

Material Memory: an Interdisciplinary Symposium
Gilcrease Museum
May 18-19, 2012

Session and Paper Abstracts

Friday, May 18, 2012

1:00 p.m. Registration and Light Lunch Available

1:45-3:15 p.m. Session I: Historiography and Cultural Formation

Session Abstract:

This session examines the impact of New World cultures, both indigenous and imported from Europe and modified, on attempts by early European and criollo writers to explain the New World in a meaningful narrative. Papers in the session also consider the reverse: that sacred, Eurocentric and locally-produced historical narratives have driven understanding of geographic space, populations, events, and European and indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. Finally, stereotypic and erroneous histories of New World cultural development will be considered. The means by which scholars challenge or correct earlier explaining narratives will be discussed.

Chair, Eduardo Faingold, Associate Professor of Linguistics, University of Tulsa

Presenters

Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, Alice Drysdale Sheffield Professor of History, University of Texas at Austin

“Memory and Space: How Biblical Typology Shaped Colonial Architectural Space, the Case of the Jesuit Temple of Quito (1650-1750)”

My talk explores the biblical dimensions of Creole elite identities through an architectural analysis of the main Jesuit temple in Quito. It demonstrates the importance of Old and New Testaments narratives in the organization of sacred provincial space. The Jesuits drew as much on Old Testament prophets and age-old Israelites heroes as on Pauline and Petrine sources. Hagiographies of St Francis Xavier became entirely organized around the miracles and peregrinations of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles whereas those of St Ignatius drew on the deeds of Peter. Sacred space became neatly divided into Petrine (masculine, Christ-centered, institutional, Roman) and Pauline (feminine, Marian, global missionary) halves with a solid prefigurative Old Testament core nestled in the middle.

Andrew Sluyter, Associate Professor of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University

“African Material Cultures on the Cattle Ranching Frontiers of the Pampas and the Great Plains.”

Two items of material culture became key to the expansion of cattle ranching in the Americas on its northern and southern frontiers during the nineteenth century. On the Great Plains, the western saddle with its horn was essential to roping cattle from horseback on the open range while on the Pampas, the balde sin fondo (“bottomless bucket”) was essential for raising water from stockwells. Relying on textual sources, scholars incorrectly traced the invention of the

saddle horn and roping from horseback to colonial New Spain and the invention of the balde sin fondo to a white man named Vicente Lanuza in Buenos Aires in 1826. Reconsideration of textual sources, reveals that black vaqueros in New Spain invented the horned saddle and roping from horseback in the late seventeenth century and that West African blacks introduced the balde sin fondo to the Pampas in the early nineteenth century. Although the details of the processes involved remain obscure, the integration of analysis of material culture and archival documents has begun to reveal some aspects of the African legacy on the cattle ranching frontiers of the Americas.

Jane Ackerman, Associate Professor of Religion, University of Tulsa

“Observed and Envisioned Realities: Juan Mateo Mange’s 1721 History of Northern New Spain”

In the early eighteenth century, a Spanish military officer, Juan Mateo Manje, joined the longstanding effort of Europeans to grasp the magnitude and importance of the New World. A veteran of nine combined evangelistic and exploratory expeditions in territories that include the modern Mexican province of Sonora and southern California, once he retired, he became a voracious reader of Spanish and criollo histories. He set himself to write a history of what he terms “Septentrional America” designed to spur renewed interest in exploration and evangelization of the region that he had traveled. He believed that evangelism and exploration were the vanguard of a coming new world order. By 1721, Manje completed an ambitious two-volume history which appears to be the first history of the U.S. Southwest and northern Mexico written by a European. Manje attempted to write meaningful history in layers, the most important of which to him were the decline of the region in which he lived, and a pious apocalyptic vision that reassured that conflicts would be put right.

3:15-3:30 p.m. Break

3:30-5:00 p.m. Session II: Indigenous Subjectivities in Colonial Spanish America

Session Abstract:

This panel examines texts that were handwritten, painted, printed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in regions of the Americas colonized by Spain. What compelling stories do they tell of indigenous subjectivities that remained determined in important ways in relation to ancestral memory, knowledge, practices, and sensibilities, even as native peoples became Christianized subjects of the Spanish Crown? How did scribes, painters, historians, or performers strategically place ancestral histories and cosmology in conversation with Christian history and cosmology? In what ways do their works engage with Spanish colonial histories or modify European modes of representation? How do native scribes express indigenous aesthetics, understanding, or insights in Christian narratives or narratives intended to Christianize? These or similar questions will be addressed.

