



Art and Imagination in Spanish America, 1500–1800: Highlights from LACMA’s Collection



This exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum features more than 100 works drawn from LACMA’s collection of Spanish colonial art—including textiles, paintings and decorative arts—providing an alternative perspective on traditional interpretations of art from the so-called New World.

Imperial expansion, conquest, colonization, and the trans-Atlantic slave trade marked the period spanning from 1500 to 1800. Cataclysmic social and geopolitical shifts brought people into closer contact than ever before in real and imagined ways, propelling the creative refashioning of the material culture that surrounded them. After the Spaniards began colonizing the Americas in the late 15th century and set out to spread Christianity, artists working there drew from a range of traditions—Indigenous, European, Asian, and African—reflecting the interconnectedness of the world. Private homes and civic and ecclesiastic institutions soon teemed with imported and local objects.

Spanish America was neither a homogeneous nor a monolithic entity, and local artists, including those who remain unidentified, were not passive absorbers of foreign traditions. While acknowledging the profound violence that marked the process of conquest and colonization, this exhibition explores the intricate social, economic, and artistic dynamics of these societies that led to the creation of astounding new artworks that were widely sought after and shipped around the world.

This exhibition was originally held at Los Angeles County Museum of Art—entitled *Archive of the World*—and includes an [accompanying catalogue](#) edited

VISUAL ARTS
ST. LOUIS

Sat, June 22–
Sun, September 01, 2024

Venue

Saint Louis Art Museum, 1 Fine Arts Dr,
St. Louis, MO 63110

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Admission

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Credits

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and presented in St. Louis with generous support from the Betsy & Thomas Patterson Foundation. *Art and Imagination in Spanish America, 1500–1800* was curated by Ilona Katzew with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The organizing curators at SLAM are Genevieve Cortinovis, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Associate Curator of Decorative Arts and Design; Clare Kobasa, associate curator of prints, drawings, and photographs; Judith W. Mann, senior curator of European art to 1800; and Amy Torbert, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Associate Curator of American Art.



by Iona Katzew.