

Lena Bader

Report on the Transregional Academy

## “Plural Temporalities: Theories and Practices of Time”

Bogotá, 24.09–2.10.2022

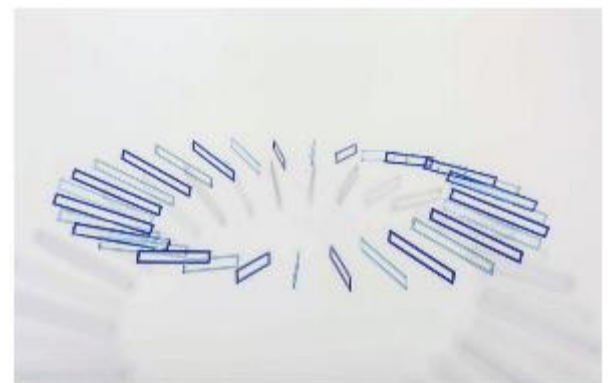
### Background

Under the title “Plural Temporalities: Theories and Practices of Time,” the fourth Transregional Academy of the German Center for Art History (DFK Paris) took place in Bogotá from 24 September to 2 October 2022. Organized in co-operation with the Universidad de los Andes and the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome (BHMPI) and with the support of the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, it was funded by the Getty Foundation as part of its “Connecting Art Histories” initiative. The academy exists in the framework of the research area “Travelling Art Histories. Transregional Networks in Exchange between Latin America and Europe,” which has given

rise to three previous transregional academies along with a series of other events.<sup>1</sup>

Following a call for proposals launched in mid-November 2021, twenty-one candidates were selected. These included applicants from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Germany, France, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Canada, Colombia, Slovenia, and the United States, most of whom work in a

Transregional  
Academy



Transregional  
Academy on  
Latin American  
Art IV

Program

September 24th –  
October 2nd, 2022

Bogotá

Plural  
Temporalities  
Theories and Practices of Time

Getty  
Foundation

Max Weber  
Stiftung

BIBLIOTHECA  
HERTZIANA

Universidad de  
los Andes

FORUM  
TRANSREGIONALE  
STUDIEN

Forum  
Transregionale  
Studien



<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the overview of all organized events as well as the corresponding reports, programme booklets, etc., at <https://dfk-paris.org/en/research-project/travelling-art-histories-1625.html>. For the programme and the call for proposals for the academy in Bogotá, visit <https://dfk-paris.org/de/page/4th-transregional-academy-latin-american-art-plural-temporalities-theories-and-practices-time>.

university context, others in the museum sphere. Six senior scholars were asked in advance to supervise the work of the fellows together with Lena Bader, Elodie Vaudry, Laura Karp Lugo, and Thomas Kirchner, forming a *steering committee*: Jens Baumgarten (Universidade Federal de São Paulo), Karen Cordero (art historian and independent curator), Thierry Dufrêne (Université Paris-Nanterre), Natalia Majluf (independent art historian), Tristan Weddigen (BHMPI), and Patricia Zalamea (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá). As internationally acknowledged experts, they are engaged in research projects and networks dedicated to Latin America from a transcultural perspective.

### **Concept**

The academy's aim was to facilitate a cross-national and cross-regional exchange on theoretical and practical articulations of temporality, based on the premise that, in such a transregional perspective, time can only be thought of in the plural: the notion of plural temporality elicits an understanding of time as open, relative, local, and manifold rather than universal, linear, closed, and singular. This starting premise seems all the more relevant in view of Latin America's colonial past, in that the history of the so-called "discovery" of the Americas already poses problems of identity and narrative, especially, but not exclusively, with regard to pre-Columbian cultures. It is therefore necessary to ask how different models of history and historiography could be conceived in light of colonial history.

The academy addressed various questions around temporality but proposed that they be interrogated not from a comparative perspective following the models of effect and influence or centre and periphery. In conscious differentiation from linear, hierarchical explanatory paradigms and strictly comparative studies of artistic and cultural transfer, we sought to map out the complex and multi-faceted nature of phenomena of circulation and entanglement. The objective was to open up interrelations between relevant research and paradigmatic projects from different regions, while also asking to what extent a common definitional and epistemological basis can exist at all. The topic and approach were deliberately broad so as to encompass a variety of research projects. To allow us to engage with a range of voices, approaches, and intellectual histories, by design the thematic orientation was not constrained by methodological or nominal accentuations that would evoke a certain predominant canon.