Chair, Kirsten Olds, Assistant Professor of Art History, University of Tulsa

Presenters

Thomas B.F. Cummins, Dumbarton Oaks Professor of History of Pre-Columbian and Colonial Art, Harvard University

"Painting and Drawing as Evidence: The Indigenous Subject represented as History"

This talk will give a brief overview of the different genres of sixteenth- and early seventeenth century paintings in which individual Andeans and Mexicans are represented as either Pre-Columbian and/or colonial subjects. Most are portraits but they appear in a variety of contexts and forms, some of which are most surprising.

Susan Schroeder, Emeritus Faculty and France V. Scholes Chair in Colonial Latin American History, Tulane University

“Pagan Ancestors and the Church: Nahua Legitimacy and Posterity According to Chimalpahin”

Seventeenth-century Nahua historian Chimalpahin is Mexico’s most renowned indigenous intellectual. Knowledgeable of classical literature, the scriptures and works by the early church fathers, as well as a great number of writings by Nahuas and Spaniards, he took it upon himself to write an epic history of Indian Mexico in his own language. A devout Christian, he exalted the accomplishments of his and the Aztecs’ ancestors, celebrating, in particular, Tlacaélel, the Cihuacoatl (Woman Serpent), who served five emperors, “conquered the world,” built the Templo Mayor, and then used it to sacrifice tens of thousands of captives to placate the gods. Chimalpahin was the last of the great native annalists in the capital. How else, then, to write the true history of early Mexico in the face of Crown sanctions and the Inquisition?

Stephanie Schmidt, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature, University of Tulsa

“Shaping Nahua Subjectivities in a Story of Tlaxcalan Child Martyrs”

Within the first decade after the conquest of Mexico of 1519 to 1521, Franciscan friars had established mission schools in Central Mexico and recruited young nobles to aid in aggressive campaigns to eradicate native religion. This brought youths to clash violently with powerful elders, and, in two instances, boys from the mission school at Tlaxcala were killed for their zealous affronts against traditional religious and community authorities. The mid-sixteenth century historian Motolinia construes these events as a story of innocent child martyrs and cruel infidel elders. By 1601 Nahua scribes under the guidance of the Franciscan friar Juan Bautista had translated Motolinia’s account into Nahuatl. In translation, The Lives and Deaths of Three Boys from Tlaxcala remains an exemplary tale of indigenous child martyrs. However, an early scribal copy of the Bautista translation reveals a more nuanced story in Nahuatl about the legacy of recent ancestral lords embroiled in what one historian of the period called a “spiritual conquest.” Even as this seventeenth-century translation aims didactically to shape Nahuas into model Christians, it attests to the continued importance of pre-Christian ancestors in the imaginary and identities of Nahua converts.

5:30-7:00 p.m. Dinner, Gilcrease Museum, Vista Room

7:00-8:30 p.m. Keynote Address, Gilcrease Auditorium

David W. Blight, Class of 1954 Professor of American History, Director, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, Yale University

“The Memory Boom in Public History at the Civil War Sesquicentennial”

Saturday, May 19, 2012

8:30 a.m. Registration and Light Breakfast

9:00-10:30 a.m. Session III: Conservation

Session Abstract:

It is self-evident that for objects to be studied they must first be present and accessible. Preservation and conservation, then, underlie and enable all historic scholarship, and all 'material memory'. This session presents the broad challenges of nationally prominent archives, the specific challenges within photographic collections, and the unique material memory found in a single artist's work, all with application to the Gilcrease collections.

Chair, Dale Teeters, Professor of Chemistry, University of Tulsa

Presenters

Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Chief Conservator, National Archives and Records Administration

“Archives Conservation: Opportunities and Challenges”

The challenges and pleasures of working with large holdings of archival materials within the National Archives and Records Administration will be examined from both preservation and conservation perspectives. Preservation strategies are affected by issues of scale or quantity of holdings, relative values, and active use. Brief case studies will exemplify such areas of concern as long-term exhibition (encasement of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights) and emergency response (recovering materials following Hurricane Katrina), as well as the challenges posed by large-scale digitization of records.

