



**MEADOWS MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW FELLOWS FOR FALL 2023,
INCLUDING FIRST FELLOW FOR THE CUSTARD INSTITUTE FOR
SPANISH ART AND CULTURE**

DALLAS (SMU) — Dec. 5, 2023 — The Meadows Museum, SMU, today announced the appointment of three new fellows who joined the museum this fall. Dr. Patricia Manzano Rodríguez, a scholar of 17th-century Spanish painting, will serve as the museum’s Mellon Curatorial Fellow for two years, and Cristina Sol A. Aldrich, whose research has focused on Iberian art during the Medieval period, will be the 2023–2024 Center for Spain in America (CSA) Curatorial Fellow. Also announced today is the appointment of Dr. Agnieszka Anna Ficek as the first fellow of the museum’s newly launched Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture. This postdoctoral fellowship is held jointly with the Edith O’Donnell Institute of Art History at The University of Texas at Dallas. Ficek’s work has examined the history and production of porcelain, which she will apply to a new digital heritage project investigating the porcelain rooms that the Bourbon King Charles of Naples (later King Charles III of Spain) commissioned for the royal palaces at Portici and Aranjuez.

“I am thrilled to welcome Patricia, Cristina, and Anna as our incoming fellows,” said Dr. Amanda W. Dotseth, the Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum. “These scholars represent the bright future of Spanish art history, each bringing unique perspectives shaped by their multidisciplinary pursuits and dynamic research interests. Cristina’s work on medieval Castilian sculpture and Patricia’s focus on Velázquez’s milieu epitomize our commitment to spotlighting diverse voices and Spanish art’s enduring global impact.”

Added Dr. P. Gregory Warden, the Mark A. Roglán Director of the Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture: “It is exciting to have Anna join the Institute as our first fellow, now that we have completed the work on our new space and are planning a diverse array of projects for the future.”

The salaried fellowships offer professional training and support for emerging scholars in the field of Spanish art history, while enabling the publication of original research and providing hands-on experience as museum professionals. Following an international open call, the fellows were selected through a rigorous process led by the museum’s director along with key leaders from the curatorial and education departments and the Custard Institute.

Additional details on each of the fellows is below.

Patricia Manzano Rodríguez, 2023–2025 Mellon Curatorial Fellow:

Patricia Manzano Rodríguez is an art historian specializing in 17th-century Spanish painting. She recently completed her Ph.D. in the School of Modern Languages and

Cultures, Durham University, with a thesis on the Spanish painter Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, student and son-in-law of Diego Velázquez. Her research on Mazo, including the most complete catalogue of his works to date, provides a new perspective on Velázquez and his workshop. She also has proposed organizing the first exhibition dedicated to Mazo's oeuvre, with the goal of displaying his work alongside Velázquez's to showcase his technical mastery. She previously received her M.A. in Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture from the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Manzano is widely recognized for her scholarship and has received a number of awards and grants, including the Juan Facundo Riaño Essay Medal, following which she was invited by the Museo Nacional del Prado to present at their *Programa Joven* initiative. In 2022, at Durham University, she supported the development of the online exhibition *Hispanic Art in British Regional Collections: History, Display, Research*.

Cristina Sol A. Aldrich, 2023–2024 Center for Spain in America Curatorial Fellow:

Cristina Sol A. Aldrich is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, specializing in Medieval Iberian art. Her dissertation, "Inventing the Immutable Virgin: Medieval Sculpture for a Multiconfessional Castilian Society," analyzes polychrome wood sculptures of the Virgin and Child to unpack Marian devotion in medieval Spain. More broadly, by analyzing these sculptures and what they reveal about the spiritual, dynastic, and political aspirations in Spain in the 12th to 14th centuries, Aldrich sees a way to shed light on the ongoing dynamics between religion and authority in contemporary society. She has presented on these and related topics, including the paper "Valencian Lusterware at The Cloisters: Shedding New Light on Iridescent Ornament," for the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Decorative Arts & Design (ICDAD). Aldrich completed her M.A. in 2017, also at NYU.

Aldrich was most recently the Vilcek Curatorial Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she assisted with research projects on medieval and early modern Spanish art. Her scholarship has been recognized with a number of awards and grants. Previously, she served as an intern in the Education Department at the Hispanic Society in New York.

Agnieszka Anna Ficek, Custard Institute for Spanish Art and Culture Fellow:

Agnieszka Anna Ficek is an historian whose interdisciplinary research addresses the intersections of art, literature, science, and material culture. She completed her Ph.D. at the City University of New York, where her dissertation focused on 18th-century French representations of indigenous South Americans, analyzing exoticized views of the Inca Empire, and connecting more broadly to how these visual constructions challenged or reinforced colonial dynamics during a time of radical change. She received her M.A. from Hunter College in 2016 with a focus on Latin American Colonial Art.

Fluent in four languages, Ficek received the ASECS Bate-Bryant Fellowship from Harvard University's Houghton Library, among other honors. Her scholarship has also explored Sarmatian-themed porcelain figures and the global circulation of silver,

making her a strong fit for the Custard Institute's upcoming digital porcelain rooms project.

Ficek will work with the faculty and staff of both the Custard Institute and the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History (EODIAH) at the University of Texas at Dallas on the research project "Royal Power, Exoticism, and Technology: Porcelain Rooms from Naples to Madrid." This cultural heritage project brings together art historians and experts in digital technologies at both institutions to create digital models of two of 18th-century Europe's great artistic and technological achievements: the porcelain rooms that the Bourbon King Charles of Naples (later King Charles III of Spain) commissioned from his court porcelain manufactories for the royal palaces at Portici (10 km southeast of Naples) and Aranjuez (50 km south of Madrid). In addition to the Custard Institute appointment, she holds a UTD/EODIAH affiliation as a Visiting Researcher and will teach a course on digital cultural heritage at SMU in the spring of 2024.

The Meadows Museum is located on the SMU campus at 5900 Bishop Blvd., Dallas, TX 75205. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday with extended hours until 9 p.m. on Thursday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Parking is free for museum visitors. For more information, go to meadowsmuseumdallas.org.

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. For more information visit meadowsmuseumdallas.org.

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