## Format

The academy was conceived around two modules to enable discussion of both fundamental methodological problems and more concrete case studies, alternating between “project presentations” and “thematic sessions.”

	Saturday 24 sept	Sunday 25 sept	Monday 26 sept	Tuesday 27 sept	Wednesday 28 sept	Thursday 29 sept	Friday 30 sept	Saturday 1 Oct
7:00 - 8:30			Breakfast Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Breakfast Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Breakfast Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Breakfast Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Breakfast Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Parque Arqueológico de Facatativá Piedras del Tunjo Meeting Point: LivinnX21 Main Entrance 7.30 a.m. Prof. invitado Alex Herrera
9:00 - 10:30		Welcome Breakfast Meeting Point: LivinnX21 Main Entrance at 8:40 a.m. Casa Galería (Carrera 2 # 12B - 92)	Introduction Edificio Mario Lasema Auditorio ML-C	Thematic Discussions - Group 1 (AU 301) Group 2 (AU 303) Group 3 (AU 305)	Project Presentations - Group A (ML 117) Group B (ML 119) Group C (ML 120)	Project Presentations - Group A (AU 209) Group B (AU 303) Group C (AU 305)	Project Presentations - Group A (C 107) Group B (C 209) Group C (C 212)	
10:30 - 11:00			Coffee Break SD Building 4th floor	Coffee Break C Building 2nd floor	Coffee Break ML Building 1st floor	Coffee Break AU Building 3th floor	Coffee Break SD Building 7th floor	
11:00 - 12:30		Visit and downtown tour, including Museo Santa Clara (Carrera 8 #8-91)	Project Presentations - Group A (SD 403) Group B (SD 404) Group C (SD 405)	Project Presentations - Group A (C 108) Group B (C 205) Group C (C 213)	Thematic Discussions - Group 1 (ML 117) Group 2 (ML 119) Group 3 (ML 120)	Thematic Discussions - Group 1 (AU 204) Group 2 (AU 209) Group 3 (AU 307)	Thematic Discussions - Group 1 (SD 702) Group 2 (SD 704) Group 3 (SD 714)	
12:30 - 14:00		Lunch optional	Lunch / Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Lunch / Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Lunch / Restaurante Villa Paulina - Uniandes	Lunch / Cafeteria Central Uniandes	Lunch / Cafeteria Central Uniandes	
14:00 - 15:30	Check in LivinnX 21 (Calle 21 # 3-71)	2:30 p.m. Museum Visit <b>Optional:</b> Museo Colonial (Carrera 6 #9-77) - Prof. invitada Patricia Zalamea	Project Presentations Group A (C 206) Group B (C 207) Group C (C 210)	Thematic Discussions Group 1 (C 205) Group 2 (C 207) Group 3 (C 211)	From 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Museo Nacional (Avenida Carrera 7 # 28-66) visit - Patricia Zalamea y Próspero Carbonell	Project Presentations Group A (T-104) Group B (K-202) Group C (K-208)	Final Discussion Edificio Mario Lasema Auditorio ML-C	
15:30 - 16:30			Monserrate (Carrera 2 Este #21-48 Paseo Bolívar) <b>Optional</b>					From 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Museo Quinta de Bolívar (Calle 21 No.4A-30 Este) Prof. invitado David Cohen
16:30 - 17:30				From 4:30 pm to 6:30 p.m. Museo del Oro (Carrera 6 #15-88) - Prof. invitada Natalia Lozada		From 4:30 pm to 6:30 p.m. Banco de la República ( Calle 11 #4-93) - Prof. invitadas Ana Franco & Verónica Uribe		
17:30 - 18:30								
19:00								Farewell dinner LivinnX21 Terrace 20th Floor

The project presentations are dedicated to the research projects of the participants. Everyone is invited to present their project for 20-30 minutes, followed by a 50-minute discussion. To promote dialogue, each presentation is led by another participant who handles the introduction and moderation. These sessions unfold in three parallel groups arranged beforehand by the organizers; the groups remain together throughout the week, so that while not all participants can attend all project presentations, they come together in a small group that operates as a closed workshop to ensure a good atmosphere for discussion.

