



THOMA

FOUNDATION

PAINTINGS FROM SPANISH AMERICA (1600-1800)

**International Museum of Art & Science
McAllen, Texas**

THOMA
FOUNDATION

Paintings from Spanish America (1600-1800)

February 8 - May 25, 2025

Curated by

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt

Thoma Foundation

Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas

Veronica Muñoz-Nájara

Thoma Foundation

Associate Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas

Directed by

Katherine Moore McAllen

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Director, The Center for Latin American Arts

College of Fine Arts

Venue Curator

Marcelo Ramirez Garcia- Rojas

Curator, International Museum of Art & Science

FEBRUARY 21 | 3-5 PM: Art History and Art Roundtable at the IMAS

Dialogues of Collecting and Display: Art of the Spanish Americas
at the IMAS in the Rio Grande Valley

APRIL 26 | 10AM- 3PM : Community Day at the IMAS

Exploring and Celebrating the Cultures of Spanish America





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Forward
Curator of Art of the Spanish Americas
Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation

It has been a joy and an honor to organize *Paintings from Spanish America (1600–1800) from the Thoma Collection* in collaboration with Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen, following our work together as guest editors of the Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture journal. Planning this exhibition for McAllen, Texas, allowed us to serve the vibrant communities of the Rio Grande Valley and to welcome students from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) into the gallery. At Dr. McAllen's class, students had the opportunity to study the artworks closely and contribute with their own community wall labels to the show. These texts—thoughtful, personal, and deeply moving—reflected on the students' own Latino heritage, their family histories, and their lived experiences in the borderlands. Their voices brought new and vital perspectives to the exhibition, helping to bridge the historical content with contemporary identity and lived memory.

The exhibition presents a rich panorama of artistic creativity from regions that comprise present-day Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Cuba, dating from the early 1600s to the late 18th century. The selection includes monumental oil paintings on canvas alongside smaller, exquisitely detailed works on copper. Together, these objects illuminate the dynamic character of viceregal art; an ever-evolving blend of styles rooted in global artistic exchange. European models were not merely reproduced in the Americas, but also reimagined to reflect local materials, devotional practices, and worldviews. Most works in the exhibition highlight the Catholic Church's central role in shaping the visual culture during of this period, showcasing localized religious iconographies shaped by Latin America's diverse sacred landscapes.

The Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation is deeply grateful for the opportunity to share its historic Art of the Spanish Americas collection with the communities of South Texas. Knowing that more than 12,000 visitors experienced the exhibition is truly meaningful, and we hope the artworks sparked conversations, curiosity, and connection. It has been a privilege to partner with the International Museum of Art & Science to bring these stories to life. This exhibition was the result of a collaborative effort, and I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Katherine McAllen, Ann Fortescue, Marcelo Ramirez Garcia-Rojas, and the Center for Latin American Arts at UTRGV. Their dedication, generosity, and vision made this project possible.

Dr. Verónica Muñoz-Nájjar
Associate Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas
The Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation

Forward
Director of the Center for Latin American Arts
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

It has been an honor to direct this exhibition that plays such an inspiring role in the community engagement and education goals we strive for in the Rio Grande Valley. Thanks to the generosity and support of the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation lending these works to the IMAS, we as educators can help involve our students and the community to participate in the creative and research initiatives that museums and universities have the potential to provide. In the living classroom of the Clark gallery of the IMAS, our students were able to write their own community voices wall labels for the works in the Thoma Foundation collection. Students and museum visitors were able to meet leading scholars in the fields of art history and curatorial studies in the Thoma Roundtable hosted by the Center for Latin American Arts at the IMAS and UTRGV.

At these museum events and in the gallery spaces, we saw how the art historians' research agendas complimented the investigations and studio process of contemporary artists to create interdisciplinary dialogues and see the overlap between various fields of study and education. These conversations were alive across time and space and disciplines, and I will be forever grateful to the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation and their curators for sharing their collection that allowed us this opportunity to have unique learning experiences.

Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen
Director of the UTRGV Center for Latin American Arts
Marialice Shary Shivers Chair of Fine Arts

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Forward
Executive Director of the
International Museum of Art & Science

It was an incomparable honor for the International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS) to host the exhibition, *"Paintings from Spanish America, 1600-1800 from the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation."* An exhibition of this caliber and uniqueness is notable for any museum and bringing it to the Rio Grande Valley was the vision of Dr. Katherine McAllen. Dr. McAllen recognized the widespread impact these extraordinary artworks would have and the opportunities for enlightening learning experiences that profoundly engaged university and community audiences.

This exhibition captivated museum visitors with recognizable themes and the Community Voices labels provided local, contemporary reflections that made the exhibition more accessible to museum audiences. One afternoon, I encountered a family from Laredo that made a special trip to see the exhibit at the urging of their teenage son who was intrigued by the imagery and age of the artworks. This example is emblematic of the impact "Paintings from Spanish America" had on the more than 12,612 visitors who experienced the exhibit at IMAS. It was a privilege for all of us at IMAS to collaborate with Dr. Katherine McAllen and the Center for Latin American Arts at UTRGV, and Dr. Veronica Munoz Najar and the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation on this exceptional exhibit project; we are deeply grateful to have had this opportunity.

Ann Fortescue
Executive Director
International Museum of Art & Science



Forward
Dean of the College of Fine Arts
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Through *Paintings from Spanish America (1600-1800)*, we step into the past, seeing humanity's struggles, triumphs, and transformations. The featured artworks and the community voices inspired by these pieces create a dialogue between past and present. I commend Verónica Muñoz-Nájjar for curating and Katherine Moore McAllen for directing this inspirational exhibit. The exhibit culminated in an outstanding roundtable of art history and art scholars from around the country and Latin America. Dr. Muñoz-Nájjar and Dr. McAllen moderated the presentations, and these scholarly contributions are published in this volume.

I am grateful for the continual partnership between the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley College of Fine Arts and the International Museum of Art & Science. Exhibitions and scholarly activities like this are possible through these kinds of collaborations. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation for their commitment to the Arts and education for many people, young and old alike. Through their generous support, we were able to share this amazing collection with the Rio Grande Valley communities.

Dr. Jeffrey Ward
Dean, College of Fine Arts
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley





**Veronica Muñoz-Nájar,
Thoma Foundation
Associate Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas**

**Moderator of the Roundtable
Dialogues of Collecting and Display:**

Art of the Spanish Americas at the IMAS in the Rio Grande Valley

Dr. Verónica Muñoz-Nájar is based in Dallas and is the Associate Curator of the Art of the Spanish Americas Collection at the Thoma Foundation. Born and raised in Peru, she holds a Ph.D. in the History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. Before joining the Foundation, Verónica was a curatorial intern in the Latin American Art Department of the Los Angeles County Art Museum and the Museo de Arte de Lima. In 2019, she was the inaugural recipient of the Marilyn Thoma Predoctoral Fellowship, where she conducted research at a diverse range of archives, museums, and private collections in Bolivia, Peru, Italy, and Spain. In 2023, she was appointed the Thoma Foundation's Arts of the Spanish Americas Curatorial Fellow.



**Katherine Moore McAllen,
Director of the Center for Latin American Arts,
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Moderator of the Roundtable
Dialogues of Collecting and Display:
Art of the Spanish Americas at the IMAS in the Rio Grande Valley**

Dr. Katherine Moore McAllen has been the Director of the Center for Latin American Arts at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley since 2019. She is an Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Art & Design at UTRGV. She received her PhD and M.A. from Harvard University, her M.A. from the University of Texas, Austin and her B.A. from Trinity University. Her research has been supported by the Fulbright and the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation as a Marilyn Thoma Post-Doctoral Fellow. She has published with the *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, the *Colonial Latin American Review*, the *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture Journal*, the *Art Bulletin Journal*, Trinity University Press, and Cambridge University Press. Her research and programming at the UTRGV Center for Latin American Arts has been supported by grants from the Raul Tijerina, Jr. Foundation, the Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, the Rea Charitable Trust, the Hollyfield Foundation, and the Brown Foundation.



Thomas B.F. Cummins,
Director of Dumbarton Oaks
Professor, Harvard University

Thomas B. F. Cummins is the Dumbarton Oaks Professor of the History of Pre-Columbian and Colonial Art in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University and Director of Dumbarton Oaks. He received his PhD from UCLA. His research and teaching focuses on pre-Columbian and Latin American colonial art. He was Professor of Art History at the University of Chicago from 1991-2002 and was also the Director of the Latin American Center. He was Professeur invité at L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, Paris in 2016 and 2019. He has also taught in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. He was also the interim Director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. He is a member of the Cisneros Institute Advisory Board, MoMA. He has lectured in 24 countries. He has published over a hundred fifty essays and eleven books, the two most recent being an edited Volume *Global Gold: Aesthetics, Material Desires, Economies in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World, I Tatti*, in 2024 and a co-edited *Sacred Matters: Animism and Authority in the Pre-Columbian Americas* with Steve Koisiba and John Janusek, Dumbarton Oaks: Washington DC, 2020; He is the Editor in Chief of the *Grove Encyclopedia of Latin American Art*, Oxford University Press. He was awarded The Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for an outstanding book published in English or Spanish in the field of Latin American and Spanish literatures and cultures, awarded by The Modern Language Association, 2014, and The Bryce Wood Book Award for the outstanding book on Latin America in the social sciences and humanities published in English, awarded by The Latin American Studies Association, 2013. He received La Orden "Al Mérito por Servicios Distinguidos En el Grado de Gran Cruz" bestowed by the Republic of Peru 2011, and he is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science. He is the co-director of the Getty Foundation Connecting Art History Grant, Afro-Latin American Art: Building the Field 2022-2026.

Collections: Images as Witnesses

By Thomas B.F. Cummins
Harvard University

This exhibition raises the question of what it means for a scholar to study collections and how we think about images as witnesses to each other. Dumbarton Oaks, for example, has one of the best Pre-Columbian collections and it is displayed in a truly magnificent space designed by Philip Johnson. Robert Bliss made his first purchase of a Pre-Columbian piece in Paris in 1912 and continued to build the collection until his death in 1962. What this means is that the formation of the collection, such as the Bliss collection or the Thoma collection, was created because the collectors admired these works but that they also wanted these works to be studied as part of the intellectual world. The Dumbarton Oaks collection is made up primarily of pre-Columbian artifacts and works from Byzantium. And this collection is very much like the Thoma Collection in that Marilyn's interest focuses on art of the Spanish Americas and Carl's is centered on Contemporary art. The question in both cases is how does one bring these works and objects together, if possible?

Such a question can be answered, for example, by the study of two portable altars at Dumbarton Oaks: one that comes from eleventh-century Germany and one that was created in Mexico in the sixteenth century, one of the very last pieces that Robert Bliss added to the collection. One is covered with porphyry, and one is covered with obsidian. A chapter in my upcoming book, *The Metaphysics of Materiality*, examines this transformation from porphyry in the eleventh century that was cut down from other pieces of the classical spolia. The porphyry originally came from the mines in Upper Egypt but were lost by the eleventh century, and they remained unknown until they were rediscovered in the nineteenth century. Hence, this ancient pagan material was cut and reworked to perform as a sacred Christian material. The same practice occurred in Mexico. Obsidian was an ancient material that was dedicated to the Mexica deity Tezcatlipoca, the god linked to the smoking mirror of obsidian, a volcanic stone whose shiny surface could be used as a mirror. What unites porphyry and obsidian? They both become the materiality of the sacred Christian altar where the central part of mass is performed, transubstantiation.

