Costa Paintings and Self-Fashioning Artists in New Spain

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Scholars do not usually consider the production of vase paintings in light of the rising status of the artisan and his art. In fact, most of the literature suggests just the opposite, by focusing on the viceregal courts' inclusion in scientific collections and curiosity cabinets, not the grand painting and sculpture galleries of wealthy European patrons of art. Extending the arguments and research of Martha Cecilia García Silva, Elena Estrada de García, Thelma Furey de Cornejo, and others, Susan Deans-Smith has recently located tombs showing that vase paintings were usually seen as inexpensive items to acquire and that individuals from different socioeconomic strata in New Spain possessed them. Yet the literature has also noted that the artisans who produced the earliest sets of vase paintings were associated with the foundation of the art academy in Mexico City, which is considered to be the development of the academy as such is critical to understanding how the center of vase painting evolved over the course of the eighteenth century. To explain these connections, others have argued that vase paintings, with their depictions of racial mixing in harmonious family settings, may be a Creole expression of pride in the indigenous.

The extensive scholarship on vase paintings considers them as if they were transparent windows directly reflecting real or imagined social conditions. Was the relationship between artistic representation and social conditions really so straightforward? Complicating this view, Deans-Smith has placed documents that highlight the relation between many of the artists who made vase paintings and their advocacy for an academy that would receive admission to Spaniards and some members of the indigenous nobility. Efforts to establish an art academy where painting would be taught as a liberal art were directly linked to an effort to evict indigenous and mestizo [mixed race] artisans from the production along with untrained and untrained craftsmen and vendors. And for

from identifying with the misconceived underclass they despised so categorically, many locally born artists who practiced the asiduo<br>donne (house of work) status for themselves.

What are we to make of the apparent contradiction between these artists' depictions of a harmonious social order and their documented efforts to distinguish themselves from the underclass? The following analysis of the different agencies involved in the invention, production, and circulation of vase paintings argues that the agency of the artisan in the social and economic network has been undertheorized. The evidence linked to vase paintings, together with other forms of documentation, suggests that an elite corps of artists in New Spain developed the genre as part of their bid towards privileges to the status of academically trained liberal artists, reversing the invention of the genre from the perspective of viceregal artists such as José Antonio López (1675-1728), José de Busto (1685-1756), and Miguel Cabrera (1695-1763), we argue here that vase paintings offered an unprecedented opportunity to display and, in reaching the highest European standards of academic artistic practice. Yet, in generating depictions of the American that were considered exotic colonial geographies by those who collected them, the artists indirectly facilitated their own colonial subjugation. In the act of trying to claim their academic and social standing in Europe, the leading artists of New Spain reinscribed their subordinate position in their choice of genre and subject matter, linking their material history of collecting precious metals.

Despite this recognition, much can be learned from the medium in which vase paintings were associated with the ambition of artists to be treated as members of the highest social echelon by virtue of their mastery of painting.
defined as a liberal art. A cross-cultural approach to reconstructing the intellectual environment in which corte paintings circulated in both New Spain and Europe shows that similar tensions between artistic license and the religious decorum of images were at stake in both places, despite clear differences in local conditions. In their American venue, arguments for the status of painting based on its scientific underpinnings were adapted to the discourse on sacred images. The visual and textual evidence in turn enables us to consider on a more nuanced historical and conceptual foundation, the significance of arguments for the intellectual status of the artist and his artistic license that had been taking place in Europe since the mid-sixteenth century.

Viceroyal Agencies and the Rise of Corte Paintings

As a type of viceroyal genre painting, corte paintings are most closely related to ethnographic representation, which first developed in sixteenth-century illustrated cultural geographies produced in Europe. These illustrated books and broadsheets represent not individuals but cultural types based largely on costume and physiognomy. As the genre developed and diversified, ethnographic illustrations came to include typical plants, animals, landscapes, and activities associated with various peoples and places in the world. As entertainment and as scientific information popular with various European audiences for several hundred years, ethnographic illustrations appeared in a wide variety of forms (Fig. 1 and Figs. 2a and b).

