

STYLING THE ELITE: ISSUES OF THE BAROQUE, *BUEN GUSTO*, AND CREOLE  
IDENTITY IN LATE 18<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY NOVOHISPANIC PORTRAITURE

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures.....	v
Introduction .....	1
I. Baroque Portraiture in New Spain .....	9
II. The Artistic Landscape of the Late Eighteenth Century .....	18
III. Style in Action .....	24
Conclusion .....	38
Appendix.....	40
Figures.....	45
Bibliography.....	62
VITA	
ABSTRACT	

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Artist Unkown. *Don Antonio de Mendoza*, after 1535. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 2. Drawing of *Bazán Slab*.
- Figure 3. Miguel Cabrera. *Retrato de don Manuel Ignacio Beye Cisneros y Quijano*, 1762. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 4. “*Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México*,” Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, 12r, 1790.
- Figure 5. “*Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México*,” Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, 16r, 1790.
- Figure 6. Andrés López. *Don Mathias de Gálvez*, 1783. Museo Nacional de la Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 7. Image of the viceregal portrait series hung in situ in the Salón de Cabildos, Mexico City.
- Figure 8. José Alfaro. *Virrey Martín de Mayorga*, 1779. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 9. Andrés López. *Retrato de Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo*. c. 1791. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán.
- Figure 10. Ignacio María Barreda. *Retrato de doña Juana María Romero*, 1794. Museo Nacional de la Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 11. N. Heideloff. *Fashion Plate*, 1794. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Figure 12. Ignacio María Barreda. *Gregorio Joseph de Omaña y Sotomayor*, 1793. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán.
- Figure 13. Ignacio María Barreda. *María Manuela Esquivel y Serruto*, 1794. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.
- Figure 14. Ignacio María Barreda. *Don Ignacio Obregón*, 1792. Museo Soumaya, Mexico City.
- Figure 15. C H Fürst. *Fashion Plate*, 1792. The Nordic Museum, Stockholm.
- Figure 16. Rafael Ximeno y Planes. *The Silversmith José María Rodallega*, c. 1795. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas.
- Figure 17. Unknown Artist. *Guadalupe Victoria*, 1825. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.

## Introduction

The last quarter of the eighteenth century in New Spain was met with ripples in the fabric of the art world. Dynamics of colonialist cultural impositions and economic restructuring affected the infrastructure of the artistic ecosystem of the viceroyalty. These effects were most clearly felt in the spaces where art was produced. Works produced in a studio or in a formal art academy reached different audiences and received varying degrees of support or persecution from the Crown. The artists who were able to gain access to elite art institutions varied with time, and lines were often drawn at an ethnic or cultural divide. Lastly, the types of art that patrons commissioned became a marker of identity charged with cultural significance. Tensions between tradition and change played out vividly in the territory of viceregal portraiture. There, Novohispanic artists and patrons had to quickly adapt to successfully navigate between their own culturally entrenched conceptions of art and portraiture and those being imposed by newly arriving Spanish artists and intellectuals.

Portraiture was a key tool of the colonial project from its inception. Sixteenth-century accounts such as that of Bernal Díaz del Castillo indicate that portraits were made of Hernán Cortéz and his company to be presented to Moctezuma during the conquest.<sup>1</sup> Starting in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, portraits of prominent political and religious figures such as the viceroy and archbishop were produced for display within corporate contexts, including the viceregal palace and cathedral. Among this type, the sixteenth-century

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 201.

portrait of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza is one of the earliest (figure 1). He is shown half-length and in three-quarter view, as is typical of Baroque portraiture. Even more indicative of its Baroque condition are the family crest in the upper-righthand corner and the textual label placed at the bottom of the work. This inclusion evidences a desire to document the identity of the sitter textually within the painting, through both family name and political title. Works such as this built a formal, notably Baroque, foundation for portraiture in New Spain. The distinctive styles of these works and their various staple formal elements, such as biographical textual labels and the sitter's coat of arms, continued to mark New Spanish portraiture through the eighteenth century.

The continuity in the style of these portraits is remarkable given the changes in New Spain's ruling structure through three centuries of colonial rule. In 1700, the last of the Spanish Hapsburg line died. The resulting battle for succession placed the Bourbon line associated with France on the throne. This change in rulership from the very conservative and deeply Catholic Hapsburgs to the Enlightenment-oriented Bourbons brought about significant social and economic change across the empire.<sup>2</sup> Political and economic reform, often referred to as the Bourbon Reforms, were imposed on New Spain. These brought increased prosperity for wealthy landowners as well as a new class of entrepreneurial tradesmen, which generated a greater impulse to advertise the contributions of the wealthy elite to society. As a direct result, the mid- to late eighteenth century saw a flourishing of the portrait genre, expanding to include elite secular men and women, as well as the proliferation of representations of crowned nuns.<sup>3</sup> With

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the relationship between the Bourbon Reforms and their influence over Mexican art, see Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America*, 204-208.

<sup>3</sup> While this thesis covers elite secular men and women, portraits of ecclesiastical figures such as nuns fall outside of the scope of this project. For more information on the prolific crowned nun

these new figures being portrayed with portraiture, their representations still largely followed the Baroque precedents established for the genre in earlier centuries.

Scholars of eighteenth-century Novohispanic secular portraiture of the past few decades have tended to approach these works from a European perspective that disregards the unique social function of these works in their particular historical context. This tendency can be seen in literature such as the well-known and easily accessible 1994 issue of *Artes de México* dedicated to Novohispanic portraiture. In this issue, these portraits are paradoxically described as a real, honest representation of the sitter as they were and a mask presenting a deindividualized persona.<sup>4</sup> Alfonso Alfaro posited that the stiffness seen in viceregal portraits and the tendency to use established visual patterns was due to “the almost exclusive treatment of religious figures [that] made it more difficult for the artists to portray earthly creatures.”<sup>5</sup> This statement suggests that viceregal artists were inexperienced when it came to portraiture because of the overwhelming cultural emphasis on religious art. Immediately following this statement, Alfaro also characterizes Creole, or American born Spanish, patrons as insecure or anxiously conservative-minded for requesting such stark stylistic division between portrait and other types of commissions. However, these types of evaluations neglect the important influence of social, racial, and economic factors unique to Colonial Latin America that gave rise to this kind of portraiture.

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genre, see James M. Córdova, *The Art of Professing in Bourbon Mexico: Crowned-Nun Portraits and Reform in the Convent* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014)., Jorge Albero Manrique, Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, Alma Montero Alarcón, et al., *Monjas coronadas: Vida conventual femenina en Hispanoamérica*, ed. Miguel Fernández Félix (Mexico: INAH, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Leonor Cortina, “Gesture and Appearance,” *Artes de México*, no. 25 (1994): 74., Alfonso Alfaro, “Mirrors of Unmoving Shadows,” *Artes de México*, no. 25 (1994): 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

More recently, scholars have rooted portraiture more fully into the social context of eighteenth-century New Spain and its concerns about race. For example, Paula Mues Orts' analysis of corporate portraiture situates the institutional motivations behind the act of commissioning portraits by elites with their intended audience and modes of display.<sup>6</sup> Also, Magali Carrera's notion of socially constituted colonial bodies is another useful approach. According to Carrera, within the colonial society of New Spain, "appearance, character, and circumstances" were the three most important deciders of social position.<sup>7</sup> One's documented racial parentage mattered less than the social performance of and acceptance within a certain socioracial class of society. This system was largely maintained by an observing public receiving this performance through a process that Carrera terms surveillance, after Foucault. In New Spain, racial purity was thus a construct in which all levels of society participated. In the words of Carrera, this performance resulted in "a set of visual practices embedded in, and reflective of, broader regulatory narratives of the late eighteenth century" that created "an illusion of totality in order to obscure the specificity of the lives and lived conditions of eighteenth-century New Spain."<sup>8</sup> In the case of Creoles, who were the main patrons of viceregal portraits, these efforts all went to consolidating what it meant to be Creole by excluding other race and class-based appearances or behaviors other than what was firmly established as a signifier of Creole identity.

In reconstructing a historical Creole identity, their location within the colonial social ecosystem cannot be explained simply by the dialectic of Spanish colonizer and colonized Indigenous. Creoles existed somewhere in between these two poles. By socially situating the

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<sup>6</sup> Paula Mues Orts, "Corporate Portraiture in New Spain: Social Bodies, the Individual, and Their Spaces of Display," in *New England/New Spain: Portraiture in the Colonial Americas, 1492-1850*, ed. Donna Pierce (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2016), 81.

<sup>7</sup> Magali M. Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), xviii.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-21.

Creoles of New Spain, it is possible to expand on Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry. In his 1994 *The Location of Culture*, he defines mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite."<sup>9</sup> While this framework of the "reformed" Other is useful when analyzing the dynamic between the colonizing Spanish and colonized Indigenous, it does not fully capture the nuances of the racial and cultural landscape of New Spain. The population of New Spain consisted of several racial groups with various degrees of intermixing. The most-well known groups were Peninsular (born on the Iberian Peninsula), Creole (Spanish-blooded, but born in the Americas), Indigenous, and Mestizo (mixed blood). Because of the cultural and racial spectrum that that these groups (and the dozen or so additional subgroups) present, any approach to the intermediary groups between Peninsular and Indigenous requires personalized tailoring.<sup>10</sup> As Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn posit, the issue of hybridity in Latin America is never simply explained by the sterile construction of an isolated "Us" and a "Them."<sup>11</sup> Racial and social identity existed on a spectrum, and thinking only in terms of one "colonized" or one "colonizer" erases the complexity of the hybridity inherent in the lived experience of nearly every colonial subject.

Of relevance for New Spain's eighteenth-century Creole population, the period set between the Enlightenment, Bourbon Reforms, and Independence generated distinct social and cultural conditions that left a direct impact on the arts, and especially that of portraiture. A divide began to appear between Novohispanic and Spanish culture and identity. To illustrate this difference, I employ the word Novohispanic to refer to the individuals, objects, and institutions

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<sup>9</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 86.

<sup>10</sup> For further information on racial dynamics and eliteness in New Spain, see Peter Villella, *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 6.

quintessentially of the viceroyalty of New Spain in this thesis. Through visual, cultural, or social means, the items of this list identified themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, with the unique context of New Spain. “Novohispanic” is used in conversation with “Spanish,” which I use to indicate individuals, objects, and institutions more directly linked to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as an indicator of racial whiteness, i.e., “Spanish blood”.

The world of eighteenth century Novohispanic portrait painting is rich grounds for new scholarship on the Creole condition, as it still remains a remarkably understudied field in art history. In spite of its challenges, it presents exciting opportunities for displacing outmoded narratives and complementing newer research with parallel arguments. Studying this body of work is important not only because it contributes to the continued efforts of decolonizing the canon, but because it reveals new and important aspects of race and class dynamics in Novohispanic society. By using portraits as a social document that speak to a patron’s performance of an elite economic position and white Creole status, it is possible to expand from the individual to the larger spaces in which Creoles asserted their identity. From this position, the constructed image of Novohispanic society becomes more complex and reveals the cultural agency of colonial subjects based on their sociocultural networks.

