

# National Hispanic Cultural Center “MUNDOS DE MESTIZAJE”

## IMAGE GUIDE: PART FOUR

This image guide provides descriptions of the images in Frederico Vigil’s “Mundos de Mestizaje” buon fresco, located in the Torreón on the campus of the National Hispanic Cultural Center, with historical and other relevant information.

### SOUTHWEST WALL



#### Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (SW1)

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (c. 1650-1695) was one of the first published lesbian feminist scholars of the Baroque era. Sor Juana was enthusiastic about reading from an early age. In her teenage years

she was sent to live in the colonial capital of Mexico City. There she became the protégée of the viceroy’s wife, who immediately recognized her intelligence. Her involvement with the viceregal court demanded a lot of her time socially. The privilege of the court’s acceptance at a young age granted Sor Juana freedoms that many women, especially women of color, didn’t have at this time. Seeking a place of solitude for her educational pursuits, she entered the Convent of the Order of St. Jerome and became a nun. Throughout her life she studied theology, philosophy, and the natural sciences, incorporating these studies into her writing. Additionally, Sor Juana wrote love poems to female counterparts and was said to have been close with the viceroy’s wife. Existing biographical works often discount these amorous writings. Because of their daring allegories and defiance of traditional gender roles, many of her Sor Juana’s writings challenged the culture of the society she lived in and confronted the marginalization of women in Mexico. On several occasions her writing was deemed heretical in the Americas; however, her work gained more popularity overseas in Spain. In her last years, the suffering of the people in Mexico led Sor Juana to help the sick. Devoting herself to the plagued, she caught ill herself and died shortly thereafter. In *Mundos de Mestizaje* Sor Juana is depicted looking out from the barred window of the convent, with a banner surrounding her and a book beneath her.

#### La Respuesta a Sor Filotea (SW2)

*La Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, or *Response to Sister Filotea*, was written in 1691 by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz as a response to the Bishop of Puebla, who had published a private letter in which Sor Juana questioned the sermon of another religious figure. The Bishop of Puebla got hold of this letter, and publicly critiqued her behavior as a nun. She was admonished for not devoting herself exclusively to the church, for including subject matter in her writing that didn’t come from the Bible, and for pursuing her secular interests. Sor Juana responded to the Bishop by defending her right as a woman to engage freely in these intellectual and artistic interests. In her letter she also spoke out against the restrictive environment of the nunnery, where she was met with hostility for engaging in her studies and had difficulty finding books and teachers. *La Respuesta a Sor Filotea* is considered one of her most famous publications influential to many Chicano/a artists and writers.

#### Banner: “It is wisdom, not gold, that is the real crown of leaders.” (SW3)

This quotation is from *Allegorical Neptune*, or *Neptuno allegorico*, written by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to accompany the ceremonial arch she was asked to design in 1680 to welcome the entering viceroy to

Mexico City. In *Allegorical Neptune*, Sor Juana combines mythology and history, saying that Neptune was a descendant of Isis, the personification of wisdom, possessing masculine as well as feminine qualities. *Allegorical Neptune* details the materials used in the arch, the images incorporated, and the way they should be interpreted, as well as likens the viceroy to Neptune, the viceroy's wife Maria Luisa, to Amphitrite, and Sor Juana herself to Isis. Wisdom and knowledge were common themes among Sor Juana's writings.

### Corn Dancer

Corn or harvest dances are performed in Pueblo communities throughout the Southwest. This dance, which varies among the different Pueblo communities, connects teachings of the planting and harvesting seasons with sacred ceremony. The Pueblo woman in *Mundos de Mestizaje* is depicted holding evergreen branches and wearing cultural regalia to resemble that worn during a harvest dance.



### Matachines (SW5)

The dancer in the fresco is pictured in black regalia to resemble that worn during the Matachines dance. The name of the dance comes from the Spanish *matachín*, referring to a medieval European sword dance that symbolized conflict between Christians and Moors. As it traveled to the Americas, the dance merged with Indigenous influences in central Mexico to include La Malinche, and went north with the movement of the colonists to the upper Rio Grande to add Pueblo and Spanish colonial history, often including Catholic religious symbols.