The corte genre is a new variant of the ethnographic illustration that first appeared in the early eighteenth century, painted by locally trained artists (Fig. 3). Corte paintings are so innovative in appearance, in fact, that their indebtedness to an existing European genre of visual ethnography came as a surprising discovery to modern scholars interested in their historical origins. Until now, however, the historical relationships between European and viceroyal variants of the genre have not been explored beyond the location of sources and the cataloguing of examples. The present work...
expands beyond these parameters by examining the related sociopolitical and professional agendas of the New Spanish artist in inventing and developing the court genre along a particular artistic trajectory.

Significantly, some court paintings—viceregal interpretations of well-established visual ethnography popular with European audiences—were executed by artists working for missionaries or scientific expeditions, but by some of New Spain’s leading artists. It is instructive to compare the newly invented genre with portraiture, because both demanded the skillful rendering of natural appearances. The canonical portrait for official and curiously portrayed on the Iberian peninsula were introduced to the viceregalities of New Spain and Peru without any significant modifications, according to Rogelio Ruíz Gomar the pose is almost always the same standing three-quarter view, the sitter gazing directly at the viewer to establish contact (albeit with an opaque expression), with the same elements of setting constantly repeated: a desk or table with objects underscoring the uniqueness of the sitter, a statue conferring coat of arms, an inscription describing the person’s place of birth, dates of birth and death, lineage, and marriage in the case of women. An inkwell with pen describes the sitter as an official or a distinguished writer, a stack of books signifies erudition, a watch or a flower refers to the nature of worldly vanities and the unstoppable passage of time arrests in the portrait. In the largely masculine world of colonial portraiture before the late-eighteenth century, Miguel Cabrera’s portrait of San Juan de la Cruz, executed c. 1750 (Fig. 4), follows a conventional portrait formula to depict exceptional, erudite men, who are also pictured as authors and seated at their writing desks in a library. The same general formula is followed in the portrait of José Pérez de Lantigua y Eguía, Archbishop of Mexico, painted c. 1719 by Juan Rodríguez Juárez (Fig. 5).

The new court genre demanded imaginative powers of invention and encouraged painterly handling of the surface largely missing from the established formulaic portraits. The sumptuous
brilliance so evident in many canto paintings, beginning with the earliest extant examples, but not drawn from contemporary scholars. How, we ask, did the painterly artifice of these paintings matter to their original audiences? What can the material presence of some paintings tell us now?

First, it is important to consider that the figures in canto paintings are not portraits of actual individuals, but depictions of imaginary types. In their virtuoso display of brushwork, the dramatic exaggeration of chiaroscuro (light/dark contrast), complexity of the figural invention, and imaginative details that symbolize the racial mixtures depicted, canto paintings represent their non-Spanish subjects quite differently from portraits even in the case of non-Spanish individuals, such as the indigenous noblewoman Sebastiana Inés de San Agustín, portrayed in 1759 when she was sixteen years old and on the eve of entering the convent of San Carlos in Mexico City (Fig. 6). Portraits of well-to-do indigenous subjects like this one testify to indigenous nobility's assimilation of a Spanish lifestyle (or, in its own terms) through dress, pets, identifying inscription, and the occasion for commissioning the portrait—choices that mimic and deflect conventions for portraying Euro-American (Criollo) and peninsular subjects. Such works meticulously emphasize the textures of the materials portrayed and not the inventive brushwork of the artist. In making the portrait visible, the artist absolved himself from the portraits while, by contrast, the bold facture of many canto paintings was a constant reminder of his presence. Since some artists worked simultaneously in both genres, these striking differences in execution cannot be explained as individual stylistic traits. The manner of execution must have been a conscious choice. The question is why—on what basis were these choices made and what did the differences signal to their intended audiences?