To displace art-historical models based on the European tradition, this project aims to focus on the distinct formal and social contributions of Novohispanic portraiture under criteria that are shaped purposefully by the art itself and its culture of origin. The 1780s and 90s in New Spain saw a period of transition in which lasting Baroque styles and new, Neoclassical artistic discourses coming from Spain coexisted. The reception of Neoclassicism in New Spain was complex and multilayered. Documents written by the top artists of the decade show that, in the early days of the Europeanizing institution of the Royal Academy of San Carlos, founded in 1781,

the separation of Spanish and Novohispanic was not black and white, nor was any stylistic change immediate. Both modes of artmaking were deeply rooted in colonial notions of race, class, and taste. At this time, Spanish artists were sent to teach the new Neoclassical style in the Academy in an imperialist bid to mold viceregal art to a European standard. Artistic discourses surrounding *buen gusto*, or a Neoclassically-based good taste, were present in daily life through intellectual magazines and print culture that circulated amongst the elite.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, as this thesis argues, Creole patrons displayed a desire to hold on to Baroque forms because of their ability to speak uniquely to their own Novohispanic anxieties surrounding documentation, social standing, and racial status.

In late eighteenth-century New Spain, a marked number of artists of renown were working in the traditional Novohispanic Baroque style. However, these artists, such as Francisco Clapera, José de Alcívar, Andrés Lopéz, and Ignacio María Barreda, also worked in a Neoclassical style at key points in their career and thus were granted access to academic spaces while other local artists were excluded, or even persecuted for practicing their craft outside of the Crown's official sanction. Despite their proficiency in Neoclassical painting, their best-known works are those executed in the Baroque style, even though they were often produced during or after their tenure at the Academy.

Two artists, Andrés López and Ignacio María Barreda, particularly stand out in this regard. In this thesis, I look at their works from the 1780s and 90s as case studies to explore this dynamic, one that I describe as stylistic code-switching. By considering the position of these artists in the midst of the aesthetic discourses surrounding style, I argue that Novohispanic artists

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, "A Taste for Art in Late Colonial New Spain," in *Buen Gusto and Classicism in the Visual Cultures of Latin America, 1780-1910*, eds. Paul B. Niell and Stacie G. Widdifield (University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 93.

such as Andrés López and Ignacio María Barreda were able to navigate the nuances between Neoclassical and Baroque styles of portraiture in their work depending on the demands of context, i.e., location of display, patronage, and desired messaging. Because of this adaptability, they were able to move successfully between elite Academic and Creole social spaces. This ability indicates a sense of artistic agency generated by their knowledge of differing cultural expectations across social groups. In addition, their Creole patrons had the economic and cultural independence to display a sense of indifference toward Spanish expectations of good taste in portraiture. Because of the independence of these artists, patrons, and the art market, a wholehearted embrace of classicizing art was not forthcoming in New Spain, and elements of the Baroque survived into the nineteenth century.

## **I: Baroque Portraiture in New Spain**

Any discussion of style in the Novohispanic artistic context necessitates a problematization of terminology. The “Baroque” and “Neoclassical” as terms employed today to categorize art were retroactively applied to cultural phenomena that emerged within specific geographical and historical moments. The movements they name were intellectual and aesthetic programs that were shaped in response to specific historical and cultural conditions on the European continent. These programs were exported to Europe’s colonies where they were applied indiscriminately to art produced in the colonies but were necessarily changed based on the distinct culture they encountered upon arrival. Part of the contemporary challenge in working with colonial images is contending with this art-historical disciplinary inheritance of terminology. Though the terms “Baroque” and “Neoclassical” were not created with the aim of describing Novohispanic art, they are often used when analyzing the painting of the late eighteenth-century viceroyalty. In the case of New Spain, I recontextualize them to be understood within their local function and context.

The social conditions that prevailed at the end of the eighteenth century dictated the form of portraiture. As scholar Richard Brilliant argues, “portraits exist at the interface between art and social life, and the pressure to conform to social norms enters into their composition because both the artist and the subject are enmeshed in the value system of their society.”<sup>13</sup> The Novohispanic artistic context is no exception. The existence of socially conscious style resulted in a need to artistically differentiate between Creole (Novohispanic) and Academic (Spanish)

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 11.

settings. Out of social necessity, portraiture in the 1790s navigated the stylistic divide between the emerging culture of Novohispanic Creoles and the Peninsular Spaniard.

Even the seemingly innocuous word “style” must be carefully analyzed when applied within a colonial context. In order to do so, I build upon the theoretical framework proposed by art historian and ancient American scholar Esther Pasztory.<sup>14</sup> In her book chapter, “Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles,” she interrogates dominant narratives surrounding style in order to challenge Western colonialist assumptions and complicate our understanding of the concept. In art historical scholarship, style is usually constructed as a relatively homogenous body tied to region and time period. Often, it is taken for granted as a neutral, shared mode of representation. Pasztory, however, activates style as an analytical tool representative of identity and social factors, even within a single region. She argues that the emergence of style often stems from the need to create difference; style, then, is necessarily linked to identity. For example, in Mesoamerica, style was an inherent component of cultural identity, serving to distinguish one culture from another. Pasztory highlights this function with a piece now known as the *Bazán Slab* which depicts a diplomatic meeting between a Zapotec and Teotihuacano (from Oaxaca and the Valley of Mexico respectively) at Monte Albán (figure 2). The Zapotec artist who created the piece portrays the Teotihuacano in the traditional geometric style of Teotihuacan, whereas they depict the Zapotec figure in the more naturalistic style of Monte Albán. Style is thus a visual tool to communicate something about the condition and identity of each figure and to differentiate between the two of them, even within a single work.

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<sup>14</sup> Esther Pasztory, “Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles,” in *Thinking with Things* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 157-78.

Using Pasztory's notion that style is a "part of the essential nature and reality of things," I argue that a similar phenomenon occurred in New Spain, where style was used to mark a distinctively New Spanish identity as different than a Spanish one.<sup>15</sup> The use of style as a marker of difference is seen in eighteenth-century portraiture of New Spain. Pasztory's argument bases stylistic divides along ethnic lines during the pre-conquest era. I argue that this approach to style reemerges in the eighteenth century so that the application of visual difference draws an ethnic line between Spanish and New Spanish.

Understanding portraits of elite Creoles outside of the context of organized religion or government necessitates a clear methodological framework. The method I propose to frame these works uses the lens of raced and classed collectivities. Over individual subjectivities, group identities allowed a larger social body to exert cultural and aesthetic power. In the case of New Spain, this would have allowed Creoles to establish a kind of autonomy from their Spanish counterparts. In Creole contexts, portraiture became a highly codified means of expressing this autonomy. Portraits, then, were visible forms of social power located firmly in the hands of the elite. They, in turn, drew their legitimacy from an established relationship between whiteness and upper-class economic success. Portraiture, combined with genealogy, played the specific role of affirming the status of the Creole individual and allowing them access to high levels of collective social power.

Miguel Cabrera's *Portrait of Manuel Ignacio Beye Cisneros y Quijano* (1762) exemplifies eighteenth century Novohispanic Baroque portraiture (figure 3). This portrait of a Creole elite reveals how portraiture was inherently linked to genealogical documents asserting *limpieza de sangre*, or blood purity. The work asserts a socioracial identity for the subject.

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<sup>15</sup> Pasztory, "Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles," 175.

Through formal elements typical of the Baroque portrait genre, such as textual labels and family crests, the performance of a particular kind of racial, economic, and social capital is enacted. The figure of don Manuel is revealed by a red curtain pulled back to the upper lefthand corner of the composition. He is presented in a full-length portrait in three-quarter view and standing next to a table with emblems of his trade. He is posed in a library surrounded by relevant theological and scholarly treatises. These texts, along with his blue and black capes and the hat on his desk with a blue and black tassel, indicate his status as a doctor in both theology and law.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the inclusion of these more discrete indicators of social position, two formal elements stand out over the figure and his setting to proclaim his position and identity even more blatantly. The family crest in the upper lefthand corner and the textual label in the bottom right are two compositional items that seem to float in space in an otherwise naturalistic portrait that observes the laws of perspective, lighting, and corporeal modelling. These two items are staples of colonial portraiture. Marita Martínez del Río de Redo and Néstor Lujan describe the labels as “complete biographies of the person which include dates of birth and marriage, offices held, and titles” that also often left space open to include the eventual death date of a living patron.<sup>17</sup> These labels thus reveal themselves as dynamic and strategic documentary sources that not only describe the biography of who the individual was, but who they were in relation to others. Therefore, they demand a nuanced interpretation and cannot be dismissed as mere “act[s] of vanity.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Mues Orts, “Corporate Portraiture in New Spain,” 90.

<sup>17</sup> Marita Martínez del Río de Redo and Néstor Lujan, “Baroque Magnificence,” *Artes de México*, no. 25 (1994): 80.

<sup>18</sup> Cortina, “Gesture and Appearance,” 74.

The textual label reveals that don Manuel was a member of the College of San Ildefonso, was a lawyer for the royal audience, founder, rector, and educator of *the Ilustre y Real Colegio de Abogados* (Illustrious and Royal College of Lawyers), religious advisor and rector of the University, as well as the patron for the construction of the University library and donor of its original collection. This last accomplishment was attributed to his zeal and love of country and public. The label ends by claiming an active reciprocal role for the painting in displaying the public's gratitude for his actions by preserving his immortal memory.<sup>19</sup> The relationship between the patron and the public then affirmed the dynamic function of colonial portraiture in constituting and being constituted by structures of collective meaning.

Paula Mues Orts' framework of "corporate portraiture," based on the eighteenth-century notion of the social body, helps in situating the audience and display practices of this work.<sup>20</sup> This painting was produced within two years of both don Manuel's founding of the Ilustre y Real Colegio de Abogados and the establishment of the library for the university. This commission must have been timed to these occasions to celebrate his accomplishments—all within larger organizations that secured his role in high societal circles. As such, portraits like this were objects made to be displayed in the semi-public corporate spaces in which elite members of society moved. They served as a visible reminder of Creole success and often functioned as an enlightened model to follow for the subsequent generations of public intellectuals pursuing a similar path.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In the original Spanish, "Acuyo celo, amor de la Patria y del bien público se debe la erección fábrica, y establecimiento de nuestra biblioteca. Acuyo honor y nombre se deberá una inmortal memoria que ejercita esta expresiva imagen de la pública gratitud."

<sup>20</sup> Mues Orts, "Corporate Portraiture in New Spain," 81.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-2.

In his commissioned portrait, don Manuel is portrayed surrounded by books, posed as if caught in the act of perusing something off of the shelves of his library. These formal allusions further cement his elite social role by providing visual evidence for his textual list of accomplishments, which at the time would only have been possible for a noble white man of suitable marriage and/or income to achieve. On the other end of this equation, the beneficiaries of his actions would only extend as far as his upper-class white and male peers, as in the case of a university library.<sup>22</sup> Thus, this portrait draws on established cultural, social, and racial hierarchy to aggrandize the patron and functions as a tool for upward social mobility restricted to certain races and classes.

