

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2019

Divine Illusions: Statue Paintings from Colonial South America

January 18 – May 16, 2020

Snite Museum of Art

University of Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME, IN. The Snite Museum of Art is pleased to announce the landmark exhibition *Divine Illusions: Statue Paintings from Colonial South America*, on view beginning January 18, 2020. In eighteenth-century Spanish America, sculpted images of the Virgin Mary were frequent subjects of paintings. Some of these "statue paintings" depicted sculptures famed for miraculous intercession in medieval Spain. Others captured the likenesses of statues originating in the Americas and similarly celebrated for their divine intervention. Like the statues they portrayed, the paintings, too, were understood to be imbued with sacredness and were objects of devotion in their own right.

Drawn from the extraordinary holdings of the internationally renowned Carl & Marilynn Thoma Art Foundation, this exhibition focuses on statue paintings of the Virgin from the Viceroyalty of Peru, a part of the Spanish Empire encompassing much of Andean South America. It centers particularly on works produced in Cuzco (Peru) and artistic centers in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca and explores the European and American dimensions of the phenomenon, iconographic variations in the genre, and what these works of art reveal about sacred imagery and its operation in Spanish colonial South America. The identities of the painters and patrons of these works remain largely unknown, but certainly some of them were native Andeans.

The paintings in the exhibition cohere not only in their subject matter and place of production, but also in the painters' meticulous treatment of the lavish dresses, mantles, jewels, and crowns that adorned the sculpted images.

These details enhance their illusionistic effects, simulating the presence of the dressed statue itself. By making divine images from distant places present in colonial Peru and positioning them--through painting--in the company of sacred sculptures from the Americas, works in this genre traced a transatlantic spiritual geography conceived in eighteenth-century Spanish America and extending from the Andes to the Pyrenees and beyond.

“The Museum is greatly honored to host this important exhibition and for our relationship with the Thoma Foundation,” states Museum Director Joseph Antenucci Becherer. “Such important loans and new scholarship are vital to our expanding awareness through the visual arts.”

In addition to the paintings on display, this exhibition will be supplemented with carefully selected archival and didactic materials from the Marian Library of Rare Books at the University of Dayton, the Hesburgh Library Rare Books and Special Collections at Notre Dame, and the Schurz Library Special Collections at Indiana University at South Bend. This landmark exhibition is curated by Michael Schreffler, PhD, of the University of Notre Dame’s Department of Art, Art History and Design.



Unidentified artist, *Our Lady of the Rosary of Pomata*, 1669, Oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Carl & Marilynn Thoma Art Foundation, photo by Jamie Stukenberg.

MEDIA CONTACT: If you would like high resolution images or in-depth information, please contact Gina Costa, Marketing and Public Relations Program Manager, (574) 631-4720, gcosta@nd.edu

A public reception for the exhibition will be held on Friday, January 31 from 5-7 p.m.

About the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame

Considered one of the finest university art museums in America, the Snite Museum's permanent collection contains over 25,000 works that represent many cultures and periods of world art history. Exceptional holdings include the Jack and Alfrieda Feddersen Collection of Rembrandt Etchings, the Noah L. and Muriel S. Butkin Collection of 19th-Century French Art, the John D. Reilly Collection of Old Master and 19th-Century Drawings, the Janos Scholz Collection of 19th-Century European Photographs, the Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh Jr., Collection of Meštrović Sculpture and Drawings, the George Rickey Sculpture Archive, and the Virginia A. Marten Collection of 18th-Century Decorative Arts. Other collection strengths include Olmec and Mesoamerican art, 20th-century art, and Native American art.

Sculpture is displayed in the Mary Loretto and Terrence J. Dillon Courtyard and in The Charles B. Hayes Family Sculpture Park.

Snite Museum of Art
The University of Notre Dame
100 Moose Krause Circle
Notre Dame, IN 46556
Phone: (574) 631-5466
Fax: (574) 631-8501
sniteart@nd.edu
sniteartmuseum.nd.edu

Hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Thursday evening until 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, 12 noon–5:00 p.m.

Closed Sunday, Monday, and major holidays.

Directions: nd.edu/visitors/directions

Admission is free