

March 18, 2013

JOAQUÍN SOROLLA OIL SKETCH ACQUIRED BY MEADOWS MUSEUM

DALLAS (SMU) – *Valencia Beach* (1904 or 1905), an important oil sketch by early 20th-century Spanish artist Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (1863-1923), has been acquired by the Meadows Museum at SMU through a gift from Mark L. Lemmon, his wife Barbara Thomas Lemmon, and her son Michael L. Thomas. The gift was made in honor of P. Gregory Warden, former faculty member of SMU’s Meadows School of the Arts.



Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida is one of the most significant Spanish artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. An accomplished painter of portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes of his native land, the artist is best known for his sun-filled beach scenes that take as their subject matter the play of light on various forms. Sorolla is especially well regarded for his adept ability to paint *en plein air* and to work quickly and depict meticulous detail in order to create an effect specific to each subject. His influence can be seen in the work of many artists represented in the Meadows Museum collection, such as Aureliano de Beruete (1845-1912) or Eugenio Hermoso Martínez (1883-1963).

“The painterly, spontaneous quality of *Valencia Beach* makes it among the finest of Sorolla’s works,” said Meadows Museum Director Mark A. Roglán. “It is the artist’s first small-scale work on panel to enter the Meadows holdings, which will make it possible for us to better present the full breadth and complexity of this acclaimed artist.”

“We had discussed with Meadows School of the Arts Dean José Bowen and Mark Roglán our desire to honor Greg Warden in some fashion,” said Mark Lemmon. “When *Valencia Beach* came up for sale we knew it was the perfect gift, as Dr. Warden is an admirer of Sorolla.”

Valencia Beach, which will join three other paintings by Sorolla currently in the museum’s collection, is unique in its format, which is commonly referred to as an *apunte*. Small in scale and rapidly painted, Sorolla’s *apuntes* were independent works; they were not created as preparatory designs for larger-scale paintings. Offering a unique view into the painter’s process, these intimate works show the essence of Sorolla’s artistic achievements.

This particular painting has been identified as one of the works that was presented in February 1909 at the monographic exhibition of Sorolla’s work at The Hispanic Society of America in New York. More than 150,000 people attended the month-long exhibition, one of the first recorded “blockbuster” attendance records in the first half of the 20th century. The painting will be included in the forthcoming exhibition “Sorolla and America,” under development by the Meadows Museum, The San Diego Museum of Art, and Fundación MAPFRE in Madrid. Set to open in December 2013 at the Meadows Museum, “Sorolla and America” will explore the artist’s relationship with early 20th-century America by examining his immense popularity with patrons and collectors of the time.

Dr. P. Gregory Warden

Distinguished professor of art history and associate dean for research and academic affairs in SMU’s Meadows School of the Arts, Warden has been an integral part of the school and the museum throughout his 30-year career at SMU, during which he served two years as interim director of the museum. Recently appointed president of Franklin College in Lugano, Switzerland, Warden assumed his new position this past fall. He remains an active member of the Meadows Museum Advisory Council, a post he has held since 2008, and he co-directs the Mugello Valley Archaeological Project/Poggio Colla Field School in Tuscany.

Dr. Mark L. Lemmon, Mrs. Barbara Thomas Lemmon & Dr. Michael L. Thomas

Mark Lemmon served in WWII and Korea and graduated in 1948 from the University of Texas Medical Branch of Galveston. During his career as a plastic surgeon he became known for pioneering the modern face-lift procedure. Barbara Lemmon attended North Texas Women’s University and has distinguished record of service with a number of community organizations including the Dallas Museum of Art, M.D. Anderson and Zale Lipshy/St. Paul Hospitals, and the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. In the early 1990s they retired to devote more time to San Saba Vineyard, which they had purchased in 1975. Mrs. Lemmon’s son by a previous marriage, Michael L. Thomas, is director of the Center for the Study of Ancient Italy (CSAI) and a research affiliate - research fellow in the department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. He serves on the Meadows Museum Advisory Council and co-directs CSAI’s two Italian projects: the Oplontis Project and the Mugello Valley Archaeological Project/Poggio Colla Field School in Tuscany.

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' 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.

Image credits:

Left: Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida (Spanish, 1863-1923), *Valencia Beach*, 1904 or 1905, oil on canvas laid on cardboard. Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas. Given in honor of Dr. P. Gregory Warden by Dr. and Mrs. Mark L. Lemmon, MM.2012.02. Photo by Dimitris Skliris

Right: From left to right in photo: Dr. and Mrs. Mark L. Lemmon, Dr. P. Gregory Warden. Photo by Tamytha Cameron.

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