Compositionally, the label that explains his professional accomplishments is balanced by don Manuel's family crest in the opposite corner, suggesting his elite familial status. In eighteenth-century colonial portraiture, both the family crest and label serve to situate the sitter within larger social contexts spanning the professional and familial, and therefore are linked to race and class status. Their actions, achievements, and institutional affiliations generate meaning and place them within a certain societal position, rather than relying on the individual presence of the figure. The prominence given to the crests commonly found within this type of composition is a highly visible reminder not only of their ties to systems of human relationships larger than themselves, but also of the *calidad* or racial lineage of the figure. The presence of a coat of arms creates a link between the sitter and a noble, markedly white, Spanish parentage. The prominence of its compositional position indicates the importance of confirming his whiteness to establishing his elite social status. In a context of high levels of racial mixing as seen in New Spain, one's racial and social status is impossible to ascertain completely from a

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<sup>22</sup> Carrera, *Imagining Identity*, 118.

portrait alone. Therefore, the crests serve a documentary function as record and proof of high standing.

Portraits like don Manuel's functioned as a kind of constructed genealogical document within Novohispanic elite society. In New Spain, genealogy played an important role in establishing social legitimacy by proving claims to a legacy of "pure" Spanish blood. María Elena Martínez posits that the idea of *limpieza de sangre* "was ubiquitous and consequential, the foundation of a multitude of practices and identities that helped mold historical memory at both the individual and collective levels."<sup>23</sup> On a broad scale, racial lineage upheld racialized workforces and created a sense of communal belonging.<sup>24</sup> Thus, race and class were perceived as inherently linked. At the highest levels of society, that translated into the conflation of blood purity to both an abstract Spanishness or whiteness and ideas of "diligence, work, integrity, education and utility to the public good."<sup>25</sup> However, as Magali Carrera points out, this idea of purity was constantly shifting and relied not on true blood purity, but on the successful performance of a racial elite.<sup>26</sup> Portraiture as a genre in eighteenth-century Novohispanic society was but one means of enacting this performance.

These mutually constituted social groups were sustained by visible actions that spoke not to who the individual was, but rather to the social circle to which they belonged. The act of commissioning a portrait confirmed the wealth of the sitter, as it pointed to them having enough disposable income to commission a painting. It also spoke to their social worth, suggesting that they were noteworthy enough to merit representing. This social worth often was built on white

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<sup>23</sup> María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza De Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 247, 263.

<sup>26</sup> Carrera, *Imagining Identity*, 19-21.

ancestry and contributions to society that benefited the Creole elite. It is on this basis that I utilize a model of collective meaning and identity when looking at eighteenth-century secular portraiture. Collectivity in this sense should not be understood as a single mass encompassing the entirety of Novohispanic society, but rather as speaking to various raced and classed subsets of society. The Creole racial and class-based identity presents a unique case study in this regard.

By commissioning these works and dictating their traditional style, Creoles embraced their hybrid but wholly Novohispanic culture and art. The impulse behind creating genealogical works of portraiture proving one's pure Spanish blood speaks less to the "Spanishness" of the sitter as it actually relates to the Iberian Peninsula. Instead, it is more tied to the culture particular to Creole circles within New Spain and their unique racial and cultural dynamics founded on an emerging notion of the Spanish American. As Kelly Donahue Wallace argues, the style of portraiture in New Spain remained much the same for over two hundred years. If there was a desire among the Creole elites to further mimic a Spanish portrait style, the genre would not have existed as it did for nearly as long as it was able to.<sup>27</sup>

However, as the century wore on, the issue of unchanging style grew more and more contested. New Enlightenment ideas surrounding Neoclassicism and art academies began to circulate and attempted to incite change from the outside. With the foundation of the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid in 1752, classical models became the basis of artistic training.<sup>28</sup> This turn in approach was historically situated within a general European renewed

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<sup>27</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America*, 205.

<sup>28</sup> Paul B. Niell, "Introduction," in *Buen Gusto and Classicism in the Visual Cultures of Latin America, 1780-1910*, eds. Paul B. Niell and Stacie G. Widdifield (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), iii.

interest in Greco-Roman austerity and a desire to turn away from the opulence of the Baroque.<sup>29</sup> This confrontation between the two styles inevitably led to debates about taste. Prominent Enlightenment philosophy from the likes of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Edmond Burke all took on the issue and assisted in the consolidation of the concept of Neoclassical “good taste,” and therefore indirectly, a Baroque “bad taste.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Niell, “Introduction,” xviii.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

## II: The Artistic Landscape of the Late Eighteenth Century

Good taste, or *buen gusto*, as it was known in New Spain, took many forms. One's selections of literature, furniture, art, and more all constituted components of the well-rounded person of taste.<sup>31</sup> In terms of art, it conceptually followed ideals of Enlightenment aesthetics and looked like the classically inspired, austere works of art being produced on the continent. For those outside of the immediate circle of the professors and students of New Spain's Academy, access to aesthetic discourses surrounding *buen gusto* took many forms. European works in the new style would have visually circulated in the form of prints and copies. Contemporary publications such as the *Gazeta de México* provided opportunities to read works in translation by proponents of Neoclassicism such as Johann Joachim Winkelmann or to peruse art and furniture of *buen gusto* in their advertisements. These ideas were also propagated socially through *tertulias* among the elite, as well as in confraternities and the like.<sup>32</sup> Thus, potential arts patrons were being inundated culturally with calls to embrace this new style.

Despite the cultural relevance of Neoclassicism, the foundation of an art academy was necessary to grant institutional credence to the Spanish Enlightenment cause. The first concerted attempts to create an art academy in New Spain occurred in the mid eighteenth century by Novohispanic artists. In 1753, top artists such as Miguel Cabrera and José de Ibarra organized an informal salon-style academy in which artists met twice a week in the instructor's home and discussed art and aesthetics. Petitions for royal acknowledgement of the endeavor, however, went

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<sup>31</sup> Donahue-Wallace, "A Taste for Art in Late Colonial New Spain," 93.

<sup>32</sup> Michael A. Brown, "Portraiture in New Spain, 1600-1800: Painters, Patrons and Politics in Viceregal Mexico" (NYU, PhD diss., 2011), 163.

unanswered, and the group disbanded not long after. In 1778, Spanish engraver Jerónimo Gil was sent to Mexico to establish a school of engraving for the royal mint. In the evenings, he taught drawing classes to interested local artists. His influence was noteworthy enough that in 1781, he petitioned the king to allow for the creation of a fully-fledged academy. Official approval from Charles III came two years later in 1783, though the Academy had already begun its activities in a de facto manner as soon as the petition was sent.<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that between the two efforts, only the one spearheaded by a Spanish artist was heeded.

Another key difference between this successful attempt to establish a formal art academy and the previous unsuccessful one was the mobilization of an economic argument. Artists advocating for the academy cited the manifold benefits for the development of industry and the various trades.<sup>34</sup> As an added bonus, an academy provided opportunity to closely monitor the production of visual culture under the centralized rule of the crown. As a result, Spanish academicians progressively made more concerted efforts to do away with the presence of traditional, Baroque viceregal modes of artmaking to bring New Spain in favor of imperial tastes. Gil himself played a large role in undermining Novohispanic Baroque art, which horrified him.<sup>35</sup> The founding statutes of the Academy state that no government institution may employ an architect or artist not associated with the Academy. The Academy also frequently collaborated

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<sup>33</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America*, 225.

<sup>34</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, "La corte vestida de gala: The Royal Academy of San Carlos and the Spectacle of Colonial Life," in *Festivals & Daily Life in the Arts of Colonial Latin America* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2014), 103-5.

<sup>35</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America*, 228.

with the Municipal Police to persecute local builders or painters whose right to work was not approved by the Academy.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the Europeanizing connotations of the institution, for the first several years after the Academy's foundation, local Novohispanic artists served as the majority of the faculty. These artists continued their artistic practice while teaching and were actively engaged in commission work to support themselves alongside their teaching salary. Though the goal may have been to "improve" the quality of work being produced in New Spain to bring it up to Spanish standards, logistical constraints of a new Academy requiring a considerable amount of faculty rather quickly led to the recruitment of local artists working in such a way as to be acceptable to the Academy's standards. However, this hiring strategy proved to have been intended as a short-term solution, as artists began arriving directly from Spain with the express purpose of serving as professors in the Academy from 1786 onward.<sup>37</sup> This dynamic could only generate tensions and hierarchical struggles to maintain artistic prestige and financial solvency for artists.

It was in this context that twenty of the most prominent artists of the late eighteenth century came together to write a letter dated 1790 and signed by "the professors of the noble arts of painting and sculpture" (Figures 4 and 5).<sup>38</sup> The letter is now located in the Historical Archive of the Academy of San Carlos and, until now, has only received brief mentions in

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<sup>36</sup> Amy C. Hamman and Stacie G. Widdifield, "The Royal Academy of San Carlos, 1781-1800," in *A Companion to Viceregal Mexico City, 1519-1821*, ed. John F. López (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 446.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

<sup>38</sup> "*Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México*," Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, Gaveta 10038, número 8, 12r-16r, 1790. The original Spanish reads, "los profesores de las nobilísimas artes de Pintura y Escultura." All translations by the author. See appendix for the author's transcription of the original letter.

scholarship. The document is addressed to the Viceroy Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco de Padilla y Horcasitas and petitions for greater oversight by the crown of art production and dealers. The artists reference their position of power and proximity to the royal/viceregal court through the Academy, and cite their titles throughout, but mainly write in their capacity as practicing artists. Cleverly, they construct their argument as one purely in line with the mission of the Academy—i.e., rooting out poor taste and uneducated artists—in order to eliminate competition.

The professors cite a profusion of untrained artists “who, in the arts, do not know even how to paint an eye, form a finger, etc.”<sup>39</sup> According to the professors, these unskilled artists threaten the stability of the very infrastructure of the artmaking world. They complain that these artists command entire workshops and have the nerve to hire assistants who are early on in their studies at the Academy. In doing so, they lead well-formed pupils astray from their good foundations and bring them down the wrong artistic path, never to perfect their art. Moreover, by coopting apprentice students from the Academy’s studios, these unofficial artists threaten the Academy’s enrollment and the power of the Academy to shape the next generation of artists and the form of their output. The letter writers isolate the greatest problem as the works one encounters for sale on the streets of Mexico City.<sup>40</sup> Such objects may have been considered especially threatening because they are physically located outside of the context of the Academy and are thus out of their direct control. Ultimately, the professors desired to exert control over artistic production in the capital.

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<sup>39</sup> The original Spanish reads, “en el arte no saben aun pintar un ojo, formar un dedo, etc.”

<sup>40</sup> “*Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México*,” 1790.

The signatories claim that only they know how to truly recognize this issue and that it affects them the most. This assertion indicates that the lesser artists were successful enough in imitating the institutionally recognized artists to fool most eyes. By appropriating this language of the artistic elite, the professors argue that these lesser artists are attempting to pass themselves off to an unknowing public as of a level with the professors of the Academy. In turn, these lesser artists take commission opportunities from professors and threaten both their income and ability to support their families. They frame the situation as quite dire for themselves, and in doing so, stress the strain this puts on the faculty of the Academy. If the Academy's professors are no longer able to sustain their artistic practices, then the quality of the education one would receive at the Academy would also suffer.

