

Renaissance Society of America (RSA) Annual Meeting 2025
Boston, MA, March 20-22, 2025
Deadline: August 1st, 2024

Session Title: “Empire in the Americas, 1300-1700: Art, Vision, Race, and Power”
Organizers: Kristi Peterson (Skidmore College) & Emily Thames (Independent Scholar)

When discussing the Western hemisphere and its imperial relationships, a handful of national identities typically dominate the conversation and thereby reduce the continents’ complexities. In truth, the imposition of empires and their legacies is a complex tapestry of hybridity, synthesis, and negotiations that rarely remain stable in their semiotics. European colonizations of the hemisphere also do not represent the earliest American empires, and the conversation often ignores Indigenous responses and negotiations of changing power structures informed by their own histories and placemaking narratives. As both markers and makers of emic social systems, visual and material culture both reflect and sustain, fulfill and negotiate, imperial impositions and systems.

This session is specifically interested in exploring and complicating this concept via the artistic production of the American hemisphere and its relationship to, and intersection with, the construction, maintenance, and transformations of vision and imperial structures, circa 1300-1700. This session seeks papers that examine the questions of the intersection of art making and empires in the Americas across time and national boundaries that impact our understanding of this period of time in the hemisphere and its legacies. We welcome submissions that examine issues related to vision, race, and power structures broadly defined. This includes, but is not limited to: indigenous responses and negotiations of empires, the mechanisms by which empires are built and maintained, how both local and imperial identities are negotiated through artmaking, and how visual culture is used to aid, negotiate, and even undermine/subvert imperial imposition.

We invite proposals for papers of no more than 200 words until **Thursday, August 1**. Please send with your proposal the following information to both Kristi M. Peterson (kpeters4@skidmore.edu) and Emily K. Thames (ekthames@gmail.com):

- Full name, current affiliation, and email address
- Discipline area
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Abstract text (200-word maximum)
- Curriculum vitae, no more than two pages (.pdf or .doc format)
- PhD completion date (past or expected)

The organizers will notify applicants of their status as soon as possible following the submission deadline. Those accepted will need to confirm and join RSA if they are not already members.

Please note that the conference is in-person and that all participants are required to be members of RSA at the time of the conference. Any questions may be directed to the emails listed above.