Texts by selected authors are discussed in the thematic sessions. These sessions similarly take place in three parallel groups, but these are not fixed beforehand, so that each participant can decide which discussion to attend. The texts are proposed by the participants in advance; they introduce each text and explain why it seems interesting with regard to the topic of the academy as well as how it relates to their own work. All texts are made available in a reader before the academy begins.



With their reading suggestions and their own project presentations, the participants decisively shape the academy's programme, which is purposefully conceived not by a single person from the top down but rather collectively and via dialogue. Supplementing this seminar programme is a line-up of

visits and excursions, developed and organized in exchange with our colleagues on-site. The aim is to foreground the study of objects. Thanks to the involvement of local experts, further encounters can take place.

## Discussions

Our seminar sessions have recurrently thematized culturally determined notions of time and their translatability into other languages and/or scientific contexts when, as in the case of the Aymara people for example, there is no word for time or future. Central to this approach was to consider time as a representation of a society's very conception of it, rather than as a physically measurable category. In this context, another topic of conversation was the epistemic violence of translations and visualizations, which – as in the case of the “arrow of time” – assert the universality of an ideological concept. This is accompanied by the question of how these notions influence our own (scholarly) writing as well



as how they have, even and especially within Western and Westernized contexts, prompted alternative, non-teleological conceptualizations, such as that of the afterlife of images, for instance. This also applies to ideas about the past that are expressed in terms and/or metaphors of ghosts or the undead. Also raised for discussion were nostalgia and melancholy as models of a retrospective relationship to history, as well as the attendant limits and possibilities of

interdisciplinary transfer processes when concepts from other areas are brought to bear on art history, such as trauma and memory theories from psychoanalysis.

Also with a view to transdisciplinary dialogues, another topic was the preponderance of theoretical positions from other domains as compared to contributions from art-historical research. From a historiographical and methodological point of view, what can we conclude from the fact that – even where they overgeneralize or even argue in an essentializing way – thinkers such as Annibal Quijano, Walter Dignolo, and Enrique Dussel, who come from Latin America yet from the fields of philosophy, sociology, and literary studies, have become topical points of reference, even more so than art-historical research on the very processes these figures speak to? What does the fascination with these “colonial thinkers” and the overlooking of important historical studies on colonization mean from the standpoint of the history of ideas?

Discrete notions of colonization, which are unquestioningly codified in the framework of analysis, were critically discussed in order to raise the difficult question of the colonial legacy of post-colonial studies. Not least in view of discursive figures who have claimed to conquer “new (iconic) worlds” for art history, we discussed the fact that this question cannot be limited to simply asking whether or not Anglo-Saxon authors are exclusively cited – though, to be sure, the concentration on the so-called “holy trinity of postcolonial theory” (Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak) at the expense of local voices is problematic.

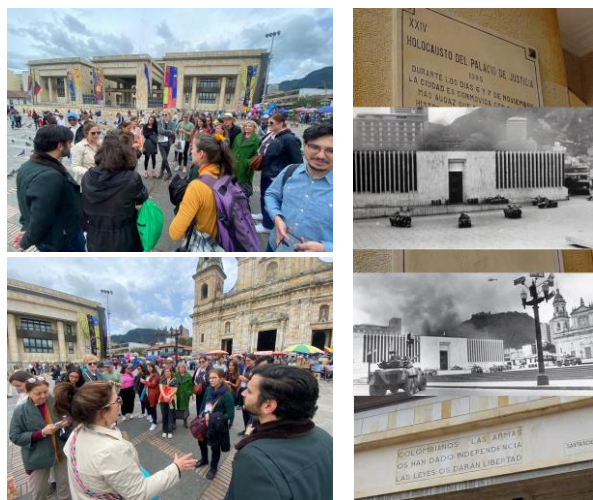


From different perspectives, the afterlife of pre-Columbian motifs in the arts of the 19th and 20th centuries was addressed. The key objective was to interrogate this dialogue beyond mere questions of