These two altars in a single collection, when exhibited together, provoke the question of why? What were the Franciscans thinking when they took the Mesoamerican metaphysical material of obsidian, which was so important to pagan religion, just as porphyry was to be used as the surface for the most important part of the Christian celebration of ritual in Byzantium. It is the formation of a collection that allows these questions to be asked. This collection, which is housed in a building where the United Nations once met, is a historic place that brings together not only materials but people with the hope of a better future. We preserve these works here at Dumbarton Oaks with that intention. When Dumbarton Oaks was given to Harvard University in 1940, the letter that was written at that point by Mildred Bliss elevated the humanities at a time of dislocation and disturbance. The humanities are more important now than ever, and that sentiment is emblazoned on one of our walls outside the library. The idea that we have a responsibility to preserve this up to now and for the future, for future citizens of the United States and the world, is what makes the legacy of collections so important.

My next research project is also encapsulated in two individuals, who are depicted in a cartoon sketch to be used for a tapestry series. In it, we see the self-portrait of the artist Jan Vermeyan, and the other standing figure other is Felipe de Guevara. One of the artists is from the Low Countries, the other is a writer from Spain. They are standing together as participants and chroniclers of the Conquest of Tunis by Charles V and Philip II. These are the most important set of tapestries that Charles V would ever own. Before they were permanently placed in Royal Palace Madrid today, Charles V took them with him everywhere, and their scale was enormous. The two men depicted in the royal tapestry, not only participated in the campaign; they helped form the royal collection of art. Moreover, Felipe de Guevara wrote the first history of painting in Spain. His knowledge came about, in part, because he and his father brought some of the most famous paintings to Spain for Charles V and Philip II. Thus, we see here individuals who are participating as witnesses to events as well as being collectors themselves. Guevara also mentions in his book *Comentarios de la Pintura* (ca. 1560) that there is an extraordinary contribution to painting: feather painting from Mexico.¹ He is one of the first to acknowledge it as painting in this treatise of European painting. I cite here two examples of feather paintings, one depicting the Mass of Saint Gregory made as a gift for Pope Paul III and the other is a feather painting of the Archangel Michael once in

¹ Felipe de Guevara, *Comentarios de la pintura* (Originally 1560, reprint Madrid: Hijos de Ibarra y Compañía, 1788).

the collection of the holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II (Figure 1).² He also describes Mexican codices and their precision and what they tell us about witnessing information. So, the first history of art was written by an author from Spain, and it has an expansive understanding of painting in Europe and the Americas, and it is also related to the history of collecting starting with Charles V. This is one of the reasons why, when you visit the Museo del Prado in Madrid, you see so many Hieronymus Bosch paintings in the museum, which were first acquired from this practice of collecting.

Another image represents a legal document drawn for Philip II and commissioned by Diego de Torres, a Cacique from Turmaques in Tunja, Nueva Granada (present-day Colombia), in 1549. It represents a Spanish subject who goes to Spain to argue the case of his community and the malfeasance of the Spanish for oppressing them. Documents and manuscripts in the sixteenth century such as these, and the Huejotzingo Codex and Codex Kingsborough, used images and alphabetic text to create legal images that were presented as documents of events that happened in the Americas, which the King of Spain could never see. These images became legal witnesses recounting historical events and advocating for Indigenous land rights.

A different example is a plate that came from the fabulous treasure transported by the ship *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*. It was recovered by Mel Fisher, who later created a museum in Key West near the location where the ship sank during a hurricane in 1622. A silver plate that comes from that collection is interesting as it depicts in the middle of the piece a coat of arms flanked by two condors with a red fringe that has been etched into the plate depicting the Andean mascapacha or royal insignia worn as a kind of crown over the forehead of the Inca emperor. This is a conflation of two different kinds of imagery, European and Indigenous, which was being carried in a vessel bound for Spain. These images provide a glimpse into linking these two radically different collections, thus allowing scholars to speak about them and study these works in relation to each other, one time and historical location across from the other.

² These examples can be seen in the exhibition catalogue *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521-1821*, eds. Donna Pierce, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, Clara Bargellini (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2004), 94-95.



Figure 1 Mexican feather mosaic depicting the Mass of Saint Gregory, in *Painting A New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521-1821*.



**Carmen Fernández-Salvador,
Professor, Universidad de San Francisco de
Quito, Ecuador**

Carmen Fernández-Salvador is professor of Art History at Universidad San Francisco de Quito. She has published various studies on colonial and nineteenth-century art, and on the historiography of Ecuadorian art. Her book *Encuentros y desencuentros con la frontera imperial: la iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de Quito y la misión en el Amazonas* (siglo XVII), was published in Madrid and Frankfurt by Iberoamericana Vervuert (2018). Currently, she collaborates in Spanish-funded projects for the study of early-modern Jesuit art. She coordinates the project “The Amazon basin as connecting borderland: examining cultural and artistic fluidities in the early modern period,” sponsored by the Getty Foundation.

Carmen Fernández-Salvador es profesora titular de Historia del Arte en la Universidad San Francisco de Quito. Ha publicado varios estudios sobre arte colonial y decimonónico, y sobre historiografía del arte ecuatoriano. Su libro *Encuentros y desencuentros en la frontera imperial: la Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de Quito y el Amazonas* (s. XVII) fue publicado por Madrid y Frankfurt por Iberoamericana Vervuert (2018). Actualmente participa en proyectos de investigación sobre el arte jesuita en la modernidad temprana, y dirige el proyecto “Conectar la frontera amazónica: fluidez artística y cultura en la modernidad temprana”, que cuenta con el financiamiento de la Fundación Paul Getty.

Marian Images and Local Identities: Exploring the Colonial Archive

By Carmen Fernández-Salvador
Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador

Images of the Virgin Mary figure prominently in the Thoma Collection, and in the exhibition that is currently on display at the International Museum of Art & Science in McAllen, Texas, many of the paintings are portraits of Marian statues, and as such, they form part of a genre that flourished in the colonial Andes known as dressed-statue paintings. Dressed in rich garments and adorned with jewelry and gifts offered by the faithful, the sculptures, or “*imágenes de vestir*” as they are called in Spanish, appear in their altars and shrines. Many of these statues were known for their ability to perform miracles and were inextricably tied to local topography, while their shrines were often the center of local or regional pilgrimage.

Paintings in the exhibition portray well-known cult images, such as the eighteenth-century copper plate depicting Our Lady of Copacabana, in what is now Bolivia, as well as lesser-known statues, among them the Virgin of the Rosary of the Dominican Monastery of Potosí and the Virgin of Our Guidance from the church of San Mauricio in Caracas. This corpus of paintings reminds us of the importance that Marian statues once had, and continue to have, in articulating local identities. These pictures also bear witness to the (sometimes) uncomfortable place that Marian statues occupied in colonial culture, at the intersection between institutional control and local religious practice, between Christian and Indigenous beliefs, as well as between secular and sacred landscapes, which is the focus of my ongoing research.

In contrast to other studies, which have focused on renowned miraculous images such as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Copacabana, or Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, I am interested in studying the way in which lesser known, non-miraculous statues of the Virgin Mary were put to work by Indigenous actors in the rural periphery of the Real Audiencia de Quito in present-day Ecuador. Rather than analyzing devotional literature and ecclesiastical histories, and following William Taylor’s seminal work on the subject, I delve into non-official and local narratives, shaped and voiced by Indigenous actors in testimonies

that are preserved in legal records.¹ Institutional texts, such as sermons, prayer manuals, or hagiographic narratives instruct the reader on proper and official ways of venerating paintings and statues. By contrast, legal documents permit an understanding of the innovative ways in which the faithful understood and “used” religious images. The archive reveals the way in which Marian images crystallized Indigenous communities’ sense of identity in moments of conflict, contention, or negotiation.

In “Images and Landscape: the (dis)ordering of Colonial Territory in Quito in the Eighteenth-Century,” I recognize the role played by images of the Virgin Mary in the ordering of space during the early colonial period, as well as on the disruption of such order by subordinate groups.² In the Real Audiencia de Quito in what is now Ecuador during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, civil and religious authorities used miraculous images of the Virgin Mary such as Our Lady of El Cisne and Our Lady of El Quinche as aids in the founding of *reducciones*, or settlements that assured the imposition of Christian civility upon the Indigenous population. In the second half of the eighteenth century, as revealed by legal documents, Indigenous communities put into practice similar strategies as a means of asserting their own concerns, physically manipulating Marian images in times of conflict. Statues were moved around, stolen or apprehended, either to legitimize the desertion of settlements or to resist forced relocation. This is the case for the image of the Virgin of the Rosary, from the indigenous community of St. Sebastian, in the province of Latacunga, which was used by town residents to avoid displacement and resettlement in an urban parish.

In the present, I continue to explore the use of Marian images in litigation, focusing on the role played by traveling statues as legal representatives of Indigenous communities. This is also the case of the statue of the Immaculate Conception from the town of Chuquiribamba, in the southern province of Loja. In the mid-eighteenth century, the image made a long trip to Quito to speak with the judges of the Real Audiencia. Standing before the high court, the image occupied the role of the Indigenous community’s *abogada*, or solicitor. These Marian dressed-statue paintings in the colonial Andes reveal how the faithful actively shaped their iconography, materiality, and function in ways that were unique to their localized contexts and regional identity in the Real Audiencia de Quito and throughout the viceroyalty of Peru.

¹ William B. Taylor, *Shrines and miraculous images: religious life in Mexico before the Reforma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010).

² Carmen Fernández-Salvador, “Images and Landscape: the (Dis)ordering of Colonial Territory (Quito in the Eighteenth Century),” *Arts* 10, no. 2 (2021), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts10020036>



**Rosario I. Granados,
Marilynn Thoma Curator,
Blanton Museum of Art,
The University of Texas at Austin**

Rosario I. Granados is the Marilynn Thoma Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas, at the Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin. There, in addition to seven thematic rotations of the permanent galleries, she has organized the exhibitions *Mapping Memory: Space and History in 16th-Century Mexico* in 2019, and *Painted Cloth: Ritual and Fashion in Colonial Latin America* in 2022. She is currently developing two new projects: *The Scholar's Gaze: Modernist Portraits of 16th Century Mexican Architecture* and *Legacies of Belonging: Icons in Colonial Latin American and Latino Art* (in collaboration with Dr. Claudia Zapata). Before coming to the Blanton in 2016, she taught undergraduate and graduate seminars on Religion, Gender Studies, Cultural Heritage, and Latin American Art at Skidmore College and the University of Chicago. She holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, an M.A. from the Courtauld Institute of Art, and a B.A. from Universidad Iberoamericana.

Becoming Visible: The Spanish Americas On Display

By Rosario I. Granados

Marilynn Thoma Curator, Art of the Spanish Americas
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin

When Katherine Moore McAllen asked all participants in the round table to prepare for the event commemorating *Paintings from Spanish America (1600-1800) from the Thoma Collection* on display at The International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS), one of the questions she gave us for consideration was how the Thoma Collection projects are essential for museums in the US and how transformative they have been for the Art of the Spanish Americas.¹ The first concept that came to my mind when thinking about how to answer such a question was that of visibility, much in tune with the Smithsonian Institution's project regarding Women's history and the importance of having a wider view of our past.² Visibility is indeed an important concept both as an active act of seeing but also as an act being seen. It was indeed an obvious concept to think about the Thoma Foundation because since 2017, this private institution has organized or participated in exhibitions featuring art of the Spanish Americas in at least twenty-two institutions of all sizes. Through each one of these projects supervised or organized by Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, Erin Fowler, Kathryn Santner, and more recently, the Verónica Muñoz-Najar, but always overseen by Carl and Marilyn Thoma, the collection has made the art of the colonial Andes visible to extremely heterogeneous audiences. Publics from a wide range of institutions, from large museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museo del Prado, the Art of Chicago, MFA Houston, Minneapolis Institute of Art or Nelson Atkins, to medium-size museums like San Antonio Museum, San Diego Museum of Art, or the almost next door Museo de Historia Mexicana in Monterrey and Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. The Foundation intentionally have also prioritized many university museums, highlighting its commitment to education. So many institutions have benefited from their mission to display an art that is different and new to many.

