), for instance, enacted progressive socialist programs that were based on the demands of the Revolution, including land reform and the nationalization of resources, while Miguel Alemán insincerely evoked the Revolution, as a political device, even as he opposed many revolutionary programs. The TGP artists, when creating the *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* portfolio, were aware of counter-revolutionary changes made to the Mexican Constitution of 1917 by Alemán. In December 1946, Alemán's administration passed 39 new laws that reversed land reform, privatized education, limited free expression and undermined existing labor organizations.²⁷ Article 27, which originally called for land reform and

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nationalized Mexican soil, was changed to protect private landholders from further land reform, thus allowing them to increase holdings and to revoke uncultivated lands from *ejidatarios*' (collective farm owners/workers).²⁸

Las Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana portfolio references the national narratives of the Mexican Revolution constructed by post-revolutionary governments, but it also represents the manner in which government participated in the Revolution. In so doing, the print collection inevitably incorporates the TGP's critique of past and present government administrations. The portfolio can be understood as a direct response to Aleman's actions, in particular his revision of the Mexican Constitution and his interests in aligning himself with the United States. The juxtaposition of Cárdenas's program of land reform (print sixty-seven) and the nationalization of resources (print seventy-four) form an implicit critique of Alemán's new project for Western style modernization. Additionally, the incongruous facets of Calles' administration are noted in the juxtaposition between the promotion of education (print sixty) and the Cristero Rebellion (prints sixty-one through sixty-four). Calles entered into a power struggle with the Catholic Church regarding constitutional provisions for secular education, prohibition of monastic orders and the disentanglement of the Church's properties, which resulted in the Cristero Rebellion.²⁹ The groupings of prints that refer to Calles make evident the complicated nature of political history and its players, defying a simplified account of the post-revolutionary period.

Any single image from this important portfolio, as well as the portfolio as a whole, can be read as an icon of remembrance.³⁰ Images commemorate events and figures of Mexican history; however, what is consistently highlighted are the social injustices and atrocities committed against and suffered by indigenous groups and the working class, both in the past and present, from the political perspective of the downtrodden and their supporters. The recurring portrayal of labor generates an iconography of Mexican labor that addresses issues ranging from oppression and revolution, reconstruction and industrialization, to cultural production and national or regional identity. Thus, as illustrated in the TGP portfolio, the image of the agrarian and urban laborer became a symbol embodying national narratives revolving around history, culture, development and social justice.

¡QUE VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN!

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NOTES:

1. For an in-depth examination of the 1937 declaration, see Susan Valerie Richards, Imaging the Political: El Taller de Gráfica Popular in México, 1937-1940, dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2001, 35-38.
2. For a discussion of the various subjects addressed by the TGP see Hannes Meyer, Taller de Gráfica Popular: Doce Años de Obra Artística Colectiva (Estampa de México, 1949) 2-36.
3. Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (University of Texas Press at Austin, 2001). Benjamin asserts (69) that it was Obregón that coined the term, 'Revolutionary Family'. However, he also states (74) that Callistas, 'pressed for the unification of all revolutionaries.' Additionally, he communicates that the Mexican Congress made November 20, 1920 an official, 'day of national celebration.' Benjamin also writes (70) that that it was in the 1920s that Zapatismo was, 'accorded revolutionary status in official memory.' We are also informed (73) that during the Calles administration the national government assumed greater responsibility for commemorating la Revolución.
4. For instance, each had a distinct position on the agrarian issue, which related to their social class: Madero and Carranza were from elite families and themselves *hacendados*, Obregón was from the middle class and an urban laborer, and Zapata was a rural *campesino*.
5. Benjamin (59) in his book implies that a type of Master Narrative of the Mexican Revolution developed and that a unified Revolutionary Family emerged, and that both were accepted by those included. However, Art Historian David Craven asserts that although various groups after the Revolution did form alliances, based upon similar political and/or economic interests, their overall distinct ideological positions prevented any *true* unification between groups like the Maderistas, Villistas, Carranzistas, Obregónistas, Zapatistas, Callistas and members of the Communist Party. David Craven, Personal Communication, February 2008.
6. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (Verso, 1991) 6-7. Anderson defines nation as, 'an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.' He goes on to write, 'It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.'
7. In relation to the issue of the changing narrative of Mexican history see the 1960 TGP portfolio *450 Años de Lucha: Homenaje al Pueblo Mexicano*, which consists of 146 prints that incorporates many images from the *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* portfolio. This later series of prints takes a different approach to Mexican history and the Mexican Revolution, resulting in the modification and sometimes the elimination of figures and episodes represented in the earlier portfolio. These alterations in the TGP's version of Mexican history reflect the group's new membership and the change in the Mexican government's administration, which results in the rewriting of history.
8. Hannes Meyer recorded, 'Of the total edition of 550 portfolios and 46,750 prints, 2/3 were sold within a year. 10% were presented to progressive cultural organizations all over the world.' Meyers, Taller de Gráfica Popular: Doce Años de Obra Artística Colectiva, XV. Helga Prignitz asserts the price made the portfolio accessible. However, she also informs that in the first year only 200 of the portfolios were sold

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and in the second year only 30 sold. Helga Prignitz, El Taller de Gráfica Popular en México 1937-1977 (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1992) 113 and 116. Meyer appears to be exaggerating if Prignitz is accurate. Twenty percent commission was given to each person that personally sold a portfolio. Additionally, it appears as if the portfolios were sold in non-sequential order and that individual prints from the portfolio were sold. For sales records, see Taller de Gráfica Popular Records, Reel 6, Box 1, Folder 51.

9. Specifically, portraits of the Hapsburg kings produced between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will serve as the basis for any discussion of a traditional and symbolic visual language of portraiture. Political portraiture of Spanish monarchs, produced between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based on the models implemented by Titian. Titian is important in the production of portraits because he established a composition, which became the model not only in Spain, but throughout Europe. The impact and spread of Titian's model is addressed by Patrick Lenaghan, Images for the Spanish Monarchy, Art and the State, 1516-1700 (The Hispanic Society of America, 1998) 11.

