

PERU: KINGDOMS OF THE SUN AND MOON

Montreal, Oct. 26, 2012 – From February 2 to June 16, 2013, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) will present for the first time *Peru: Kingdoms of the Sun and Moon: Identities and Conquest in the Early, Colonial and Modern Periods*. Organized by the MMFA, this exhibition will display an extensive collection of pre-Columbian treasures and masterpieces from the colonial era to Indigenism, including over 100 pieces that have never before been seen outside of Peru. With more than 350 works of art (paintings, sculptures, gold and silver ornaments, pottery, photograph, works on paper, and textiles) on loan from public and private collections in Peru, Canada, United States, France, and Germany, this exhibition covers roughly 3,000 years of history, including archaeological discoveries in recent decades.



Mochica, North Coast, possibly La Mina
Forehead ornament with feline head and octopus tentacles
ending in catfish heads (100 - 800 A.D.)
Gold, chrysocolla, and shells. 28.5 x 41.4 x 4.5 cm
Museo de la Nación, Lima. Photo: Daniel Giannoni

“In conceiving this exhibition on the question of identity in Latin America following our exhibition *Cuba! Art and History from 1868 to today* presented in 2008, I was fascinated to discover the extent to which archaeology has revealed this birthplace of civilization – one of six such in the world – only recently in the course of the 20th century” explains Nathalie Bondil, Director and Chief Curator of the MMFA. “This exhibition demonstrates how the retrospective view of history shifted from a colonial interpretation to a new nationalist feeling in the course of the modern era. This complex project brings together numerous loans, both public and private, from Peru, some of which have not been exhibited before. Above all, the display features paintings of the era subsequent to the Spanish Conquest and, for the first time outside Peru, of the Indigenist period after independence. The constant elements of a civilization built up over millennia open up perspectives never before opened,” she added.

Mythical Peru, cradle of Andean civilization, and its pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern history will be examined in the four sections of the exhibition as follows:

- Section 1 (introduction) will explain how archaeology rewrote the national history beginning with the discovery, in 1911, of Machu Picchu to the recent restitution of artworks;
- Section 2 will focus on the myths and rituals of the early civilizations of the Andes, highlighting their role in forming and shaping Peruvian identity during the pre-Columbian era;
- Section 3 will illustrate the perpetuation, concealment, and hybridization of the indigenous culture during the colonial period;
- The last section will highlight the rediscovery of this culture in the 20th century and the revalorization of ancient symbols of identity in contemporary Peruvian iconography.

Adds Exhibition Curator Victor Pimentel, Curator of Pre-Columbian Art at the MMFA, “Through the representation and reinterpretation of myths, rituals and other primordial symbols of identity captured by different artistic traditions, the exhibition will illustrate how the evocative power of images have influenced the history of pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern Peru.”

Illustrating the beliefs and rituals of pre-Columbian societies

The relationship with death, particularly the constant dialogue between the world of the living and the world of the dead, is an essential component of Andean spirituality. Among the Mochicas, ceremonial sacrifices contributed to the perpetuation of the supernatural and social orders, while ancestor worship held significant importance to the Lambayeque and Chimú cultures.

In order to illustrate the beliefs and rituals that dominated the life of pre-Columbian societies, the exhibition will focus on objects associated with the sacrificial ceremony of the Mochica people (200 B.C. to 800 A.D.) and the funerary rites of the Chimú and Lambayeque cultures (11th to 15th century A.D.), by presenting some of the most complete depictions of these rituals.

On display will be important objects in gold, silver, and turquoise from the royal tombs of Sipán, discovered in 1987 by archaeologist Walter Alva, constituting the most significant find made in Peru since that of Machu Picchu. They include:

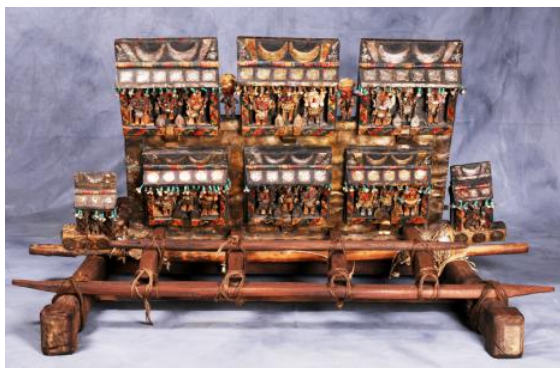
- A gold ear disc depicting the Lord of the place, the Mochica governor (pictured above right).
- A Mochica ornament in the shape of a half-feline, half-octopus (pictured right) recently repatriated and exhibited for the first time outside of Peru.
- Funerary jewelry (crown, ear discs, necklace, pectoral and shoulder-pieces) including a masterpiece of Chimú gold work (pictured below right).
- A rare headboard of a Lambayeque litter (pictured below) depicting figures officiating at a ceremony, unique in the complexity of its ornamentation.



