FESTIVALS & DAILY LIFE IN THE ARTS OF COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA, 1492–1850

Papers from the 2012 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum

Edited by Donna Pierce
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Colonial Images

Tipos y costumbres of Ecuador Revisited in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Alexandra Kennedy-Troya

The persistent representation of native Indians—their costumes, types of labor, and festivities—has been key to understanding nation building and the construction of identities in Latin America since the 1820s. Let me bring to mind a map of Nueva Granada, the governing unit that comprised present-day Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador during early republican times. It was used to illustrate French historian Guillaume N. Lallemand's book Historia de Colombia, published in 1827 (fig. 1). Independence hero Simón Bolívar, seen in the upper center, is surrounded by emblematic landscapes pertaining to the three unified nations along with generic types (tipos) of men, women, priests, and a Muisca Indian family shown in two images: one of a man and one of a woman with a child. It is well known that both Bolívar and his compatriot Antonio José de Sucre believed in the power of images to influence important changes in the newly created independent nations. In this context one can understand the hasty creation of the Cuenca School of Arts in 1822, where students were expected to make war instruments as well as to design new artistic images for the republics (fig. 2).

As Peruvian colleague Natalia Majluf noted in a remarkable essay concerning Pancho Fierro’s colonial-era costumbrista watercolors, the antecedents of costumbrista images of the nineteenth century have to do with the vigorous international industry of producing paintings and engravings for illustrated travel and costume books, as well as for series dedicated to trades related to street commerce and industry, which enjoyed a resurgence in the late eighteenth century. Peruvian Bishop Baltasar Martínez Compañón’s images done in 1780 and 1785 come to mind. In a broad sense of the word, these publications fulfilled the Enlightenment-era desire for images in order to pursue, compile, and organize knowledge. Illustrations were a vital part of these visual encyclopedias—first on a continental level, later for the nations, and finally for and about specific regions.

Integrated into an official map in a major history manual such as Lallemand’s Historia de Colombia, intended to circulate on a worldwide level so as to reinforce the newly formed and independent nations, the so-called tipos y costumbres (types of people and customs) and landscapes seem to tell us a different story from the earlier illustrated genre. These images relate not to the pursuit of knowledge but to local Latin American politics and interests in a new republican context. The indigenous figures portrayed still remain at the lower bottom of the map, and of society, although their labor was crucial to the economy of the new nations. They seem to depict the order in which Bolívar was trying to visualize free Latin America.

Besides the printed plates combined with maps, dozens of painters in Quito, Mexico City, or Lima from the 1830s to the 1920s were still being commissioned by international and local leisure travelers and scientists to make inexpensive small watercolors similar to the prototypes that had been established in the previous century. Examples can be seen in Gaetano Osculati’s Costumes of Quito, painted by Ramón Salas in Quito (fig. 3), or Le Moyne’s Antioquia.

Therefore, in accord with Majluf’s proposal, nineteenth-century tipos and costumbrista renderings based on the earlier tradition were not an invention of Latin American artists as a means to present or discuss local identities, although, I argue, they were used later in other contexts to do so. These kinds of representations in the first and second halves of the nineteenth century—most of them anonymous—follow quite closely the late colonial tradition, although most of the scientific discourses that characterized the previous genre were lost as other interests, mainly political, arose. The most coveted images were copied, simplified, and decontextualized in order to meet a demand for souvenirs and illustrations for travel journals and diaries (figs. 4a, b, and c).

We must also remember that these representations were not memoirs of a colonial past but were still related to present-day life—life that changed very little in the Andean region until around the 1870s (fig. 5). They served as a sort of carte postale...
Figure Making the Arts and Sciences Be Born from Bolivia's Head. From Melchor María Mercado, Melchor María Mercado, "paisajes, tipos humanos y costumbres de Bolivia (1841–1869)" (La Paz: Banco Central de Bolivia/Archivo Nacional de Biblioteca Nacional de Bolivia, 1991).


Fig. 4c. Juan Agustín Guerrero, Indian Herb Vender, Ecuador, 1852. Watercolor on paper. From Imágenes del Ecuador siglo XIX. Juan Agustín Guerrero 1818–1880, texts by Wilson Hallo (Quito/Madrid: Ediciones del Sol/Spana-Calpe, 1981).

Fig. 5. Ramón Salas, Chacatalica in the Holy Friday Procession in Latacunga, Ecuador, c. 1855–1865. Watercolor on paper. From Album de costumbres ecuatorianas: paisajes, tipos y costumbres, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv.# 15-90, Madrid. Reproduced in Imágenes de identidad. Acuarelas quirúeñas del siglo XIX, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, Biblioteca Básica de Quito 6 (Quito: FONSAL, 2005), 274–275.
that depicted contemporary life in the ex-colonies, elaborated under the gaze of a colonial local eye. Eventually, late-nineteenth-century photography of *tipos* displaced laborious watercoloring and gave this genre a new stance, something we shall go back to.