The gender of ethnographic representations is different from any of its predecessors in other respects as well. Even in the earliest known examples, signed by Arellano in 1711—which, unlike subsequent examples of the genre, contain only one adult figure per panel—the subject portrayed is a type. In one case, Arellano identifies his subject in the painting's inscription as "Design of a mulato woman, daughter of a black woman and a Spanish man in Mexico City, capital of America on 22 August 1711" (Fig. 7). In another example (Figs. 8a and 8b), and utilizing the same phraseology, he provides a "Design of a Chichimec man and Chichimec woman on a pair of canvases" ("Chichimec" generally refers to nomadic native groups of northern Mexico that popularly symbolized in post-Hispanic and retablistic times). Arellano's deliberate use of the term "design" (disenio) in both works suggests his knowledge of the early modern European identification of painting as a Literar Art—a crucial topic discussed in greater detail below. As the genre developed, artists like Juan Rodríguez Juárez and José de Espinosa continued to exploit exotic types and the sensuous qualities of the painted surface through dramatic brushwork, composition, and color, while replacing Arellano's single-figure compositions with infra-red couples and their offspring depicted together on a single panel (Fig. 9). Increasing details of costume and setting were added, including symbolic and allegorical elements that also signal the novelty of these paintings as luxury items.

The canto sets created by Miguel Cabrera (Fig. 10) conform to the basic compositional formula established by Rodríguez Juárez, but they emphasize costume and setting, including flora and fauna indigenous to the Americas and the interaction of family figures in them stressing cooperation and productivity. Cabrera's canto paintings include the inscription "Painted by Miguel Cabrera, Mexico," and the question that they catered to an export market. In fact, many canto paintings survive in European collections, confirming their function as desirable objects made for export, a novel, high-end variation of the ethnographic type, for which there was a large existing market in Europe. Provenance patterns and a small body of documentary evidence indicate that a portion of this audience consisted of high-ranking Spanish bureaucrats and prelates returning to Europe once their tenure in the

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**Fig. 6. Portrait of Sebastiana Inés de San Agustín. Mexico, 1759. Oil on canvas, 46 x 30.9 in. Museo de América, Madrid. Photo: Museo de América.**

**Fig. 7. Arellano, Design de mujer (Design of a Mulata Woman). Mexico, 1711. Oil on canvas, 46 x 30.9 in. Museo de América, Madrid. Photo: Museo de América.**

**Fig. 8a. Arellano, Diseño de niños (Design of Two Children). Mexico, 1711. Oil on canvas, 46 x 30.9 in. Museo de América, Madrid. Photo: Museo de América.**

**Fig. 8b. Arellano, Diseño de niños (Design of Two Children). Mexico, 1711. Oil on canvas, 46 x 30.9 in. Museo de América, Madrid. Photo: Museo de América.**
Creoles as their inferiors and prohibited their access to high political and ecclesiastical offices. In a more positive, local perspective, Creoles positioned themselves as the rightful heirs of the mighty Spanish conquistadors as well as the great Aztec past. But cuna paintings do not project this more positive picture; rather, they focus on the devolution of miscegenation, as can be readily seen in many examples, including a composite version on a single panel reproduced here, in which increasingly disfigured half-caste couples produce increasingly darker-complexioned progeny of lower economic as well as social status (Fig. 11). As we show below, even individual paintings in which the cross-racial household seems harmonious may contain clues to more complicated attitudes.

Moreover, there was not a singular "Creole response" to these works. In fact, there seems to have been a kind of double vision in play. An unfavorable view is clearly expressed in a 1746 letter penned by José Acuña y Miranda to Juan José Eguízar y Eguízar, in which he complains that cuna paintings picture "that which damages us, from which we will not benefit, that which dishonors us, not that which endows us with the mixture of Castilian [European] blood with Indian or Creole blood." The implication here is that miscegenation, especially with those of lower social echelons, endangers the dignity that Creoles claimed. Perhaps this explains, in part, why the majority of cuna paintings picture Spaniards paired with upper-class natives, while lower-class natives are paired with racially mixed plebeians.

For a European audience, these idealized and largely imaginary images might have relieved anxieties about dire social realities in New Spain. As R. Douglas Cope has argued, New Spain's social structure was theoretically based on the internal stability of separate Spanish and American identities, but in practice, the ideal segregation was considerably threatened by miscegenation. In the constant flux of colonial society, vertical social mobility was difficult to prevent, since typing by skin color was a highly imperfect art and simply changing one's costume and demeanor could enable entry to a
higher social status. As Katrie has noted, caste paintings must have owed Spanish audiences about New Spain's socio-racial complexity by creating the illusion of a harmonious society that was rigidly ordered according to the sistema de castas, which placed Europeans at the top of the socio-racial system and everyone else on its lower rungs.⁷

While the elite commissioned individualized representations of themselves in the form of portraits, the underclasses were represented by others, for others, in rigidly elaborated, beautifully crafted typologies that focused on the particular but not on individual identity. The contrast between formal portraiture and caste paintings is a significant symptom of evolving class-based differences in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New Spain. Yet New Spain's complex and tense social circumstances do not fully explain why the social realities depicted in caste paintings were usually painted as sympathetic as they were, and in an overtly paintedly style, by the best artists, rather than by scientific illustrators. Simplistic categories of positive and negative portrayals do not do justice to the complex interplay between artistic representation and the social conditions involved.

