**Tinker Award 2012 Summary Report**

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I arrived in Mexico City on an early morning in May filled with anticipation for what I might discover in this vibrant city filled with colonial history. Having studied the art of colonial Mexico for three years, I longed to see the immense collections of art in Mexican museums and churches that I had previously only read about in books. I was overcome by the layering of history I encountered at every turn where paintings, sculptures and architectural structures dating from before the conquest and colonial period coexisted with modern day buildings and visual ephemera. Fortuitously, I stayed at an inn where a well-known art historian of colonial Mexico was staying at the time, and she invited me on a cultural geography walk of San Juan Moyotla, an indigenous neighborhood during the colonial period, with two other scholars of colonial Mexico. We were able to pinpoint the location of where the market would have been located as well as the boundaries of the Convento de San Francisco. This excursion not only acclimated me to the historical layering of the city, it also put me in contact with established Latin American scholars from institutions across the United States. Incidentally, the inn continued to be a rich environment during my stay, as I engaged in many fascinating conversations over breakfast with artists and Latin American scholars from Mexico, the United States and Argentina.

My initial interest for this trip was to consider the notion of transformation in the Marian works of seventeenth-century artist Juan Correa. In March I visited Antequera, Spain to see a set of paintings by Correa depicting scenes from the life of Mary. These works had been transported to Spain from New Antequera, New Spain during the colonial period by a prominent member of the viceregal administration. While closely analyzing these works, I noticed a peculiar detail that was not mentioned in scholarship: on the robe of the Jewish priest was the depiction of eyes. I had never encountered this iconography before and was curious as to whether it was an invention by Correa or if it was a standard manner of depicting this figure. No European depictions of this scene seem to include eyes on the robe of a Jewish priest. The only European painting that embeds eyes into a garment of which I am aware is the Rainbow portrait of Queen Elizabeth I by Marcus Gheeraerts. Otherwise this type of depiction seems to be rather unusual in the European context. However, after visiting the collections in Mexico, I learned that this form of representation is quite common in colonial depictions. Not only did Correa include eyes within the garment of the priest, several other artists in colonial Mexico did as well. Typically, the eyes appear at the bottom of the blue garment of the priest in the Betrothal of the Virgin, but I found one example where the eyes are depicted on his sleeves, as well. I have not encountered information about this detail in scholarship on these works and have yet to determine its significance. However, the standard personification of Judaism as a woman wearing a blindfold in the Western tradition may provide some clues. I intend to pursue this research question further and perhaps eventually publish an article about it.

While viewing works by Correa in Mexico in anticipation of a potential dissertation topic was the primary goal of this trip, a visit to the Museo Nacional de Virreinato in Tepotzotlán and the Museo de Arte Religioso Ex Convento de Santa Mónica in Puebla provided me with rich experiences that dramatically altered the direction of my dissertation topic. Within a gorgeously restored seventeenth-century Jesuit monastery in Tepotzotlán is housed an immense collection of viceregal art including one of the largest collections of *monjas coronadas* or portraits of crowned nuns. The Museo Nacional de Virreinato also holds two funerary portraits of nuns, or *monjas muertas*. Just before my trip to Mexico I completed a seminar paper on the role of sensory experience in these magnificent, flower-filled portraits of nuns, which mark their entrances into the convents in *monjas conronadas* paintings and their entrances into heaven with *monjas muertas* paintings. I am so enthusiastic about this topic that I am currently in the process of revising the seminar paper into my qualifying paper, which I will submit to the faculty of the History of Art department as part of my requirements to move to the next stage of my program. Additionally, I will present this paper in a session titled Faith, Gender, and the Senses at an upcoming conference in March. My hope is to expand this project into a dissertation topic that deals with artistic representation associated with colonial Mexican convents.

Being able to see these works in person in Tepotzotlán and in Puebla was invaluable to my project. At the Museo Nacional de Virreinato was an exhibit demonstrating how a deceased nun would have been displayed, adorned with a floral crown and fragrant petals behind the grille of the lower choir of the convent for the community to admire. At the Museo de Arte Religioso Ex Convento de Santa Mónica I was able to physically walk through the lower choir and see the grille behind which a nun would have been displayed. The museum also had a *monja muerta* painting, which I discuss in my paper, of an actual nun who had lived and died at the convent of Santa Mónica. Seeing this work in person and noting its relatively small scale informed my thinking about the intimacy of viewing required of its beholders. Being able to walk through the convent was crucial to my understanding of how the space functioned, which before I had only read about in books. Additionally, I happened to be in Cholula on the day of Corpus Christi and was able to visit a church and smell the sweet fragrance of the fresh flowers that adorned it from floor to ceiling. This type of floral decoration is similar to those described in colonial documents, which recount funerals of esteemed nuns, where the sense of smell was key to the spectacle and celebration. In addition to walking through the convent and seeing portraits of nuns, I also visited the Archivo General de la Nación where I examined receipts for items purchased during convent celebrations, such as candles, food and flowers. My experience at the archive informed my paper and at the same time acclimated me to how the archive functioned; I am now registered for five years and will be able to easily access documents on my next visit.

Another primary goal of my trip was to familiarize myself with the collections of colonial art in Mexico, in general. I was able to see numerous well-known works which are typically addressed in introductory surveys on colonial Latin American art, such as the open chapel of the sixteenth-century Church and Ex-convento of Saint Nicholas de Tolentino in Actopan, the fascinating murals featuring indigenous imagery in the Church of San Miguel in Ixmiquilpan, and the mythical murals in the Dean’s House in Puebla, on which I wrote a seminar paper last semester. By seeing these objects in person, I was able to engage with them at their original scale and often in their original contexts. The murals at the Dean’s House were especially fascinating because I never could have envisioned the way in which they encircle the beholder as they wrap around each wall of the two rooms they cover. The open chapel at the Church of Saint Nicholas was also impressive, as the terrifying images of hell pictured on its walls appear to envelop the beholder at actual size. The dim lighting of the Church of San Miguel dramatically heightened the experience of peering at indigenous warriors battling mythical monsters within the Christian church. Additionally, the multitude of colonial objects I encountered in the immense collections of the Museo Franz Mayer, the Museo Nacional de Arte, the Museo Nacional de Historia, and the Museo Nacional de Virreinato in Tepotzotlán solidified particular themes of colonial Mexican art for me. For example, I feel as though I have a much better understanding of the iconography of scenes from the life of the Virgin and other depictions of saints. By seeing these themes repeated again and again by various colonial artists, I am now able to distinguish a standard representation from an unusual one. By visiting these sites and analyzing works in major collections I was able to familiarize myself with iconographic and stylistic aspects of colonial painting as well as inform directions for my dissertation topic. This trip afforded me with the invaluable experience of connecting me with established Latin American scholars, clarifying directions for my research, expanding my general knowledge about colonial Mexican art and preparing me longer research trips in the future.