This was the way to represent (and collect)—in a very European fashion—what was occurring in the newly independent Latin American nations, with the intention to attribute the backwardness of these ex-colonies to the ill treatment of the native population by Spanish and Portuguese administrators and by the clergy of the Catholic Church. These new discourses would be a major platform upon which to defend and promote neocolonialism in the minds of British or U.S. politicians and businessmen.

As time went by, these images became more and more sophisticated and showed a greater diversity of trades and types of people—in both cases mostly representing indigenous life and costumes—as well as urban and rural landscapes, which sometimes included active volcanoes (fig. 6). Although some of these new images were created or promoted by nineteenth-century foreign travelers, the information incorporated into visual and written texts/narratives came from well-informed local Latin American elite groups, as well as from the popular classes.

A resurgent demand in the 1850s originated from within the new American republics, specifically Ecuador (fig. 7). To mention only one of many cases, the Brazilian ambassador Miguel Maria Lisboa, upon arrival in the Ecuadorian capital in 1853, located Ramón Salas (1815–1885), son of the famous painter Antonio Salas (active 1790–1860), and commissioned him to produce a “collection of national costumes.” Some days, he recalled, he would have seven or eight people in his waiting room expecting to sell their watercolors. Circulation and recirculation of these watercolors provided income for many people. The

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3.6. Juan Agustín Guerrero. Cotopaxi as Seen from Quito on August 23rd, 1878 at Night. Watercolor on paper. From *Imágenes del Ecuador siglo XIX*. Juan Agustín Guerrero 1818–1880, texts by Wilson Fallo (Quito/Madrid: Ediciones del Sol/Espasa-Calpe, 81). Title of watercolor was given much later, as was customary.
Fig. 7. Ramón Salas. *Indian Governor Carrying the Standard*. Ecuador, c. 1855–1865. Watercolor on paper. From *Album de escenas de supersticiones, costumbres, y curiosidades*. Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nº 15-90, Madrid. Reproduced in...
La mesa con figüritas en la fiesta del Patriarca

Fig. 9. Ramón Salas, Table with Figurines at the St. Francis Celebration. Ecuador, c. 1855–1865. Watercolor on paper. From Album de costumbres ecuatorianas: paisajes, tipos y costumbres, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. #15-90, Madrid. Reproduced in imágenes de identidad. Acuarelas quitenses del siglo XIX, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, Biblioteca Básica de Quito 6 (Quito: FONSAL, 2005), 302–303.
lack of engraving workshops in Quito, Lima, or Potosi, in contrast to Mexico City, induced artists and artisans to hand-copy established models over and over, and, as was to be expected, the quality of these images varied enormously.

But there were other one-of-a-kind images painted and photographed for new commissioners linked more to the costumbrista genre, which explicitly showed the stagnation and corruption of the new nation under local rulers (fig. 8). These unique plates must have been significant primarily to local citizens involved in politics and interested in changing the course of history. As much as I am interested in these plates as images, I am inclined to look at them in the context of a collection, as an organized narrative sequence. In this essay I am concerned with the impact these images had as a whole—as well as in the collecting of such images in albums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—in the hands of local Latin American progressive politicians and image makers. They were reinterpreted or re-read in late Romantic, Modernist, and Indigenist Latin American contexts up to the 1930s, moments in which nation building and national identities were again at stake, although faced in very different ways.

To uncover such re-readings I have chosen an exceptional album of Ecuadorian watercolors with a beautiful cover inlaid with mother-of-pearl, put together around the 1920s and now held by the National Library of Spain in Madrid. It contains 165 anonymous watercolors of Ecuadorian types (tipos), costumbrista scenes, and landscapes. The first 141, apparently intentionally organized, have been dated around 1855–1865 (fig. 9). These are followed by much later watercolors and ink drawings, dated around 1900–1920s and done by less accomplished hands. What is most intriguing is that the album starts with two photographs taken

around 1870 (figs. 10a and 10b), of two Indian leaders who were involved in the most important indigenous uprisings of Ecuador in the 1870s, in Azuay and Chimbo provinces. The subjects are Daquilema de Cachi, of Incan descent, who was executed in April 1872, and a woman, probably Manuela León, his wife. Real, fierce, and “savage” looking, these photographs have a totally different feeling from the picturesque, unmenacing watercolors in the album. All the items in this album—passed on generation after generation—seem to have been organized by the final owner at the end of the 1920s, when Indigenism as a strong political movement was on its way. The collector must have been involved or at least heavily interested in the new left-wing ideologies. Unfortunately, there is no information on how or when the Madrid Album became part of the Spanish National Library.