Colonial Art Academies and the Status of Painters

To address these questions, it is essential to examine the institutional structure in which artists functioned. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, the leading artists of Mexico City tried to reform the dysfunctional guild system by stressing the importance of calidad, aiclassifying category that fixed race, class, honor, and skill, to the practice of painting.⁸ It is unclear whether the guild was to be supplemented or replaced by a new institution, the art academy.⁹ In any case, in a colonial context where one's station in life depended on socio-racial classification and occupation, an academy would have amplified its members' social status and presumed their own unblended European bloodline.⁸ Many of the same artists were involved in both movements, as Katrie, Deans-Smith, and others have emphasized. Rodríguez Juárez, responsible for some of the earliest casts, and for some of the paintings of highest artistic quality, tried to found an art academy in Mexico City in 1722 or even earlier, that is, within a decade of his first caste paintings. Guillermo Torres de Teresa has proposed that this earliest attempt to establish an academy initiated the drawing academy founded by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo and Francisco Herrera the Younger in Seville in 1660, with the express purpose of elevating the status of painting as one of the liberal arts of the vocatūra, encouraged by the king himself.¹⁰ The academy in Seville (like its predecessors in Paris, Rome, and Florence) had been established to demonstrate that painting was an intellectual pursuit and not simply a manual craft.¹¹ In support of these institutional similarities, New Spanish painters involved in their own academy movement designed ephemeral architectural constructions requiring collaboration with other artisans as well as poets and writers for public celebrations, signaled their work's ways that indicate the intellectual foundations of their profession, and referred to themselves as "spaniards" and "professors."¹²

Throughout the eighteenth century New Spanish painters continued to petition for an officially sanctioned art academy in Mexico City.¹³ In 1753 José de Barba and Miguel Cabrera, like Rodríguez Juárez central to caste painting production, founded a second Academy of Painting, a direct continuation of the Rodríguez Juárez brothers' academy but also a reaction to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, founded in Madrid in 1752. This second academy also failed to secure royal protection; success came only in 1783 with the founding of the Royal Academy of San Carlos under the sway of viceroy Francisco de Gálvez y Gallardo.¹⁴

Two works capture the very differing interests of those who wished to found an art academy in New Spain. Around 1790 an artist, possibly Andrés López of Mexico City, painted a posthumous portrait of the Royal Academy's patron Gálvez y Gallardo (Fig. 12). When we compare this portrait with Juan Rodríguez Juárez's earlier self-portrait of c. 1715 (Fig. 13), one key element clearly stands out: a notable difference in paint handling or...
The official portrait conforms to contemporary preferences for a mirror-like surface that reflects all evidence of its craftsmanship, while the self-portrait—one of the earliest by a New Spanish artist—is intimate and painterly. In the first portrait, the sitters stand in the foreground, gesturing with an air of authority toward two dark-skinned children dressed in tattered clothing, one of whom holds a roll of drawing paper and a drawing board. Meanwhile, in the background, two other children draw with a plane and stone in a room lit by a single light that emphasizes the relief structure through heightened juxtapositions of light and dark. This official portrait illustrates academic training on European terms while also emphasizing that the new academy was to provide educational and employment opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged, thus creating a dangerous social situation. The position embodied in this portrait is clearly that of the Creole elite and peninsular officials advocating Bourbon reforms.

Rodríguez Juárez's self-portrait (Fig. 13), executed about 75 years earlier, portrays him as a gentleman and a sensitive, even sensitive, highly verbally instructed individual. He deliberately calls attention to the art of painting with apparently spontaneous, painterly brushstrokes that are especially daring in the rendering of his scarf and delicately articulated hand, in which he clutches a brush or drawing instrument. The pose, made famous in Spain by Diego Velázquez in Las Meninas (1656) and quoted by many artists subsequently, is a self-conscious declaration of the intellectual quality of painting that distinguishes it from the mechanical art.

