

# NEW TREASURES OF HISTORY REVEALED IN *MADE IN THE AMERICAS: THE NEW WORLD DISCOVERS ASIA*, AT WINTERTHUR MARCH 26, 2016 -- JANUARY 8, 2017

## *Seminal Exhibition Rethinks First Global Age*

**WINTERTHUR, DELAWARE**—Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library announces *Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia*, the landmark exhibition pressing the reset button on the history of globalism and the colonial Americas, March 26, 2016 through January 8, 2017, in the Winterthur Galleries.

Described as “scintillating” by the *Wall Street Journal* during its debut at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (August 18, 2015 – February 15, 2016), *Made in the Americas* is the first large-scale, Pan-American exhibition to examine the profound influence of Asia on the arts of the colonial Americas. Over 80 works, including fine furniture, textiles, ceramics, silverwork, and paintings dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries relay the complex story of how craftsmen throughout the hemisphere adapted Asian styles in a range of objects. The exhibition features works from the MFA, Winterthur, and on loan from public and private collections, many never previously publicly displayed or published.

“*Made in the Americas* focuses on a history not taught in school,” said exhibition curator Dennis Carr, a graduate of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, and Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture, MFA, Boston. “The history of the colonial Americas has long been written as a series of encounters between Europe and the New World; however, the extraordinary objects in this exhibition encourage us to think more broadly about the Americas as being at the center of this global cultural and commercial exchange. They invite us to review the powerful influences from across the Pacific that changed the course of history. It is an honor to return to Winterthur with this exhibition.”

Carr said the exhibition has served as a catalyst for reevaluation of traditional history, art history, and other curricula relative to the period. He has been working with educators at Harvard, Yale, Wellesley, Northeastern, Holy Cross, and other educational institutions that are instituting new curricula. Winterthur will be working with a variety of colleges and universities in the mid-Atlantic region to introduce this new scholarship into their courses.

Linda Eaton, Winterthur John L. & Marjorie P. McGraw Director of Collections and Senior Curator of Textiles, is the project curator for the Winterthur installation of *Made in the Americas*, which she called groundbreaking.

“Winterthur proudly welcomes Dennis Carr home to Winterthur with this seminal exhibition,” Eaton said. “The range of exquisite objects *Made in the Americas* brings together is remarkable, but it is the riveting scholarship presented that is eye-opening. We clearly lived in a global age long before the internet and smartphone.”

## **The Global, Glamorous World of “Chinoiserie”**

The fashion for Asian art as a decorative style, today known as *chinoiserie* (“in the Chinese taste”), was a global sensation during the colonial period, reaching its zenith in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In the Americas, the style manifested itself in lavishly painted and decorated interiors, furniture, ceramics, silverwork, textiles, and paintings. Citizens eager to show off their wealth and worldly interests fueled an almost insatiable demand for exotic products from East and South Asia.

--more--

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2016



*The Wedding at Cana*. On loan from The Hispanic Society of America, New York, NY. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

Liz Farrell  
lfarrell@winterthur.org  
Phone: 302.888.4803  
Fax: 302.888.4950

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$20 adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11.

## **Museum hours**

10:00 am- 5:00 pm, Tuesday- Sunday.

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.



**WINTERTHUR**

Winterthur, Delaware 19735  
302.888.4600 • winterthur.org

Visitors to *Made in the Americas* will see stunning objects made in Mexico City, Lima, Quito, Quebec City, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that reflect the influence of Asian design, such as blue-and-white talavera ceramics copied from Chinese porcelain, and luxuriously woven textiles made to replicate fine silks and cottons from China and India.

At the entrance to the exhibition are a number of works that explore the trade routes that connected Asia and the colonial Americas including a 6-panel folding Japanese screen (1624-35) measuring approximately 5-1/2 feet tall and 11-1/2 feet wide depicting the Southern Barbarians at a Japanese Port.

### Furniture

Among the rarest pieces of furniture in the exhibition is a desk-and-bookcase (mid-18<sup>th</sup> century) from Mexico, which features a dramatic interior displaying chinoiserie-style painting in gold on a red background. Recalling early colonial maps drawn by indigenous artists, the inside of the doors show views of an extensive hacienda in Veracruz drawn in an indigenous style. The geometric designs on the exterior are Spanish-Islamic (Hispano-Moresque) in style.

### *Japanning*

The practice of *japanning*, a painted imitation of Asian lacquerwork on furniture and wall paneling using layers of varnish, gold paint, and occasionally metallic powders, spread like wildfire throughout New England, New Spain, the Caribbean, and parts of South America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In North America, Boston became a major center of the production of japanned furniture – where over a dozen japanners worked before 1750 -- but it was also made in Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, and other port cities in the British colonies, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Port Royal, Jamaica. Among objects from Winterthur’s collection featuring this technique are a high chest and clock whose decoration is attributed to Robert Davis (d. 1739), an important Boston japanner who is credited with creating some of the most beautiful examples of the period.

The indigenous lacquer of Mexico and South America was transformed by the introduction of Asian lacquerware and their European imitations. Because indigenous artisans did not have access to the tree resin used to create Asian lacquers, they developed new styles and techniques made from a mixture of oils from the aje beetle and chia seeds, clay, and organic and mineral colorants. By doing so, they were able to participate in the burgeoning market for luxury goods such as finely decorated boxes, cabinets-of-drawers, and large *bateas* (or trays).