What this list shows us is thus, the importance of being able to be seen. By partnering

¹ This text is based on a presentation delivered on February 21, 2025, as part of a round panel available here: <https://youtu.be/du7Kdlebhcl?si=zDnvkHmoh1GwBwza>

² Becoming visible Bringing American Women's History into Focus. Smithsonian American Women's History Museum, 2024. <https://www.becomingvisible.si.edu/>

with all these institutions, what the Foundation has been doing is an alternative to the idea that the “Old Masters” were only of European origin. This collection and its traveling exhibitions reveal the richness of the Old Masters of South America, showing other ways of creation that were possible and are worth admiration. These projects make them visible for others to admire.

Carl & Marilyn Thomas’s efforts to make this art visible and accessible to many but a decade earlier, in 2006, even when the Foundation was nothing but a dream. The traveling exhibition *The Virgins, Saints, and Angels. South American paintings from the collection 1600 to 1825* traveled from California (Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University; to Texas (Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin) via Arizona (Tucson Museum of Art), also traveling outside the continental U. S., visiting the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico in Santurce, but also reaching Canada (University of Toronto Art Center).³

At the Blanton, blue walls welcomed the 56 paintings that, at that time, Marilyn had collected for almost a decade. The impact of making these paintings available and visible is still felt to this day: Last summer, I was at the St. Louis Museum of Art visiting to see *Art and Imagination in Spanish America, 1500-1800: Highlights from LACMA’s Collection*. When I showed my ID to the man selling the tickets, and I introduced myself as the Thoma curator at the Blanton—not out of courtesy, I must confess, but because I sought to enter for free—the man’s eyes opened widely as he proceeded to share how clearly he remembered that exhibition at the Blanton back in 2008. He explained that it was the first time he had seen Colonial Latin American Art, understanding its relevance and appreciating its aesthetic and historical value. “If I’m able to admire what we have here today,” he said to me, “it is because of that show I saw in Texas so many years ago.” Visibility was doing its magic. To be appreciated, understood, and even questioned, you first need to be visible. And that is what the Thoma Collection has been doing for over two decades: making viceregal South American art visible and accessible.

I know firsthand about the power of what the Thoma collection exhibitions provoke, because I was also a visitor to one of them, even before having the fortune of working closely with these materials. I had learned many things at Dr. Tom Cummins seminars during graduate

³ *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1600-1825 from the Thoma Collection*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Stanford and Milan: Skira and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, 2006).

school, but nothing prepared me for the breathtaking *Our Lady of Bethlehem*, a painting I first saw at the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014. Teaching in front of it with University of Chicago graduate students from Anthropology and Theology enrolled in my Religious Material Culture course, was eye opening: I closely witnessed how captivated my students were, appreciating it along with other pieces in the collection, wondering about its style, its iconography, its original setting. My second experience was when I went to Blanton to interview for my job at the Blanton back in 2016. I saw how other graduate students, mainly those in Professors Susan Deans-Smith and Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, interacted with the paintings, making stories visible through the labels they were invited to write for the occasion, in a very similar fashion of what IMAS decided to do in this installation. Many years later, *Our Lady of Bethlehem* became a key element in *Painted Cloth*, my first major exhibition at the Blanton. The painting was available to the visitors, emphasizing its ritual usage through a subtle arch painted in the wall, replicating a niche, and a pair of benches in front, encouraging close looking. We did this because visibility is more than just including paintings in a show: it is an invitation to consider the original settings of the paintings and their social life, a life that changes along with the different viewers all cultural artifacts meet throughout their history.

Visibility also means education, another key value in Carl & Marilyn's vision for these materials. The name we now refer to their collection is just a minimal token of such educational effort because, as we all know, changing names is hugely symbolic. We name things as we want them to be seen and appreciated. So, from the "Spanish Colonial Art" label that for years shaped our field to the term "Viceregal" currently used at the MFA Houston and the "Spanish Americas" title we started using at the Blanton in 2017, there are acute yet essential differences that persuade the recognition of how inventive these South American paintings are. Those categories, based on their geography but also juridical and political status, certainly enhance the identification and appreciation of artistic imagination and skillful artistry.

One of my next curatorial projects is tied to another piece in the Thoma collection. In it, I imagine *Our Lady of Cocharcas* from the Thoma collection in dialogue with the 1993 *The Virgin of the Lake* by Alejandro Romero, a screenprint from the BMA Collection. I am launching this new exhibition tentatively named *Legacies of Belonging: Icons in Colonial Latin American and Latino Art* with my colleague Claudia Zapata, associate curator of Latino art at the Blanton, to connect not only past and present but also symbolic geographies.⁴ We

want to explore how and why Romero, a Mexican muralist now living in Chicago, chose this particular South American iconography and transformed it into a social commentary about immigrant struggles. We also look forward to pairing the portrait by New Mexico photographer Miguel A. Gandert, that prominently feature her tattoo of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with a rare mezzotint now part of the collection of the Harry Ramson Center made in the 1780s for a Mexican Jesuit friar living in Italy after the Spanish king expelled that entire religious order from all his territories. Both the image in Teresa Gutierrez Juarez's back and the colonial print talk about the longing for a lost land, encapsulated in the same religious icon. Both images will highlight the importance of visibility in another level.

Let me end this brief presentation by returning the conversation to the Thoma paintings included in the IMAS show. I love that the guide includes community voices, through which we can further explore the theme of visibility as the state of being able to see or be seen. In one of those community labels, Juan García mentioned that the portrait of Gregorio de Viana made him reflect on his own legacy, which is another way of thinking about how visible he will be in the future. The picture, thus, functioned as a mirror not only of a Spanish bureaucrat in search of the recognition of his deeds but also of the IMAS board member today, contemplating in a similar fashion about his legacy.

El comentario de Laia Vite expuso una conexión con el marco boliviano de la colección Thoma a través de la plata, mineral también crucial para la ciudad minera de Pachuca, Hidalgo de donde es originaria su familia. En ese caso la visibilidad que permite ver y ser visto me resultó personal porque tanto mi mamá como mi papá también nacieron ahí, y yo misma pasé veranos enteros comiendo pasteles en Real del Monte, conociendo historias sobre la plata y el fútbol. The Thoma paintings then, discovered a common legacy between the graduate student the curator, making visible a connection that otherwise would have past unnoticed. I cannot imagine a better way to underscore the social role of this show and all the others organized by the Thoma foundation. By bringing colonial Andean Art into the spotlight, by making it visible, we see ourselves, and it is possible to cross time and space and, consequently, build bridges that connect us all. What a joy!

4 For more on this miraculous image, see Emily Engel, "Our Lady of Cocharcas." Object Narrative in *Conversations: An Online Journal of the Center for the same Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion* (2014). doi:10.22332/con.obj.2015.2



**Kristopher Driggers,
Curator of Latin American Art,
San Antonio Museum of Art**

Kristopher Driggers is the Associate Curator of Latin American Art at the San Antonio Museum of Art. His research and exhibitions have explored a wide range of Indigenous arts from the Americas, including textiles of the Andes, the sixteenth-century K'iche Maya story Popol Vuh, narrative arts in Mexico, and the contemporary resonances of ancient American art. He is currently working on an exhibition about the pigment Maya Blue, an Indigenous innovation with enduring resonances today. He was previously the Associate Curator of Latin American Art at the Tucson Museum of Art, and he holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Chicago and a BA in The History of Art from Yale University.

Connecting with Place at the Art Museum

By Kristopher Driggers

Curator of Latin American Art, San Antonio Museum of Art

Museum exhibitions of art are always the meeting points of multiple voices. Exhibitions require collaborations between colleagues working across departments to negotiate and problem-solve to bring objects to a space and work out how to communicate about them to a public; there are the artworks themselves, which converge energetically in the galleries and dialogue with one another; and then there are those of us who visit, bringing our own subjectivities and voices to the arena. In the case of the IMAS presentation of *Paintings from Spanish America from the Thoma Collection*, it's especially exciting to see another layer of multivocality, with the Community Voices labels written by members of the RGV community. These texts reflect on how the images and ideas found in this group of artworks relate to the experiences of people living where you live. There are vast expanses of geography and time represented in this exhibition, but reading these labels underscores that those geographies connect with the 'here and now' for many in the museum's region.

That story connecting historical Latin American art to local contexts is also told at San Antonio Museum of Art, where I curate the Latin American art collection. The collection stewarded in our Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Latin American Art is broad, where we care for more than 10,000 objects representing every country in Latin America, with the first acquisitions made in 1924, just over a century ago.¹ Yet while the collection holdings reach across distances of time and place, many objects have special connections close to home, reflecting the history of South Texas. To take one example, the museum conserves a painting by a major Mexican artist of the 18th century, Nicolás Enríquez, which allegorically depicts the founding of a College in Querétaro by friars of the Franciscan Order.² One corner of the painting features Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, a foundational figure in the history of the San Antonio Missions, preaching before Indigenous subjects. As the community-authored labels in the Thoma Collection exhibition remind us, artworks take on distinct meanings that

¹ To learn more about the formation of the permanent collection at the museum, see *The San Antonio Museum of Art: Guide to the Collection* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art, 2012).

² In addition to the painting conserved at SAMA, the image also circulated in print. See Rosa Cacheda Barreiro and Karina Ruiz Cuevas, "De Valencia a Querétaro. La devoción jacobea a través de una estampa de Vicente Capilla Gil," *Ad Limina: Research Journal of the Way of St. James and the Pilgrimages* 1 (2010): 165-184.

reflect the contexts where they're shown; in San Antonio, our South Texas history gives us an important and living connection to the objects in the collection.

The exhibition at IMAS also speaks, of course, to the tremendous work that the Thoma Foundation has done in making Colonial Latin American art accessible to audiences through the sharing of the collection. Beyond creating exhibitions that can travel to institutions, the Thoma Foundation also makes loans of individual objects that join with other collections to create narratives about historical Latin American art. Currently, San Antonio Museum of Art has a painting on loan from the Collection representing Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata, an advocacy of the Virgin Mary that was especially popular in Peru and Bolivia in the 17th and 18th centuries.³ The image speaks to the confluence of ideas from distinct cultural traditions around 1669 when it was made: both the Virgin and the Christ child that she holds wear crowns with pink and white plumes, likely speaking to the enduring relevance of Indigenous Andean ideals of performance and power. At SAMA, the loan of the painting has been shown paired with a retable from the Andes, creating an in-gallery relationship between the painting and the altarpiece that offers insight into the historical contexts of each.

I'll end these short comments with an invitation: Please, visit our galleries in San Antonio! If the experience of seeing the exquisite paintings from the Thoma Collection at IMAS has sparked your curiosity, know that SAMA is just a few hours' drive away. We are eager to share the experience of engaging with Colonial Latin American artworks in our galleries with you. Alongside them, you'll find works from ancient Mesoamerica and the Andes, Modern and Contemporary Latin American art, and objects of popular art spanning three centuries of Latin American history. Beyond SAMA, Texas is home to several collections with Colonial Latin American holdings to keep growing your interest. Exhibitions are the culmination of many efforts, but they can also be starting points, and I hope that the important exhibition of the Thoma Collection might mark the new start of your own exploration of historical Latin American art.

³ To learn more about Marian devotional images and other paintings from the Thoma collection, see *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1600-1825 from the Thoma Collection*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Stanford and Milan: Skira and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, 2006).



Carlos Limas
Artist
Department Chair, South Texas College

Carlos Limas has a background in Graphic Design from the Instituto Profesional de Arte y Diseño, Monterrey, México, as well as a Bachelor in Studio Art from l'Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles, Belgium. He completed a Masters in Fine Arts at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, TX. His primary media are photography, painting, and video. He has exhibited in solo and group art exhibitions at regional, national, and international levels. Limas lives and works in McAllen, Texas, where he teaches Digital Photography at South Texas College where he also serves as the Art Department Chair.

