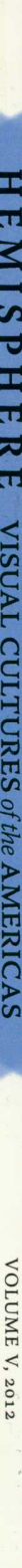




HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

VOLUME V, 2012



HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

VOLUME V, 2012

CHIEF EDITOR:

Elaine Higgins, Ph.D. Student

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Annick Benavides, M.A. Student

Gay Falk, M.A. Student

Regina Hamdy, M.A. Student

Heather Kline, M.A., Treasurer

Christian W. Olsson, M.A. Student

Emmanuel Ortega, Ph.D. Candidate

FACULTY ADVISOR:

Catherine Zuromskis, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

All members of the Editorial Committee are affiliated with the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico.

ADVISORY BOARD:

Kirsten Buick, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

David Craven, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

Ray Hernández-Durán, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

Margaret Jackson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

Libby Lumpkin, Ph.D. Professor of Art History and Criticism, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

Fernando Lara, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Art History and Architecture, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin

Dana Leibsohn, Ph.D., Priscilla Paine Van der Poel Professor of Art History, Department of Art, Smith College

Rachel E. Spaulding, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, UNM

Catherine Zuromskis, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Art History, UNM

EDITORIAL ADDRESS:

Department of Art and Art History

MSC04 2560

1 University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

Email: hmsphr@unm.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The publication of Volume V would not have been possible without funding from the following sources at the University of New Mexico: The Graduate Art Association, Department of Art and Art History, College of Fine Arts; Kirsten Buick, Chair of Department of Art and Art History, College of Fine Arts; Jim Linnell, Interim Dean of College of Fine Arts and Bill Gilbert, Acting Dean of College of Fine Arts with funds from the Dean's Circle.

© 2012 Hemisphere. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the express permission of the Hemisphere Editorial Committee.

ISSN 1945-1482

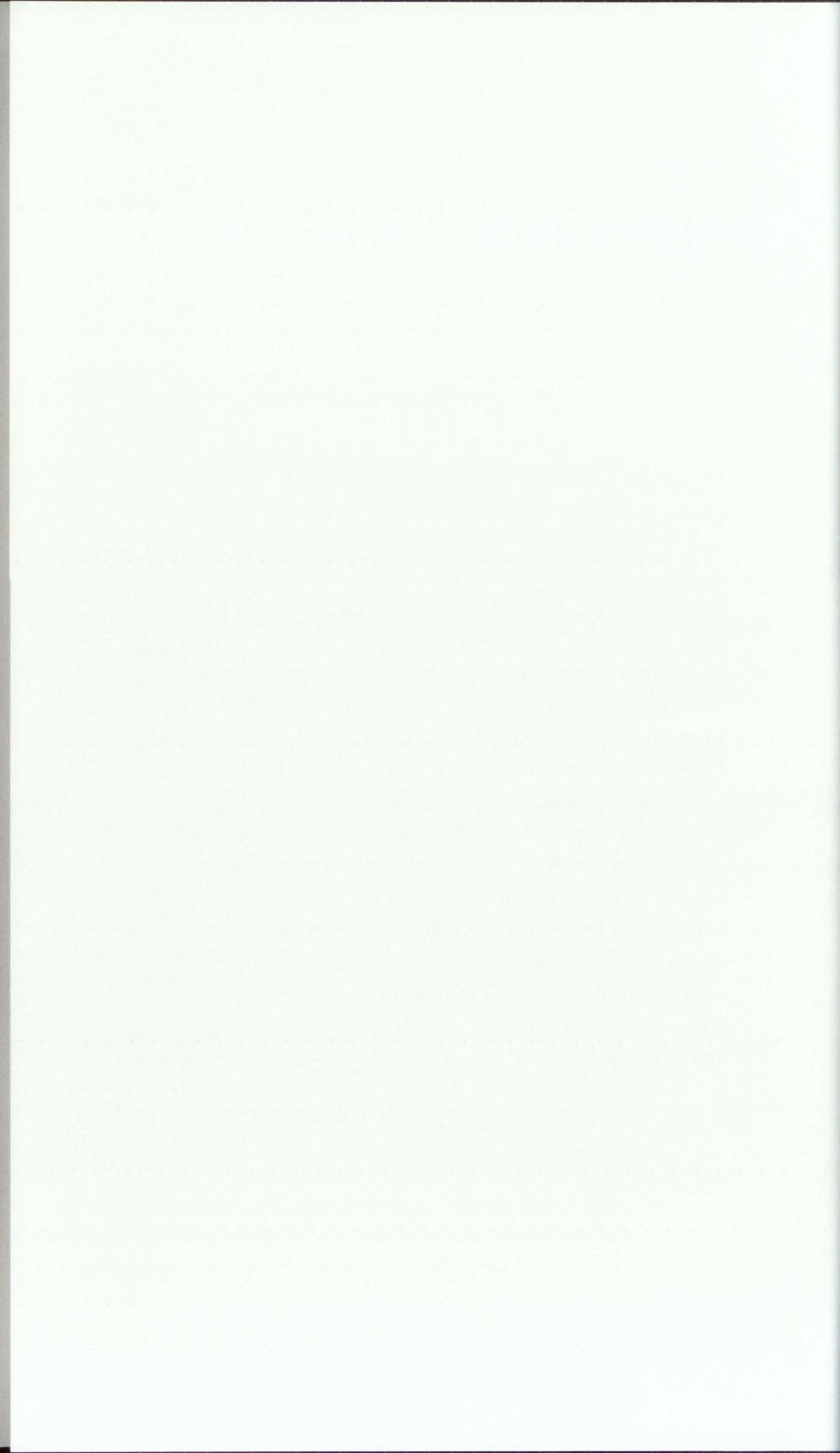
HEMISPHERE

VISUAL CULTURES *of the* AMERICAS

VOLUME V, 2012

Hemisphere is an annual publication produced by graduate students affiliated with the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico (UNM). *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. Through the production of *Hemisphere* students promote their educational and professional interests as they gain first-hand experience in academic publishing. Although the inaugural issue highlighted essays, reviews, and artwork by graduate students from the Department of Art and Art History at UNM, subsequent editions consist of work submitted by graduate students at other universities in the United States. The journal welcomes and will continue to accept submissions from authors at other institutions in and outside of the United States. A call will be sent out each year to invite submissions for the next issue.

Subscriptions are not available at this time; however, we welcome donations to support the production of *Hemisphere*.



In Memory of
PROFESSOR DAVID LEE CRAVEN

The fifth volume of *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. David L. Craven, for all of his time and dedication to the Department of Art and Art History as well as *Hemisphere*.



Dr. David Lee Craven, Distinguished Professor of Art History at the University of New Mexico, died Saturday, February 11, 2012, at the age of 60 in Albuquerque, NM. He had been on the faculty at UNM since 1993. David was a man of letters and a champion for social causes, beloved by all who knew him for his keen intellect, genuine sense of compassion and desire to help others. Recognized by his peers as one of the most informed and incisive art historians in the world, David's immense knowledge and the publication of ten books and more than 150 articles that have appeared in twenty five different countries and translated into fifteen different languages led to his recognition as a world authority in the fields of twentieth century

Latin American art, post-1945 art from the United States and critical theory, as well as the philosophy and methods of art history and visual culture. He earned his Ph.D. in Art History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1979. He received a Master's degree in Art History from Vanderbilt in 1974, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in European History from the University of Mississippi, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1972. Fluent in Spanish, German and French, David traveled the world as a visiting professor to give lectures in more than 100 universities and museums in the United States and internationally including Russia, Mexico, Spain, Germany, England and France. He was preparing for the publication in 2012 of six new articles on art history subjects in the United States, Mexico and England when he died.

His art history books are respected as authoritative including the most widely read, *Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910–1990*, which was nominated for a 2004 Mitchell Prize, as well as *Diego Rivera as Epic Modernist*, *The New Concept of Art and Popular Culture in Nicaragua Since the Revolution in 1979*, *Poetics and Politics in the Life of Rudolph Baranik*, *Abstract Expression as Cultural Critique: Dissent During the McCarthy Period*, which received broad critical acclaim, and *Dialectical Conversions: Donald Kuspit's Art Criticism*. Among the numerous awards and recognitions David received during his career included a *Medal for Excellence* by the state of New York in 1991 for his work at State University of New York/Cortland College, a *Faculty Acknowledgement Award* at the University of New Mexico in 2003, and in 2007 he was chosen to be the *Rudolf Arnheim Professor* at Humboldt University in Berlin and was elevated to the rank of *Distinguished Professor* at the University of New Mexico. David won more than fifteen major national and international Fellowships and Grants from organizations including the *American Council for Learned Studies*, the *National Endowment for the Arts*, the *National Endowment for the Humanities*, the *Rockefeller Foundation*, the *Ministerio de Cultura de Espana*, and the *Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes de Mexico*.

Born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on March 22, 1951, to Peggy and Albert Craven, David lived with his family in Houston, Texas and then in Clinton and Oxford, Mississippi, where his father taught at Ole Miss. His parents recognized an early aptitude for art and David began art lessons in the fourth

grade, leading to his decision to pursue art history as his career. Also an avid sportsman and athlete, David was the quarterback of the Oxford High School football team and won MVP honors in the 1969 season. He also helped his high school basketball team earn a place in the state championships.

DAVID L. CRAVEN MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP

A Fellowship in memory of Dr. David L. Craven has been established for graduate Art History students at the University of New Mexico Department of Art and Art History.

**PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS INDICATING THE GIFT
IS IN MEMORY OF DAVID CRAVEN TO:**

Department of Art and Art History

c/o UNM Foundation

Two Woodward Center

700 Lomas NE Suite 108

Albuquerque, NM 87102

TO GIVE ONLINE:

<https://www.unmfund.org/online-giving/fine-arts>

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

TABLE of CONTENTS

- 12 **Modeling Motion:
Brazilian Art Against Stasis**
Matthew Q. Breatore, *Ph.D. Candidate,*
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
- 33 **Reinterpreting Moche Warfare:
Regionality and Multiple Ideologies in
Moche Fineline Painting**
Ethan Cole, *Ph.D., Department of Art History,*
University of California, Los Angeles
- 54 **Painting a Cultural Landscape:
The [in]visibility of the Convent of Corpus Christi,
Mexico City 1719–1775**
Amy Hamman, *Ph.D. Candidate,*
Department of Art History, University of Arizona
- 77 **A Burning Desire:
Los Angeles as Femme Fatale**
Tatiana Reinoza, *Ph.D. Candidate,*
Department of Art History, University of Texas at Austin
- 93 **Artist Spotlight:
In Space, In Time**
Ryan Henel, *M.F.A. Candidate, Art and Ecology,*
Department of Art and Art History, University of New Mexico
- 105 **Exhibition Review:
Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World**
Annick Benavides, *M.A. Student,*
Department of Art and Art History, University of New Mexico

MODELING MOTION: BRAZILIAN ART AGAINST STASIS

MATTHEW Q. BREATORE, Ph.D. Candidate,
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Motion, like air, often remains unnoticed until one attempts to exist without it. It is so fundamental to not only human existence, but existence as such, that we struggle to understand its most basic implications. But there are those who have tried. Three artists, all working in the same location at roughly the same time, engaged in artistic dialogue with movement, each in his or her own unique way. The three Brazilians of whom I write—Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, and architect Oscar Niemeyer—created according to his or her own appraisal of movement, considering formal and philosophical principles equally in the conception and execution of an artwork. One case relative to each artist is analyzed through the motives, practice, and implications of movement inherent in their respective artistic productions. The cases are identified by their employment of differing states of movement: stored energy—an object's *potential* for motion (Clark's *Bichos*, c. 1960–64); kinetic energy—an object's actual or *occurring* motion (Pape's *Neoconcrete Ballets*, 1958–59); and what I call suggested energy—that is, the *evocation* of motion (Niemeyer's architectural curves). In establishing new readings for each relative state of energy, the cases will be addressed solely with regard to the artists' employment of movement, a phenomenon that was embraced as a vehicle for the rejection of stasis and its many implications within the arts.

I begin with a brief scientific explanation of movement, as the study of motion lies first and foremost within the realm of physics.¹ One can summarize the science of movement in seemingly oppositional ways, though each path leads to the same definition. First, motion may be described as a disruption, a consequence of chaos, never entirely understood, predicted, or controlled. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the field of quantum mechanics is the uncertainty principle—the impossibility of knowing a particle's velocity and direction at the same time as its position—thus rendering complete control of motion futile. Since motion requires the dominance of one opposing force over another, immobility can be appreciated as a sort of physical bliss that requires the perfect balance of all acting forces. Stasis, as in a mature Mondrian painting, could thus represent harmony, economy, and control; there is no over-powering energy, and there is no chaos.

Motion may also, however, be explained as the most elemental and truly universal form of liberation. It is the release of an object from the grasp of one force through the application of another greater and opposing force. Conversely, an object in stagnation is in literal captivity, caught in the vice of physical laws. The only way to break the bind is through the transference of motion-energy from one object to another, thereby putting an end to an object's otherwise eternal arrest. Despite the two variations of theme, there is only one "true" definition, and perhaps Sir Isaac Newton put it best: *A body in motion stays in motion, a body at rest stays at rest.*

The Brazilian artists in question were primarily concerned with the latter conception of the phenomenon. Movement for these artists served as a vehicle for various modes of liberation, a catalyst posed in contrast to artistic and phenomenological stasis. Each of the three artists entered into artistic production through an investigation of static forms which, over time, led to the development of comparatively more dynamic and phenomenological artistic output. Niemeyer, Clark, and Pape undertook such explorations in great part as a response to specific European artists working or exhibiting in Brazil. Two such visitors had particular resonance in the country's twentieth-century artistic production: Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, with his stable right-angles and functionalist drive in the 1930s, and Swiss artist Max Bill, with his hyper-calculated Concretist piece *Tripartite Unity* (1947–48), a work awarded the Grand Prize in sculpture at the inaugural *São Paulo Biennial* in 1951.

Le Corbusier first traveled to the Americas in 1929, though his ideas preceded him with his widely distributed text *Towards a New Architecture* (1923).² Here the author calls for modern, rational, technological—in short, "engineered"—forms already found in industrial products and certain examples throughout history. Automobiles, pipes, glass vases, airplanes, and, despite his warnings against the trappings of the past, the Parthenon and the works of ancient Rome, were all explained as bearing the underlying connection of a formal geometric clarity. Viewing the "house as a machine for living in,"³ Le Corbusier extended these principles of exaction to the private dwelling space and eventually large public structures.

Le Corbusier had a direct influence in the Americas as well. Serving as an advisor for city planning and building projects, he traveled on multiple

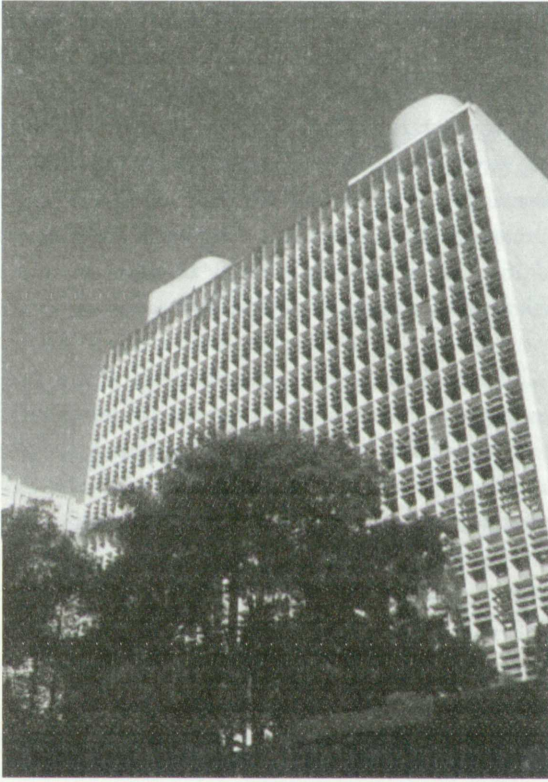


FIGURE 1. Lúcio Costa, Carlos Leão, Jorge Moreira, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Ernani Vasconcelos, and Le Corbusier (consultant), *Ministry of Education and Health* building (now titled *Gustavo Capanema Palace*), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1936-43. Courtesy of Gustavo Capanema Palace on Freebase.

occasions to Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina between 1929 and 1936. The Brazilian *Ministry of Education and Health* building (1936-43), though by no means the first example of simplified functionalist architecture in the region, was among the first employments of the architect's theories within developing modernism in the Americas (Figure 1).⁴ The project, begun in 1936, was to showcase much of Brazil's up-and-coming talent in architecture and design, including Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Carlos Leão, Jorge Moreira, Affonso Reidy, and Ernani Vasconcelos, along with the involvement of the painter Cândido Portinari and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. It was Le Corbusier, however, who helped carry awareness of the project into the international sphere after his brief involvement with the Brazilian architects.⁵

Le Corbusier was invited to give a series of lectures in June of 1936, after which he was asked to join the *Ministry's* design team. During his four weeks dedicated to the project, Le Corbusier embraced Niemeyer as his "*de facto* interpreter" and charged him with translating his plans and ideas for the rest of the team.⁶ Niemeyer writes on the French-Swiss architect's influence over the project:

At that time we were somewhat removed from the core concerns of his architecture. We had read his exceptional work as if it were Holy Scripture, but, as it turned out, we were still not really in on all the details and secrets. This explained the masterly independence with which he quickly rejected [Lucio Costa's] U-shaped design for the ministry and adopted a different solution with the linear form that characterized most of his designs.⁷

The building design thus adhered to principles set forth by Le Corbusier, whether expressed through his treatise or in person: the innovative *pilotis* lift the massive construction and allow for air ventilation and the flow of pedestrian traffic while imparting a sense of visual weightlessness; the roof and courtyards were originally landscaped by Roberto Burle Marx in accordance with Le Corbusier's call for the visual filling of displaced natural ground; and Cândido Portinari created exterior murals, contributing to the creation of a "total work of art."⁸ Additionally, there was the calculated planning of all structural forms, the careful relationship of each form to the others, and most importantly, the establishment of visual stability and autonomy, wherein the building came to possess its enveloping space and command its own volume. Despite the French-Swiss architect's markedly brief involvement, the *Ministry's* design serves as a near encyclopedic example of Le Corbusier's theories, as seen in the almost extreme compression of form, strict use of ninety-degree angles, seriality, and gridded compartmentalization of frontalized planes.⁹ In applying these principles to the structure's design, the Brazilian team achieved the harmonious effect of stable forms resistant to any suggestion of representation, instability, or the sensual. The final product was a massive architectural block standing in monumentalized stasis.

The capabilities of reinforced concrete and new construction methods permitted such advances in architectural form, many of which were widely employed throughout Brazil immediately following the reception of Le Corbusier's philosophies.¹⁰ Yet, these same post-industrial techniques and materials also afforded Niemeyer the opportunity to quickly develop his own style, one that immediately deviated from the foreign architect's aesthetic rigidity.¹¹ In 1940, while the *Ministry* was still mid-process, Niemeyer was selected to be the principle architect for a lavish building project proposed by Juscelino Kubitschek, then Governor of Minas Gerais and later President of Brazil (1956–61). The development, called the "Pampulha complex," was to serve as an extravagant suburban resort for Brazil's wealthy middle and upper classes.

Niemeyer's progression away from Le Corbusier's formal stasis is notable in their differing manners of employing reinforced concrete. While Le Corbusier used the material to create massive gridded blocks reflective of calculation, control, and immobility, Niemeyer embraced the strengthened concrete in his creation of organic curves. Through his emulation of nature and the sensual, Niemeyer's evocation of motion was not merely a turn away from, but an immediate and outright rejection of, European ideals of aesthetic stasis and autonomy. The Pampulha restaurant designed by Niemeyer is a key example. *Baile*—the allusive name of the restaurant-turned-nightclub—consists of an open arcade sheltered by a concrete covering that gently winds along the lakefront. As the elevated concrete undulates with the ripples of the shoreline, it approaches an ovoid enclosure, connecting with it much like a stream convenes with a motionless pond. This visualization is quite literal, as the semi-enclosed structure at the end of the wavy covering was designed to house a lily-pool.¹² Despite his involvement with the comparatively rational Le Corbusier, Costa, and the construction of the *Ministry* building, Niemeyer's architectural ideals were, above all, inspired by the sensual. In an oft-quoted passage, the architect writes:

I am not attracted to straight angles or to the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man. I am attracted to free-flowing, sensual curves. The curves that I find in the mountains of my country, in the sinuousness of its rivers, in the waves of the ocean, and on the body of the beloved woman. Curves make up the entire Universe, the curved Universe of Einstein.¹³

Though begun only four years after the *Ministry*, Niemeyer's faithfulness in Pampulha, not only to the evocation of motion, but to a literal representation of nature, is a far cry from Le Corbusier's advocacy for hard linearity, a consequence of increasingly popular anti-naturalism in Europe. It was, after all, through right-angles that Le Corbusier eradicated illusionism and instability in the creation of compositional and spatial autonomy.

The French-Swiss architect's "loyalty to the right angle...which he tended to regard as his private domain" essentially developed into architecturalized grid forms, a leading stylistic feature of Bauhaus and functionalist-inspired architecture in the Americas.¹⁴ While Niemeyer's curvilinear evocations rejected such aesthetic immobility, the architect's challenge to stasis was not solely concerned with visuality and formalism. For many European artists working in the wake of the Great War, a gridded, mechanical aesthetic served to rid art of the individual, of the human hand, and, ultimately, of any trace of the body or its physical interaction with art. Individuality had no place in a rational, intellectual, aesthetically pristine artwork, the logical product of an equally pure and utopian post-War era. Neither the human corpus, nor sensation, nor intuition bore a function within the formation of a new Socialist society; the body had become a literal "embodiment" of the individual and individuality. Work was to contribute to a mechanized utopia and united socio-political body, one founded on functionalism and stark rationalism.¹⁵ Art became a denial of the flesh.

From the beginning of his independent career, Niemeyer steadfastly disregarded "the right-angle and rationalist architecture designed with a ruler and square."¹⁶ The Pampulha complex afforded him an early opportunity to employ such ideals, which would persist throughout his career. He writes:

The project was an opportunity to challenge the monotony of contemporary architecture, the wave of misinterpreted functionalism that hindered it, and the dogmas of form and function that had emerged, counteracting the plastic freedom that reinforced concrete introduced. I was attracted by the curve—the liberated, sensual curve suggested by the possibilities of new technology yet so often recalled in venerable old baroque churches.¹⁷

Niemeyer's aesthetic sensuality questioned the platitude of modernist architecture's Cartesian separation of mind and flesh. For Descartes, as with many post-World War I artists, the senses could not be trusted, lest they lead to intellectual, spiritual, or indeed global catastrophe. Truth must lie within the mind and without the body. Accordingly, the *Ministry* building's façade is a tight, rational grid that reflects the Cartesian coordinate system—the very tool that has enabled Man to mathematize the physically real. Moreover, as in mathematics, the Cartesian grid revolutionized modern art as a tool for the autonomy of an artwork, enabled in great part through its tendency to eradicate representation.

Mondrian's strict employment of the grid, for example, served in great part to announce what Rosalind Krauss calls "modern art's will to silence."¹⁸ She argues that the grid restructures artworks in order to oppose "...literature, narrative, or discourse..." as a work becomes "...flattened, geometricized, ordered."¹⁹ Similarly, and though not directly considered by Krauss, I argue that the grid is also markedly "still." Krauss's "will to silence" could thus be equally considered "will to stasis." The visual stability of a work comprised solely of ninety-degree angles denies narrative not only through a lack of figuration, but also through the removal of temporal *evocation*.²⁰ It was, after all, Theo van Doesburg's re-introduction of the diagonal line into painting that marked the "break-up" between he and Mondrian, as the latter felt that it reinserted not only spatial recession, but also rhythm and temporality into painting—essential markers of representation that they originally sought to eradicate.

Niemeyer's "liberated, sensual curve..." his anti-grid, challenged this increasingly rational aesthetic philosophy. While such a rejection is present in his Pampulha project, the architecture and design of Brasília (1956–60), the Niterói Contemporary Art Museum (1996), and numerous other projects, Niemeyer's interior of the *São Paulo Biennial* pavilion (now called the *Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo*) is perhaps the most characteristic of the architect's employment of motion (Figure 2). The pavilion was designed by a team led by Oscar Niemeyer and Hélio Uchôa, and has housed the Biennial since its fourth installment in 1957. The massive three-story structure offers a 36,000-square meter exhibition area permeated by Niemeyer's sensually winding ramps that seem to coil and flow throughout the space.

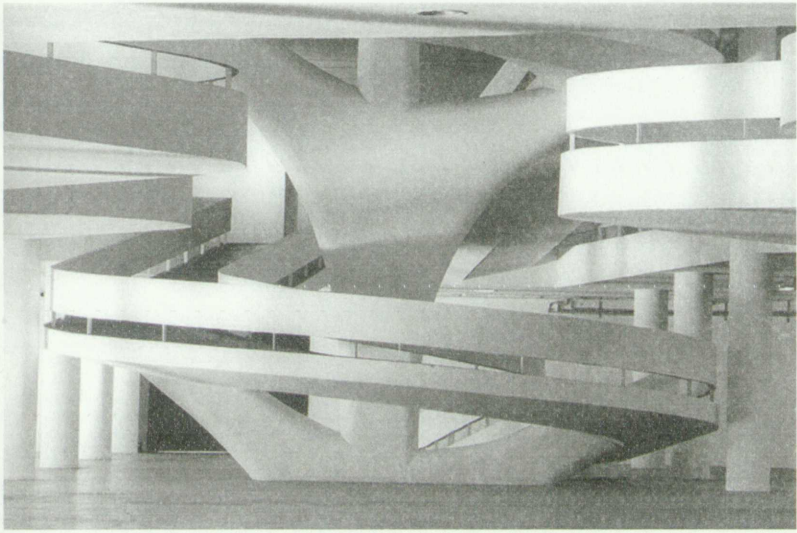


FIGURE 2. Oscar Niemeyer, São Paulo Biennial pavilion (Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo), interior view, Parque do Ibirapuera, 1957. Courtesy of André Batista.

