



MEADOWS MUSEUM

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**MEADOWS MUSEUM ACQUIRES IMPORTANT WORKS
BY TWO CATALAN MODERNISTS**

*Two paintings add depth to the Museum's collection
while bringing new works into public view*

Dallas, TX—January 30, 2020—The Meadows Museum, SMU, announced today that it has purchased works by two Catalan modernists: painters Josep de Togores i Llach (1893–1970) and Santiago Rusiñol i Prats (1861–1931). These works are important additions to the Museum's collection and to increasing public and scholarly access to Catalan works from this early modern period, roughly the 1880s into the 1920s. Despite the fact that this was a period of significant artistic production and stylistic innovation, works by Catalan artists of this era are not well-represented in American museum holdings.

“This period is often considered a ‘Golden Age’ of Catalan art, with many outstanding works produced at a time that coincides with the construction of Gaudí’s great buildings in Barcelona,” said Mark Roglán, the Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum. “And yet, because it was also a period of prosperity in the region, many of the works by artists like Togores and Rusiñol were acquired by and remained in the collections of local families and institutions. For the Meadows Museum, these terrific objects help round out our Catalan collection—which begins with the medieval painting by Pere Vall—and expands our understanding of this moment in Spanish art history. I am grateful to the many donors whose contributions supported our purchases.”

The first painting, Togores’ *Portrait of the Mestre Family* (1927), is a masterful example of modern Spanish portraiture depicting wealthy Catalan industrialist Josep Mestre Mitjans; his wife, Berta Lantz Beinquet; and their three children, José, Jorge, and Blanca. Togores was a popular society painter within 20th-century Spain, and his avant-garde works from the 1920s are highly prized. The figures are portrayed in a hard-edged, linear style associated with New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*), a German movement of the mid-1920s that advocated for close observation of reality. This is evident in the artist’s studious attention to the appearance of texture and material, for example in the shiny lapels of Mestre’s tuxedo and the folds of Berta’s blue dress. Even the illusion of depth is suppressed, with the family appearing compressed within the edges of the large-scale (53½ x 63¼ in.) painting. Togores exhibited the painting in Barcelona in 1927 and in Madrid in 1928, during which time it garnered favorable critical notice. It has remained in the collection of the Mestre family ever since and has been exhibited only once since 1928: at the Togores retrospective organized by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and Museu d’Art Modern del Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya in 1997 and 1998.



Josep de Togores i Llach (Spanish, 1893–1970), *Portrait of the Mestre Family*, 1927. Oil on canvas, 53½ x 63¼ in. (136 x 161 cm). Photo by Kevin Todora.



Santiago Rusiñol i Prats (Spanish, 1861-1931), *Cluster of Cypresses, Arbor IV*, 1908. Oil on canvas, 46 ¾ x 55 ¼ in. (119 x 140 cm). Photo by Kevin Todora.

contrasts the strong diagonals of the path and flowerbeds against the vertical lines of cypresses to create a dynamic composition, and the whole is rendered in quick, bright brushstrokes. Other paintings from the same series are in the collection of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and in Paris's Musée d'Orsay.

The second painting, Rusiñol's *Cluster of Cypresses, Arbor IV* (1908), is a lush, impressionistic landscape, one of a series of ten the artist painted of a "glorieta," or circular garden feature, located within the historic gardens of the royal palace of Aranjuez, just south of Madrid, and an excellent example of the artist's work during his prime years in the early 20th century. Rusiñol painted numerous gardens within Spain, and much like the French Impressionist painters, most famously Monet, would return to the same locations at different times of day and during different seasons to capture the changing effects of light and colors. The orange leaves on the trees in the background and the wilted flowers lining the path to the glorieta suggest that this painting was made in autumn; Rusiñol

The Museum gratefully acknowledges support from the following donors, whose gifts made possible the acquisition of Togores' *Portrait of the Mestre Family* from descendants of the artist: Susan Heldt Albritton, Linda P. and William A. Custard, Gwen and Richard Irwin, the Mr. and Mrs. Walter M. Levy Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas, Cyrena Nolan, and Elizabeth Solender and Gary L. Scott, with additional support provided by The Honorable Janet Kafka and Mr. Terry Kafka, Stacey and Nicholas McCord, and friends of the Meadows Museum. The Museum's purchase of Rusiñol's *Cluster of Cypresses, Arbor IV*, which was acquired from a private collection, was made with funds from The Meadows Foundation.

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. For more information visit meadowsmuseumdallas.org.

CONTACTS:

DALLAS
Carrie Sanger
csanger@smu.edu

NEW YORK
Sascha Freudenheim
sascha@paveconsult.com

MADRID
Guillermo Arazo
guillermo.arazo@gmail.com

214-768-1584

917-544-6057

+34 617 028 458

IMAGES: <https://smu.box.com/s/al7jxbs3vsi00eid99gsf96q1f42eaf0>