

Note to media: The IMA will host a media preview day of *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* on Thursday, October 8. Media may arrange to preview the exhibition by appointment by contacting Laura Pinegar (317-923-1331 ext. 239; lpinegar@imamuseum.org). Ronda Kasl, Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture before 1800 at the IMA, will be available for comment. The IMA also will accommodate media visits on other dates by request.

**INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART ORGANIZES GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBITION
DEVOTED TO ART AND BELIEF IN THE SPANISH WORLD
DURING THE 17TH CENTURY**

***Sacred Spain will Feature Works by El Greco, Velázquez, Zurbarán, Murillo and Others,
Many of Which Will Travel to the United States for the First Time***

Famed Golden ‘Crown of the Andes’ To Be Featured in a Rare Public Display

***A \$1 Million Grant from the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation Will Allow the
IMA to Offer Free Admission to the Exhibition***

INDIANAPOLIS, September 15, 2009—The first exhibition to examine the religious visual culture of 17th-century Spain and Latin America will premiere at the Indianapolis Museum of Art on October 11, 2009. *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* brings to life the challenges faced by visual artists such as El Greco, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, Alonso Cano, Francisco Ribalta, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Juan de Valdes Leal, Juan Correa, Cristobal de Villalpando and others, who were charged with the creative task of making religious images that were useful, truthful and moving. The exhibition will feature more than 70 works of art, including paintings, polychrome sculpture, metalwork and books, many of which have never before been seen in the United States. *Sacred Spain* will be on view exclusively in Indianapolis from October 11, 2009 through January 3, 2010.

A \$1 million grant from the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation for *Sacred Spain* will allow the IMA to offer free admission to the exhibition, reinforcing the IMA’s reputation as a leader in audience accessibility.

Exhibition highlights include:

- The legendary golden *Crown of the Andes*, made to adorn a statue of the Virgin Mary, venerated in Popayán (Colombia). The crown celebrates the devotion of the faithful to their protectress and makes visible the mystical tie with divinity. Set with 447 emeralds, the crown is the oldest and largest collection of emeralds in the world and has rarely been displayed publicly.
- A life-size and realistically rendered sculpture, Juan Sánchez Barba’s *Cristo Yacente*, which is featured in Holy Week processions in the Spanish town of Navalcarnero and has never been exhibited outside of the town.
- Juan de Valdés Leal’s long-separated *Allegory of Vanity* and *Allegory of Salvation*, a pair of symbol-laden still lifes that contrast temporal attainments and eternal rewards.
- A trompe l’oeil “statue painting” by Cristobal de Villalpando of a famous miracle-working image of the Virgen de la Soledad carved by Gaspar Becerra.
- Francisco de Zurbarán’s *Agnus Dei*, an illusionistic rendering of a lamb bound for sacrifice and presented as the object of prayer.

This groundbreaking exhibition offers a new perspective on the sacred art of the Spanish world during the baroque period. In a departure from usual museum practice, in which religious images are treated solely as historical or aesthetic artifacts, *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* recognizes the possibility of transcendent images and seeks to reassert the art museum as a primary venue for cultural interpretation based on a deeper understanding of the creation, reception and uses of art.

“While the scenes depicted in these works may be familiar to many, *Sacred Spain* puts these paintings and sculptures in the context of a pivotal period in Spanish history,” said Maxwell L. Anderson, the Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. “This exhibition illuminates the remarkable role that the artist played at a time when art was believed to have divine power.”

“In an important sense, the exhibition is about the power of art,” said Ronda Kasl, Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture before 1800 at the IMA. “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 exhibition will be divided into six key sections: In Defense of Images; True Likeness; Moving Images; With the Eyes of the Soul; Visualizing Sanctity; and Living with Images.

In Defense of Images

Sacred Spain will begin with an introduction to the essential elements of Spanish Catholic religious practice as they relate to images. These were used to aid memory, inspire devotion and convey the worshiper toward contemplation of the divine. Faced with persistent accusations of idolatry, the Council of Trent (1545–63) previously had reaffirmed the usefulness of images for the instruction of the faithful and set the stage for an intense preoccupation with the theological arguments that shaped creative practice in 17th-century Spanish culture. This section features works by painter-theorists such as Francisco Pacheco, Fray Juan Rizi, Pablo de Céspedes and others, including Juan de Valdés Leal, who contemplates the potential for creative human action, and the resulting attainment of glory or hell, in his *Allegory of Vanity*; its dense accumulation of symbolic objects makes pointed reference to the visual arts.