Destino Sur:

Carlos Limas
Artist
Department Chair, South Texas College

The evolving narrative of photography is a continuous process of observation where we discover new things, for me, photography has never just been about capturing what's in front of the lens. It's always been a way of exploring, of learning, almost like a conversation with places, objects, and memories. Over the years, my practice has slowly taken shape into something that feels more like research than just documenting. It's become a way for me to dig into the meaning of a place, to ask questions, some I didn't even know I needed to ask after a simple act of contemplation, like, what stories hide in plain sight? or How does my cultural background shape what I choose to photograph?

Destino Sur was not something I set out to create as a single project. It grew organically, one trip at a time, from different locations and different altitudes in the wonderful country of Peru. This turning point happened in 2018 when I was working on my MFA at UTRGV. I was taking a Latin American art history course with Dr. Robert Bradley, and that's when I was first introduced to the Nazca Lines. These enormous geoglyphs in the Peruvian desert completely fascinated me. Their scale, their mystery, their quiet defiance of time. I couldn't stop thinking about them. So, when a chance to study abroad in Peru came up, I made sure to arrive ahead of everyone else so I could see them for myself. I took a short flight over the desert with a camera on hand, and even though the flight lasted only minutes, the experience changed the way I thought about photography.

That moment opened up a whole new understanding of my work. I started to approach photography more intentionally as a way of following my intuition to make connections and trace the past to the present. I realized that photography could also be a form of research, a way of building a dialogue by decoding an image and its historic context.

Engaging with collections like the THOMACollection helped push this idea even further. Looking at their works, it really shaped how I think about artists at that time responding and

documenting through painting to their social and political demands and context. When I joined the THOMA Foundation Roundtable earlier this year, it reminded me how valuable it is when studio artists and art historians come together. We each bring something different to the table, and those exchanges lead to fresh perspectives and richer questions.

That same spirit of collaboration is a big part of what I do. In my case, with Professor of Photography at UTRGV Brownsville, Romeo Di Loreto, an artist I've worked with for a couple of years. His collaboration helps me build something lasting, which I hope can transcend to a creative and young artistic community where ideas can cross between practice and theory, between local stories and global conversations.

In the end, Destino Sur is a reflection of all of that. It's the result of years of paying attention, studying, collaborating, and listening. It reminds me that photography isn't a solitary act. It's always in conversation with time, with history, and with people. And having access to research, whether through collections, classes, or conversations, doesn't just enrich the work; it makes it possible. It helps us make images that don't just describe but that ask, that echo, and maybe even help us understand our contemporary society a little better, one photo at a time.



Catalogue of Artworks



Autor desconocido

**San Francisco de Asís
intercede por la humanidad**

Potosí, Bolivia

Siglo XVIII

Óleo sobre lienzo

La intercesión de los santos es una doctrina de la Iglesia Católica que afirma que se puede encomendar a los santos que recen por los demás. En este cuadro, San Francisco suplica a Cristo y a su madre María que intercedan por las almas que sufren en el Purgatorio y por todos los estamentos de la humanidad, representados por reyes, clérigos y un noble que lleva peluca blanca. El elaborado marco de plata fue probablemente encargado especialmente para esta pequeña pintura sobre tabla. Tanto la pintura como su marco, fueron creados en Potosí, la famosa “Ciudad de la Plata”.

Unidentified Artist

**Saint Francis of Assisi
Interceding for Mankind**

Bolivia, Potosí

18th century

Oil on panel

21.87 x 22.25 inches (framed)

The intercession of the saints is a doctrine of the Catholic Church that asserts that saints may be asked to pray for others. In this painting, Saint Francis pleads with Christ and His mother, Mary, to intercede for the suffering souls in Purgatory and for all walks of humanity, represented by kings, members of the clergy, and a nobleman wearing a white wig. The elaborately crafted silver frame was likely commissioned specially for this small painting on a wood panel. Both the painting and its frame were created in Potosí, the famous “City of Silver.”

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Laia I. Vite C.

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Una figura conocida por su compasión, San Francisco de Asís es prominente en la pintura cristiana en América Latina, intercediendo en nombre de la humanidad, evocando sentimientos de espiritualidad y mostrando su devoción religiosa. Abogando por la salvación de la humanidad, salva las almas que están en el purgatorio. El marco elaborado es un ejemplo de la excepcional hibridez que ocurrió en la producción artística en las décadas posteriores a la conquista de Perú. Tales obras fueron cruciales para la evangelización de Sudamérica, y el objetivo español era que la asimilación se implementara con éxito, y las nuevas ideas y formas de arte debían ser introducidas lentamente a su creciente población.

El hermoso marco de plata me recuerda a mi familia, que originalmente es de Pachuca, Hidalgo. Algunos de ellos todavía residen actualmente en la ciudad, donde hay muy conocidas minas de plata. Muchos artesanos locales crean espejos de plata, marcos de fotos y marcos pintados que reflejan los estilos y diseños en el marco de esta pintura. La plata es un componente importante que utilizo como inspiración para mi trabajo en mi práctica artística de explorar la identidad. Mi familia y yo hacemos un viaje anual al “pueblo mágico” Real del Monte en las montañas de Hidalgo para comprar plata y explorar la influencia europea del siglo XVIII del lugar.

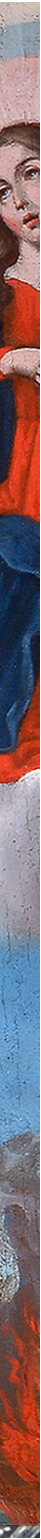
COMMUNITY VOICES

Laia I. Vite C.

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

A figure known for his compassion, Saint Francis of Assisi is prominent in Christian painting in Latin America, interceding on behalf of mankind, evoking feelings of spirituality, and showcasing his religious devotion. Advocating for the salvation of humanity, he saves those souls who are in purgatory. The elaborate frame is an example of the exceptional hybridity that occurred in art production in the decades following the conquest of Perú. Such works were crucial to the evangelization of South America, and the Spanish goal was for assimilation to be successfully implemented, and new ideas and art forms had to be slowly introduced to its growing population.

The beautiful silver frame reminds me of my family, who are originally from Pachuca, Hidalgo. Some of them still currently reside in the city, where there are very well-known silver mines. Many local artisans create silver mirrors, picture frames, and painted frames that echo the styles and designs in the frame of this painting. Silver is an important component I use as inspiration for my work in my art practice of exploring identity. My family and I make a yearly trip to the “pueblo magico” Real del Monte in the mountains of Hidalgo to buy silver and explore the eighteenth-century European influence of the place.





Juan Pedro López

Nuestra Señora de Guía

Caracas, Venezuela

ca. 1765-1770

Óleo sobre lienzo

Juan Pedro López, nacido en Caracas y de padres canarios, es el pintor más destacado de la Venezuela del siglo XVIII. Este cuadro representa la escultura vestida de Nuestra Señora de la Guía en su nicho en el altar mayor de la iglesia de San Mauricio, con dos angelillos coronándola. Según una leyenda, los rostros de la Virgen y el Niño fueron modelados a partir de los de la esposa e hijo del conde de Tovar, quien sentía una especial devoción por la imagen. El elaborado marco rococó fue creado por el ebanista Domingo Gutiérrez, colaborador habitual de López.

Juan Pedro López

Our Lady of Guidance

Venezuela, Caracas

c. 1765-1770

Oil on canvas

46.5 × 35.93 inches (framed)

Juan Pedro López, born in Caracas to parents from the Canary Islands, is the best-known painter of eighteenth-century Venezuela. The painting depicts the “dressed sculpture” of Our Lady of Guidance in her niche on the main altar of the Church of San Mauricio, with two putti leaning down to crown her. A legend suggests that the faces of the Virgin and Child were modeled on those of the wife and child of the Count of Tovar, who had a particular devotion to the image. The elaborate gilded rococo frame was crafted by the cabinetmaker Domingo Gutiérrez, a collaborator of López.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Kelsie Garza

Estudiante de posgrado en la
Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

La Calma de Una Madre



Al frente, ella brilla tan radiante, Un símbolo de calma mientras dos ángeles bajan una corona desde lo alto.

Bendiciéndola con su amor tierno, su mirada es tranquila, pero su espíritu fuerte, un consuelo para aquellos que han rezado por tanto tiempo.

Sosteniendo a mi hija, acunandola cerca, mientras el mundo se detiene por un momento. Mis manos firmes, mi corazón liberado, una luz guía en su pequeño mundo.

El amor de una madre, la visión de un niño. Ella está, serena, con los brazos abiertos, Contra el mundo, protegiéndola del daño.

Al igual que ella, encuentro mi fuerza, en sus pequeños suspiros, en sus suaves gorjeos.

Su calma refleja la mía, un consuelo tranquilo, un amor bien conocido.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kelsie Garza

UTRGV Graduate Student in the
School of Art & Design

A Mother's Calm

At the forefront, she shines so bright, a symbol of calm as two angels lower a crown from above.

Blessing her with their gentle love, her gaze is calm, yet her spirit strong, a comfort to those who've prayed for so long.

Holding my daughter, cradling her close, as the world is still for a moment. My hands steady, my heart unfurled, a guiding light in her small world.

A mother's love, a child's view.

She stands, serene, with open arms, against the world, protecting from harm.

Just like her, I find my strength, in tiny sighs, in soft coos.

Her calmness reflects my own, a quiet comfort, a love well-known.





Autor desconocido

San José y el Niño Jesús

Quito, Ecuador

Finales del siglo XVIII

Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

Santa Teresa de Ávila, fundadora española de la orden carmelita, fue una devota seguidora de San José, padre terrenal de Jesús, que promovió activamente su devoción en Europa. Este culto se extendió a Hispanoamérica con los carmelitas, quienes establecieron varios monasterios en Quito, Ecuador, donde se creó esta pintura. Las figuras de José y el Niño Jesús, con sus dulces gestos que resaltan su afecto, exhiben en su tez el aspecto de porcelana típico de las pinturas quiteñas. Un aspecto original de las pinturas quiteñas de finales del siglo XVIII es el elaborado marco rococo ficticio, inspirado en grabados europeos.

Unidentified Artist

Saint Joseph and the Christ Child

Ecuador, Quito

Late 18th century

Oil and gold on canvas

40 × 29 inches (framed)

Saint Teresa of Ávila, the Spanish founder of the Carmelite order, was a devoted follower of Saint Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, and actively promoted devotion to him in Europe. The cult spread to Spanish America with the Carmelites, who established several monastic houses in Quito, Ecuador, where this painting was created. The porcelain-like qualities typical of Quito paintings are evident in the figures of Joseph and the Christ Child, whose sweet gestures highlight their affection. Nearly unique to Quito paintings of the late eighteenth century is the fictive painted framework in an elaborate rococo style inspired by European engravings.