In particular, lacquerware from the Mexican cities of Periban, Uruapan, and Patzcuaro exhibited a variety of motifs adapted from European and Asian sources. Jose’ Manuel de la Cerda, a celebrated painter of noble Indian lineage is considered the finest of the Patzcuaro lacquer artisans. Works from his workshop show pronounced Asian influence, including a desk-on-stand (18<sup>th</sup> century, Hispanic Society of America), painted in a chinoiserie style with exotic-looking buildings and weeping willow trees delicately picked out in gold paint on a black background.

### *Enconchado*

Furniture making in Peru featured a variety of precious materials, poignantly demonstrated in the exhibition by a group of furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell. Described in Spanish as *enconchado* (shellwork), the objects recall the elaborate Japanese shell-inlaid lacquers or fine inlaid furniture imported from India, Korea, and other parts of Asia. A pair of *enconchado* writing cabinets (first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Coleccion Patricia Phelps de Cisneros) from Alto Peru (modern-day Bolivia) show that this interest in shell-inlaid woodworking extended into rural South America. Probably made by indigenous artists for the Jesuit mission churches in this remote region, the cabinets display a worldly, cosmopolitan flair that was typical of the religious order’s establishments throughout the Americas.

### Ceramics

Southeast of Mexico City, along the trade route that brought Asian goods overland from Acapulco, a ceramics tradition in the town of Puebla flourished based on imported Chinese blue-and-white porcelains. Because artisans in Puebla did not have access to the fine materials needed to create true porcelains, they covered earthenware pottery with a thick, white tin glaze—in much the way potters did in Delft in the Netherlands and Talavera de la Reina in Spain during the same period—decorating it with expensive cobalt blue. In some of these ceramics, known as talavera poblana, artists replaced Chinese figures with local imagery, switching out Chinese phoenixes in favor of native quetzals (small birds with long, colorful tail feathers). In addition to depicting Chinese characters and decorative motifs, Puebla potters also adapted traditional Chinese forms, such as broad-shouldered jars (*tibors*), gourd-shaped vessels, and thin-necked wine jars. Talavera is still made in Puebla today, continuing a tradition that has lasted more than four centuries.

## Silver

China's growing appetite for silver helped fuel the robust trade with the Americas. Likewise, colonial silver was an important part of chinoiserie style in the New World. As imported Chinese tea became all the rage in the 18th century, a number of American craftsmen produced silver vessels in an Asian style to satisfy the demand for a host of specialized vessels, including teapots, hot-water urns, tea caddies, strainer spoons, creamers, and sugar bowls—many of which are on display in the exhibition. In particular, colonial silversmiths such as John Hurd excelled at producing elegant vessels whose design was based on both Chinese and European styles.

## Textiles

Chinese silks as well as Persian and Indian textiles were prized in the Americas, and a variety of Asian and American textiles are included in the exhibition. An important part of the Asian textile trade were colorful cottons from India, which came to the Americas through Manila as well as from European ports. The exhibition also includes an extraordinary embroidered hanging from Peru, dated 1661, which was probably displayed hanging from a window or balcony during the procession which welcomed Peru's new viceroy, Diego de Benavides, into Lima in that year. The bright red embroidery was dyed with cochineal, a natural dye still used today that comes from the body of female insects that live on cactus.

## Paintings

To be a colonial citizen in the Americas was to be a global citizen, as embodied by a number of paintings in the exhibition. For example, a portrait from Mexico, *María de los Dolores Juliana Rita Nuñez de Villavicencio* (about 1733, Carlos de Ovando Collection), shows a young noble woman wearing an embroidered dress with a menagerie of imagery from China, Europe, and the Near East. Chinese men, exotic-looking animals, military tents, and oversized flowers and trees were all part of the chinoiserie vocabulary when this fashionable style found its way to Mexico in the 18th century.

A portrait of *Nicholas Boylston* (about 1769, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) by John Singleton Copley shows the Bostonian as a wealthy man at leisure—the embodiment of the era's global merchant. His red velvet turban and silk morning gown (banyan or Indian coat) were the clothes of a gentleman. His firm, Green and Boylston, became extremely successful in the 1760s, importing textiles, paper, tea, and glass that were eagerly sought by Bostonians. This painting is paired with another from Mexico, *De Español y Negra, Mulato* (about 1760, attributed to José de Alcívar, Denver Art Museum), which also shows its subject wearing a long coat in an Asian style. In this case, the robe is made of embroidered or printed Indian cotton, but it is difficult to know whether the fabric was made in India, was a European copy or was of local origin. It, like many works in the exhibition, reflects the global story of trade and artistic influence found in the colonial Americas.

An illustrated catalogue of essays (*Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia*, MFA Publications, 2015) accompanies *Made in the Americas*, described as “horizon-expanding” by *The New York Review of Books*. The essays were written by a team of experts, including exhibition curator Carr.

The opening of the exhibition in Boston in 2015 was timed to mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Galleon trade between the Philippines and Mexico, inaugurated in 1565 and lasting for two and a half centuries, until 1815.

At Winterthur, the exhibition features new additions from the Winterthur collection plus a range of exciting programming, concerts, dancers, cuisine, wine tastings, and additional related attractions and events. For information and updates throughout the year, please visit [winterthur.org/madeintheamericas](http://winterthur.org/madeintheamericas).

*Made in the Americas* is presented by DuPont, Glenmede and John L. and Marjorie P. McGraw with additional support from M&T Bank and Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP.

*This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

###