Today this ritual drama is performed in Pueblo communities along the upper Rio Grande valley of New Mexico and in the greater Southwest. The dance, which can vary from community to community, consists of a procession, several dances, and a recession, usually accompanied by music played on a violin and guitar. The dancers include ten to twelve masked figures (the Matachines), a young person dressed in white as La

Malinche, an adult dancer with a floral crown who represents Montezuma or El Monarca, a person dressed as a bull, and two clowns. It is choreographically and visually distinct in Pueblo communities in the region, and the ways in which various communities perform and interpret the dance differ significantly. This dance embodies an extraordinary synthesis of history as well as culture and religion, adding layer upon layer of historical significance. As performed today in the greater Southwest, the Matachines dance ultimately demonstrates a woven history of various cultural influences.

### Banner: Hunab Ku (SW6)

Hunab Ku is the Maya deity of movement and measure, believed to be the sole creator of the universe. In Yucatec Maya, the word "hunab" refers to one state of being, and "ku" refers to the sacred or godly. Gods relating to all aspects of nature played an important role in Maya religious belief, and priests held the knowledge of these spiritual forces. In the pantheon of the Maya and the books of *Chilam Balam*, Hunab Ku is the father of Itzamna; the paramount god of Mayan culture and protector of Mayan spiritual leaders.







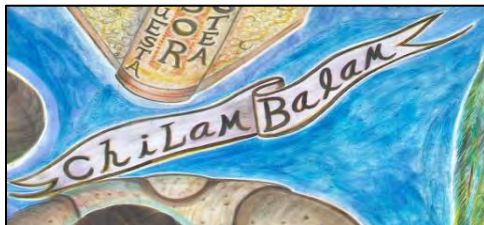
## Mayan Zero and Hand Glyphs (SW7)

The pre-classic Maya exhibited great literary and numeric advancement in their contributions to astronomy, mathematics, and writing. The Mayan symbol for zero in the fresco is depicted as an oval or shell-like shape. It is supposed that the Maya used a shell as the symbol for zero because of the civilization's proximity to the ocean; a shell then representing expanse, or perceived nothingness. In a similar manner, the Maya created their almanac and calendar system based on their observations of the movements of the stars and the planets. This vigesimal calendar system, with twenty as the base place value, is referred to as the "Long Count," which includes a cyclical chronology of the passage of time from the past and present, to several thousands of years into the future. The zero symbol is also used as a placeholder in this calendrical system. The human hand-shaped glyphs below the zero symbols in the fresco

are additional forms of Maya writing. Such glyphs are deciphered based on whether the right or left hand is displayed, whether the hand is facing toward or away from the viewer, as well as how the fingers and thumb are positioned.

## Quinto Sol (SW8)

Quinto Sol or fifth sun refers to an Aztec creation story centered around the birth, destruction, and rebirth of the worlds that came before ours today; all marked at different dates within the Aztec calendar, and found within the *Popol Vuh*. Different variations on the same origin story exist, but most include the following narrative contrasting between themes of light and dark, balance and change. Each of the five suns, or five worlds, has their own role in the Aztec story of creation. Ometeotl, the god of duality who possessed both male and female entities, birthed the gods Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl. The quarrel between these two gods led to the first sun, Nahui Ocelotl, where Tezcatlipoca transformed into a jaguar and destroyed the world. The first jaguar sun represents the element of earth. The second sun, Nahui Ehecatl, was destroyed by Quetzalcoatl, who caused a great force of wind to wipe out the earth. The wind sun represents the element of air. The third sun was brought by Tlaloc, the rain god, who brought a storm of fire and destroyed the earth. The rain-fire sun, Nahui Quiahuitl, represents the element of fire. The destruction of the fourth sun, Nahui Atl, was brought on by the kin of Tlaloc, Chalchiuhtlicue, who covered the earth in floods. This sun represents the element of water. The fifth sun, Nahui Ollin, is said to be our present world of movement; a combination of all the elements and rebirths of the worlds that gave life to our present world. In the fresco we see the suns contrasting in ochre and sepia pigments with the oldest and first sun to the bottom right, following diagonally and to the left up to the yellow fifth sun.



