



As some of you might know there is an American show on TV called "[Extreme Makeover](#)", dedicated to restore or rather reconstruct people and then there is another one which does the same thing, only with your home: [Extreme Makeover, Home Edition](#).

In walking past the colonial church that is located one block away from my home, and noticing how it is being restored, all sort of thoughts were triggered in my mind. The restoration of this church has probably as little to do with any past reality as the reconstruction of the people shown on television. **Fortunately we are in the process of being able to witness how the church is losing all patina of time, which in many ways represents an equivalent to the wrinkles on the face of contestants which are being erased by plastic surgery, the process of aging is deleted as it would be in a photographers studio using Photoshop on a digital portrait.**



© Pedro Meyer, 2006

Everything is geared to be rendered as new, young, or as it were, "seldomly used". But do not think that this is something that only happens in Mexico, it is the same in the US were in Los Angeles a hotel renovation is advertised in terms of plastic surgery and as the billboard suggests: everyone needs a little bit of that."



© Pedro Meyer, 2006

Or in China, for that matter, were the Forbidden city, is now under an extreme makeover of its own, being closed down for the coming two years, in preparation for a debut in time for the Olympics in 2008.



© Pedro Meyer, 2006

But getting back to the nearby San Juan Bautista (John the Baptist) church, not only is the face lift something to ponder about, as making it look like if it was "born" yesterday might not be the most promising form of representation for a building were the passage of time is as much part of its history as it is its architectural nature. You can't get away from the fact that the frontispiece offers us the real dates of its construction. There are in fact, two dates making reference to when the church was built. One is 1582 and the other is 1804. **Which brings up an interesting consideration with regard to digital images as to what is the date one should apply to a picture when it is done in several stages over time.**



© Pedro Meyer, 2006

I've had the custom of dating my pictures just like that, stating the dates pertaining to the time line of the various stages within the same image. Thus a photograph might have several dates to it, just like this church has (Ooops, there goes the decisive moment!). **What seems so strange to me is how difficult it has been for the photographic community to come to terms with a practice that has been accepted and commonly used in architecture since Colonial times.**

Pedro Meyer
Coyoacan, January 2006