10. Joanna Woodall, Portraiture, Facing the Subject (Manchester University Press, 1997): 2.

11. Julián Gállego assesses the significance of tables in portraits of the king. Also see Gállego for discussion of armchairs in the portraiture of rulers. Julián Gállego, Visión y símbolos en la pintura española del Siglo de Oro (Catedra: Ensayos Arte, 1984) 218-220; 226-227.

12. A window behind a model relates him to affairs and activities of the outside world. It could also refer to the public persona of the subject. Columns erected in a portrait were usually monumental in size and only partially visible. The presence of a column evoked classical rulers and heroes in an attempt to assign their attributes to the monarch.

13. When mounted by the king the horse is transformed into a traveling throne, decorative dressing further advances this idea. The illustration of the monarch's equestrian skill and control over a horse metaphorically represents his ability to govern his subjects and control his realm. Jesús María González de Zárate, "El retrato en el barroco y la Emblemática: Velásquez y La lección de equitación del príncipe Baltasar Carlos," Boletín del Museo Camón Aznar XXVII (1987) 29. Lenaghan (21) explains that riding a horse, hunting, and military activities are linked by their demands of similar faculties. Gállego (1984, 228-229) notes the significance of the horse in representations of kings.

14. In regards to which hacienda may be referred to within the image, Sotelo Inclán informs that Zapata lived and grew up near the Cuahuixtla Hacienda. Jesús Sotelo Inclán, Raíz y razón de Zapata 1943-1944 (1970) 425. However, the people of Anenecuilco had trouble with the owner of the Hacienda Hospital and Chinameca Hacienda who was aggressively taking land, animals and water. Enrique Krauze, El amor a la tierra, Emiliano Zapata (2000) 34-35.

15. Sotelo Inclán writes (425-426) that at the age of nine Zapata witnessed the destruction of a neighboring village, Olaque, as part of an expansion project by hacienda owner Manuel Mendoz Cortina of the Cuahuixtla Hacienda. He also informs that a myth arose in relation to this event in which Zapata sees his father in tears, in response to the annihilation of the town of Olaque. Zapata asks his father, "why do they take our land?" and "why do we not fight against them?" Zapata swears to his father that when he grows up he will make these men return the land taken.

16. Calzoneras during the Spanish colonial period were "a species of wide pants opened on the outer sides, with a double set of silver buttons running down its length from the waist to the foot, the opening through which may be seen the wide pants worn underneath." Alvarez del Villar, Men and Horses of Mexico: History and Practice of Charrería (1979) 35. A relationship between the calzoneras of Spanish colonial hacienda owners and Morelos' *campesino* white cotton calzone is reasonable to assume. However, resources dealing with *campesino* attire are scarce and I have been unable to explore the topic in depth.

17. Samuel Brunk, ¡Emiliano Zapata! Revolution and Betrayal in Mexico (University of New Mexico Press, 2001) 6. It is commonly believed that Zapata did not wear the white cotton calzones or manta of the agricultural laborers of the south of Mexico. It has generally been accepted that the image of

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Zapata wearing calzones is part of a myth visually constructed by Diego Rivera. Rivera illustrated approximately 40 images of Zapata, those of him wearing the calzone include: a 1927 illustration in Fermin Lee's publication, which depicts Zapata on horseback holding a banner that reads, "Tierra y Libertad;" and two images painted between 1929 and 1930 at Cortez' Palace in Cuernavaca, one at the end of the cycle infamously depicting Zapata and a white horse and the other painted overhead on an arch shows Zapata laying on his side.

18. John Womack, Zapata and the Mexican Revolution (Vinatage Books, Random House, 1970) 6.

19. For an indepth history of land issues and oppression in Morelos see Sotelo Inclan, 97-439. Or for a brief summary of late nineteenth-century agrarian-based industries, the hacienda system, and the impact on and oppression suffered by the local people as a result of both, refer to Womack, 43-52 or Brunk, 9-13.

20. As integral component to the hacienda system, the horse also alludes to the hierarchical social structure of Mexico. The depiction of a monarch mounted expressed dexterity, military skill and control suggesting the ability to govern. Jesús Maria González de Zárate, "El retrato en el barroco y la Emblemática: Velásquez y La lección de equitación del príncipe Baltasar Carlos," Boletín del Museo Camón Aznar XXVII (1987) 29. See also Lenaghan, 21. In the Americas the horse signifies the conquest and hierarchical social structure established in New Spain by the conquistadores and early Spanish settlers. As the rural areas were inhabited by the mestizos, the horse became a primary tool for these charros to perform their chores associated with livestock and agriculture. Between the sixteenth and mid eighteenth centuries, the indigenous of the Americas were not allowed to own, ride or use a horse. For the history of horses in the Americas see Jose Alvarez del Villar, 11-27.

21. See Shearer, "What is a Portrait?," Portraiture (2004) 33.

22. Alicia Hernández Chávez, Mexico: A Brief History, trans. Andy Klatt (University of California Press, 2006) 240.

23. Andrae Michael Marak, The making of modern man: the Callista education Project, 1924-1935, dissertation, Department of Latin American Studies, University of New Mexico, 2000, 310.

24. Marak, 310.

25. See Marak, 117 and 146.

26. This figure can be read as a Mexican version of French Libertè, and a direct reference to Delacroix's 1830 painting, "Liberty Leading the People."

27. See Stephen R. Niblo, Mexico in the 1940s: Modernity, Politics, and Corruption (Scholarly Resource, 1999) 83-237.

28. For a discussion outlining amendments made by Alemán's regime to Article 27 see Niblo, 183-188. For a discussion of the impact of Alemán's changes to the Mexican constitution see James M. Wechsler, "Propaganda Gráfica: Printmaking and the Radical Left in Mexico, 1920-50," MEXICO and Modern Printmaking: A Revolution in the Graphic Arts, 1920 to 1950, (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006) 75.

29. Hernández Chávez, 245. Chávez further explains, "The government responded by ordering the immediate and universal application of the constitution. State governors ordered the expulsion of foreign priests, and local authorities closed Catholic schools, convents, and orphanages. A Catholic resistance took hold and formed the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty. . . . Calles implemented a constitutional provision that gave the federal government authority to regulate religious practices.'

