

IHRC 10 Year Anniversary Faculty Grants



Project title:

Pearls for the Crown: European Courtly Art and the Atlantic Pearl Trade, 1498-1728

Project description

This book project examines five artworks related to the Atlantic pearl industry in order to unveil the messages they conveyed within circles linked to the Spanish Crown. It unveils ideas about imperial power, providential wealth and human mastery over nature that legitimized the indiscriminate exploitation of natural and human resources in the Americas.

Bio

Mónica Domínguez Torres is Associate Professor at the Department of Art History of the University of Delaware. She specializes in the arts of the early modern Iberian World, with particular interest in cross-cultural exchanges between Spain and the Americas during the period 1500-1700. Her book *Military Ethos and Visual Culture in Post-Conquest Mexico* (Ashgate, 2013), supported by a Wyeth Foundation for American Art publication grant, investigates the significance of military images and symbols in sixteenth-century Mexico, showing how certain martial notions and symbols created cultural bridges between Mesoamericans and Europeans. Her current book-length project, tentatively entitled *Pearls for the Crown: European Courtly Art and the Atlantic Pearl Trade, 1498-1728*, examines the cultural and political currency that pearls had in the early modern period, exploring a selection of images and collectibles related to the Atlantic pearl industry in relation to the interplay between materiality, labor, and consumption

that shaped artistic production in Europe. She has received support for this project from the Renaissance Society of America, the Getty Research Institute, the Bard Graduate Center, UD's Center for Global and Area Studies, and the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Center.