The weaving walkways are physical manifestations of the architect's "Poem of the Curve."²¹ Having developed the comparatively gentle undulations of his Pampulha works into fully wound curls, the architect presents some of his most progressive re-insertions of time and movement into architecture. The motion suggested by the corkscrew platforms is dramatically increased through their positional relationships, as the apparent inter-locking of different levels recalls the constant circular motion of rotating gears. One can imagine such screw-like ramps slowly boring into the ground, mimicking the disorienting red stripes of a rotating barber's pole.

Now far from his work on the *Ministry*, Niemeyer's evocation of motion, much like actual moving particles, energizes the perceived space and surrounding forms. His buildings may be physically static, but they share the same visual dynamism of those "waves of the ocean" that inspired his designs. Further, using the organic and phenomenological as both philosophical and formal models, the architect reunited mind and body otherwise divided by Cartesian disassociation. Niemeyer's curves demand an experiential understanding of his work and stand in opposition to purely visual or cognitive readings.

While such considerations may have been unique within western modernism in his early career, the architect's dynamism anticipated similar developments in the plastic arts, many arising in response to writings on phenomenology by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the 1940s. Art historian Frank Popper notes the French philosopher's argument for:

[the] primacy of vision over the constructions of the mind in so far as painterly representation is concerned....My movement is not a decision of the mind, an absolute doing, which decrees, from the depths of the subjective retreat, some change in position that is miraculously carried out in extension. It is the natural consequence and the maturing of a vision.²²

Popper again quotes Merleau-Ponty in the latter's discussion of the aesthetics of movement, resulting in an explanation steeped in phenomenology: "Painting does not see the externals of movement—but its secret codes." These "secret codes" of motion were to be emphasized within the plastic arts of Brazil starting in the mid-1950s, thereby introducing physical experience into artistic and discursive practices surrounding the nation's cultural production.

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) refutes the Cartesian severance of mind and body through his rejection of Descartes' devaluation of the corporeal. Merleau-Ponty additionally argues that the phenomenological is not in opposition to intellect, but rather, works in tandem with it for a poly-sensorial engagement with the concrete. Much as Niemeyer embraces the liberating qualities of the "sensual curve," the French philosopher writes on the liberating potential of sensorial engagement, of an anti-static existence, arguing that we experience both the material and cerebral, first and foremost, phenomenologically.²⁴ In Merleau-Ponty's *Structure of Behavior* (1942), the author suggests that sensorial engagement may serve as a catalyst for self-discovery by embracing the body as an agent for both personal and communal experience. His message was particularly poignant to a nation that was undergoing rapid industrialization and experiencing phenomenological numbness as a result. His texts therefore increasingly took hold with Brazilian artists and intellectuals shortly after the influence of European models—the grid, autonomy, stability—began to

wane. Though, in their own times, both stasis and motion served as artistic decrees in the nation, the two artistic philosophies were contradictory and incompatible, one inevitably giving way to the other.

Swiss Artist Max Bill, much like Le Corbusier before him, brought to Brazil ideals of cold, rational, and geometrically precise forms created through rationality and rigorous intellect. His *Tripartite Unity* achieved immediate acclaim in the region while on display in the first São Paulo Biennial in 1951. The work consists of three Möbius bands that meld into each other, carving space into separate, yet interwoven, units. While the work evokes all of the sensual motion of Niemeyer's curves, it is instead premised on calculative dehumanization, which is then employed in the band's aesthetic autonomy and sculpting of concrete space. As the metallic ribbon twists and turns, its single frontal plane boasts its mathematical grounding, calling for and anticipating an increasingly scientific, industrial age.

Brazil experienced rapid modernization in the early 1950s, greatly accelerated in 1955 by President Kubitschek's building of the hyper-modern Brasília. Bill's timely promotion of such technological and anti-regional discourse, therefore, offered artists a potential language through which to contribute to the nation's development, helping launch the Brazilian Concrete art circles, *Grupo Ruptura* (1952) out of São Paulo and the *Grupo Frente* (1953) out of Rio de Janeiro. Jacqueline Barnitz summarizes one critic's view on why such ideals likely took hold:

According to [Ronaldo] Brito, Concrete art, by opposing "intuitive informalism," could claim exact scientific, mathematical precision that competed with other disciplines, such as architecture, design, and science, to create an autonomous art that could stand on its own. It attempted "to transform the social environment and to surmount underdevelopment" by attacking the "archaisms" of the traditional Brazilian power structures, and by extension, the academy²⁵

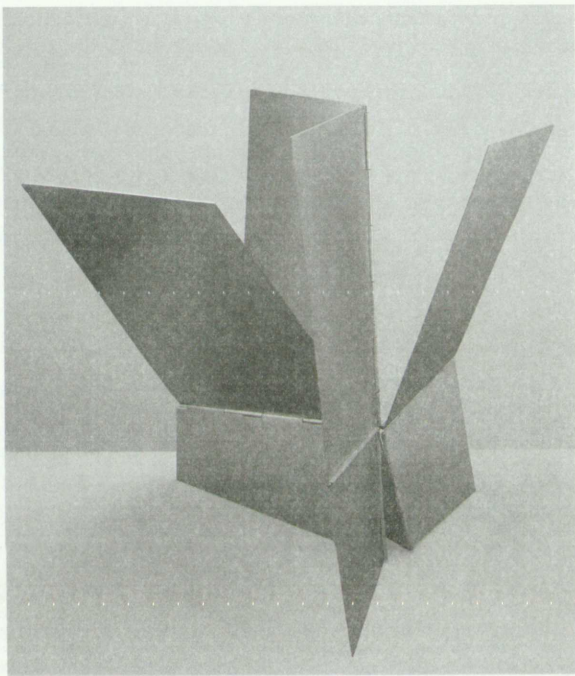
Bill's promotion of control and creative detachment resonated with the São Paulo Concretists, as the artists viewed freeness of form, lack of calculation, and unpredictability—all inherent qualities of motion—as characteristics

to be combated. Bill's principles did not, however, register with the increasingly phenomenological artists from Rio. The São Paulo group was markedly more dogmatic and calculated than the comparatively sensual *Grupo Frente*, eventually fueling an artistic backlash on behalf of the latter. Taking much from Merleau-Ponty, and akin to Nieymeyer, the Rio artists embraced phenomenology as a direct challenge to hyper-stability, doing so under their new identification as Neoconcretists in 1959. Yet it was the Swiss artist's promotion of a work's autonomy, as well as the implications of movement inherent in the Möbius strip, that helped inspire their move away from starkly intellectual Concretism.

The development of *Frente* artists Lygia Clark and, to a point, Lygia Pape, parallels the Rio artists' development of Neoconcretism. Through the early-to-mid 1950s, the Rio and São Paulo artists experienced growing tension over conflicting ideals. In 1956 and 1957 the two groups exhibited together for the first time in the National Concrete Art exhibitions in São Paulo and Rio, displaying first-hand the incompatibilities between them. The official break was made public immediately following the Rio exhibition, which helped launch wide debates addressing "calculation versus creative freedom."²⁶ As Ferreira Gullar writes in the *Neo-Concrete Manifesto*, the split had notable "reference to their *power of expression* rather than to the *theories* on which they based their art [original italics]."²⁷ The Rio group moved away from the "dangerously acute rationalism" of the *Grupo Ruptura* and embraced the transition as paramount for the establishment of Neoconcretism, a circle founded upon the premise that art "could only be understood phenomenologically."

As with Nieymeyer, the Neoconcretists first began by adopting foreign philosophies. Further, each embraced and reapplied the newly familiar tools—reinforced concrete for the former and the Möbius Strip for the latter—to challenge the formal and philosophical ideals of those very same parties that introduced the new means. This progression can be detected through the formal evolution of Lygia Clark's *Modulada* paintings (*Modular*, 1957), *Ovo Linear* (*Linear Egg*, 1958), and *Casulo* (*Cocoon*, 1959). The first embraced Bill's ideals in a similar manner to the São Paulo artists, as these works were designed through the employment of geometry, challenging the viewer's faith in both perception and the objects thereof. The plane, modulated by geometric shapes, is subject to depth variations as the forms

FIGURE 3. Lygia Clark, *Bicho-Monumento a todas as situações*, 1962, aluminum, dimensions variable: approx. 41 cm x 66 cm x 54 cm (16.13 in x 26 in x 21.25 in), Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Courtesy of Cultural Association "The World of Lygia Clark."



alternate in their definition of space as advancing or receding. Though the works are static and two-dimensional, the ambiguous spatial definition suggests depth and movement through counterpointed visual oscillations, serving as one of Clark's earliest challenges to temporal and pictorial stasis. Clark's artistic evolution continues in *Ovo* (*Egg*, 1958). The enveloping white band marking the perimeter of the black circle disappears into the white gallery wall, itself a modernist trope, and creates perceptual tension between flatness and depth, front and back, reality and aesthetic mimicry. The conflict is increased through the breaking of the band, allowing the black mass to seemingly burst out of the confines of the white edge. Blackness is presented in a frozen state of rupture, seized just before it would have otherwise spilled onto the wall and into the physical and temporal realm.

Clark's planes were finally "liberated" from the strictly two-dimensional with her *Contra-Relevo* and *Casulo* series in 1959. In one of the artist's more advanced examples from this era, *Casulo* (*Cocoon*) takes the previous *Ovo*'s rupture more literally and seems to break away from the wall, unfolding both frame and plane into the three-dimensional realm. As with all of her

paintings until this time, the piece is physically static. Yet the work seems to reach out and move, through both time and space, destroying the confines of the grid, and extending its little triangular hand for an introduction with the phenomenological. As the influence of both Max Bill and Merleau-Ponty increasingly took hold, it was but a small step from the unfolded planarity of *Casulo* to one of the artist's most praised and influential series, the *Bichos*.

Lygia Clark's *Bichos* (1960–64) were begun in 1960 immediately following the artist's extension of painting into real space (Figure 3).²⁸ The works are composed of paned industrial sheet metal, hinged in a manner that allows each piece to be manipulated into various compositions. Questioning the psychological, cultural, and socio-political relevancy of passive sculpture, the *Bichos* were intended to be maneuvered by viewers, thereby serving as vehicles for a phenomenological engagement with art, one's own body, and, indeed, existence itself. The sensorial encounters were to be distinctly relational, bringing awareness to one's experience with the work as it developed over an indeterminate period of time. Clark writes, "The first movement (yours) does not belong to the bicho. The inter-linking of the spectator's action and the bicho's immediate answer is what forms this new relationship, made possible precisely because the bicho moves—i.e., has a life of its own."²⁹ There has been a veritable explosion of scholarship on Clark in the last decade, particularly with regard to her *Bichos*, later "therapeutic" pieces, and the overall relationship of the artist's *oeuvre* with the body. An analysis of her works' art historical positioning and connection to the body will therefore only exist in allusion within this paper. Emphasis is instead placed upon the *Bichos*' incorporation of unfolding time and movement, both necessary constituents for the existence of the artwork-as-phenomenon.

Much scholarship on Clark addresses the incorporation of phenomenology into her work. Rarely, however, does one underscore physical motion as a requirement for the phenomenological to even become possible. Taking for granted the necessity of viewer participation in the manipulation of a *Bicho*, as well as the subsequent body-*Bicho* relationship, I argue that the works themselves, as autonomous material entities, are examples of stored energy. Clark's original *Bichos* are no longer exhibited as sculptures to be manipulated by the audience because of preservation concerns. Movement within her works is therefore only *potential*. As such, Clark's *Bichos* are exhibited as models of *stored* energy. When the work sits in stasis, the viewer

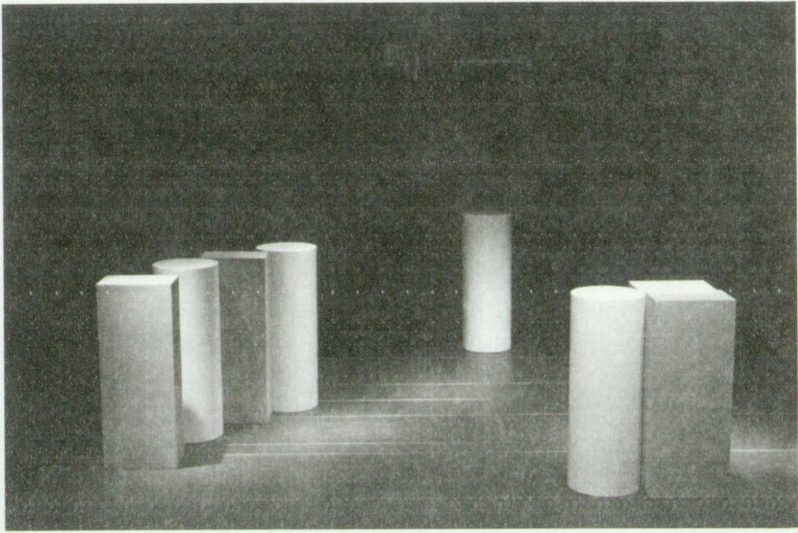


FIGURE 4. Lygia Pape, *Neoconcrete Ballet I*, 1958/2000/2012 (here re-performed at the SESC Bom Retiro, 2012), Paula Pape (General Director), Né Barros (Dance Director), Pedro Fortes (Photography). Courtesy of Projecto Lygia Pape.

stands as an embodiment of potential motion existing parallel to the work and, until activated, the *Bichos* remain Sir. Newton's "objects at rest." Yet energy potential is not only stored within the objects as such, as in a loaded spring, but also within viewers as potential energy-agents. We, the audience, are required by the artist to activate the artwork and are thereby implicated, in a sense, as phenomenological "battery-packs." Once the viewer's potential energy is released and translated into the object's movement, however, the activated *Bicho* becomes a literal extension of the participant, a "rectangle in pieces [that] has been swallowed up by us and absorbed into ourselves."³⁰ It is only through the co-existence and a physical relationship between participant and *Bicho* that both parties can transform potential into kinetic energy.

While it may seem obvious that the release and transference of one's energy is required for the activation of a *Bicho*, thinking in these terms offers a new reading whenever Lygia Clark's works are exhibited alongside "Please Do Not Touch" signs. In such cases the artist's sculptures serve only as promises of action, offering in vain to liberate the viewer's energy otherwise locked in a state of passive museum-going stasis. What Clark may not have anticipated is that the tension intrinsic to stored energy seems to subside

within viewers over time, much like a spring loaded for too long, or a Slinky stretched beyond capacity. Audience members become increasingly comfortable with stasis and passive contemplation, increasingly numb to feelings of withdrawal from the phenomenological, and eventually lose any inherent drive to realize their potential for action. A body at rest does indeed stay at rest.

It is the physical transference of motion into realized kinetic energy that Lygia Pape employed in her *Neo-Concrete Ballets* of 1958 and 1959, marking the culmination of Pape's artistic and poetic efforts in her earliest Concretist explorations of form (Figure 4). In speaking about the transition into Neoconcretism, Pape states that among the group's primary concerns was to address artistic production with "the attitude from the outside in," as well as "the action from the inside out."³¹ The comment reveals the artist's considerations throughout the *Tecelares* (*Weavings*), a series consisting of single-print woodcuts produced between 1955 and 1959, as each work was a developed embodiment of both the "attitude" and "action" proposed by Pape.

The internal "action" is present in the works' materiality and its effect on, and bond with, perceived compositional relationships. Stripped of any reference to the expressive, the woodcuts present a tense disunion inherent in the calculated forms' "violation" of the natural wood. This is underscored in many of her pieces, which recall the geometric modulation of Lygia Clark's work. Yet where Clark somewhat denaturalizes her pieces by painting in stark fields of black and white, Pape opts to emphasize wood's organic grain, thereby presenting the material's natural negation of calculated geometric forms. Such functioning of artistic materials "from the inside out" marks Pape's earliest repudiation of stasis and dictated control.

The external "attitude" is present in Lygia Pape's questioning of foreground and background, and of the nature and validity of such relational readings. The artist's comment on her *Tecelares* summarizes her understanding of such uncertainties:

[My work] referred specifically to spatial investigation: space being warped; yarn weaving space; the principle of ambiguity, no privileged position for a base or bottom (a work could be

inverted without being stripped of all its characteristics), surface pared down to black as colour, and the wood's pores acting as vibration to the point of reaching total white: both black and white were always *form* (original italics) and never figure and ground, since both had a position of *two-dimensionality* and *topological* aspects. The moment I arrived at total white, I reached the end of my investigations. To me, it was as if two surfaces—spaces—were overlaid....³²

Though her discussion was specific to the development of Neoconcretism, and has here been expressed in relation to her *Tecelares*, the artist's words bear equal significance when applied to her *Neo-Concrete Ballets*. Developed together with poet Reynaldo Jardim, the dances incorporate the aforementioned philosophies of Merleau-Ponty for a re-unification of mind and body, thereby contributing to discourses about art/dance/color/music relationships that were to develop within Neoconcretism. The first *Ballet* included dancers housed within four red rectangles and four white cylinders, all of which moved rectilinearly under white, red, and blue beams of light. The choreography followed Jardim's nonsense vocable poem entitled *alvo-ólho*, which consisted of two words, "alvo" (target) and "ólho" (eye).

Both Pape and Clark pursued the "liberation" of art from the canvas through their respective challenges to "privileged positions." Pape, however, was comparatively more invested in "a refusal to classify the fine arts according to the form used," much in line with Ferreira Gullar's *Theory of the Non-Object* (1959).³³ With her own "non-objectivity," Pape investigated phenomenology and movement through her exploration of "action from the inside out." The geometric containers rid dancers of identity and their usual relationships with the experiential, "hiding the body to reveal it."³⁴ Artists then become reliant on what Pape calls "plurisensoriality," that is, the heightened awareness and use of multiple senses simultaneously. Dancers develop an increasing awareness of their movement as a catalyst for other relationships that they themselves cannot perceive—the actual dance.

Audience members also become aware of the dancers as "battery packs" of stored energy potential; they are literally inserted into the forms for the sole purpose of transferring energy in the creation of motion. It is through the "mechanization" of bodily movement that the dance is realized, enabling

the audience and dancers alike to consider "the action from the inside out." Yet visual phenomena created by the movements are equally important, as they allow for a questioning of "attitudes from the outside in." Unlike either the continual Dionysian flow of energy that Hélio Oiticica released with his *Parangolés*, activating a "pure drive" unable to be controlled or choreographed, or Clark's *Bichos*, which are in fact only promises of movement potential, Lygia Pape employs the body as an agent of kinetic energy, which is then subject to control and organization. To further the rigid choreography of the *Ballet*, the artist restricts movement to lines and points on a grid system. Pape exploits Krauss' proposed "will to silence" inherent in the grid thereby denying any curvilinear movement and potential external reference. The artist aims to silence all intellectual and emotional "noise" otherwise generated through expression, representation, and narrative, freeing the viewer to concentrate solely on the motions and resulting visual relationships. The geometrization of the dancers and mechanization of their movements serve to deepen this focus. As Pape states, "There are no dancers. There is only the dance."³⁵

For such a tightly focused questioning of specific relational concerns, time as a medium had to be reduced within the "plurisensorial" experience. Contrary to Clark's *Bichos*, wherein time was an important catalyst through which sensorial relationships could develop, or Niemeyer's evocation of movement through time, Pape viewed temporality as a mere pre-requisite for motion and its organization. Robert Morris writes of his own work, though his words apply equally to the *Ballet*: "Time was not an element of usage, but a necessary condition; less a focus than a context."³⁶ Reynaldo Jardim describes the project as being "of the time in which the space of the stage delimited two forms (A and B), proportional to each other and proportional to the time and space of the stage, [was] rendered and started seeking integration in the element from which they were extracted."³⁷

For the *Ballet*, as with the *Tecelares*, Pape was interested in the visual dialogue between "extraction" and "insertion" of forms in space, as well as the visual dialogue between their energies. As in her spatial explorations with the white and black, paint and wood of her *Tecelares*, the first *Ballet* created tension through an ambiguous treatment, if not outright rejection, of traditional relationships between ground and figure. As the red rectangles became bathed in red light, they would disappear into the "background" of

the dance, thereby allowing the white spheres to come forward visually as frontal figures. As movement and the lighting's color and intensity changed, the situation was reversed and a casting of white light brought the red shapes forward visually. Though written with regard to the Tecelares, Pape's thoughts resonate strongly with the visual effects of the dance: "both black and white were always form and never figure and ground, since both had a position of two-dimensionality and topological aspects."³⁸ Only at the end of the dance, with Pape's introduction of blue light, were the forms treated equally, thereby marking the completion of the work.³⁹

Each of the artists here discussed both embraced and negated influential foreign models of stasis. The artists adopted select lessons of inherently static elements—i.e. the silence of the grid—but did so only to position such tools against themselves. The three Brazilians thus found their artistic voices through their respective challenges to stasis by using the very tools of stasis to achieve his and her own unique employments of motion. Oscar Niemeyer adopted Le Corbusier's lessons on right angles and reinforced concrete, rejecting the former through the capabilities of the latter. Responding similarly to the detached calculation of the São Paulo Concrete artists, Lygia Clark embraced Max Bill's endless plane of the Möbius strip. Her art was then moved out of the static two-dimensional through her creation of works which served as embodiments of stored energy. By promising kinetic release to would-be participants, Clark treats viewers as equal bearers of potential energy and implicates them as parallel agents of action. Nonetheless, until viewer and artwork exchange transformative energies inherent within each, they remain mere carriers.

Finally, Lygia Pape developed the geometricized plane as a mechanism for channeling movement as a malleable force. Perhaps even more than the other two artists, her *Ballets* reunite the Cartesian separation of mind and body, and serve as vehicles for multi-sensorial engagement with and within the physical realm. For Pape, dancers in the *Ballets* are to experience de-personalization and exist merely as agents of mechanized motion. The audience is enabled and invited to see that the produced motion, as well as subsequent visual relationships, serves as a vehicle for questioning perception. Foreground and background appear as dubious constructions that refute any stable definition and, through movement and shifting relationships, call into question countless other dichotomies. While

Niemeyer, Clark, and Pape each stress the importance, if not necessity, of motion and phenomenology in the creation and reception of art, they—perhaps most importantly—allude to passivity and stasis within the choices and lives of viewers themselves. Like physical particles, artistic, social, and political bodies at rest stay at rest, forever unmoved. For these artists, we the public must understand and realize our agency as battery packs for social motion, transcribe their artistic lessons into greater actions, and propel our energies against an otherwise static world.

MATTHEW Q. BREATORE is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. He is also a Candidate for his Doctoral Certification in Curatorial Studies, administered through the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. The author is working in the Curatorial Department at El Museo del Barrio, New York, in partial completion of the certificate. Among other museum projects, he was part of the curatorial team for *Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World* (2012), and further served as Associate Editor for the accompanying publication. Mr. Breatore's research interests include the roles of painting and popular imagery in establishing early modern Brazilian identity, dance and music in the arts of the African Diaspora, and theories surrounding the collection, conservation, and display of non-traditional media.

NOTES:

¹ Such studies began in great part with the establishment of Sir Isaac Newton's laws of motion. His three laws, first published in his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687), are summarized as follows. First law: The velocity of a body remains constant unless the body is acted upon by an external force. Second law: The resultant force on an object is equal to the time rate of change of its linear momentum. Third law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

² The architectural treatise consists of seven primary essays, six of which were published previously in *L'Esprit Nouveau* (c. 1918–1925), the Purist journal he co-founded with Amédée Ozenfant.

³ Richard J. Williams, *Brazil: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 11.

⁴ This structure is now known as the *Gustavo Capanema Palace*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ Oscar Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time: The Memoirs of Oscar Niemeyer* (New York: Phaidon, 2010), 60.

⁸ The original exterior *pilotis*, as designed by Le Corbusier, were four meters tall. Those that were isolated and seen only from the interior were ten meters tall. Niemeyer, however,

made later modifications so as to "open" the space (Image 2). He writes, "In removing the glass walls from the ground floor, exposing it to the plaza on all sides, I had given these interior columns fresh allure and more prominence. They were now free-floating and monumental....I felt that the modifications to Le Corbusier's design had given the building a more free-flowing style; the columns had undeniably gained integrity, as people moved around them highlighting their scale and splendor." Niemeyer, *Curves of Time*, 67.

⁹ It should be noted that, though historians have often portrayed Corbusier as more of a project consultant than leader, Niemeyer writes in his memoirs, "We have always acknowledged the Ministry of Education design as being the work of Le Corbusier." Oscar Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time*, 61.

¹⁰ Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 168.

¹¹ Niemeyer's work has also influenced that of Le Corbusier, an impact that is need of greater analysis and historical consideration. As Niemeyer writes, "During one of my trips to Paris, one of Le Corbusier's most discreet assistants made a somewhat sour remark about what was happening to the master's architecture; he felt Le Corbusier was lacking sensibility and passion. It was obvious that my architecture had influenced Le Corbusier's later projects, but this factor is only now being taken into account by critics of his work." Niemeyer, *Curves of Time*, 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 169 cited in Stamo Papadaki, *Oscar Niemeyer* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991).

¹³ Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time*, title page.

¹⁴ Amédée Ozenfant commenting on Le Corbusier; Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time*, 63.

