

Alfonso X, known as “the wise,” included a very original version of the story of Cain in his *General Estoria*. According to Alfonso, God never stopped loving Cain and gave him a very long life so that he would have time to repent and be saved. He also adds the interesting detail that Cain married his twin sister, Calmana, and the two of them were so alike that they had an ideal marriage. In contrast, in the *Grande e general Estoria*, Alfonso accused Cain of committing all seven deadly sins.

In his *Libro de las armas* Alfonso’s nephew, Don Juan Manuel, claimed that Alfonso was equally guilty. He also compared Alfonso’s wife, Violante, to Calmana, accusing her of having killed her sister Costanza.

Finally, Pedro López de Ayala’s *Crónica del rey don Pedro* and *Crónica del rey don Enrique* used biblical and apocryphal references such as the figure of Cain to portray King Pedro I as monstrously cruel and philo-Semitic, and to justify Pedro’s assassination by his bastard half-brother Enrique of Trastámara.

This carefully researched little book is sure to be of interest to students of the Hebrew Bible and of medieval Spanish literature. Unfortunately, it is marred by a large number of typographical errors.

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JORGE F. RIVAS PÉREZ, ED. *Appropriation & Invention. Three Centuries of Art in Spanish America*. Denver/ Munich: Denver Art Museum/ Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2022. 296 pp.

This exquisitely illustrated volume addresses a selection of the outstanding colonial Spanish American art collection of the Denver Art Museum, a recognition of the legacy of many supporters and long-standing active acquisition strategies of the museum in relation to Latin American art. In 1936, after receiving a gift of southwestern *Santos*, the museum pioneered in establishing a New World department in 1968, inspiring additional donations in the following decades, currently making the museums’ collection “the largest and most complete such collection in the United States and one of the best in the world” (11). The selection of pieces presented in the publication offers an excellent overview of this important collection, its depth and range. More recently the museum has acquired modern and contemporary Latin American art, to complement “the cultural narrative of past, present, and future” (11). The volume is edited by Jorge F. Rivas Pérez, former Frederick and Jan Mayer Curator of Latin American Art and Department Head at the Denver Art Museum.

Rivas Pérez offers a short introductory text on the topic of appropriation and invention in the arts of Spanish America, setting the tone for the following brief essays. A total of eighteen short texts are authored by a group of international scholars coming from the United States, different countries of Latin America, and Europe, all of which are recognized authorities in their respective fields: Olga Isabel Acosta Luna, Luisa Elena Alcalá, Elsa Arroyo Lemus, Carla Aymes, Michael A. Brown, James M. Córdova, Gustavo Curiel Méndez, Carmen Fernández-Salvador, Raphael Fonseca, Philippe Halbert, Ricardo Kusunoki Rodríguez, Natalia Majluf, Franziska Martha Neff, Janeth Rodríguez Nóbrega, Jorge F. Rivas Pérez, Sofia Sanabrais, and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden Revilla. Some are long-term collaborators of the Denver Art Museum Spanish colonial collection; others are new to this project.

The content is divided in the traditional regions of the Viceroyalties of New Spain (7 essays) and Peru (5 essays), distributed by artistic technique such as painting, sculpture, and silversmithing. Each individual text presents the masterpieces of the collection, with a summary of the most recent scholarship in the specific field. If this synthesis of knowledge is effective to introduce the collection, the commentary feels short in many instances.

The collection of texts innovates in its inclusion of the Spanish Caribbean region with a focus on what is currently known as Venezuela. This region has usually been neglected in colonial art historiography, and the Denver Art Museum constitutes the biggest collection of Venezuelan colonial art outside of Venezuela. Paintings and furniture, this last being Rivas Pérez' field of expertise, are at the core of those two Caribbean chapters and were recent gifts by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. The chapter on painting from New Granada, under the umbrella of the Viceroyalty of Peru, also addresses how a specific donor, in this case the collector Daniel C. Stapleton, who lived in Colombia and Ecuador between 1895 and 1914, significantly increased a section of the Denver Art Museum's collection and shaped it in a very distinctive way.

The epilogue section also innovates by including essays that go beyond the established field of colonial art, the strength of the collection, by addressing other areas of interest to the Denver Art Museum. These include: the relations of Asia with Spanish America by Sofia Sanabrais; New Mexico *Santos* by James M. Córdova; Natalia Majluf's text on artworks that go beyond the Independence, which opens a dialogue with Modernity; and the presence of colonial essence in Modern and Contemporary art by Raphael Fonseca. A segment at the end offers a translation of the texts into Spanish, an important acknowledgement of a Hispanic readership.

The volume is a thrilling tribute to the importance of the Spanish American art collection at the Denver Art Museum and the ground-breaking scholarship it stimulated through the leadership of Frederick and Jan Mayer, and the Mayer Centre for Ancient and Latin American Art. A decade ago, the museum had published the *Companion to Spanish Colonial Art at the Denver Art Museum* (2012). The new publication coincides with the reinstallation of the permanent collections of the museum. It highlights the substantial growth of the collection in the last decade, the considerable conservation work done, and the advancement of the scholarship in the field.

The question of appropriation and innovation in the arts of Spanish America is not a new method, but at a moment when the discipline of art history at large is trying to decolonize its canon, and museums their collection, it is a valid approach to look at familiar material with fresh eyes. The essays address specific techniques and materials, particular iconographies, local conditions and contexts, questions of identity, the training of artists particular to Spanish colonial America that provide an overview of the richness of the art production of the area.

This book is a delight in terms of editorial work, high quality and quantity of images, the content is of great interest for specialists in the field, and the short texts can also be used as pedagogical support for the classroom. One area of concern is the "Selected Readings" section, that could have been expanded much more. The criteria for inclusion are not clearly stated, and it is not reflective of the rich bibliographic material referred to in the individual essays. The inclusion of a map could also be helpful to a readership not familiar with the territorial divisions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries alluded to in the volume.

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JILL ROBBINS. *Poetry and Crisis. Cultural Politics and Citizenship in the Wake of the Madrid Bombings*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2019. 169 pp.

Si anhelábamos un alegato a favor de la relevancia emocional, pero también social y política, de la poesía, el iluminado libro de Jill Robbins viene a colmarnos. *Poetry and Crisis* desafía la tan irónica como irreverente advertencia de Charles Simic acerca de la inutilidad de la poesía. Preguntas como las siguientes permean el volumen de Robbins: "what is the role of poets today in times of crisis? To witness? To heal? To promote social change? To reflect critically? Can poetry still live up to those expectations? Should it? Can it speak of crisis without commodifying it?" (81). *Poetry and*