

XLVI International Colloquium on Art History  
Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM

*Sources for art histories in Latin America  
Resurgences and new interpretations*

October 4 -7, 2022 (online conference)

Over the last few decades, historiography of Latin American art has been renewed thanks to the appearance of other methodologies that have made it possible to rethink certain approaches to the field; to enable new archives, collections, geographies, and processes of cultural agency; and to question the canon of art from approaches of social history of art, visual culture studies, art anthropology, gender studies, and decolonial theory. In the same way, through academic literature, conferences and curatorships in Latin America, the United States and Europe, historiography of art has made evident the fundamental place that sources (written, visual, oral, material, etc.) had in the construction and dissemination of nationalisms and imaginaries of what is called “American” and “Latin American.”

To the extent that this historiography was consolidated, certain accounts, ideas, authors, categories, and genealogies deserve to be re-evaluated in the light of the present and of critical and revisionist horizons. From a methodological perspective—and as a first approach—, this colloquium proposes *to return* to the primary sources (along with their authors and/or production contexts) that gave rise to some of the most important issues and problems in the fields of indigenous, colonial, modern, and contemporary art, as well as in cinema, curatorial studies, and materiality studies.

In this sense, some of the questions to be formulated are: What new interpretations can be generated from the criticism of sources, materials, and seminal authors of Latin American art? Which are the spaces for historiographical intervention and discussion on the epistemology of art history from the sources? What re-readings can be done of seemingly canonical works and texts? What role have academic and ideological agendas played in the construction of the art accounts of each country, taking the sources as their axis? How does art history build its primary sources, unlike other accounts and disciplines, particularly history?

Therefore, this proposal focuses on a *return* to the founding stories of our field and is conceived from a detailed examination of the sources. Such analysis and studies can be carried out through close reading exercises, or from a critical contextualization of primary sources and interpretation based on contemporary theories and problems. The themes of this proposal for our annual colloquium will pay special attention to issues such as the genres, characteristics and scope in which sources were conceived (codices, stelaes, archives, documents, art criticism, chronicles, treatises, manifestos, memoirs, testimonies, letters, scholar texts, etc.), as well as their conditions of production and circulation.

## Objectives:

- ✓ To analyze and rethink frequent themes and problems in the historiography of art in Latin America.
- ✓ To rescue and critically re-read primary sources of art through methodologies that allow us to distinguish its variety of genres.
- ✓ To confront historiographical constructions based on comparative methodologies between primary and secondary sources.

## Themes

### 1. Objects as sources

A series of objects of material culture have been considered and used as sources for art history due to their structural features, their production processes, and their visual and written content. Some examples include codices and stelae, mural paintings, ceramics, and different objects of daily life such as furniture, clothing, etc. The diversity of these manifestations, including those derived from digitality, determine the modes of use, reading and informative scope of these sources, as well as the possibilities of their conservation and prevalence over time. From there stems part of the enrichment of the perspectives of art history, which in order to ascertain these objects as sources has had to enter into a dialogue with various areas of knowledge such as epigraphy, paleography, codicology, visual anthropology, industrial design, digital humanities and materiality studies, among others.

### 2. The sources: institutions and agents, their preservation and organization

A part of the statute of sources is conferred by the instances and institutions responsible for their organization, description, conservation, and custody. Likewise, the very definition that institutions (museums, archives, libraries, newspaper archives, icon libraries, sound libraries, photo libraries, video libraries) give of themselves entails the delimitation, selection, and segmentation of the type of sources that they can collect and preserve. The public or private nature of these organizations also influences the greater or lesser breadth of the repertoire and set of sources that they may contain, their visibility and the access to them. To that extent, these entities are mediators and generators of a series of processes of significance and valorization, as well as biases—such as their relative rarity, their exclusivity and unrepeatableness—that the sources did not necessarily have when they were conceived.

The handling and editing of files that some agents carry out will also be explored, with the aim of guaranteeing a legacy under a specific ideological framework.

### 3. Written/visual genres and source statute

As “art” has ceased to be an obvious object in art history, it has also verified a transformation in its horizon of sources. In this open extension of the discipline, there are new objects such as maps, ethnographic and anthropological photographs, decorative objects, scientific drawings, audiovisual records, decorative objects, illustrations, among many others. This has allowed a relocation of the sources—previously considered marginal—that has gone hand in hand with the construction of new narratives and areas of study (gender perspective, post-coloniality, cultural theory, and eco-criticism). Its dynamism has led to a reflection on the very statute of the source in art history in which a series of pertinent questions arise for the epistemology of the discipline, from the very specificity of its object of study, to the kind of knowledge that it produces unlike other disciplines such as history or archaeology, which also operate with the use of sources. Such questions are specific to certain practices of art history, as is the work with images and texts that take on the role of sources, the research of material characteristics that are presented as evidence or the operability that the field has with respect to collections. This thematic axis looks for proposals that reflect on some of the facets with which art history produces, maintains, and transforms its sources, either from a specific case or from a more general issue.