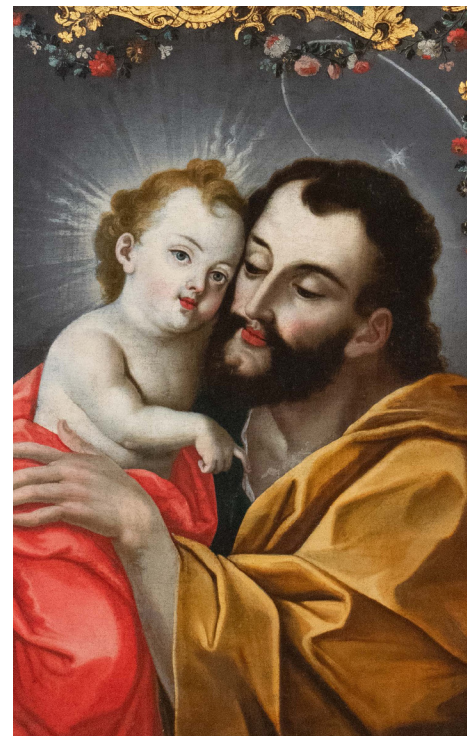
VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Padre Pedro Hernández, STB

Iglesia Católica de Santa Ana, Linn-San Manuel

Ite San Joseph
(Ve A José)

San José, padre adoptivo de Cristo, nunca pronuncia una palabra en los Evangelios, por lo que aparece oculto en el misterio. Este artista desconocido utiliza componentes visuales para guiar nuestra imaginación y nos despliega la paternidad de San José. En el cuadro, José aparece con una mirada embelesada hacia el Niño Jesús mientras contempla al niño en sus brazos, una representación habitual. Este cuadro nos recuerda que San José es un modelo santo para sacerdotes y padres que desean servir a sus comunidades y familias. ¡Acude a José como el Niño Jesús! San José, ruega por nosotros.



COMMUNITY VOICES

Reverend Pedro Hernández, STB

Catholic Church of Saint Anne, Linn-San Manuel

Ite San Joseph
(Go To Joseph)

Saint Joseph, Foster Father of Christ, never speaks a word in the Gospels; therefore, he appears concealed in mystery. This unknown artist uses visual components to guide our imaginations and unfolds St. Joseph's fatherhood to us. In the painting, Joseph appears with an enamored gaze towards the Christ Child as he beholds the child in his arms, a common depiction. This painting reminds us that Saint Joseph is a holy model for priests and fathers, who desire to serve their communities and families. Go to Joseph like the Christ Child! Saint Joseph, pray for us.





Autor desconocido

**Nuestra Señora del Rosario del
Monasterio Dominico de Potosí**

Bolivia

Siglo XVIII

Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

Innumerable paintings of Nuestra Señora del Rosario fueron creadas por artistas en el virreinato. Esta obra en particular representa una escultura de la iglesia del monasterio dominico de Potosí, Bolivia. La escultura vestida aparece enmarcada por el arco de plata ornamentada que la acompaña hasta hoy en las procesiones por la ciudad. El artista ha pintado el vestido y las joyas de la Virgen con exquisito cuidado y ha recreado magistralmente el arco utilizando la técnica de grisalla. Los santos Francisco y Domingo aparecen como líderes de las órdenes responsables de la difusión de la fe en todo el mundo.

Unidentified Artist

**Our Lady of the Rosary of the
Dominican Monastery of Potosi**

Bolivia

18th century

Oil on canvas

45 × 36.5 inches (framed)

Innumerable paintings of Our Lady of the Rosary were created by Spanish colonial artists. This particular work depicts a sculpture from the church of the Dominican Monastery in Potosí, Bolivia. The “dressed sculpture” is shown framed by the ornate silver circle that accompanies it on festive processions through the city to this today. The artist has painted the Virgin’s gown and jewels with exquisite care and masterfully recreated the silver arch using the grisaille technique. Saints Francis, on the lower left, and Dominic, on the lower right, appear as the leaders of the orders credited with spreading the faith worldwide.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Hannah Piñon

Estudiante de posgrado en la
Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV



Lo primero que me llama la atención es el marco pintado alrededor de la Virgen del Rosario, que parece tan delicado y elegante como un encaje. Lo siguiente que me atrae es el rosario en las manos de la Madre y del Niño. Me pregunto si el color rojo representa la sangre de Cristo y su sacrificio, o la relación de la rosa roja con la Virgen María. Me llama la atención el otro objeto que tienen en las manos: una flor. No es una flor cualquiera, sino un Ranunculus por sus capas de pétalos. Es otro toque delicado al cuadro que complementa el marco de encaje.

Con gran atención a la joyería, realmente disfruto viendo las pinceladas blancas de pintura que se asemejan a perlas, ofreciendo una sensación de pureza de la Virgen. Con esto en mente, no puedo evitar fijarme en su velo brillante que cubre su pelo con pequeñas gemas. Su única oreja asomando por delante del pelo y el velo con su pendiente tipo araña nos dice: «Estoy aquí para escuchar». Los dos santos que miran a la Virgen María son bastante interesantes. Interpreto que su posición equilibrada representa la vida y la muerte. La vida representada en la rama florecida a la derecha y la muerte representada abajo a la izquierda con la calavera. Interpreto esto como que seguirán a María en la vida y en la muerte. La moda y la indumentaria españolas también influyeron mucho en este cuadro, ya que el Niño Jesús lleva una peluca blanca empolvada.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Hannah Piñon

UTRGV Graduate Student in the
School of Art & Design

What first catches my eye is the painted frame around the Lady of Rosary, which appears as delicate and elegant as lace. The next thing I am drawn to is the rosary in both the mother and child's hands. I wonder if the red color represents the blood of Christ and His sacrifice, or the relation of the red rose that is also related to the Virgin Mary. My eye is drawn to the other object in their hands, a flower. Not just any flower, but a Ranunculus because of its layers of petals. It's another delicate touch to the painting that compliments the lacy frame.

With great attention to jewelry, I truly enjoy seeing the white beads of paint that resemble pearls, offering a sense of purity to the Virgin. With that in mind, I can't help but notice her sparkly veil covering her hair with little facets of gems. Her single ear popping out in front of her hair and veil with her chandelier type earring says, "I am here to listen." The two saints that look to the Virgin Mary are quite interesting. I interpret their balanced position as representing life and death. Life being represented with the flowering branch on the right and death represented on the bottom left with the skull. I interpret this as they will follow Mary in life and in death. Spanish fashion and garments also greatly influenced this painting as the Christ Child wears a powdered white wig.





Autor desconocido

**Niño Jesús con instrumentos
de la pasión**

Perú

Siglo XVII

Óleo y oro sobre cobre

Esta composición, creada por el grabador flamenco Hieronymus Wierix hacia 1619, fue pintada por numerosos artistas en Europa e Iberoamérica. El joven Cristo cargando la cruz imagina su viaje simbólico hacia la crucifixión mientras lleva una cesta con los Instrumentos de la Pasión que incluye los clavos, tenazas, dados y el velo de la Verónica. El delicado rostro de Cristo, los colores apagados y la aplicación mínima de oro sugieren que el autor era un artista activo en el Perú del siglo XVII. La pequeña escala de este cobre indica que estaba destinado a la contemplación privada en entornos domésticos.

Unidentified Artist

**Christ Child with Instruments
of the Passion Bolivia**

Peru

17th century

Oil and gold on copper

8.93 × 6.68 inches

This composition, invented by the Flemish printmaker Hieronymus Wierix around 1619, was painted by a number of European and Spanish colonial artists. The young Christ bearing the cross envisions his symbolic journey to His Crucifixion while carrying a basket laden with the so-called Instruments of the Passion: the nails, pincers, dice, and Veronica's veil. The sensitively depicted face of Christ, muted colors, and minimal application of gold suggest an artist working in seventeenth-century Peru. The small scale of this painting on copper means that it was intended for private contemplation in domestic settings.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Marcelo A. Ramirez Garcia-Rojas

Curador, Museo Internacional de Arte y Ciencia

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV



La imagen me recuerda la historia contada en la iglesia de mi vecindario en Reynosa, Tamaulipas, sobre el Cristo Niño enseñando a los ancianos en el templo. Mi hermano y nuestros vecinos escuchaban atentamente la historia y se maravillaban de cómo la sabiduría de un niño podía enseñar a aquellos mayores que él. Esta historia bíblica nos inspiró a compartir y aprender con otros a lo largo de nuestras vidas.

Utilizando líneas temporales alteradas, el artista representa a Cristo como un niño con los instrumentos de su eventual muerte. Al utilizar instrumentos de la crucifixión como proyectos de carpintería temprana, el artista muestra una conexión con la vida, la muerte y el tiempo. Esta representación humana muestra el concepto del Cristo niño dotado con las facultades de una deidad todopoderosa, para conocer todas las cosas pasadas, presentes y futuras.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Marcelo A. Ramirez Garcia-Rojas

Curator, International Museum of Art & Science

UTRGV Graduate Student, MA Art History, School of Art and Design

The image reminds me of the story told in my neighborhood church in Reynosa, Tamaulipas about the Christ Child teaching to the elders in the temple. My brother and our neighbors would intently listen to the story and wonder at how the wisdom of a child could teach those older than him. This biblical story inspired us to share and learn with others throughout our lives.

Using altered timelines, the artist portrays a representation of Christ as a child with instruments of his eventual death. In utilizing instruments of the crucifixion as early carpentry projects, the artist shows a connection to life, death, and time. This human portrayal shows the concept of the Christ child being endowed with the faculties of an almighty deity, to know all things past, present, and future.





Autor desconocido
**Nuestra Señora de los
Remedios de La Paz**
Bolivia
Siglo XVIII
Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

Según una piadosa tradición, la herida en la mejilla de la imagen de la Virgen María en la iglesia del Hospital de San Juan de Dios en La Paz, Bolivia, fue causada por un puñal esgrimido por un ludópata corrupto. Al ver la imagen sangrar, experimentó una profunda conversión religiosa. Nuestra Señora de los Remedios de La Paz, rodeada de brillantes rayos dorados, está representada con San Juan de Dios a su izquierda y Rafael, el “ángel de la sanación”, a su derecha. Ambas figuras se asocian con la salud, destacando el poder curativo de la imagen original, considerada milagrosa.

Unidentified Artist
**Our Lady of the
Remedies of La Paz**
Bolivia
18th century
Oil on canvas
33.5 × 26.75 inches (framed)

According to a pious tradition, the wound on the cheek of the Virgin Mary's image in the church of the Hospital of Saint John of God in La Paz, Bolivia, was caused by a dagger wielded by a corrupt gambler. Witnessing the image bleed, he experienced a profound religious conversion. Our Lady of Remedies of La Paz, surrounded by brilliant gold rays, is depicted with John of God on her left and the “healing angel” Raphael on her right. Both figures are associated with healing, emphasizing the curative power of the original image, which was considered a miracle worker.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Kelsie Garza

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Ella

Su vestido fluye como olas de oro.

Hilos de historias en patrones audaces.

Ángeles se elevan, sus alas toman vuelo.

Santos se arrodillan, bañados en su luz.

Un halo de plata enmarca su gracia.

Una reina eterna en su lugar sagrado.

Jacinto Zambrano

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Mirando esta imagen, oigo los sonidos y las palabras de la canción de los Beatles:

«Cuando me encuentro
en tiempos difíciles,
la Madre María viene a mí,
pronunciando palabras de sabiduría.
que así sea.

Y en mi hora de oscuridad,
ella está de pie frente a mí
Diciendo palabras de sabiduría,
que así sea».

-Los Beatles

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kelsie Garza

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

Her

Her gown flows like waves of gold.

Threads of story in patterns so bold.

Angels rise, their wings take flight.

Saints kneel below, bathed in her light.

A silver halo frames her grace.

A timeless queen in her sacred place.

Jacinto Zambrano

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Looking at this image, I hear the sounds and words of the Beatles song:

“When I find myself in times of trouble,
Mother Mary comes to me,
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.
And in my hour of darkness, she is
standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.”

-The Beatles





Autor desconocido

Ángel arcabucero

Bolivia

Siglo XVIII

Óleo sobre lienzo

Las pinturas de ángeles arcabuceros realizadas en Perú y Bolivia destacan como algunas de las creaciones más originales de los artistas virreinales. Inspirándose en los manuales militares europeos, estos artistas no identificados imaginaron un “ejército celestial” para defender la fe católica. Estos elegantes espadachines llevan bastones de mando, banderas de regimiento y armas como el arcabuz. Si bien algunas series de estas figuras adornaban los interiores de las iglesias, grabados de época demuestran que también decoraron interiores domésticos.