¹⁵ Consider Purism, Russian and German Constructivism, the Bauhaus, and Neo Plasticism.

¹⁶ Niemeyer, *The Curves of Time*, 62.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," *October* (Vol. 9, Summer, 1979), 50.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Krauss writes that a gridded work is "what art looks like when it turns its back on nature," (Krauss, "Grids," 50.) and it is this quality that removes any temporal "legibility." She continues to write, "...whereas grids are not only spatial to start with, they are visual structures that explicitly reject a narrative or sequential reading of any kind" (Krauss, "Grids," 55). Though Krauss notes the grid's resistance to narrative, she only explains this function with regard to narrative and representation, yet neither motion nor stasis.

²¹ These words were first written in Niemeyer's "Poem of the Curve," a tongue-in-cheek title for his response to Le Corbusier's body of nineteen paintings produced between 1947 and 1953 as a group titled "The Poem of the Right Angle."

²² Frank Popper, *Origins and Development of Kinetic Art* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968), 226–227. Popper's quotes of Maurice Merleau-Ponty taken from the latter's text, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated from the French by Colin Smith (1945: New York: Routledge Classics, 2002).

²³ Though Merleau-Ponty would have the greatest influence in Brazil in the mid-1950s and 1960s, phenomenology was introduced to the nation in the 1940s by the influential art critic Mario Pedrossa, thereby "preparing" artists and intellectuals for the reception of his writings. See Claire Bishop, *Installation Art* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 60.

²⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

- ²⁵ Barnitz, *Twentieth-Century Art*, 216. Quoting Brito in Ronaldo Brito, *Neoconcretismo, vertice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Edição Funarte, 1985) 100, 106.
- ²⁶ Ferreira Gullar, "Neo-Concrete Manifesto," in *Readings in Latin American Art*, edited by Patrick Frank (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 172.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ *Bichos* is often translated, however roughly, as *Beasts*, though sometimes as *Critters* or *Creatures*, the latter being this author's preference.
- ²⁹ Lygia Clark, "Beasts [Bichos] (1960)," in *Readings in Latin American Modern Art*, edited by Patrick Frank (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 176.
- ³⁰ Lygia Clark, "Morte do plano" ["Death of the Plane"] (1960), *October: The Second Decade, 1986–1996*, edited by Rosalind Krauss (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 36.
- ³¹ Herkenhoff, "Lygia Pape: The Art of Passage," in *Lygia Pape: Magnatized Space*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011), 26.
- ³² Lygia Clark, "Depoimento" ["Statement"] (1979), in *Lygia Pape: Magnatized Space*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011), 91.
- ³³ Paulo Herkenhoff, "Lygia Pape: The Art of Passage," 19. See Ferreira Gullar, *Theory of the Non-Object* (1959), Michael Asbury (trans.), in *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, edited by Kobena Mercer (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2005), 173.
- ³⁴ Marcio Doctors, "Lygia Pape, a radicalidade do real," *Galeria*, vol. 21, 68–75 (São Paulo: Área Editorial Ltd., 1990), 73.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Luiz Canillo Osorio, "Lygia Pape: Experimentation and Resistance," in *Lygia Pape: Magnetized Space*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011), 104.
- ³⁷ Herkenhoff, "Lygia Pape: The Art of Passage," 38.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 26.
- ³⁹ Specifics of the *Ballet's* lighting were obtained from Herkenhoff, "Lygia Pape: The Art of Passage."

REINTERPRETING MOCHE WARFARE: REGIONALITY AND MULTIPLE IDEOLOGIES IN MOCHE FINELINE PAINTED IMAGERY

ETHAN COLE, Ph.D., Department of Art History,
University of California, Los Angeles

Recent advances in the physical analysis of human remains, models of political organization, as well as the comparison of architectural designs provide exciting new avenues for examining Moche warfare. Previous studies of Moche warfare that relied largely on the interpretation of the visual record found on decorated portable objects led to contrasting opinions over the ritual versus secular nature of Moche (North Coast, Peru, 200–900 CE) warfare practices.¹ This essay contributes to the understanding of Moche culture through a reexamination of warfare imagery by taking into account some of the revelations that have taken place over the past decade. By complementing a reinterpretation of fineline painted decorations in regards to newly identified regional substyles of Moche art, with data from physical anthropological investigations, models of political organization, as well as the comparison of architectural designs, I find there to be overwhelming evidence that real battles were indeed fought by this ancient group.

MOCHE IDEOLOGY

The Moche, who settled the North Coast of Peru around 100 CE and remained dominant until about 900 CE, produced exquisite art works ranging from finely made gold and silver jewelry, to wall-sized murals of painted plaster. Moche artists also developed a tradition of skillfully decorated ceramics that range from vessels modeled to realistically represent real life objects such as human portrait heads and life-like figurines of local fauna, to superbly painted mythical narrative scenes in a technique referred to as “fineline painting.” It is widely believed that the manipulation and control of an ideological program was one of the basic power strategies utilized by Moche leaders.² By materializing ideology into tangible forms or experiential events, the governing regime was able to formulate a belief system that could not be easily replicated or replaced by their rivals. The ability to obtain and coordinate large amounts of labor and exploit exotic resources was thus propagated by Moche elites through the erection of monumental architecture, the production of portable objects (including

fineline painted ceramics) and the periodic enactment of rituals. Fineline painted ceramics are some of the most enduring and readily accessible manifestations of Moche ideology. Painted scenes depicting symbols of the state, sometimes in the form of elaborate ceremonies and mythological events dominate the subjects of Moche artistic motifs. Although there are several examples of domestic activities represented that appear to be of a secular nature, most decorations have a mythical and/or religious character and depict supernatural and human figures involved in ceremonial events. Christopher Donnan observed that over sixty percent of all Moche artistic decorations relate to symbols of what he described as the "Moche state religion."³

The circumstances of the production of fineline painted ceramics provide support to the notion that the creation of these images was controlled by the ruling regime. The most impressive evidence that fineline painted ceramics were produced under the auspices of elite rulers comes from the discovery of a pottery workshop in the heart of the Huacas de Moche site in the Moche Valley. Once considered the capital of a monolithic state, Huacas de Moche was dominated by two monumental structures, the Huaca del Sol and the Huaca de la Luna, which have been interpreted as religious and administrative centers respectively. Examples of unfired fineline painting as well as relief sculpture and molds for appliqué depicting major themes in Moche art were discovered within the confines of the workshop. Excavations further revealed that all of the activities related to ceramic production—from the mixing of clays to firing—took place within a single compound, highlighting the centralized nature of the production process. Santiago Uceda and Jose Armas suggested that the location of the workshop at the ceremonial center of the site, and its affiliation with the production of elite wares, demonstrated a connection to Moche rulers.⁴ The discovery of elite burials under the floors of the workshop provided evidence that the workshop not only produced wares *for* the elite, but that it was utilized by members of the elite.⁵

Tomb I from the main patio of the second phase of construction of the workshop contained the remains of a male aged approximately forty years upon death. Osteological analysis of the remains provided evidence that the individual was of good health overall, alluding to access to an ample diet

enjoyed only by the elites, but that this individual suffered from rheumatism in his hands and arthritis in his back. These injuries are consistent with the repetitive activities of a potter. The result of this finding is that a member of the Moche elite has been linked to the workshop, suggesting that it was populated by elite artisans. Similarly, Tomb II contained the remains of a female aged forty to fifty years. Analysis of her bones found arthritis in her hands, back and knees, which identifies her as a potter.⁶ The woman in Tomb II was interred with an elaborate offering that included forty-two ceramic vessels, copper objects and a guinea pig, suggesting that she too was a member of the Moche elite.⁷ The fact that these artisans worked within sight of administrative centers suggests that the workshops performed official business and existed under the influence of the state. Furthermore, their elite status suggests that the artisans would likely have been initiated into the meaning of the images they created, allowing them to function as a government apparatus for promoting official ideology as they manipulated and controlled images used to disseminate the ideas maintaining the power base of the elite class.

THE CASE FOR MULTIPLE MOCHE IDEOLOGIES

It is noteworthy that "ideology" tends to be treated in singular terms by Moche scholars.⁸ This was most recently demonstrated in Christopher Donnan's proposal of a "Moche State Religion." Although he did not explicitly state that Moche ideology itself was a singular uniform program, Donnan discussed Moche art as an aspect of a pan-Moche religion. For instance, he found the Warrior Narrative (detailed below) to be the focus of a "highly organized religious institution," of a "Moche state religion."⁹ Donnan's reference to Moche religion in its singular form, as opposed to using the plural, signals his perception that the ideological program present in Moche art is monolithic in nature.

Only in rare instances has the possibility of multiple Moche ideologies been addressed. Garth Bawden suggested that the Middle Moche period (300–600 CE) represented the florescence of Moche political ideology.¹⁰ Having grown out of earlier local cultures such as the Cupisnique, Gallinazo and Salinar, the artistic designs that we now commonly associate with the "Moche" took form during the Middle Moche period. Powerful symbols ranging from human portrait heads, presumably the faces of actual leaders,

to complex narrative motifs were thought to have been utilized by Moche elite to both distance themselves from the commoner class, and associate themselves with the supernatural realm. Although Bawden suggested that a central ideology was shared among the elites from different sites, he noted that during the Middle Moche period there was "differential local emphasis" on how it was disseminated, whether through monumental architecture, murals, burial techniques or portable objects.¹¹

Bawden observed that following a collapse of Middle Moche ideology, new variations took form, suggesting that north of the Moche Valley, Moche leaders incorporated new foreign beliefs into their ideological program in order to retain power from a lost base. He found that changes also took place at sites within the Moche Valley. For instance, Bawden proposed that the Moche population at Galindo, located at the neck of the Moche Valley, created a new ideology, arguing that the near absence of Moche narrative decorations and portrait head vessels from Galindo represented an intentional departure from the program in use at the Huacas de Moche site.¹² In contrast to the narrative designs that populate the majority of decorated vessels elsewhere, Bawden observed that the ceramics at Galindo tended to be decorated with geometric designs. Greg Lockard's study of ceramic fragments excavated from the site supported Bawden's hypothesis. Lockard found that seventy percent of recovered fineline ceramics at Galindo contained geometric designs, whereas only twelve to thirteen percent had figural (narrative) motifs.¹³ Bawden believed that decorating fine ceramics with geometric designs, as opposed to narrative motifs, was an intentional act utilized in the promotion of a new ideological program instituted by the rulers at Galindo.

Bawden also proposed the existence of competing ideologies among different social classes within the site of Galindo. Although it is often difficult to detect non-dominant forms of ideology (see discussions by Bawden and Tom Dillehay), Bawden suggested that certain key distinctions in burials of individuals from lower social classes suggest that they followed a contentious system of beliefs to that which dominated the site.¹⁴ Dillehay suggested that the Moche's unified ideological system described above was the exception, not the rule, as the North Coast likely played witness to multiple ideologies at all levels of society.¹⁵ He proposed that there may

have been multiple competing ideologies among the elites as well as others among the commoner class. Although Dillehay opened up the possibility for multiple ideologies, with one at each polity, he followed the dominant Moche as a single unified ideology paradigm, without further exploring different programs among distinct Moche populations.

In a discussion of intermediate-scale ceremonial sites in the hinterlands of the Jequetepeque Valley, Edward Swenson also found evidence for the existence of multiple Moche ideologies.¹⁶ He argued that sites throughout the valley performed unique ceremonies, each of which was suited to the spread of local ideologies supporting a local power base. Although excavations and surface surveys of these sites yielded fragments of San Jose de Moro fineline painting, suggesting participation in a pan-valley ideological program, variant designs of the ceremonial platforms at these sites suggest that rituals were performed according to local custom. For instance, observed that platforms at the site of San Ildefonso suggest straight movements of participants along ramps, whereas those at Catalina, a site of comparable size, contain ritual architecture indicative of processions along a winding path of lateral movements along ramps and across terraces. He found this to be evidence of local leaders inventing new traditions that "constituted a viable ideological strategy."¹⁷ Furthermore, Swenson suggested that local variations in ideologies are endemic to the Moche area, and that the Jequetepeque Valley was but a "microcosm" of the Moche's utilization of ideology as a whole, although he never applied this idea to help explain differences in Moche fineline painting styles. Whereas Swenson utilized architectural differences to suggest differences in ideology within the Jequetepeque Valley, I argue that differences within the fineline painted decorations reflect differences in Moche ideologies among Moche groups throughout the North Coast.

REGIONAL SUBSTYLES OF MOCHE FINELINE PAINTING

The Moche were once conceptualized as a single society with its capital at the site of Huacas de Moche in the Moche Valley. This idea was supported by Rafael Larco Hoyle, a hacienda owner and Moche enthusiast working in the early to mid-twentieth century. Having amassed a collection of Moche artifacts, largely through the purchase of smaller collections as well as through amateur excavations in around his property in the Chicama Valley,

Larco created the first chronology of Moche ceramics. He observed that the upper spouts on stirrup spout bottles appeared to correspond to differences in the vessels' decorations. Believing that there was a single Moche artistic style, Larco attributed these differences to evolutionary changes through time, and organized his ceramics collection into five temporal phases (I–V).¹⁹ Larco's chronology was widely accepted, and it was not until the mid-1990s, after large-scale archaeological projects in the Northern part of the Moche area were initiated, that it became clear that Larco's seriation for Moche ceramics was not applicable to all Moche sites. Although Larco's chronology was supported by excavations in and around his hacienda in the Chicama Valley, excavations at distant sites did not demonstrate continuity. For instance, at the Jequetepeque Valley site of San Jose de Moro, Luis Jaime Castillo and Christopher Donnan found that certain ceramic forms common to Southern Moche sites were absent from the archaeological record.²⁰ This led them to introduce a chronology specific to the Northern Moche Region, which they defined as sites above the Pampa de Paiján, a forty kilometer stretch of barren desert.

Continued work at sites in the Northern Moche area has indicated that the two-Moche model is also overly simplistic. Recently, Luis Jaime Castillo and Santiago Uceda suggested that Moche populations living in different river valleys across the North Coast experienced individual trajectories of evolution.²¹ They found that regional variations in Moche burial patterns, construction techniques and ceramics indicated that Moche populations at different sites were distinct, apparently resulting from unique local conditions, and must be studied as individual units. This approach—the study of multiple trajectories—has also been adopted in the study of Moche ceramics. In 2007, Donna McClelland, Don McClelland and Christopher Donnan identified what they referred to as the San Jose de Moro substyle of Moche fineline painting. They proposed that certain attributes present on a number of artifacts suggested that they represent distinct subgroups of the overall sample. At present, only four substyles—the San Jose de Moro fineline substyle, the Huacas de Moche fineline painting substyle and the so-called Dos Cabezas and Huancaco style ceramics—have been formally recognized.²² In my dissertation, I provided an in-depth comparison of the San Jose de Moro and the Huacas de Moche fineline painting substyles in order to discuss the potential cross-influences and political ramifications

of distinct artistic styles. Since a full comparison of the forms, content and style of these substyles is beyond the scope of the present study, in this essay I focus only on a single example, the absence of human warfare imagery from the San Jose de Moro substyle in order to demonstrate the intentional nature of its aversion to depicting human warrior imagery, and its ability to speak to differences between the populations that created fineline painted substyles.

MOCHE IMAGES OF WAR AND THE EFFECTS OF ARTISTIC AGENCY

Of the few publications that discuss Moche warfare imagery, most debate the nature of warfare, with authors falling into one of two camps, those who view it as ritual versus those who believe there were secular battles. Many scholars suggested that Moche warfare was a ritual activity tied to religious practices.²³ These authors often utilized warfare imagery, as opposed to archaeological data, as the foundation for their ideas, in which they interpreted battles to be prescribed rituals. Walter Alva and Christopher Donnan observed that warriors nearly always engage in one-on-one combat while dressed in elaborate garb, which they suggested indicates that battles were fought between Moche elites (Figure 1).²⁴ Furthermore, Donnan noted that the location of these scenes, which often take place in desert landscapes, as well as the absence of siege weapons and violence against civilians provide additional support to the notion that the Moche did not participate in conquest warfare.²⁵ Finally, battle scenes interpreted to represent Moche-on-Moche combat have been used to suggest that these battles took place among Moche groups (viewed as a sign of voluntary conflict in which sacrificial victims could be traded), rather than foreign forces (thought to be a sign of involuntary conflict).²⁶

The most often cited argument for ritual warfare is what has come to be known as the "Warrior Narrative." Initially outlined by Walter Alva and Christopher Donnan, the Warrior Narrative is composed of a series of images in which the lives of Moche soldiers are traced from battle to the ceremonial drinking of the blood of their captives. The narrative, as proposed by Alva and Donnan, begins in the battlefield where enemies are stunned by a blow to the head with a war club, after which they are stripped of their arms and wardrobe and led by their captors to be arraigned. Eventually the nude captives are brought to a climatic rite, dubbed the Sacrifice Ceremony,



FIGURE 1. Artist unknown, rollout drawing of a typical example of Moche painted warfare imagery depicting hand-to-hand combat on a ceramic stirrup spout bottle, 600-900 CE (Late Moche Period), slip painting on a ceramic vessel. Courtesy of Donna McClelland.

where their throats are slit, and their blood is collected and drunk by high ranking officials. Archaeological evidence from tombs at the sites of Sipan in the Lambayeque Valley and San Jose de Moro in the Jequetepeque Valley suggest that some of the figures in depictions of the Sacrifice Ceremony had real life counterparts.²⁷ Thus, this sequence, which includes images depicting elaborately dressed warriors engaged in hand to hand combat, has been used as evidence that warfare had cosmic objectives in the Moche world and was likely ritually prescribed.

Alternatively, several scholars have argued that Moche warfare had a secular nature.²⁸ Jeffrey Quilter suggested that fineline paintings of warriors engaged in one-on-one combat in desolate environments reflected decisions made by Moche artists, rather than accurate records of real life events.²⁹ He noted that, in general, rank and file soldiers are rarely depicted in portrayals of battle scenes around the world. Thus, he believed the naturalistic images in Moche art may misleadingly suggest that most Moche battles were fought among elaborately adorned elite warriors, when in fact lower ranked soldiers who were not painted did much of the fighting. John Verano equally warned against reading these images at face value, and pointed to Maya and Aztec examples of warfare for comparison.³⁰ He observed that both cultures employed an artistic convention for military conquest in which victory was expressed through the grasping of an enemy's tuft of hair. Verano noted that *Lintel 8* (755 CE) from Yaxchilan, Chiapas, Mexico, and the sacrificial stone of the Aztec ruler Motecuhzoma I (ca. 1455-1469 CE) represent large

military campaigns with a single figure depicting a handful of participants.³¹ Furthermore, George Lau's examination of an often published Moche painted war scene on the *Lührsen vessel* from the Museum für Völkerkunde suggested that it provides evidence for battle between local and foreign soldiers.³² He proposed that the headdresses, weapons and accessories used by several of the defeated warriors are reminiscent of those associated with the Highland Recuay culture, and thus provides evidence of battles between these two distinct cultures.

It is clear that the artist involved in the creation of warfare imagery played a significant factor in the appearance of the compositions we study, and must be recognized accordingly. When analyzing Moche imagery we must take care to acknowledge the artistic decisions that went into the creation of the images we study and their implications for our (mis)interpretations of this ancient group. Since the Moche had no discernable written language, and no recorded oral tradition, our knowledge of them comes largely through archaeological and art historical inquiries. Archaeologists have observed that martial activities such as battles are often difficult to identify in the archaeological record, since they are fleeting moments in time and generally leave few material traces.³³ Largely as a result of this, much of our current understanding of Moche warfare practices comes through analyses of their art. This highlights the importance of recognizing that the images depicted on Moche artifacts should not be considered objective recordings of history. Jeffrey Quilter reflected this in his acknowledgement that the Moche artists were able to select from many aspects of war for their creations. Rather than telling us about Moche warfare, the focus of the composition, manner of depiction, perspectives, and subjects of Moche battle scenes may be more informative of Moche ideological ambitions, and the audience they were meant to please, than of what Moche warfare may have actually looked like. The fineline decorations from San Jose de Moro provide an excellent case study in regards to interpreting the nature of Moche warfare through art. Since San Jose de Moro's fineline depictions of warfare differ from those of other fineline painting substyles, particularly those of the Huacas de Moche substyle, it represents a unique opportunity to reexamine Moche warfare.

EVIDENCE OF "REAL" WAR IN THE JEQUETEPEQUE VALLEY DURING THE LATE MOCHE PERIOD

Several recent studies questioned the dichotomy between "ritual" and "secular" (or "real") warfare, recognizing that secular warfare of many cultures include ritual aspects and ceremony.³⁴ Acknowledging that there were likely ritual aspects involved in the martial activities that took place in the Jequetepeque Valley during the Late Moche Period (approximately 600–900 CE), I contend that there existed at least the threat of "real" battles. Late Moche settlements in the Jequetepeque Valley provide some of the best evidence of warfare in the pre-Hispanic Andes. Many of the sites in this area overlook cultivated lands and irrigation canals, and such locations would have proven advantageous in the defense of these settlements from invading forces. Defensive walls, some standing several meters in height at these sites, also suggest that there was at least a perceived threat of invasion. That these walls were defensive in nature (as opposed to functioning primarily as divider of ceremonial space) is supported by the fact that they often contain parapets and piles of sling stone projectiles.³⁵ For instance, San Ildefonso, a fifty hectare (0.5 kilometers²) site located on the hillside of Cerro San Ildefonso by the Chaman River, contains four perimeter walls, each of which measures up to three meters high. The presence of sling stone piles along their lengths led to propose that these walls had a decidedly defensive function and are "associated with 'real' combat."³⁶

The choice of weapons depicted in local art provides further indication that real warfare was present in the Jequetepeque Valley during the Late Moche period. There are two common types of warfare-related decorative motifs in the San Jose de Moro substyle of fineline painting. One, referred to as the "Supernatural Confrontation Scene," involves two anthropomorphic creatures engaged in hand-to-hand combat. These scenes illustrate a deity known as Wrinkle Face, who battles a variety of sea creatures who have taken on human attributes, such as arms, legs, hands and feet. It is noteworthy that the weaponry in these scenes is limited to the use of *tumi* knives. *Tumi* knives, hand-held knives with a crescent-shaped blade, appear to have been the weapons of choice in Moche ceremony, as they are frequently portrayed in scenes depicting ritual activities, such as drawing blood for consumption in the Sacrifice Ceremony. It is noteworthy that despite the fact that *tumi* knives are commonly depicted in the Supernatural Confrontation Scene

and are used to draw blood of captives for ritual, they are not associated with warriors in neither the San Jose de Moro substyle nor any of the other fineline painting substyles.

A second type of warfare imagery of the San Jose de Moro fineline painting substyle presents anthropomorphic warriors carrying so-called "weapon bundles." These figures, which often take the form of birds or crayfish, have humanoid limbs in which they carry weapon bundles. Weapon bundles are compound artistic elements composed of the wardrobe and accessories of warriors, and are often associated with captives. They tend to have a circular or rectangular shield in its center, with a war club directly behind it. Several elements can appear on sides of the war club including headdresses, backflaps, tunics, spears, spear-throwers, and slings. The weapon bundle is the most frequently depicted element in San Jose de Moro fineline painted decorations, and is found on over fifty percent of known examples of this substyle. Unlike the *tumi* knives used in the Supernatural Confrontation Scene, the weapons carried by anthropomorphic warriors are consistent with those wielded by naturalistic depictions of Moche warriors engaged in combat.

Although they are depicted with far less frequency, weapon bundles are also found in the Huacas de Moche fineline painting substyle. A comparison of the weapon bundles depicted in San Jose de Moro with examples from the Huacas de Moche substyle demonstrates a great deal of continuity (Figure 2). They tend to share the same general composition, with a club placed vertically behind a shield, and spears located at diagonals. The weapons depicted in the bundles of these distinct substyles are similar, suggesting that those utilized in real life by warriors from San Jose de Moro also paralleled those used by other Moche populations. Jeffrey Quilter speculated that the Moche likely utilized tactics both for long-range and close-range confrontations.³⁷ Projectiles such as sling stones and darts were likely used to thin attacking lines, while clubs and shields would have been used in hand-to-hand combat. That the same weapons are portrayed in the Huacas de Moche and San Jose de Moro fineline painting substyles implies that the populations producing these subcategories of Moche art also used similar battle tactics.

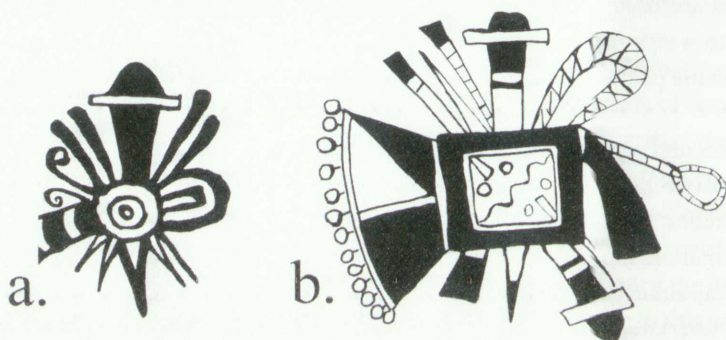


FIGURE 2. Artists unknown, rollout drawing comparing weapon bundles between the San Jose de Moro and Huacas de Moche substyles of fineline painting in stirrup spout ceramic bottles, 600–900 CE (Late Moche Period), slip paintings on ceramic vessels. Courtesy of Donna McClelland.