## Banner: Chilam Balam (SW9)

The *Books of Chilam Balam* are a series of documents written in the Mayan and Spanish languages from northern Yucatan following the Spanish Conquest. *Chilam Balam* means "speaker of the Jaguar Priest". *Chilames* were a class of priests believed to be prophets and soothsayers. Because of this, the title is sometimes referred to as the "Secrets of the Soothsayers."

The individual books are identified by the area in which they were written. Three of the most well-known are the books of Mani, Tizimin, and Chumayel. The books were written by multiple authors and

describe many subjects, featuring a fusion of Mayan hieroglyphs and Spanish imagery. Included are accounts of historical events, myths, prophecies, religion, rituals, art, medical lore, and astronomy. The *Books of Chilam Balam* have been instrumental in learning about ancient Mayan customs, politics, migration, and history.



### **Moctezuma (SW10)**

Moctezuma, also commonly referred to as Montezuma or Motecuhzoma, was the last elected ruler of the Aztecs reigning in the early 16th century. Scholars offer differing perspectives on Moctezuma; some suggest that after serving as a high priest in his early life, he became a military commander who held a semi-divine status with his people. Others note Moctezuma as a merciless and powerful leader.

In the age of the Spanish conquest, Moctezuma saw several omens and caught word of foreign ships on the coast. When he consulted seers about the mysterious

coming of the Spaniards, no one could foretell what was to come. Moctezuma learned of the Spaniards' arrival on land and believed Cortés to be the feathered god Quetzalcoatl. He invited the Spaniards to stay, and ordered his best artists to present offerings of gold and greenstone to Cortés and his men. Despite his efforts to protect his people, the Spaniards overcame Moctezuma's kingdom and continued their plight through the Americas. In the fresco, Moctezuma is shown wearing colorful feathers and holding a gold necklace towards the banner with the names of the Cortés family. La Malinche, the interpreter for Moctezuma and Cortés, is pictured next to him.

### **La Malinche (SW11)**

La Malinche, also known as Malintzin and Doña Marina, was the Mayan woman who became an interpreter for Hernán Cortés during the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Malintzin was reportedly born into a noble family in 1505 in Painalla, southern Mexico. She was educated as a child, which was atypical for women of her time. When her father died, her mother sold her to a slave trader. Malintzin was one of the 20 slave women given to Cortés as tribute after Cortés won a battle against the Mayans in 1519. Her value as an interpreter was evident to Cortés when he realized that she spoke both Nahuatl and Mayan. A talented linguist, she rapidly learned Spanish as well and became Cortés' main translator, guide, and mistress. Together they had Martín Cortés, one of the first mestizo children born of an indigenous woman and a European man. Malintzin later married one of Cortés' knights and bore a second child, dying shortly after. Over the years, historical depictions of Malintzin have taken on many forms, as Doña Marina the heroine and mother figure, to Malinche, traitor to the Mexican people, as well as Malintzin, the powerful feminist who saw a way to escape slavery, navigating a life between two cultures. Many illustrations of Malintzin in the original codices show her positioned between Moctezuma and Cortés, pointing one finger to signify her linguistic authority over these important exchanges. Vigil portrays Malinche as the "mother of mestizaje," holding a conch shell to symbolize a spiral of movement and mixing.