Unidentified Artist

Angel with Harquebus

Bolivia

18th century

Oil on canvas

56 x 37 inches

Paintings of military angels from present-day Peru and Bolivia are among the most original creations of Spanish colonial artists. Drawing on European military manuals, these unidentified artists envisioned a “celestial army” to defend the Catholic faith. These elegant swashbucklers carry batons, regimental flags, and weapons such as the harquebus, a matchlock gun. Series of these individual figures adorned churches, but engravings also show military angels decorating domestic interiors.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Adrian Ortega

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

A lo largo de mi adolescencia, tuve la fortuna de viajar al extranjero dos veces con mi familia, una vez a Argentina y otra a Perú. En diciembre de 2016, pasamos dos semanas frenéticas recorriendo monumentos históricos en todo Perú, desde la Plaza de Armas en Cusco hasta Machu Picchu. En ese momento, desconocía la rica historia de la región, y mis intentos apresurados por aprender sobre la marcha fueron infructuosos, por lo que quiero volver. El Ángel Arcabucero es una obra bellamente detallada creada a través de una combinación de técnicas de pintura y estudios de caza que generaron un tema único en Sudamérica.

Uno de mis recuerdos más formativos del viaje fue visitar las orillas occidentales del lago Titicaca, donde caminé entre las islas flotantes del pueblo Uru. Aprendí cómo se han adaptado a la vida en el lago, construyendo islas, casas y barcos completamente con juncos. Incluso mencionaron que podían reposicionar sus hogares levantándolos y girándolos.

A pesar de mi ignorancia —o quizás por ella— el encuentro con una forma de vida tan radicalmente diferente transformó cómo veo el mundo. Me sorprendió que esta forma de vida pudiera coexistir con la mía, ambas bajo el mismo cielo. Revisitar este recuerdo me sirve como recordatorio para mantenerme curiosa y seguir buscando nuevos conocimientos.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Adrian Ortega

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

Throughout my adolescence, I was fortunate to travel abroad twice with my family, once to Argentina and once to Perú. In December 2016, we spent two hectic weeks ping-ponging between historical landmarks across Perú, from the Plaza de Armas in Cusco and Machu Picchu. At the time, I was unaware of the region's rich history, and my rushed attempts to learn on the fly were fruitless, so I want to return. The Angel Arcabucero is a beautifully detailed work created through a hybrid of painting techniques and hunting studies that generated a subject matter unique to South America.

One of my most formative memories from the trip was visiting the western shores of Lake Titicaca, where I walked among the floating islands of the Uru people. I learned how they've adapted to life on the lake, building islands, houses, and boats entirely from reeds. They even mentioned they could reposition their homes by picking them up and turning them.

Despite my ignorance—or maybe because of it—encountering such a radically different way of life reshaped how I see the world. It amazed me that this way of living could coexist with my life, both beneath the same sky. Revisiting this memory serves as a reminder to me to stay curious and to continue seeking new knowledge.





Autor desconocido

Ángel con bastón de mando

Bolivia

Siglo XVIII

Óleo sobre lienzo

Las pinturas de ángeles arcabuceros realizadas en Perú y Bolivia destacan como algunas de las creaciones más originales de los artistas virreinales. Inspirándose en los manuales militares europeos, estos artistas no identificados imaginaron un “ejército celestial” para defender la fe católica. Estos elegantes espadachines llevan bastones de mando, banderas de regimiento y armas como el arcabuz. Si bien algunas series de estas figuras adornaban los interiores de las iglesias, grabados de época demuestran que también decoraron interiores domésticos.

Unidentified Artist

Angel with Baton

Bolivia

18th century

Oil on canvas

Paintings of military angels from present-day Peru and Bolivia are among the most original creations of Spanish colonial artists. Drawing on European military manuals, these unidentified artists envisioned a “celestial army” to defend the Catholic faith. These elegant swashbucklers carry batons, regimental flags, and weapons such as the harquebus, a matchlock gun. Series of these individual figures adorned churches, but engravings also show military angels decorating domestic interiors.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Ricky O. Sullivan

Instructor de Arte, UTRGV School of Art and Design

Esta imagen me recuerda las historias que nuestra maestra de la escuela dominical, la Sra. Jane, nos contaba sobre San Miguel Arcángel, quien lideraba el ejército de Dios contra las fuerzas de Satanás. Es durante la guerra en el cielo que el Arcángel Miguel sale victorioso sobre el diablo. Después de la batalla, Satanás fue arrojado a la tierra con sus ángeles caídos. La Sra. Jane fue muy apasionada durante la narración de la historia y todos nos sentimos muy bien. Era un sentimiento de alegría, de ansiedad; un sentimiento difícil de explicar. Todo lo que puedo decir es que era una buena sensación. A menudo contaba esta historia y reiteraba que Dios era bueno con todos los que creían en Él.

Como artista, creo firmemente que el arte es una forma de comunicación poderosa y universal, que va más allá de los “barreras” del lenguaje, el espacio y el tiempo. El arte es también un reflejo y una expresión de la cultura, que revela los valores, creencias e identidades de diferentes grupos e individuos. Puede poner a prueba las normas sociales, fomentar debates e inspirar un cambio necesario, lo que lo convierte en un actor activo en el progreso de la identidad cultural. A lo largo de la historia, el arte ha desempeñado un papel esencial en la expresión de la identidad cultural. Esto es exactamente lo que quiero transmitir con mi arte.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Ricky O. Sullivan

Instructor of Art, UTRGV School of Art and Design

This image reminds me of the stories our Sunday school teacher Mrs. Jane would tell us about Saint Michael the Archangel leading God's army against Satan's forces. It is during the war in heaven that the Archangel Michael is victorious over the devil. After the battle, Satan was cast to earth with his fallen angels. Mrs. Jane was very passionate during her storytelling that we all felt great. It was a feeling of joy, of anxiousness; a feeling that is hard to explain. All I can say is that it was a good feeling. She often told this story and reiterated that God was good to all that believed in Him.

As an Artist I strongly believe that art is a powerful and universal form of communication, that goes beyond the "walls" of language, space, and time. Art is also a reflection and expression of culture, which reveals the values, beliefs, and identities of different groups and individuals. It can test social standards, encourage discussions, and inspire a needed shift, making it an active player in the progression of cultural identity. Throughout history, art has played an essential role in expressing cultural identity. This is exactly what I want to convey with my art.





Autor desconocido

Mujer del Apocalipsis

Quito, Ecuador

Siglo XVIII

Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

El tema de esta pintura sobre cobre se basa en un pasaje del libro del Apocalipsis 12:1, donde San Juan de Patmos describe a “una mujer vestida del sol, y la luna bajo sus pies, y sobre su cabeza una corona de doce estrellas”. Da a luz a un niño, que es perseguido por un dragón que pretende devorarlo, pero el infante es “llevado a Dios y a su trono” (12:5). La mujer tan vívidamente descrita fue interpretada como la Virgen María, y su hijo como el Niño Jesús. San Juan aparece inmerso en el paisaje, documentando su visión divina.

Unidentified Artist

Woman of the Apocalypse

Ecuador, Quito

18th century

Oil on copper

11.93 × 8.93 inches

The subject of this copper painting is based on a passage from the Biblical book of Revelation 12:1, where Saint John of Patmos describes, “A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” She delivers a child, who is pursued by a dragon seeking to devour him, but the infant is “taken up to God, and to his throne” (12:5). The woman so vividly described was interpreted as the Virgin Mary, and her son as the Christ Child. Saint John appears in the landscape, documenting his divine vision.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Victoria Martinez

Estudiante de posgrado en la
Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Esta obra me invita a reflexionar sobre el rol de la mujer como símbolo de fuerza, resistencia y transformación en nuestras vidas y comunidades. La Mujer del Apocalipsis no es sólo una figura premonitória. Simboliza el potencial de renacimiento y cambio, incluso ante una adversidad abrumadora. En muchas culturas, las mujeres han sido consideradas las cuidadoras y líderes que guían a sus comunidades en tiempos difíciles con compasión y fortaleza.

Para mí, este cuadro representa algo más que una alegoría bíblica. Es una poderosa representación visual de la resistencia femenina. La victoria de la mujer sobre la bestia de seis cabezas, que se asemeja a una serpiente, se hace eco de un pasaje de la Carta a los Romanos 16:20, «y así Jesús magulló la cabeza de la serpiente... en ese día se acabará cuando Dios aplaste la serpiente bajo nuestros pies en la gloria». Bajo sus pies, la imagen de la bestia sometida habla del triunfo del bien sobre el mal, un mensaje que habría resonado profundamente en la gente que vivía en Quito durante la colonia, ofreciéndoles consuelo y esperanza, y que resuena en mí también hoy.

La mujer también acuna a un niño -Jesús- junto a su pecho, una imagen de amor maternal y protección. Esto me recuerda el poema de Amy Chan: «Oh, cómo late salvaje mi corazón cuando abrazo a mi precioso hijo...». El vínculo maternal es universal, trasciende el tiempo y la cultura y, en el contexto de este cuadro, sirve para recordar el poder protector de la mujer, tanto en el ámbito espiritual como en el físico.

COMMUNITY VOICES

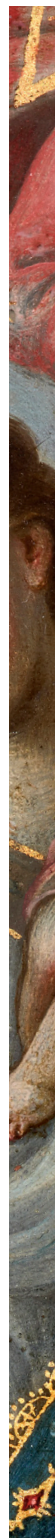
Victoria Martinez

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

This piece invites me to reflect on the role of women as symbols of strength, resilience, and transformation in our lives and communities. The Woman of the Apocalypse is not just a figure of foreboding. She symbolizes the potential for rebirth and change, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. In many cultures, women have been seen as nurturers and leaders—guiding their communities through difficult times with compassion and strength.

For me, this painting represents more than a Biblical allegory. It is a powerful visual representation of female resilience. Her victory over the six-headed beast, which resembles a serpent, echoes a passage from Romans 16:20, “and thus Jesus bruised the serpent’s head... on that day will one day be finished when God crushes the serpent under our feet in glory.” Beneath her feet, the image of the beast being subdued speaks to the triumph of good over evil, a message that would have resonated deeply with the people of colonial Quito, offering them comfort and hope, and it resonates with me today too.

The figure also cradles a child—Jesus—close to her chest, an image of maternal love and protection. This reminds me of the poem by Amy Chan: “Oh, how my heart beats wild when I hold my precious child...” The maternal bond is universal, transcending time and culture, and in the context of this painting, it serves as a reminder of the nurturing power women hold, both in the spiritual and physical realms.





Autor desconocido

**La visión de Santa Rosa de
Lima de la Virgen y el Niño**

Lima, Perú

Siglo XVIII

Óleo sobre lienzo

Santa Rosa de Lima (1586-1617), nacida como Isabel Flores de Oliva en una noble familia criolla de Lima, mostró una profunda devoción desde joven. Aunque no ingresó en una orden religiosa, vivió como asceta y mística en una ermita en el jardín de su familia, como miembro de la Tercera Orden Dominicana. Su piedad le granjeó una gran fama y devoción. Declarada santa en 1671, se convirtió en la primera santa católica nacida en América. El tema de esta pintura se inspira en la literatura de su campaña de canonización y se basa en un grabado creado durante ese período.