A CASE FOR “REAL” WARFARE AMONG THE SOUTHERN MOCHE

“Moche-on-Moche” battle scenes tend to be interpreted as ritual because warriors appear to be in Moche dress, yet such an assertion may be challenged for two reasons. First, the assumption that battling Moche warriors were of the same population could result from our own limited ability to identify ethnic markers. Astonishing advances within the past few years in identifying Moche fineline painted substyles has demonstrated that the field of Moche studies is still developing. In the course of a little over two decades, the field has shifted from conceptualizing the Moche as a single unified state, to one made up of regional (and possibly intervalley) polities, each with their own substyle of Moche art. As a result, it is not beyond the realm of possibilities that, at present, we simply cannot distinguish between members of distinct Moche communities within Moche art. It is noteworthy that in nearly all scenes of one-on-one combat, the dress of the aggressor and that of the defender are different. These distinctions likely held meaning that could be identified by Moche viewers, but are presently indecipherable to modern investigators.

Ethnohistoric accounts suggest that in the pre-Hispanic Andes, ethnicity was communicated through dress. Father Bernabe Cobo noted that each subject of the Inca Empire was forced to wear the “insignia or emblem” of their respective community on their clothes and headdresses in order to aid in their identification by the Inca administrators.³⁸ Furthermore,

Guaman Poma de Ayala observed that Inca subjects were ordered to wear only garments "customary in the tribe."³⁹ Archaeological evidence from the Azapa Valley, in Northern Chile, also supports the notion that textile design was linked to ethnic identity in the ancient Andes. Vicki Cassman's study of textiles from that area revealed the existence of only a single textile style from sites throughout the valley, which she found to be evidence that there was only a single ethnicity in the region.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that Cobo stated, "Since the Indians were beardless and of the same [skin] color, aspect and [physical] features, and since they used the same language and dressed the same way, it would be impossible to distinguish each nation in any other way [than their clothing]."⁴¹ This statement suggests that that neighboring communities are so closely linked genetically, that it can be difficult to distinguish members of one from another. Thus for the uninitiated, it may be impossible to comprehend the significance of the varied wardrobes and headdresses donned by Moche warriors, but a Moche viewer may have been able to identify rival soldiers according to the patterns and styles of their wardrobe.

A second point of contention against the interpretation of ritual warfare based on "Moche-on-Moche" battle scenes comes in the potential that these scenes may represent real battles between different Moche populations. An analogy to Maya depictions of warfare proves useful here. In many of their representations of war, Maya artists depicted "Maya-on-Maya" scenes, in which both sides of warriors share distinctly Maya traits. Returning to *Lintel 8* (date) from Yaxchilan, a scene depicts Yaxchilan's ruler Bird Jaguar capturing a rival ruler named Jeweled Skull. Bird Jaguar and Jeweled Skull both demonstrate characteristically Maya morphological features such as flattened foreheads. Additionally, capturer and captive each wear garments that are similarly crafted in a distinctly Maya way.⁴² Aided by the lintel's hieroglyphic inscriptions, we are able to learn that this scene commemorates an actual military victory that took place on May 9, 755 CE. Despite the propagandistic nature of this monument dedicated to Bird Jaguar's military prowess, this scene attests to the fact that there was Maya-on-Maya warfare.

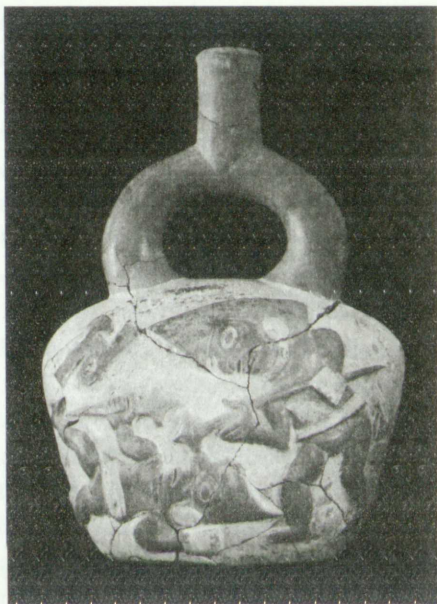
The notion that one-on-one battle scenes represent clashes between different Moche groups is supported by biodistance data of human sacrifice at the Huaca de la Luna Plaza 3A, a recessed plaza in the Huaca de la Luna notable for its integrated rock outcrop, was the location of a massacre of seventy

individuals.⁴³ Bodies of the victims were found strewn across the plaza floor with various degrees of disarticulation. Some were heavily mutilated, missing key body parts such as heads and limbs, while others appear to have had foreign objects inserted around the time of death.⁴⁴ Osteological analysis revealed that the victims were male and were all between the ages of fifteen to thirty-nine and were found to be of robust health, but several demonstrated evidence of recently healed bone fractures. These characteristics led to their identification as warriors. Subsequent analyses of the remains of the Plaza 3A victims focusing on their geographic origin have led to contentious results. A comparison of mtDNA from human remains in the Lambayeque and Moche Valleys (including samples from Plaza 3A) suggests that the victims came from the local population at Huacas de Moche.⁴⁵ Alternatively, a study of the epigenetic dental traits of the same sample of Plaza 3A victims was found to support the notion that these individuals came from Moche populations in distant valleys.⁴⁶ An additional study by Richard Sutter and John Verano using the same techniques but including victims from nearby Plaza 3C at the Huaca de la Luna also suggests that the sacrificed warriors were nonlocal. Sutter and Verano find that the victims of the earlier Plaza 3C were more closely related to the local population than those of Plaza 3A.⁴⁸ They propose that the sacrifices at Plaza 3C resulted from early military expansion of the Huacas de Moche site into neighboring valleys, and that the Plaza 3A victims were captives from a second campaign from even more distant ethnically Moche valleys.

DIFFERENCES IN REPRESENTATION OF WARFARE AS DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS WARFARE

The emergent picture suggests that the two Moche populations associated with the Huacas de Moche and San Jose de Moro substyles represented warfare in contrasting manners. Although they both appear to have fought largely through hand-to-hand combat, the Moche from Huacas de Moche emphasized naturalistic human warriors, while at San Jose de Moro warfare imagery was abstract and relegated to the supernatural realm. It is noteworthy that human warfare imagery was not wholly absent from the site of San Jose de Moro. The excavation of a Middle Moche burial (MU-813) by the San Jose de Moro Archaeological Project, which pre-dates the appearance of fineline decorations at the site, produced a stirrup spout bottle with a low relief, polychromatic decoration depicting two human

FIGURE 3. Artist unknown, an example of human warfare imagery on a Middle Moche stirrup spout bottle from San Jose de Moro, 400–600 CE (Middle Moche Period), ceramic stirrup spout bottle. Courtesy of the San Jose de Moro Archaeological Project.



warriors engaged in battle (Figure 3). The warrior on the right hovers above his enemy, as he strikes down a punishing blow with his club. The presence of this scene at San Jose de Moro demonstrates that local Moche artists were familiar with themes of human warfare, and speaks to the intentional nature of the absence of such designs from its fineline painting substyle.

It is possible then that the differing representations of warfare reflect variant attitudes towards war itself. In other words, war may have had a different meaning and significance on Huacas de Moche society than that of San Jose de Moro, which then resulted in differing modes of representation. For instance, war for the Moche living at Huacas de Moche may have been a manner of securing precious labor from newly conquered peoples needed for large-scale projects such as the erection of the Huacas de Moche, or perhaps enabled the acquisition of new arable farmlands. Alternatively, for the Moche in the Jequetepeque Valley, where sites had fortified walls, indicating a preoccupation with defense, warfare may have had negative connotations. For the Huacas de Moche polity, war functioned to support their society. In contrast, for Moche populations in the Jequetepeque Valley war may have had a negative impact and was a means for concern.

I propose that these divergent attitudes were reflected in the warfare imagery of both societies. Noble expressions of warfare and warriors that populate Huacas de Moche ceramics is contrasted by the notable absence of humans in San Jose de Moro's ceramic decorations. Instead of depicting the human face of war, San Jose de Moro relegates warfare to the gods. This may have been done as a means to solicit the gods for their help in battle. Perhaps the frequently depicted anthropomorphic bird warrior deity on San Jose de Moro fineline decorations was a patron deity for the polity. Like Athena, who was called upon to protect Athens, the San Jose de Moro Bird Warrior was invoked to prevent wars and to help drive away enemies in battle.

CONCLUSIONS

In his critique of Maya scholarship of the 1950s, David Webster stated that the Maya "achieved the singular reputation of being the only nonindustrial civilization not plagued by war and conflict, despite the fact that warriors, weapons, and captives or sacrificial victims were prominently displayed in their art."⁴⁹ When the word "Maya" is substituted with "Moche," Webster's statement becomes an apt description of our current understanding of this ancient Andean group. For Mayanists, the watershed moment, when the traditional perception that the Maya were a pacifistic society became obsolete, was realized when hieroglyphic inscriptions describing warfare among different polities were deciphered.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, at this point we have no decipherable Moche written language, perhaps recognizing that the Moche were composed of many polities each with its own socio-political organization and local traditions may serve as a turning point in Moche scholarship.

In this essay I have presented new perspectives on analyzing Moche images of war and provided new interpretations of Moche warfare. I have supported the position brought forth by previous scholars that real battles took place on the North Coast between different Moche factions by comparing different modes of representation present in two regional substyles of Moche fineline painting.⁵¹ Whereas examples in the Huacas de Moche substyle frequently depict human warriors, those of the San Jose de Moro substyle are limited to arms-bearing supernatural warriors that are never depicted engaged in battle. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that viewing substyles of fineline painting as distinct ideological programs produced by independent Moche

polities enables an unprecedented ability to compare Moche populations. Although this study focused on the subject of warfare, future inquiries will likely result in additional opportunities to differentiate between Moche polities. For instance, my dissertation traced the points of intersection among the San Jose de Moro substyle, the Huacas de Moche substyle as well as another fineline painting substyle that may have come out of the Chicama Valley in Late Moche times (which I call the Late Chicama substyle) as a means to speak to potential interaction among the Moche groups that produced them.

This is a very exciting time for the field of Moche studies. With unprecedented advances made each year, our ability to comprehend the ancient activities portrayed in their art is expanding beyond what was believed to have been impossible only a decade ago. This essay has utilized resources that were simply not available in many previous studies, including the revelation that there was no single Moche art style. When investigating the past of a culture such as the Moche that had no decipherable written language or known oral history, scholars are often faced with the problem of making the best interpretations possible with the available data. While in the past, evidence supported the model that Moche warfare was prescribed ritual; the current data indicates that there were indeed “real” battles depicted in Moche fineline painted decorations.

ETHAN COLE received his Ph.D. in Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles in May 2012 (adviser, Cecelia F. Klein). He is a member of the San Jose de Moro Archaeological Project and has offered courses as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His dissertation entitled, *Moche Marks of Distinction: Time and Politics in Painted Pottery Substyles of the Moche Culture, Peru AD 100–900*, expands upon many of the topics in this essay.

NOTES:

¹ Walter Alva and Christopher B. Donnan, *Royal Tombs of Sipán* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum of Cultural History at the University of California, Los Angeles, 1993); Christopher Donnan, “Deer Hunting and Combat: Parallel Activities in the Moche World,” in *The Spirit of Ancient Peru: Treasures from the Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera*, edited by Kathleen Berrin (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997); Christopher Donnan, “Moche State Religion: A Unifying Force in Moche Political Organization,” in *New Perspectives on Moche Political Organization*, edited by Luis Jaime Castillo and Jeffrey

Quilter (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 1997); Anne Marie Hocquenghem, *Iconografía mochica* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Católica del Perú, 1987); Jeffrey Quilter "Moche Politics, Religion, and Warfare," *Journal of World Prehistory* 16 (2), 2002; Jeffrey Quilter, "Art and Moche Martial Arts," in *Art and Archaeology of the Moche: An Ancient Andean Society of the Peruvian North Coast*, edited by Steve Bourget and Kimberly Jones (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); George Lau, "Object of Contention: An Examination of Recuay-Moche Combat Imagery," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* (14), 2004.

² Garth Bawden, *The Moche* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Garth Bawden, "The Art of Moche Politics," in *Andean Archaeology*, edited by Helaine Silverman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2004); Luis Jaime Castillo, "Moche Politics in the Jequetepeque Valley: A Case for Political Opportunism," in *New Perspectives on Moche Political Organization*, edited by Luis Jaime Castillo and Jeffrey Quilter (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2010); Claude Chapdelaine, "Recent Advances in Moche Archaeology," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19(2), 2011; Elizabeth DeMarais, Luis Jaime Castillo and Timothy Early, "Ideology, Materialization and Power Strategies," *Current Anthropology* 37 (1), 1996.

³ Donnan, "Moche State Religion," 60.

⁴ Santiago Uceda and José Armas, "An urban pottery workshop at the site of Moche, North Coast of Peru," *MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology*, supplement to Vol 15 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998).

⁵ Santiago Uceda, Claude Chapdelaine, Claude Chauchat, and John Verano, "Fechas radiocarbónicas para el complejo arqueológico Huacas del Sol y la Luna: Una primera cronología del sitio," in *Informe técnico 2001: Proyecto arqueológico Huaca de la Luna*, edited by Santiago Uceda, Elías Mujica and Ricardo Morales (Trujillo: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, La Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, 2002).

⁶ Uceda et al., "Fechas," 199–200.

⁷ Ibid, 201.

⁸ Chapdelaine, "Recent Advances"; DeMarais et al., "Ideology"; Donnan, "Moche State Religion"; Donna McClelland, Don McClelland and Christopher Donnan, *Moche Finesline Painting from San José de Moro* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, 2007); Margaret Jackson, *Moche Art and Visual Culture in Ancient Peru* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Jeffrey Quilter, "The Narrative Approach to Moche Iconography," *Latin American Antiquity* 8 (2), 1997; Quilter, "Moche Art of War"; Edward Swenson, "Cities of Violence: Sacrifice, Power and Urbanism in the Andes," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 3 (2), 2003; Santiago Uceda, "Investigations at Huaca de la Luna, Moche Valley: An Example of Moche Religious Architecture," in *Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (Washington D.C.: Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XL, 2001).

⁹ Donnan, "Moche State Religion," 58.

¹⁰ Bawden, "The Art of Moche Politics," 127.

¹¹ Ibid, 123–4.

¹² Ibid, 291, 296.

¹³ Greg Lockard, "A Design Analysis of Moche Finesline Sherds from the Archaeological Site of Galindo, Moche Valley, Peru," *Andean Past* 9 (2009), 200.

¹⁴Bawden, "Symbols," 301; Tom Dillehay "Town and Country in Late Moche Times: A View from Two Northern Valleys," in *Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (Washington D.C.: Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XL, 2001), 262.

¹⁵Dillehay, "Town and Country," 262.

¹⁶Edward Swenson, "San Ildefonso and the Popularization of Moche Ideology," in *Arqueología Mochica: Nuevos Enfoques*, edited by Hélene Bernier, Luis Jaime Castillo, Gregory Lockard, and Julio Rucabado (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2008).

¹⁷Ibid, 418.

¹⁸Ibid, 408.

¹⁹Rafael Larco Hoyle, *Cronología Arqueológica del Norte del Peru* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Geográfica Americana, 1948).

²⁰Luis Jaime Castillo and Christopher Donnan, "Los mochicas del norte y los mochicas del sur," in *Vicús*, edited by Krzysztof Makowski (Lima: Banco del Credito del Perú, 1994).

²¹Luis Jaime Castillo and Santiago Uceda, "The Mochicas," in *Handbook of South American Archaeology*, edited by William Isbell and Helaine Silverman (New York City: Springer Science + Media LLC, 2008).

²²Christopher Donnan, *Moche Tombs at Dos Cabezas* (Los Angeles, CA: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, 2007); Christopher Donnan, "Moche Substyles: Keys to Understanding Moche Political Organization," *Boletín del Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino* 16(1) 2011; Donna McClelland et al., *Moche Finesline Painting from San Jose de Moro*.

²³Alva and Donnan, *Royal Tombs of Sipan*; Steve Bourget, "Rituals of Sacrifice: Its Practice at Huaca de la Luna and Its Representation in Moche Iconography," in *Moche Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Luis Jaime Castillo, "The Last of the Mochicas: A View from the Jequetepeque Valley," in *Moche Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (Washington D.C.: Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XL, 2001); Christopher Donnan, *Moche Portraits from Ancient Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); Christopher Donnan, "Moche State Religion"; Hocquenghem, *Iconografía Mochica*; Theresa Lange Topic and John R. Topic, "Hacia una comprensión conceptual de la guerra andina," in *Aqueologia antropologia e historia en los andes: Homenaje a Maria Rostworowski*, edited by Rafael V. Gabai and Javier F. Espinoza (Lima: Banco Central de Reserva del Peru, 1997); Swenson, "San Ildefonso."

²⁴Alva and Donnan, *Royal Tombs of Sipan*, 129.

²⁵Donnan, "Deer Hunting," 51–2.

²⁶John Verano, "War and Death in the Moche World: Osteological Evidence and Visual Discourse," in *Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury (Washington D.C.: Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XL.2001), 113.

²⁷Walter Alva, "Discovering the New World's Richest Tomb," *National Geographic* 174 (2), 1988; Alva and Donnan, *Royal Tombs of Sipan*; Christopher Donnan, "Iconography of the Moche: Unraveling the Mystery of the Warrior Priest," *National Geographic* 174(4): 1988; Christopher Donnan and Luis Jaime Castillo, "Finding the Tomb of a Moche Priestess," *Archaeology* 45(6): 1992.

- ²⁸ Richard C. Sutter and Rosa J. Cortez, "The Nature of Moche Human Sacrifice," *Current Anthropology* 46 (4): 2005; Richard C Sutter and John Verano, "Biodistance Analysis of the Moche Sacrificial Victims from the Huaca de la Luna Plaza 3C: Matrix Method Test of Their Origins," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* (132): 2007; Quilter, "Moche Politics"; Quilter, "Moche Art of War"; David Wilson, *Prehispanic Settlement Patterns in the Lower Santa Valley Peru* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988); Verano, "War and Death."
- ²⁹ Quilter, "Moche Art of War," 223.
- ³⁰ Verano, "War and Death," 122.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 122, Fig. 14.
- ³² Lau, "Object of Contention," Fig.3.
- ³³ See discussions by Elizabeth Arkush and Charles Stanish, "Interpreting Conflict in the Ancient Andes" *Current Anthropology* 46 (1): 2005; Topic and Topic, "Hacia una comprension."
- ³⁴ Arkush and Stanish, "Interpreting Conflict"; John Carman, "Beyond the Western Way of War: Ancient Battlefields in Comparative Perspective," in *Ancient Warfare: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by John Carman and Anthony Harding (Phoenix Mill, England: Sutton, 1999); Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).
- ³⁵ Luis Jaime Castillo, "Moche Politics in the Jequetepeque Valley: A Case for Political Opportunism," in *New Perspectives on Moche Political Organization*, edited by Luis Jaime Castillo and Jeffrey Quilter (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2010); Topic and Topic, "Hacia una comprension"; Swenson, "San Ildefonso."
- ³⁶ Swenson, "San Ildefonso," 417, 423.
- ³⁷ Quilter, "Moche Art of War."
- ³⁸ Father Bernabe Cobo, *History of the Inca Empire: An Account of the Indians' Customs and Their Origin Together with a Treatise on Inca Legends History, and Social Institutions*, translated by R. Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005[1653]), 196.
- ³⁹ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Letter to a King. A Peruvian Chief's Account of Life Under the Incas and Under Spanish Rule* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978[1615]), 53.
- ⁴⁰ Vicki Cassman, "A Reconsideration of Prehistoric Ethnicity and Status in Northern Chile: The Textile Evidence," PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology (Tempe, Arizona State University, 1997).
- ⁴¹ Cobo, *History of the Inca Empire*, 197.
- ⁴² Linda Schele and Mary Miller, *Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art* (New York: G. Braziller 1986), 212.
- ⁴³ Bourget, "Rituals of Sacrifice."
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Verano, "War and Death."
- ⁴⁵ Izumi Shimada Ken-ichi Shinoda, Steve Bourget, Walter Alva, Santiago Uceda, "MtDNA Analysis of Mochica and Sican Populations of Pre-Hispanic," in *Biomolecular Archaeology: Genetic Approaches to the Past*, edited by David M. Reed (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2005); Izumi Shimada, Ken-ichi Shinoda, Walter Alva, Steve Bourget, Claude Chapdelaine, Santiago Uceda, "The Moche People, Genetic Perspective on the Sociopolitical Composition and Organization," in *The Art and Archaeology of the Moche: An Ancient Society on the Peruvian North Coast*, edited by Steve Bourget and Kimberly Jones (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

⁴⁶ Sutter and Cortez, "The Nature of Moche Human Sacrifice."

⁴⁷ Sutter and Verano, "Biodistance Analysis."

⁴⁸ Ibid, 204.

⁴⁹ David Webster, "The Not So Peaceful Civilization: A Review of Maya War," *Journal of World Prehistory* 14 (1): 2000, 68.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Sutter and Cortez, "The Nature of Moche Human Sacrifice"; Sutter and Verano, "Biodistance Analysis."

PAINTING A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE: THE [IN]VISIBILITY OF THE CONVENT OF CORPUS CHRISTI, MEXICO CITY 1719–1775

AMY HAMMAN, Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of Art History, University of Arizona

Produced from the early sixteenth century onward, images of Spain's colonial territories generated a substantial body of cartographic materials and secular art. Within this expansive oeuvre exists a category of images devoted to the urban environment of Mexico City, formerly known as the viceregal capital of New Spain. Accomplished artists and draftsmen rendered their perceptions of the city on the surfaces of canvas paintings, topographical maps, and even elaborate folding screens used as room dividers. Depending on a variety of artistic and functional criteria, these images may be classified by scholars according to a variety of descriptive labels that include: landscape, *veduta*, profile, map, elevation, and so on. Besides demonstrating colonists' fondness for city views and the usefulness of such images in regard to urban planning, the sum of these works also establish a distinct and relatively unexplored category for art historical analysis.

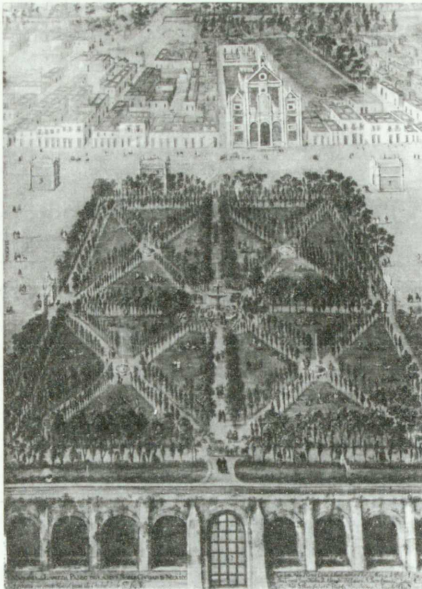


FIGURE 1. Anonymous, *Mapa de la Alameda Paseo de la Muy Noble Ciudad De Mexico*, ca. 1719, oil on canvas, 82.7 in x 58.25 in (210 cm x 148 cm). Courtesy of W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, Harvard University.

Mapa del Alameda Paseo de la Mui Noble Ciudad de México offers a prime example of a Spanish colonial landscape (Figure 1). Featured prominently in the mid-ground of this large canvas are the well-manicured gardens of the Alameda Park. Mature ash trees create the appearance of shady avenues that crisscross the lawns and direct the movement of figures. From a compositional standpoint, the prominent north/south thoroughfare bisects the image and creates a vertical axis leading the viewer's gaze to the facade of a large building that stands to the immediate right of the end of the thoroughfare. Carefully-wrought features, such as a tripartite portal, enclosed rooftop garden, twin bell towers, and a formidable brick façade indicate the structure is a church. Indeed, an explanatory key located the bottom of the painting verifies this assessment by identifying the building as, "the Convent of Corpus Christi fabricated by His Excellency the Marquee of Valero I."

The impact of the Convent of Corpus Christi upon the contours of colonial society cannot be overstated. Officially established in 1724, Corpus Christi provided a facility expressly reserved for nuns descended from the families of noble, pureblood Amerindians. It was the first of its kind in the Americas where throughout much of the colonial period ethnicity, gender, and class discrimination had prohibited native women from gaining official entry to any of the approximately fifty-three nunneries existing in the audiencia of Mexico. Sponsored by former Viceroy Zúñiga (also known as the Marquee of Valero, Viceroy 1716–1722), the foundation of Corpus Christi overturned more than two centuries of discriminatory policies. The convent also served as the prototype for three subsequent native nunneries including: Our Lady of Cosamaloapan in Valladolid (established 1734), Our Lady of Los Angeles in Oaxaca (established 1774), and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City (established 1811).¹

Taking into consideration the cultural significance of Corpus Christi and the Viceroy's personal interest in its establishment, the treatment of the convent within the aforementioned painting brings several issues into focus. Why for instance does the nunnery feature so prominently within the composition—locating, for example, the first ordinal reference of the textual inscription? Furthermore, to what extent did the artist faithfully depict features of the viceregal urban environment? What purposes might alteration, embellishment, and/or staging have served? While concrete

answers to these questions require further investigation, analysis of *Mapa del Alameda* and artworks of a similar nature can assist scholars in better understanding the ideology of visual representation within Spanish colonial landscape.

After establishing a theoretical framework from which to better comprehend the history of landscape in New Spain and discussing the social context in which the convent of Corpus Christi originated, this essay offers a reading of three paintings featuring Alameda Park, an area just north of the former convent. The visual handling of Corpus Christi within these works provides a source of insight from which to consider Spanish colonial perspectives on the assimilation of native and mixed-race populations, as well as how the arts were employed in an effort to communicate the various sociopolitical agendas of the viceregal state. The following essay contributes to existing scholarship on the social and cultural dimensions of colonial society through its application of art historical perspectives and analysis. The intent is to shed light on the ways in which visual representations of the city communicated specific messages about the “cultural landscape” of eighteenth century New Spain.