### Jaguar Warrior (SW12)

The jaguar is a significant motif found throughout the ruins of the ancient civilizations of the Americas in the form of paintings, pelts, sculptures, and carvings. As a symbol of worship, rebirth, and sacrifice, the jaguar is often depicted as a jaguar-human hybrid. According to Aztec legend, the jaguar and the eagle became the two highest-regarded military orders because of their bravery at a sacrificial event at Teotihuacan. In this ritual, the

jaguar represented Tezcatlipoca, the god of the night sky, and its counterpart was the eagle warrior who represented daylight and the sun. Those who were jaguar and eagle warriors were considered elite members of the Aztec military. The Aztecs wore jaguar and eagle regalia at war because they believed the animal's strengths would be given to them during battle. In Maya belief, the god of the sun would shapeshift as a jaguar during their nightly travels through the underworld.

### Corn (SW13)

Corn, or maize comes from maíz, the Spanish word for corn derived from the Taíno (Indigenous Caribbean) word for the plant. Corn began to be domesticated about 10,000 years ago by the Indigenous groups throughout the Caribbean, Central, and South America. Scientists believe that the plant we recognize as corn today developed over time from the ancient grass teosinte, traced to Central Mexico. This modern form of maize developed around 3,000 BCE, and became a staple of the Mesoamerican diet. Corn cultivation continued to spread throughout South and Central America, and the Southwest regions of North America. Though years of land disputes have disrupted some indigenous agricultural practices, indigenous people continue to enact food sovereignty by revitalizing such practices and rematriating seeds native to their land. Puebloans of the Southwest commonly venerate corn for its vitality and sustenance; some honor the crop through ritual or dance. The image of corn in *Mundos de Mestizaje* was meant to reference the four directions in Pueblo culture. This image is also connected to the Mesoamerican myth of Quetzalcoatl; a figure who was believed to have traveled over Tonacatépetl (the Mountain of Sustenance) as an ant to retrieve seeds of corn to sustain humanity.



### Popul Vuh ((SW14)

The *Popol Vuh*, meaning “book of the woven mat,” or “book of the people,” is considered one of the oldest texts of the Americas. It is an ancient literary epic written by the indigenous K’iche’, who inhabit the Guatemalan Highlands. The *Popol Vuh* narrative describes the creation story, history, and traditions of the Maya, as well as recounts the Hero Twins myth and record of K’iche’ lineage and land rights. It was written in the midst of Spanish colonization in Central America during the 16th century, as a way to preserve K’iche’ foundational stories. One of the first copies of the *Popol Vuh* comes from Father Francisco Ximénez, who studied the manuscript in the 18th century. The copy he made of the sacred text and Spanish translation are the only extant copies taken directly from the original *Popol Vuh*.

### **Olmec Head (SW15)**

As they were the first major civilization in Mexico, scholars consider the Olmec civilization (1200-400BCE) the mother culture of Mesoamerica. The Olmecs inhabited the tropical lowlands of ancient south central Mexico. They created an aesthetic, naturalistic style that influenced a large geographical area, exemplified by the colossal Olmec heads weighing between 25 and 55 tons. As with much of the stelae and other sculptures found in the area, these heads were carved from basalt boulders from the Tuxtla Mountains in the region. Historians are unsure how these monumental sculptures were moved around; it is believed that they may have been partially carved and then brought to their final locations up to 100 km away, using river rafts or log rollers. The Olmec heads each possess unique and expressive facial features, and can be distinguished from one another by the symbols on their helmets. Scholars believe that some heads represent different rulers, while the heads with helmets resemble what players wore in Mesoamerican ball games.



### **Jadeite Figurine (SW16)**

This image is exemplary of another sculptural form in Olmec art. It references a collection of 16 figurines that were found at the ruins of La Venta in Tabasco, Mexico. These intricately carved human-like figurines were buried facing each other in a semi-circular formation. The translucent green mineral that makes up this figurine is sometimes also referred to as greenstone, a form of jadeite. Other figurines at this site were made of serpentine and granite variants.