30. Luis Camnitzer gave a talk entitled "Art and Dishonor" given at Site Santa Fe on November 13, 2007 as part of a lecture series in conjunction with the exhibition *Los Desparecidos*. Camnitzer discussed his work "Uruguayan Torture Series," thirty-five etchings that provide potent visual testimony to the horrors of war. Within this context Camnitzer spoke of art as icons of remembrance that inform about and/or keep alive the reality of suffering that accompanies dictatorial governments and war, which history so often omits or denies.

ANXIETY AND REMEDIATION: THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF KERRY SKARBAKKA

Corey Dzenko, Ph.D. Student

In his recent photographic series, contemporary performance-photographer Kerry Skarbakka has been producing color photographic images that depict the artist frozen in a moment of falling or ascending. He stages these scenes and, after performing the action in front of the camera, Skarbakka then intervenes in the final image, digitally erasing all evidence of the climbing gear and other machinery that he may have used to hold himself aloft. Thus, he mixes the media of photography, digital art and performance throughout his process. Naming his recent series *The Struggle to Right Oneself* (2002-2004), *Constructed Visions--The Struggle Continues...* (2005), and *Life Goes On* (2005), Skarbakka uses his hybrid process to communicate a sense of anxiety and to address unknown outcomes in both his personal history and in contemporary culture.

Somewhat like a movie director, Skarbakka goes *on location*, traveling to specific sites to make his photographic images. He titles images that have been photographed outside of the United States according to their geographical location, in order to emphasize that he has actually traveled to these places.

The images, *Sarajevo* (2002), and *Croatia* (2003), illustrate this practice. Skarbakka names works that he created in the United States according to what he thinks about during the process or after he sees an image. Such titles range from *Trestle* (2003), and *Stairs* (2002), which identify the generic setting of the image, to more referential titles, such as *Plato's Cave* (2002), a work he titled for what he calls the, 'theoretical members of his audience'¹ (Figure 1).



Figure 1, Kerry Skarbakka, *Stairs* (2002), c-print. Image courtesy of the artist.

Once on location, Skarbakka performs his falls multiple times to

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achieve a single image by combining his knowledge of mountain climbing and martial arts so that he lands safely. The height of a specific fall determines the type and amount of climbing gear that he will utilize. For example, in creating *Interstate* (2003), Skarbakka leapt from an overpass, landed on an embankment and rolled to safety without using gear. However, to create *Naked* (2002), he constructed an armature in a bedroom and used lightweight climbing gear to stage his action. To create *Con—mporary* (2005), Skarbakka leapt from the rooftop of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Due to the taller height of the building, Skarbakka hired Chicago Flyhouse, a professional theatrical rigging company that, 'construct[ed] a cantilever atop the museum, strung with two 2,000 lb. wires that controlled his fall.'² Skarbakka's physical involvement in this process requires an assistant to release the shutter of the camera, which Skarbakka has positioned; falls are then repeated many times to have a variety of options from which final images are chosen.

Skarbakka's entire operation is undertaken to produce a still photograph. But his photographs call for a willing suspension of disbelief and rely on our historical understanding of photography as a recorder of reality. Within the mechanical basis of the photographic medium, light reflects off of an object and is recorded onto a light-sensitive surface. In *Studio* (2002), the light is reflected off of such things as Skarbakka's figure, his golden shirt and blue pants, the ladder from which he fell, the wall behind the ladder and the contents of the studio space. These objects are directly related to their representation in the photographic image. Roland Barthes called this objective recording of light characteristic of, 'that-has-been,' noting that what is seen in the image was in front of the camera and reflected light back to it at the time the shutter was released.³ Because of its mechanical basis, photography provides us with a sense of immediacy in relation to its subject matter. It tends to erase its own mediating presence, and it is this transparency of the photographic medium that allows viewers to look through the medium to the subject and assume that the subject existed in reality just as it appears in the image.

Contrasting photography with painting in a review of the 2003 Tate Modern exhibition, *Cruel and Tender: the Real in the Twentieth-Century Photograph*, Amanda Hopkinson noted that, "The salient characteristic of a photograph is its unbreakable link to the real world: whereas a painting has first to pass through the creative imagination of the artist, a photograph is taken of something essentially beyond the photographer's creative control."⁴ This underlying assumption of photographic transparency, as stated by Barthes and Hopkinson, has been described as naïve, but photography maintains its resistance to let go of its direct connection to the real. Skarbakka capitalizes on our willing acceptance of the immediacy of the photographic document and the impact of his imagery largely depends on it.

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Using digital technology to alter his photographs, Skarbakka erases any evidence of the harness or climbing gear that he used in creating his suspended pose. His alterations involve scanning exposed film and modifying each image to varying degrees. After the digital alterations are complete, a photographic negative is created from the digital file and a final chromogenic print is produced from this negative. Skarbakka's digital alterations are subtle and not immediately apparent, resulting in imagery that, although startling, appears to directly reference actual events that naturally transpired in the physical world.

Through the use of digital technology, Skarbakka's photographs become an example of remediation, a characteristic of new media discussed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, in which newer media evince characteristics of older media. For example, computer graphics remediate the appearance of photorealism just as video games remediate the appearance of cinema, the latter, ultimately functioning as *interactive films*.⁵ Bolter and Grusin assert that the process of remediation, or the way in which, 'new media refashion prior media forms,' involves two strategic aspects: the desire for transparent immediacy and hypermediation.⁶

Immediacy, as noted earlier, is the quality of the medium, in this case photographic, that erases its presence. This transparency allows viewers to look through the medium employed to the subject and to occupy the same space as the original viewer, perceiving the representation as if it was a form of reality. Within the history of Western art, achieving the effect of immediacy has been a goal for various artists and thus a defining characteristic of this tradition. Renaissance paintings, for example, were expected to function as windows through which one could look and view an illusory extension of our world. This objective was accomplished by employing single-point and atmospheric perspectives, and by minimizing the surface appearance of brushstrokes, thus ideally erasing the presence of the artist. Ultimately, later technological developments, such as photography, film, and television automated this effect of immediacy by mechanically and chemically reproducing perspectival space and its subjects.⁷ In contrast to immediacy, hypermediacy calls attention to the medium. Bolter and Grusin point to the technique of photomontage, as an example of hypermediacy, such as Richard Hamilton's, *Just What is it That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (1956). Photomontages are created by combining elements from various photographs into a pastiche, which draws the viewer's attention to the image or work surface. Even when viewers attempt to view this kind of work with a desire for immediacy and attempt to see a cohesive pictorial space, their attention will be directed back to the process or construction of the image.⁸