LANDSCAPE AND BUENA POLÍCIA

The essential starting point for this discussion is awareness that all landscape—despite ostensible veracity—must be understood as mediated representations of the social, political, and/or economic conditions existing within a given environment. Although definition of the term “landscape” continues to elicit debate among scholars, most would agree it refers to a category of works that offer graphic representation to a real or imagined location in order to facilitate understanding of space, concept, condition, process, and/or event. Author W.T. Mitchell offers researchers in this field a useful approach to the analysis of landscape. Using a theoretical model that takes into account both the transcendental viewing experiences of landscape and the semiotics inscribed within such works, Mitchell questions not what landscape *is* but what it *does* and how it functions as a cultural practice. He suggests that landscape operates as an instrument of power by naturalizing cultural constructions and giving form to the dominant ideology.² Put another way, landscape visualizes a complicated body of social, political, and economic practices in order to *make* history both within actual and represented environments.

Given the enormous amount of energy and resources directed toward the development of Spain's cartographic tradition, it appears the Crown, indeed, aspired to *make* history. It was under Phillip II (r. 1556–1598) that the official institutionalization of cartography developed and rose to its apogee in sixteenth-century Spain. Sovereign ruler over a vast, unknown territory that encompassed the Spanish Netherlands and stretched across the Atlantic to the Americas, Philip valued maps for their potential to communicate information about his kingdom and to relay the directives of the Crown. Knowing he was physically unable to see his territory in its entirety and interact with his subjects firsthand, Philip turned to the emerging field of cartography as substitute. According to author Barbara Mundy, for the King and his contemporaries “knowledge was predicated on seeing.”³ Thus, by shaping the unknown into something concrete and intelligible, visual images offered a solution to the physical distance of the far-flung Empire.

Throughout much of the colonial period, New World territories provided an inexhaustible subject of study for artists, cartographers, surveyors, and military engineers who strove to display both the built environment and the human communities existing therein. Through his work on images of Hispanic cities, Richard Kagan suggested that the representation of Spain's “Empire of Towns” stood out as a subject of particular fascination among image makers and their patrons. Special regard for artistic images of the “city” likely developed in response to the renewed interest Europeans paid to ancient Greco-Roman sources related to urban planning. Materials such as Vitruvius's *Ten Books on Architecture* and translations of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* led Renaissance luminaries like Leon Battista Alberti (1402–1472), Andrea Palladio (1508–1580), as well as neo-Aristotleian Spanish philosophers such as Alonso de Castrillo (flourished 1521), Diego Pérez de Mesa (1563–1616), and others, to correlate the practice of urban dwelling with the rise and development of civilized society.⁴

Spaniards' understanding of the word “city” or *ciudad* owed much to Aristotle's theories suggesting that a well-organized urban space promoted an auspicious environment for the institution of law, government, and religion. It was additionally believed that cities provided privileged spaces that sheltered citizens bound by common laws in an attempt to protect civic justice and promote individual virtue. Understood in these terms, the demand for New World urban views—particularly communicentric

landscapes—comes as little surprise. Defined as images intended to evoke the intangible social and cultural characteristics of a commonwealth, communicentric landscapes gave prominence and/or invention to certain features of the urban environment.⁵ Drawing attention to churches, civic architecture, and charitable institutions enabled Spanish colonial landscapes to communicate the “civilizing” effects of the Conquest, as well as an ineffable sense of community forged amongst Spaniards within hitherto unknown lands. Communicentric landscapes also relayed critical information about the preservation of Spanish social order as seen through their display of *policía*.

According to author Kagan, the term *policía* derived from Greek and Latin sources and expressed attitudes relating to governance—most especially good governance and the peace, as well as order and prosperity that flourished as result of conscientious stewardship. Additionally, Spaniards associated a secondary meaning to the word beyond its magisterial and punitive connotations. Alternate definitions of “*policía*” linked it to ideas relating to individual comportment, manners, and refinement. In essence, *policía* more accurately amounted to a complex state of being that on one hand pertained to the political structures of urban living, and on the other hand, described standards of polite society.⁶ Evidence supporting this interpretation can be found within sixteenth-century Spanish sources, which often referred to Amerindian neophytes (residing in towns, villages, or *reducciones*) as having become civilized or ser *político*.⁷ Clearly derived from the Spanish *policía*, this phrase takes into account both conceptions of the term: adherence to the communal laws of a commonwealth and an appropriate level of social decorum. Yet, before exploring how specific landscapes communicated *buena policía* and naturalized the cultural constructions of the dominant social group, the origination of the convent of Corpus Christi shall be discussed in order shed light on the complex ethnic and class relations of Spanish colonial society. An analysis of the developments that precipitated the 1724 establishment of the first convent reserved for pure-blood, native women will reveal the cultural transformations occurring within eighteenth-century Spanish colonial society.

CORPUS CHRISTI

The first female convent founded in the New World, *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* (Mexico City, 1540), offered respite to Spanish women opting a

religious life over conjugal domesticity. Admittance to *La Concepción* was selective and determined chiefly by legitimacy of birth and a family lineage derived from Old World Christian descendants. Ecclesiastical authorities believed these criteria best ensured that the standards and regulations of the Iberian world were upheld within a new colonial context. Accordingly, the admission policies of *La Concepción* became standard issue for convents later established in the Spanish Americas.⁸

While ethnicity and legitimacy of birth factored greatly, under the right circumstances certain exceptions were granted.⁹ The only members of society strictly barred from gaining entry through official channels were native women. Perceived as intellectually inferior, lacking self-discipline, and persistent in idolatrous practice, indigenous women were refused the opportunity to profess as black veiled nuns—those fully entitled to all the honors and obligations of life in the convent.¹⁰ The official position of the Church declared that these women, *las naturales de la tierra*, were immutably flawed by ethnicity and gender. According to officials, both afflictions fed wayward tendencies and rendered the women incapable of fulfilling the demands of their vows.¹¹ Therefore, for much of the colonial period, the roles of native women living within nunneries centered largely upon providing domestic service.

Although it would take nearly two hundred years to amend the admission policies of New Spanish nunneries, ecclesiastic support for the incorporation native women into the religious paradigm grew steadily throughout the colonial period. During the decades immediately following conquest, Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, suggested the humble natures of Amerindian women offered an apt example of model Christian behavior. Despite his observation, a majority of Church resources were allocated, instead, toward *colegios* providing grammar, art, and theological instruction to indigenous male youth, whom authorities deemed better suited to the rigors of formal education. Undeterred by his peers' reluctance to incorporate females into a program of Christian instruction, Zumárraga persisted in advocating for the spiritual interests of native women. In the early 1530s, he succeeded in organizing a girls' school that aimed to provide both religious instruction and an education in the "womanly arts." Within a few short years, however, the project was abandoned.¹²

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Spanish support for indigenous spiritual credibility surged. Belief in the special aptitude of native men and women to have transcendental Christian experiences was prompted, in part, by the writings of contemporary spiritual visionaries such as Theresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Friar Luis de León. Together, the messages put forward by these pious and uniquely "touched" individuals generated an eager and exuberant environment of religious abandon.¹³ In the Americas, the most well-known example of native spirituality was the account of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe before an Amerindian named Juan Diego; however, mendicant friars working on fringes of the frontier submitted reports that also built momentum. Over the century, the writings of these individuals coalesced into a substantial body of hagiographic literature documenting the pious natures of indigenous women and crediting them with great feats of devotion.¹⁴ Simultaneously, the works lessened Spaniards' doubts about the sincerity of Christian conversion amongst native populations.

One of the most prolific hagiographic writers of the seventeenth century was Jesuit scholar Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. Best known for his praise of Spanish Creole identity, Sigüenza y Góngora expressed a strong admiration for the ancestral peoples of the Americas. Through his writings, Sigüenza y Góngora commended certain aspects of pre-Conquest civilization in an attempt to strengthen his case for the ascendancy of Creole culture. Additionally, Sigüenza y Góngora was receptive to the idea that religious women, rather than men, might be endowed with a unique ability to communicate with the Divine. He cleverly formalized these attitudes in his allegorical narrative dealing with the Conceptionist convent of Jesús María located in Mexico City.

In *Parayso Occidental*, Sigüenza y Góngora suggested that the Conceptionist convent provided a metaphor for New Spain, which he extolled as a New World Paradise that had triumphed against sin and paganism. The manuscript also included uncommon praise of two indigenous women living within the convent. According to Sigüenza y Góngora, despite their lowly status as servants to the Spanish nuns, both Petronila de la Concepción and Francisca de San Miguel repeatedly demonstrated remarkable "proofs of grace." Discussing not only the miracles attributed to Petronila and Francisca, Sigüenza y Góngora argued the two should be honored as models

of Mexican, female virtue. He laid groundwork for this argument in the opening chapters of *Parayso* by crafting parallels between pre-Conquest Mexico and the ancient Greco-Roman world. Sigüenza y Góngora proposed that because vestal virgins were honored in both societies, the two great civilizations possessed similar cultural values.¹⁵ This argument supported the belief that native descendants of the great pre-Conquest societies were also noble and worthy in their own right.

The ideas expressed by Sigüenza y Góngora did not exist within a cultural vacuum. Indeed, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Bishop of Puebla (1640–1655), participated within the growing intellectual circle that sung praise to the virtues of indigenous people. Once again, of special consideration were native women, whose dignity, humble natures, innocence, and great piety continued to garner much admiration. Palafox and others fell short, however, of recognizing the infraction of social justice inflicted upon these women as result of convent admission policies. Dismissing the matter entirely, Palafox explained the inability of native women to profess was caused by an economic issue, not one of ethnic discrimination. In his *El libro de las virtudes del Indio*, Palafox entirely dismissed the question of ethnic discrimination by stating, “Lacking a dowry they [native women] enter the convents to serve willingly and with great pleasure.”¹⁶

Despite an apparent disinclination of the Church to formally rescind its admission policies, eighteenth-century society was poised for change. Unfortunately, exact events precipitating the establishment of Corpus Christi, the first convent to welcome professed native nuns, remain shrouded in mystery. Scholars do know that the project generated fierce debate among colonial officials and ecclesiastical authorities. However, supporters of the initiative had in their corner the highest secular authority in all of New Spain. Indeed, Viceroy Francisco Baltasar de Zúñiga y Guzmán (vr. 1716–1722), also known as the Marquis of Valero, played an essential role in the founding of Corpus Christi.

As the story goes, Viceroy Zúñiga, a pious man, sought the council of a young novice in the Franciscan convent of San Juan de la Penitencia concerning governmental affairs. The young woman, *Sor* Petra Francisco, held a reputation of exceptional piety, and incidentally, was the daughter of a wealthy Spanish couple. In her letter of response to Zúñiga, *Sor* Petra never

disclosed the Viceroy's reason for contacting her, but stated she would pray for quick resolve of the matter. She also mentioned her own fierce hope that the Viceroy would found a new convent for nuns of the First Rule of Saint Clare. Zúñiga, it seems, was so deeply moved by this request that he paid a personal visit to the young woman to further discuss the proposition.¹⁷ Although Sister Petra's initial appeal did not stipulate the convent be reserved for native women, negotiation between the two parties yielded this very outcome.

Yet, securing approval for the convent generated a storm of controversy amongst various ecclesiastical and civic bodies. Detractors of the initiative insisted native women remained incapable of managing the spiritual demands of cloistered life. Countering the opposition, Franciscan advocates argued that pureblood native women did not suffer from the irredeemable character flaws formerly ascribed to *los naturales* as a demographic whole. Even the Mexico City Council expressed reserve for the foundation of yet another convent whose charitable needs would create economic strain on the capital. Unwavering in his commitment to the convent, Zúñiga donated some 40,000 pesos for the project—an endowment intended to cover the living expenses of the nuns. In 1719, he also contracted Spanish architect Pedro de Arrieta to submit plans for the convent. Construction began in July of the following year. Although the dispute raged on for almost five years, the matter was finally put to rest when the royal charter arrived in March of 1724.¹⁸

According to the official paperwork, the nunnery would belong to the First Order of Saint Claire and would house thirty-three nuns.¹⁹ Franciscan ministers presided over inaugural ceremonies, which opened with three days of prayer and official blessings. These were open to the public. Community endorsement of a nunnery, even if somewhat sensationalized by the unique circumstances of Corpus Christi, was not uncommon. In her study of eighteenth-century nunneries in central Mexico, author Margaret Chowning found that, in most cases, residents avidly supported the foundation of female convents since the facilities bore testament to the outstanding Christian values of the community.²⁰ In this manner, Corpus Christi offered an asset, rather than concession, to the residents of the city.

Fabricated from local *tezontle* and *chiluca* stones, the facade of Corpus Christi provided a stunning focal point to the area south of Alameda Park. Just above the main portal of the convent, a monstrance carved in stone relief referenced the namesake of the Church. The heraldic *escudos* of Viceroy Zúñiga also appeared on either side of the monstrance in honor of his patronage. According to author Josephina Muriel, there was nothing outwardly “indigenous” in the appearance of Corpus Christi. The only indication of its designation as a native nunnery was an inscription located directly above the main portal. Placed within an elegant cartouche, letters carved in high-relief clearly stated:

This is a Franciscan convent for the Indian daughters of caciques and no others, the convent was founded and constructed by His Excellency Señor Don Baltazar de Zúñiga... being Viceroy, Governor and Captain General of this Kingdom, genteel man of the House of Your Majesty and Overseer of Your Royal *Audencia*.²¹

Indeed, so crucial was this fine point that Zúñiga, in 1727, petitioned and received a papal brief from Pope Benedict XIII to confirm that only legitimate daughters of noble, Indian *caciques* would be admitted to Corpus Christi.

PAINTING A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Returning to the aforementioned painting, *Mapa del Alameda* presents a striking communicentric portrait of Alameda Park and the surrounding urban environment (Figure 1). Naturally, city views completed prior to the foundation of the Convent of Corpus Christi did not include the convent; and, rarely did these images present a southern view of the city's yet undeveloped neighborhoods. Although the artist and date of completion remain unknown, the visual prominence of Corpus Christi suggests *Mapa del Alameda* was intended as a commemorative work, and completed 1719 or later in order to celebrate the convent and honor the accomplishments of the Viceroy. Favorable regard for the nunnery is suggested here by the artist's careful treatment of it. Weighting the upper one third of the composition, the convent enjoys a commanding presence. Sight lines created by the main thoroughfare of the Alameda move the viewer's gaze to the main portal. Its

barred doors and windows, as well as small rooftop garden, symbolize the purity and strict enclosure of the nuns inside. Although sculptural details of the main façade have been rendered, they appear to depart from historical accuracy.²³

The vertical orientation of the canvas works to naturalize a theoretical partitioning of space, specifically a distinction between divine and profane spheres. Like colonists elsewhere in the Spanish Americas, residents of the viceregal capital believed that nunneries offered profound benefit to the community at large. As the epitome of earthly perfection, observant nuns were thought to share in an intimate bond with God. While for the laity this closeness was unattainable, the faithful nevertheless believed that ordinary folks could leverage the nuns' spiritual closeness with the Divine. Developing close friendships with cloistered nuns was one way the laity could ensure an abundance of prayer on their behalf.²⁴ The juxtaposition of the public garden with that of the convent reinforces an interpretation that normalizes cultural perceptions about the communal value of religious institutions. The message is clear—while the gentry enjoy a day of leisure in the park, a community of unseen nuns works diligently to safeguard the collective welfare.

Additionally, the carefully orchestrated composition projects a favorable image of the order, cleanliness, and efficiency of the viceregal capital—a civility suggestively represented by a buoyant image of verdant park, prosperous, city, and convivial citizens. The notion of responsible stewardship as it relates to *Mapa del Alameda*, thus, raises the issue of how landscape visualizes the real and illusionary practices of *buena policía*. Of interest to this interpretation is the title of the work. Consider, for example, *Mapa del Alameda Paseo de la Mui Noble Ciudad de México*, a rather cumbersome phrase literally painted onto the canvas. By definition, this landscape offers “*un mapa*”—a word that in eighteenth-century, Spanish vernacular meant a brief description of the sight and state of something and all of its inclusive elements.²⁵ An informational key, located at the bottom of the canvas, offers additional supporting evidence. By identifying eight critical features of the landscape—including, the aqueduct, nunnery, eastern and western entrances to the park, and four park fountains commissioned by Zúñiga—*Mapa del Alameda* presents an informative summary of the urban environment. In other words, the landscape offers testament to the

buena policía of the Viceroy near the completion of his term, a tenure that spanned from 1716 to 1722.

Furthermore, although one might simply accept Zúñiga's activism in the foundation of Corpus Christi as evidence of his altruism, this interpretation seems somewhat naïve when considering the Viceroy never explicitly revealed his motives for establishing the convent. He also did not justify his rationale in insisting it be reserved for native women. As suggested by author Asunción Lavrín, the Viceroy may have envisioned the convent as his personal contribution to festivities celebrating the second centennial conquest of Mexico, occurring in 1721.²⁷ If true, the visual prominence of Corpus Christi within *Mapa del Alameda* conveyed a profound symbol of the triumph of Church and Crown over a now fully assimilated indigenous population. The acceptance of pureblood, native women to one of the most prestigious vocations of society also gave credence to Spaniards' claims that the Conquest had "civilized" the peoples of the Americas. Furthermore, the success of this endeavor epitomized Spanish enterprise and the complete appropriation of all the colony had to offer in terms of spiritual and human capital. In this way, *Mapa del Alameda* visualizes a historical precedence of *buena policía* credited to Viceroy Zúñiga, steward of the Spanish Crown.

Directing visual attention to the Convent of Corpus Christi also allows *Mapa del Alameda* to formalize complex ideas about Spanish beliefs about ethnicity—most directly the concept of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) and its relation to social class. Recall that in 1727, three years after the establishment of Corpus Christi and five years concluding the Viceroy's term of office, Zúñiga solicited a papal brief from Pope Benedict XIII confirming that only legitimate daughters of pureblood, Indian *caciques* would be admitted to the convent. Presumably, the intent was to prevent the entrance of women with mixed race or indeterminable backgrounds. As María Elena Martínez discussed in her work on genealogy and the construction of race in Spain and Colonial Mexico, the meaning of the term *limpieza de sangre* was incredibly complicated and somewhat mutable. For much of the colonial period, for example, Spaniards generally defined *limpieza de sangre* in terms of religion wherefore its application distinguished Spaniards descended from Old World Christians with complete absence of Jewish, Moorish, or heretical ancestry.²⁸ Understood in this manner, the term carried extraordinary weight in the determination of one's social status.

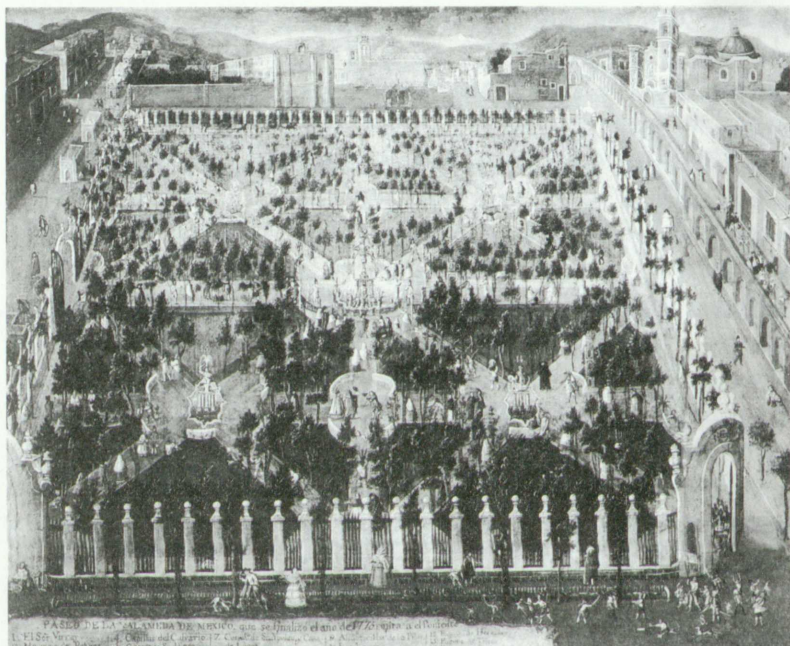


FIGURE 2. Anonymous, *Paseo de la Alameda de Mexico*, ca. 1775, oil on tin 18.5 in x 22 in (47 cm x 56 cm). Courtesy of private collection.

However, by the eighteenth century, a complex process of cultural change prompted Spaniards to revise definition and use of the term. As a result, “*limpieza de sangre*” could be applied in reference to pureblood indigenous peoples—provided they possessed a genealogical record of blood purity and meritorious Catholic service.²⁹ Thus, Amerindians fitting the criteria were afforded a measure of increased social status in opposition to the large and ever-growing mixed race, caste population. Within *Mapa del Alameda*, the visual prominence of Corpus Christi (also inscribed within the key as the premier focal point of the image) supports the assumption that although the convent housed primarily native women, their purity of blood and distinguished lineage ranked them among society’s elite. Presentation of the Convent of Corpus Christi, a principal subject of this cultural landscape, therefore, expresses societal regard for an institution that preserved class boundaries and the ethnic standards of elite society.

Another landscape, completed approximately fifty years following the production of *Mapa del Alameda*, offers a strikingly different portrait of the built environment surrounding Alameda Park (Figure 2). Dated 1775, *Paseo de la Alameda* again features a bird's eye view of Alameda Park; yet, it departs from *Mapa del Alameda* in its omission of the Convent of Corpus Christi. Using the previous painting as a point of reference, the orientation of *Paseo de la Alameda* has been shifted ninety degrees counterclockwise, so that the top of the canvas aligns due west. The location of Corpus Christi should be to the left of the viewer; however, it remains [in]visible, falling just outside the picture plane. While it appears the painting has been cropped for framing purposes, an explanatory key also does not reference the convent. Alternatively, activities occurring in and around Alameda Park occupy center stage.

The tighter composition serves two purposes. First, unlike *Mapa del Alameda* which directs attention to the lay-out and condition of a large portion of the city, *Paseo de la Alameda* presents only the area immediately surrounding Alameda Park and brings to focus the social exchanges occurring there. In doing so, this landscape initiates a dialogue about life in the viceregal capital. Secondly, through its representation of the social ambit, *Paseo de la Alameda* offers viewers a rare glimpse of the boisterous nature of viceregal society. Figures obscured or abbreviated within *Mapa del Alameda* have been rendered, here, more legible. Soldiers, vendors, clerics, and men and women exhibiting the trappings of high society, interact with one another in a congenial, park setting. Closer inspection also reveals differences in the presentation of the park such as a formidable iron fence that skirts the perimeter. Although prettified with stone pillars topped by finials, this enclosure creates a barrier between figures contained within the park and others that linger on the fray.

Among those depicted outside of the park are beggars, vagrants and hooligans, who loiter just beyond the eastern gate. One particularly rowdy group, visible in the lower, right-hand corner, provides a measure of comic relief. Waving makeshift swords and battle implements, these revelers cavort in a make believe game centered upon the 1492 *Reconquista*. This tableau is, in fact, labeled "8. *Muchachos jugando a moros y cristianos*." Others, labeled "10. *Los Locos*," include several grouping of single or multiple figures.

In demonstrating their lack of mental and/or moral correctness, these individuals brawl (upper, right-hand corner) or teeter unsteadily through the streets (far right mid-ground). The most reproachable act of indecency, however, is perpetrated by a figure located in the lower right-hand corner of the painting. With pants pulled down and posterior exposed, the squatting personage is engaged in a rather delicate matter. Indeed, he appears to be defecating near the arcades of the aqueduct.

Unlike the first painting, *Paseo de la Alameda* takes care to present what may be considered correctional institutions or reformatory facilities. For example, "7. *Convento de San Ypolito y Casa de Locos*," identifies a convent housing the mentally ill (upper right-hand corner). Likewise, "2. *Hospicio de pobres*," identifies the Mexico City Poorhouse, visible in the top left-hand corner of the canvas and physically located just two doors west of the Convent of Corpus Christi. Both charitable institutions, the *Hospicio* and the *Casa de Locos*, were established in 1774 under the directive of Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa.³⁰ But what do these institutions have to do with the [in]visibility of Corpus Christi; and, how do the appearances of a poorhouse and asylum comment upon a shifting cultural landscape?

As previously discussed, the presentation of Corpus Christi within *Mapa del Alameda* offers visual representation to a monumental achievement of equality within a long trajectory of ethnic struggles. However, some fifty years later, that focus shifts from the convent to social rehabilitation centers. *Paseo de la Alameda*, unlike *Mapa del Alameda*, also addresses the unsightly elements of colonial society and presents the agencies responsible for correcting them. In the manner suggested by author Mitchell, the latter landscape works to visualize the prevailing ideological position of the dominant social group—in this case, the colonial elite. *Paseo de la Alameda* provides a visual description supporting claims made by eighteenth-century social critics who complained about the presence of the poor and the woeful state of city infrastructure.³¹ As such, the landscape communicates competitive relationships occurring between various social and institutional apparatuses. Put another way, this painting offers a class view that embodied the beliefs of colonial elite, which quite literally associated the city's poor with the repugnant functions of the lower body.³² It differs from *Mapa del Alameda* in its presentation of the contours of colonial society because the cultural landscape of *Paseo de la Alameda* does not appear to differentiate

or give visual prominence to any particular race or ethnic group—as, for example, the representation of the convent had accomplished in the prior painting. Instead, this image comments upon the economic base of viceregal society (with no apparent regard for race), suggesting that the idleness of the unemployed and the shameful habits of the poor, such as drinking, gambling, and begging, undermined the tranquility of the park and city at large.