Mochica, North Coast, Sipán
Earspool depicting a warrior (100 - 800 A.D.)
Gold, turquoise, and wood. 9.2 cm
Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán, Lambayeque
Photo: Joaquín Rubio



Mochica, North Coast, possibly La Mina
Forehead ornament with feline head and octopus tentacles ending in catfish heads (100 - 800 A.D.)
Gold, chrysocolla, and shells. 28.5 x 41.4 x 4.5 cm
Museo de la Nación, Lima.
Photo: Daniel Giannoni



Lambayeque, North Coast,
Back of litter (750 - 1375 A.D.)
Wood, gold, silver, cinnabar, sulphurous copper, ammonia, shells, turquoise, and feathers
58 x 114 x 5 cm
Museos "Oro del Perú" – "Armas del Mundo"
Fundación Miguel Mujica Gallo, Lima
Photo: Joaquín Rubio



Chimú, North Coast, possibly Chan Chan
Set of head and body ornaments (900 - 1476 A.D.)
Gold, silver, and copper alloy
Approx. 46.6 x 21.9 cm
Museo Larco, Lima
Photo: Joaquín Rubio

Religion in Many Forms

The Spanish conquest of Peru in the 16th century led to the hybridization of the Peruvian culture expressed through reinterpretations of mostly religious European art. Paintings of the School of Cuzco – established by the Spanish as a means of converting the Incas to Catholicism – showing Christ, miraculous Virgins, archangels and defenders of the Catholic faith, testify to the powerful role played by images in the campaign to evangelize the Native peoples of the Andes. Included among the examples of paintings mainly by Native artists resulted from this hybridization are:

A Nativity Chest dating from the 18th century (pictured right), painted with a number of Biblical stories including Adam and Eve, the Annunciation, the Nativity and the visit of the Magi. This three-dimensional illustrated catechism was used to spread Catholicism throughout the Andes.

Among the ceremonial objects on view illustrating the importance of imagery relating to the celebration of the Eucharist in the Andes is a silver Eucharistic urn in the shape of a Pelican (pictured right), a bird traditionally associated with Christ's sacrifice. It is widely considered a masterpiece of the liturgical metalwork from the Latin-American Baroque period.

A particularly popular image in art during the Viceroyal period is that of the Virgin. Symbolic representations of the virtuous life of the Virgin Mary on view, such as *Young Virgin Spinning* (pictured right), recalls the *acllas*, the Virgins of the Sun in the Inca empire, whose principal occupation was making garments for the Inca and for religious rites.

Processions also played an important role in the elaboration of a Peruvian identity both as a collective expression of Christian faith and as a means of reinforcing the socio-political positions of the participants. An 18th century depiction of a splendid *Corpus Christi* procession (pictured below), one of the first Christian celebrations to be performed in the colony and still performed to this day, attests to the multi-ethnic nature of the city of Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Inca empire. Coinciding with the celebration of the *Inti Raymi*, an Inca festival dedicated to the Sun God, *Corpus Christi* was the most important feast day in the colonial liturgical calendar.



Anonymous, Cuzco School
Procesión del Corpus Christi [Corpus Christi Procession]
(Circa 1740)
Oil on canvas, gold and silver leaves. 86.4 x 200.2 cm
Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima. Photo: Joaquín Rubio



Anonymous, Cuzco School,
Baúl de Nacimiento [Nativity chest] (18th c.)
Painted wood, polychrome plaster and maguey (agave), and metal. 46.7 x 105 x 47.8 cm
Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima
Photo: Joaquín Rubio



Anonymous, Possibly Lima
Depósito eucarístico con forma de pelicano
[Eucharistic urn in the shape of a pelican]
(circa 1750 - 1760)
Partially gilded silver and gemstones
83 x 91 cm
Monasterio Nuestra Señora del Prado, Lima
Photo: Daniel Giannoni



Anonymous, Cuzco School
Virgen Niña Hilando [Young Virgin Spinning]
(Second third of the 18th century)
Oil on canvas, gold leaf. 112.5 x 80.5 cm
Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima. Photo: Joaquín Rubio

Peruvian art in the 19th and 20th centuries

By 1821, Peruvians had achieved their independence and had formed an indigenous collective memory that combined the idealisation of the pre-Hispanic past, particularly the Inca Empire, with an interest in local subjects. A typical work of Peruvian art of the mid-19th century, *Habitante de las cordilleras del Perú* (Inhabitant of the Peruvian Highlands) by Francisco Laso (pictured right), portrays the indigenous peasant as a national symbol for the new Peruvian republic, and heralds the direction that Peruvian cultural nationalism was to take in the next century.



