INTRODUCTION

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The impetus for the present volume developed out of basic need. Several years ago, armed with a broad background in both feminist and viceregal\textsuperscript{1} period art historical theory and practice, I determined to construct a graduate seminar on the representation of women in early modern Latin American art. At first I believed materials appropriate for the course would be relatively easy to come by, but I was seriously mistaken. Fortunately, I had recently heard a lecture by Richard E. Phillips in which he analyzed images of female saints on the piers of the sixteenth-century cloister at Oaxtepec, Morelos.\textsuperscript{2} Over the next couple of years, Richard and I shared insights into the topic and I was finally able to offer the course for the first time. Our collaboration resulted in a College Art Association Conference session titled “Image, Icon, Identity: Constructions of Femininity in Viceregal Latin American Art and Architecture,” held in Los Angeles in 1999. Reception by audience members suggested to us that there were other early modern Latin Americanists who were also interested in the subject. Since that time, we have made a concerted

\textsuperscript{1} The editors of this book have avoided the terms “Spanish colonial” or “colonial” art. These terms pre-condition the spectator to expect that the artistic and social forms of the colonized countries are largely derivative or imposed with regard to those of the colonizing polity. This is not the case with the tremendous creativity of local traditions developed by the regions subjected to Spanish control in the New World. The cultural contributions of Spain and the rest of Western Civilization to Latin America were of course fundamental, but they were not slavishly imitated nor monolithically imposed without great originality in their reinterpretation, negotiation, and redirection by the New World inhabitants. So instead of the outmoded terms “Spanish Colonial” or “colonial,” we follow the example of the great scholar of Mexican architectural history Robert Mullen, who titled his seminal 1997 book \textit{Architecture and its Sculpture in Viceregal Mexico} without further elaborating on his choice of the word “viceregal” in his text. The adjective “viceregal” refers to the viceroys appointed by the Spanish kings to rule over their New World dominions and is therefore a preferable and historically correct substitute for such terms as “Spanish Colonial.”

\textsuperscript{2} See Ch. 4 in the present volume.
effort to seek out research and collect essays that deal with various facets of the topic; our efforts are revealed in this volume.

As we worked on the project, we noted with some surprise that although feminist art history had expanded exponentially from its inception in the 1970s with regard to ancient and European artistic traditions, not a single essay on the art and architecture of the early modern period in Latin America had made its way into the many feminist art historical publications on the period. The various essays in this publication, selected from a variety of sources, begin to correct that omission. They combine feminist approaches with interdisciplinary methodologies to expand our contemporary understanding of the art and architecture of the viceregal epoch.

Feminist art historians have identified five basic methodologies, called ‘feminist interventions,’ with which to reappraise traditional art historical practice. I begin with the first four interventions and defer the fifth to a later position in this introduction. Of primary importance over the past three decades has been the reconstruction of the contributions of both (1) female artists and (2) patrons, and (3) the inclusion of a significant number of both in the standard art history survey texts. The feminist approach also (4) seeks to identify the institutionalized strictures that have traditionally hindered the ability of women artists to become professionals as they were historically limited or denied access to the artistically and economically nurturing environments of art guilds and academies.

These four feminist interventions were identified by conventionally trained art historians with primary expertise in Western European traditions. The arts of the past century or so aside, these four approaches have not been applied systematically to the historical visual art production of cultures outside or on the periphery of this tradition.

The example of Latin America, particularly during the early modern or viceregal period, is a case in point. This exclusion of viceregal Latin America from the feminist art historical discourse—that is, the identification of women artists and patrons, their inclusion in standard art historical texts, and their limited or denied access to training—runs counter to Latin American scholarship in other humanist disciplines. Groundbreaking work by researchers such as Silvia

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