



Meadows Museum Presents First Major Exhibition in the U.S. of Masterworks from the House of Alba Collection, Among the Most Significant Private Collections in Europe

*Exhibition features more than 100 works by artists such as Goya, Renoir, and Rubens
as well as objects and documents spanning 500 years of history
Exhibition is part of Meadows Museum's 50th anniversary*

Dallas, TX (Southern Methodist University), August 31, 2015 – The Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University presents the first major exhibition in the U.S. of works from the House of Alba collection, one of the oldest and most significant private art collections in Europe. *Treasures from the House of Alba: 500 Years of Art and Collecting* features more than 100 works—from paintings by Goya and Rubens to 16th-century tapestries by Willem de Pannemaker and 19th-century furniture created for Napoleon III—most of which have never been seen outside of Spain, as well as illuminated manuscripts, books, historic documents, miniatures, antiquities, prints, sculpture, drawings, and other objects. Curated by Dr. Fernando Checa Cremades, former director of the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, *Treasures from the House of Alba* is on view at the Meadows from September 11, 2015 through January 3, 2016, and serves as a cornerstone of the Museum's 50th anniversary celebration, which will continue throughout 2015. After its viewing at the Meadows Museum, the exhibition will travel to the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, where it will be presented from February 5 through May 1, 2016.

The House of Alba—for centuries the most illustrious household in Spain, with close ties to the monarchy—remains one of the foremost noble families in Europe, with roots dating back to the mid-15th century when Fernando Álvarez de Toledo was named Count of the town of Alba de Tormes. The Albas have since forged connections with members of some of the most prominent dynasties in European history, including the House of Stuart; the Count-Dukes of Olivares; the Duchy of Veragua, (descendants of Christopher Columbus); Napoleon III and his wife, Eugenia de Montijo; and the Churchill family. Over the past five centuries, the Alba family's patronage, connoisseurship, and ties to Western royalty have shaped the growth and trajectory of the Alba collection, which is now one of the greatest private collections in the world. Until her passing in November 2014, the head of the Alba family was Cayetana Fitz-James Stuart, the 18th Duchess of Alba, who bore more recognized titles than any other noble today. She is succeeded by her son, Carlos Fitz-James Stuart y Martínez de Irujo.

“Our will is to share the works and pieces that make up the collection of the House of Alba Foundation with a public that is increasingly knowledgeable and more interested in culture and history,” said Carlos Fitz-James Stuart y Martínez de Irujo, Duke of Alba. “This selection of objects allows us to present different works and documents that have survived the vicissitudes of history and represents the greatest treasure of the legacy of our family. It is also an extraordinary opportunity for making the public aware of the steady and silent work of preservation and upkeep that the House of Alba has been doing for centuries.”

“The Meadows Museum is incredibly grateful for the generosity of the late Duchess of Alba, the Duke of Alba, and the entire Alba family, who have so graciously agreed to lend a range of preeminent works from their collection for this groundbreaking exhibition,” said Mark A. Roglán, The Linda P. and William

A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum and Centennial Chair in the Meadows School of the Arts. “These extraordinary works of art, many of which have never crossed the Atlantic before, are a treasure trove and a fount of new art historical knowledge. We are honored to present the first exhibition of this outstanding collection in the United States, sharing these works of art that tell the story of a remarkable family and provide an opportunity to explore the panoply of cultural achievement and European history. We are honored that Fernando Checa Cremades is the curator for *Treasures from the House of Alba*, working with the Museum to present the collection in a way no one has experienced before.”

Exhibition Themes and Highlights

Treasures from the House of Alba is organized chronologically according to seven periods of Alba family history, collecting, and patronage from the 15th to the 20th century. The exhibition begins with the dynasty’s origins in the mid-15th century and rising influence under the 3rd Duke of Alba, Don Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, a prominent courtier in the service of the Spanish monarchy in the 16th century. This is followed by an exploration of the family’s close ties to the Marquis of Carpio, Europe’s greatest art collector of the 17th century, from whom the Duchy of Alba received important holdings of Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and to the Duques of Veragua, from whom came the Christopher Columbus documents featured in the exhibit. The exhibition also presents a section devoted to Goya and his relationship with the Duchess Doña Teresa Cayetana, and concludes with the extensive collecting activity of the late Duchess and her father since the beginning of the 20th century, which includes the acquisition of works by such artists as Peter Paul Rubens, Joshua Reynolds, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Pablo Picasso, among others.

The exhibition features works from the family’s three most prominent palaces in Spain: the Palacio de Liria in Madrid, Palacio de las Dueñas in Seville, and Palacio de Monterrey in Salamanca. In addition to works currently housed in the Alba collection, the exhibition includes loans from distinguished museum collections that were once part of the Alba holdings. These loans serve to complement the contributions from the Alba family and showcase the full scope of the family’s collecting history.