Collecting and assembling albums was quite common from the 1850s onwards, and they have to be treated as important cultural objects in themselves. Read as a collection, the Madrid Album represents social and public affairs more than the familial or domestic aspects of society. It comprises images of wide circulation at the time: characters, landscapes, or events that were socially visible and probably valued by the community, as historian Rosemarie Terán observed. This and other albums I have studied emphasize the popular aspects of a regional society situated around Quito. The album opens with “Vista del Antiguo Quito” (View of Old Quito, fig. 11). At that time the city had 50,000 inhabitants, many of whom regarded its recent colonial past as “antique” history and viewed its mythic aboriginal history as linked to Shyris and Incas, cultures that had been systematically denigrated by foreign visitors.

This “regional” album portraying craftsmen and free peasants, administrators, and traders from the highlands of Ecuador north of Quito becomes a sort of national manifesto. The nation considered

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Fig. 11. Ramón Salas, View of Old Quito. Ecuador, c. 1855–1865. Watercolor on paper. From Album de costumbres ecuatorianas: paisajes, tipos y costumbres, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. # 15-90, Madrid. Reproduced in Imágenes de identidad. Acuarelas quiteras del siglo XIX, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, Biblioteca Básica de Quito 6 (Quito: FONSAL, 2005), 163.
Lo que aconteció el 30 de Abril de 1852.

cuando se trataba de asaltar el cuartel

Vista de "El Placer"
its capital to be a unifying force. Behind the scenes the Catholic Church, as an institution, played an ambiguous role as shaper of the nation but also as the great landowner in the Sierra. It encouraged its members to be active participants in politics. Many images show its relevance in daily life and annual festivities; in contrast, very few show the strong presence of military forces, and when they do, it is in a satirical fashion. An appropriate question seems to be: Was/were the collector/collectors antimilitarists?

Ramón Salas, to whom I have attributed most of the watercolors in the Madrid Album, had been strongly involved in the political changes that took place from the 1830s to what is known as the Revolución Marcial (March Revolution), a revolution that began on March 6, 1845, and overthrew Venezuelan military officer Juan José Flores, the first president of independent Ecuador. Salas was a member of many art-promoting societies such as the Sociedad Democrática Miguel de Santiago (Democratic Society of Miguel de Santiago), the first art school founded after the Revolution, which aimed to promote free art in a freed nation. Its members declared themselves antimilitarists and anticlericals. In one of the discourses at the inauguration, it was said that painting should represent the “image of Ecuadorian nature,” as well as “virtues and vices, deformity and beauty, all of the passions, all of the events, uses, habits and costumes” of the new nation. These were images created to set examples.

Some of the watercolors inserted in the album appear to have been commissioned by local intellectuals. These have to do with specific political events or are more general political satires, criticisms of Catholic priests and their abuses, such as “What Happened on April 13th, 1852” (fig. 12), “Child Jesus Mass” (fig. 13), “Satire of the Republic in the 1imes of (President) Urbina” (fig. 14), and “The Executed” (fig. 8). They are intermingled with other images of Indian types or costumes, which, if seen in a decontextualized fashion, we could think of as symbols of the

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politics of exclusion, neutralizing social and ethnic inequalities that could menace the new mestizo orders being established. But I believe that they were afterwards literally tied to the album in a very special kind of political narrative.

The above example and other albums exhibit popular classes—mainly indigenous—about whom leading progressive politicians, diplomats, and lawyers such as Pedro Moncayo (1807–1888)20 were concerned. Another peer of Ramón Salas and Pedro Moncayo was visual artist, musician, and politician Juan Agustín Guerrero (1818–1880), who had also been part of the Escuela Democrática Miguel de Santiago. In 1852 Guerrero finished his thesis presenting a collection of tipos and indigenous musical scores. He dedicated this work to Pedro Moncayo. When Moncayo was exiled to Valparaíso, Chile, around 1870, he took with him this album/thesis, which was passed on to his son Pedro. Later inscriptions—including a dedication in the album—show that Pedro, the son, gave it as a present to Peruvian Indigenist painter Julia Codesido de Mora (1883–1979).21 This must have been a cherished gift, as it included models to be used in her own painting, with direct references to a neighboring country that suffered from the same "illness": mistreatment of indigenous people.

