



Behind Closed Doors: Art in the Spanish American Home, 1492-1898

On View at the New Orleans Museum of Art June 20, 2014-September 21, 2014

New Orleans, La. - Opening June 20 at the New Orleans Museum of Art, *Behind Closed Doors: Art in the Spanish American Home, 1492-1898*, is an immersive exhibition that explores the private lives and interiors of Spain's New World elite from 1492 through the nineteenth century. Organized by the Brooklyn Museum, the exhibition displays the use of American, European, and Asian luxury goods from everyday life as signifiers of the faith, wealth, taste, and socio-ethnic standing of their consumers. Common themes throughout the exhibition showcase rituals in the home and the display of social identity through material culture.

"Behind Closed Doors is an ideal exhibition for the city of New Orleans, a city with an important history of Spanish America," said Susan M. Taylor, Director of the New Orleans Museum of Art. "This exhibition showcases the cultural and artistic traditions New Orleans shares with the former Spanish colonies of the Americas. NOMA houses one of the most important collections of Spanish Colonial art in the United States and plans to reinstall one of its most important holdings in the Spanish Colonial collection."

The exhibition will showcase approximately 160 paintings, sculptures, prints, textiles, and decorative art objects, compiled by curator Richard Aste of the Brooklyn Museum. Eleven objects from NOMA's Spanish Colonial collection will be included in the exhibition's installation in New Orleans. The material demonstrates how colonial Spanish America's new moneyed classes—including Spaniards, Creoles (Spaniards born in the New World), individuals of mixed race, and indigenous people—secured their social status through the spectacular private display of luxury goods from all over the world. The exhibition will invite the visitor into an elite Spanish colonial home, beginning with more public reception rooms, hung with elaborately costumed family portraits and filled with fine imported and locally produced luxury goods, and ending with more private rooms, displaying objects that also spoke to the racial and social identity of their owners.

Throughout this exhibition, Spanish colonial objects intended for the home will be paired with British American counterparts for purposes of comparison. The exhibition, which encompasses all of the New World under Spanish domination, calls attention to the Caribbean's pivotal but, surprisingly, often overlooked role in Spanish American history.

"Behind Closed Doors offers a unique opportunity to address the legacy of Spanish America in New Orleans through an examination of the American continent's rich material culture – and the social constructs behind this incredible cache of artworks," said Lucia Abramovich, Curatorial Fellow for Spanish Colonial Art. "This exhibition also presents the opportunity to showcase several pieces from NOMA's superb Spanish Colonial collection alongside the Brooklyn Museum's world-renowned collection of Spanish Colonial art."

NOMA

Among the exhibition highlights is a group of luxury objects from the viceroyalty of New Spain, which comprised present-day Mexico and Central America. One is a shell-inlaid and painted folding screen, or *biombo enconchado*, commissioned expressly for Mexico City's viceregal palace about 1700 by Viceroy José Sarmiento de Valladares. This extremely rare, massive six-panel screen will be a focal point of the exhibition, along with a newly discovered late eighteenth-century Neoclassical portrait by the Puerto Rican painter José Campeche. Depicting twenty-one-year-old Doña Maria de los Dolores Gutiérrez del Mazo y Pérez, the painting commemorated her marriage to the future viceroy of New Granada.

Behind Closed Doors: Art in the Spanish American Home, 1492-1898, will be on view at NOMA from June 20 through September 21, 2014. An accompanying catalogue will be available for purchase in the Museum Shop.

Exhibition Organization and Credits

Behind Closed Doors: Art in the Spanish American Home, 1492-1898 is organized by the Brooklyn Museum. Generous support for this exhibition has been provided by National Endowment for the Humanities. The New Orleans presentation is underwritten by the Zemurray Foundation, with additional support provided by Pan-American Life Insurance Group.



NOMA Admission

Wednesdays are FREE for Louisiana residents. Adults, \$10; Seniors (65 and up) and Students, \$8; Children 7-17, \$6; Children 6 and under, free.

About NOMA and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses nearly 40,000 art objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing temporary exhibitions, are on view in the museum's 46 galleries Fridays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by over 60 artists, including several of the 20th century's master sculptors. The Sculpture Garden is open seven days a week: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. For more information about NOMA, call (504) 658-4100 or visit www.noma.org.

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