

Architecture Professor Receives Subvention Award for Book on Early Colonial Buildings in Oaxaca, Mexico

Posted on **January 31, 2014** by **maverick**

Benjamin Ibarra Sevilla, assistant professor in the School of Architecture, has been granted a \$5,000 book subvention award by the Office of the Vice President of Research, Subvention Grants Program. The award will support the book named “Mixtec Stonecutting Artistry / El arte de la cantería mixteca” to be published by the National Autonomous University of Mexico Press.

Ibarra, who was involved in the restoration of early colonial buildings in Oaxaca Mexico, had been planning for a number of years to study the three beautiful sixteenth-century churches of la Mixteca in southern Mexico.



His curiosity for these buildings arose from the extraordinary refinement in the construction and the outstanding ribbed vaults forming the ceilings. These churches have been recognized by art historians for their monumentality, the exquisite pieces of art found in the buildings, and because of their important role that they played in the historic events that took place during early colonial times in Mexico. Ibarra's work looks at the buildings from a different perspective.

“The churches of Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán, San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca, and San Pedro y San Pablo Teposcoloula are unique pieces of architecture in the Americas, they are the continuation of the Gothic architecture on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.” wrote Professor Enrique Rabasa who is the author of the book's foreword.

In order to develop his analysis, Ibarra relied in the latest technologies, which allowed him to analyze the buildings in the digital environment. This required first, to establish collaboration agreements with institutions and the government of Mexico, in order to obtain the permissions for the documentation of the buildings. Once the agreements were in place, Ibarra used a 3D laser scanner that created a 3D model in the computer. These 3D models were analyzed obtaining the information of how the vaults were designed and how they were built stone by stone. The study looks at the buildings from the point of view of the methods of construction and the transference of building technology necessary to complete such complex buildings. The methodology implemented by Ibarra is illustrated through sixteenth-century and eighteenth-century depiction methods in combination with digital models creating a number of attractive drawings and 3D prints.

Parallel to this book, Ibarra has curated an exhibition that includes fifteen models created with 3D printing technology and thirty-seven panels profusely illustrated with photographs and drawings. The exhibition is currently traveling through different cities in Mexico and the US, and it will visit the city of Austin in late 2014. "My goal is to place these buildings in the global context of the History of Construction," has said Ibarra in his presentations about his research work. He notes his book "will be obligated reference to those who study sixteenth-century architecture in Mexico and those who admire the achievements of the indigenous people during this period of time."

This entry was posted in **Faculty Books** and tagged **Amy Crossette**, **Benjamin Ibarra Sevilla**, **El arte de la cantería mixteca**, **Mixtec Stonecutting Artistry/El arte de la cantería mixteca**, **Oaxaca Mexico colonial buildings**, **UT Austin School of Architecture** by **maverick**. Bookmark the **permalink** [<https://sites.utexas.edu/shelflife/2014/01/31/architecture-professor-oaxaca/>].