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Skarbakka's altered images remediate photography and illustrate both immediacy and hypermediacy. In *Naked*, for example, Skarbakka provides viewers with an image of a naked man frozen in midair as he falls or perhaps ascends above a bed. As he struggles against the pull of gravity, a map that is hanging on the wall curls away and also begins to fall, paralleling the man's movement. The improbable positioning of the man and the overall quality of exaggeration, gives clue to the construction of the scene and hypermediates it. But the lack of actual evidence to the scene's construction joins with the viewer's belief in the transparency of the photographic medium, facilitating the reading of the image as imbued with a sense of immediacy.

The fact that Skarbakka performs for each image is an important component of his art. The falling action of Skarbakka's performances developed from the tradition of body projection, a type of performance art that involves the artist's use of his or her own body in different types of physical activity. Examples of this approach include Yves Klein's *Leap Into the Void* (1960), and Peter Land's *The Staircase* (1998), both of which involve body projection and, more specifically, the act of falling. A point of interest is that Skarbakka's work has often been compared to Klein's *Leap Into the Void*. Although he does not credit Klein's work as a direct influence, he admits that Klein's well-known image may have been in his subconscious; however, when talking about the body projection aspect of his work, Skarbakka references Land instead.⁹ Land's *Staircase* is a video projection of the artist falling down a flight of stairs set to Muzak circus music. Land's work frequently refers to the theme of failure and *The Staircase* involves the failure to *negotiate space*, resulting in the fall.¹⁰

Traditionally, photography has been used to document performance art events, given the assumption that the medium's transparent immediacy provides evidence of an action that is otherwise momentary and exists only in its duration. In her essay, *The Ontology of Performance*, Peggy Phelan discusses the relationship of performance art to its documentation. She emphasizes the temporary nature of performance by pointing to the dichotomy between presence and absence. The presence involved in performance art is the body of the performer, and as an art form, she notes, 'performance's only life is in the present.' Documents of performance, such as photography, video and descriptive writing, only bring the memory of the performance into the present, not the performance itself, which remains absent.¹¹

In an analysis of Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*, Rebecca Schneider has also discussed the relationship of performance to the present versus the relationship of the document of a performance to the past and future. Klein leapt from the roof of a building to illustrate his ability to levitate and fly, a stunt undertaken in order, 'to establish his credibility as the highest initiate and *Messenger of the*

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Age of Levitation.¹² He documented this leap by photographing it. Through the combination printing of two photographic negatives, the evidence of Klein being caught in a tarp held by a dozen members of his judo club is not presented to viewers in the final image. According to Schneider, Klein's performance was, 'not for a present audience but for a photograph that would record an event that had taken place at a prior time for a future audience.'¹³ Skarbakka's images function in a similar way. Except for the Chicago event, the activity of his performance is not ordinarily available to a larger audience. He performs so that a future audience may view and interpret the record of his action.

However, if Skarbakka's interest only involved the final photograph as a staged image, the creation of the document would not require the time, travel, danger, experience and/or body projection involved in his process. Rather than going through the trouble of participating in the physical action and repeating it many times just to arrive at a single image, he could very well have created the illusion of falling by constructing the images completely with digital technology. But Skarbakka's art requires both the performative action and the end product of the altered document. Its impact is directly tied to the authenticity of his physical presence before the lens and the conviction carried by the photograph as a transparent document, which bolsters the viewer's response. Knowing Skarbakka's entire process adds a sense of validity to his work and allows for a dynamic understanding of the ambiguity of his images as they shift between transparent documents of his body projection and digitally altered photographic constructs.

Skarbakka's background provides insight into his ongoing work. He was raised in the Bible Belt of Tennessee where he lived with his mother, stepfather and brother, who lived according to Christian fundamentalist beliefs. Skarbakka spoke in tongues by the age of seven, participated in Bible debate teams and traveled to Europe for two summers as a teen missionary. Skarbakka states that his strict Christian upbringing did not provide him with any, 'constructive information about how to deal with life;' instead, he claims that it left him full of fear and anxiety.¹⁴

In contrast, Skarbakka spent many summers with his biological father where his father's parenting style differed greatly from that of his mother and stepfather. Skarbakka's father would promote drinking and *getting laid* to the teenage Skarbakka, which undermined the boy's Christian fundamentalist indoctrination, leading to bouts of depression.¹⁵ He eventually left Tennessee and escaped from his background by joining the United States army; however, he had been forced to enlist by his mother and stepfather who thought it was his duty as an American citizen. His two years in the military resulted in further depressions and drug use, which, he stated, 'led to an expansion of my mind in a very ungodly way,'

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and then to a final breaking away from his years of fundamentalist brainwashing. Skarbakka states that his work, *The Struggle to Right Oneself*, developed partially from a, 'life of anxiety, worry, and tension [that has] contributed to a certain sense of loss of placement and foundation.'¹⁶

Moving beyond the personal, the content of Skarbakka's imagery also responds to a more widespread sense of contemporary crisis and political anxiety, a feeling linked to the loss of cultural stability and the falling global reputation of the United States.¹⁷ He explains it thus:

*[Society is] driven by greed and we have a leader (George W. Bush) who thinks he is ordained by the Western God to bring our ideology to everyone else. This is not right and there is nothing I can really do about it. I am continually stripped of the ability to control what my government does or how the rest of the world views us.*¹⁸

Skarbakka relates his chosen action of falling to the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who, 'described human existence as a process of perpetual falling, and it is the responsibility of each individual to catch ourselves from our own uncertainty.'¹⁹ In the photograph, *Winter Roof* (2004), Skarbakka appears to slip on a pile of snow on the roof of a house and is in danger of falling to the ground. The image suspends Skarbakka's body in a moment of unknown resolution, and it is left up to the viewers to decide whether or not this figure will catch himself.