True Likeness

Sacred Spain also will explore the idea that some religious images offered the possibility of divine presence. Some images owed their sacredness to a supposedly miraculous origin. The theological justification for the veneration of these works depended upon the acceptance that they were not made by mortals. Countless “portraits” of the Virgin are ascribed to the hand of St. Luke, while the face of Christ impressed on Veronica’s veil and the Virgin of Guadalupe on Juan Diego’s cloak are believed to have been transferred through direct physical contact with the divine. El Greco’s trompe-l’oeil *Veronica* bears the miraculous impression of Christ’s bloodied face and implies the presence of the actual relic of the sacred cloth. Alonso López de Herrera’s *Holy Face*, an image he replicated many times, was proclaimed a “true effigy” and authenticated by his signature.

In other cases, the religious authority of an image resides in its convincing, sometimes exaggerated, lifelikeness, conveyed through artistic means such as realism or illusionism. The latter is powerfully on display in Zurbarán’s *Agnus Dei*, which presents a lamb bound for slaughter as the object of prayer, challenging the boundary that exists between the representation of the sacred and its actual presence.

Moving Images

One of the most compelling justifications for the use of religious imagery was its ability to provoke empathetic response and move the beholder toward contemplation of God. Spanish art

often manifests the divine in terms that are both palpable and proximate, underscoring the role of the senses in apprehending purely spiritual qualities. Artists employed a wide range of techniques, but most of them shared the aim of intensifying emotional response. This is especially apparent in representations of Christ's Passion, where the subject is the graphic depiction of human suffering. This section will feature works by both painters and sculptors, including Bartolomé Estebán Murillo, Alonso Cano, Antonio de Pereda, Juan Sánchez Barba, and Baltasar de Echave Rioja.

With the Eyes of the Soul

The works in this section of the exhibition reflect deliberate efforts by artists to render purely spiritual values in visual form. The exhibition considers the ways in which artists depicted visionary experiences and expressed what was at once unknowable and unrepresentable. Similarly, it explores the religious practices and aspirations that informed and motivated these artistic representations. Key works include Francisco Camilo's painting of a vision experienced by the Spanish mystic St. John of God, who receives a Crown of Thorns upon contemplating an image of the Crucifixion. Similarly, Cristóbal de Villalpando depicts a rapturous St. Teresa being clothed by the Virgin and St. Joseph in a shining garment and a golden collar. The artistic challenge of representing such a vision is suggested by the saint herself, who wrote that the experience was beyond human understanding or imagining, and so beautiful that in comparison, everything on earth appeared to be a smudge of soot.

Visualizing Sanctity

The visual representation of sanctity constitutes one of the most fertile areas of Hispanic artistic production in the 17th century. Saints were the protagonists of a religious history that was continually updated through the addition of new episodes that featured both historical and contemporary acts of heroism, holiness and virtue. Images of the saints were of fundamental importance in the promotion of the faith, and artists were faced with the problematic task of creating likenesses of them. The motive of truthful portrayal underlies the diffusion of images like Alonso Cano's *Miraculous Portrait of St. Dominic at Soriano*, depicting the "portrait" of St. Dominic said to have been given by the Virgin Mary to the monks of Soriano and Antonio Montúfar's stark effigy of St. Francis, based on Pope Nicolas V's contemplation of the saint's mortal remains. Insistence on the necessity of truthful likenesses of the saints also resulted in portraits of individuals renowned for their saintliness, as well as postmortem portraits and death masks of the recently deceased. Velázquez's portrait of Madre Jerónima de la Fuente was almost certainly made in anticipation of efforts to promote her sainthood.