The professors' proposed solution to this problem was the creation and enforcement of an artistic review bureau. In short, they sought governmental support, specifically the bureaucratic support of the viceroy, to create a formal, politicized infrastructure that would govern production of art objects. This system would presumably approve artists aligned with the Academy's goals, allowing only those artists to produce art.

The professors concluded their letter with two final appeals to power. First, they emphasize the outrage these works present within a sacred context. They argue that lesser artists were committing active sacrilege by depicting the sacred as anything less than perfect. Second, they appealed to even higher powers than the current viceroy by stressing the disappointment of King Charles III and his hopes for the Academy, as well as the former viceroy, Mathias de Gálvez, who heeded the artists' warning and followed their suggestions when this situation arose previously.

This letter speaks to a consciousness among artists of the importance of distinguishing hierarchies of taste. The letter suggests an awareness that the stakes of this distinction rode not merely on intellectual, aesthetic “correctness,” but more so that they impact their very livelihoods and families. Therefore, they relied on the central authority of the viceroy and the Academy as an institution to not only produce the next generation of successful artists, but also to police artistic production in the current moment. Of course, such policing would favor those who maintained a proximity to the Academy, both in institutional affiliation and ideology. Though the artists affiliated with the Academy clearly distinguished themselves from non-Academic local artists, their letter suggests that the art buying public was unable to tell the difference. While their letter insinuates that the elite have poor taste stemming from a lack of a discerning eye, they indirectly imply that their work may be more similar than they protest. Thus, the letter provides an indirect commentary on the art market, suggesting that the art buying public had poor taste and lacked good connoisseurial sense when buying art.

Paradoxically to the contents of the letter, the majority of the signatories were artists who worked in the traditional Novohispanic style, which is quite distinct from the more austere style imposed by the Academy. Among those who signed the letter figure viceregal artists of some fame such as Francisco Clapera, José de Alcívar, Andrés López, and Ignacio María Barreda. These artists all displayed an ability to work in a Neoclassical style at key points in their career, and thus were granted proximity to academic social prestige through their teaching positions at the Academy. However, their most iconic works are those executed in the Baroque style and often produced around the time of their connection to the Academy. This dynamic is best seen when examining works by Andrés López and Ignacio María Barreda.

### III: Style in Action

Andrés López was active in Mexico City from 1763 to 1812. He was the son of the painter Carlos Clemente López and worked alongside his brother Cristóbal López, primarily in religious and portrait genres. He was associated with the Academy of San Carlos for several years.<sup>41</sup> Manuel Toussaint has perhaps the most developed biography of the artist, but he relies primarily on his surviving works to extract his information. From this little information, it is clear that he belonged to a family that was thoroughly entrenched in the arts of New Spain for at least two generations. Therefore, based on the art spaces in which he moved, he would have been trained in the more popular Novohispanic Baroque through his family and family connections, yet he must have been conversant in Neoclassical forms and concepts to gain and maintain a professional relationship with the Academy.

Andrés López presents perhaps one of the best examples of a colonial artist navigating the cultural implications of style in a distinctly Novohispanic manner. In 1783, he produced his first portrait of the then viceroy of New Spain, Mathias de Gálvez (figure 6). López was aware that this work was to be displayed in a palatial hall where portraits of previous viceroys were also hung. This politicized location would have dictated that he follow the Baroque stylistic conventions of the previous centuries' viceregal portraits. Because this work would have been placed in dialogue with works going back to the Mendoza portrait, it needed to be visually and ideologically compatible with its predecessors and any future additions (see figure 7).

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<sup>41</sup> Manuel Toussaint, *Pintura Colonial en México* (Mexico: UNAM, IIE, 1965), 176.

This work builds upon the foundation that was developed throughout the viceregal portrait series by several artists. From the more reserved portrait of Mendoza, this work maintains the staple elements of the coat of arms and biographical textual label. Its more elaborate elements have their origins in predecessors such as the 1779 portrait of the Viceroy Martín de Mayorga which sets the figure into a more tangible and ornate setting with curtains and furniture (figure 8). As is tradition for the series of official viceregal portraits, Gálvez's portrait is half-length and three-quarter view. His strong features are illuminated by his bright eyes, making direct eye contact with the viewer. He wears the gold embroidered red and blue suit of the viceroy. He stands in front of a desk covered in writing implements and an envelope addressed to him. The textual label at the bottom identifies the sitter and his standing as the viceroy of New Spain along with the date he was sworn in, April 29, 1783. His family crest hovers above his shoulder as a very conspicuous reminder of his noble lineage and racial purity. As in the case of Cabrera's portrait of don Manuel, the formal inclusion of a textual label and crest reveals an anxiety to provide documentary evidence of race and class to immediately and convincingly associate the sitter within an elite Novohispanic milieu.

Not long after he completed this portrait, López produced a radically different portrait of the same viceroy circa 1791 (figure 9). This time, however, the commission was destined for an Academic context, as it was intended to be displayed at San Carlos to honor the first viceregal benefactor of the Academy.<sup>42</sup> I believe the intended social and ideological atmosphere of the location of display inspired López to change his approach to the formal attributes of his work.

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<sup>42</sup> Jaime Cuadriello, "Object 53, *Portrait of Viceroy Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo*," *Painted in Mexico, 1700-1790: Pinxit Mexici* (Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2017), 272.

López no longer conveys racial, political, and social status through text or crests, but rather through allegory and symbol.

Gálvez still stands at three-quarter view and dons his viceregal uniform, but he is now shown full length. He once again stands against a table with writing implements and a curtain, but instead of concealing an undefined grey background, the now tastefully blue curtain pulls back to reveal the halls of the Academy of San Carlos. He extends his hand in a gesture of protection over two groups of students. The group closest to him are two poor, presumably Indigenous, students dressed in torn rags and deep in discussion, perhaps on the work they carry under their arms. A set of two male students further in the background shows the next stage of progression through the institution of enlightenment. They are older and well dressed. Sitting upon stools, the two young men study a plaster cast of classical Greek statuary illuminated by a conspicuous chandelier and copy it onto paper. Gálvez's paternalistic gesture changes this portrait. The politician from the earlier work is now transformed into an enlightened humanitarian and patron of the arts. Here, his main concerns are knowledge and classical aesthetics. His condition as a viceroy is communicated only through his dress. His elite racial status is communicated through context and visual contrast. His whiteness is underscored by the brown skin of the poor indigenous students. His highlighted qualities and achievements are not spelled out textually in a label or crest, but rather alluded to visually.

The intended destination of display in the halls of the Academy necessitated a change in strategy. Both visually and conceptually, this portrait is made for the Academy. The juxtaposition of these two portraits points to an artist who is sensitive to the needs of his patron based on the context of the object's display and who is accordingly able to adapt stylistically.

## *Ignacio María Barreda*

Before shifting to analyze the work of the artist Ignacio María Barreda, it is a must to examine his biography due to the baggage his social background he brings to his work.

According to Mexico City baptismal records, Felipe Ignacio María Barreda y Ordoñez was born on February 4, 1754, and christened eight days later in the Sagrario Metropolitano, Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City. His parents were don Miguel Francisco de Barreda and doña María Josepha Zapata. His godfather was don Joseph de Soria. All three relatives are recorded as residents of the capital city.<sup>43</sup> According to his signature from his 1777 *Casta* painting (commissioned by Teniente Coronel de Exército, don Antonio Rafael de Aguilera y Orense), he received a Bachelor's in philosophy.

Barreda married first in 1778 to doña María Guadalupe Revilla, a Spanish-blooded Creole and natural of Mexico City, who is noted to have been the widow of don Bernabe Duran. The couple first announced their marriage on September 21 and were married October 2, 1778, in Santa Catarina Virgen y Mártir, Cuauhtémoc, the parish to which they both belonged. In the marriage record, Barreda is recorded as being an "español natural."<sup>44</sup> The next mention of the artist in the Mexico City vital records is on May 23, 1798, with his second marriage to doña Francisca Esheverria (widow of don Vicente Vallego). They were married in the same parish as

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<sup>43</sup> "México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514-1970," FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939Z-RLSW-BY?cc=1615259&wc=3PXQ-3TL%3A122580201%2C127945601>), Asunción Sagrario Metropolitano (Centro) > Bautismos de españoles 1751-1755 > image 664 of 1221; parroquias católicas, Distrito Federal.

<sup>44</sup> "México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514-1970," FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939D-859H-LQ?cc=1615259&wc=3P8M-W3D%3A122585001%2C122846301>), Santa Catarina Virgen y Mártir (Centro) > Amonestaciones matrimoniales 1778-1829 > image 48 of 1340; parroquias católicas, Distrito Federal.

his first marriage, located in the Casa del Escudo on Calle de la Amargura. Their witnesses were Br. don Mariano Arroyo Presbitero and don Pedro Chacon.<sup>45</sup> He died on January 18, 1799, and was buried in the Iglesia del Convento de Santo Domingo. His second wife was recorded as his widow, and his residence was noted as having been on the Calle de la Amargura.<sup>46</sup>

The biography presented above presents a correction to the scholarly record, which previously referred to his birth and death dates as 1750-1800. Increased attention to biography is important in this context because of its ability to highlight the positionality of the artist in concert with their patrons'. The effort to reconstruct this biographical archival information reveals the artist was born, educated in both the liberal and fine arts, and was active artistically all within Mexico City. His parents and relatives were all residents of Mexico City, and he was born with such a degree of limpieza de sangre that he was racially Spanish and culturally Creole. He was married twice to women that each shared his social and racial status and ensured his location within an elite racial class of society.

As to his artistic practice, secondary literature reveals that he worked for the Inquisition around 1791, when he painted a series of four religious scenes relating to the Passion on the cells of the Inquisition grounds.<sup>47</sup> Manuel Toussaint speculated that, based on his extensive body of portraits of ecclesiastical figures from the seminary of San Camilo, he was perhaps the official

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<sup>45</sup> "México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514-1970," FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939D-8P9Q-84?cc=1615259&wc=3PZ1-829%3A122585001%2C132450101>), Santa Catarina Virgen y Mártir (Centro) > Matrimonios 1784-1801 > image 319 of 789; parroquias católicas, Distrito Federal.

<sup>46</sup> "México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514-1970," FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939D-8P93-3C?cc=1615259&wc=3PZ1-HZ3%3A122585001%2C129154901>), Santa Catarina Virgen y Mártir (Centro) > Entierros 1794-1807 > image 275 of 1065; parroquias católicas, Distrito Federal.