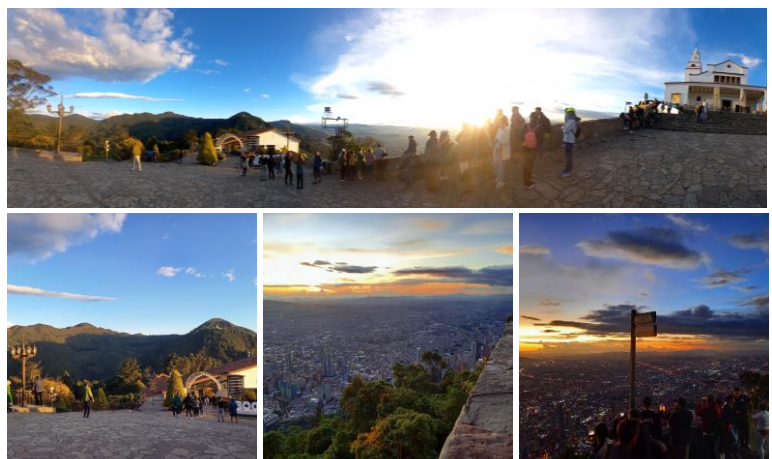
cultural appropriation, instead engaging it through the lens of the complexity of various related, and tightly entangled, motivations: archaeological interests, political questions, national projects, industrial interests, questions of social representation, etc. Seen from this perspective, the question of visual analogies must necessarily go beyond a simple history of motifs and styles. This is accompanied by another problem that was touched upon in various sessions: To what extent can a transregional perspective enrich comparative studies, to what extent must such a perspective necessarily challenge a comparative method?

Early on, in the course of the numerous discussions – which mostly took place in three parallel seminar sessions but also partly during breaks, meals, or communal outings – it became clear that we were able to communicate in one and the same language, whether English or Spanish, but that our words and concepts could have very different connotations and sometimes even came with strongly contrasting references. This creates the need for the individual participants to position themselves in relation to their own context, career, and singular trajectory, thereby contextualizing themselves and their vocabulary in view of their own horizon of thought. Only in this way can an exchange occur that is equally safeguarded against relativism and universalism: in the reciprocal movement of an opening into dialogue that is mindful of its own entrenchment. Since such exchanges work better on a small rather than a large scale, the

academy prioritizes seminar sessions over amphitheatre gatherings. For the purposes of such a dialogue, and in order to interrogate scholarly work from a transregional perspective, it also promotes conversation around the diversity of institutional and cultural parameters at play in research. Accordingly, it is not only the history of art that can be thought of in the plural, but also its reception and readership, which in their own right are culturally, socially, and historically anchored.



Accompanying the various reading and discussion sessions, the academy offered a rich sightseeing programme, from city tours to specialized museum visits. The introductory highlights naturally included a visit to the Plaza de Bolívar – with the seat of the Constitutional Court, the Palace of Justice, which was occupied by the guerrilla group M-19 in 1985 – as well as to the Cerro de Montserrate, which offers a breath-taking view of the Colombian capital.



## Museums and Collections

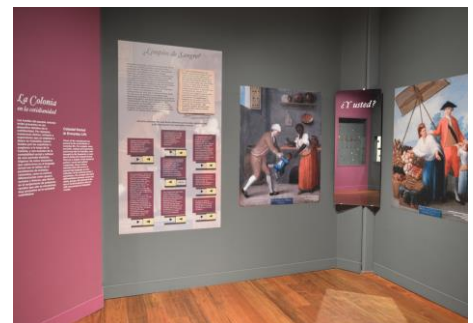
We approached our museum visits through a double lens: the focus was equally on the exhibited objects and on the narratives in which they are embedded; alongside historical considerations, there were always problems of staging and historiography or museography, which we discussed together with invited professors.



This was true at the outset of our visit to the Museo Colonial, a museum that raises the question of how to represent colonial history by means of artistic practices, proceeding from the assumption that the importance of the latter can be explored far beyond religious doctrine, instead of being reduced to having served as an ideological instrument of encounter in the form of altarpieces. Patricia Zalamea guided us through the collection and discussed the recent shift away from chronological presentation. The

installation is now divided into four key areas of emphasis: the colonial image; the travel experience; territories; and education. The last room speaks to the problem of coloniality, the afterlife of the colonial era in our society, “The Colony: a past still present”, materialized symbolically in a mirror under the heading: ¿Y usted?

The question raised at the beginning about the representability of colonial history would prove to be a recurring topos of our discussions: How might we consider the relationship between artistic practices and socio-political history? How may these be brought into dialogue with each other? And how might we think about their interplay beyond a mere illustrative function on the part of the visual arts, while not over-estimating art’s impact?