### **Mesoamerican Player and Ball Game (SW17)**

The ball game was prevalent in Mesoamerica from the Olmec to the Aztec civilizations. Archaeological remains of ball courts and ball game imagery have been found as early as 1200 BCE, the time of the Olmecs. Scholars believe that the proximity of ball courts to ceremonial sites suggests the game as having been both for ritual and sport purposes. Based on the artifacts found at archaeological sites, it is supposed that the ball game played in Mesoamerica was similar to present-day soccer; however the rules of the Mesoamerican sport are unknown. The balls used for the game were solid and hard, made of a rubber harvested from the sap of a tree native to the area. The padding of hides, wood and woven materials were likely worn over the places where players could strike the rough rubber ball. Scholars propose that teams scored by launching the ball into the opponent's goal, a stone ring located near the top of the court. In *Mundos de Mestizaje*, a player wearing the traditional padding, a rubber ball, and the circular goal are depicted. References to the sacred significance of the ball game can be found in the *Popol Vuh* text of the Maya,





specifically the “Hero Twins” myth, in which twin gods played this game against the gods of the underworld. The *Popol Vuh* also likens the head of the players to the rubber ball, emphasizing the practice of ritual sacrifice. For the Aztecs, the earthly ball court was the counterpart of the sky god’s celestial ball court. It is believed that the game itself was a symbol of the battle between the sun and the moon.



### Script on Ring, Ball Court (SW18)

This ring which corresponds to the Mesoamerican Ball Game image contains script that says, “Saquasohuh,” “Massau,” “Tonalmatl,” and “Pleroma.” Saquasohuh and Masau’u hold ceremonial and spiritual significance in the Hopi tradition. Tonalmatl refers to a sacred almanac used by the Aztecs. Pleroma is the divine fulfillment of God within Christian theology.

### Monument 19, La Venta (SW19)

This image is of Monument 19 at the archaeological site of La Venta, an Olmec religious and civic center that thrived from 800-400 BCE. It is located in the present-day Mexican state of Tabasco. The site contains various monuments, altars, large head sculptures, and stelae, all of a spiritual or ceremonial nature. Monument 19, La Venta depicts a low-relief stela carved into a basalt boulder. The actual size of the stela is about 3 feet tall. The image on the stela depicts a priest holding a bag and wearing a jaguar mask, seated inside the body of a serpent. In the Olmec belief system the priest had the ability to cross between the living and spiritual worlds; such imagery of man combined with animal was common in Olmec sculpture. This relief is believed to be one of the earliest representations of Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent) in Mesoamerica.

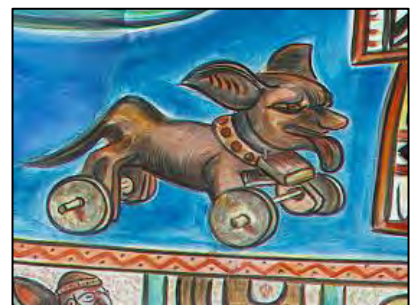


### Ant (SW20)

The ant carrying a kernel of corn signifies an ancient legend found throughout Mesoamerica. Various sources have their own origin stories for corn, and many of these are centered on a god in the form of a black ant, retrieving a kernel of corn for humanity. According to Aztec legend, at a time of drought and starvation, the god Quetzalcoatl traveled as an ant over the Tonacatépetl, the Mountain of Sustenance, beyond which the Aztecs had no knowledge of other food sources. Quetzalcoatl found corn and brought it back to his people, where the crop flourished and provided food for centuries to come.

### Wheeled Animal Effigy (SW21)

Wheeled animal effigies, such as the dog toy pictured in the fresco, date back to the late Classic through Early Post-Classic periods in Mesoamerica (600-900 CE) and have been found in few archaeological sites throughout Mexico, Panama, and El Salvador. They were typically made out of clay, and took the form of reptiles or mammals. This image was included by the artist to represent the existence of the wheel in Mesoamerica prior to European contact.



Whereas in Europe, wheels were used primarily for transportation, the wheeled animal effigies in Mesoamerica may have served as entertainment or for ritual purposes.



