

Southwestern University
2011 International Studies Lecture Series

History and Rhetoric In the Quinatzin Map of Circa 1542

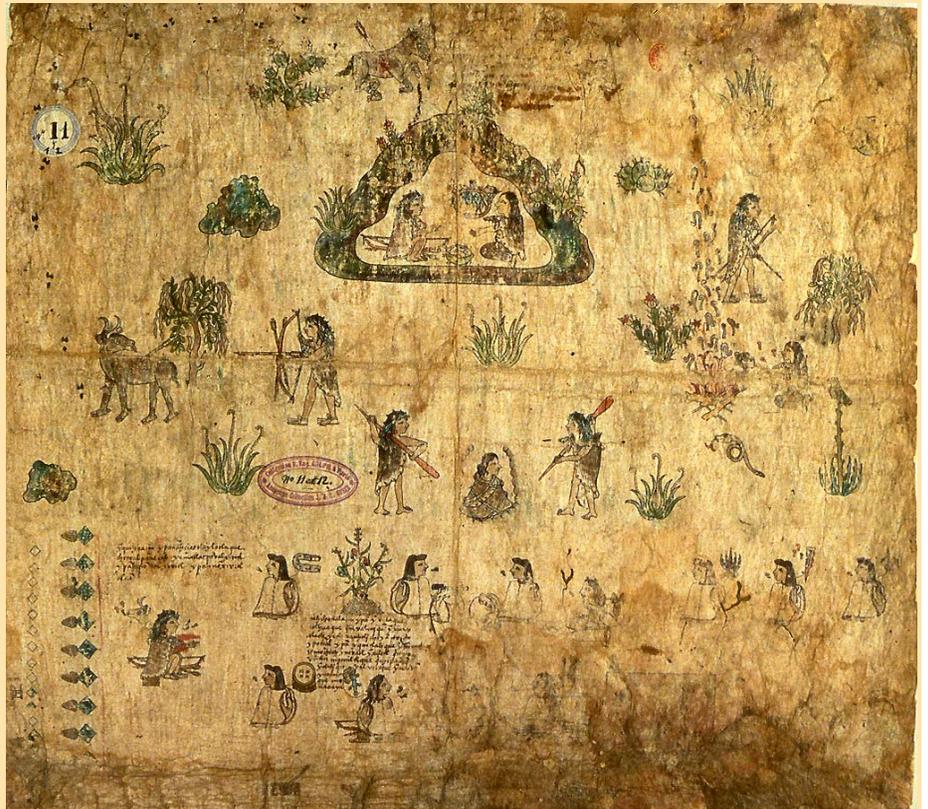
Dr. Eduardo de J. Douglas
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Thursday, November 17, 2011, 4:00-5:30 P.M.

**F. W. Olin Building, Room 110
Southwestern University
Q&A to follow**

Sponsored by the International Studies Program, the Department of History, the Art & Art History Department, and the Dean of the Sarofim School of Fine Arts Visiting Artists & Lectures Series with additional support provided by the Global Citizens Fund

Painted in Tetzco, Mexico, in circa 1542, the Quinatzin Map, a vertically oriented strip comprising three panels of indigenous fig-bark paper, brings together three categories of information: historical, economic, and ethnographic. The only other central Mexican manuscript whose thematic organization, if not its actual physical form and pictorial style, resembles that of the Quinatzin Map is also post-Conquest: the Codex Mendoza.



The Mendoza adapts indigenous pictorial forms and documentary genres to the European format and categories dictated by its putative patron, New Spain's first Spanish viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza. The Quinatzin Map distills the rhetorical and thematic structure of the Codex Mendoza's seventy-two folios into an abbreviated indigenous-style strip. While the Quinatzin's thematic concerns and overall structure may in part reflect Spanish categories of enquiry and ordering of knowledge, their reiteration in a form nearer to symbol than catalogue or narrative brings into play indigenous linguistic tropes. The manuscript simultaneously engages pre-Hispanic forms through pre-Hispanic systems of meaning and colonial assumptions and expectations through the underlying conceptual order and editorial silences. But attention to these processes does not tell us much about how empire was experienced by those people who engaged in trade, administered the state, or developed the technology that helped hold an empire together. Louis Lafite's life story, beautifully illustrated by his own watercolor maps, offers a useful example of macro historical process at work in a micro scale.