

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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Blanton Announces Curator of Spanish Colonial Art Underwritten by Thoma Foundation,
Long-term Loan of Works from Thoma Collection

*Gift Will Galvanize Institutional Initiative
in Spanish Colonial Art and Culture Across Campus*



AUSTIN, TX—November 30, 2016—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin and The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation announce the establishment of the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Associate Curatorship of Spanish Colonial Art at the Blanton. Underwritten by the Thoma Foundation, the position correlates to a long-term loan to the Blanton of works from the Thomas' distinguished collection of Spanish colonial art. The Thoma Foundation will also support short-term research grants for visiting scholars, available through the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection (LLILAS Benson).

This initiative has catalyzed multidisciplinary collaborations across campus. The Blanton and the Thoma Foundation, in partnership with LLILAS Benson, have developed a program that will focus on displaying, teaching, and researching the artistic production of the Spanish colonial period. The overarching goal of this unique national model is twofold: to share material from the Thoma, Blanton, and Benson collections with both students at UT and broader audiences, and to work across campus to impact scholarship in the field both at the university and on a national and international stage.

“We are thrilled to share these beautiful and impactful works of art from the Thoma Collection with UT and the community,” remarks Blanton Director Simone Wicha. “I am deeply grateful to Carl and Marilyn Thoma for this transformative gift and the loan of works from their collection, which provides new opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration and programming at the university. These collaborations have already taken shape across campus, bringing together a remarkable community of scholars around an area of study that has historically been under-examined. As a university, we are excited to support scholarship in this important field and lay the foundation for building a strong collection of Spanish colonial art at UT.”

Dr. Rosario I. Granados, a curator and lecturer in the field of Spanish colonial art and religious material culture, has been appointed as the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Associate Curator of Spanish Colonial Art. Granados has taught extensively on material culture, art, gender, and religion in Latin America, and has recently held positions at Skidmore College, the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago, and the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (UNAM, Mexico).

Marilynn Thoma says, “Carl and I are confident in the potential of this campus-wide, interdisciplinary initiative to strengthen The University of Texas’ international leadership position as a cultural resource and academic center for Latin American art. The Blanton’s links with LLILAS Benson and other departments across campus will provide an important multi-disciplinary setting that will help foreground a comprehensive approach to the study of Spanish colonial art in the context of the larger, burgeoning field of Latin American art.”

As expressed in the mission statement for their foundation, Carl and Marilyn Thoma “believe passionately in the power of art to enrich life, to teach and to deepen understanding of the cultures, places and times of which we are a part”—goals shared by the Blanton. The partnership between the Blanton and the Thoma Foundation first began in 2008, with the Blanton’s presentation of *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1600—1825 from the Thoma Collection*, organized by the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University. In 2014, the Blanton organized *Re-Envisioning the Virgin Mary: Colonial Painting from South America*, an installation of Spanish colonial paintings featuring works from the Thoma Collection.



Two galleries dedicated to art from the Spanish Americas will be included in the Blanton’s reinstallation of its permanent collection, scheduled to open to the public February 12, 2017. The galleries will feature paintings on loan from the Thoma Collection along with bibliographical materials from the Benson Collection, and works from other private collections, and will mark the first time in its history that the Blanton has dedicated permanent gallery space to art from the Spanish colonial period. The second rotation of these galleries in spring 2018 will coincide with LLILAS Benson’s annual Lozano Long Conference, which that year will be dedicated to showcasing

the most recent scholarship on Spanish colonial art and visual culture. By emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration, the aim of this academic gathering will be to highlight the relevance of this period to the contemporary world and the different theoretical perspectives available for its study.

Also during the 2018 spring semester, Dr. Gabriela Siracusano will join the university as a Tinker Visiting Professor in Spanish colonial art and visual culture appointed through LLILAS Benson. She will teach a course addressing the history and materiality of paintings from this period.

Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Director of LLILAS Benson remarks, "This is a unique collection that eloquently conveys not only a sense of the Spanish colonial visual aesthetic, but also provides a strong sense of the time and place from which these pieces came. It is a singular and mesmerizing collection."

The long-term loan of works from the Thoma Collection to the Blanton will be critical to the cultivation of a strong body of research on Spanish colonial art, and will strengthen collaborative relationships between UT and other research institutions. While the majority of the 26 works on loan from the Thoma Collection will be on view at the Blanton, a small number of works will be available to faculty from departments across campus for pedagogical purposes.

Short-term research grants, also supported by the Thoma Foundation, will be made available through LLILAS Benson to scholars, curators, and PhD students (preferably but not exclusively from Latin America) interested in the study of Spanish colonial art and culture. Thoma Visiting Scholars in Spanish Colonial Art will travel to Austin for three-week stays devoted to research on the Benson, Blanton, and Thoma collections, which together provide unique opportunities for comparative research on colonial Mexican and Andean art, among other topics.

The College of Liberal Arts at UT (COLA) will lend generous support to the faculty side of the initiative, with additional support provided by the College of Fine Arts (COFA) and the School of Architecture. Susan Deans-Smith, Associate Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of History at COLA, has been instrumental in thinking through the initiative as it relates to UT faculty, and serves as faculty coordinator for the project. She and Granados lead a Working Group comprised of faculty members from the departments of art history, history, architecture, and anthropology, as well as Blanton curators, LLILAS Benson staff, and UT students, whose purpose is to facilitate awareness of the vast resources available to students and scholars for the study of this subject at the university. With this goal in mind, they will explore available options for establishing a long-term teaching program in this burgeoning field.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Collection of Spanish Colonial Art

The Marilyn and Carl Thoma Spanish Colonial Collection includes paintings that capture the expressions and intertwined history of European and Andean cultures. The paintings represent the geographic diversity of the Viceroyalty of Peru, the administrative entity by which Spain controlled most of South America since 1542.

