

NOTIONS OF RACE IN THE GLOBAL RENAISSANCE



The Fishermen, Tapestry from the Old Indies Series,
Royal Manufacture of Gobelins, c. 1692 - c. 1723.
<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/BK-1968-21>

The Discreet Charm of the *Old Indies*.

Kongo, Brazil, and Colonies at the Villa Medici in Rome.

A LECTURE BY CÉCILE FROMONT.

ABSTRACT: A tropical menagerie set in a lush landscape surrounds almost imperceptible human characters and architectural structures in the eight tableaux of the *Old Indies*, a Baroque tapestry from the French Royal Factory of the Gobelins. Interrogating the sources, provenance, and reception of the visual program that made their success from the 17th century to today, this talk sheds light on the long-forgotten African sources of their iconography and analyzes the long-invisible colonial dimension embedded in their alluring exotic tableaux. It puts into dynamic dialogue the context of their creation in the ebbs and flows of the early modern Atlantic World with the contemporary debates about their display as historically and socially charged objects of European artistic patrimony.

CÉCILE FROMONT is Professor of Art History at Yale University. Prof. Fromont's work focuses on the visual, material, and religious culture of Africa and Latin America, with a special emphasis on the early modern period (ca 1500-1800), on the Portuguese-speaking Atlantic World, and on the slave trade. She is the author of *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), which won numerous prestigious awards, and of *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola* (Penn State University Press, 2022). Prof. Fromont's exceptional scholarship has been recognized through various grants and fellowships from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the Michigan Society of Fellows, the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Paris Institute for Advanced Studies. She was a 2018 Rome Prize fellow of the American Academy in Rome and a Spring 2022 fellow at I Tatti – The Harvard University's Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence.

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GAYLE KARCH COOK CENTER AT MAXWELL HALL

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