While the artist is a study in quiet observation, the painterly surface demonstrates assured judgment and skill of hand established by European period standards. Rodríguez Juárez's intense gaze, marked forehead, and angular face, cast in a dramatic juxtaposition of deep shadows and highlights, strategically undermine this self-aware image of the artist claiming an intellectual status.

Considered together, the Gálvez and Rodríguez Juárez portraits identify a complex intersection of agencies. At the invitation of a top ranking peninsular state official, Mexico City's most important (self-identified) "Spanish" artists sought to elevate the status of their craft to the level of an intellectual calling. To do so, they turned to an elite Creole and peninsular Spanish audience by producing works—among which one painting is particularly prominent—that demonstrated a new freedom from the mere imitation of nature associated with formal portraiture.

The Ontological Status of Painting in Europe and New Spain

Both colonial artists' agency and their audience toward agency are suggested by the longstanding debates on the authenticity of the sacred portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe, considered to have been made without human intervention—a sacred image produced in the manner of a contact relic like the Shroud of Turin. The dispute and discussion surrounding this nature of the sacred image, not surprisingly, also involved the question of copies made by artists. An echo of 1657, for example, condemned inaccurate copies of the original Guadalupe image on view in the basilica dedicated to her in Mexico City. It is not surprising then, that in 1656, when José Juárez (1617–1660) made a painting preserved in the Convent of the Concepcionistas in Aigmada, Spain (Fig. 14), he included a central panel of a "true portrait and exact copy" (verso véndelo y copia juntamente) of the original image.

Examination of the original painting by artists placed on a commission to do so was first recorded in 1666, and they declared the image miraculous and perfect on the basis of their assessment of materials and artistic technique. Another inspection took place in 1731, and in 1756, Miguel Cabrera (a leading innovator of copy painting and the author of at least two copies of Guadalupe made in 1752 directly from the original) published a volume describing the sacred image in detail, which included six colleagues' opinions on the divine origins of the painting. Cabrera's publication is an academic performance in the Ciceronian genre utilized by early humanists since the fourteenth century, in which debating a question from all sides (employing rhetorical methods for inquiring...
argument enables the participants to demonstrate their expertise. Leonardo da Vinci adapted this classical rhetorical model, partly by way of medieval sources, to defend painting against poetry, sculpture, music, and the mechanical art, while similar arguments were disseminated by the mid-sixteenth century, partly because they were included in Baldassare Castiglione's widely read Il Libro del Cortegiano, first published in 1528.

