World, Empires and Nations (Mexico City, 10-12 Oct 16)

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Deadline: Apr 15, 2016

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World, Empires and Nations: The Redefinition of “Colonial Art”.
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October 10 to 12, 2016

Mexico City

The notion of “colonial art”, in relation with the study of the Spanish dominions in America, has been subject to critique and debate during recent decades. From perspectives that find support in legal and historical analysis, with doubts expressed since the eighteenth century and articulated in the twentieth by studies such as Levene’s Las Indias no eran colonias (Buenos Aires: Austral, 1951); expressions like “colonial history” or “colonial art” have lost currency, being replaced by such as “art of the vice-regencies” or “arte virreinal”, “art of the Spanish overseas realms”, “Novo-Hispanic art” in the case of Mexico, etc.

This tendency contrasts with the broad current in “post-colonial” studies, dealing with the cultural processes of colonization and subsequent phenomena, which sets off from the ideas of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, to name just a few of the best known. This perspective is often supported by the Marxist critique of the long-term process of capital accumulation; it also places the accent on the notion of “emancipation”. At the same time, the concept of “internal colonialism” has long been the subject of exhaustive reflection in Latin America countries, being understood as the domination of the indigenous peoples by each country’s national elite, while or as the survival survival of educated native elites after the instauration of the Viceroyalities; this is the thesis of authors such as Pablo González Casanova, Ángel Rama and Juan Acha.

As far as art history is concerned, these polemics—of which it can be said without exaggeration that they represent the displacement of political arguments—have acquired characteristics of their own. On the one hand, authors such as George Kubler held, on the basis of an analysis of sixteenth-century monastic architecture, that in New Spain the mendicant friars set about creating a functional colonial régime—ideal, if one takes them on their own terms, or even exemplary when compared with other less successful modern colonial projects. On the other hand are authors such as José Moreno Villa, who formulated
the notion de “tequitqui” in order to draw a parallel between the American phenomenon and the mudéjar, conceiving it as a movement not restricted to the first century of the Viceroyalty, and hav-

ing a tributary character, as the origin of the term itself suggests. In response to this, Constantino Reyes, in the framework he established under the heading of “Indo-Christian art”, offered his thesis of “conjugation of solutions”. Another idea that comes to mind is that of “Mestizo art” in the art of South America. But debates around colonial art have also been an arena for discussing universalisms (or for refuting them), and at the same time for legitimating the construction of new national, regional or racial identities. Although a prolonged reflection on the American Baroque lay at the center of this debate, the notion was taken up again in recent decades by authors such as Bolívar Echeverría, and with growing frequency we find its terms and categories transferred to the theoretic and critical discussion on contemporary art.

A colloquium is proposed in which to discuss fully this set of problems beyond the frontiers of specializations. In this sense, we propose the setting up of a broad organizing committee so as to guarantee a plurality of perspectives, reflecting the express wish to confront positions that may be different and even opposed.

Despite the origins of such discussions in a debate peculiar to Latin American historiography, the committee hopes to receive papers from the United States or Canada and other parts of the world. The colloquium will address processes of “internal colonization”, understood as processes of domination exercised within a particular nation state or regional power; likewise the classic notions of “colony”, “reino”, “viceroyalty” “metropolis” and “empire”, that have stimulated an interdisciplinary discussion of their implications for the arts, where they have acquired a leading role; but also the antagonistic notions of “emancipation”, particularly involving the emergence of national states in territories that were previously subjected to other regimes. Equally, it will address the articulation of the arts with different forms of geographical and political domination: on the one hand, through the analysis of terms such as “tequitqui”, “ultra-baroque” and other similar terms that were central for the historiographers of the twentieth century and, on the other, by seeking new proposals that may facilitate a broadening and deepening of reflection on the arts and the formation of cultural and esthetic paradigms on the basis of processes of domination: authoritarian regional modernizations, supplantings and
simulations of identity; proliferation of universal languages and “International Gothics”; rivalry between nationalisms and equally unilateral universalisms; geographical colorizations, but also processes aiming to dominate the past and the imagination. Finally: the characterization of the arts of the Others, their negation or classification, even their appropriation, plagiarism and subjection to different jurisdictions, can be subject to a variety of approaches from within art history, without excluding other disciplines of knowledge.

The following divisions by panels are offered as a starting point for reflection, but may be reconsidered in consideration of the proposals received:

I. From the Concept to the Object
The problem of nomenclature and designation using terms borrowed from other disciplines. Inexorable identity; or the status of works as judged from the perspective of the European canon and the classical tradition; the utility or dysfuncionality of references to styles; the
Latin-American debate on art from the 1930s to 1980s; the role of anthropology: from syncretism to agency (Kopytoff, Gell); the new alternative terminology: cultural zones, Atlantic world, Asia-Pacific, mestizaje, Indo-Christian, hybridism, mimesis (Kubler, Bhabha, Costa Kauffman).

II. From Subject to Discourse
Discoverers and conquistadors, chroniclers and “defeated”, missionaries and colonized. Reinos versus colonies; from socioeconomic exploitation to legal structuring; races and changing identities; identity as an unfinished process; transitory affiliations; individuals versus corporations.

III. From Practices to Representation
Themes and image systems; “influences” and the center-periphery model; images as conducting and colonizing; the construction of local imaginaries; genres beyond the theory of genres; the circulation of images of departure and return; images as responses; denunciations and artifacts of controversy; the directionality and ambiguity of messages; semantic interference. From the culture of dissimulation of the Ancien Régime to participation in the public sphere of Modernity.

IV. Village, Empire and World
From postcolonial theory to the “colonial heritage”; from heritage to postponed modernity; planetary circles in the world of empires; emancipation, assimilation, permanence and resistance; the contemporary view of the colonial past.

Guidelines
1. Proposals must be submitted in either English or Spanish including references and methodological approach, must have a tentative title and also include a summary,not exceeding 300 words, on the paper to be developed. Only one proposal per author will be accepted.
2. Proposals must briefly explain why you wish to participate on a given panel. Please attach a résumé of not more than 150 words, highlighting your main academic work and your academic affiliation.
3. Deadline for submitting proposals is Friday, April 15, 2016.
4. Proposals will be evaluated by a Committee made up of members of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas and other institutions, who will select the proposals based on criteria of quality and thematic relevance.
5. The Committee's decision will be announced no later than Friday, May 27, 2016 and will be final.
6. Once the papers are accepted, the text’s requirements are: 12 pages, double spaced, to be read in 25 minutes. A form related to the copyrights of the paper and the images will have to be filed. Those papers that are not delivered in time will not be accepted and will be
removed from the definite program.
7. A preliminary version of the paper to be presented should be delivered before Friday, September 23, 2016.
8. Papers accepted and presented at the Colloquium will be submitted for arbitration for the digital publication of the Colloquium memories. The Committee's will determine which papers will be included in the digital book. The authors will be notified no later than Monday, October 24, 2016.

Final versions must comply with the following characteristics: a maximum of 25 pages (8 000 words using Chicago referencing system) and 8 images. Authors must obtain their image reproduction permits. The IIE will or will not publish them in terms of their cost. The deadline to submit the papers is Friday, December 9, 2016. After this date no papers will be accepted.

Ciudad Universitaria, D.F., January, 2016.

Please send your proposal to the following email:
eliceaguilar@gmail.com

Reference:

CFP: World, Empires and Nations (Mexico City, 10-12 Oct 16). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 26, 2016 (accessed Nov 12, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/12308>.