<sup>47</sup> Raquel Pineda Mendoza, "Pintores novohispanos en el Tribunal de la Inquisición. Noticias documentales," *Imágenes. Revista Electrónica del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*.

portraitist of the institution.<sup>48</sup> From the archives of the Academy, his name appears in two documents. The first document is the above analyzed 1790 letter to the viceroy, written by the professors of the Academy. Barreda's inclusion as one of twenty signatories reveals that he was a professor there in the early days of the institution.<sup>49</sup> The second document bearing Barreda's name in the Archive of San Carlos a straightforward directory of the painters and workshops active in Mexico City as of June 23, 1791. Ignacio María Barreda is listed eighteenth of twenty-five. He is acknowledged as commanding the full rank of master painter with a workshop located on Calle de la Amargura. He is recorded as not having attended, nor having been attending the Academy at the time. Following the list of master painters, a list of *oficiales de pintura* (an intermediary tier between master painter and apprentice) is given, though bare of the detail that the rank of painters received. Assistants are remarked as being too great in number to elaborate and are only mentioned in the abstract on the directory of painters, in the context of whether or not a workshop employs any.<sup>50</sup>

From the directory, we can locate the artist's studio, ascertain that he was recognized as a full painter by the Academy, and in command of his own workshop. The letter reveals several more nuanced points. As a signatory, we know that he was serving as a professor in the early years of San Carlos and was not only recognized as a valid working artist by the Academy, but also one of sound artistic education and good taste. Though staffing and salary records from the Academy do not appear to mention his name directly, lower-level professors were not always referred to by name in financial records and documentation on them is generally sparse.

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<sup>48</sup> Toussaint, *Pintura colonial en México*, 172.

<sup>49</sup> "Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México," 1790.

<sup>50</sup> "Nómina de los pintores y obradores de pintura que hay en México." Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, Gaveta 5, numero 630, 1791.

Expanding upon the modest scholarship on Barreda with a better understanding of his life based on archival records situates his broader body of portraits of elite individuals in the social, racial, and cultural moment which shaped the artist and, therefore, the works he produced. Though the individuality and biographies of artists were not stressed in New Spain as they were for European artists, this biographical information certainly sheds light on what it meant to be an artist in Mexico City in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Barreda's whiteness would have granted him social currency that in turn gave him greater access to elite social spaces and patrons. He also benefitted from a relationship with the Academy during its early years, which would have put him in close proximity with contemporary European artists and artistic philosophy.

Despite this relationship with the Academy, Barreda maintained a strong clientele among the larger population of elite Creoles, as is evidenced by his large surviving body of portraits of wealthy women and high-ranking ecclesiastical figures. He displayed an ability to work in a more austere, classicizing style with at least one portrait of a member of the Academy, but Barreda's body of predominantly Baroque portrait work in the 1790s reflects his social upbringing in a Creole context, and therefore his sensitivities to Creole taste, regardless of Spanish artistic preferences.

His most iconic work, Barreda's painting of doña Juana María Romero illustrates this point (figure 10). It was produced four years after he signed the letter and three years after Andrés López's Neoclassical Gálvez portrait. Despite his proximity to Neoclassical artistic models while at the Academy, the work is decidedly Baroque in style. The patron was a wealthy

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<sup>51</sup> Barbara E. Mundy and Aaron M. Hyman, "Out of the Shadow of Vasari: Towards A New Model of the 'Artist' in Colonial Latin America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 24, no. 3 (2015): 296.

woman who was thirty-four years old at the time of commission. She was not born into wealth, but upon her marriage, she received a gift of several precious jewels and gold from her guardian within the church, the priest Gabriel Pérez Romo. Upon the priest's death, the couple inherited the lion's share of his fortune. With the funds from both gifts, the couple steadily grew their wealth and settled into a luxuriant life as successful landowners and businesspeople.<sup>52</sup>

In the portrait, the subject is portrayed full length at three-quarter view. Her monumental figure is wrapped in luxury. She wears a fashionable dress made voluminous in the skirt through several yards of fine silk. The hem is decadently embroidered with blue and white nature motifs. Her waist is cinched into the classic conical silhouette of the eighteenth century. It is further adorned with decorative trim and two watches to allude to her wealth and ability to own in excess. They are set to two different times to generate a sense of frivolity; the actual time has no bearing on her, there are others to take care of such matters.<sup>53</sup> Her cuffs are embroidered and edged with lace to match the rest of the ensemble. She wears a fine lace fichu that is decorated with flowers that match those pinned into her powdered wig alongside piles of decoration in the forms of pintucked and scalloped white silk chiffon, ribbons, and an ostrich feather. At her temple, she sports a large *chiqueador*, which draws attention to her strong facial features, set in a confident smirk. Her ears, neck, and wrists are dripping in strings of pearls of various sizes. The overall figure style exudes a Baroque sensitivity. She is not shown in a highly illusionistic manner as would be expected for a Neoclassical work. Her overall proportions and passages such as her feet contribute to a certain stiffness that is characteristic of Baroque Novohispanic portraiture.

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<sup>52</sup> Verónica Martínez, "Mujeres e indios, creencias e iglesia en los testamentos a finales de la época colonial en Querétaro" (Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, MA Thesis, 2011), 213.

<sup>53</sup> Jaime Cuadriello, "Object 80, *Portrait of Doña Juana María Romero*," *Painted in Mexico, 1700-1790: Pinxit Mexici*, 352.

Though her intention was clearly to display her elite status through the utmost of fashionable dress, this ensemble slightly misses the mark for the continental fashions of the mid-1790s. By the year of this portrait, 1794, French and British fashion plates were dominated by the classically inspired, empire waisted white cotton gowns—and the Spanish court was not far behind (see figure 11). Nonetheless, this manner of dress speaks to an established idea of wealth and elegance that is tied to the middle decades of the eighteenth century. She was not looking to be on the cutting edge of the most elite fashions, but rather to first have access to a well-established idea of eliteness specifically within the realm of New Spain. As a member of the *nouveau riche*, her concern was not with Spanish trends, but rather fitting in within a Creole context.

The figure of Juana María Romero is set into a nondescript room. She stands next to a vanity that holds a jewelry box. Though the box is closed, its contents are alluded to by the ring and the string of pearls sitting in front of it. The scissors just behind them generate a narrative in conjunction with the broken string of pearls slipping off the table. This vignette serves as another reference to excess and frivolity, as she presents herself as wealthy enough to not care as to the fate of a few precious gems, no matter how precarious.

Her figure is framed with draping damask and velvet curtains. A coat of arms hovers over the cloth. Alongside the implicit modes of communication carried across in her clothing and physical surrounds, the coat of arms and textual label that runs along the bottom of the canvas communicate overtly what the sitter wishes for the viewer to surmise about her from this painting. Though it was common practice to include a family crest, this particular crest is unusual. It bears the symbols of Castile (castle), Leon (lion), Aragon/Navarre (black eagle), and Madrid (tree). Thus, instead of a plausible individual family, she attaches herself to Spain generically.

Here, it is evident that by the late eighteenth century, the presence of the coat of arms had become so entrenched within portraiture as to become a formal necessity onto its own. It was essential to communicate power and Creole importance, regardless of whether the sitter actually had claims to a noble lineage or not. With the crest, she is also projecting a pure Spanish racial identity. Though her own birth records are seemingly absent from the Mexican baptismal records, those of her children appear in the records of Querétaro.<sup>54</sup> A birth record for one of her daughters, born in the same year as this portrait was created, list both of the parents as “españoles naturales.” Though, as discussed above, appearance played a large role in the attribution of racial identity. Thus, without further documentation, it is impossible to say whether this racial status is something she achieved through her wealth and documentary gestures such as commissioning portraits that are coded with Creole identity or something she was born with.

The textual label that runs along the bottom of the canvas is also an important producer of meaning in this work. In other portraits, the biographical label typically serves to announce the important contributions to society of men, or the noble parents of a young woman. However, Romero did not have the benefit of either. Hers reads,

Madam Juana María Romero was born on June 23 in the year 1760. She was married to Mr. José Manuel García Auriolés de León on October 28, 1776. Her portrait was painted the first of November of 1794, having gone through nine births and three stillbirths. The most recent was in Mexico City in 1793, during which, her life was in great peril. Ignacio María Barreda painted this.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "México, Querétaro, registros parroquiales, 1590-1970", database with images, *FamilySearch* (ark:/61903/1:1:6C16-46NQ), Entry for don José Manuel Garcia Auriolés de Leon and Maria Guadalupe Garcia Romero, 1 Jul 1794.

<sup>55</sup> The original Spanish reads, “La Señora doña Juana María Romero nació el día 23 de junio del año de 1760, se desposó con el Señor don José Manuel García Auriolés de León el día 28 de octubre de 1776, se retrató en México a primero de noviembre de 1794, habiendo tenido 9 partos y 3 malos partos, siendo el último en México el año de 93 del que se vio muy arriesgada. Ignacio María Barreda lo pintó.”

She spotlights her own birth, her marriage, but above all else, her feminine contribution to the society of New Spain: her fertility. Interestingly, the text is not framed with the number of children she had, but rather the number of births she had endured. This phrasing creates a sense of the individual which was perhaps intended to put a spotlight on her selfless motherly virtue, but ultimately primarily serves to increase the sense of awe and admiration of the figure in its reception. This portrait loudly broadcasts her importance in a Baroque manner from form to dress. She is therefore, whether intentionally or unintentionally, communicating a desire to be part of the Creole elite, rather than carrying pretensions to fit among the continental and recently arrived Spanish elite.

Barreda clearly understood his client's desires and allowed these to supersede the austere and illusionistic style demanded of the Academy. In the case of this portrait, the presence of the label and the coat of arms speak to social pretensions of upward mobility that would have been immediately understood in Creole contexts. A work such as this would not have been intended for corporate display, as was the case in the prior portraits of prominent men. Instead, a portrait of a woman who has already been long married would seem to be intended to aggrandize the reputation of the woman among the social circles that would have viewed it within her own home. Barreda recognized her needs and the potential of the Baroque style to confirm her as part of the Creole elite. In this case, he capitalized upon the benefits both social (for the sitter) and financial (for himself) of an "outdated" style while still maintaining his professional connections to the Academy.

The Juana Romero portrait fits into a larger body of work he produced throughout the 1790s of ecclesiastical figures and women sitters especially. His paintings of ecclesiastical figures follow the Baroque conventions of pose, backdrop, textual label, and family crest (figure

12). Additionally, women sitters are a large portion of his surviving works (figure 13). Marriage portraits or portraits of wealthy women such as Juana María Romero did not serve a professional function and thus enjoyed different spaces of display and desired social purpose, being domestic rather than corporate and family oriented rather than career oriented. While the form of these portraits was largely developed during the middle to late eighteenth century, they depended on the visual rhetorical strategies of earlier systems of Baroque portraiture.

However, at least one of his surviving works diverges from these Baroque tendencies. Barreda's 1792 *Portrait of Don Ignacio Obregón* (figure 14) provides evidence for the same ability to stylistically code switch displayed within Andrés López's work. The austere two-tone background underscores the sitter. The shadowed upper half and bright lower half suggest that he stands in a ray of light coming in from a window or door. He is illuminated by this beam and presented literally as an Enlightened man. He is well dressed and posed unconventionally with an apple in hand. In contrast with Juana María Romero, his appearance is at first glance quite modest. Gone are the sumptuous silks and embroidery, which were equally present in men's fashion in the mid eighteenth century. Obregón instead presents his elite status more quietly through his means of dress. A European men's fashion plate from the same year displays a male figure dressed in nearly the same exact ensemble (figure 15). He is up to the minute on European men's fashion trends for the mid 1790s and dressed immaculately to communicate that. Obregón communicates with this portrait that he has nothing to prove; he is comfortably situated in his elitiness.