As another example, in the 1870s Italian musician Pedro Traversari was hired by conservative president Gabriel García Moreno as a flute professor at the new National Music Conservatory in Quito. It is known that he left for Chile with his Quiteñan wife, Alegria Salazar, to whom he dedicated another such album of watercolors compiled by him.22 His son, Pedro Pablo (1874–1956), who moved to Chile with his parents at age ten and also trained as a musician (in the Conservatorio de Santiago de Chile), was an enthusiastic collector of indigenous instruments. We might assume that Pedro Pablo kept this album for some years, as many of these plates showed Indians playing
Mera’s (1832–1894) compilation of popular poetry published in 1892 as *Cantares del pueblo ecuatoriano*. In this case, artists and writer were focused upon dignifying and preserving popular culture in a society that was starting to change dramatically. Modernity was on its way, as was a feeling of the loss of an arcadian life on the part of local Romantic artists, whose minds and hands exoticized the indigenous and popular communities with their closeness to Mother Earth and their moaning music and verses.

At the same time, the School of Arts in Quito was opened in 1904, with its main goal being to train students to become modern artists for a modern nation. While its first director, the Spanish artist Víctor Puig, was key to the initial organization of the institution, his successor from 1911 until 1920, José Gabriel Navarro (1881–1965), was fully committed to modernizing its curriculum by bringing in professors who could teach the know-how of European modern art and introduce themes that were typically Ecuadorian, thereby distancing the School of Arts from the main art centers. One such “imported” teacher was Italian sculptor Luigi Cassadio (active in Ecuador 1915–1933), who would insistently recommend that his students explore their own surroundings, the landscape, and especially the Indians. Unfortunately very few of his works have remained, and those that we know of have little or nothing to do with what he preached, the exception being *Madre india* (Indian mother), dated 1928, a large sketch that shows a young Indian woman carrying a baby, who turns around to see him with a smiling face (fig. 17). This gesture had never been present in depictions of the Indian race, which was always shown in a severe mode and related to its historically remote past.

In this new scenario, the colonial *tipos* still served as models to the new modern artists. A very good example is the large-format oil painting *India de Zambría* (Indian from Zambría) (fig. 18) by Víctor Mideros (1888–1965), dated around 1925–1930. But the *tipo* has undergone a dramatic change. This barefoot Indian young woman is beautifully dressed in her best gown and is presented in a realistic way looking firmly into the beholder’s eye. She protects herself from the sun. The impressive white backdrop reminds us of

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**Fig. 17. Luigi Cassadio, *Indian Mother*. Ecuador, 1928. Tempera on cardboard, 39 1/3 x 13 1/2 in. (100 x 34 cm). Museo de la Casa de la Cultura Benjamín Carrión, Quito. Photo: Christoph Hirtz.**
Fig. 18. Víctor Mideros, *Indian from Zámbriza*. Ecuador, c. 1925. Oil on canvas, 7/4 x 39½ in. (188 x 99.6 cm). Fondo de Arte Moderno-Contemporáneo del Ministerio de Cultura y Patrimonio del Ecuador, Guayaquil. Photo: Christoph Hirtz.
Whistler. Mideros, a former student at the school, then a teacher, and many years later, director of the institution for several terms, aestheticized and humanized the Indian woman so that she seemed real, as in Cassadó’s *Indian Mother*. The latter and other representations of indigenous characters of the time are also related to Symbolist visual art and ideas and the recovery of national pride and soul.³⁵

This same path was followed by outstanding Quiteñan photographer José Domingo Loso (1870–?), who portrayed Indian *tipos* in his studio, often using neoclassical European landscapes as backdrops (fig. 19). Again, the notion of modernizing and dignifying the subject is present. Individually or in a group, Indians from different tribes and regions of Ecuador are shown as real people, sometimes showing their deformed members caused by malnutrition or overwork, at other times smiling, talking to each other, or breastfeeding.²⁶

But such attractive and dignified depictions of indigenous peoples were by no means common practice in Ecuador—far from it. By the end of the 1920s leftist *mestizo* intellectuals were condemning the way Ecuadorians had ill-treated this group. Many of these thinkers were inspired by Peruvian Juan Carlos Mariátegui’s 1928 book *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruanas* (Seven essays for interpreting Peruvian reality). Similar voices were heard across Latin America in countries that had large indigenous populations such as Mexico, Guatemala, and nations throughout the Andean region.

The *costumbrista* and *tipo* watercolors from the eighteenth century, welcomed by scientists and voyagers, had lost their original purpose and meaning. Romantic practitioners had imbued them with a picturesque and nostalgic aura, and in turn, in modern times, paintings, sculptures, and photographs had lost their picturesque character. The people represented began to be recognized as icons of national identity—specifically, of national modern art and culture that gave character to local art.

