

## Racial Epistemologies and Global Iberian Visual and Material Cultures

Deadline: Aug 31, 2025

Claudia Hopkins, University of Edinburgh

Call for Papers for the Volume:

"'The Foundation of Our Genius': Racial Epistemologies and Global Iberian Visual and Material Cultures".

Co-Editors:

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In 1932 Spanish writer and diplomat Ernesto Giménez Caballero stated that

"[if] Spain one day decides to institute a Fiesta de la Raza, it will be precisely in the opposite sense of the German idea. We deny the purity of our race, admitting that the foundation of our genius is the fusion of races."

More recently, historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra wrote, "neo-classical, German theories of race did not gain any purchase in Spain...We need to go back to Malaspina's own epistemological warning, expressed in his political axioms about America: We should quit applying northern-European models to the interpretation of stubbornly unyielding realities."

Reflecting Giménez Caballero's sentiment, the "realities" that Cañizares-Esguerra's speaks of partly concern how ethno-racial difference was perceived, understood, and represented in the Iberian and Ibero-American world(s), where, as we propose, ideas about race developed along different trajectories than those that inform the theoretical frameworks currently dominating scholarly discourse. This proposition responds to the concern that most of these frameworks tend to privilege a North Atlantic, primarily Anglophone perspective.

Over the past two decades, the question of race in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America has been explored in exhibitions, symposia, historical and cultural studies, as well as case studies of art and visual and material culture. While this scholarly activity has been of great importance, it remains fragmented across various fields and addresses the subject unevenly, leading to numerous blind spots. In the field of the history of art, architecture, and visual culture, the discussion of race that recognizes the complex ethno-racial realities within the Global Iberian world over an extensive time frame has yet to be fully explored in a cohesive study. This should encompass a broad range of racialized categories and subjects, including Afro Latin American and American Indigenous populations, Asians, North African and Middle Eastern communities, and diverse Iberian populations.

The editors of this volume seek new research that foregrounds the visual and material record with an eye to a systematic exploration of how questions of race, ethnicity, and difference have unfolded over twenty centuries in the Iberian global context, from Spain and Portugal to their imperial territories and possessions across Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia and Oceania, and Africa.

A key concern is to consider whether a definable racial system that speaks to a specifically Iberian and Ibero-American experience of and approach to difference can be discerned and mapped over time.

We thus ask:

- how did peninsular racial epistemologies and practices or modes of racial thinking take shape?
- How did they evolve over time?
- How did/do they impact on other regions of Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia?
- How significant was/is visual and material culture in generating, referencing, changing and/or promoting racial politics and racializing practices in the Iberian global context?

Proposals could examine themes of historical peninsular migrations, feudal social structure, the Church and Catholicism, royal and/or viceregal policy, imperial geographies, missionary activities, African and Indigenous American slavery, global commerce, tourism, medical/scientific developments, miscegenation, and/or processes of modern nation formation.

Case studies could consider architecture, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, painting, prints, photography, decorative arts, and performance, among other things.

Contributors should provide their full name, home institution (if applicable), email address, and an abstract of the proposed submission.

Abstracts should be no more than 250 words.

For best consideration, proposals should be submitted to both Ray Hernández-Durán (rhermand@unm.edu) and Claudia Hopkins (C.Hopkins@ed.ac.uk) by August 31, 2025.

Potential contributors will be notified whether they have been accepted or not by December 5, 2025.

Reference:

CFP: Racial Epistemologies and Global Iberian Visual and Material Cultures. In: ArtHist.net, Jul 1, 2025 (accessed Aug 2, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/49615>>.