The bottom of the composition still includes a biographical label, but a coat of arms is conspicuously missing, as are the traditional curtain and table. The label itself reads "don Ignacio Obregón, deputy of the Royal Body of Mining and councilor of the Royal Academy of the Three

Noble Arts of San Carlos of New Spain. Ignacio María Barreda painted this in Mexico, in the year 1792.”<sup>56</sup> Notably, there is no mention of elite lineage or excess wealth, but rather his more abstract contributions to industry within an economy based largely on silver mining. His prominent role in the arts is also centered through his involvement in the board of the Academy. Both of the noted affiliations speak to the core of the Bourbon Reforms, with its focus on economic stability, and its man of buen gusto. So, while this portrait maintains some lingering remnants of Baroque style, Barreda makes it clear he is purposefully shifting stylistically to speak in the Neoclassical visual language for this patron. Though, as in the case of the portrait of Juana María Romero he produced two years later, he would switch back to fully-fledged Baroque work once again.

I situate this difference in representation between figures such as Juana María Romero and Ignacio Obregón in the social connotations of their locations of display and desired reception. Romero’s portrait quotes from the longstanding tradition of Baroque portraiture in a bid to place herself among the historically established elite. In contrast, the Neoclassicizing portrait aligns Ignacio Obregón with a distinct intellectual and artistic milieu that further advances his social standing as well as his career interests in silver as a businessman. The coexistence of artists and styles within mainstream elite society and the Academy indicates that both artists and sitters expressed greater agency within representation than they are often credited. This ability is akin to a visual language bilingualism where artists such as Barreda display proficiency in reading factors such as display and audience and then code switch accordingly. Looking at style through

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<sup>56</sup> The original Spanish reads, “El Señor don Ignacio Obregón, Diputado del Real Cuerpo de Minería y consiliario de la Real Academia de las Tres Nobles Artes de San Carlos de Nueva España. Ignacio María Barreda lo pintó en México, año de 1792.”

this lens nuances the narrative of artistic discourse at the end of the eighteenth century and activates style as a charged artistic tool in the hands of the individual artist.

## Conclusion

In the midst of these artistic negotiations between Baroque and Neoclassical that local viceregal artists such as Barreda and López were carrying out, the Crown began sending more and more Spanish artists working in the Neoclassical style to serve as professors in the Academy. Artists who became synonymous with the Mexican Academy such as Rafael Ximeno y Planes and Manuel Tolsá arrived in 1794 and 1790 respectively. The posts that they took up progressively removed Novohispanic artists over the course of the 1790s. They shaped what the lasting image of the Academy of San Carlos would be in dominant narratives of Mexican art history as well as popular memory. Their reputations loom large through their well-known works produced around the eve of Independence such as Tolsá's *Caballito* or Ximeno y Planes' portrait series of academicians (figure 16). However, while the *Caballito* was created at a monumental scale and intended for public display, oftentimes works with overt Neoclassical messaging remained within artistically elite spaces. Ximeno y Planes may have generated the beginnings of an institutional portrait hall to display the likenesses of key artists and patrons of the Academy, but he failed in creating an aesthetic program that lasted or had the same impact as its Baroque predecessor outside of the walls of San Carlos.

Despite the best efforts of the Academy and its intellectual proponents, the presence of the Baroque persisted at all levels of artistic production into the nineteenth century. Even within the halls of the Academy, Spanish Baroque painters served as models from which students

copied.<sup>57</sup> However, the formal traces of the Baroque are perhaps most evidently seen in the portraiture of early independent Mexico. The blend of Neoclassical influence and the stubborn remains of Baroque visual language led to the creation of hybrid images such as the 1825 anonymous portrait of Guadalupe Victoria (figure 17). This portrait borrows from the Baroque for its pose and textual label. The Neoclassical is simultaneously represented through its updated men's fashion and comparative austerity stemming from a lack of family crest and drapery, which was then especially fitting for Mexico's recent break from the Spanish monarchy.

In sum, style in New Spain always held cultural significance. In the late eighteenth century, the intersection of Baroque and Neoclassical portraiture intensified the association between art, identity, and one's place within a race and class-based hierarchy. Thus, portraiture's ability to create difference was wielded intentionally by both artist and patron. In times of cultural confrontation between Spanish and Novohispanic, the decision of a patron to commission a work in a given style resulted in an overt performance of a desired identity to the exclusion of another. The artist in accepting that commission supported the cultural significance of a particular style. Though Novohispanic artists displayed an ability to paint in the Neoclassical style when necessary, the Baroque continued to speak most effectively to the needs of the Novohispanic elite. The survival of the Baroque in these circumstances, despite the Crown's and the Academy's concerted efforts to do away with it, is proof that portraiture granted both artists and patrons new access to their own agency to assert their own cultural identity and style elitence in their own image.

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<sup>57</sup> Elisa García Barragán Martínez, "Modelos artísticos en la Academia de San Carlos. La pervivencia del barroco," in *Caminos del barroco: Entre Andalucía y Nueva España* (Mexico: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2011), 96-107.

## APPENDIX

Rl. Academia 1790

Instancia de los profesores de Pintura y Escultura sobre los perjuicios que ocasionan los Tratantes en las obras de estas artes.

12r

Eximo. Sr.

Los profesores de las nobilísimas artes de Pintura y Escultura, residentes en estas artes, ante la superioridad de U. Exc. como mejor de año proceda, y con las protestas oportunas--Decimos: que su recta justificación se ha de servir mandar, se den las más serias providencias, a fin de que se extingan los tratantes de las obras de Pintura y Escultura: mandado en su consecuencia, el que solo ejerzan dichas nobilísimas artes los Profesores que a juicio de esta Real Academia, estén aptos, e idóneos: permitiéndose solo a estos tener obradores públicos; por ser así conforme a las piadosas intenciones de nuestro soberano, y convenir al año que nos asiste.

Es constante la relación que se nos sigue de la

12v

negociación de los tratantes. Estos no son otra cosa que unos menos regatones, que compran a menos precios unas pinturas, o imágenes, indignas de tal nombre, por su total imperfección: fabricadas por algunos aprendices, o Pintores incognitos: en laminas fingidas de ola de lata, con que prácticamente engañan al público, el que llevado del bajísimo precio, en que por lo regular venden semejantes obras (salvo a algunos incautos, a quienes aun en el precio enlazan: exigiéndoselos con mucho exceso al valor de la obra) se aplica a comprar estas olvidándose de las que con perfección forman los profesores. De que sigue, el que apenas se encuentran personas, que ocurran a menos obradores, a que se haga alguna obra, y por consiguiente el vernos estrechados a una escasa manutención de nuestras personas, y familias, sin poder llevar la correspondiente decencia: incurriendo tal vez por esta causa, en la nota de viciosos. Todas estas tan fatales consecuencias, y otras muchas, que por amor a la brevedad omitimos, se nos siguen, y estamos experimentando con el tráfico, o comercio de los tales tratantes.

Estos mismos daños experimentamos, y quizá como de causa principal, por el ejercicio de muchos Pintores, y Escultores, (los que a su tiempo asignaremos,)

13r

Que solo lo son en nombre; más en el arte no saben aun pintar un ojo, formar, un dedo, etc. Estos como que por su impericia no son acreedores a que los soliciten, para las obras de consideración,

se andan entrometiendo, u ofreciéndose a hacer cualquiera obra, por un bajísimo precio: perjudicando notablemente con sus introducciones a los legítimos Profesores. Pero no queda en solo esto; sino que se atreven a tener obradores públicos: procurando con este medio confundirse con los más peritos en el arte: llegando a tanto su atrevimiento, que procuran atraerse a los incautos jóvenes, que solo se hallan con unos cortos principios, adquiridos en la Real Academia: apartándolos de la línea por medio de un vil estipendio que le ofrecen. Estos, como por lo regular son pobres, se hallan muy contentos con el escaso interés, de que ya gozan: olvidándose de perfeccionarse en su arte; y solo aspirando, o anhelando a alquilarse donde hay obras de coches, y retablos, para mantenerse con toda independencia, sin embargo de la inopia que experimentan.

De todo le dicho se sigue por consecuencia necesaria, el jamás llegaran a su perfección estas dos nobilísimas artes; pues si atendemos a los principiantes o aprendices como que estos luego que se hallan con unas

13v

cortas luces, se destinan a las obras, (como llevamos insinuando,) nunca piensan en perfeccionarse. Los Pintores, y Escultores, que prometimos asignan, como bien hallados con su impericia, y socorridos con la pronta salida, que tienen con los tratantes, no solo no aspiran a perfeccionarse; mas de día en día se van entorpeciendo, y habituándose a hacer muchas obras, sin reparar en su imperfección; y si en el lucro, que les queda. Y como quiera que este sea corto de cada imagen, procuran hacer muchas en poco tiempo para que la multitud de estas sufrague lo escaso del precio.

Buena prueba de esto son las imágenes que diariamente se ven por las calles y principalmente en al baratillo, en las que apenas encontrará una bien formada; pero si todas muy baratas. Y no solo en las calles, en los mismos templos de Jesús Cristo, y aun en las obras modernas, se encuentran muchísimas imágenes, así de Pintura; como de Escultura, que no habrá quien diga, sean fabricadas por algún Profesor, impuesto en su obligación; y todos dirán ser de los aprendices, oficiales incognitos,

14r

O de los mismos Carpinteros, que no contentos en los límites de su oficio, se atreven a usar del nuestro.

En ningún oficio, ni arte se experimenta lo que en las nobilísimas nuestras. En las otras, no solo los justicias; mas los mismos individuos celan con la mayor actividad, de que ninguno, que no esté examinado, y aprobado ejerza su oficio, y tenga obrador público excitándolos el amor del bien común, y [si] propia utilidad; pues ciertamente el digno de que unos hombres, que invirtieron sus primeros años en invertirse: los de su juventud en perfeccionarse; y los de su edad madura en develarse a fin de que sus obras salgan con la mayor perfección, tengan el distintivo de Maestros de su oficio, con obradores públicos. Así se rectifica puntualmente en todas las artes.

Solo la nobilísimas de Pintura, y Escultura lloran en esta desgracia, que la piedad de U. Exc. De digne expedir, para su remedio.

No se extrañará esta nuestra solicitud, para impedir la imperfección de las obras de Pintura, y Escultura, y espe-

14v

cialmente las sagradas imágenes, que en lo que con más frecuencia nos ejercitamos; pues para impedir la imperfección de estas puso todos sus esfuerzos un tribunal tan serio, y recto, como lo es el del santo oficio de la Inquisición prohibiendo con gravísimas penas las que no tuvieran la perfección debida. Esta providencia, con el transcurso del tiempo, se ha echado en olvido. De modo que apenas hay quien se acuerde de ella y mucho menos quien la observe. Así mismo tenemos presente otra providencia, tomada por este superior Gobierno: prohibiendo semejantes imágenes, la que solo tuvo efecto en las que se vendían en el baratillo, que llaman de tablas: quedando las de más en la antigua corruptela de darles destino.