The pervasive sense of anxiety in Skarbakka's art is shared by a wide variety of contemporary artists, as could be seen in the 2006 Whitney Biennial. The Biennial's curators, Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne, chose to title the exhibition for the first time in its history. The title, *Day for Night*, was taken from a 1970s François Truffaut film, as a reference to the Hollywood movie technique of filming night scenes in daylight by using a blue filter. This technique is called *La nuit Americaine* in French, which means, 'the American night'—an idea of the darkness overshadowing the world's politics that the Whitney curators hoped to underscore. This choice for the Biennial title, then, metaphorically referenced the, 'sense of foreboding, dread, or anxiety which emerged as a recognizable theme from the hundreds of artist studios, that the curators visited.'²⁰ Vergne noted that the anxiety-based art is, 'not necessarily political art but it's art made politically.' While it does not contain overtly political images, it is art with a *political flavor*.²¹ Although Skarbakka did not participate in this Biennial, his work nevertheless fits Vergne's description of art with political overtones. Skarbakka's images do not contain overtly political messages but instead reflect his personal reaction to the current political situation. The unknown outcome of Skarbakka's interaction with gravity parallels the insecurity of contemporary political events.

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The ambiguity inherent in Skarbakka's images has led to misunderstandings in the news media. *Con—mporary*, is one of the resulting images from the performance titled, *Life Goes On*, which was staged at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and to which the public was invited to be included in the images (Figure 2). *Con—mporary*, shows a man in a business suit falling, or possibly ascending, in front of the mirrored surface of a tall building. Cameramen and onlookers stand on a large staircase that leads up to the building's entrance. The body of one of the cameramen blocks the 'TE' of the word 'CONTEMPORARY' that hangs above the entrance doors on the overhang. While Skarbakka's falling action and the timeliness of his production of these images was influenced by the scenes of falling men and women during the September 11th attacks on the Twin Towers, Skarbakka's series was not an attempt to recreate this event. Instead, the plight of the victims provided, 'a catalyst for a photographic exploration of the idea of control, an important idea in Skarbakka's own life and one he believed both spoke to the human condition and had political resonance.'²² Skarbakka was struck by the fact that by deciding to jump, the victims took their fate into their own hands—taking control while at the same time abandoning themselves to a final outcome.²³

Media coverage of the event in Chicago, however, led to distortions and a misreading of Skarbakka's intentions. Some members of the public felt the work too closely resembled the World Trade Center's falling victims. New York Governor, George Pataki, described Skarbakka's performance as, 'an utter disgrace.'²⁴ New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, called the work, 'nauseatingly offensive.'²⁵ Due to the negative responses posted in the media, members of the public reacted personally against Skarbakka and sent him death threats, even though he stated that he did not intend to disgrace or mock the victims of 9-11 in any way.²⁶ Editorials called for Skarbakka to apologize for his performance. He responded by saying that he was sorry for all of the misunderstandings of the work, but the resulting headline simply read that Skarbakka said he was sorry, implying that he had apologized for his actions. On his website, Skarbakka wrote, 'The images shown in the news coverage are not my images and the quotes attributed to me are either not my words or placed completely out of context. It's all too sad that these misrepresentations have upset so many; however, I believe my work can speak honestly for itself.'²⁷

Though it is possible that Skarbakka may continue to produce images that deal with control and falling, in 2005, he began to work on another series titled, *Fluid*, in which he photographs himself submerged in water in a variety of locations. This series, funded by a Creative Capital Foundation Grant, participates in a discussion of environmental issues, alluding to human relationships with water, disease, natural disaster and the effects of global warming on the rising oceans. With the help of hired divers, Skarbakka arranges to have his underwater

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Figure 2, Kerry Skarbakka *Con—mporary* (2005), c-print. Image courtesy of the artist.

performance photographed; he then digitally combines multiple photographs into final images.²⁸ As with the images of his falling body seemingly suspended in mid-air, Skarbakka's process creates an atmosphere of crisis by juxtaposing the accepted immediacy of the photographic document with his physical involvement and performance.

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NOTES:

1. Plato's Cave refers to Plato's allegory involving a group of prisoners in a cave who could see only shadows cast on the wall, not real forms. Plato was attempting to illustrate that thinking and speaking about reality can occur without the presence of actual forms. "In Plato's Cave" is also the title Susan Sontag gave to part of her book *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1973), 3 - 24, in which she replaced the shadows of Plato's allegory with photography in order to critique our culture's use of photographic images to understand reality.

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2. Jon Yates, "Being a Fall Guy All Day Long; Relax, It's Only Art," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 June 2005, <http://proquest.umi.com/> (accessed February 9, 2006).
3. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 77.
4. Amanda Hopkinson, review of *Cruel and Tender: The Real in the Twentieth-Century Photograph*, *Tate Modern, Aperture 174* (Spring 2004): 12.
5. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 28, 47.
6. Bolter and Grusin, 273.
7. Bolter and Grusin, 24-25. Photography's mechanical and chemical nature seemed to conceal both the process and the producer so much that supporters of the medium had to argue for its acceptance as art rather than science.
8. Bolter and Grusin, 34-39.
9. Kerry Skarbakka, interview by author, March 21, 2006.
10. Jan Estep, "Why Failure is so Funny, or, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Gallery," *New Art Examiner 26 no. 2* (October 1998): 20-25.
11. Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.
12. Jonathan Fineberg, *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being, 2nd ed.* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 227.
13. Rebecca Schneider, "Solo solo solo," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin Butt (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 30.
14. Tori Marian, "Why is this Man Going to Jump off the MCA?" *Chicago Reader*, 10 June 2005, 28.
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27. Kerry Skarbakka, "Statement about Life Goes On," <http://www.skarbakka.com/menuframe.html> (accessed January 28, 2008).
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“In our banal little world, where far too much living consists of staring at a computer screen, making low-grade decisions, art is pretty much the last bastion of insoluble mystery and radical transport. What’s art for? What it’s always been for. To get you out of here.”