Debra Hess Norris, Chair and Professor of Art Conservation and Photographic Conservator, Henry Francis du Pont Chair in Fine Arts, University of Delaware

“The Preservation of Our Photographic Heritage in Oklahoma: It Ain't Too Early and it Ain't Too Late”

Photographs enhance scholarship and knowledge, inspire discourse, engage public audiences, document history, connect societies, and celebrate greatness. Whether housed in museums, libraries or archives, these collections—ranging from salted paper prints to cellulose acetate film base negatives — are at risk. Early daguerreotype and tintype plates may exfoliate and corrode while everyday nineteenth-century photographic prints made from egg whites and printed-out metallic silver discolor and twentieth century black-and-white materials are often prone to fading. The United States' first-ever comprehensive survey of the state of preservation of our Nation's cultural heritage, the Heritage Health Index (HHI), confirms the urgent need for improved collections storage conditions, site-specific disaster plans and emergency response training, increased preservation staff, and sustained funding for collections care. HHI revealed that there are 727 million photographic items being cared for by US collecting institutions. More than 40% of these collections are in unknown condition; 21% are in need or urgent need of preservation. This presentation will address the preservation challenges and solutions typical of photographic collections held in cultural institutions and private collections throughout the United State and worldwide.

Jodie Utter, Conservator of Works on Paper, The Amon Carter Museum

“The Watercolors of Charles M. Russell: an examination of the artist’s materials and techniques on the Montana frontier”

Analysis of Charles M. Russell’s (active ca. 1880–1926) watercolor materials and techniques were undertaken using magnification, polarizing light microscopy (PLM), X-ray fluorescence (Tracer III XRF), infrared photography (IR), and ultra violet (UV) radiation. Russell’s pigments were identified as were shifts in his technique over the course of his career. Pigment samples were collected from Russell’s studio materials housed at the C. M. Russell Museum, the Britzman collection at the Gilcrease Museum, and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. For the study, twenty-six paintings were chosen to represent all phases of the artist’s career and ability. Traditional and unconventional techniques were noted, as well as shifts in the utilization of underdrawing. In addition, focus was given to the wide variety of high-quality artists’ materials available on the Montana frontier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

11:00–12:00 p.m. Tour of Gilcrease Galleries and Archives

12:30–1:30 p.m. Lunchtime Keynote

Herman J. Viola, Curator Emeritus, The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History

“The ‘Seeds of Change’ as Columbus’ Old World Meets the New World”

Abstract:

In 1492 Christopher Columbus, a Genoese seaman sailing under the flag of Spain, discovered a land unknown to the peoples of Europe. His voyages were pivotal in world history. They initiated processes that changed the ethnic composition of two continents, revolutionized the world’s diet, and altered the global environment. Traditional teaching about the Columbus voyages was that they brought the Old World in contact with the New World. In truth, two “ancient” worlds came together to form a “New World”—the world we live in today. Dr. Herman Viola’s presentation will tell this story through five “seeds of change”—disease, sugar, corn, the potato, and the horse.

1:45-3:15 p.m. Session IV: Slavery and the American West

Session Abstract:

This session will resituate the history of American slavery from the South, its regional setting most familiar to scholars and non-scholars alike, to the West. This move invites important questions about the periodization of slavery, the identities of its advocates, practitioners, and victims, and its long-term political and cultural consequences. Slavery’s widespread presence in the West over a very long period of time, and across an extremely geographically and demographically diverse area, endows the institution with a number of striking characteristics which problematize historiographic as well as commonly held assumptions about its influence on Western history.

Chair, Robert Jackson, Associate Professor of English, University of Tulsa

Presenters

Tiya Miles, Professor of American Culture, History, Afroamerican and African Studies, Native American Studies, University of Michigan

“Enslavement and Movement in Indian Territory”

This paper explores the theme of movement in the experience of enslaved blacks in the Cherokee Nation in and en route to Indian Territory. Although an idealized vision of voluntary migration to Indian Territory has been a feature of African American cultural expression since the late 19th century, the reality of black life in Indian Territory indicates a pattern of forced mobility. This presentation attempts to reconstruct and connect the occurrences of movement for black slaves in Cherokee country--from the Trail of Tears, to sales and familial separations, to pursuit and capture by slave catchers, to relocation during the Civil War.

Elliot West, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History, University of Arkansas

“Slavery in the West: As Mixed as the Land and Its People”

In this presentation three themes will be discussed about slavery in the West. First, is the antiquity of enslavement, which was part of western life long before the arrival of Europeans. Second, the different forms of and purposes of slavery in the West. The common association of slavery with African Americans in the American South obscures the many forms of slavery and its many uses across the nation but especially in the West. Finally, slavery as a ground of cultural exchange, where different cultures met, influenced one another, and by that helped shape the West as a human mosaic.