Unidentified Artist

**Saint Rose of Lima's Vision
of the Virgin and Child**

Peru, Lima

18th century

Oil on canvas

50 x 43 inches

Saint Rose of Lima (1586-1617), born Isabel Flores de Oliva to a noble Creole family in Lima, was deeply devout from a young age. Although she did not join a religious order, she lived as an ascetic and mystic in a hermitage within her family's garden as a member of the Dominican Third Order. Her piety gained her widespread fame and a devoted following. Declared a saint in 1671, she became the first Catholic saint born in the Americas. This painting's subject is inspired by literature from her canonization campaign and is based on an engraving created during that period.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Andres A. Rangel

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

“Si solo aprendiéramos cuán grandioso es
poseer la gracia divina y cuántas riquezas tiene en sí misma,
cuántas alegrías y delicias, dedicaríamos toda nuestra preocupación a ganar
para nosotros mismos dolores y aflicciones,
para alcanzar el tesoro insondable de la gracia.”

-Ad medicum Castillo, en La Patrona de América. Editado por L. Getino, Madrid, 1928.

Este extracto de los escritos de Santa Rosa de Lima significa mucho para mí,
porque se enfoca en el papel de las tribulaciones y luchas que proporcionan acceso a
las insondables riquezas y tesoros de la gracia divina.

Se utiliza en el Oficio de Lecturas Romano en la fiesta de
Santa Rosa de Lima el 23 de agosto.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Andres A. Rangel

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

“If only we would learn how great it is
to possess divine grace and how many riches it has within itself,
how many joys and delights, we would devote all our concern to winning
for ourselves pains and afflictions,
in order to attain the unfathomable treasure of grace.”

-Ad medicum Castillo, in La Patrona de America. Edited by L. Getino, Madrid, 1928.

This excerpt from the writings of Saint Rose of Lima means a lot to me,
because it focuses on the role of tribulations and struggles that provide access to
the unfathomable riches and treasures of divine grace.

It is used in the Roman Office of Reading on the feast day of
Saint Rose of Lima on August 23rd.





Autor desconocido

La Visitación

Perú

Siglo XVII con sobredorado del
siglo XVIII

Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

Santa Rosa de Lima (1586-1617), nacida como Isabel Flores de Oliva en una noble familia criolla de Lima, mostró una profunda devoción desde joven. Aunque no ingresó en una orden religiosa, vivió como asceta y mística en una ermita en el jardín de su familia, como miembro de la Tercera Orden Dominicana. Su piedad le granjeó una gran fama y devoción. Declarada santa en 1671, se convirtió en la primera santa católica nacida en América. El tema de esta pintura se inspira en la literatura de su campaña de canonización y se basa en un grabado creado durante ese período.

Unidentified Artist

The Visitation

Peru

17th century with gold
embellishments of the
18th century

Oil on canvas

55 x 49 ½ inches

The story is recounted in John 1:39: After Archangel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would bear a child, Mary visited her older cousin Elizabeth, who was then pregnant with the future Saint John the Baptist. "And it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." This painting exemplifies the strong naturalism found in seventeenth-century Peruvian art. However, the eighteenth-century addition of gold stenciling to the surface reflects a later trend, developed in the city of Cuzco, towards a more decorative aesthetic.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Anna Ramos, RN

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV
Enfermera en el Doctors Hospital at Renaissance

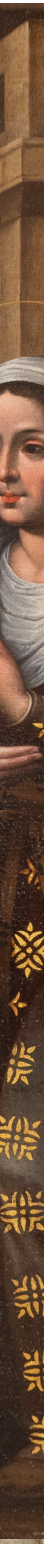
Como enfermera, siento una profunda conexión con este viaje de la maternidad mientras abogo y apoyo a las familias en su camino milagroso para dar la bienvenida a una nueva vida. Esta pintura de María y Isabel, ambas madres expectantes, captura bellamente la anticipación y la alegría que experimentan las mujeres de todo el mundo mientras esperan la llegada de sus bebés. Ilustra la profunda y sincera esperanza que estas madres llevan al desear que sus hijos nazcan sanos. La calidez del entorno que las rodea refleja el amor y el apoyo de los miembros de la familia, quienes se reúnen para celebrar esta preciosa reunión. Destaca la importancia de la comunidad en el cuidado de nuevas vidas y en la continua búsqueda compartida de la humanidad por el crecimiento y la mejora.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Anna Ramos, RN

UTRGV Graduate Student, MFA School of Art and Design
Nurse at Doctors Hospital at Renaissance

As a nurse, I feel a profound connection to this journey of motherhood as I advocate for and support families in their miraculous path to welcoming new life. This painting of Mary and Elizabeth, both expectant mothers, beautifully captures the anticipation and joy experienced by women around the world, as they await the arrival of their babies. It illustrates the deep, heartfelt hope that these mothers carry as they wish for healthy children to enter the world. The warmth of the environment surrounding them mirrors the love and support from family members, who come together to celebrate this precious reunion. It highlights the importance of community in nurturing new lives and continuing humanity's shared desire for growth and improvement.





Autor desconocido
**Niño Jesús como
Salvator Mundi**
Perú
ca.1600-1630
Óleo sobre lienzo

Las imágenes pintadas y esculpidas del Salvador del Mundo fueron populares en Europa durante la Edad Moderna, donde surgió un subtipo que mostraba a Jesús como niño en lugar de adulto. El Niño Jesús levanta la mano derecha en señal de bendición mientras sostiene el globus cruciger, simbolizando su papel como Salvator Mundi, o Redentor del Mundo. Probablemente basada en un grabado europeo, esta pintura fue creada por un artista de Lima a principios del siglo XVII, quien añadió el panel dorado detrás del trono. La relación incómoda entre la figura y el sillón frailer revela el trabajo de un artista virreinal.

Unidentified Artist
**Christ Child as
Salvator Mundi**
Peru
c.1600-1630
Oil on canvas

Painted and sculpted images of the Savior of the World were popular in Early Modern Europe, where a subtype emerged showing the child Jesus rather than the adult. The Christ Child raises his right hand in benediction while holding a globus cruciger in his left, symbolizing his role as Salvator Mundi, or Redeemer of the World. Likely based on a European print, this painting was created by an artist in early seventeenth-century Lima, who added the gilded screen behind the throne. The uneasy relationship between the figure and the throne, a simple “friar’s chair” reveals a colonial hand at work.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Dulce Perez

Estudiante de posgrado en la
Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV



Estas impresionantes pinturas de esta colección representan la delicadeza y la devoción del arte colonial, donde los colores vibrantes se fusionan con hojas de oro suave. Los detalles en Cristo como Salvador del Mundo muestran cómo el artista trabajó con tal devoción, probablemente con la intención de que los espectadores sintieran admiración y asombro por este solemne sujeto representado. Como símbolo de poder, el oro en el trono y en su halo demostraba la presencia divina y la gloria celestial de Cristo, y el diseño de la tela en la pared rinde homenaje a la producción textil que fue tan venerada en los Andes antes y después de la llegada de los españoles. Estas tradiciones, y los ricos brocados y técnicas de tapicería introducidas desde Europa, transformaron a los sujetos de seres terrenales en formas celestiales. A través del aura espiritual representada por el artista, esta pintura se convierte en algo más que una imagen religiosa. Se convierte en una devoción en sí misma: con cada pincelada, se hace una oración, y con cada hoja de oro y representación textil, es posible vislumbrar el mundo divino.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Dulce Perez

UTRGV Graduate Student, MFA School of Art and Design

This impressive paintings in this collection represent the delicacy and devotion of colonial art, where vibrant colors merge with soft gold leaf. The details in the Christ as Savior of the World show how the artist worked with such devotion, more than likely intending for the viewers to feel admiration and awe for this solemn subject that is represented. As a symbol of power, gold on the throne and in His halo demonstrated the divine presence and heavenly glory of Christ, and the fabric design on the wall pays homage to the textile production that was so venerated in the Andes before and after the Spanish arrived. These traditions, and the rich brocades and tapestry techniques introduced from Europe, transformed subjects from earthly beings into celestial forms. Through the spiritual aura depicted by the artist, this painting becomes more than just a religious image. It becomes a devotion itself - with each stroke of paint, a prayer is made, and with each gold leaf and textile representation, a glimpse into the divine world is possible.





Autor desconocido

Virgen de Copacabana

Bolivia

Siglos XVII-XVIII

Óleo y oro sobre cobre repujado,
cincelado y grabado

Desde el siglo XVII, artistas bolivianos crearon pinturas devocionales en láminas de cobre repujadas y grabadas. Este ejemplo representa a la Virgen de Copacabana, nombre homónimo de la ciudad boliviana junto al lago Titicaca donde se venera la imagen. La Virgen María aparece como la escultura que creó el artista indígena Francisco Tito Yupanqui en la década de 1580. La acompañan San José, su esposo, y San Agustín, quien fundó la orden que resguardó la imagen original en una capilla. Posteriormente, la capilla fue sustituida por un santuario que sigue atrayendo a devotos en busca de su intercesión y bendiciones.

Unidentified Artist

Our Lady of Copacabana

Bolivia

17th-18th century

Oil and gold on embossed,
chased and engraved copper

12 x 9.5 inches

Since the seventeenth century, artists in Bolivia have created unique devotional paintings on embossed and engraved copper sheets. This example portrays Our Lady of Copacabana, named after the Bolivian town on Lake Titicaca, where the image is venerated. The Virgin Mary is shown as the sculpture created by the Indigenous artist Francisco Tito Yupanqui in the 1580s. She is accompanied by Saint Joseph, her earthly husband, and Saint Augustine, whose order originally established the chapel where the image resided. The chapel was later replaced by a larger sanctuary that continues to draw numerous devotees seeking her intercession and blessings.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD



Osbel Olivares

Estudiante de posgrado en la Escuela de Arte y Diseño de UTRGV

Esta representación de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana del siglo XVII-XVIII resuena con mi viaje, cada detalle intrincado refleja las capas que navego en mi vida. Nombrada por el santuario en el Lago Titicaca donde se la venera como Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, esta imagen de la Virgen tiene un profundo significado cultural para el pueblo aimara, cuya peregrinación anual refleja tanto devoción como resistencia. Aquí, ella está adornada con vibrantes túnicas de oro y naranja, de pie en simetría elegante con San José y San Agustín, cuya presencia simboliza firmeza y sabiduría. Las figuras están en unidad con la Virgen en el centro. Juntos, representan ideales que busco equilibrar en mi propio trabajo como diseñadora, artista y especialista en medios: disciplina, creatividad y crecimiento continuo.

El diseño maximalista de la pintura, una mezcla de colores exuberantes y rombos geométricos que rodean a la Virgen y sus acompañantes, evoca la belleza de la identidad en capas. Estas formas espejadas, que pueden haber representado hojas de plata pulidas reflejando la luz de las velas del santuario, sirven como recordatorios de la iluminación que proviene de abrazar todas las facetas de uno mismo. El Niño Jesús, que se inclina alejándose de María, recuerda una leyenda en la que se movió para revelar su rostro más plenamente, un detalle que simboliza mi propio viaje para armonizar cada capa de mi identidad, permitiendo que todos los aspectos de mi trabajo, desde la habilidad técnica hasta la creatividad, sean visibles y valorados.

Así como esta composición equilibra la grandeza con la reverencia, yo también busco armonizar la complejidad y el propósito en mi vida.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Osbel Olivares

UTRGV Graduate Student in the School of Art & Design

This 17th-18th century depiction of Our Lady of Copacabana resonates with my journey, each intricate detail reflecting the layers I navigate in my life. Named for the sanctuary on Lake Titicaca where she is venerated as Our Lady of Candlemas, this image of the Virgin holds deep cultural significance for the Aymara people, whose annual pilgrimage reflects both devotion and resilience. Here, she is adorned in vibrant robes of gold and orange, standing in elegant symmetry with Saint Joseph and Saint Augustine, whose presence symbolizes steadfastness and wisdom. The figures stand in unity with the Virgin at the center. Together, they represent ideals I strive to balance in my own work as a designer, artist, and media specialist—discipline, creativity, and continuous growth.