A pesar de tan maduros preceptos, se han seguido expendiendo las pinturas más imperfectas, e impidiendo, con esto, la perfección de las dos nobilísimas artes; pero lo más lamentable, y dig-

15r

no del mayor dolor, es: ver frustradas la piadosísimas intenciones de nuestro Católico Monarca, el Sor D. Carlos tercero (que de Santa Gloria haya) bastante significadas en las constituciones, o estatutos, que expidió para el Gobierno de esta Real Academia: titulándola con el glorioso renombre de San Carlos de Nueva España: poniéndola bajo de su inmediata Real protección: constituyéndose su Majestad, por su único protector: delegando sus veces en la persona de más alta dignidad, que conocemos en este Reino, como lo es el Exmo. Sor. Virrey: dándole el título de Vice protector: encargando con la más viva expresiones el aprovechamiento, y aumento de la Real Academia: dotándola con crecidas rentas; y honrando a sus individuos con los mayores privilegios de hidalguía, y exenciones de cargar concejiles, y de toda contribución. ¿Y todo a que fin? No a otro, que al de perfeccionar las nobilísimas artes de Pintura, Escultura, y Arquitectura. ¿Y podrían lograrse tan

15v

altos fines de nuestro Soberano? Sin duda, solo tomándose las providencias que llevamos impetradas.

En tiempo del gobierno del Exmo. Sor. Don Mathias de Gálvez hicimos semejante ocurro (que, del todo reproducimos) y se tomaron las providencias previas, que se estimaron oportunas, y entre ellas comisionar a D. Juan Lucas de Sazaga, para que practicara todo lo que se le ordenó;

pero habiéndose seguido el fallecimiento de dicho Exmo. Sor. Se suspendió el giro a nuestro asunto, sin que hasta el día se halla vuelto a suscitar. Con este, silencio se han insolentado más, los tratantes: atribuyendo la suspensión del éxito, a carencia de apoyo en nuestras peticiones.

Para obviar sospechas, y que se del debido curso a esta nuestra solicitud, ocurrimos necesariamente a la justificada piedad de U. Exc.: suplicando rendidamente se dirige a tenderla, y en sus consecuencias, mandar hacer en todo, como pedimos al principio y repeti-

16r

mos por concluir. En cuyos términos, A U. Exc. Suplicamos, mande hacer en todo como pedimos, que en ello recibiremos merced con justicia. Juramos en forma, y los necesario, etc.

(Dios por este escrito y vista de documentos once pesos, haciendo equidad por ser de comunidad. Lo juro.)

Lic. Miguel José Adame

Francisco Clapera

Rafael Gutiérrez

José Joaquín Esquivel

Ignacio Berveno

Juan de Sáenz

Francisco Bravo

Juan Hurtado de Mendoza

Santiago Cristóbal Sandoval

Ignacio Sandoval

Juan Sandoval

Andrés López

José de Alcibar

Mariano Guerrero

Ignacio Tamayo

Alejandro Guerrero

Ignacio María Barreda

José Mariano Huerto

Mariano Vázquez

Ignacio Ayala

## Figures



Figure 1. Unknown artist. *Don Antonio de Mendoza*, after 1535. Oil on canvas, 100 x 66.5 cm. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.

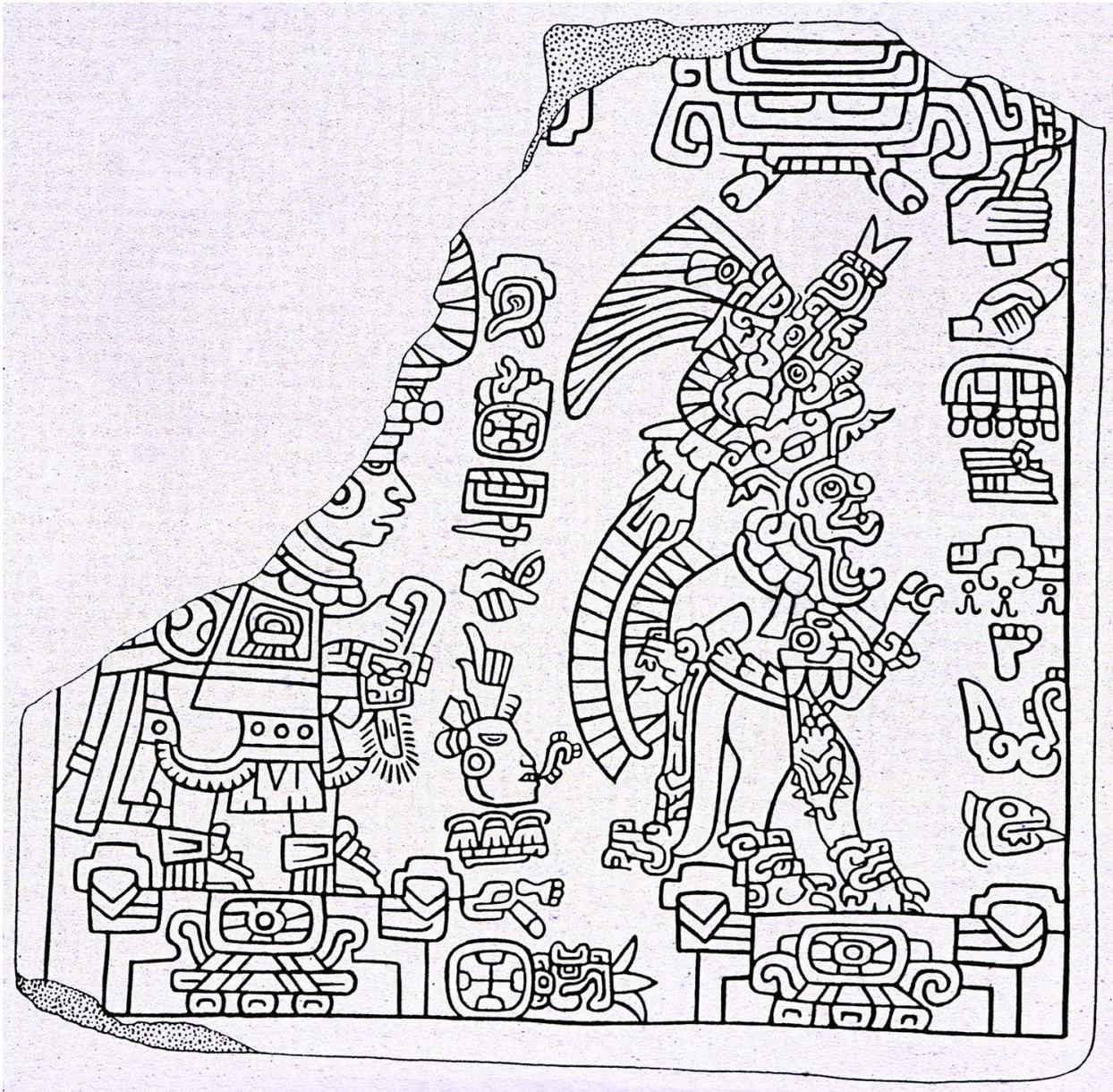


Figure 2. Drawing of *Bazán Slab*, Monte Albán, 200-500. Alabaster. In Pasztory, Esther. "Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles." In *Thinking with Things*, 162. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.



Figure 3. Miguel Cabrera. *Retrato de don Manuel Ignacio Beye Cisneros y Quijano*, 1762. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Museo Nacional de Historia.

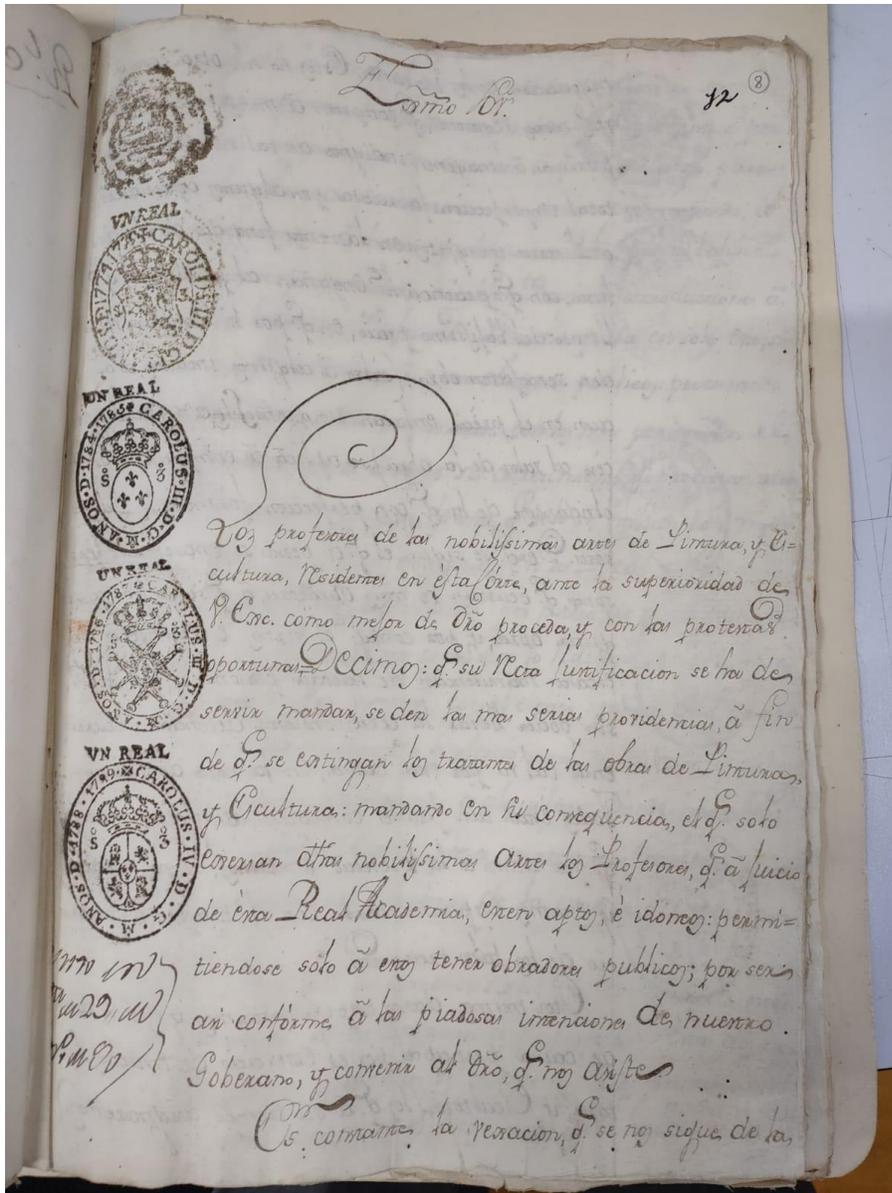


Figure 4. "Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México," Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, Gaveta 10038, número 8, 12r, 1790.