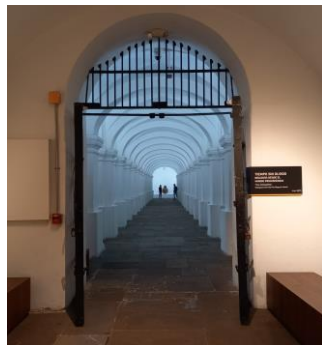


Another highlight was Natalia Lozada Mendieta's (Universidad de los Andes) guided visit to the Museo del Oro, which houses the world's most important collection of pre-Hispanic goldwork. Here, too, we were interested in the narratives offered by the museum, such as the pointed interpretative focus on shamanistic background or the tendency to disambiguate historically unclear traditions. At the same time, we studied the practices and techniques entailed in producing astonishingly early gold artefacts, about which the

impressive collection imparts much information. The visit to the museum also provided occasion to talk about the legend of El Dorado and its dramatic consequences: the countless lootings undertaken in an attempt to unravel this myth, which was launched in the 16th century around offerings made in the context of a Muisca ceremony at Lake Guatavita. The museum possesses, and has dedicated a room to, a small sculptural group from the Muisca ritual.



We also paid a longer visit to the Museo Nacional, housed in a former prison. The museum's relatively recent museography interested us all the more because its revision endeavours to



present history from the perspective of the civilian population and not that of the government. In place of the previous chronological and linear installation, thematic approaches purport to elude a clear history of progress. The first publicly accessible room in this new presentation was the "Sala de la Memoria y Nación," which seeks to acknowledge oral and indigenous cultures alongside official state documents; the pursuit of a discourse that is as inclusive and diverse



as possible is motivated by a desire to contribute to national reconciliation by being a museum for all Colombians. This is apparent not least in the so-called “Wall of Diversity” – a form of representation that we often returned to in our discussions as we assessed the limits and possibilities of such a staging. The tendency – increasingly frequent in recent years – to exhibit montages of this sort has been controversially described as the trend of the “Warburg walls” because it curbs the critical potential of such a synopsis through the (overly) representative display of diversity. “Decolonize, not diversify” was one of the responses.

Without being able to account for them all in detail, other museum visits should at least be mentioned: the visit to the Museo de Arte del Banco de la República with Veronica Uribe (Universidad de los Andes), which demonstrated how much landscape depictions contributed to the modernization of painting in Colombia at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, as well as how encounters with artists from Europe are represented in the pictorial medium; or the visit to the Museo Quinta de Bolívar with David Cohen (Universidad de los Andes), where two rooms



exhibit, in a most interesting way, multiple representations of Simón Bolívar from the points of view of artists from Europe and Latin America.

### Excursion

The last visit took place 40 km away from Bogotá: in the Parque Arqueológico Piedras de Tunja in Facatativá, which we visited on Saturday at the end of the academy. It is Colombia’s largest archaeological

park, an area that, despite its impressive legacy of pre-Hispanic painting, was long neglected and only nationalized in 1946. The tour led by Alexander Herrera (Universidad de los Andes)



provided an opportunity to discuss various forms of staging the past. Using the example of works of sculpture from the 1980s-90s modelled after smaller pre-Hispanic ceramic figures and presented as the ostensible remnants of bygone times, we discussed the implications of such a monumentalization of the past from the perspective of the present: a historiographical montage that once again raises the question of the staging and translatability of the past.

The culmination was another historical dialogue, reflected in the most impressive manner in Facatativá: five portraits of liberal spokespeople who appropriated what was once a

ritual site to organize their opposition against the largely Catholic conservatives – a true reappropriation of the hitherto suppressed pre-Hispanic past, which is ascribed new topicality through this ideological reinterpretation.





## Dialogue and Exchange

During the various visits and discussions, everyone involved was able to experience how valuable transregional exchange is within the sciences, whether in front of the works themselves or within the seminar room: seeing together, reflecting together, debating together, multiplying positions and views – the added value of the collective was the programme: a group of thirty people, from a total of fourteen countries, working across eleven different languages.

The academy is not limited to the spaces of the seminar and the museum; it means living together for a week, coming together in a confined space and working together, sharing meals, rooms, and experiences – for most of them, without knowing one another beforehand; it means fostering the human side of research, cultivating an atmosphere of listening and sharing – something that was certainly very welcome in the wake of the pandemic-related contact restrictions, but also goes beyond the current context and appeals to a specific type of research: one shaped as shared experience, as an art history in dialogue.