As Pamela Voekel explained through her work on social conflict in the late eighteenth century, New Spain's colonial elite despised the urban poor and held this group responsible for the many ills plaguing the city—problems such as unsanitary conditions, outbreaks of disease, and the overall moral dissolution of colonists. Fueled by interventionist vigor, colonial administrators undertook unprecedented efforts to transform the physical environment of the viceregal capital and the ethical values of its subjects. Morality campaigns railed against the lower classes and cited the poor as antagonistic to the economic, political, and social aspirations of the State. Persecution of this group also, provided a convenient means to preserve class identity in a society in which *limpieza de sangre* had become an increasingly muddled concept, and the elevated class distinction it denoted, harder to ascertain.³³

Here, the concept of *buena policía*, formerly visualized by images of straight streets, regular plazas and a proliferation of churches, found new representation in a cultural landscape that drew a distinction between the masses and the “civilized individual.” This person was one who internalized the virtues of self-discipline, moderation, and moral integrity—in short, the self-definition of the elite. Treatment of the urban environment seen within *Paseo de la Alameda* encourages this sort of class comparison. Here, all manner of unsavory characters skulk in the margins, literally and figuratively just outside of polite society. Unable to comply with standards of decorum, these rogues represent the unlawful practices and moral pollution of the city. The fortified gates and iron fencing seen within this image provide, as well, an illusionary account of actual park conditions.³⁴ In this case, the barrier shelters those assembled inside the park and sets apart shadowy delinquents still in need of rehabilitation. Understood in these terms, it seems reasonable that the Convent of Corpus Christi would be minimized within *Paseo de la Alameda*—a cultural landscape giving prominence to reformatory institutions like the *Hospicio* and *Casa de Locos* and juxtapositions of social

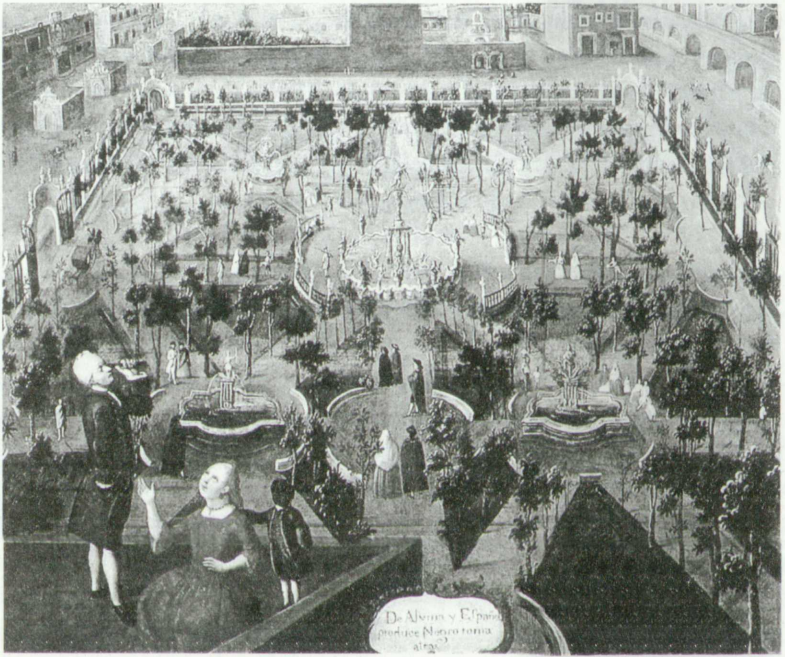


FIGURE 3. Anonymous, *De Albina y Español produce Negro torna atrás*, ca. 1775, oil on copper, 18.1 in x 21.7 in (46 cm x 55 cm). Courtesy of the Colección Banco Nacional de México.

class. Analysis of a final image will provide further insight into the ideology of race, class and governance addressed within Spanish colonial landscapes.

Similar to the previous two paintings, *De Albina y Español* (ca. 1775) features a panoramic view of Alameda Park (Figure 3). The painting is horizontally-oriented, and, like *Paseo de la Alameda*, displays the park from an Eastern vantage. Differing from the other paintings, however, this scene has been brought into sharper focus and provides a probing view of the park and three figures poised on a balcony overlooking the grounds. Once again, the convent of Corpus Christi is not visualized; but the *Hospicio* is, and stands out among only a few discernible buildings. Additionally, the outcasts of society, displayed within *Paseo de la Alameda*, are no longer part of the scene, which alternatively features an image of well-mannered and law-abiding citizens who stroll peacefully within the park.

De Albina y Español also differs from the previous paintings because it belongs to a genre of colonial artworks, known as *pinturas de castas* or caste paintings. Generally consisting of a series of sixteen to twenty individual canvases, caste paintings visualized the *mestizaje* or (blood) mixing of Spaniards, Amerindians, and Africans. Unique to eighteenth century Spanish America, scholars now understand the genre to have been responsive to the assertion of Creole identity and the socioeconomic hierarchies of colonial society.³³ Caste sequences invariably began with the pairing of two pureblood races—specifically, the union of Spaniard and an Amerindian to produce a *mestizo* child. African bloodlines were introduced by the fourth succession with the pairing of a Spaniard and African to yield a *mulata/o*. Colonists additionally believed that individuals of ethnic variation inherited stereotypical characteristics, including physical features, temperaments, and professional and intellectual aptitudes. These beliefs colored the nature, so to speak, of the *sistema de castas* or caste system.

In contrast to the paintings previously examined, *De Albina y Español* offers viewers visual access to the world of the upper crust. A stylish trio of figures, representing a family, occupies the lower left-hand side of the canvas. Man, woman, and child are situated on a tile floor, indicating a private veranda. Identified as, “*Español*,” the male figure stands erect peering intently upon the scene at hand. His vision is aided by the use of a spyglass. Meanwhile, the Albino woman, with upward gaze and outstretched arms, kneels in a gesture that could either read as prayer or exasperation. Evidence of the latter is suggested by the woman’s posture and stance, seeing as she turns her back to the child. Both parents, in fact, appear wholly uninterested in their offspring, a small boy pejoratively labeled *Negro torno atrás* or “Black return backwards.” One may speculate as to whether or not colonial audiences appreciated a compositional arrangement lending itself to visual pun.

Through a narrative of *mestizaje*, *De Albina y Español* communicates the anxiety colonial elite felt about a social pecking order they believed unstable. As Ilona Katzev explained in her seminal study of colonial caste paintings, racial classification was a highly impractical and fluid concept. The categorization of race as projected by the *sistema de castas*, as well as Spaniards’ preoccupation with *limpieza de sangre*, only underscored the inadequacy of such artificial determinations to the preservation of the social hierarchy.³⁶ Indeed, author María Elena Martínez demonstrated how

late colonial society became increasingly alarmed by the blurring of social boundaries, as physical appearances, among other factors, failed to offer a reliable method of ascertaining social status. The colonial elite perceived this ambiguity as a threat to the order that defined the social superiority of the upper classes—a system they believed essential to the organization of civilized society. As *De Albina y Español* makes apparent, even the so-called marginalized members of caste society, in this case the “*Negro torno atrás*,” could gain access to the upper class where tailored clothing and impeccable manners concealed a dubious ancestry of mixed-race descent. Whether intentional or not, this painting and the genre to which it belongs, also makes a parody of eighteenth-century social correctness and the transparent fraud of *limpieza de sangre* within a clearly heterogeneous society.

Secondly, by exploring the faculty of vision as a subject, this painting additionally confronts ideas relating to the administration and governance of colonial society. Within *De Albina y Español*, vision is both subject and verb. From his propriety post, the ever-vigilant Spaniard actively looks upon society. His vision is aided by a spyglass, ensuring no misdeed, great or small, escapes notice. This arrangement works to suggest the present state of order has been executed as a result of careful observation, or surveillance of the populace. Enforcing the “public gaze”—in this example, a visual rhetoric supplanting the concept of *buena policía*, was a real and concrete goal of late eighteenth century civic reformers. As Pamela Voekel explained, the cultured elite sought to expand the criminal justice system and renovate city infrastructure in order to enforce the “public gaze” and bring the misdeeds of the poor under direct surveillance. Important contributions to this endeavor included, for example, a reorganization of the city into thirty-two jurisdictions manned by the *Alcaldes de Barrio* and *Guardafaroleros*, two special police forces; public street lighting projects; and numerous regulations directed at policing the city’s taverns and other alcohol-serving establishments.³⁷

Just as Corpus Christi within *Mapa del Alameda* represented the physical arm of the Church, the Spaniard in this cultural landscape embodies the human extension of new correctional institutions like the *Hospicio de Pobres*, as well the social engineering impulses of the latter part of the century. With spy glass raised and pressed to his eye, the ever-vigilant Spaniard forcibly probes the scene before him. The figure—understood, here, as a metaphor

for the “public gaze”—uses the instrument to extract a penetrating view of society at large, a vantage that would otherwise be inaccessible and outside the scope of vision. Within *De Albina y Español*, the faculty of sight and the visual manipulation of the “public gaze,” give representation to the chief strategy colonial reformers applied in their attempts to expose and correct the misdeeds of the lower classes. Under the intense and duty-bound scrutiny of the Spaniard, it appears justice will prevail. The presence of the figure, thus, symbolizes the inescapable “long arm of the law” as envisioned by the city’s elite, as well as the corrective institutions intended to shape society’s misfits into productive individuals. Carefully controlled and frighteningly omniscient, the staging also works to suggest that the all-seeing eye of God has been superseded by that of the all-seeing eye of the colonial punitive system.

CONCLUSION: THE ART OF LANDSCAPE

In conclusion, this essay has sought to challenge the problems of visual representation encountered in three Spanish colonial landscapes. Doing so has provided insight into colonial attitudes about the assimilation of native and mixed-race populations, as well as the social conditions of viceregal society. Each of the landscapes examined, here, can be understood to have functioned as a medium of exchange by naturalizing the cultural conventions of the dominant social group, at times varying from viceregal authorities to the social elite of the late eighteenth century. While the touchstone for this study has been the visual presentation of the Convent of Corpus Christi—an institution whose foundation in the early eighteenth century evidenced the profound ethnic struggles of the Spanish colonial period—two additional themes have emerged to overshadow the historiography of the convent. These include the presentation of *buena policía* and the concept of *limpieza de sangre*.

At first pass, these themes have little to do with developments surrounding the establishment of the convent. However, I maintain the account of Corpus Christi remains significant to this investigation as it evidences the profound social changes of the century and the first stirrings of what historian Pamela Voekel identifies as *piedad ilustrada* or enlightened piety—an eighteenth century Catholic reform movement experienced in the colonies and in Spain.³⁸ Those of the *piedad ilustrada* promoted a more egalitarian theology that condemned the dominant influences of Old Guard social hierarchies

and exalted an internalized piety hinged upon the virtues of self-discipline.³⁹ While this avenue of research remains underrepresented within the present essay, continued research will likely yield multiple intersections of relevancy to bring these culturally-contingent themes: Catholic Reform, colonial administration, and racial miscegenation, into alignment. Throughout this essay I have discussed the manner in which the visual handling of Corpus Christi referenced a shifting “cultural landscape;” yet, my interest in this subject belongs to a larger set of research questions directed at the spatial, political, and cultural dimensions of Mexico City as represented in urban views.

AMY HAMMAN is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she studies Spanish colonial visual culture with Stacie Widdifield. Amy completed her Master of Arts at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. Guided by the direction of Kelly Donahue-Wallace, her M.A. thesis dealt with political imagery displayed by nineteenth and twentieth-century Mexican *ex-votos*. Amy's dissertation project, titled *The Art of Landscape and the Cultural Dimensions of Urban Renewal in Late Eighteenth-Century Mexico City, 1789–1794*, analyzes visual evidence pertaining to the spatial, economic, and cultural dimensions of urban renewal in late, eighteenth-century New Spain.

NOTES:

¹ Josefina Muriel, “El Convento de Corpus Christi de México. Institución para indias caciques,” in *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, II, 7 (México, 1941), 88–107 offers a rich history of the Covent of Corpus Christi. For a discussion of other indigenous convents consult Asunción Lavrin, *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 265–266. For an approximate number of convents existing in New Spain, Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 351.

² W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1–3.

³ Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 7–9. See also, Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 8–9, 12–29.

⁴ Richard L. Kagan and Fernando Marías, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 10. For an overview of these ideas see, Santiago Quesada, *La idea de ciudad en la cultura hispana de la edad moderna* (Barcelona, 1992).

⁵ My understanding of the term “communicentric” derives from Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World* and Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26–28, 33–36; and Padrón, *The Spacious Word*, 101.

⁷ Kagan, *Urban Images*, 37.

⁸ Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*; Asunción Lavrin, “Indian Brides of Christ: Creating New

Spaces for Indigenous Women in New Spain," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 15, no. 2 (Summer, 1999): 225–260; Asunción Lavrin and Rosalva Loreto López, *Monjas y Beatas: La Escritura Femenina En La Espiritualidad Barroca Novohispana: Siglos XVII y XVIII* (Mexico: Universidad de las Américas-Puebla: Archivo General de la Nación, 2002); Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Josefina Muriel, *Conventos De Monjas En La Nueva España* (México, D.F.: Santiago, 1946); Muriel, *Las Indias Cacique De Corpus Christi*, 2nd ed. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2001); and Pilar Gonzalbo, *Las Mujeres En La Nueva España: Educación y Vida Cotidianana* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1987).

⁹ Gonzalbo, *Las Mujeres*, 213–214. Here, the author discusses two mestiza daughters of Isabel de Moctezuma who were admitted to La Concepción after their mother's death.

¹⁰ Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ," 247–248.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 225–260.

¹² José María Kobayashi, *La Educación Como Conquista: Empresa Franciscana En México* (México: El Colegio de México, 1974), 239–92 and Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 246–247.

¹³ Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ," 230.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 231–241.

¹⁵ Kathleen Ross, *The Baroque Narrative of Carlos De Sigüenza y Góngora: A New World Paradise* (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 67–69; Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, *Parayso Occidental plantado y cultivado por la liberal benéfica mano de los muy católicas y poderosos reyes de España nuestros señores en su magnifico real convento de Jesús María de Mexico [1684]* (Mexico: UNAM-ConduMex, 1995).

¹⁶ Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *El libro de las virtudes del Indio* (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, no date), 40.

¹⁷ Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ," 241–242. For a more thorough discussion of the term of Viceroy Zúñiga and his involvement in the foundation of Corpus Christi see, Muriel, "El Convento de Corpus Christi," 88–94.

¹⁸ Muriel, *Las Indias Caciques de Corpus Christi*, 45.

¹⁹ Muriel, "El Convento de Corpus Christi," 92; Lavrin, "Indian Brides," 245; and Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 259.

²⁰ Margaret Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752–1863* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 38–40.

²¹ ESTE CONVENTO ES DERELIGIOSAS FRANCISCANAS INIDAS HIJAS DE CACIQUES Y NO PARA OTRAS, SE EDIFICO YFUNDO POR EL EXCELENTISIMO SENOR DON BALTAZAR DE ZUNIGA Y GUZMAN SOTOMAYOR YMENDOZA, MARQUE DE VALERO Y ALENQUER, SIENDO VIRREY, GOBERNADOR Y CAPTIANGENERAL DE ESTE REYNO, GENTIL HOMBRE DE LA CAMARA DE SU MAGESTAD Y OIDOR DE SU REALAUDENCIA.

²² Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ," 245.

²³ The relief sculpture appearing above the main portal appears to be a representation of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception; and in fact looks very different the actual relief sculpture installed in 1729 featuring a monstrance, see Muriel, "El Convento de Corpus Christi," 103. This speculative evidence provides suggests that Mapa del Alameda was completed sometime between 1719 and 1729. To be certain, the provenance of this

painting is need of further investigation.

²⁴ Chowning, *Rebellious Nuns*, 38. Of course, in addition to spiritual favors, convents and nunneries provided real and tangible benefit to colonial communities as they often severed as money lending institutions. For further discussion see, Lavrin, "The Role of the Nunneries in the Economy of New Spain in the Eighteenth Century," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Nov., 1966): 371–393.

²⁵ *Diccionario de la Lengua Espanola* (Real Academia Espanola). (Madrid: Real Academia Espanola, 1734). "Mapa: Aquel escrito en que en resumen se pone á la vista el estado de alguna cosa con todas sus partes." The main entry for "mapa" is as follows: "Mapa. La descripcion geográfica de la tierra, que regularmente le hace en papel ó lienzo, en que se ponen los lugares, mares, rios, montañas, y otras cosas notables, con las distancias proporcionadas, segue el pitipí que se elige, señalando los grados de longitud y latitud que oua el País que se describe, para conocimiento del parage ó lugar que cada cosa destas ocupa en la tierra..."

²⁶ The cartouche reads: "Mapa del Alameda Paseo de la Mui Noble Cividad de Mexico, Las cañas por donde biene el agua ala Ciudad desde Sta. Fee 8., Convento Corpus Chrisit de fundo por El Excelentísimo Sr. Marquez de Balero 1., las cuatro fuentes que dicho Señor, mandó hacer nuevas 2., Hermitas del Calvario, 3. Puerta San Ysabel 4., Puerta 5., Puerta San Diego 6., Puerta a San Juan de Dios 7."

²⁷ Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ," 242.

²⁸ María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza De Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

²⁹ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 200–226.

³⁰ Silvia Marina Arrom, *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774–1871* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Richard A. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Masses in Mexico City from Colony to Republic* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

³¹ See for example, Hipólito Villarroel, *Enfermedades Políticas Que Padece La Capital De Esta Nueva España*. 3 ed. (México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1999).

³² Pamela Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace: Bodily Resistance to Bourbon Reforms in Mexico City," *Journal of Historical Society*, 5:2 (1992): 184, 199–202.

³³ Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace," 183–208.

³⁴ María Estela Duarte, Américo Sánchez, and Nadia Ugalde, *Alameda: Visión Histórica y Estética De La Alameda De La Ciudad De México* (México, D.F.: Inst. Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2001), 261. Iron gates were installed in 1732 under Viceroy Don Juan de Acuña, and renovated in 1766 under Viceroy Don Carlos Francisco de Croix.

³⁵ Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*.

³⁶ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 227–264.

³⁷ Voekel, "Peeing on the Palace," 183–208. See also, Magali Carrera, *Imaging Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 106–116.

³⁸ Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 43–76. See also, Arrom, *Containing the Poor*, 32–39.

³⁹ Voekel, *Alone Before God*, 1.

A BURNING DESIRE: LOS ANGELES AS FEMME FATALE

TATIANA REINOZA, Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of Art History, University of Texas at Austin

Los Angeles is a city that seems to love life on the edge, whether through destructive nature or politics or LAPD or through illusionistic Hollywood, Disneyland or the endless traffic and gentrification, this city represents a defining moment in time.... it becomes the iconic dream, the bigger picture (or perhaps illusion) that reminds us that from destruction comes rebirth, and that all you can do, like all Angelenos, is continue to drive on.

—Vincent Valdez¹

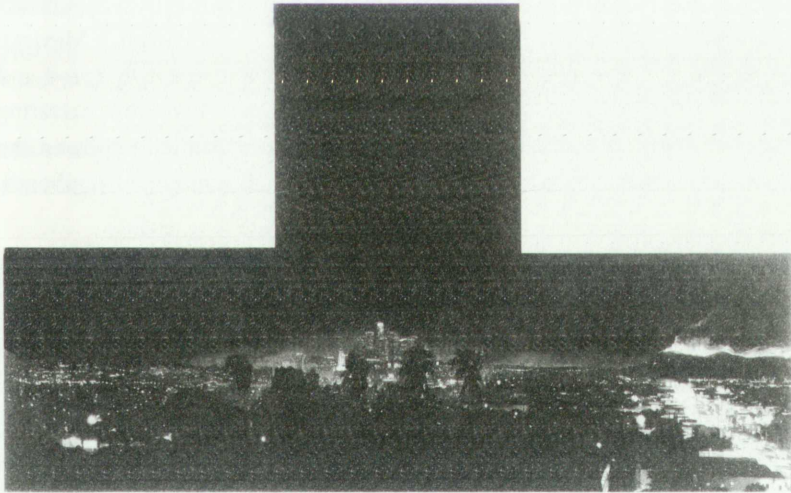


FIGURE 1. Vincent Valdez, *BURNBABYBURN*, 2009, oil on canvas, 96 in x 144 in.
Courtesy of the artist.

A syncretic mixture of quiet complacency and the implicit crackling sounds of burning hillsides animates the city of Los Angeles in the large-scale oil on canvas entitled *BURNBABYBURN* (2009) (Figure 1). Vincent Valdez captured this view from his eastside Lincoln Heights studio window.² With a cinematic quality reminiscent of Sunset noir (color noir film), the urban landscape vibrates like a force field.³ Lights flicker at a distance through the

shadow of tall palm trees. Our gaze embraces a postcard-perfect downtown cityscape that barely illuminates a vast darkness. The central panel of the triptych extends upward, phallic-like, guiding the eye into a monochromatic black sky. A blazing fire in the right corner of the lower register steers it back to the trailing horizon line. Chávez Ravine is a fiery furnace with a thick smoke stack, fueled by a menacing wind that threatens to engulf the surroundings.

Dark, evocative, and erotic qualities characterize the work of this San Antonio-native. Valdez was catapulted into national prominence with his tour de force painting *Kill the Pachuco Bastard!* (2001) (Figure 2). Now part of the Cheech Marin collection, the painting toured the country in *Chicano Visions* (2002), a ten-city traveling exhibition.⁴ After moving to Los Angeles in 2005, Valdez began work on one of his most ambitious commissions to date: *El Chávez Ravine* (2005–07) (Figure 3). Musical magnate Ry Cooder commissioned the artist to paint the history of Chávez Ravine, a Mexican American working class neighborhood that was systematically razed and then became home of Dodger Stadium. Valdez spent two years narrating this history through a fusion of film-like sequences, painted in oils on the body of a vintage 1953 Chevy ice cream truck with a mounted signboard.



FIGURE 2. Vincent Valdez, *Kill the Pachuco Bastard!*, 2001, oil on canvas, 72 in x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist (Collection of Cheech Marin).

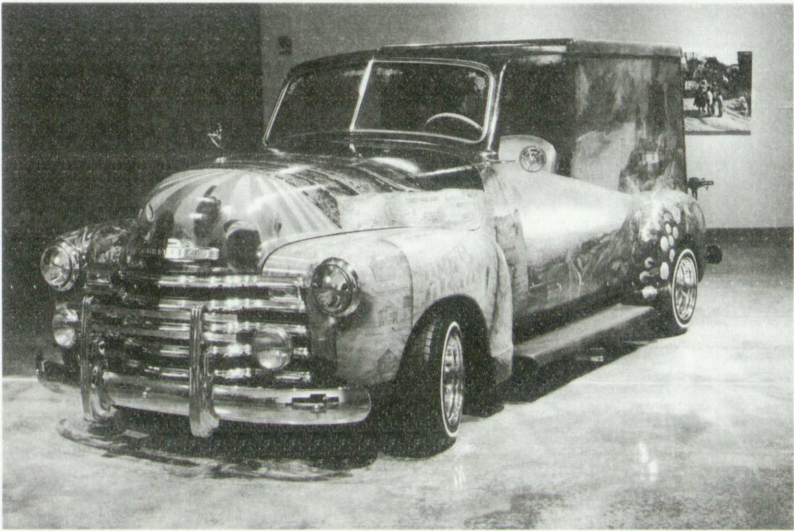


FIGURE 3. Vincent Valdez, *El Chávez Ravine*, 2005-2007, oil on vintage 1953 Chevy ice cream truck, 72 in x 156 in x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist (Collection of Ry Cooder).

His research on *El Chávez Ravine* eventually led him to this new series of Los Angeles nocturnes.

The largest of his nocturnes, *BURNBABYBURN* signals his embrace of, as well as his surrender to, his new adopted city. He pairs down his palette to a narrow range of hues echoing the work of American tonalists such as the dark and neutral hues in James McNeill Whistler's nocturnes. The darkness also suggests the lush black velvet paintings with kitsch themes popularized in the 1970s. Although he works primarily as a figurative painter, Valdez abandons the figure in favor of the city, which takes the form of a reclining muse, much like Titian's *Venus of Urbino*. But this is no ordinary or innocent muse—Los Angeles transmogrifies into a femme fatale complete with overwhelming sexuality and violence. As we are led down Broadway into the soaring fire we uncover a lethal plot, a crime scene that waits to be investigated. I argue that Valdez constructs a gendered fantasy of Los Angeles. This polymorphous fantasy is both male and female. His seductive view of Los Angeles engenders the trope of the femme fatale but the very materiality of its unusually shaped canvas simultaneously embodies the male-dominated discourses of power by revealing the very infrastructure of the city.

