

PASSPORT TO EUROPE

Six Centuries of Treasures from Museo de Arte de Ponce

This exhibition is organized by Museo de Arte de Ponce. This exhibition is supported by the Museum's Friends of European Art and the Museum's Connoisseurs Circle. Promotional support for this exhibition has been provided by Cox Communications **cox**, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Latino Future Magazine and Scottsdale, Glendale, Mesa and Phoenix Public Libraries.

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For Immediate Release

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EXHIBITION OF EUROPEAN MASTERPIECES DEBUTS AT PHOENIX ART MUSEUM

PHOENIX (February 6, 2008) – On display for the first time in North America, Phoenix Art Museum presents *Passport to Europe: Six Centuries of Treasures from Museo de Arte de Ponce* an exhibition of 59 paintings spanning six centuries and nine nationalities. The traveling exhibition makes its U.S. debut on Sunday, April 6, and features exquisite examples of French Academic, Italian Baroque and British Victorian painting from the permanent collection of Museo de Arte de Ponce, in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Internationally recognized as an important center for European art from the Renaissance to the early 20th century, Museo de Arte de Ponce is the Caribbean's premier fine art institution.

In 1959 Ponce native and industrialist Luis A. Ferré (1904-2003) founded Museo de Arte de Ponce with the vision of creating a museum that would be a showcase of Western art. Advised by Dr. Julius Held, a leading art historian, Ferré assembled an encyclopedic collection of fine European Old Master and 19th century paintings, offering the citizens of Puerto Rico a first-hand look at the finest expressions of international culture. Extensive renovations at Museo de Arte de Ponce allow an unprecedented number of the museum's finest holdings to be shown at select North America institutions. This is a rare occasion for residents of the American Southwest to enjoy this unparalleled collection in their own backyard during its limited engagement here in Phoenix.

"*Passport to Europe: Six Centuries of Treasures from Museo de Arte de Ponce*, presents more than 50 works of the highest quality from every major school of European art," commented Cheryl Hartup, Chief Curator, Museo de Arte de Ponce. "The exhibition is a unique opportunity for new audiences to admire both the paintings in themselves and the pioneering vision of the museum's founder, Luis A. Ferré."

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Museo de Arte de Ponce's Chief Executive Officer and Director, Agustín Arteaga, Ph.D, explained that “since the museum's inception, collaborative exchanges, including works on loan, have been a constant in Museo de Arte de Ponce's relationship with major international institutions. The paintings that comprise *Passport to Europe: Six Centuries of Treasures from Museo de Arte de Ponce* are representative of our European collection, and the exhibition exemplifies our interest in making our holdings available to the North American public”.

“Picture by picture, Museo de Arte de Ponce's holdings rival great collections including those of the Frick Collection (New York), the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston) and even The Getty (Los Angeles),” said Thomas J. Loughman, Ph.D., Curator of European Art, Phoenix Art Museum. “*Passport to Europe* brings high-caliber paintings from Italian Renaissance artists such as Luca de Tommé, a stunning Reformation-era altarpiece by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, and one of Jean-Léon Gérôme's greatest paintings into one superb show.”

Featured in *Passport to Europe* are notable works of the Northern Renaissance including Lucas Cranach's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and Joos Van Cleve's *The Flight into Egypt*; Italian and Spanish Baroque paintings by Jusepe de Ribera, Bernardo Strozzi and Francisco de Zurbarán; Dutch and Flemish Baroque paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, David Teniers and Anthony van Dyck; French paintings by Charles Le Brun and James Jacques Joseph Tissot; and major British paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, James Ward and Edward Coley Burne-Jones.

The exhibition is organized by Museo de Arte de Ponce, The Luis A. Ferré Foundation, Inc. Ponce, Puerto Rico. This exhibition is supported by the Museum's Friends of European Art and the Museum's Connoisseurs Circle. Promotional support for has been provided by Cox Communications Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Latino Future Magazine and Scottsdale, Glendale, Mesa and Phoenix Public Libraries.

Public Events:

The Museum is offering a full schedule of programs and events relating to the exhibition, such as workshops,

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lectures, music and more. Updated information regarding public programs can be found on the exhibition Web site, www.passporteurope.org.

Exhibition Details:

Passport to Europe will be on view in Phoenix Art Museum's Steele Gallery April 6 thru June 15, 2008.

Admission to the exhibition is included in general museum admission, which is \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens (65+), \$8 for full-time college students with ID, \$4 for children ages 6–17 and free for children under 6 and for museum members. Admission is also free on Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. and for everyone on First Fridays, 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Phoenix Art Museum is located in downtown Phoenix at the corner of Central Avenue and McDowell Road. Museum hours are Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. and Wednesday – Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays.

About Museo de Arte de Ponce:

Museo de Arte de Ponce (MAP), widely recognized as a premier institution of Italian, French, and Victorian painting, opened less than fifty years ago as a collection of fine European art acquired by philanthropist Luis A. Ferré "for all Puerto Ricans to enjoy". Thanks to a major renovation and expansion of MAP's award-winning Edward Durell Stone building, *Passport to Europe: Six Centuries of Treasures from Museo de Arte de Ponce* brings part of Ferré's trendsetting collection of Old and Modern Masters--today one of the finest in the Americas--to the United States. This group of exemplary European paintings will serve as the museum's ambassadors during its temporary closing from 2008 to 2010. MAP is the proud guardian of approximately 3,600 works of art (paintings, sculptures, and works on paper), among which are the extraordinary pieces of the English Pre-Raphaelites, the Italian Baroque and the French

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Academy. Spanning six centuries and nine countries, these paintings represent the major schools of European art from the Renaissance to World War I, and serve as a fitting tribute to the vision of MAP's founder. Since November, 2007 MAP has a second venue called MAP@PLAZA, located at the third floor of Plaza Las Américas, the most important shopping mall in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

For more information about MAP or MAP@PLAZA, call to 787.848.0505, 787.200.7090 or 787.840.1510. You can also visit the museum's web site at: www.museoarteponce.org

About Phoenix Art Museum:

The classically progressive design of the 203,000 sq. ft. Phoenix Art Museum integrates art and architecture with the Southwestern landscape, accommodating large traveling exhibitions and a collection of over 17,000 works in American, Asian, modern & contemporary, European, Latin American and Western American art, and fashion design. Visitors also enjoy the Sculpture Garden, the Thorne Miniature Rooms of historic interiors, PhxArtKids interactive space for children, Art Museum Café and The Museum Store. Visitors can learn more about the Museum's collection through its bilingual, random access MP3 audio guide, available at the admissions desk. The museum recently opened its \$50 million expansion project, which included the addition of a glass-enclosed lobby and entry plaza, 4-level gallery wing, sculpture garden and expanded store.

For more information about this exhibition or Phoenix Art Museum, visit the Web site at: PhxArt.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

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