### 4. Discourse genres and sources

For different literary genres and forms of artistic writing, textual sources have traditionally been the discursive spaces from which works of art have been read or studied, especially in Western contexts. The usual relationship between monument and document proposed by iconology has made written sources the encoder from which remarks about the works are anchored, interpretations are validated, or critical assessments are made. Heuristics and hermeneutics have also given great weight to written sources as spaces from which historians launch processes of discovery, collection, and fact interpretation. For this reason, this thematic axis seeks to return to *direct* written sources of different forms and genres, considering to what extent these resonate or determine specific ways of artistic production. Considering their forms of construction, typologies and rhetorical strategies, discursive genres (art criticism, chronicles, manuscripts, treatises, manifestos, memoirs, letters, testimonies, academic texts, among others) establish, propose, and impose rules of writing, while they enable certain frameworks of interpretation of the field.

### 5. Canonical works, paradigms, authors, and re-readings

Certain accounts and authors have determined the gaze of Latin American art histories for being considered pioneers in their field, contributing foundational texts for the discipline in certain geographies or specific thematic areas. Or contributing texts that found or challenged paradigms, providing testimonies of specific moments and historical contexts, concerns, or academic traditions. This thematic axis invites the critical re-reading of authors such as Juan Acha, Aracy Amaral, Diego Angulo, Carlos Duarte, Justino Fernández, Teresa Gisbert, George Kubler, Francisco de la Maza, José de Mesa, Julio E. Payró, Héctor Schenone, Eduard

Seler, Manuel Toussaint, Salvador Toscano or Marta Traba, among others, to reveal and dismantle their status as canonical works, their ideological agendas and the narratives, approaches, and methodologies in which they operate.

## Guidelines

1. Proposals must be submitted in Spanish or English, must have a tentative title and also include a summary, not exceeding 500 words, of the presentation to be carried out. Only one proposal per author will be accepted. You must explicitly indicate which of the subject(s) suggested above you will be addressing. Please attach a résumé of not more than 150 words, highlighting your main academic works, as well as your institutional affiliation.
  2. The deadline for receiving proposals will be **May 13, 2022** and can be registered as of **February 24, 2022** at [www.esteticas.unam.mx](http://www.esteticas.unam.mx). The Scientific Committee composed of specialists from IIE-UNAM and other institutions will examine the proposals and select them based on quality criteria and thematic relevance.
  3. The decision of the Committee will be announced on **June 15** and will be final. The selected speakers will not pay registration fee.
  4. Once the papers are accepted, the text's requirements are: 2,500 words or 10 double-spaced pages to be read in a maximum of 20 minutes. In addition, each speaker will provide a video with his/her/their presentation, which can be recorded with the support of the technical team of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas. **By submitting his/her/their text, authors agree to be included in the corresponding proceedings, prior academic arbitration.**
  5. Speakers must complete a form regarding the copyrights of the paper and its images, as well as on the webcast on the date of their intervention.
  6. The paper to be presented should be delivered before **September 5, 2022**, in order for the commentators to prepare their interventions.
  7. Final versions for publication must comply with the following characteristics: a maximum of 25 pages (8,000 words) using Chicago referencing system and 6 images, to be submitted to the corresponding arbitration process. The IIE reserves the right not to publish certain images depending on their cost, with the understanding that speakers must obtain all image reproduction permits. The deadline to submit the accepted texts for publication will be **October 28, 2022**. There will be no extension.
5. Any matter not foreseen in this call will be solved by the Scientific Committee with the support of the Directorate of the Institute.

Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City, February 24, 2022.

## Scientific Committee

### *Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM*

Dra. Dafne Cruz Porchini

Dra. Franziska Neff

Dr. Omar Olivares Sandoval

Dra. Leticia Staines Cicero

Dr. Luis Vargas Santiago

Dra. Angélica Velázquez Guadarrama

### *Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas, UNAM*

Dra. Marina Garone Gravier

### *Denver Art Museum*

Dr. Jorge Rivas Pérez

### *Universidad de Buenos Aires*

Dra. Marta Penhos

### *Universidade Federal de São Paulo*

Dr. Jens Baumgarten

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