Blanton Museum of Art

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with nearly 18,000 objects. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The Blanton holds one of the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive collections of twentieth-century Latin American art in the country, with more than 2,200 modern and contemporary paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures, reflecting the great diversity of Latin American art and culture. More than 600 artists from Mexico, South and Central America, and the Caribbean are represented.

The Blanton's collection of European art includes works from the fourteenth through nineteenth centuries, and is particularly rich in Italian Renaissance and Baroque art, and seventeenth-century French paintings. With the renowned Suida-Manning Collection at its core, augmented by generous gifts and strategic purchases, the Blanton's collection offers an in-depth view of the development of European art through dynamic and engaging works.

LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections

LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, a partnership of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, raises awareness of past and current issues that affect Latin America and U.S. Latina/o communities through its world-class collections, globalized higher education, research, international exchange, and public programs.

Rosario I. Granados

Rosario I. Granados has a PhD in art history from Harvard University and an MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art. Her areas of specialization are colonial Latin American art and religious material culture. Prior to joining the Blanton, Granados held post-doctoral fellowships at Skidmore College, the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago, and the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (UNAM, Mexico). She has taught extensively on material culture, art, gender, and religion in Latin America, topics in which she also has a strong portfolio of publications and public presentations. Her museum experience began more than a decade ago at the Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe in Mexico City, where she was head of research and of community outreach programs.

Gabriela Siracusano

Gabriela Siracusano earned her PhD in art history from the University of Buenos Aires, and has been a visiting professor and scholar at several universities, including Columbia University, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, and others. She was a Getty Postdoctoral Fellow in 2003 and a Guggenheim Fellow in 2006–2007. She is a scientific researcher at CONICET (National Research Council, Argentina), Professor of Theory and Historiography of Art at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, and Professor of Colonial Art at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM). She was the Research and Academic Director of the Instituto de Investigaciones sobre el Patrimonio Cultural (UNSAM) and is currently Director of the Centro de Investigaciones en Arte, Materia y Cultura at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero. Siracusano is also part of the Material Economies

of Religion in the Americas: Arts, Objects, Spaces, Mediations Project, organized by Yale University's Center for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion.

The College of Liberal Arts

The College of Liberal Arts is at the heart of academic learning at UT Austin. Although 10,000 students and 120,000 alumni call the college home, nearly all students at UT take liberal arts classes as part of the core curriculum. Liberal arts students are independent, original thinkers who hold many campus leadership positions and consistently earn top national awards including Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships. Offering more than 50 majors in the humanities, social sciences and languages, the college's 22 academic departments rank among the nation's best, and its 500+ research faculty include Guggenheim and Mac Arthur Fellows and members of the National Academy of Sciences and American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Susan Deans-Smith

Susan Deans-Smith is Associate Professor in the Department of History and an affiliate of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. She specializes in colonial Latin American history and the history of the Spanish empire, with a particular interest in Mexico and the Andean region. Additional research interests include comparative colonialisms and empires, the social and cultural histories of artisans and artists, and visual and material culture. She is currently completing a study of the first fine arts academy established in Spanish America, *Matters of Taste: Cultural Reform in Bourbon Mexico and the Royal Academy of San Carlos (1781-1821)*. She received her BA from Warwick University and her MPhil and PhD from Cambridge University. Her books include *Bureaucrats, Planters and Workers: the Making of the Tobacco Monopoly in Bourbon Mexico* (University of Texas Press 1992) and *Race and Classification: The Case of Mexican America* co-edited with Ilona Katzew (Stanford University Press, 2009).

The College of Fine Arts

The College of Fine Arts at The University of Texas at Austin prepares students for the creation, practice, study, criticism and teaching of the arts, in a context that emphasizes cultural diversity, community engagement and technical innovation.

The College is dedicated to advancing the arts through research and the creation of new work, preserving the past while striving to define the future of artistic traditions. It is committed to exploring the interrelationships among the arts and among other disciplines. Through presenting performances and exhibitions, the College seeks to deepen the understanding of the arts, to expand audiences, and to enrich the quality of life at the university, in our community, our state, our nation and the world.

The School of Architecture

A top-tier school of design and planning, the UT Austin School of Architecture is known for melding theory and practice. The faculty include many accomplished professionals in the fields of architecture, interior design, urban planning, landscape architecture, and historic preservation. The faculty also advance theory through research, writing, exhibitions, and symposia and have a broad range of expertise in architectural history, building systems, technology, sustainability, transportation, Latin American architecture and urbanism, and the social effects of the built environment. This scholarship is advanced through the school's

three dedicated research units—the Center for American Architecture and Design, the Center for Sustainable Development, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. The school's undergraduate programs in architecture and interior design maintain rankings in the top six nationally, and the graduate program in architecture is in the top fifteen. It is one of the few public schools to achieve such rankings at both graduate and undergraduate levels.



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Image captions:

Unknown workshop (Cuzco, Peru)

Procession of Our Lady of Mercy, called "the Pilgrim of Quito"

Circa 1730- 1735

Oil on canvas

31 1/2 x 50 3/8 in.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Collection

Melchor Pérez Holguin (circa 1660 - 1732)

Saint Luke Painting the Virgin

Early 18th century

Oil on canvas

37 1/2 x 27 3/4 in.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Collection