

DePaul Art Museum explores Colonial Andean Art

The emergence of a distinctive artistic tradition following the 16th-century Spanish invasion of South America will be explored in "Reverence Renewed: Colonial Andean Art from the Thoma Collection," which opens Jan. 15 at the DePaul University Art Museum, 2350 N. Kenmore Ave., Chicago.

The exhibition, which runs through March 20, features 40 extraordinary paintings from the collection of Kenilworth/Chicago residents Marilyn and Carl Thoma, as well as Latin American silverwork from the same period from the collection of Richard and Roberta Huber of New York City. It will highlight the diversity and opulence of the artwork from the unique historical landscape of the Spanish Empire in South America between the 16th and 19th centuries.

The show debuts with an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Jan. 15 at the museum. The exhibition will focus on three aspects of these opulent works: the prominence of the Virgin Mary and her incorporation into the South American landscape; the development of unique styles of representation by Andean artists, most notably those working in the old Incan capital of Cuzco, Peru; and the ways that the colonial environment stimulated the emergence of a distinctive set of subject matters and iconographies.

Curator of the exhibition is Delia Cosentino, associate professor of art history and architecture at DePaul and a specialist in colonial Latin America. "The Spanish and

Portuguese conquistadors of South America were accompanied by missionaries intent on converting local populations to Christianity, which included building and decorating churches based on European prototypes to varying degrees. While much inspiration came from the art and architecture of Italy, Spain and Flanders, the South American examples were products of their colonial environment, indeed often made by native and mixed-blood artists who infused the works with their own religious and broader cultural values," Cosentino said.

"Similarly, the scale and exuberance of the works not only evoke Baroque traditions of Europe, but also reflect the complex social and economic Andean situation where a growing elite class accumulated the kind of wealth from local resources – like silver – that allowed for such luxurious expression," she added.

Museum Director Louise Lincoln said of the exhibition: "Many images in the Thoma collection are literally dazzling in their surfaces and palette, and we expect that their visual appeal will generate curiosity and encourage visitors to delve more deeply into their history and meaning."

In conjunction with the exhibition, a lecture series and musical program will be offered. All events will be held at the DePaul Art Museum.

On Jan. 22, 6 p.m.: Luisa Elena Alcalá, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, speaks on the localization of the Cult of the Virgin Mary in the Americas.

On Feb. 12, 6 p.m.: Sabine MacCormack, University of Notre Dame, will talk on the Bible in the Andes.

At noon on Feb. 17, Joseph Barabe of the McCrone Group, a specialized laboratory for microscopy and materials analysis, details the examination of a painting of an archangel with arquebus. The lecture addresses the topic of authentication of a painting through laboratory analysis, an important topic within museum and collector circles but rarely addressed publicly.

On March at 6 p.m.: Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, independent scholar and consultant to the Thoma Collection, discussed South American images of hell.

Then, on March 8 there will be a thematically related concert of early music from Spain and Portugal in the New World, sponsored by Ars Musica. The DePaul Art Museum is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information about "Reverence Renewed" or other museum programs and exhibitions, please call 773/325-7506 or visit <http://museums.depaul.edu/artwebsite/>.

Also opening Jan. 15 in the museum's north gallery will be "Realism and Magic: Latin American Photography Collection of DePaul University." Twenty images from DePaul's growing collection, ranging in dates from the 1860s to the present, show the polished and distinctive practice of photography in Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Peru and the Caribbean. The opening reception for the exhibition, which runs through May 24, also will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Jan. 15.



Saint Michael Archangel will be displayed in the exhibit.