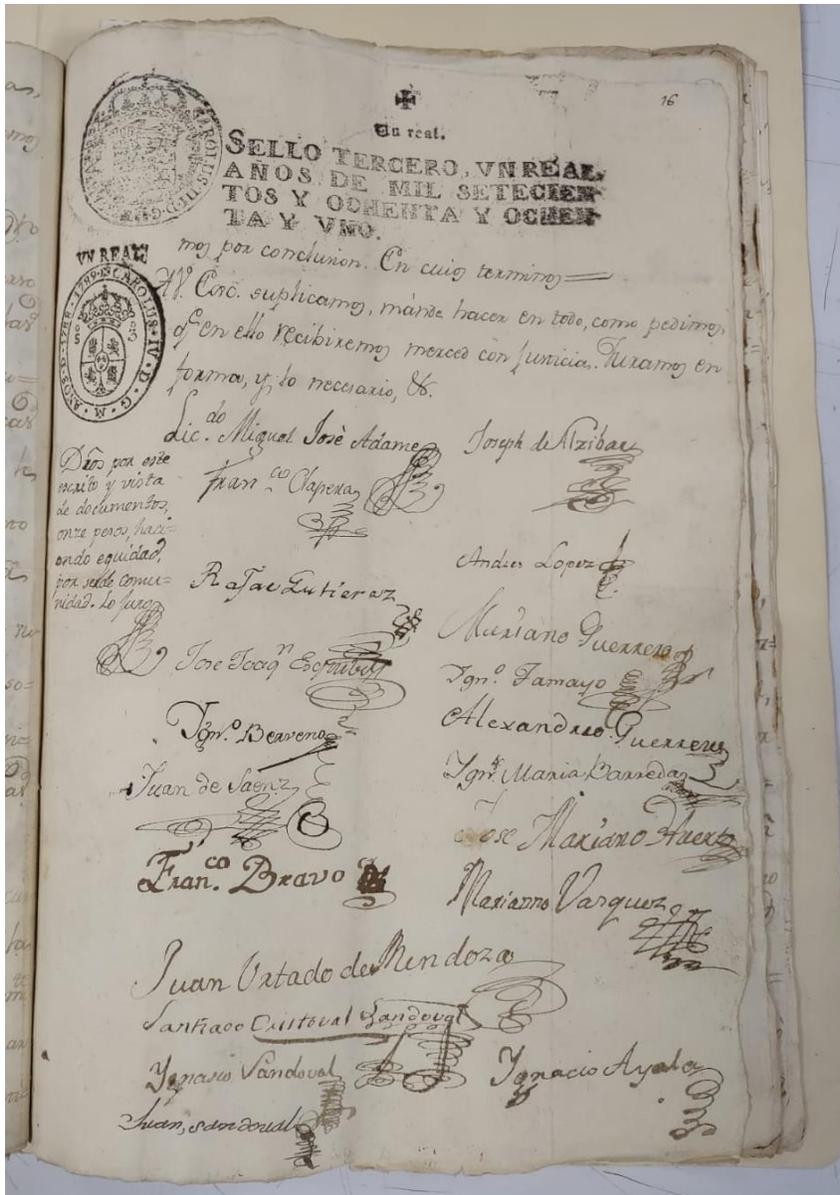


Figure 5. "Ocurso de los profesores de pintura y escultura residentes en la Ciudad de México," Archivo Histórico de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Facultad de Arquitectura, UNAM, Gaveta 10038, número 8, 16r, 1790.



Figure 6. Andrés López. *Don Mathias de Gálvez*, 1783. Oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm. Museo Nacional de la Historia, Mexico City.



Figure 7. Image of the viceregal portrait series hung in situ in the Salón de Cabildos, Mexico City. In, Carrió-Invernizzi, Diana. "Las galerías de retratos de virreyes de la Monarquía Hispánica, entre Italia y América (siglos XVI-XVII)." In *À la place du roi: Vice-rois, gouverneurs et ambassadeurs dans les monarchies française et espagnole (xvi<sup>e</sup>-xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, edited by Aznar, Daniel, et al., 113-134. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2015.



Figure 8. José Alfaro. *Virrey Martín de Mayorga*, 1779. Oil on canvas, 99 x 80 cm. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.



Figure 9. Andrés López. *Retrato de Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo*. c. 1791. Oil on canvas, 113 x 91 cm. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán.



Figure 10. Ignacio María Barreda. *Retrato de doña Juana María Romero*, 1794. Oil on canvas 190 x 116 cm. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.



*Published as the Act directs October 1. 1794. by N. Heideloff, at the Gallery of Fashion Office, N<sup>o</sup>. 90. Wardour Street.*

Figure 11. N. Heideloff. *Fashion Plate*, 1794. Engraving, dimensions unknown. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 12. Ignacio María Barreda. *Gregorio Joseph de Omaña y Sotomayor*, 1793. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán.



Figure 13. Ignacio María Barreda. *María Manuela Esquivel y Serruto*, 1794. Oil on canvas, 94 x 73 cm. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.

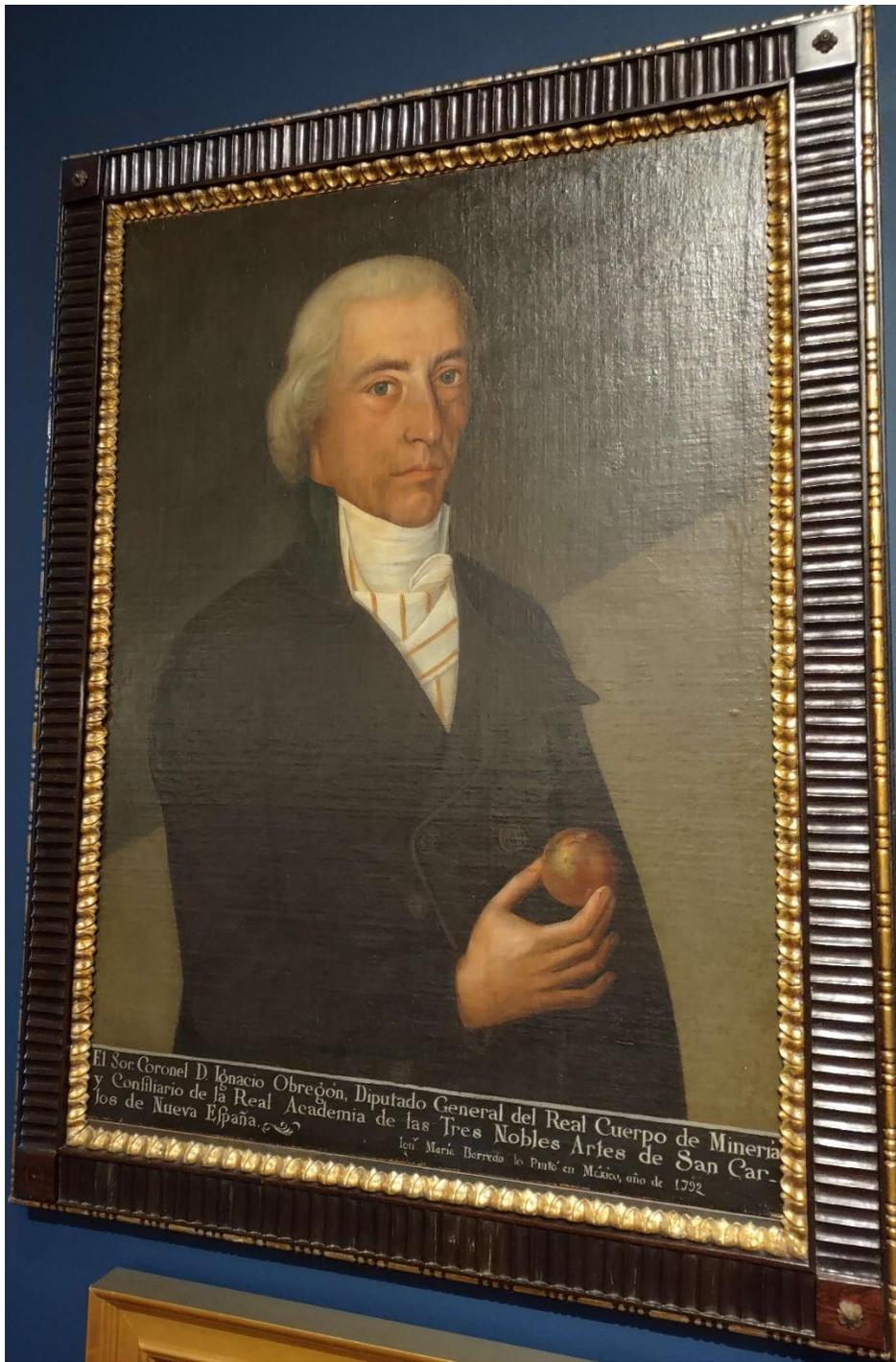


Figure 14. Ignacio María Barreda. *Don Ignacio Obregón*, 1792. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Museo Soumaya, Mexico City.



Figure 15. C H Fürst. *Fashion Plate*, 1792. Hand colored engraving, dimensions unknown. The Nordic Museum, Stockholm.



Figure 16. Rafael Ximeno y Planes. *The Silversmith José María Rodallega*, c. 1795. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas.



Figure 17. Anonymous. *Guadalupe Victoria*, 1825. Oil on canvas, 207 x 117 cm. Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City.

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Amonestaciones matrimoniales 1778-1829 > image 48 of 1340; parroquias católicas,

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## VITA

Melissa Sztuk graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2019 from DePaul University. There, she double majored in Spanish and Chinese Studies with minors in History of Art and Architecture and Museum Studies. For the 2017-2018 academic year, she was an exchange student at La Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, where she began her studies of Mexican art. After teaching English abroad for a year, she returned to her graduate studies and earned a graduate Specialization degree in Art History from La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Upon completing her studies in Mexico, she began her Master of Arts degree in Art History from Texas Christian University where her area of specialization was post-contact Mexican art with a special interest in the eighteenth century.

## ABSTRACT

### STYLING THE ELITE: ISSUES OF THE BAROQUE, *BUEN GUSTO*, AND CREOLE IDENTITY IN LATE 18<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY NOVOHISPANIC PORTRAITURE

by

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Secular portraiture flourished during the eighteenth century in New Spain. These works' stylistic tenets were grounded in an established Baroque visual program developed over centuries in the viceroyalty. At the close of the century, the Spanish crown founded the Art Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City. From its foundation in 1781 through to the nineteenth century, the Academy served as a symbol of Neoclassicism. The 1790s in New Spain saw a period of transition in which lasting Baroque styles and new, Neoclassical artistic discourses coming from Spain coexisted. Both modes of artmaking were deeply rooted in colonial notions of race, class, and taste. By considering the position of the artist in the midst of these tensions, I argue that Novohispanic artists such as Andrés López and Ignacio María Barreda were able to navigate between Neoclassical and Baroque styles depending on the demands of context, allowing them to move purposefully through elite Academic and Creole social spaces. Creole patrons displayed a desire to hold on to Baroque forms because of their ability to speak uniquely to Novohispanic anxieties surrounding documentation, social standing, and racial status. This ability to consciously navigate between styles indicates a sense of agency for both artist and patron.