Enciklopedi Museale americana (Fig. 15), and published together with the "rules of the art of painting," Caldera's text of 1756 documents the difficulty of negotiating between an intentional liberation associated with the European art academy and the aesthetic responsibility of producing accurate copies of a sacred model, whose originality consists in signaling the artist's humble fidelity to the allegedly original. What at stake is an ontological issue. In the case of a miraculous image produced without human intervention, the truth of the sacred representation is incontestable; it is ensured by direct contact with the divine. But—given human fallibility—what ensures the truth of a sacred portrait made by human hands? The concept of innovation, from a Christian ontological standpoint, is dangerous in granting the artist an active, independent role. In this case, the artist is no longer simply a passive recipient of God's "inspiration" by which God communicates his likeness "in multiplication of itself." (to invoke the Scholastic terminology grounded in the scientific language of formal optics). The medieval concept of human artifice is indeed not only subject to the Augustinian idea that God alone creates ex nihilo, but also to later Scholastic definitions of nobility and perfection. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, material substances receive likeness "instituted" of the invisible by way of the sensory powers. Writing in similar terms, Saint Bonaventure claimed that an artistic product proceeds from a multitude existing in the artist's mind in the same way that God produces "creatures" using his vestige. There is evidence that these Scholastic ideas were still relevant four centuries later, when the artist's license to invent was still well established in the literature on art. The artist's autonomy and freedom to invent are central to modern, secular notions of art. Yet in sacred paintings, artifice was valued as the ideological sign of God's presence, that is, as the impression of a material substance with God's likeness. The inscription on José Jaurés's painting in Agen (Fig. 14) and other examples that have been recently published by Claudio Bureghetti are, as Burgeon emphasizes, evidence of the artist's need to negotiate not only their autonomy and right to invent things out of their imaginations, but also their direct contact with the divine to ensure the truth of their artistic representations. About a century later, Cabrera carried out a similar negotiation in The Virgin of Guadalupe's Penitential of the Franciscan Order, which he painted for the Colegio de Propaganda Fide in Zacatecas (Fig. 16). An exact copy of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which Cabrera renders with precision in the same flat, unaffected style of the original miraculous image, appears prominently in the work's center, where it contrasts markedly with his handling of the rest of the composition, a rounder exercise in volumetric modeling and expressive brushwork. Such a deliberate contrast in painting styles within a single work demonstrates the inventive abilities of the artist in a two-fold manner: he was simultaneously capable of expressing his own animated style and of rendering a miraculously produced achiropoietic image, where it was appropriate to efface the painter's hand or presence. Two orders of imitation are involved here: the sacred vision, painted by the artist in imitation of natural forms and appearances, includes his painting of a sacred image produced without human intervention. Within the matrix of the Christian belief system, the perennial challenge was to establish the ontological status of the artistic representation in relation to divine truth, Catholic Reforma.
writer Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), whose 1582 treatise on correcting the abuses of painters and sculptors was widely read, understood the truth of sacred images in just these ontological terms. He considered that the absence and incorporeal images used by theologians, like the fantasia and concetto conceived by painters, are a "gift of God and a sign of the loftiness of human nature." The painter/ theorist Federico Zuccaro (1540–1609), founder of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome and closely associated with its precedent in Florence, navigated cautiously through ontologically dangerous territory after the Florentine Decree on Images of 1563 placed strict limits on artistic license in order to preserve the religious decorum of sacred subject matter. Zuccaro identified human disegno with an "agent intellect" that "makes all things," found in the human soul, which derives its intellectual light from God himself, the soul's creator. Thus the fallible, particular intellect of the human individual is enlightened and sustained by the mind of God. Painting distinguished by coloring, shading, lighting, and so on gives figures such spirit and vivacity that they seem "living and true," appealing immediately and universally to all beholders. In the fifteen optical terms less than two decades earlier, spaulus universal language: it is immediately recognized by everyone because such artistic images represent the similitude of things just as things themselves appear to the sense of sight.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spanish artists and theorists endorsed these ideas about the truth of artistic representation to promote the nobility of painting and to negotiate the ontologically slippery terrain between independent artistic invention and the truthfulness of sacred images. And they continued to assign a leading role to the science of optics, which enabled artistic invention to conform to the truth of natural appearance. Nature, in other words, regulates the decorum observed by artists. For example, in Diálogos de la pintura (1633), Vincente Carducho (1576–1658) defines disegno (or dibujo) as a method of understanding and revealing what is real and true in nature. Francisco Pacheco (1564–1654) confirms this notion in his Arte de la pintura (1638) and takes it a step further by stating that invention is inseparable from decorum, from which "all of the good parts of drawing are derived." Carducho and Pacheco also influence their definition of disegno, giving the scientific grounding in symmetry, proportion, anatomy, and perspective, which they identify as disegno, constituent elements.

Arrellano's one of the same term ("disegno") in his portrait of a noblewoman (Fig. 1) and Chichicastenango couple (Figs. 2a and 2b) not only suggest the presence of these concepts at least one of New Spain's artist circles. It also indicates that these works are ontologically truthful representations of their subjects because Arrellano has masterfully grounded them in the scientific principles of the art of painting as delineated by Carducho and Pacheco. Years later, New Spanish painters involved in the academy movement wrote petitions that demonstrate their familiarity with these authors. Miguel Cabrera and his colleagues qualify the excellence of the Guadalupe image in strikingly similar terms:

"For them, the perfect imitation of these scientific principles makes the invisible present and visible to humankind and is proof of divine authorship." In making this argument, they deliberately call attention to the specialized knowledge that allowed them to carry out their important and erudite examination of the Guadalupe. Although studies regarding the potential impact that early modern Spanish painting treated had on viceregal artists must remain to be carried out, the conceptual basis that informs Misamor americana bears a striking resemblance to that proposed in these texts. The hypothesis that Cabrera and his circle had access to these Spanish sources is also supported by the inclusion of Pacheco's Arte de la pintura and Glosas del pintor in Cabrera's portrait of San Juan de la Cruz (Fig. 4).

