

Unit 2: Colonial Encounters

The “discovery” of the New World in the late fifteenth century by Spain and Portugal inaugurated an unprecedented period of cultural encounters stimulated by the arrival of Europeans and, later, Africans to the Americas. This unit examines a range of artworks – textiles and decorative arts, religious and viceregal architecture, painting and sculpture – that represent the diversity and, no less, the challenges of cross-cultural engagements. We will consider such themes as “New World,” or creole, identities, syncretism and hybridity, and colonialism and independence in artworks from Mexico, Peru, and Brazil.

Unit 2 Time Advisory

This unit should take you approximately 26 hours to complete.

- Subunit 2.1: 1 hour
- Subunit 2.2: 10 hours
- Subunit 2.2.1: 3 hours
- Subunit 2.2.2: 4 hours
- Subunit 2.2.3: 3 hours
- Subunit 2.3: 15 hours
- Subunit 2.3.1: 3 hours
- Subunit 2.3.2: 4 hours
- Subunit 2.3.3: 8 hours

Unit 2 Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:

- Identify and describe representative examples of colonial Latin American art and architecture by style, subject, and medium.
- Explain the relationship between colonial Latin American artworks and the broader social, religious, economic, and political contexts in which they functioned and circulated.
- Discuss the political and ideological significance of colonialism and the impact of European and African contact on Latin American visual culture.

- Discuss themes of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and nation in relation to works of art.
- Characterize aspects of artistic innovation and continuity across approximately three centuries, and describe the ways in which artists both adapted and resisted foreign influences.
- Discuss the evolution of an “American” identity, as manifested in artworks made at the time of independence movements across Latin America.