### Hand of God (SW22)

This image is titled “The Hand of God” by the artist, referencing the Aztec city of Teotihuacan, meaning “the place where the gods were created.” Similar hand symbolism can be found in religious artworks depicting the hand of Christ; in some cultures, the hand is also a symbol of protection from evil.

### Pyramid (SW23)

In *Mundos de Mestizaje*, you can see a pyramid-shaped structure with a circular component at the top. This depiction of a pyramid is the artist’s rendition of two separate structures located at the ruins of Chichén Itzá; El Castillo and El Caracol. At this site, El Castillo is a pyramid-like structure, and El Caracol is a shorter astronomical observatory. Chichén Itzá is located on the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. It was a grand city center occupied and controlled from c. 750-1200 CE at different times by both the Maya and Toltec civilizations. Based on their findings at these ruins, archaeologists and anthropologists determined that this site shows some of the earliest examples of acculturation. This can be seen in the fusion of the architectural styles in the buildings and blending of cultural traditions evident through artifacts found at Chichén Itzá. The structures at Chichén Itzá were named centuries after their inception by the conquistadors, who associated them with similar buildings in Spain. The artist’s inclusion of this pyramid structure in the fresco was meant to recognize the impressive architectural and scientific contributions of the Maya and Toltec civilizations, pre-dating European contact.



### Chacmool (SW24)

The Chacmool, also spelled Chak Mol, is a recurring image found throughout the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica. This carved figure is depicted as seated on the ground with bent knees and an upright torso, and its head turned 90 degrees. The statue is typically shown with a bowl or vessel on the stomach, meant to hold offerings of sacrifice to the gods. It was believed to serve as a mediator between humans and the divine, and could be found nearby thrones at the tops of temples or ballcourts, or wherever the ritual of human sacrifice would occur. Chacmool is not the actual name of this statue, rather, the name by which historians refer to it. This name originated during an excavation in 1875 by Augustus Le Plongeon and his wife Alice Dixon at the Temple of Eagles and Jaguars in Chichén Itzá, in the Mexican state of Yucatán. The Chacmool depicted in *Mundos de Mestizaje* holds a plate with Mercury to reflect the universe.



# NICHOS



## Maya Glyphs (NC1)

The written language of the Maya is believed to have been developed as early as 250 BCE. Maya writing consists of various symbols including pictorial glyphs that represent whole words, word parts, or sounds. The Maya glyphs in *Mundos de Mestizaje*, as identified by the artist, represent the following from left to right: A- unknown, B- earth, C- water, D- sky, E- water, F- earth, G- unknown. All of the glyphs pictured are the artist's rendition and may show some variance from genuine Maya glyphs.



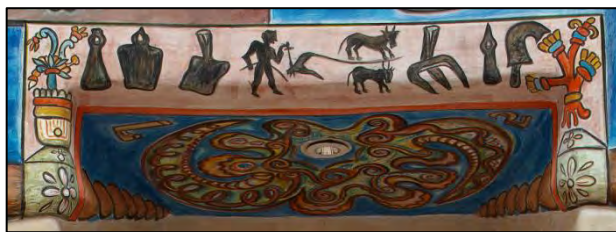
## Wooden Rope Motif (NC2)

The design element of carved rope in wood is common in Nuevomexicano art, and is also featured in the interior bordering and columns in churches and buildings throughout New Mexico. Wood carving, especially the

carving of wooden saints, has had a presence in New Mexico since the 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish colonial period. Vigil mimics this traditional New Mexican carved rope element with the painted rope and wood-like features lined along the bottom of the fresco.

## Bowl of Colorful Potatoes (NC2)

The potato is native to the Americas. It descended from a wild tuberous plant that had a tough exterior and ability to grow beneath ground, in all weather conditions year round. For this reason, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and cassava, were grown and consumed in abundance in the Americas. The cultivation of the potato was an Incan agricultural contribution. Many indigenous groups of the United States and Mexico also domesticated their own varieties of potato successfully for thousands of years. The Spanish conquistadors of the 16<sup>th</sup> century learned the cultivation of this nutritious and durable vegetable from indigenous people and brought potatoes with them on their journeys to Europe.



