



Kimbell Art Museum presents *Murillo: From Heaven to Earth*, September 18, 2022–January 29, 2023

Landmark exhibition surveys Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's realist representations of ordinary life in 17th-century Seville

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORT WORTH, TX—The Kimbell Art Museum presents *Murillo: From Heaven to Earth*, a comprehensive exhibition of works by Spanish Golden Age painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682). The leading religious painter of Seville during his time, Murillo is primarily known for his depictions of the life of Christ, Christian saints, and other Biblical scenes, including monumental paintings of the Virgin in celestial glory. While *Murillo: From Heaven to Earth* includes a number of these religious paintings, its focus is instead on his earthly pictures of secular subjects and representations of everyday life in the 17th century, which constitute some of the artist's most iconic pictures. Guillaume Kientz, director of the Hispanic Society Museum and Library in New York and former curator of European art at the Kimbell, serves as curator for the exhibition, which will be seen only at the Kimbell. On view from September 18 through January 29, 2023, the show will feature 50 paintings organized around concepts of youth and age, comedy, romance and seduction, compassion, narrative, and modern realism.

Murillo: From Heaven to Earth is the largest gathering of paintings in the United States by the artist since the Kimbell's 2002 exhibition, *Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1617–1682: Paintings from American Collections*, and expands the scope of the focused exhibitions on the artist's portraits (Frick Collection, 2017) and the New Testament narrative of the Prodigal Son (Meadows Museum, 2022). The show is inspired by the Murillo masterpiece *Four Figures on a Step*, which was acquired by the Kimbell in 1984 and is one of the museum's most compelling and enigmatic paintings. A rare work in Murillo's oeuvre, the image depicts street life in Seville with an unsettling cast of characters. In contrast to his

iconographic works, Murillo's intimate depictions of the poor and narratives of charity embody a culture—both visual and literary, stretching from Northern Europe to Spain—that would, for the first time in modern history, make the lower classes the main subjects of its pictorial narratives and written tales.

“Murillo's depictions of everyday scenes are especially remarkable because they have no real precedent in Spain,” said Eric M. Lee, director of the Kimbell Art Museum. “The show hopes to shed new light on these paintings' complex meanings, revealing their importance in their own time and suggesting their relevance in our own.”

This exhibition brings together some of Murillo's most exceptional and unusual genre scenes from collections worldwide, including *San Diego de Alcalá and the Poor* from the Real Academia in Madrid, the National Gallery of Art's *Two Women at a Window*, and the *Young Beggar*, on loan from the Musée du Louvre, Paris. A number of religious scenes in which emphatic realism advances the Biblical narrative are included, among them the *Marriage Feast at Cana* from the Barber Institute, Birmingham, England. The exhibition will also feature another aspect of Murillo's engagement with contemporary reality—the magnificent, and very worldly, portraits of Spanish clergymen, merchants, and aristocrats who went to the painter for a commemoration of their earthly success and power.

“While his predecessors achieved a revolution in grounding their art into reality via faithful observation and rendering, Murillo blurs the lines and challenges the boundaries between sacred and secular, earthly and heavenly,” says Guillaume Kientz.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with essays and commentaries by leading scholars of Spanish art and culture: Guillaume Kientz, director of the Hispanic Society Museum and Library; Ronni Baer, Allen R. Adler, Class of 1967, Distinguished Curator and Lecturer in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University; Madeleine Haddon, teaching fellow at Edinburgh University; Fernando Loffredo, assistant professor in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature at Stony Brook University; and Xavier F. Salomon, deputy director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator at the Frick Collection, New York. The Kimbell is pleased to offer free admission to *Murillo: From Heaven to Earth* during its 50th anniversary week, from October 4 through October 9.

DATES

September 18, 2022–January 29, 2023

Subject to change

EXHIBITION CREDITS

This exhibition is organized by the Kimbell Art Museum.

SUPPORT

The Kimbell is supported in part by Arts Fort Worth, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Promotional support is provided by American Airlines, NBC5 and PaperCity.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to *Murillo: From Heaven to Earth* is \$18 for adults, \$16 for seniors, K–12 educators, students and military personnel, \$14 for ages 6–11, free for children under 6 and \$3 for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. Admission is half-price all day on Tuesdays and after 5 p.m. on Fridays. Admission to the museum’s permanent collection is always free.

The Kimbell Art Museum is open Tuesdays through Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Fridays, noon–8 p.m.; Sundays, noon–5 p.m.; closed Mondays, New Year’s Day, July 4, Thanksgiving and Christmas. For general information, call 817-332-8451.

ABOUT THE KIMBELL ART MUSEUM

The Kimbell Art Museum, owned and operated by the Kimbell Art Foundation, is internationally renowned for both its collections and its architecture. The Kimbell’s collections range in period from antiquity to the 20th century and include European masterpieces by artists such as Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini, Velázquez, Vigée Le Brun, Monet, Cézanne, Picasso and Matisse; important collections of Egyptian and classical antiquities; and the art of Asia, Africa and the Ancient Americas.

The museum’s 1972 building, designed by the American architect Louis I. Kahn, is widely regarded as one of the outstanding architectural achievements of the modern era. A second building, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, opened in 2013 and now provides space for special exhibitions, dedicated classrooms and a 289-seat auditorium with excellent acoustics for music. For more information, visit kimbellart.org.

IMAGES

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Three Boys*, c. 1670, oil on canvas. Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, DPG222; Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *The Marriage Feast at Cana*, c. 1672, oil on canvas. © The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham; Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Two Women at a Window*, c. 1655–60, oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

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PRESS KIT

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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