This theoretical background may also explain why the 1783 Royal Academy of San Carlos made drawing the foundation of professional training for artists practicing all media in New Spain—as it
had been in Spanish and other European academies founded on the model of the Florentine and Roman academies, both of which Zurbarán had helped to found.19 A line eighteenth-century car-

painting practiced around this time exhibits the centrality of drawing to the status of the artist. One of a pair within a larger set, it imagines a visual and professional parity between the artist’s studio and the physician’s examination room (Figs. 17a and 17b). Each panel portrays a professional as a skilled Spanish gentleman whose clients also enjoy elevated social status. In the artist’s studio a Spanish gentleman, dressed in French high fashion, sits before his subject, an ailing woman (offering of a Spaniard and a woman), while painting her portrait. Demonstrating the nobility of his profession and the specialized knowledge and judgment that is demanded of its practitioners, the painter bases his portrait both on direct observation of his sitter and on a drawing, held up by his carefully mixed assistant, that is apparently copied from one of the classical basins arranged on a shelf just above an apprentice dressed in rags. 20 Drawing combines knowledge of the concept of drawing from nature, a concept familiar in Europe since the latter part of the fifteenth century. The boy’s drawing pad on the floor next to the chair shows the asceticism and self-discipline of the painter’s studio. A similar self-consciousness about the painter’s education and the separation of the artist from the world was characteristic of the Spanish eighteenth-century court.21

Costa paintings as Academic Art

Let us now return fully to the case of Costa paintings, a secular form of artistic production remarkably free of religious reference.22 In Díaletto de la pintura, Casimiro stresses that painters had the special ability to render visible the otherwise invisible nature of their subjects through science.23 A portrait is a matter of copying nature accurately, whereas in the Italian, a Costa painting is a matter of idealized invention, corresponding to the higher calling of Ingres.24 Both had their place in New Spain. From the New Spanish artist’s point of view, Costa painting provided an opportunity to convert a new composition painted in a modern, painterly, naturalistic style complete with inventive embellishments that underscore the central message of the subject matter. The Denver Art Museum’s painting by José de Alcubierre (c. 1735–1803) of a Spanish man and a black woman producing a malagueña (c. 1760) provides an excellent case in point (Fig. 19). Its academic features include carefully studied brushwork, heightened juxtapositions of light and dark, clear organization into overlapping spatial planes based on these same juxtapositions of value, and primely imitation of textile patterns in both Aztlan fabrics and local cloth worn by Aztecs and women. Also notable are the intimate gestures shared by father and son, respectively sitting and holding a basket to light the father’s cigarette. And the exact handling of the brush is an important ingredient in this coloristic visual display.

Costa painting allowed New Spanish artists to exhibit their grasp of current notions of science, including scientific knowledge of human expression as well as the optical principles of painting from nature—two important ingredients of both academic artistic training and the arguments used to elevate the status of painting.25 Thus, in late-eighteenth-century Costa paintings physiology, expression, and gesture (that is, the outward expression of the subjects’ inner nature) relate their appearance and behavior to their social classification.26 This is especially evident in the work of José Joaquín Magon (active c. 1754–1770), who pictorially emphasizes the human temperament and assigns them to the figures’ facial designations in the paintings’ inscriptions. In the first painting form a set of sixteen, Magon portrays a Spanish man, his native wife, and their mestizo child in a domestic study (Fig. 19a). The framed inscriptions in the upper-center portion of the composition reads, “In the Americans people of different colors, customs, temperaments, and languages are born.” Just below that, another inscription identifies the figures: “Born of the Spaniard and Indian woman is the mestizo, who is generally humble, tranquil, and straightforward.”27