## Instruments and Utensils (NC3)

The artist meant for these images to reference the Bronze Age and the Celtic influence that changed the technology of the plow, irrigation, and other agricultural practices. These tools are another representation of movement of goods from the European continent to the Americas. The form they take here in the fresco are also reminiscent

of ex votos, or small votive offerings made out of metal and left at shirens, churches and other sacred spaces.

### Celtic Image (NC4)

This is a motif of a female figure with doves and Celtic symbols representing the civilizations of the Iberian Peninsula.



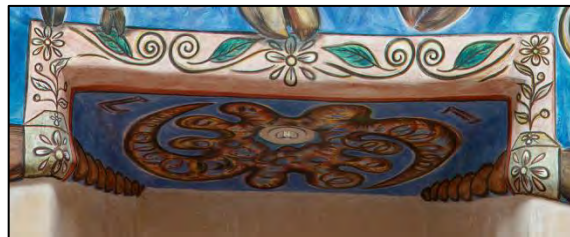
### Pomegranates (NC5)



The pomegranate is included in the fresco as a motif, present in the visual culture of many different areas of the world. The fruit is said to have originated in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE in the Middle East and Central Asia, later traveling to the Mediterranean regions of Europe and Africa, and with the Spanish Conquistadores overseas to the Americas.

### Olives (NC6)

Olives, and olive oil, were another cultural staple brought to the New World by Spanish missionaries. Although the true origin of olives is unknown, they can be traced back to the Mediterranean coast. It is believed that the Phoenicians brought olives to Spain and North Africa around 1000 BCE. The Iberian Peninsula continues to be a top producer of the fruit today.



### Flowers (NC7)

The flowers and leaves above this nicho are a design repeated on the nichos around the fresco.

### Wheat (NC8)

Wheat was brought to the Americas by the Spanish. The Spanish diet in Europe consisted mainly of bread, wine, olives, and meat. Upon arrival to the Americas, the Spanish were not used to the fruit- and vegetable-rich diet of the indigenous people. When it came to securing food and land, they based their settlement efforts on whether or not an area was viable for growing wheat. The cultivation of wheat was carried over as a tool for colonization that changed the social and agricultural landscape of the Americas.







### Sperm and Eggs (NC9)

Human creation is shown through the fertilization of a female egg by a male sperm. In each niche, the proximity of the sperm changes as it gets closer to fertilizing the egg. The artist intended this to reference the concept of human creation.

### Gye Nyame (NC10)

Gye Nyame, pronounced “jeh-nyah-me,” is a spiritual Adinkra symbol that represents the supremacy or omnipotence of god. Adinkra symbols are native to the Asante (also known as Ashanti) ethnic group of Ghana. Nana Kofi Adinkra is the name of a ruler to the Gyaman kingdom (15th-19th centuries) whose clothes were patterned with such symbols. According to Asante legend, Nana Kofi Adinkra was overtaken and brought to the kingdom of Asante against his will. The Asante then adopted these traditional Adinkra symbols, which are still recognizable in Ghana today.



### L1, L2 and L3 (NC11)

L1, L2, and L3 refer to the strands of DNA that originated in ancestral African populations. These are three major haplogroups; i.e. groups of organisms that share a common ancestor. The L1 haplogroup can be traced back to the very first female, which supports theories that all humans originated in Africa. Some

believe this to be a metaphor for the genesis of humanity from Eve; however, scholarly research does not support this theory. The Gye Nyame symbol and origin story of DNA strands (L1, L2, L3) were introduced to the artist by Father Bill Sanchez. Frederico Vigil and Father Bill Sanchez made the connection between their shared Catholic Christian beliefs and this symbol of creation, which the priest came across while traveling the western region of Africa, and therefore included it in the fresco.

