

Reassessing the Material Culture of Manila Galleons (Portland, 30 Oct -1 Nov 25)

Sixteenth Century Society Conference, Portland, Oct 30–Nov 1, 2025

Deadline: Apr 10, 2025

Jesse Locker

CfP for Panel at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference:
Reassessing the Material Culture of the Manila Galleons.

As the discipline of art history has taken a global and material turn in recent years, scholars have increasingly recognized the key role that the Manila Galleons—the massive, multi-decked ships that, beginning in 1565, sailed between the Philippines and New Spain—played in the transformation of Early Modern visual and material culture. Carrying enormous cargoes of Asian goods, including Indian textiles, Philippine carved ivories, beeswax, Chinese porcelain, Indian textiles, and other luxury products, these vessels tapped into well-established pre-existing trade in the South China Sea, and their crews were themselves often multicultural. Not only was there a large market for such goods in Mexico, Peru, and other Spanish territories in Latin America, they were often transported overland to Mexico’s Atlantic coast and then shipped to Europe.

This panel seeks new perspectives on the impact of the Manila Galleons via material and visual evidence. How can the Manila Galleon help us better understand changing tastes? What are the artistic and cultural impacts of the Galleon in the Americas, Asia, and Europe? What were some of the unexpected connections/circulations that emerged from this experience?

Topics might include:

- Art history and material culture of the Spanish Pacific
- Art and material culture of shipwrecks
- Artistic encounters between the Asia and the Americas
- Hybrid objects
- Impact of the Manila Galleon on Indigenous populations
- Environmental effects of the galleon trade

For consideration, please submit a 200-250-word abstract with paper title, and a 2-page CV to Carmen Ripollés (ripolles@pdx.edu) and Jesse Locker (locker@pdx.edu) by April 10.

All participants must be members of the Sixteenth Century Society by the time of the conference.

Reference:

CFP: Reassessing the Material Culture of Manila Galleons (Portland, 30 Oct -1 Nov 25). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 31, 2025 (accessed May 8, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/44944>>.