



MEADOWS MUSEUM
SMU · DALLAS

MEADOWS MUSEUM ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF
LATE MEDIEVAL ALTARPIECE PANEL

Gilded painting one of only three works in the collection dating before 1450

Dallas, TX—February 23, 2017—The Meadows Museum at SMU announces the acquisition of a late medieval altarpiece panel attributed to Spanish painter Pere Vall (active in Cataluña c. 1400–c. 1422). One of only three works in the collection dating before 1450, it considerably strengthens the Museum’s holdings from this important period in Spain’s history. The tempera on wood panel painting, dated c. 1410, features the Saints Benedict and Onuphrius. It is the first work by this artist to enter the Museum’s collection, as well as the first work acquired under the new phase of the Meadows Acquisition Challenge Fund, with matching funds generously provided by Richard and Luba Barrett.



The painting is one of six extant panels (two in the collection of the Indianapolis Museum of Art) that once formed part of a *banco* or bottom row of an altarpiece (also known as a *predella*) likely created for a side chapel within one of Cataluña’s many churches. The tempera painting on wood is a prime example of the large, gilded retables so often seen in Spain’s churches, and features Vall’s characteristic affinity for flat figures and strong contours. Saint Benedict is depicted with his *Rule* and a crozier, while the amusing figure of Saint Onuphrius, a hermit saint, is shown completely covered in hair.

Only a few objects in the Museum’s collection represent the roughly six centuries of the Middle Ages, such as the *Catalan*

Cabinet (1375–1400); this panel therefore represents a significant acquisition representing the Hispanic artistic tradition of the later medieval period, which was characterized and dominated by large, painted retables serving as instructional backdrops for the theater of the mass. With *Saints Benedict and Onuphrius* in the

Meadows collection, the Museum is better poised to offer students and visitors a more complete view of the religious practice that so shaped the lives of medieval Spaniards.

“By activating the challenge fund recently put in place, we hope to encourage other donors to follow suit in the future,” said the Barretts. “We are delighted to be able to support the Meadows Museum and to recognize the excellent work being done by Director Dr. Mark Roglán and his outstanding team.” Richard is a member of the Meadows Museum Advisory Council.

Dr. Roglán added, “We are thankful to the Barretts for their continued support of acquisitions, loans and other aspects of museum operations; this acquisition strengthens our holdings of medieval Spanish art and improves our ability to illustrate its development to students, scholars and the public.”

The Meadows Acquisition Challenge Fund was established in 2006 as part of The Meadows Foundation’s historic gift of \$33 million to SMU. Five million dollars of the gift was designated as a challenge grant to match dollar-for-dollar new gifts for the acquisition of additional works of art for the collection. Over the next ten years, the fund was completely matched and allowed the Museum to acquire significant works of Spanish art, such as Jaume Plensa’s *Sho* (2007); Francisco Goya’s *Portrait of Mariano Goya, the Artist’s Grandson* (1827); and Salvador Dalí’s *L’homme poisson* (1930). In April 2015, The Meadows Foundation renewed the challenge grant for a second decade, this time with \$6 million in funding, part of a total gift of \$45 million.

About the Artist

Pere Vall (also referred to as the Master of the Cardona Pentecost), was a well-documented retable painter who likely trained in the studio of Pere Serra in Barcelona but was primarily active in the town of Cardona (Cataluña) during the first decades of the 15th century. He is represented in the collections of a handful of prominent museums, including the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, the Museu Episcopal de Vic, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. Others of his altarpieces (or parts thereof) remain in situ in Cardona. He is among the most distinctive and prolific of documented artists active in the environs of Barcelona during the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

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 small Prado for Texas."

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 centuries 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 Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, which has included the exchange of scholarship, exhibitions, works of art and other resources.

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