Living with Images

The final section of exhibition focuses on images created for use by individual worshipers, both lay and religious. Images of all kinds, from portable altarpieces and costly paintings to inexpensive prints, were owned by members of nearly every class and profession. Their owners prayed to them, venerated them on domestic altars, adorned them with flowers and jewels, and displayed them in oratories. Such images gave tangible form to the sacred and in a very real sense mediated the interactions of individual worshipers with the divine. The goal of these encounters was nothing less than spiritual perfection: to rise above mundane reality and achieve a closer union with God. Works in this section, including Francisco Ribalta's double portrait of a nobleman and his wife displaying a devotional image of St. Joseph and the pregnant Mary, chart the intimate, interactive relationship between worshiper and image and explore the visual strategies used by artists to activate memory and arouse response.

Symposium

Presented in conjunction with *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World*, this symposium will examine the religious visual culture of 17th-century Spain and Latin America through the fields of literature, art, religion, politics and history. The symposium will include talks

by Anne J. Cruz, professor of Early Modern Spanish Literature at the University of Miami; Ignacio Navarrete, professor of Spanish at the University of California-Berkeley; Tanya Tiffany, assistant professor of Italian and Spanish art at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and Jeffery Schrader, assistant professor of art history at the University of Colorado-Denver, as well as presentations by leading scholars from across the country. A visit to the exhibition and a musical performance are included. The event will be held at the IMA on October 16 and at Indiana University, Bloomington, on October 17. The event is free. Transportation between venues is provided. The symposium is presented in part by Indiana University, Bloomington, and has been made possible through a matching grant from the Indiana Humanities Council in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities. A complete schedule and registration information is available at www.imamuseum.org/exhibitions/sacred-spain.

iPod Touch Tour

iPod Touch devices programmed with an interactive tour application designed by the IMA for the exhibition will be available for a \$5 rental fee. The application, titled "TAP into Sacred Spain," will feature multimedia content related to artworks that appear in the exhibition, such as video of 2009 Holy Week processions in Navalcarnero, Spain, including footage of the *Cristo yacente* (Dead Christ) from the Church of la Asunción de Nuestra Señora, Hermitage of la Veracruz. The application also will feature curatorial gallery introductions, period music and more in-depth content related to other works of art and exhibition themes.

Additional Exhibition Programming

Color, Sounds, and Images in Sacred Spain

The IMA will host a performance by *Fénix de los Ingenios*: a Bloomington-based early music ensemble devoted to Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American repertoires of literature and music. Artistic co-directors are Angelique Zuluaga (soprano) and Juan Carlos Arango (dulcian).

Friday, October 16 / 7 p.m.

The Toby

\$5 IMA Members / \$10 Public / Free for symposium registrants. Tickets may be purchased online at www.imamuseum.org or at the IMA's ticketing desk.

Art Jolt: The Spanish Imagination

This two-hour, information-packed class will discuss how something as intangible as spiritual values can be represented in a visual form and will consider the ways in which artists featured in the exhibition expressed what is unrepresentable. Similarly, the class takes into consideration the religious practices and aspirations that inform and motivate such representations. Taught by Rebecca Long, IMA's Allen Whitehill Clowes Curatorial Fellow.

Thursday, October 29 / 6–8 p.m.

Adult Lecture Room A

Members \$21 / Public \$30 / Students & Seniors \$25.50. Register by October 14 online at www.imamuseum.org or by calling 317-955-2339.

Spanish Language Tours of Sacred Spain

Take a Spanish-language tour of the special exhibition *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World*. All levels of proficiency are welcome. Tours are limited to 25 persons.

Sunday, October 11 / 1:30 p.m. & 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 15, November 12, December 10 / 7 p.m.
Free; Meet at the exhibition entrance

Scott Chamber Players: Musical Migrations of the Golden Age

This concert will explore the influence of Spanish composers on music composed and performed in Europe and the Americas. Inspired by the *Sacred Spain* exhibition, the Scott Chamber Players (Lisa Scott, violin; Beverly Scott, viola; Perry Scott, cello; Sylvia Patterson-Scott, piano) interpret the sacred and secular music of Spain and its reciprocal manifestations on both sides of the Atlantic, featuring compositions by “the Guerreros” (16th-c. Spain), Antonio de Salazar (17th-c. Mexico), Domenico Scarlatti (early 18th-c. Italy), Manuel Joseph de Quiroz (early 18th-c. Guatemala), and others. Come early and enjoy Spanish-themed brunch items beforehand in the IMA’s Nourish Café.