Kristen Oertel, Mary F. Barnard Chair in Nineteenth Century American History, University of Tulsa

“‘The Creeks say if the negroes are free they shall not remain in the Creek nation’: The Slavery Debate in Indian Territory, 1850-1860”

The "problem of slavery" in the American West did not begin with the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, but rather earlier, in Indian Territory, when former slaves and Indians battled for sovereignty and questioned government policy on slavery in the West. In the midst of the 1840s Seminole Wars in Florida, the U.S. government told former slaves of the Seminole Indians that they would gain their freedom if they moved to Indian Territory. Dozens of black freedmen migrated to the region in the late 1840s and settled on Creek lands where they quickly rebuilt their community and began harboring and protecting fugitive slaves from both Indian Territory and Arkansas. The Creeks, a slaveholding tribe, objected to the freedmen's status and "rebellious" behavior by disarming them and attempting to return them to their masters and/or sell them back into slavery. This paper will explore the forced settlement of these freedmen, their quick and violent resistance against slavery, and their Indian neighbors' desire to re-enslave them, all while the U.S. government strained to formulate a policy that tackled the dilemma posed by slavery's march westward.

3:30-5:00 p.m. Session V: Cultural Sovereignty

Session Abstract:

Chair, Judith Royster, Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Native American Law Center, University of Tulsa

Presenters

Rebecca Tsosie, Professor of Law, Willard H. Pedrick Distinguished Research Scholar, Arizona State University

“Native Nations and Museums: Developing an Institutional Framework for Cultural Sovereignty”

Museums play an important educational role in contemporary society and they are vital to the effort of Native American peoples to exercise their “cultural sovereignty,” reclaiming their own histories as distinct from “American” history. This presentation addresses the changing relationship between museums and Native American peoples over time, and examines the contemporary role of museums as institutions that engage in the dual processes of “repatriation” and “reconciliation.” These themes implicate a dynamic of intercultural justice and embody a commitment to the self-determination of Native peoples.

L.G. “George” Moses, Professor of History, Oklahoma State University

“Our Mother Place’: Pueblo Sovereignty and the History of the Pueblo Lands Board, 1923-1931”

In the 1920s a convergence of sorts took place: on the one hand, governmental leaders launched their final assault on American Indian cultures through such devices as the “Dance Order” (which forbade Native American ceremonials), The General Leasing Act (which granted to the interior department extraordinary power over “allotted” Indian lands), and the Bursum Bill (which gave Euroamerican “squatters” on Pueblo lands paramount rights to quiet title). On the other side, “social scientists,” visionaries, and artists from the Santa Fe and Toas communities formed voluntary organizations to harness public opinion against the Bursum Bill and on behalf of preservation of Indian cultures by preservation of Indian lands. The Bursum Bill failed repeatedly, and in its place congress passed The Pueblo Lands Act which reinvested the Pueblo people with title to their lands and in effect placed the burden of contest and proof on the Euroamerican claimants. The act created the Pueblo Lands Board to determine ownership of the disputed lands. The story of the Pueblo Lands Board, fascinating in its own right, has never been told. Its story involves such disciplines as history, anthropology, and sociology. The establishment of the Pueblo Lands Board also represents a significant chapter in the emergence of applied anthropology in the United States during the twentieth century.

Brian Hosmer, H.G. Barnard Chair of Western American History, University of Tulsa

“Ni’i’ihi at the Library”

In 2004, the Newberry Library hosted Ni’i’ihi: in a Good Way, Photographs of Wind River Arapaho, 1976-1996. The exhibit included material from Newberry collections documenting Arapaho history and culture and photographs by visual anthropologist Sara Wiles. Ni’i’ihi presented an opportunity for creative dialogue between materials separated by space, time, and intent, all in the service of re-connecting past with contemporary and Library with native community. Delicate negotiations, with donors, Newberry staff, Northern Arapaho tribal officials and partnering institutions was required along with developing interpretive themes, and public

programming. In the end, Ni'iihi stands both as exhibit and case study into complications of hosting exhibitions, with multiple partners, and multiple objectives.

6:00-7:30 p.m. Catered Reception hosted by President Steadman Upham