Highlights include:

- ***The Duchess of Alba in White* by Francisco de Goya y Lucientes** (1795), a portrait that serves as testament to the close relationship between Teresa Cayetana de Silva Alvarez de Toledo, the 13th Duchess of Alba, and the famed Spanish painter. Goya created several renowned portraits of the Duchess, many of which were completed shortly after her husband’s death in 1796, sparking rumors that the Duchess and the artist were lovers.
- ***Charles V and the Empress Isabella* by Peter Paul Rubens** (c. 1628), a double portrait painted after a lost work by Titian. Charles served as the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Germany, Italy, and Spain in the early 16th century, and was best known for his considerable role in opposing the Protestant Reformation. The Empress’s portrait here was painted posthumously.
- ***Girl with Hat with Cherries* by Pierre Auguste Renoir** (1880), a portrait painted toward the end of the artist’s Impressionist period. During the 1880s, Renoir spent a significant amount of time traveling abroad, visiting Italy, Holland, Spain, England, Germany, and North Africa. It was during this time that the artist became inspired by the works of Raphael, Velázquez, and Rubens, and traces of these influences can be seen here.
- ***The Bible of the House of Alba***, an early 15th-century illuminated manuscript and one of the earliest known translations of the Old Testament from Hebrew into a Romance language. The Bible contains commentary written by both Christian and Jewish theologians, and was an attempt

to encourage stronger ties between Christians and Jews. The Bible was part of the library of the kings of Spain, and was later housed by the Inquisition before it was finally recovered for the House of Alba by the Count Duke of Olivares in 1622. In honor of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion in 1992, 500 copies of the Alba Bible were published, one of which was given to King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

- **One of Christopher Columbus’s logbooks**, a set of manuscripts documenting the explorer’s journey of discovery of the New World in 1492. The House of Alba’s archive of 21 Christopher Columbus documents includes nine personal letters (one of which is addressed to Columbus’s son Diego) and four of the only remaining documents written during the time of his four voyages. This logbook also features the first map of the New World as drawn by Columbus during his first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.
- ***The Virgin of the Pomegranate* by Fra Angelico** (c. 1426), a centerpiece of the Alba family’s collection since 1817 when it was acquired in Florence by then-Duke of Alba Carlos Miguel Fitz-James Stuart. Rarely publically displayed, the painting depicts the Madonna and Child engulfed in a golden cloth and flanked by two angels, and showcases Fra Angelico’s mastery of naturalistic compositions through the figures’ delicate features and surrounding drapery. The work was created during the same period in which Fra Angelico produced the *Annunciation* altarpiece for the Convent of San Domenico en Fiesole, now in the Museo Nacional del Prado, which is considered one of his greatest works. The Meadows exhibition marks the first time the work has traveled to the U.S.
- ***Mercury Enamored of Herse* by Willem de Pannemaker** (1570), one of eight mythological tapestries that comprise the only complete surviving example of a series depicting Ovid’s tale of the loves of Mercury and Herse. Willem de Pannemaker was a tapestry-maker and supplier to the royal courts of the Flemish Renaissance in the 16th century—including Charles V and his son Philip II—and was significantly inspired by Raphael’s tapestry designs for *The Acts of the Apostles* in the Sistine Chapel.

“This exhibition represents an unprecedented moment of art historical discovery,” said Fernando Checa Cremades, Curator of *Treasures from the House of Alba* and former director of the Museo Nacional del Prado. “Displaying and studying these masterpieces will spark a new wave of research and scholarship in the field, and will build our understanding of these celebrated artists and their legacy. The depth and breadth of the exhibition enables museum audiences and scholars alike to experience over 500 years of European history anew and on an unprecedented level of intimacy.”

Treasures from the House of Alba is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, which includes in-depth information about the collection and its history, and lays the groundwork for future research on the works included in the exhibition, as well as the collection as a whole. The catalogue, which contains essays from nine noted scholars of Spanish art, is edited by Fernando Checa Cremades and includes studies of the Alba family’s three main palaces, as well as new photography of the buildings and their current décor and gardens.

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Exhibition Support

This exhibition has been organized by the Meadows Museum at SMU. A generous gift from The Meadows Foundation has made this project possible. It is part of the Museum’s Golden Anniversary,

which is sponsored by The Meadows Foundation, The Moody Foundation, the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District. Media sponsorship has been provided by The Dallas Morning News. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

About the Meadows Museum

The Meadows Museum is the leading U.S. institution focused on the study and presentation of the art of Spain. In 1962, Dallas businessman and philanthropist Algur H. Meadows donated his private collection of Spanish paintings, as well as funds to start a museum, to Southern Methodist University. The Museum opened to the public in 1965, marking the first step in fulfilling Meadows's vision to create a "Prado on the Prairie."

Today, the Meadows is home to one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. The collection spans from the 10th to the 21st century and includes medieval objects, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures, and major paintings by Golden Age and modern masters. Since 2010 the Museum has been engaged in a multidimensional partnership with the Prado, which has included the exchange of scholarship, exhibitions, works of art, and other resources.

About the Fundación Casa de Alba

The Fundación Casa de Alba is a Spanish institution dedicated to culture. Established May 14, 1975 by Cayetana Fitz-James Stuart, 18th Duchess of Alba, with the inestimable support of her husband Luis Martínez de Irujo y Artázcoz, it is mindful of the important patrimony possessed by the House of Alba, of which she was the head. The objectives of the Foundation include the permanent exhibition to the public of works of art belonging to the Foundation in the Palaces of Liria in Madrid and Monterrey in Salamanca; the conservation and dissemination of the historical and artistic heritage of the House of Alba; and the description and conservation of its bibliographic and documentary holdings.

WHERE: Meadows Museum
5900 Bishop Blvd.
Dallas, TX 75205

WHEN: *Treasures from the House of Alba* will be on view in Dallas from September 11, 2015 through January 3, 2016.

Hours: Tue-Sat 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Thu until 9:00 p.m., Sun 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Closed Monday.

Admission: \$12, adults, \$8, seniors 65 & over, \$4, non-SMU students.

Free: Museum members, children under 12, SMU faculty/staff/students. Free Thu eve after 5:00 p.m.

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