Pictured between his neatly dressed Spanish father, who is fingering a copy of Don Quixote, and his native mother, who is bejeweled and dressed in an elaborate laced bordered huipil, a traditional
blesses for native women), the mestizo child holds up a sheet of paper to his father as if to show him (and the painting's viewers) his writing exercise. The term PANCIO written on the boy's page reinforces mestizo supérieur qualities. Pancer signifies someone who is lazy or uncommunicative. In viceregal times, literacy was a quality ascribed by Europeans as natural to themselves, but not to indigenous people. For example, in his 1552 biography of Hernán Cortés, historiador López de Gomara emphasizes the importance of teaching the natives how to read and write alphabetic text. It is through "letters that they are truly men." The boy's mother holds an inscribed sheet of paper to which she points, revealing an undecipherable grouping of letters repeated in list format—she is an illiterate native. Meanwhile, the Spanish father's husband looks upon his intellectually (less) compromised mestizo son with affectionate approval because he has mastered a few decipherable letters. Perched on the backseat of the Spaniard's chair is a scarlet macaw, a native American bird that, like the more traditionally depicted European parrot, invites human speech without understanding what it means.

Compromising racialized distinctions are even more evident in other panels in Magón's series. Contrasting with the familial harmony that Magón depicts at the top of the social hierarchy is the conflictive grouping in the eleventh panel in the same series, entitled 16. "Un indio y una Cazadora de ordinario poderoso, y personas de ingenio tardío." ("From a native man and an Indian woman, the Cazadora is usually slow, lazy, and cumbrous!"") (Fig. 195). Here a Lluba (literally "well")—the offspring of African and Amerindian parents) father...
turns his back to his American Indian wife and child, who are reaching for a bag with a determined content that he protectively holds behind a dagger. The lower right corner of the composition is a black and white table, with one symbolizing sin and corruption in Christian art) is perched next to an opened fruit. Reuniting with this traditional symbol of evil, the father’s retreating gesture, concealed, and dagger compose the image of a criminal. The father’s tattered clothing and the child’s simple, sleeveless shirt convey this family’s low socioeconomic standing in comparison to other families in this series that claim more European heritage.

At the same time, Maggio embedded racializing content in his paintings by placing his elevated standing as an artist familiar with academic values. Maggio’s series of comic representations demonstrates the artist’s ability to make visible the malevolent aspects of a successful narrative. Mastery of this ability had been central to discussions of artistic intention at least since Alberti’s treatise on painting of 1435, and it was consistent with the post-Enlightenment redirection of narrative to represent the stereotypes concerning the artist’s social status.

Notes


At the Crossroads: The Arts of Spanish America & Early Global Trade, 1492-1850
"At the Ends of the Earth"
Asian Trade Goods in Colonial New Mexico, 1598–1821
Donna Pierce

Evidence of the globalization of culture and international trade can be detected in the art of New Spain and Spain during the early modern era. For example, in the Mexican Still Life from 1676 by Antonio Pérez de Aguilar, a porcelain plate imported from China is visible on the lower shelf (Fig. 1). Still life paintings from Spain at times show objects clearly Mexican in origin, such as the piano (harpsichord) shown in a painting by Antonio de Paredes from 1682 (Fig. 2, top right corner). Even religious paintings occasionally reflect aspects of international trade, such as the painting of the Christ of Chalma with Chinese porcelain jars flanking the sculpture (see p. 83, Fig. 1). Portrait and easel (stair) paintings depict imperial European clothing styles as well as European and Asian decorative arts in the Americas (Fig. 3). Implicit in the paintings, particularly portraits, is the association between foreign objects and status.

The geographical extent of globalization during the early modern era had been much debated, with some scholars claiming that it was pervasive while others argue that it was restricted to urban and political centers. As a case study of the extent of early modern globalization, this paper focuses on the northern frontier of New Spain, the province of New Mexico, part of the southwestern United States (see map, p. 19).

Geographically, New Mexico was over a thousand miles from Mexico City and was described by its governor Diego de Vargas in 1602 as "at the ends of the earth and remote beyond comparison." Yet archeological and documentary evidence indicates that New Mexico participated in the international trade market and the globalization of culture from the earliest days of settlement. Although Asian trade goods are documented in churches and missions in New Mexico, I focus exclusively here on the presence of Asian trade goods in colonial New Mexican domestic settings.