As a result of social unrest, the difficult situation of the indigenous peoples was harshly denounced by left-wing politicians and Indigenist artists, such as former Modernists Pedro León (1894–1956) or Camilo Egas (1895–1962),
during the latter years of the 1920s, the same time in which the Madrid Album was put together.27 Did our collector share this important political stance? Apparently, in this new context, the original objects were re-semantized, and these nineteenth-century watercolors, collected in the late 1920s, served to recall a highly segregated population that had to be empowered, as it was many decades later.

Notes
5 See América exótica. Panorámicas, tipos y costumbres del siglo XIX. Obras sobre papel en colecciones de la banca central de Colombia, Ecuador, México, Perú, y Venezuela, curated by Patricia Londoño Vega (Bogotá: Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango/Banco de la República, 2004).
6 In Gaetoano Oscurati, Esplorazione delle Regioni Equatoriali lungo il Napo ed il fiuente delle Amazzoni frammenti di un viaggio fatto nelle due Americhe negli anni 1846–1847, 2nd ed. (Milano: Fratelli Cantenari, 1854).
8 Rosemarie Terán-Najas, "Facetas de la historia del siglo XIX, a propósito de las estampas y relaciones de viajeros," in Imágenes de identidad. Acuarelas quitesas del siglo XIX, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, Biblioteca Básica de Quito 6 (Quito: FONSAL, 2005), 64–65.
10 Tipos were also represented—a couple of decades later—by photographers in the same fashion as watercolorists. See Lucía Chiriboga and Silvana Caparrini, El retrato iluminado. Fotografía y pintura en el siglo XIX (Quito: Museo de la Ciudad/Taller Visual, 2005), 40.
11 A thorough study of this document was undertaken by four Ecuadorian specialists: architectural historian Alfonso Ortiz, historian Rosemarie Terán, anthropologist Jorge Trujillo, and art historian Alexandra Kennedy-Troya, and was published as Imágenes de identidad. Acuarelas quitesas del siglo XIX, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, Biblioteca Básica de Quito 6 (Quito: FONSAL, 2005).
12 This photograph was taken by P. J. Vargas. See Lucía Chiriboga and Silvana Caparrini, El retrato iluminado, 104 ff.
14 Terán Najas, "Faceas de la historia del siglo XIX," 72.
16 Terán Najas, "Facetas de la historia del siglo XIX," 64.
17 As we saw before, he was the person who illustrated Gaetoano Oscurati’s book published after his visit to the Amazonian jungle in Ecuador. Many watercolors by Ramón Salas, some signed, can be found in the Museo de la Casa de la Cultura in Quito.
19 "The Executed" became a prototype image of popular members of the opposition regularly executed by firing squads in public squares from the time of President Vicente Rocafuerte. In contrast, President Urbina became known as a statesman who defied militarism; he expelled the Jesuit order from the country, abolished slavery, limited taxes on indigenous people, and became very popular among subordinate sectors of society.
20 Moncayo and many other progressive leaders—such as Miguel Riofrío (1822–1881) and famous writer Juan Montalvo (1832–1889)—were Masons and openly criticized the government. Many had to go into exile, Moncayo among them.
21 Wilson Hallo (comp.), Imágenes del Ecuador en el siglo XIX (Quito: Ediciones del Sol/Espasa Calpe S.A., 1981), 21 ff. Codesido was the daughter of Peruvian Bernardo Codesido Oyace, who was sent to Europe as a consul and remained there with his family for 18 years. Julia Codesido went back to Lima in 1918 and, at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes del Perú, asked to be transferred to José Sabogal’s workshop in 1922. She then became one of many good Peruvian Indigenist painters. See Eduardo Moll, Julia Codesido (1883–1979) (Lima: Ed. Navarrete, 1990).
22 At present this album belongs to a descendant of his in Quito, Mario Ribadeneyra. It contains 56 watercolors.
24 Madre indita was discovered in the course of research for an exhibition curated by Kennedy and Rodrigo Gutiérrez: ALMA MIA. Simbolismo y modernidad en Ecuador, 1900–
1930. Seen through the lenses of Symbolism and Modernism, the Indian image gained a new status in art and society. See essays by Fausto Ramírez, Rodrigo Gutiérrez, Alexandra Kennedy, and Trinidad Pérez in ALMA MIA. Simbolismo y modernidad en Ecuador, 1900–1930 (Quito: Fundación Museos de la Ciudad, 2014).

21 Alexandra Kennedy, “Modernidad y gestos simbolistas en la cultura visual ecuatoriana,” in ALMA MIA, 94–96.