This reading poses a particular set of challenges. On the one hand, how can we define the figure of the femme fatale, not as an agent in history but as an archetype? With its origin in French for 'fatal woman,' the femme fatale is a female character that uses her sexuality to lure and entrap men leading to their downfall and often their death. As a recurring stereotype in popular culture we can trace the theories of fatal women to Sigmund Freud's views on 'femininity.' In film noir and neo-noir the femme fatale is a modern version of the vamp—female vampire—as it was known in the silent film era. The next challenge is to question whether such an archetype is applicable to the city. I am not suggesting this as a definitive reading of this work nor that it coincides with the artist's intention. I am merely setting up my own *mise-en-scène* that may in turn reveal more on the form of such expressionism, the gendering of landscape, and the puzzling shape of the canvas. Moreover, the artist has suggested that the canvas owes its shape to the form of City Hall. Thus, alternatively, this painting could be read as a reinterpretation of the Catholic triptych, such as those by the early Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden. The construction of these Renaissance triptychs emphasized architectural harmony and ideologically projected divine order and power. The same ideological projection is at work in the structure of City Hall. This, some would say heavy-handed, positioning of Los Angeles as femme fatale will, I hope, serve as a means to approach the work of a figurative painter who takes a leap towards the abstraction of subject and message in this work. Commenting on the use of film noir to describe urban spatial politics, the cultural critic Rosalyn Deutsche has noted:

It has become critical commonplace to observe that in noir the figure of the femme fatale resists confinement in—or as—space and, crossing boundaries, threatens the protagonist's identity. The role of the urban detective and, some critics believe, the work of noir itself, is to repress her image, to master the feminine—how successfully is controversial—thereby restoring spatial order and, with it, the detective's own perceptual clarity and geographic proficiency.⁵

Reading this ideational landscape as femme fatale also elicits the exploration of these issues of confinement, containment and repression. Although it attempts to subvert these paradigms of power, *BURNBABYBURN* is

still largely a masculine terrain, reinforced through its phallic canvas. The feminine position of the city is that of image and landscape, while the masculine is the privileged gaze and the container of desire. Other scholars have extended this critique to the male gaze prominent in Chicano art.⁶ This critique could certainly apply to the work of Valdez as a self-identified Chicano. It was certainly prominent in the *Chicano Visions* exhibition, which, in my view, says more about the vision of a collector than about the individual artworks on view. But I want to depart from the pervasive insular readings of Chicano art and position Valdez within the Americanist tradition of painting.

FIERY ANTECEDENTS

On a recent trip to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, I serendipitously stumbled upon a monumental predecessor to *BURNBABYBURN* with the same title: Roberto Matta's *Burn, Baby, Burn (L'escalade)* (1965–66). The iconic work by the Chilean-born master takes the Vietnam conflict and the then recent Watts riots as its subject matter, but renders them abstractly with riveting force. Comparing it to Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, curator of Latin American art Ilona Katzew reads it as "a bold indictment of the destructiveness of mankind and a manifesto for peace."⁷ The title of the work comes from the popular cry "Burn, Baby! Burn!" coined by Magnificent Montague, a Los Angeles disc jockey, who would shout the phrase on the local rhythm-and-blues radio station. Rioters in Watts appropriated it as a battle-cry. The term alluded to the arson that marked the riots. Although Valdez was apparently unaware of this piece when he painted *BURNBABYBURN* in 2009, Matta's work is an important historical antecedent because, like Valdez's painting, it is entrenched in Angeleno history—it bears witness to the racial violence that has plagued this quintessentially American city.

With regards to antecedents, Valdez is not the first to set Los Angeles on fire. In the mid-sixties, Ed Ruscha worked on a series of fire paintings of Los Angeles landmarks, including *Norm's, La Cienega, On Fire* (1964), *Burning Gas Station* (1965), and *Burning Standard* (1968). Ralph Rugoff, art critic and director of London's Hayward gallery, describes these images of fire as "visual analogue for noise."⁸ This is remarkable given the medium's limitations, that the materiality of paint can at one point vibrate as sound. Without abandoning the cool aesthetics of West Coast pop, Ruscha uses fire

as a visual disturbance in contrast with the hard-edged lines of the buildings. In these works fire is a formal device, but in *Los Angeles County Museum of Art on Fire* (1965–68) fire takes the form of institutional critique. The art critic Dave Hickey and curator Chon Noriega view the work as an outright challenge to cultural institutions that dispense “standards” and serve “norms.”⁹ Ruscha began work on this canvas a year after the museum opened its doors. The artist used the media and his access to commercial galleries to stage a theatrical opening for the work. The Western Union telegram that announced the opening read: “Los Angeles Fire Marshall says he will attend. See the most controversial painting to be shown in Los Angeles in our time.”¹⁰ Paradoxically, the mainstream machine quickly absorbed the institutional critique (so much for avant-garde practices), given that Ruscha and his contemporaries were soon welcomed into LACMA. Ruscha’s fire paintings are important in relation to *BURNBABYBURN* because they create a myth around Los Angeles, and the use of fire serves multiple purposes: visual noise and institutional critique.

A soaring wildfire also comes to life in the masterful photo-realism of John Valadez’s *Pool Party* (1986). The native Angeleno captures the serenity of a quiet weekend afternoon, where two women, perhaps sisters, bathe a dog and prepare the pool for a swim. The smiles and ease that the two sitters project stands at odds with the roaring fire that threatens to encroach on their property. Here, fire is used as a formal device to contrast with the coolness of the blue pool water, but it is also a cultural commentary on the fact that Angelenos are so accustomed to the Southern California wildfires that they simply go about their day without a care in the world. Thus, John Valadez projects an image of Los Angeles culture as extravagant, lush, and fairly self-centered. For Vincent Valdez in contrast, witnessing the Los Angeles fires was tantamount to an apocalyptic scene, “The skies blackened and all around us were these monstrous flames that were uncontrollable.”¹¹ Valdez’s reference to fire equates it with danger. And in his portrayal of Los Angeles, this danger plays into his characterization of the city as femme fatale.

LOS ANGELES AS MUSE

However one tries to define or explain noir, the common denominator must always be the city. The two are inseparable. The great, sprawling American city, endlessly in flux, both spectacular and sordid, with all its amazing permutations of human and topographical growths, with its deeply textured nocturnal life that can be seductive almost otherworldly labyrinth of dreams or a tawdry bazaar of lost souls: the city is the seedbed of noir.

– Nicholas Christopher¹²

As the primary setting for noir, the city at night is the perfect setting for crime. That is precisely how David Lynch begins his neo-noir film *Mulholland Drive* (2001). A dark screen opens with a street-sign of Mulholland Drive: the camera moves in for a close-up and the sign flashes rapidly as if illuminated by passing headlights. The scene shifts, and we see a black limousine driving along a winding road in the darkest of nights. Only the headlights illuminate the paved road, the fluorescent red taillights twinkle with a haze. The limousine moves slowly and deliberately, like a snake slithering toward its prey. The camera angle shifts between looking down on the limousine and directly behind it, some of the shots overlap creating composite, layered images. As the car fades out, a panoramic aerial view of Los Angeles comes into focus. It is magnificent: teeming with life, the perpetual motion of Los Angeles traffic, the billboards and neon lights—the city vibrates with anthropomorphic qualities evoking lust and intrigue. With this dramatic opening sequence, Lynch sets the mood and the tone for his black melodrama.

Mulholland Drive and Lynch's view of the city greatly resonate with Valdez's *BURNBABYBURN*, in which the city is laid bare and naked in a wide-screen panoramic shot. Valdez is the detective or male protagonist assigned to the Chávez Ravine murder. But before he can solve the crime, he is seduced by the city who takes the form of a femme fatale. Through his investigation, he discovers a web of corruption and complicity all pointing back to City Hall, which takes the shape of a phallic canvas. Though this plot might sound far-fetched, *BURNBABYBURN* is remarkably akin to a film noir, particularly in



FIGURE 4. Vincent Valdez, *BURNBABYBURN*, 2009, detail, oil on canvas, 96 in x 144 in. Courtesy of the artist.

its gendered readings of the city. The femme fatale is one of the key figures in this genre. She is always portrayed as exquisite, ruthless and calculating—a combination of beauty, sensuality and cunning intelligence—unmatched by any other female character in the film.

Valdez's Los Angeles is a projection of male desire. One derives a great deal of pleasure from watching "her." The city is mesmerizing, glistening like a wet body in low lighting. Read from left to right, our eyes peer through an open window (Figure 1). A bright streetlight guides our view into a distant horizon where the lights begin to melt into a hazy atmosphere. Moving toward the center, black palm trees in the foreground cast their shadow on the iridescent city center; these obstacles draw the viewer deeper into the painting. The tall skyscrapers symbolize modernization and ever-expanding capitalism. Among this complex, City Hall shines like a beacon of power. These spatial relationships based on the consolidation of legal and corporate

power evoke the political and economic operations of what Saskia Sassen calls the global city. The tallest building in Los Angeles, the U.S. Bank Tower, with its large glass crown that is illuminated at night leads our view up to the dark night sky.

Valdez points out that "the complexity in color of a night sky is richer than most of us tend to notice."¹³ He works from dark to light and begins by priming the canvas with his night time blacks: ivory black, Prussian blue, alizarin crimson, dioxazine purple, yellow ochre and burnt sienna. Once the entire surface is covered, he proceeds to carve out the skyline with its smog and clouds, hills and buildings. He achieves a surface that appears to be a single skin of paint, what tonalist James Abbott McNeill Whistler referred to as "like breath on the surface of a pane of glass."¹⁴ This single skin of paint effect lends *BURNBABYBURN* film-like qualities, which are not surprising given its geographic relation to Hollywood. But upon closer inspection, the viewer discovers multiple layers of pigment, meticulously blended with medium, adding a smooth sheen to the oils. Brushstrokes are only evident in the more detailed areas, such as the fire or the dense city streets. From the sky we descend back to downtown, and the horizon line steers us toward the fire. Much like Ruscha's fire, this fire creates visual noise. Valdez employs it as a formal device that serves as a contrast to the overall dark palette. As visual noise, the fire breaks the heavy use of blue in the hazy horizon line and the detailed outlines of Broadway. Nowhere is the city teeming with life more than in Valdez's view of the Eastside (Figure 4). The taillights of cars and Metro buses flicker in the hustling Broadway thoroughfare. Traffic lights are tinged with blue and lampposts emanate a soft yellow glow, as do the golden arches of McDonalds, the billboards and neon signs. Valdez renders his second home, the community on the Eastside, as full of vitality, vibrancy and resilience. This is by far the most detailed of the panels. Here, Valdez shows off his hyperrealist technique. It is masterful and reminiscent of John Valadez's canvases, though less expressive and more equivalent to the visuality of film, photo-based works and video games. The apartment complex in the bottom right is so real and haunting, we want to peer through its windows, make sense of the shadows and the flickering television lights. Through these intricate formal devices, Valdez slows us down and forces upon the viewer a close-looking or close-reading of the work. The diagonal line of Broadway, lit up like a roman candle, guides us back to the fire, and we begin once again to navigate the nocturne.

Los Angeles as femme fatale is also a projection of anxiety. The anxiety comes from the flames, which are also suggestive of sexual rhetoric, but threaten to incinerate the dreamscape that Valdez painstakingly built up. It leads the viewer to question the fire as the site of the crime. What happened at Chávez Ravine? Ry Cooder explains in his *Chávez Ravine* (2005) album notes:

It cost about 7 million dollars of public funding to regrade Chávez Ravine according to Richard Neutra's housing site plan. But there wasn't going to be any housing, public or otherwise, because there was just too much heat over the whole thing, so the city council worked out a sweet deal with Walter O'Malley and brought the Dodgers out there. Because baseball was clean, you couldn't argue with it, and it was good for the town. O'Malley loved money and a good deal, maybe even as much as he loved the game itself.¹⁵

The PBS film *CHAVEZ RAVINE: A Los Angeles Story* (2004) narrates the account in greater detail. Located just a couple of miles from City Hall, Chávez Ravine was home to generations of Mexican Americans and African Americans. After the Federal Housing Act of 1949, the Los Angeles Housing Authority earmarked the site as a prime location for redevelopment. By the summer of 1950, all residents were notified that they would have to sell their land in order for the city to begin construction on a large public housing project (Elysian Park Heights) that would "benefit" the area. Through the power of eminent domain, the city bought up the land and began demolition. But the public housing promise never came to fruition. The project was stalled in a decade-long battle. Intertwined with the politics of the 1950s "Red Scare," public housing became synonymous with socialism and was deemed un-American. Instead, the most American of pastimes would come to supplant the Chávez Ravine community. Walter O'Malley, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, struck a deal with the city officials (including an alleged illegal deal with Mayor Poulson) to bring the Dodgers to Los Angeles in exchange for a new stadium at Chávez Ravine. After much political turmoil, including a public referendum, the city cleared the land and removed the last of the families. The Dodgers Stadium officially opened on April 10, 1962.

Valdez spent almost two years studying this history through vintage maps of Los Angeles, texts and testimonies from the Housing Authority, and interviews with former residents. This research led him to develop the concept and imagery for his three-dimensional mural, *El Chávez Ravine* (2005–07) (Figure 3).¹⁶ One of the most poignant images from this mural is the eviction scene, where a young woman is literally being dragged out of her home by Los Angeles police officers.¹⁷ Her grimacing face is contorted with anger and teary eyeliner runs down her cheeks. At the top of the stairs, we see the legs of an officer with a baton holding her by the arms. Two more officers drag her by the legs. The one in the foreground carries a gun on his holster with a bullet belt around his waist, signaling the police's intimidation tactics and their power to use all necessary force. In the backdrop, Valdez painted the seal of the City of Los Angeles in bright red hues to reference the "Red Scare" politics that dominated the 1950s and played a role in destroying the public housing project destined for Chávez Ravine. He placed bright, colorful light bulbs on the perimeter of the seal to resemble a game show and in the middle ground he painted the leering faces of key players in the Chávez Ravine saga.¹⁸ This is the ugly underbelly of the noir city that Valdez lights on fire and a source of a great deal of his anxiety. His great fear is the purposeful amnesia of Los Angeles, its willful neglect to come to terms with its own history of violent displacements, and its seductive lure as an image-making machine through its powerful film industry. With this political act, Valdez continues to prove that he is a history painter in the vein of Kerry James Marshall.

Marshall's ten-by-eighteen-foot streetscape, entitled *7AM Sunday Afternoon* (2003), captures the sun-bathed elegance of a Chicago neighborhood: the movement of cars and residents, the musical notes emanating from windowsills, birds traversing the sky, all through a prismatic reflection of fracturing light that bears witness to the changing economies and politics of displacement. According to curator Helen Molesworth, "Marshall's *7AM Sunday Morning*, functions like a history painting; it is a concrete image of the present, readable to a local constituency in its documentation of a contemporaneous situation, yet it is also destined to function for posterity, as a record of what has happened."¹⁹ The painting reflects on the failures of urban public housing, Chicago's infamous Robert Taylor Homes, at one time the "largest concentration of poverty in America." Analogous with the

case of Chávez Ravine, the city of Chicago recently decided to demolish the buildings, displacing 12,000 families in the process.²⁰

History is always about bringing the past into the present, but the present is also tainted with anxiety. 2009 was a difficult year for California's economy, notably when the state began to send out IOUs to county agencies and resident taxpayers as it found itself on the brink of bankruptcy.²¹ Some of California's most prominent cities came to be known as foreclosure capitals. The Great Recession hit the Golden State with a punch. The unemployment rate rose quickly into the double-digits.²² In addition, eight years of failed foreign policies and two of the costliest wars in American history, had left many wondering, what had gone wrong? How did we get here? These uncertainties were just as real for Valdez who faced his most difficult year (financially). Commissions were drying up. Art patrons were holding out. It was a test of faith for artists who made a living from their work. *BURNBABYBURN* is like a film still in that sense: it captures the beauty and sensuality of Los Angeles as evil temptress, its treacherous past, and its uncertain future.

Feminist film critics have argued that the femme fatale is a projection of male desire and anxiety about the changing gender roles in American society.²³ Particularly in the postwar period, as many more women worked outside of the home, their financial and social mobility began to threaten the established social order. I return here to Rosalyn Deutsche's comments on the figure of the femme fatale and how it resists confinement. As much as the artist tried to contain Los Angeles within the phallic framework and through his male gaze, the elusive city is always just out of reach. His painting lies somewhere in the ambiguous spectrum that questions the discourses of power that regulate the sprawling, yet gentrified body of Los Angeles. This body is nonetheless constructed through the male gaze. Thus placing us in a masculine terrain where repression serves to obscure unwanted histories such as those of Chávez Ravine. The ambiguity is challenged by lighting the body on fire.

In an interview I asked the artist about the unusual shape of this canvas, he quickly replied it was the shape of City Hall.²⁴ Home to the mayor's office, the city council and its meeting chambers, Los Angeles City Hall is the

center of government. Architects John Parkinson, John Austin, and Albert Martin designed the building that was inaugurated in 1928. It is the tallest isolated structure in the world with a seismic retrofit that can sustain an 8.2 magnitude earthquake. Up until the mid-sixties it was the tallest building in Los Angeles. As a testament to its power, an image of City Hall has been engraved on Los Angeles Police Department badges since 1940.²⁵ The fire in *BURNBABYBURN* points to City Hall, the beacon of power, where most of the decisions to displace and demolish the Chávez Ravine community took place. Since its incorporation as a city and municipality in 1850, Los Angeles has been governed by men. All of the mayors, including the current mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, have been male. Some of these men have been corrupt, and have abused their power for monetary and political gains. I read Valdez's phallic-shaped canvas as an aggressive masculinity projected over the city and as an indictment on city council politics over the dissolution of Chávez Ravine.

These allegations of corruption recall another well-known neo-noir, *L.A. Confidential* (1997). Set in 1950s Los Angeles, the plot involves three LAPD officers: Ed Exley, Bud White and Jack Vincennes and their investigation of the Nite Owl Coffee Shop slayings, which leads them to uncover a web of corruption that points back to City Hall and the Chief of Police. The femme fatale Lynn Bracken, played by Kim Basinger, is part of a high-class prostitution ring, run by a rich real estate developer. The film uncovers the dark world of Los Angeles crime: gangsters, prostitution, drugs, and corruption. Several of the scenes feature wonderful shots of the City Hall building, but one scene in particular shares a pronounced visual similarity with Valdez's canvas. In this nocturnal scene, Jack Vincennes (played by Kevin Spacey) is on the street, talking with Sid Hudgens (played by Danny DeVito), publisher of *Hush-Hush* magazine. They are about to go and arrest a young couple for marijuana use, but must photograph them naked with the evidence first for the pleasure of *Hush-Hush* readers. The scene was carefully constructed to place Hudgens on the left and Vincennes on the right with two young officers behind him. Palm trees—a quintessential Hollywood trademark—frame the image. Vincennes gestures with his right hand and guides us directly to El Cortez, a towering theater with the same phallic-form as City Hall and *BURNBABYBURN*. The brightest area in the shot is the theater's marquee, which stands in stark contrast to the dark night, the

palm trees, and the officer's uniforms. Superimposed over the tower in large type is the name of the film that is currently debuting: *When Worlds Collide*. The costumes, the cars and this direct reference to a 1951 sci-fi thriller are like a time machine that magically places the audience back in the 1950s.

When Worlds Collide, the sci-fi movie and the phrase, is perhaps a good way to close this story. The violent collision of worlds and cultures is what makes incidents like Chávez Ravine happen. As Vincent Valdez masterfully narrates in *El Chávez Ravine* mural, most notably in his eviction scene, greed is a violent force willing to displace anything or anyone that stands in its way. And like a clever villain, it desperately tries to erase the evidence or sweep it under a rug. In *BURNBABYBURN*, Valdez opens up the Pandora's box and asks viewers to question why Chávez Ravine is on fire, and what really happened there. His is a seductive form of visual rhetoric—the city is a muse, the muse a femme fatale—that causes pleasure, anxiety, and hopefully, awareness, “off the record, on the QT, and very hush-hush...”²⁶

TATIANA REINOZA is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of Texas at Austin where she specializes in Chicana/o and U.S. Latino art. Her advisor is Dr. Cherise Smith and the title of her dissertation is *Latino Print Cultures in the U.S., 1970–2008*.

NOTES:

¹ Vincent Valdez, email to the author, December 7, 2010.

² Ibid.

³ I want to acknowledge San Antonio Museum of Art's curator David S. Rubin's reading of *El Chávez Ravine* and his mention of film noir movies of the 1940s for inspiring this reading of *BURNBABYBURN* through the language of film noir. David S. Rubin, “A Los Angeles Story,” in *El Chávez Ravine*, exhibition catalogue (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art, 2009), 11. Film noir refers to a genre or style of film depicting a dark, corrupt and fatalistic world. French critics coined the term in the 1940s to describe the new wave of cynical and stylized American movies. Most often, the films are set in urban spaces and scenes take place at night. Film noir was initially thought to have a time span bounded by *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Touch of Evil* (1958). However, new iterations, often called neo-noirs, continue to be produced.

⁴ Tatiana Reinoza, “Collecting in the Borderlands: Ricardo and Harriett Romo's Collection of Chicano Art” (Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 41–2.

⁵ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 252.

⁶ Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art Inside/Outside The Master's House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). Amalia Mesa-Bains,

"Domesticana: The Sensibility of Chicana Rasquachismo," in *Chicana Feminisms, a Critical Reader*, edited by Gabriela F. Arredondo (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 298–315. Laura E. Perez, *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁷ "Burn, Baby, Burn (Lescalade)," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, accessed December 6, 2010, <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=focus;id=182095;type=101>.

⁸ Ralph Rugoff, "Heavenly Noises," in *Ed Ruscha: Fifty Years of Painting*, exhibition catalogue (New York, NY: Distributed Art Publishers, 2010), 17.

⁹ Ibid.; Dave Hickey, "Available Light," in *The Works of Ed Ruscha*, exhibition catalogue (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 24; See also Chon Noriega, "Early ASCO: Your Art Disgusts Me," *Afterall* 19 (2008): 109.

¹⁰ The invitation is reproduced in Catherine Grenier (ed.), *Los Angeles, 1955–1985: Birth of an Art Capital*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Centre Pompidou and Panama Musées, 2006), 180.

¹¹ Vincent Valdez, email to the author, December 7, 2010.

¹² Nicholas Christopher, *Somewhere in the Night: Film Noir and the American City* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 39.

¹³ Vincent Valdez, email to the author, December 7, 2010.

¹⁴ James Abbott McNeill Whistler quoted in Joyce Hill Stoner, "Materials for Immateriality," in *Like Breath On Glass: Whistler, Inness, and the Art of Painting Softly*, edited by Marc Simpson (Williamstown, Massachusetts: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2008), 96.

¹⁵ Ry Cooder, album notes to "It's Just Work for Me," *Chávez Ravine*, 2005.

¹⁶ Rubin, "A Los Angeles Story," 11.

¹⁷ Although based on an actual photograph by Don Normack, Valdez recreated and photographed the event with friends as actors. Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ Rubin identifies three of the faces as Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, and developer Fritz Burns. It is likely that William Parker, Chief of the LAPD at the time, is also one of the faces. Ibid.

¹⁹ Helen Molesworth, "The Art of Hanging Pictures," in *Kerry James Marshall: One True Thing*, exhibition catalogue (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004), 12.

²⁰ The last of the buildings was destroyed in 2007.

²¹ Tami Luhby, "Cash-poor California Turns to IOUs," CNNMoney.com, July 2, 2009. Accessed December 12, 2010, http://money.cnn.com/2009/07/02/news/economy/California_IOUs/index.htm

²² David Pierson, "State caught in avalanche of job losses; After steep January cuts, more than 10% of Californians are out of work. And it's even worse in L.A. County," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 2009.

²³ For an extensive discussion of film noir and feminist criticism see Ann Kaplan, ed., *Women in Film Noir* (London: British Film Institute, 1998).

²⁴ Vincent Valdez, in conversation with the author, Los Angeles, November 11, 2010.

²⁵ LAPD Badge Description, Los Angeles Police Department. Accessed December 12, 2010, http://www.lapdonline.org/search_results/content_basic_view/1125.

A BURNING DESIRE

²⁶ Sid Hudgens (played by Danny Devito), the publisher of Hush-Hush magazine repeats this phrase in the film. *L.A. Confidential*, DVD, directed by Curtis Hanson (1997; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1998).

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: IN SPACE, IN TIME

RYAN HENEL, M.F.A. Candidate, University of New Mexico

The open desert of the Southwest allows access to a unique experience of space, distance, and, consequentially, time. We are constantly reminded of how our existence is relative to the larger order that surrounds us—its scale often beyond our understanding. The experience of space and time inherent to the desert has influenced my work. Most of my installations are created for a specific site, often placed out in the landscape. I try to develop work that relates to a land feature or a human built element on a site. Often the work's function is to isolate a particular perspective or characteristic of the environment. I look to re-frame what is already there.

When I am working with a site, I try to spend as much time as possible experiencing the space through different conditions and frames of mind. This process is intuitive and sometimes arbitrary: walking, reading, sleeping, staring. Sometimes it is necessary to remove one sense in order to facilitate awareness. I might use earplugs to remove sound, for example, allowing a sharpening of sight or increased sensitivity to touch. I try to relate not only to the physical characteristics of the site, but also to its current use or its history. Many times, after “digesting” or living in the space, I have noticed that certain qualities become predominant, at which point I can react to them.

Through my work I try to create experiences that reshape the way we interact with or see the environments around us. I believe that when we develop a spatial awareness, we become more cognizant of how our actions are part of a larger cycle or process that is vast in scale. Working outside the jurisdiction of traditional art-viewing environments allows for a different relationship between artwork and viewer. There are expectations inherent to viewing artwork in a museum or gallery. Outside this forum, the viewer is offered a chance to experience art that can be perceived, even if momentarily, without the anticipation of it being art. This context is a powerful staging tool to allow the spectator to experience a place or event without pre-determined ideas. When coming upon something that does not have an immediately identifiable function or purpose, the mind is afforded a chance to search for

meaning and associations. I look to facilitate this sort of encounter when developing a work for a site.