Excerpted from, *What Is Art For?*
Waldemar Januszczak,
LONDON TIMES, OCTOBER 29, 2006

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: **SITE LINE**

Mary Goodwin

Site Line shifts the gaze of the traditional landscape panorama away from the horizon towards the ground. By turning the visual orientation of the landscape downwards, these images merge documentation of the land with its abstraction.

The photographs in Site Line carry the viewer to the various sites by acting like windows on the world, but where is the viewer going? What is the final destination of this *radical transport*, and why should the viewer travel there?

These images map places where a change of state, a transition, has occurred. The events behind these transitions range from the historically significant to the deeply personal. As the photographs focus on very localized sections of the earth, they delineate both a physical and a cultural geography; Site Line traces the tangible locations of intangible moments that define the history of the land and its inhabitants.

Sometimes evidence of events remains on the ground after the fact, but more often the transitions that lie beneath the surface of these images leave behind no impression visible to the camera. A seemingly uncomplicated image of the ground is often, through the written word, invested with an unexpected consequence.

Site Line creates a tension between the ambiguity of what is visible in the images and the concrete knowledge that something important happened here. Site Line, in its combination of visual detail and narrative text, questions how much can be truly known about place through the photograph.

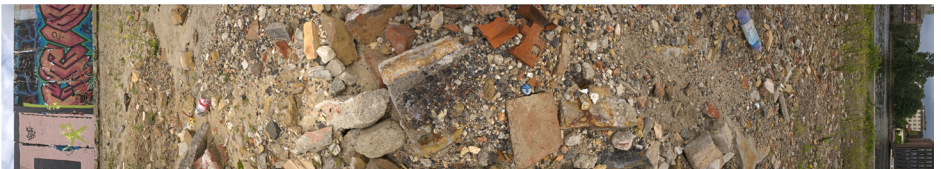
BERLIN WALL/RIVER SPREE

BERLIN, GERMANY

The former East-German government erected the Berlin Wall in 1961 as its *anti-fascist protection barrier*. It stood as a divider between countrymen and families, East and West, until November 9, 1989. Almost 200 people died trying to get past the Wall and into the West during this time.

I sat on the Berlin Wall the night it fell and was one of the first few hundred to jump over the wall into no-man's land without official permission. On that night, I was witness to the re-birth of a unified nation.

In today's Berlin, the euphoria of those nascent hours has largely disappeared, as has the Wall. The longest stretch of the Wall that still stands, the *East Gallery*, where this picture was taken, is about a half-mile long. It seems that this land exchanged one master for another: this historic site, once no-man's land between the Wall and the River Spree, is now endangered by developers.







YOU CAN/CAN'T HEAR ME NOW OUTSIDE BERNALILLO, NEW MEXICO

Like many in our connection-fed culture, I have my cell phone on all the time. I've never been in another place like New Mexico, where there is so much space that one can drive through where there is no cell phone connection. In this image, half of the picture shows where I can make a call, and the other half where I cannot. It's the line between help and being stranded.

The feeling of isolation that results from not being able to call may be one of the few remaining vestiges we have of the Wild West.

NORTH/SOUTH SIDES OF THE STRIP **BRANSON, MISSOURI**

Branson, Missouri is called the Sin City of the Middle West. It has a strip, just like Las Vegas, but here the comparison between the two cities ends. There is no gambling in Branson, and entertainment is limited to the family-oriented variety; however, sidewalks line both sides of the strip, making it accessible to pedestrians and other creatures of the land. I walked the strip in Branson looking for sexy razzle-dazzle but found none and went to bed early with the TV on full blast. How many dreams of release—besides mine—have died crossing the strip in Branson?







FEAR/FEARLESS (BRIAN'S FIRST DIVE)

SANTA ROSA, NEW MEXICO

It was late on a Friday afternoon at the Blue Hole in Santa Rosa. Brian, nine years old, was there with a school group of about 20 of his friends. They had been trying to get Brian to dive all afternoon long, but he was too afraid. Now it was time to go, and all of his friends were out of the water: ready to leave, and watching.

For some reason, they were not going to let Brian go without jumping. An adult stood with him on the diving site high above the water, another waited in the water directly in his path. Brian wore a life vest, just in case. Still, he cried and shook with fear. After many minutes of painful indecision, he finally cinched his nose closed and jumped, feet first.



**LIFE/DEATH FOR
GONZALO BRENNER**
OUTSIDE ESPANOLA,
NEW MEXICO

Gonzalo Brenner, 29, was driving alone in the dusk hours of August 19, 2002, when he lost control of his car and swerved off the road, flipping the car. He died before being discovered on the side of Highway 285.



**ROCKIN' LAS AMÉRICAS:
THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF ROCK
IN LATIN/O AMERICA**

Pacini Hernández, Deborah; Zolov, Eric; Fernandez-L'Hoeste, Hector, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); 420 Illustrations. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

Reviewed by Tijen Tunali, Ph.D. Student

This invaluable volume focuses on the history of Rock music in the Americas and presents a multi-vocal account consisting of 15 articles: four of them focusing on Mexico, two on Brazil and one each on Cuba, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, Argentina, Puerto Rico and Chile. The contributors come from different disciplines, such as Anthropology, History, Literary Studies, Sociology, Ethnic Studies and Ethnomusicology. Two essays are written by non-academics: the essay about the Guatemalan Rock group, *Alux Nahual* by Paolo Alvarado, who was the founding member of the group, and Tere Estrada, who is the co-writer of the article on women rockers in Mexico. The book also includes an appendix of Rock music in Latin America from 1940 to 2000.

In this comprehensive anthology, the authors argue that while early Rock n' Roll posed some degree of threat to the social order in the U.S., in Latin America, the political and social implications surrounding this foreign phenomenon was quite different. Rock music was seen by many as the representation of the, 'cultural, military and economic imperialism,' of the United States during a time when the U.S. was engaged in forceful political, as well as military intervention in Latin America. The main stand of this volume is that with its anti-establishment message, Rock eventually threatened the stronghold of the authoritarian regimes that held sway in the Americas. Hence, for many of the leftist Latin American intelligentsia, it was a threat to the integrity and survival of local musical forms.