Francisco Laso (1823 - 1869)
Habitante de las cordilleras del Perú
[Inhabitant of the Peruvian Highlands] (1855)
Oil on canvas. 138 x 88 cm
Pinacoteca Municipal "Ignacio Merino" de la
Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima
Photo: Daniel Giannoni

At the beginning of the 20th century, Indigenism flourished as an artistic and intellectual movement based on revalorising and reaffirming Peru's indigenous heritage. Paintings depicting scenes of Native life and the idyllic landscapes of the Peruvian countryside and highlands such as *Pastoras* (Shepherdesses) by Leonor Vinatea Cantuarias (pictured below left) were to transform the visual culture of Peru in the modern era. This movement is represented in the exhibition by a wide selection of works by José Sabogal, Camilo Blas, Julia Codesido, and Enrique Camino Brent. Widely praised for his documentation of indigenous culture, the only Amerindian included among the major artists associated with the movement is the photographer and portraitist Martín Chambi. Works by Chambi on view include *Tristeza andina*, *La Raya* (Andean sadness, La Raya) (pictured below).



Leonor Vinatea Cantuarias (1897 - 1968)
Pastoras [Shepherdesses] (1944)
Oil on canvas. 197 x 174 cm
Museo de la Nación, Lima. Photo: Joaquín Rubio



Martín Chambi (1891 - 1973)
Tristeza andina, La Raya [Andean sadness, La Raya] (1933)
Gelatin silver print. 10 x 15 cm
Courtesy of Archivo Fotografico Martín Chambi, Cuzco

A new publication featuring essays by the foremost experts on the art of Peru

The MMFA will produce an accompanying 384-page catalogue co-published in English and in French by the MMFA and 5 Continents Editions in Milan. This fully-**illustrated** volume (450 illustrations) comprises essays by eminent curators and specialists and interviews with leading figures and experts on Peruvian archaeology, art history, and literature such as the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa.

Exhibition travel dates

The MMFA will tour *Peru: Kingdoms of the Sun and Moon: Identities and Conquest in the Early, Colonial and Modern Periods* to the Seattle Art Museum, where it will be presented from October 17, 2013 to January 5, 2014.

An enriched educational program

In partnership with the faculties of history, classics, Spanish studies, literature and languages of Montreal's four great universities and the YMCA's International Language School, the Museum has developed a major interdisciplinary educational program. Professors have been invited to design classes specifically focused on the themes of the Peru exhibition, which will be held in situ in the Museum's galleries. These activities reserved for graduate students in Montreal's four universities will be held from June 17 to September 15, 2013. This venture, the most ambitious project of its kind ever launched by the Museum, will enhance the special relationship between the institution and the city's universities.

Curators and curatorial committeeCurator

- Victor Pimentel, Curator of Pre-Columbian Art at the MMFA.
- Assisted by Erell Hubert, associate curator.

Coordination

- Pascal Normandin, Head, Exhibitions Management.

Curatorial committee

- Walter Alva is a Peruvian archaeologist. He directed the excavations of the royal tombs of Sipán after the discovery in 1987. Since 2002 he has been Director of the Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán (Museum of the Royal Tombs of Sipán), Lambayeque Peru.
- Ulla Holmquist is a Peruvian archaeologist and Curator of the Museo Larco, Lima.
- Natalia Majluf is Director and Chief Curator of the Museo de Arte de Lima (Art Museum of Lima), and an expert on Peruvian art of the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Luis Eduardo Wuffarden is an independent researcher and curator specializing in colonial and post-colonial Peruvian art. He is a member of the Riva-Agüero Institute and of the cultural committee of the Art Museum of Lima.

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Images of several of the works are available on the Museum's website at mbam.qc.ca/media.
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About the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has one of the highest attendance rates among Canadian museums. Last year, more than 760,000 people visited its unique encyclopedic collection (free of charge) and its original temporary exhibitions, which combine artistic disciplines (fine arts, music, film, fashion, design) and feature innovative exhibition designs. It conceives, produces and circulates many of its exhibitions across Europe and North America. It is also one of Canada's leading publishers of art books in English and French, which are distributed worldwide. Over 100,000 families and schoolchildren take part in its educational, cultural and community-oriented programs each year. The fall of 2011 saw the opening of a fourth pavilion at the Museum – the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art – and a 444-seat concert venue – Bourgie Hall – housing an outstanding collection of Tiffany stained glass windows. This expansion also brought about the reinstallation of the Museum's rich holdings in its other three pavilions, which house the world cultures, international art, Medieval to contemporary European art, and decorative art and design collections. Music is now an integral part of the Museum, providing another perspective on the visual arts, through musical audio guides and other innovative activities. A fifth pavilion devoted to the Old Masters will open its doors by 2017.