



MEADOWS MUSEUM  
SMU · DALLAS

## MEADOWS MUSEUM ACQUIRES MAJOR PAINTING BY PEDRO DE CAMPAÑA

DALLAS (SMU)—February 2, 2022— The Meadows Museum, SMU announced today that it has acquired a painting of a calvary scene by Pedro de Campaña (born Pieter de Kempener). The highly emotive painting, likely commissioned for personal devotion in a private chapel, features a masterful composition, rich color, and expertly executed depictions of light and dark. *Calvary* (c. 1560) is the first work by Campaña, who was widely considered to be the most important painter of Renaissance Seville, to enter the Meadows' collection. As most works by Campaña are in situ in ecclesiastical settings in Spain, the acquisition of this work presented a rare opportunity for the Meadows to fill a gap in its collection, thereby enabling the museum to present a more complete history of the art of Spain. The painting is currently on view in the museum's galleries.

Pedro de Campaña (1503–1580) became one of the most influential artists of his generation in Spain, despite having been born in Belgium and trained in the Low Countries and Italy. Campaña arrived in Seville right as it was becoming the center of Spain's expanding global empire, and the artist found an eager audience for his religious paintings among the city's growing number of wealthy inhabitants. The artist and his workshop were often commissioned by this new merchant class to create paintings for churches and private chapels. *Calvary* was likely commissioned for a private chapel toward the end of Campaña's life. The painting merges skills Campaña learned in Belgium and Italy, such as the clever composition and level of detail, with the religious storytelling and iconography demanded by Seville's pious audiences.

The painted panel work features Christ on the cross flanked by two crucified thieves, whose bodies and twisted crosses both frame the scene and direct the viewer's gaze toward Christ's body and musculature. Campaña's use of color is masterful, with Christ's body appearing as if illuminated against an otherwise mostly dark canvas. This effect is amplified by Campaña's application of mordant gilding (gilding added after the work has been painted) to the halos of Christ, Mary and John. The viewer's focus is further directed by the positioning of the two saints looking upward at Christ's body, their facial expressions and hand gestures providing a model for the viewer's personal devotion. Mary and John's heightened emotional state is enhanced by the dramatic background of tumultuous skies and Campaña's incorporation of symbols like the serpent at the base of the thief's cross.

“This painting will hold a special spot in our collection for being the last acquisition overseen by the Meadows' late director Mark Roglán, whose passion for and tremendous knowledge of Spanish art left an indelible mark on every aspect of the museum and its

collection,” said Meadows Museum Director *ad interim* and Curator Amanda W. Dotseth. “Campaña’s *Calvary* is not only the first work by the artist to enter the collection, but also the first by any artist active in sixteenth-century Seville. The acquisition thus greatly enhances our ability to present and study the history of Renaissance Spain.”

### **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.

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### **CONTACTS:**

DALLAS

Carrie Sanger - Meadows Museum

[csanger@smu.edu](mailto:csanger@smu.edu)

214-768-1584

NEW YORK

Aga Sablinska - PAVE Communications & Consulting

[aga@paveconsult.com](mailto:aga@paveconsult.com)

862-216-6485

MADRID

Julián Hernández

[julian.hdez58@gmail.com](mailto:julian.hdez58@gmail.com)

+ 34 630 963 735

### **IMAGES:**

<https://smu.box.com/s/bv1afzmybqc73am68sskhhrkvawy3eg8>