The main contribution of this volume is that it presents its readers with a thorough overview of local Rock music production and reception in various Latin American states, while simultaneously addressing overarching questions of musical difference, which are embedded in the cultural—often racial and social—differences of the global music market. The authors are careful in placing Rock music

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in the context of local social and political phenomena, such as the Cuban revolution, student protests in Mexico and the authoritarian regimes of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala. The contributors are very successful in balancing the contradictions inherent in any discussion of global dynamics and national contexts.

The general approach of the book is to trace the development of the perception of Rock music from a hegemonic cultural expression to one that becomes counter-hegemonic. We learn that, like the rest of the *developing* world, the Rock n' Roll phenomenon was first embraced by middle and upper class Latin American youths, for whom it was a symbol of modernity. Given their privileged economic positions, they had access to records, instruments, radios and record players and were thus able to become familiar with this musical idiom. In contrast, local Rock bands were preferred by Latin American governments, as a statement against *imperialistic* Anglo Rock music; thus, local musical groups received state subsidies in most Latin American countries. With the cultural and social changes that affected the globe in the late 1960s, this was an era of counter-culture and the uprising against authority in Latin America, as well. Middle class youth embraced these developments and a Rock movement started developing throughout Latin America in opposition to apolitical and government-supported local music. The fans of Rock soon gained the potential to influence millions and gather hundreds of thousands of people at music festivals; however, with the exception of Cuba, from the 1980s on, the power of music culture shifted entirely into the hands of commercial music industries.

In their introduction, Hernández, Zolov, and L'Hoeste compile an anthology of Rock music across the Americas, from the beginning of the sixties to the end of the nineties. They reframe the relationship of Rock' n' Roll to the ideologies of capitalist consumerism and state intervention in music through Latin America during this time. Moreover, they compare these developments to those in the U.S., but they also compare the historiography of Rock in authoritarian contexts, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala with that of Mexico and Cuba. In the article, *Between Rock and a Hard Place*, Hernández and Garófalo interview academic authorities of Rock music in Cuba, such as Humberto Manduley López, author of *Rock in Cuba*, and González Moreno, who wrote the book *Rock en Cuba*. They build on the turbulent experience of Rock music during

ROCKIN' LAS AMÉRICAS

the first 20 years of the Cuban Revolution. The authors evaluate the contradictory position of Cuba's Revolutionary government of banning music in English to government-supported Rock bands. With a smoothly written narrative, López describes the measures people took to listen to Rock music, which was broadcast from the U.S., and how the Cuban Rock bands survived underground.

In *La Onda Chicana*, historian Eric Zolov demonstrates, with the example of a Rock band called *La Revolución de Emiliano Zapata*, that bands, such as this one, were able to manipulate the PRI's official rhetoric of revolution and articulate their own understanding of cultural revolution. Another invaluable article, *A contra corriente: A History of Women Rockers in Mexico*, offers a survey of women rockers in Mexico from Gloria Ríos to Julieta Venegas. The authors, for the first time, incorporate women into the histories of Latin American Rock. Building upon interviews with women rock singers such as Laura Abitia and Norma Valdez, the authors Baby Batiz, Kenny Avilés, and Zappa Punk, re-write the 40 year history of Mexican rock from the perspective of rockeras. They also situate their argument in relation to the changing attitudes of women musicians within the broader social phenomenon of *La Onda* movement.

The collection of articles in this volume tells the tragic stories of a musical idiom that, although suppressed and manipulated, found a way to survive in the most ominous of conditions. As George Yúdice points out in the Afterword the reason those musical expressions were repressed was because they were transgressive. This meticulous study demonstrates that Rock music in the Americas, with its flouting aesthetics and power to mobilize, still presents a possibility for negation, no matter how much and for how long it has been repressed and/or comodified.

TIJEN TUNALI is a Ph.D. student of Modern Latin American Art at the University of New Mexico.

LOS DESAPARECIDOS:

REVIVING THE MEMORIES OF THE DISAPPEARED,

Exhibition curated by Laurel Reuter, North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks; SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico; October 13, 2007–January 20, 2008.

Reviewed by: Shana Klein, M.A. Student

SITE Santa Fe's exhibition, *Los Desaparecidos*, resembles a funerary monument. Installation pieces, photographs, and videos become like tombstones that memorialize the thousands of intellectuals and resistance workers who *disappeared* during the dictatorial regimes in Latin America of the 1970s. Gallery visitors encounter works by more than 15 Latin American artists from countries, such as Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil and Guatemala. Although the underlying theme of the exhibit may make it seem morbid, it is undeniably inspiring. The artists who are represented have produced works of art that reflect their attempts at coming to terms with the political disappearances of thousands of individuals and with the corruption evinced by their governments in the recent past. The title, *Los Desaparecidos*, refers to those people who were abducted, exiled, tortured, and/or killed in some cases, by state terrorists. While all of these artists seek justice by exposing the widespread disappearance of people in their home countries, some artists are particularly effective in capturing the despair and devastation caused by tyrannical regimes during the last century.

The untitled installation by artist Arturo Duclos dramatically conveys how a murderous regime ravaged the country of Chile (Figure 1). Duclos constructed an 11x17' Chilean flag entirely of human femur bones, which he placed end to end to form an outline of the image. The reference to his nation's flag is bleak and clearly speaks to the fact that Chile was a dictatorial state, one whose citizens were persecuted, tortured and put to death during Pinochet's administration in the 1970s. Yet, while this skeletal flag produces an unforgettable image, it achieves its effect at some risk. Although the human bones were donated to the artist by various hospitals, Duclos' installation may potentially offend some viewers. Since this piece is meant to memorialize the victims of torture and murder in his country by using actual remains, it might also be read as desacralizing the human body through the grotesque display of human remains. Simultaneously, however, the carefully constructed display reframes the bones in a manner that recalls the importance of relics in Catholic belief and ritual. This alternate reading counters the perception of desacralization by symbolically rendering them as sacred.

