



2013 SYMPOSIUM
MAKING VALUE, MAKING MEANING:
TECHNÉ IN PRE-COLUMBIAN MESOAMERICA AND ANDEAN SOUTH AMERICA
October 11-12, 2013

Dumbarton Oaks is pleased to announce the annual Pre-Columbian symposium, to be held in the Music Room of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., on Friday, October 11th and Saturday, October 12th, 2013. Please note that the symposium will be two full days: coffee and registration will begin at 9 am on Friday, and the conference will conclude Saturday evening.

Techné was the Ancient Greek goddess of skilled crafting and artisanship; for the ancient philosophers, *techné* was a form of knowledge that entailed not mechanical crafting, but rather crafting with skill, intent and profound understanding of the relationship between process and product/outcome. This form of practical knowledge of how to create *things* included not just ceramic vessels, or tunics, or jewelry, but also the knowledge of how to create government, social relationships, and other essential elements of social life. Thus, the concept of *techné* is a powerful one for understanding the role of objects in social life and the how the processes and circumstances of their creation helps to generate social, political, and spiritual power. This symposium brings together both young and well-established scholars, all of whom are making new contributions to the study of ancient artisans and craftsmanship through the exploration of how artisan identity, access to and deployment of esoteric knowledge, and the technology and organization of production factor into the creation of symbolically and politically charged goods. Some of the participants were asked to consider the raw materials and associated understandings of different materials, and how material becomes medium. We know that in the ancient Americas jade, shell, gold, silver, stone, and other materials are closely bound up with ideas about value, be they about efficacy, kinship and other social relations, or moral beliefs. Others analyze the processes of production, and how the ways in which objects were created imbued social, political, and symbolic significance. Questions they consider include: How was esoteric knowledge employed in the creation of works? And why were certain processes favored over other, possibly more efficient methodologies? Third, some participants seek to understand the identities and roles of artisans in the Pre-Columbian world. Who were the artists and how were they organized? What was their relationship to specific social and political entities? What was the relationship between artisan identity and the meaning and value of the goods they produced?

The symposium is organized with Cathy L. Costin (California State University Northridge). Symposium speakers include Claudia Brittenham (University of Chicago), Michael Callaghan (Southern Methodist University), Lisa DeLeonardis (Johns Hopkins University), Laura Filloy Nadal (Museo Nacional de Antropología, México), Christina Halperin (Princeton University), Stephen Houston (Brown University), John Janusek (Vanderbilt University), Diana Magaloni Kerpel (Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Blanca Maldonado (El Colegio de Michoacán A.C.), Jerry Moore (California State University Dominguez Hills), Carlos Rengifo Chunga (University of East Anglia), Alessandra Russo (Columbia University), Lisa Trever (University of California, Berkeley), Carolina María Vélchez Carrasco (Proyecto Qhapaq Ñan, Ministerio de Cultura, Perú), Patrick Ryan Williams (The Field Museum, Chicago), and Colleen Zori (University of California, Los Angeles).

Space for this event is limited, and registration will be handled on a first come, first served basis. For further information, please visit our website (www.doaks.org) or contact the Pre-Columbian Studies Program at Dumbarton Oaks (pre-columbian@doaks.org, 202-339-6440).