Sunday, November 22 / 2:30 p.m.
Tobias Theater
\$14 public / \$7 IMA members / \$9 students with ID

Theological Follies: Two Films by Luis Buñuel

This one-evening film series explores identity through spirituality in the films of Spanish director Luis Buñuel, perhaps best-known for his Surrealist explorations with artist Salvador Dalí. Buñuel’s mid-career films presented here grapple with his ambivalence toward religion, a theme that would preoccupy much of his career.

Simon of the Desert (Mexico, 1965, 45 min.)

Simon, a deeply religious man, shirks the advances of the Devil by retreating to the top of a pillar. But when Simon finds himself lured to a New York City disco, he begins to question his self-righteousness. This satire on religious fanaticism won the Special Jury Prize at the 1965 Venice International Film Festival. In Spanish with English subtitles. Shown on 35 mm.

The Milky Way (Italy/France, 1969, 98 min.)

Two French pilgrims are met with a series of diversions as they embark on a journey to the holy city of Santiago de Compostela in this comedic stab at religion and faith. The film is the first in what Buñuel would later refer to as a trilogy of “comically surreal satires.” Co-written by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière, the film won an interfilm award at the 1969 Berlin International Film Festival. In French with English subtitles. Shown on 35 mm.

Friday, November 20 / 7 p.m.
The Toby
\$5 IMA members / \$9 public / \$7 students with ID

In Conversation: Popular Imagery and the Religious Imagination

Join Ivan Gaskell (Harvard University) and David Morgan (Duke University) for a discussion on the role of visual piety in popular religious culture, as they reflect on some of the issues raised in *Sacred Spain*. Moderated by Frank Burch Brown (Christian Theological Seminary).

Sunday, November 15 / 2:30 p.m.
DeBoest Lecture Hall
Free

Chef’s Taste

A cocktail reception with tapas and wine, followed by a tour. Celebrate the special exhibition *Sacred Spain* as you explore Spanish whites—Rias Bajas, Valencia, Ribeiro and Rueda.

Thursday, November 19 / 6:30 pm

Nourish Café

\$35 per person

Call (317) 923-1331 ext. 235 for reservations and more information.

Blasphemy: Art that Offends

In this talk, S. Brent Rodriguez Plate (Hamilton College) will address the issue of what constitutes acceptable religious imagery within visual culture by considering the impact of art that is perceived as controversial, idolatrous or obscene.

Sunday, December 6 / 2:30 p.m.

DeBoest Lecture Hall

Free

Chef's Taste

A cocktail reception with tapas and wine, followed by a tour. Celebrate the special exhibition *Sacred Spain* as you explore Spanish Sparklers, Cava, Torres, Penedes and Astrurias.

Thursday, December 17 / 6:30 pm

Nourish Café

\$35 per person

Call (317) 923-1331 ext. 235 for reservations and more information

Exhibition Organization and Support

Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World is organized by Ronda Kasl, Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture before 1800 at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. The exhibition concept and checklist were developed in consultation with an advisory committee of specialists in the art, history and culture of Spain and Spanish America. Principal curatorial advisors to the project include Javier Portús (Museo Nacional del Prado) and Concepción García Sáiz (Museo de América), two leading authorities on Spanish and Latin American baroque art.

Sacred Spain will be accompanied by a fully illustrated scholarly catalogue with essays by Luisa Elena Alcalá, María Cruz de Carlos Varona, William A. Christian, Jr., Jaime Cuadriello Concepción García Sáiz, Ronda Kasl, Javier Portús and Alfonso Rodríguez Gutiérrez de Ceballos.

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.

About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

The Indianapolis Museum of Art offers visitors an inclusive view of creativity through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the IMA is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and it features significant collections of

African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Through its new articulation of the interconnectedness of art, design and nature, the IMA welcomes its visitors to experiences at the Museum, in 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which will be the largest contemporary art park in the United States when it opens in June 2010, and at Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA's grounds.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with new 10,000-plus-square-foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's first level. In November 2008, the IMA opened the renovated 600-seat Tobias Theater. Nicknamed, "The Toby," the theater is a venue for talks, performances and films.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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