LOS DESAPARECIDOS



Figure 1, Installation view of *Untitled* (2005); 66 human femurs and screws; 11.5x16.9 ft., Arturo Duclos (Chile), Courtesy of SITE Santa Fe.

The artwork of Argentine artist Fernando Traverso, like that of the Chilean, Duclos, also provides viewers with an unusual memorial piece (Figure 2). This work is titled, *Urban Intervention in the City of Rosario*, and consists of a collage of photographs, which depict a series of bicycle silhouettes that Traverso spray-painted onto various walls and street corners in Rosario, Argentina. His eerie silhouettes draw attention to the absence of those who disappeared because his spray-painted bikes are abandoned and unoccupied by their cyclists. Traverso explains that, 'you knew someone had been taken away if you found his abandoned bicycle.'¹ Since bicycles can also be symbols of innocence and childhood, Traverso's silhouettes remind us that the warped Argentine government also abducted innocent children during the violent years of 1976-1983, otherwise known as the Dirty War. The photo-collage, however, loses some of the immediate impact of the original, site-specific, spray-painted bicycles via the mediation of the photograph. If Traverso had spray-painted a bicycle silhouette directly onto SITE Santa Fe's walls, local gallery-goers might have experienced a more visceral sense of loss and abandonment.

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Argentine artist, Marcelo Brodsky also created a memorial out of a childhood object: his eighth-grade class portrait. In *The Companions*, Brodsky asked his classmates at a reunion to write directly on his class portrait about their current lives and whereabouts (Figure 3). Responding to the absence of many of his classmates, Brodsky then circled the faces of students in the



Figure 2, *Urban Intervention in the City of Rosario* (2001); Photograph. Fernando Traverso (Argentina), Courtesy of SITE Santa Fe.

photograph who were forced into exile during the Dirty War. He also crossed out the faces of students who have since disappeared or been killed. Brodsky's artwork makes a powerful statement that emphasizes how an unbelievable number of people, nearly 30,000, disappeared during the Dirty War in Argentina. His installation compels viewers to think about how their own class portraits might look in comparison.



Figure 3, *The Companions* (1996); large photographic intervention; 46x69 in. Marcelo Brodsky (Argentina), Courtesy of SITE Santa Fe.

LOS DESAPARECIDOS

Instead of focusing on the political victims of disappearance, Iván Navarro's *Criminal Ladder* is a commentary about those individuals who actually committed the acts of torture and abduction in Chile (Figure 4). In his installation, Navarro presents an escape ladder, which hangs from the ceiling to the floor and has the names of Chilean criminals emblazoned on each of its wire rungs. Out of all the criminals who are highlighted on the rungs of this ladder, only a few have served time in prison. Navarro recorded these sentences in an accompanying binder to demonstrate both how incredibly lenient those punishments have been and how comfortable some of the prisoners are in their luxurious reformatories, which include such amenities as television and internet access. Navarro implies that the criminals represented on the escape ladder have metaphorically escaped their punishment. By pairing the escape ladder with a lawyer's briefcase, Navarro's installation

is a stinging critique of how the Chilean legal system still has not brought justice to those who were victimized during the Pinochet regime.

In his installation piece, *Project for a Memorial*, Colombian artist, Oscar Muñoz, projects a series of video images that show an artist's hand in the act of painting portraits of people who were killed by violence in 1970s Colombia (Figure 5).

As the artist's hand re-traces these portraits on a sidewalk, the faces dissolve within moments as the paintings evaporate under the hot sun. Since their fleeting



Figure 4, *Criminal Ladder* (2005); fluorescent light bulbs, electric conduit, metal fixtures; 1.5x3x30-38 ft. Iván Navarro (Chile), Courtesy of SITE Santa Fe.

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Figure 5, *Project for a Memorial* (2005); installation of 5 synchronized videos; 15 in. screens. Oscar Muñoz (Colombia), Courtesy of SITE Santa Fe.

faces can never be entirely seen, Muñoz highlights how we will never have the ability to fully know the people who have been abducted. Although the memories of the victims' faces are ephemeral, the underlying message of *Los Desaparecidos* suggests that remembering their struggles will help prevent future disappearances.

Like the artists featured in *Los Desaparecidos*, the Mothers of Plaza De Mayo in Argentina are trying to recover the identities of those who are missing (Figure 6). SITE Santa Fe includes a video on this Argentine organization, which was started by mothers of abducted children. Today, the Mothers of Plaza De Mayo is made up of human rights activists who help unite children who were missing with their families. Though this organization is integral in aiding the disappeared, SITE Santa Fe's video on the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo is tucked away in a gallery corner where it is easily overlooked. Nevertheless, this video is important to the exhibition because it provides insight into how people today are coping with the aftermath of the political disappearances of their family members and friends.

Lawrence Weschler, who wrote about the disappearances in *The New Yorker*, believes that Latin American societies are continuing to find ways of,

LOS DESAPARECIDOS



Figure 6. *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*. Courtesy of Peter and Jackie Main.

‘reclaiming the disappeared and honoring their presence in a manner that still allows room for, and indeed creates room for the living.’² Perhaps the artwork of *Los Desaparecidos* is accomplishing the same goal by honoring the dead and helping people come to terms with the legacy of these tumultuous years. Whether it is with human femur bones or with a paintbrush, these artists honor the missing and the dead by remembering them, as they try to reconcile their countries’ bloody pasts. Ultimately, *Los Desaparecidos* is an important exhibition to see and experience because, as it suggests, remembering the injustices of the past can change the way we act in the present and future. More importantly, the exhibit also reminds us to be active and to be critically engaged with our political system in order to prevent such atrocities from ever reoccurring.

SHANA KLEIN is a first year M.A. student of Native American Arts and Architecture at the University of New Mexico.

NOTES:

1. Fernando Traverso, “Fernando Traverso” in *Los Desaparecidos Grand Forks: North Dakota Museum of Art* (2006), 58.
2. Lawrence Weschler, “Preface” in *Los Desaparecidos Grand Forks: North Dakota Museum of Art* (2006), 11.

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