



CARL & MARILYNN THOMA ART FOUNDATION

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Thoma Foundation Awards \$128,000 to Scholars of Art of the Spanish Americas

Unrestricted project funding awarded to two Marilynn Thoma Fellows and two Thoma Foundation Research & Travel Awards winners



From left to right: Aaron M. Hyman, Katherine Mills, Ninel Valderrama Negrón, and Lucila Iglesias.

CHICAGO, IL – The Carl & Marilynn Thoma Art Foundation will award over \$125,000 in fellowships and research grants to support scholarship on the art of the Spanish Americas. This year, we are pleased to support four groundbreaking scholars whose work engages questions of epigraphy, ritual and gender, art as empire building, and devotional iconography across the 16th-through 18th-century Spanish American world.

In these uncertain times, the Foundation is proud to continue supporting innovative scholarship in this field by indefinitely extending the project timelines of these grants.

Now in their second year, the unrestricted **Marilynn Thoma Fellowships** and the **Thoma Foundation Research & Travel Awards** are the only grants of their kind in the United States. The Foundation will distribute a post-doctoral fellowship of \$60,000 and a pre-doctoral fellowship of \$45,000, both for projects lasting one year. Additionally, the Foundation will distribute two short-term travel and research awards totaling over \$20,000.

The Marilynn Thoma post-doctoral fellowship is awarded to **Dr. Aaron M. Hyman**, Assistant Professor in the Department of the History of Art at Johns Hopkins University, who will produce a book manuscript examining the unusual prevalence of written inscriptions on artworks created from 1550–1750 in present-day Spain, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. Hyman’s project focuses not on the usual questions that text can answer—“when, where and for whom works of art came into being”—but rather how those words contribute to the overall visual impact of the works. He explains, “It is the visuality of the document that proves key to understanding the work of art, and not just the document’s words and evidentiary details.” This research will contribute substantially to Hyman’s second book-length project, tentatively titled *Seeing Script: On Artistic and Archival Affinity in the Early Modern Spanish World*.

Pre-doctoral fellow **Katherine Mills**, PhD Candidate in the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, will receive \$45,000 to pursue field work related to her dissertation, which explores the relationship between architecture, devotional art, rituals, and female power in two important 17th-century convents in Cuzco, Peru: Santa Catalina and Santa Clara. Specifically, Mills explores the period of extensive reconstruction and redecoration following a devastating earthquake in 1650 that destroyed both cloisters. For Mills, this award will enable her to ambitious goal of spending a year of research based in Peru. She writes, “It would be impossible to write this dissertation without spending the full year in Cuzco, working closely with the nuns of both convents. I know that the relationships forged with both them and the greater academic community in Cuzco will lay the foundation for a long and productive career in the field and I look forward to the adventure.”

Additionally, the Thoma Foundation is pleased to announce two recipients of its **Research and Travel Awards** in art of the Spanish Americas for self-directed research projects. **Ninel Valderrama Negrón**, PhD Candidate in Romance Studies at Duke University, will receive a grant to conduct research relating to her dissertation, which examines paintings, sculptures, urban plans, and religious iconography that portray Spanish colonialism as benevolent and convey a rhetorical intention to resurrect a global empire in the final days of Spanish control in the Americas. **Dr. Lucila Iglesias**, post-doctoral fellow at the National Research Council in Argentina and Assistant Professor of Spanish American Art History and Renaissance at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, will receive a grant to research the history and material evidence of the desecrated Christ images at La Merced Church in Cuzco in order to establish a chronology of these devotions during the 18th century.

We celebrate the accomplishments of these awardees and take pride in supporting their scholarly endeavors. The fellows and award winners were selected from a competitive pool of international applicants on the basis of their academic accomplishments, their scholarly commitment to the art of the Spanish Americas, and the relative merit of their projects. All awardees were chosen by a jury of three undisclosed experts in the field. Inspired by the Thoma Foundation’s collection of over 160 works of art from the 17th to 19th centuries from the Viceroyalty of Peru and the Kingdom of Nueva Granada, these fellowships and awards are the first grants of their kind in the United States to devote unrestricted funding to scholars whose projects will make a significant contribution to the understanding of historic Spanish American art and its history.

2021–22 Fellowships and Research Awards application period announced



Later this summer applications will open for the 2021–22 Marilyn Thoma Fellowships and Thoma Foundation Travel & Research Awards in Art of the Spanish Americas. Fellowships and Research Awards are portable and funds may be used in any reasonable way the applicant sees fit to accomplish the research project. Applicants will be encouraged to propose flexible project timelines.



Please visit our website for more information about these [grants](#) and to explore our collection of [Art of the Spanish Americas](#). To stay updated with the Foundation's grants activities, sign up for our [quarterly grants newsletter](#).

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