

SACRED SPAIN

Art and Belief in the Spanish World

October 11, 2009 - January 3, 2010 / FREE ADMISSION



Juan Correa, Mexico, about 1646-1716, Mexico, *The Woman of the Apocalypse*, ca. 1689, oil on canvas, 92 1/4 x 48 7/8 in. (234 x 124 cm), Acervo del Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán / INAH

For the first time ever, an exhibition has been planned to highlight the religious visual culture of 17th-century Spain and Latin America. This fall *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* opens at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and showcases works from artists who were charged with the task of making religious artwork that was useful, truthful, and moving.

“In an important sense, the exhibition is about the power of art,” says Ronda Kasl, IMA Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture Before 1800. “It features works of art that were created with explicit responsive goals—they were meant to arouse wonder, devotion and identification. We hope that viewers will be moved by the sheer visual impact of these works.”

THE SHOW WILL BE DIVIDED INTO SIX KEY SECTIONS:

IN DEFENSE OF IMAGES provides an introduction to the essential elements of Spanish Catholic religious practice as they relate to images. Works were used to aid memory, inspire devotion and encourage the worshipper to contemplate the divine.

TRUE LIKENESS explores the idea that some religious images offer the possibility of divine presence, or the inspiration the artist used to create them came from a supposedly miraculous origin. Although made by mortal artists, these works were believed to have been made with inspiration and assistance from God.

MOVING IMAGES focuses on the ability of religious images to provoke an emotional response in the beholder. Images were created to provoke empathetic response and move the viewer closer to God.

WITH THE EYES OF THE SOUL explores the ways in which artists depicted visually the spiritual world and events that were often too hard to describe in words because they were so passionate and emotional.

VISUALIZING SANCTITY includes several images of saints, an area of religious history that was constantly being updated with new stories and acts of heroism, holiness, and virtue that needed to be documented.

LIVING WITH IMAGES focuses on images created for use by individual worshippers and meant to help guide people towards prayer and meditation.

The exhibition and free admission are made possible through the generosity of the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation. The exhibition and catalogue are presented with the collaboration of the State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad, SEACEX, which is supported by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Ministry of Culture. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The exhibition features over 70 works of art, many of which have never been seen in the United States. The pieces emphasize the significant role of the artist in 17th-century Spain as a bridge between the mundane and the divine. Highlights from *Sacred Spain* include:



The legendary *Crown of the Andes*, which celebrates devotion to the Virgin Mary. The crown, made of gold and set with 447 emeralds, is the oldest and largest collection of these gemstones in the world.

Unknown artists, Popaán, 17th-18th centuries, *Crown of the Andes*, ca. 1600-1700, gold, cast, repoussé, and chased, with emeralds, height: 13 1/2 in. (34.5 cm), diameter: 13 1/4 in. (33.7 cm), Private collection



Agnus Dei, an illusionistic painting of a lamb bound for sacrifice and presented as an object of prayer, challenges the boundary between representation of the sacred and its actual presence.

Francisco de Zurbarán, Fuente de Cantos, 1598-1664, Madrid, *Agnus Dei*, about 1636-1640, oil on canvas, 14 x 20 1/2 in. (36.6 x 52.1 cm), San Diego Museum of Art, Gift of Anne R. and Amy Putnam.

BRINGING SACRED SPAIN TO YOUR CLASSROOM

Sacred Spain will most likely appeal to educators working with mid-elementary through university students. Visit imamuseum.org/sacred-spain for the Indiana Academic Standards that can potentially be addressed in the exhibition during tours (either docent-led or self-guided). Other specific areas of interest and opportunities may include (but are certainly not limited to):

SPANISH OR ESL/ELL teachers can request a tour given in Spanish and can explore the cultural aspects of Spanish artwork and its influence on society (available on a limited basis and scheduled first come, first-served by visiting imamuseum.org/connect/tours/schoolform or by calling 317-920-2649).

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION teachers will appreciate the wide representation of biblical stories and references, and the pieces in the exhibition will help shape thought-provoking discussions around religious themes with students.

ART TEACHERS will enjoy *Sacred Spain* for the variety of artwork displayed, including paintings, polychrome sculpture, metalworks and books. Of great importance, too, is the highlighted role of the artist: that of spiritual interpreter, guide and channel for divine inspiration.

Visit imamuseum.org/sacred-spain for more information. Book a field trip online at imamuseum.org/connect/tours/schoolform

**INDIANAPOLIS
MUSEUM
OF ART
IMA**

4000 MICHIGAN ROAD INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46208-3326
317-923-1331 IMAMUSEUM.ORG