Perspective chamber was built as a place to stare (Plate 1). It was created during the Land Arts of The American West journey of 2003—a course of field study at the University of New Mexico that offered a group of students the chance to experience significant earthworks and cultural-historic sites, as well as create their own work outside of the traditional studio. *Perspective chamber* was situated in the evaporating shores of Lake Powell in Utah. Here, the shifting volumes of lake water, moving clouds, and eroded sedimentary rock provided the context for creating a work that experimented with our understanding of space and volume. In an attempt to subtly blur the distinction between artwork and site, I used existing stone from the surrounding area to create an intimate refuge. This space, only large enough for one person, situated the viewer in a reclined position, sloped towards higher ground. It provided the visitor a station from which to observe a towering mass of rock formations beyond. From the “oculus” at the end of the structure, I traced a line in the sand to the landmark in the distance. The view from the chamber foreshortened the perceived distance, collapsing the space between viewer and object. This work was an attempt to play with the cognitive dissonance of physically being located in one place, yet allowing the mind to conceive of being elsewhere.

Survey also attempts to draw the viewer to a specific sight line and another place (Plates 2 and 3). Located on the outlying grounds of El Camino Real Heritage Center,¹ I designed this work to act as an upright marker in an open chasm of horizontal space. It was intended, in part, to bring awareness to the desert surrounding the Heritage Center and the conditions migrants experienced when traveling the Camino Real. Two columns, constructed of adobe and framed by a thin steel armature, acted as a landmark, drawing the viewer in from a distance. The dirt columns rose up as if extruded from the earth, yet showed the clear imprint of human presence. The steel triangular projections off of the columns followed a trajectory much like a rectangle drawn in one-point perspective. When situated between the two columns, the triangles directed the viewer's gaze to the sunrise and sunset at the time of construction. Time was indicated not only by the passing of sun and shadow, but the slowly eroding adobe. With *survey*, I was interested in blurring the

distinction between what we consider man-made and natural. My choice of materials was an attempt to visualize and confuse this socially constructed dichotomy. The adobe, a raw natural material, was cast within the order of a steel frame. As the adobe eroded away, the steel frame referenced its pre-existing volume, acting as a reminder of the original intended form. Through the process of decay, the adobe's association transferred from man-made back to natural, illustrating how human intent inevitably succumbs to time.

In *constellation*, I created a piece that related to man-made structures at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, employing the same methods I use in a natural landscape (Plates 4 and 5). A plot in the center of a circular roundabout allowed me to experiment with perspective in 360 degrees. I developed a work that offered many different forms, depending on the vantage point. A planer wedge shape was chosen in response to the sloped shape of a pre-existing structure on the premises. The form was constructed out of *latillas* (small wood poles), which are used in traditional United States southwestern architecture. The material related to the vernacular of the location, and the form to its surroundings. The sloped cuts of the poles created a constellation of points. The optical phenomenon created by the poles changed as the viewer moved around the sculpture, the form appearing to shift in mass and volume. Light also emphasized this effect, sometimes drawing out, and other times, camouflaging the piece against a background of trees.

In *depth of field*, I used a similar language to that of *survey* (Plates 6 and 7). Located on a flat plain of land on the property surrounding a casino at Pojoaque Pueblo in Santa Fe, New Mexico, my intention was to draw the stray visitor away from the containment of the casino and towards a distant land feature. Each of the three adobe columns had roughly the proportions of a human being. Each had a set of pivoting, aluminum louvers, which reflected light in accordance with the moving sun and air. This reflection acted as a sort of signal or beacon, drawing the viewer in from a distance. Within close range, the sculpture offered two deliberate lines of sight. Standing at one end of the work, the shifting louvers aligned to create an abstraction of a mirage on the horizon. Looking in the other direction, the columns' arrangement directed the viewer's gaze to a unique, mound-like land feature off in the far distance. Again, as with *perspective chamber*, this

framed perspective created a dissonance between the viewer and a distant object—flattening our sense of depth and scale.

In the natural world, symmetry and geometric patterns are apparent at the microscopic scale. Strong geometry in nature is often invisible to the naked eye. With *field divisions*, located at The Land/An Artsite in Mountainair, New Mexico, I created a work with strong geometry to emphasize an existing pattern in nature (Plate 8). As the viewer approaches the piece, an inlaid stone triangle in the path designates the vantage point for the work. From this point, a series of reflections trace a triangular gap in the juniper trees, their source not readily recognizable. These reflections are generated by rectangular mirrors on steel armatures refracting the shifting daylight. Depending on the angle of the sun, the color changes from a full spectrum of red, orange, and blue to invisible. When the mirrors match the color of the sky, it looks as if holes had been punctured through the hillside.

In conclusion, my installations are not only intended to be signs that point to other places or features, but also markers in and of themselves. I attempt to work in the universal tradition of land marking. I am intrigued by its continuity throughout history and cultures. Landmarks, such as the specific arrangement of stones, are reinterpreted over and over throughout time, each new generation overlaying its own understanding of the signs of the past. Although I have specific intentions with my work, I try to maintain a level of ambiguity, which allows space for the viewer to assign his or her own meaning. I appreciate that my intentions could become just another layer in the landscape, a scratch on the surface of time.

RYAN HENEL, M.F.A. Candidate, Art and Ecology,
University of New Mexico.

NOTES:

¹ El Camino Real Heritage Center is a New Mexico's State Monument that presents the history and cultural significance of the Camino Real trail, the emigrant trail that brought Spanish and Mexican colonists to New Mexico in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.



PLATE 1. Ryan Henel, *perspective Chamber*, 2003, Lake Powell in Utah, stone.



PLATE 2. Ryan Henel, *survey*, 2005, Socorro New Mexico, adobe and steel.



PLATE 3. Ryan Henel, *survey*, 2005, Socorro New Mexico, adobe and steel.



PLATE 4. Ryan Henel, *constellation*, 2006, Santa Fe New Mexico, wood.



PLATE 5. Ryan Henel, *constellation*, 2006, Santa Fe New Mexico, wood



PLATE 6. Ryan Henel, *depth of field*, 2010 Pojoaque Pueblo, aluminum.



PLATE 7. Ryan Henel, *depth of field*, 2010 Pojoaque Pueblo, aluminum.



PLATE 9. *Man's Tunic (Uncu) with Tocado and Stylized Jaguar Pelt Design* (double-sided), Bolivia, Lake Titicaca, mid- to late 16th century CE, tapestry weave (cotton warp; camelid, silk, and metallic weft), 38.5 in x 30.75 in (97.8 cm x 78.1 cm). Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, Division of Anthropology.



PLATE 10. *Figure of Eagle Warrior*, Mexico, Aztec culture, 1440–69 CE, clay, 46.46 in x 66.93 in x 21.65 in (118 cm x 170 cm x 55 cm). Courtesy of Conaculta, INAH, Mexico.

PLATE 11. *Hanging or Mantle*, Peru, Inca culture, 1450–1532 CE, cotton (discontinuous warp and weft), 72 in x 72 in (182.9 cm x 182.9 cm). Courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

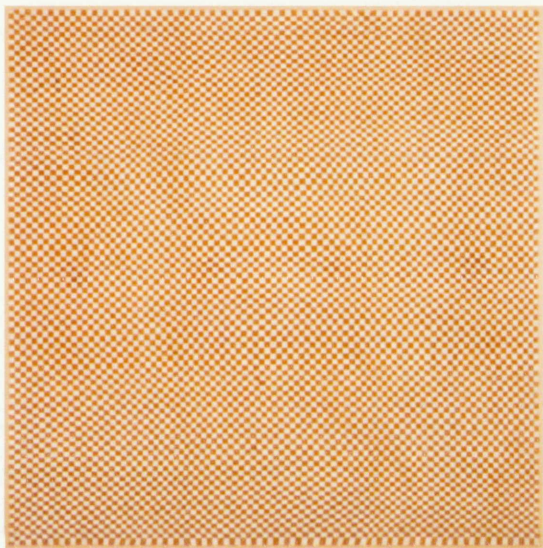


PLATE 12. *Man's Tabard*, Peru, South or Central Coast, Inca culture, late 15th–16th century CE, feathers knotted and sewn to plain-weave cotton ground, 25 in x 55 in (63.5 cm x 139.7 cm). Courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.





PLATE 13. *Bishop's Feather Work Miter and Infulae*, Mexico, ca. 1559–65 CE, feathers glued on handmade (amate) paper and textile with embroidery, mitre: 16 in x 12.5 in (41 cm x 31.7 cm), infulae: 17 in x 4.2 in each (43.7 cm x 10.6 cm). Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York.



PLATE 14. Morlete Ruiz, VII. *From Spaniard and Morisca, Albino*, c.1760 CE, oil on canvas, 41.3 in x 49.6 in (104.9 cm x 125.98 cm). Courtesy of Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

EXHIBITION REVIEW: CONTESTED VISIONS IN THE SPANISH COLONIAL WORLD

ANNICK BENAVIDES, M.A. Student,
Department of Art and Art History, University of New Mexico

LACMA's recent display of art from the vicerealties of Mexico and Peru excels in its ability to please both the casual museum visitor and academics familiar with the field. This is because *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World* conjoins the lure of objects delectable in aesthetic form with the attraction of an exhibition bent on revising canonical assumptions. Exemplary of this phenomenon is the featured Andean *uncu*: woven in the traditional Inca tapestry technique, it features glistening silver thread, a modification never seen before the arrival of the Spanish (Plate 9). The *uncu* is decorated with Spanish heraldic devices and *tocapu*, geometric patterns associated with Inca lineage that have of late presented tantalizing interpretation challenges for colonial art historians. The *uncu* illuminates the growing efforts of art historians to analyze and appreciate how viceregal artisans negotiated disparate techniques, materials, and signifying languages.

Contested Visions eschews the outdated line of colonial inquiry (read: analysis of the Iberian's role at the expense of indigenous consideration, perpetuating the illusion of a rapid and complete conquest), and instead attempts to reveal the multiplicities and contradictions of the era through its art production. It coalesces thematically as an investigation of the role indigenous peoples played in Spanish America. The visitor is ushered through the art of the Inca and Aztec empires before encountering viceregal works from both New Spain and Peru. The passage from Inca and Aztec galleries into spaces filled with viceregal objects produces the overarching narrative. Carefully orchestrated by curator Ilona Katzew, the organization explores relationships between pre-conquest traditions and post-conquest visual production. The thematic sequence demonstrates that convergence and negotiation were paramount to Spanish viceregal visual culture. This compelling presentation is indebted to the work of previous curators and academics that propelled the appreciation of viceregal pieces well beyond the insipid niche once reserved for Spanish colonial visual culture.

Enter the world of Inca and Aztec art. Immediately, a towering Aztec ceramic sculpture of a man costumed as an Eagle Warrior greets you (Plate 10). The mass and posture of the sculpture, placed on a pedestal and rising high above viewers, produces awe. It also startles in verisimilitude, for conventional notions of pre-conquest art preclude large scale figural representation. *Eagle Warrior* is displayed in juxtaposition to a massive Incan checkered mantle (Plate 11). Positioned together, they inaugurate the voyage into each culture's artistic and religious designs.

Small votive figurines that were used during sacrificial rituals dominate the Inca gallery. The labels for these votive figurines showcase the first instance of canonical re-writing, as the artisans were Chimú, not Inca. The Incas conquered the Chimú coastal tribe in the 1470's and brought Chimú artisans to Cusco as reigning artisans. If the artwork distribution in the gallery evidences Inca art production writ-large, Chimú artistry deserves recognition for its seminal contribution to Inca artistic development. The prominence of Chimú artisans inside the Inca gallery, resultant from their incorporation into the Inca Empire, serves to de-mystify the later conquest of the Inca by the Spanish: both scenarios produce an artistic convergence of "vanquished" and "victor." *Contested Visions* demonstrates that Inca and Spanish visual cultures were both highly influenced by the peoples they conquered.

In an expert maneuver, *Contested Visions* camouflages the shift from pre-conquest galleries into post-conquest ones. Fittingly labeled *Ancient Styles in the New Era*, the first post-conquest gallery remains consistent in design with the Aztec and Inca spaces. As you enter, no conspicuously European materials or modes of production are visible. The forms of artistry are still familiar to pre-conquest empires: Inca textiles and feather works, Aztec stonework, obsidian and silver sculptures. Only upon intimate examination do these objects disclose ties to post-conquest origins.

Material continuity is coupled to symbolic negotiation in this gallery, as the substance of Aztec and Inca art is refashioned towards novel purposes and decorated with new signs imported from Europe. Sixteenth-century artisans in New Spain carved a large stone baptismal font utilizing the same raw material and skill set necessary for pre-conquest sculpture. Visible on the exterior of this font, which was built for the enactment of Catholic

sacraments in Mexico, is pre-conquest sacrificial imagery. The Inca textiles in this gallery, crafted from the same materials and techniques as their pre-conquest siblings, are here embroidered with Christian and Spanish heraldic symbols.

These early colonial works also reveal adaptations in their post-conquest production through the physical effects of disrupted trade. Inca exchange with feather tradesmen in the *selva*, rainforest areas east of the Andes, was severely restricted during the sixteenth century due to conquest battles and civil wars. Inca feather works, which employed brilliant oranges, blues and yellows in the pre-conquest galleries, transition to browns and whites in the post-conquest pieces such as *Man's Tabard* (Plate 12). This phenomenon appears to have eluded feather trade in New Spain, as the exquisite and colorful *Bishop's Feather Work Miter and Infulae*, made in New Spain, stands in marked contrast to the muted Andean feather works, and is bound to be acknowledged as a viceregal masterpiece (Plate 13). This piece also has an exact sister version, which was gifted during the viceregal era to the Pope in Rome, an act that serves as a testimonial to the fascination Europeans held for "New World" art.

Moving forward, the gallery spaces become progressively lit, and mounting excitement accompanies this evolution. The bulk of the show is organized thematically as opposed to chronologically. These galleries feature a smorgasbord of sixteenth through nineteenth century objects from New Spain and Peru. Mannerist, baroque, neoclassical and native folk-traditions intermingle. Although this organization allows for formal comparison, the curatorial emphasis lies in the exploration of New Spain and Peru's shared dialectical polemic.

Immense *biombos* steal the show in the second post-conquest gallery: *Conquest and New World Orders*. These skillfully executed works, unique to New Spain, elicit an intimate scrutiny uncommon for objects their size. The *biombos* form was imported from Japan, while the decorative cityscapes and mythological programs were invented in New Spain. As the Americas linked Spanish trade routes between Asia and Europe, New Spain, and especially Mexico City, enjoyed a cosmopolitan ambience. *Biombos* demonstrate the truly international strains that run through Spanish viceregal art. By awarding these folding screens the prominent placement they merit,

Contested Visions positions the Spanish Colonial world as a global center, both economically and culturally.

In another long overdue infusion to the canon of colonial visual culture, caste paintings (*pinturas de casta*) are revitalized as complex and historically specific pieces (Plate 14). Too often these works, which chart mixing between Spaniards, Indians and Blacks in New Spain, are read through twenty-first century conceptions of race, overlooking the complex portrayal of Spanish American tropes, material goods and economy. In order to remedy this, *Contested Visions* displays caste paintings alongside paintings that classify more than people. Thus, we can appreciate the ideological overlap of *Yumbo Indian from Mainas with his Load* with caste paintings. Their proximity illuminates how caste paintings, like this image of a generic Indian type carrying promotional depictions of American fruit and vegetables, were fictionally constructed scenes meant to merchandise the uniquely American.

As one might correctly assume, the myth of the conquest looms large in colonial visual culture. Take for example *Folding Screen with the Conquest of Mexico*, which attempts to justify the conquest by presenting Spanish forces of order and civility conquering an Aztec society plagued with chaos. Across from *Folding Screen with the Conquest of Mexico*, one can observe the European Protestant discussion of the conquest via Theodor de Bry's influential book illustrations of Spanish brutality and insatiable greed in the Americas. *Contested Visions* also explores how creoles of New Spain wielded art as an ideological tool to foment their emerging sense of nationhood. In the eighteenth-century work *San Hipólito and the Mexican Coat of Arms*, Spanish creoles harnessed the Aztec foundational myth to negotiate their emerging identity as "Mexicans."

The next galleries, *The Devotional Language and the Indian as a Good Christian and Indian Festivals and Sacred Rituals*, couple Spanish visual culture with performance. Religious and civic festivals featuring processions, costumes and traditional dances form the bulk of the subject matter in these galleries. The numerous Virgin veneration paintings that commemorate viceregal religious processions featured in *Contested Visions* attest to the importance of public spectacle in New Spain and Peru. Indians, who were conceived by Iberians as invariably on the verge of idolatry, teetered in visual performance between devout worshippers and dangerous idolaters. In yet

another re-writing of the colonial canon, the scope of religious art is proven to extend beyond indigenous didacticism. Paintings were also instructive for religious devotees (friars and fathers) who sought saintly inspiration for their mundane responsibilities.

In *Contested Visions* the art from each respective viceroyalty is usually placed along separate walls, which fosters simultaneous thematic unison and stylistic comparison. This allows viewers to learn to distinguish the qualities of Mexican and Peruvian works. For example, the perceptive viewer will deduce that elaborate gold leafing can be found almost exclusively on Cusco School works. This sumptuous décor compresses the illusionistic space and renders the Peruvian works surprisingly modern. The sheer quantity of Andean pieces in the show is a notable advance for a field that tends to be Mexico-centric. That said, the diversity of viceregal production within the Peruvian viceroyalty could be further elucidated, as the significant painting production of Lima and Potosi remains overlooked in *Contested Visions*.

Upon entering the final gallery, *Memory Genealogy and Land*, a colonial *quipu* is displayed alongside an educational video. The video documents a yearly ritual in the Andes that honors the *quipus*. One man who hails from a town that still maintains and honors its *quipus*, states in the video: "for us, it [the *quipus*] is everything." And yet he notes that *quipus* can no longer be read; they have become inaccessible yet potent symbols of pre-conquest ancestry. This contemporary conception of the *quipu* raises the question: Did colonial citizens comprehend the Inca or Aztec signs employed in their own colonial visual culture? Had the signs come to embody wholly new meanings?

These questions are important, as Inca and Aztec symbols and mythology are recalled at great lengths in the last gallery. Both Spanish and indigenous inhabitants of the Americas used art as legal evidence to secure and maintain elite privileges, the indigenous often referencing their pre-conquest genealogy to gain post-conquest respect. Large-scale portraits of indigenous, mestizo, and Spanish viceregal subjects conclude the show, objects replete with complex amalgamations that speak to local rituals.

Contested Visions explores a canon that was still in its burgeoning stages, suggesting the potential of a visual culture unbounded by rigid historicizing

processes. Wall labels in the show often leave interpretation open ended, emphasizing where research is yet to be done, and admitting that some things we will never know. The labels avoid the thorny question of the artists' ethnicity, though leading scholars in the field consider the subject in the exhibition companion book.

The impact of the exhibition is visually astonishing and will recruit new admirers to viceregal art production. Although not as groundbreaking in its comparative presentation as it claims to be (think: 1996 *Converging Cultures in the Spanish Colonial World: Art and Identity in Spanish America* at the Brooklyn Museum, and 2006 *Tesoros/Treasures/Tesouros: the Arts in Latin America, 1492–1820* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), this show attests to LACMA's commendable effort in promoting Latin American art. Curator Ilona Katzew unites objects featured in seminal art historical articles (such as the *Lienzo Tlaxcala* and *the Marriage of Martin de Loyola to Princess Doña Beatriz*) with previously unsung marvels.

Contested Visions of the Spanish Colonial World, building upon a continuum of museum consideration of viceregal art, broadens the canon, or perhaps better said, provides the impetus to deconstruct the canon. It attempts to fracture any monolithic conceptions of colonized and colonizer. And because the exhibit foregrounds cultural negotiation as inherent to societies in flux, it even questions the exceptionalism of Spanish America. It serves as an inspiration for all curators to explore the forces of convergence and negotiation that, although uncommonly prominent in the Spanish colonial world, are endemic to any visual culture.

ANNICK BENAVIDES is an M.A. Student in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico. She received her B.A. in Art History at Williams College. During her year at *El Museo Pedro de Osma* in Lima, Peru, she developed educational programming for adult and school aged visitors. Her current research focuses on viceregal Peruvian visual culture under the supervision of Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán. As the recipient of a Tinker / Latin American and Iberian Institute Field Research Grant, she spent the summer of 2012 investigating rural Andean Hybrid Baroque chapels in Peru.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE SIXTH VOLUME MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1, 2012.

Completed essays, reviews of recent publications or exhibitions, and interviews are requested from M.A. or Ph.D. students currently enrolled in graduate programs. Submissions are accepted written in English or Spanish.

Each submission must be accompanied by a cover letter that prominently notes the title of the essay, the field of study to which it pertains, as well as a curriculum vitae that includes the author's status (e.g. M.A. / Ph.D. Student or Ph.D. Candidate), department, and institution name and location.

ESSAYS, REVIEWS, OR INTERVIEWS AS WELL AS OTHER DOCUMENTS LISTED ABOVE CAN BE SUBMITTED AS WORD DOCUMENTS VIA E-MAIL TO:
hmsphr@unm.edu

Journal contributors receive five complimentary copies. Additionally, essay writers selected to publish in *Hemisphere* will be invited to participate in a symposium at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque in the fall semester of 2013, where they will present their essay.

SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON CONDITION THAT THE AUTHOR ACCEPTS AND WARRANTS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. If and when accepted, you secure the necessary written permission from the appropriate copyright owner or authorities for the reproduction in the article and the journal of any text, illustration, or other material. You warrant that, apart from any such third party copyright material included in the submission, the submission is your original work, and cannot be construed as plagiarizing any other published work, and has not been published elsewhere.
2. The *Hemisphere* Editorial Committee shall prepare and publish your submission in the journal. We reserve the right to make such editorial changes as may be necessary to make the essay or review suitable for publication; and we reserve the right not to proceed with publication for whatever reason.
3. You warrant that the submission contains no statement that is abusive, defamatory, libelous, obscene, fraudulent, and in no way infringes the rights of others, nor is it in any other way unlawful or in violation of applicable laws.
4. You shall retain the right to use the substance of the above work in future works, including lectures, press releases, and reviews provided that you acknowledge its prior publication in the journal.

FORMAT FOR SUBMISSIONS:

We request that submissions address the following style and formatting issues before submitting articles to *Hemisphere* in order to save our editorial committee valuable hours on each issue. Thank you for your assistance in this endeavor.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES:

- In addition to English, we also accept essays or reviews in Spanish.
- No abstract necessary.
- No title page necessary, simply include the title at the beginning of text.
- For essays paper length = 20 to 30 pages. Images are included within the page limit, and will be the first to be cut if it is necessary in terms of your essay's length going over the maximum.
- Length for reviews and interviews = 5 to 10 pages. Reviews and interviews may include images. Images are included within the page limit, and will be the first to be cut if it is necessary in terms of your review's or interview's length going over the maximum.
- Use the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition
- 12 point font and double spaced
- Please insert a single space between sentences, rather than double. (e.g. hit the space bar once after each sentence)
- Insert page numbers
- Do not tab paragraphs; rather force a line break and all new paragraphs begin flush left.

Miscellaneous Notes:

- Use full name in first mention, then surname only (e.g. "Jane Smith"... "Smith")
- Block quotes should be set apart by a forced line break—not italicized. Do not use quotation marks.
- Be consistent in your use of abbreviations. In your first reference spell everything out and follow by abbreviations in parenthesis [e.g. New Argentine Cinema (NAC)].
- Spell out all numerical references under 100.
- All foreign words in italics; include English translation in brackets if necessary (e.g. *Do figurativismo ao abstracionismo* [From *figuration to abstraction*]).
- References to centuries: as adjectives=nineteenth-century; as noun = nineteenth century

ENDNOTES (We use endnotes—not footnotes):

- Place all endnotes at the end of sentences and separate multiple citations in an endnote with semi- colons.
- Endnotes are limited to 25.
- Please use Arabic numerals for numbering system.
- Use 10 point font.
- Flush left.
- Note there should be no space between each.

IMAGES:

- Limit 4 images per essay. Please limit the number of images you include to only those significant to your discussion, and refrain from an excessive number of images simply for the sake of including them.
- All images will be printed in black and white, except for those included in the Artist Spotlight Section. However, when possible images may be printed in color, but this is not guaranteed. If images are printed in color, their placement within the journal will be dictated by constraints related to printing.
- Accompanying images, tables, figures, or illustrations should be inserted where intended to be located within each essay and numbered. Images will be allotted half a page each. The designer will help to finesse this element, among others, but if you format your essay in that manner the job will be easier.
- When first introducing or addressing an image within the text note the title in italics followed by (date); Follow this reference with (Figure #) at the end of the sentence. [e.g. *Title* (2009)...(Figure 1).]
- Each image should include a caption that indicates: Figure number, Artist, Title of work, Date, Medium, and Size if known (period), followed by copyright information (Image courtesy of _____).
- In addition to imbedding your images into your word document, please provide the highest quality digital copy of the image as a separate file and title it by Fig # and placement within your essay, for example: after paragraph 6, etc. Images should be jpg, tiff, or pdf files and should be at least 300dpi, and approximately four inches in one direction to make sure they print clearly.
- *Hemisphere* does not accept responsibility for copyright issues that may arise. The author is responsible for acquiring copyright permission for all images included in their essay or review and published in the journal.

CONTRIBUTOR INFORMATION:

- Include a brief bio at the end of your submission, which includes the author's status (e.g. M.A. / Ph.D. Student or Ph.D. Candidate), department, institution name and location, advisor, and topic of your thesis or dissertation project.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Hemisphere Journal

Department of Art & Art History

MSC04 2560

1 University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001

