

**COLLECTING MEXICAN ART  
BEFORE 1940: A NEW WORLD OF  
AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES**



NOVEMBER 14–15, 2019  
MUSEUM LECTURE HALL  
GETTY CENTER

## ABOUT THE KEYNOTE

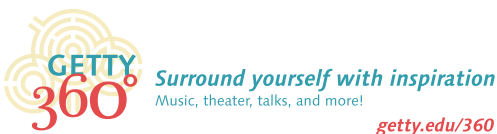
Art historian Megan E. O'Neil examines the changing US market in antiquities from Mexico and Central America in the 1930s and 1940s by focusing on Pierre Matisse and Earl Stendahl, art dealers in New York City and Los Angeles, respectively. Both Matisse and Stendahl began their businesses trading European art before adding pre-Hispanic art in the 1930s. But conflict in Europe during World War II prompted changes in the art business and, during this period, the pre-Hispanic art market largely shifted from Europe to the Americas. Matisse's correspondence illuminates the human stories that accompanied these changes, as some of his European contacts went into exile. Both men started collaborating with Mexican dealers in acquiring pieces directly from Mexico, precipitating a growth in the removal of pre-Hispanic objects from that country. While Matisse eventually stopped acquiring antiquities, in subsequent decades the Stendahl Galleries bought and sold thousands of pre-Hispanic objects from Mexico and Central America. This lecture follows the changing geographies of the art market and the lives of these two men, their sources, and their clients, who together provided the foundations for many pre-Hispanic art collections in American museums today.

## ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

This international symposium is the inaugural event associated with the Getty Research Institute's new Pre-Hispanic Art Provenance Initiative. Responding to the pressing need for preservation of ancient Mesoamerican heritage and its provenance, the initiative comprises the first systematic study of how the corpus of pre-Hispanic art took shape in North America and Europe and came to form centerpiece collections of some of the most important art museums in the world.

Speakers focus on early collections assembled between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. The year 1940—when the Museum of Modern Art hosted the groundbreaking exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, featuring works of Mexican ancient, colonial, modern, and folk art—marks the turning point when sales of pre-Hispanic art began to boom on the international art market, in part through the commercial activities of the Stendahl Gallery in Los Angeles. This symposium presents efforts of curators and scholars to study these collections comprehensively and to investigate the broader role of pre-Hispanic art in the history of the art market and in the formation of international collections and institutions.

Cover image: Drawing of Mexican antiquities (detail, color modified), Maximilien Franck, 1829. Trustees of the British Museum, Am2006, Drg.128



## Thursday, November 14, 2019

**7:00 p.m. Welcome**  
Mary Miller, Getty Research Institute

**Keynote Lecture**  
*"Good Pieces in Sight": The US Market in Mesoamerican Antiquities circa 1940*  
Megan E. O'Neil, Emory University

**8:00 p.m. Panel Discussion**  
Megan E. O'Neil  
Mary Miller  
Matthew H. Robb, Fowler Museum at UCLA

## Friday, November 15, 2019

**9:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee**

**10:00 a.m. Welcome**  
Mary Miller, Getty Research Institute

**10:20 a.m. Session I: Collections in Mexico and Guatemala**

*The History of Objects and the Objects of History: Maximilien Franck's Catalogue of Mexican Antiquities*  
Matthew H. Robb, Fowler Museum at UCLA

*Local, Regional, and Imperial Rivalry: Archaeological Collecting in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*  
Adam Sellen, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mérida

*"A scientific classification is not a bazaar": Inventories and the Science of Mexico's Ancient Past*  
Miruna Achim, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa

**11:20 a.m. Break**

**11:40 a.m. Casting for Quirigua: The School of American Archaeology and Research on Ancient Mesoamerica, 1907–1916**  
Khristaan Villela, Museum of International Folk Art

*In the Footsteps of Guatemala's First National Museum*  
Oswaldo Chinchilla Mazariegos, Yale University

**12:20 p.m. Lunch**

**2:00 p.m. Session II: Collections in the US and Europe**

*Extended Provenances: The Cultural Biographies of Mesoamerican Artifacts in Italy and Beyond*

Davide Domenici, Università di Bologna

*From Curiosity to Thirst for Knowledge and Collecting Mania: The Formation of Pre-Columbian Museum Collections in Berlin, Hamburg, and Basel*

Viola König, Freie Universität Berlin

*Black Gold and Stone Figures: Collecting Huastec Sculpture before 1940*

Kim Richter, Getty Research Institute

*Branding West Mexico: Early Collectors vs. Art Dealers*

Christopher S. Beekman, University of Colorado Denver

**3:20 p.m. Break**

**3:40 p.m.** *Maya on the Mersey: Thomas Gann and Collecting in Early Twentieth-Century Britain*

Andrew Turner, Getty Research Institute

*The Avery Judd Skilton Collection*

Brooke Luokkala, Emory University

**4:20 pm** *"American Antiquities for an American Museum": Frederick Church, Luigi Petich, and the Founding Decades of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1870–1914)*

Joanne Pillsbury, Metropolitan Museum of Art

**4:40 pm Discussion**

Moderated by Mary Miller

**5:15 pm Concluding Remarks**

Mary Miller

**5:30 pm Public Reception**