The painting's maximalist design—a blend of lush colors and geometric rhomboids surrounding the Virgin and her attendants—evokes the beauty of layered identity. These mirrored shapes, which may have represented polished silver sheets reflecting sanctuary candlelight, serve as reminders of the illumination that comes from embracing all facets of oneself. The Christ Child, who leans away from Mary, recalls a legend where he moved to reveal her face more fully—a detail that symbolizes my own journey to harmonize each layer of my identity, letting all aspects of my work, from technical skill to artistry, remain visible and valued.

Just as this composition balances grandeur with reverence, I, too, aim to harmonize complexity and purpose in my life.





Autor desconocido
**Anunciación a la Virgen María con
las Santas Catalina y Gertrudis**
Cuzco, Perú
Siglo XVIII
Óleo y oro sobre lienzo

El artista cuzqueño combina hábilmente figuras bien modeladas con intrincadas aplicaciones de oro. Alternativamente, podrían ser dos artistas: uno encargado de pintar las figuras y otro especializado en aplicar la red de sobredorados que aplana ciertas partes de la pintura. El uso del oro para simular tejidos ricamente bordados, llamado brocateado, fue adaptado por los pintores andinos para evocar las superficies creadas por los doradores de esculturas de madera. Documentos de época revelan que las pinturas con aplicaciones de oro eran más costosas y, por lo tanto, más valiosas que las que carecían de este adorno.

Unidentified Artist
**Annunciation to the Virgin Mary
with Saints Catherine and Gertrude**
Peru, Cuzco 18th century
Oil and gold on canvas
35.12 × 28.37 inches (framed)

This unidentified Cuzco artist skillfully combines well-modeled figures with areas that deliberately show a command of intricate applications of gold. Alternatively, two artists might be involved: one painting the figures and another specializing in applying the golden network that deliberately flattens certain areas of the painting. The use of gold to simulate richly embroidered textiles, called brocateado, was adapted by Andean painters to evoke the brilliant surfaces created by the gilders of wooden sculptures. Documentary evidence reveals that paintings enhanced with gold were more expensive, thus more valued, than those without such embellishment.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Mary Nettie Rodriguez

Rio Grande City, Texas

Madre de la Directora de Marketing de IMAS, Anastasia Pérez



Este artista cuzqueño no identificado combina hábilmente figuras bien modeladas y áreas que muestran deliberadamente un dominio de aplicaciones intrincadas de oro. La inclusión de las Santas Gertrudis y Catalina por parte del artista ofreció apoyo a la asombrada Santa Gertrudis, que se veía a sí misma como la esposa de Cristo, rezó célebremente por la dicha nupcial y el amor divino. Santa Catalina, considerada la virgen más santa después de María, se convirtió en la patrona de las jóvenes doncellas. El estatus elevado y la posición de importancia de María se establecen mediante varios dispositivos artísticos colocados deliberadamente. El más obvio es la gran escala de su figura, que no solo la distingue de los otros sujetos en la obra, sino que también ocupa la mayor área del lienzo. María también atrae miradas de veneración de los demás, quienes están posicionados para enfocarse solo en ella. La aplicación de un pesado brocateado dorado en el vestido y la corona de María por parte del artista rápidamente capta la atención del espectador. Esta pintura fue probablemente encargada por un adinerado patrón andino cristiano convertido, con la capacidad de invertir en la costosa tarifa del artista por el embellecimiento adicional en oro. El patrón buscaba rendir un profundo homenaje a la importante narrativa bíblica, elevar el interior de un espacio sagrado con una impresionante obra de arte devocional, y ciertamente señalar su vasta riqueza y alta posición social.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Mary Nettie Rodriguez

Rio Grande City, Texas

Mother of IMAS Marketing Director Anastasia Perez

This unidentified Cuzco artist skillfully combines well-modeled figures and areas that deliberately show off a command of intricate applications of gold. The artist's inclusion of Saints Gertrude and Catherine offered support to the bewildered Mary. Saint Gertrude, who saw herself as the bride of Christ, famously prayed for nuptial bliss and divine love. Saint Catherine, considered the most holy virgin after Mary, became the patroness of young maidens. Mary's elevated status and position of importance is established through several purposely placed artistic devices. The most obvious is the large scale of her figure which not only sets her apart from the other subjects in the work but also inhabits the largest area of the canvas. Mary also attracts adoring gazes from the others, who are positioned to focus only on her. The artist's application of heavy gold stenciling on Mary's gown and crown quickly captures the viewer's eye. This painting was likely commissioned by a wealthy converted Christian Andean patron with the ability to invest in the artist's costly fee for the extra gold embellishment. The patron sought to pay deep homage to the important biblical narrative, elevate the interior of a sacred space with a stunning devotional artwork, and certainly signal his or her vast wealth and high social position.





Autor desconocido

Retrato de Gregorio Viana

Cuzco, Perú

ca. 1760-1770

Óleo sobre lienzo

El género del retrato en el Virreinato del Perú reflejaba las convenciones del retrato español contemporáneo mediante las poses de los retratados y la inclusión de símbolos de sus profesiones y estatus social. Sin embargo, los retratos coloniales a menudo incluyen información biográfica textual. En este cuadro, los logros de Gregorio Viana en Perú, incluido su papel en la reconstrucción de Lima tras el terremoto de 1746, se documentan en una cartela a la izquierda del lienzo y continúan en un borde inferior. El escudo de su familia en la esquina superior derecha indica su elevada posición social.

Unidentified Artist

Portrait of Gregorio Viana

Peru, Cuzco

c.1760-1770

Oil on canvas

75.87 x 64.25 inches (framed)

Portraiture in the Viceroyalty of Peru reflected the conventions of contemporary Spanish portraits through the poses of the sitters and the inclusion of symbols of their professions and social status. However, colonial portraits are often distinguished by the inclusion of textual biographical information. In this painting, Viana's achievements in Peru, including his role in rebuilding Lima after 1746 earthquake, are documented in detail in a cartouche at the left of the canvas and continuing in a border along the bottom of the painting. His high social position is indicated by his family heraldry in the upper right corner.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Juan Garcia

Miembro de la Junta Directiva y
Ex-Presidente de la Junta, IMAS



Miro a sus ojos y me pregunto: ¿sabía él que siglos después buscaría ecos de mí mismo en su mirada? Su rostro, pintado con esmero, lleva el peso de la ascendencia, de la memoria tejida en cada pincelada. Su retrato hace más que capturar su semblanza; registra su legado. Las palabras que lo rodean aseguran que su nombre, sus acciones, su resiliencia perduren.

Gregorio Viana es más que un retrato; es una historia, un linaje, un susurro que ha pasado a través del tiempo. Su escudo marca su lugar en la sociedad, pero su mirada firme habla más allá del estatus. En él, veo a los que vinieron antes que yo: su resiliencia, sus sueños, su supervivencia. Su retrato es la prueba de que vivieron, que soportaron, que permanecen.

En la imagen de Viana, me recuerda el peso de la ascendencia, que se remonta antes de las fronteras, antes de que Texas fuera Texas. Recordar es honrar. Sin embargo, la mirada de Viana no solo mira al pasado; envía un mensaje al futuro. No se trata solo de lo que debemos a quienes vinieron antes, sino también del legado que dejamos para quienes seguirán.

Viana ayudó a reconstruir Lima después del gran terremoto de 1746. ¿Cuál será mi legado?

COMMUNITY VOICES

Juan Garcia

Board Member and former President of the Board,
International Museum of Art & Science

I look into his eyes and wonder—did he know that centuries later, I would search for echoes of myself in his gaze? His face, painted with care, carries the weight of ancestry, of memory woven into every brushstroke. His portrait does more than capture his likeness; it records his legacy. The words surrounding him ensure that his name, his deeds, his resilience endure.

Gregorio Viana is more than a portrait; he is a story, a lineage, a whisper passed through time. His coat of arms marks his place in society, yet his steady gaze speaks beyond status. In him, I see those who came before me—their resilience, their dreams, their survival. His portrait is proof that they lived, that they endured, that they remain.

In Viana's image, I am reminded of the weight of ancestry, stretching back before borders, before Texas was Texas. To remember is to honor. Yet Viana's gaze does not just look to the past—it sends a message to the future. It is not only about what we owe those who came before, but also about the legacy we leave for those who will follow.

Viana helped rebuild Lima after the great earthquake of 1746. What will my legacy be?





Autor desconocido

**Retrato de Francisco Javier de
Ripalda de Beaumont Yoldi y
Aoiz, 3er Conde de Ripalda**

Cuba

ca. 1770

Óleo sobre lienzo

Al igual que sus contemporáneos al servicio del rey en Madrid, los hombres que protegieron los intereses de la Monarquía en sus territorios lejanos también quisieron conmemorar sus carreras encargando retratos. Francisco Javier Ripalda, cuyo escudo familiar aparece en el ángulo superior derecho, fue un militar encargado de proteger las ciudades cubanas de Puerto Príncipe y Trinidad durante su mandato como teniente gobernador (ca. 1771 a ca. 1779). Sus responsabilidades incluían dirigir revistas militares y defender los puertos marítimos de los piratas ingleses. Además, fue un hábil burócrata, supervisando tareas como la elaboración del primer censo de la isla.

Unidentified Artist

**Portrait of Francisco Javier de
Ripalda de Beaumont Yoldi y
Aoiz, 3rd Count of Ripalda**

Cuba

c. 1770

Oil on canvas

Like their contemporaries serving the Spanish king in Madrid, the men who safeguarded the Monarchy's interests in its distant realms also sought to commemorate their dutiful careers by commissioning portraits. Francisco Javier Ripalda, whose family crest is seen in the upper right corner, was a military man tasked with protecting the Cuban cities of Puerto Príncipe and Trinidad during his tenure as lieutenant governor (c. 1771 to c. 1779). Ripalda's responsibilities included conducting military reviews and defending seaports from English pirates. Additionally, he was a capable bureaucrat, overseeing tasks such as the first census taken of the island.

VOCES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Enrique Guerra

Artista

Melissa Guerra

Escritora y Alumna de posgrado de UTRGV



La doble cultura de un europeo nacido en Latinoamérica queda bellamente plasmada en este retrato de Francisco Javier de Ripalta. Como criollo, participó de la comida, la lengua y el folclore de dos civilizaciones, similar a la dualidad cultural que experimentamos en el Valle del Río Grande. Vivimos en la frontera entre el inglés y el castellano - Francisco Javier vivió en la intersección de la cultura europea y la indígena.

En 1770, era importante para el retratista y para Francisco Javier no sólo conmemorar sus nobles hazañas, sino declarar el triunfo de los europeos en suelo extranjero. La historia de la colonización es tensa y complicada, al igual que nuestros problemas fronterizos actuales.

Como ciudadanos de la frontera entre México y Estados Unidos, estamos llamados a triunfar dentro de nuestra doble cultura. No todos entienden quiénes somos, pero al registrar y compartir nuestras vidas a través del arte como lo hizo Francisco Javier, podemos describir a las siguientes generaciones cómo el mundo tenso y complicado gira en nuestros días.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Enrique Guerra

Artist

Melissa Guerra

Writer and UTRGV MFA Alumna

The dual culture of a European born in Latin America is beautifully captured in this portrait of Francisco Javier de Ripalda. As a criollo, he participated in the foods, language and folklore of two civilizations, similar to the cultural duality we experience in the Rio Grande Valley. We live on the border between English and Spanish – Francisco Javier lived at the intersection of European and indigenous culture.

In 1770, It was important to the portrait artist and Francisco Javier to not only memorialize his noble deeds but to declare the triumph of European people on foreign soil. The history of colonization is fraught and complicated, just like our current day border issues.

As citizens of the border between Mexico and the United States, we are called to triumph within our dual culture. Not everyone understands who we are, but by recording and sharing our lives through fine art as Francisco Javier did, we can describe to the next generations how the fraught, complicated world turned in our day.



