

For Immediate Release

Minneapolis Institute of Art Acquires Rare, Personalized Devotional Triptych by Fernando Gallego

First Edition Single-Leaf Print of Samson and the Lion by Albrecht Dürer Joins Mia Collection

August 31, 2022

MINNEAPOLIS—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) announced two important acquisitions to add to its European art collections. The new works of art include a rare 15th century triptych of the Madonna and Child surrounded by four saints, by Spanish medieval painter Fernando Gallego—one of the few works by this artist to join a collection outside of Spain. Distinguished by its exquisite quality and very fine condition including its original frame and hardware, the devotional painting is a new discovery in the artist's oeuvre. The second work is a richly detailed, first edition print of a woodcut of Samson fighting the lion, by leading German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer. Dürer, one of the greatest printmakers of all time, revolutionized the art of woodcut in the late 1490s with his draftsmanship, imagination, narrative power, and artistic ambition. This first edition print of *Samson and the Lion* features dramatic movement, fluid lines, and a stunning naturalistic landscape.

"These exciting acquisitions help Mia provide a wider representation of religious art in the fifteenth century. From Spain, Fernando Gallego's triptych painting of the Virgin and Child with four saints and from Germany, Albrecht Dürer's exciting woodcut print of Samson fighting the lion, show the breadth and variety of theological art from more than 500 years ago," said Katie Lubber, Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President of Mia.

Fernando Gallego, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Andrew, Saint Eustace, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Catherine* (c. 1470–1480)

Fernando Gallego (1440–1507) was one of the leading religious painters in Castile, Spain, in the second half of the fifteenth century. His paintings are in the Hispano-Flemish style that flourished at the court of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile (reign 1474–1504) thanks to friendly relations with the Netherlands and the king and queen's taste for Flemish art. Gallego's paintings reflect the influence of northern sources, but adapted to his artistic vision, with a warm palette, compressed spaces, figures with intense, impassioned expressions, and weighty depictions of forms. The treatment of drapery in *The Virgin and Child with Saint Andrew, Saint Eustace, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Catherine* (c. 1470–1480) is a tour de force: the white dress and mantles look like chiseled drapery.



Fernando Gallego (Spanish [Castile], 1440/45–1507), *The Virgin and Child with Saint Andrew, Saint Eustace, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Catherine*, c. 1470–80, oil and gilding on panel. The John R. Van Derlip Trust Fund. Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art

In the central panel, a young Christ looks up at the Virgin, showing his palms and bottoms of his feet, the places he is wounded on the cross, thus foreshadowing his death. Four saints are represented on the wings of the triptych: Saint Catherine depicted with the spiked wheel of her martyrdom, Saint John the Baptist with his lamb, Saint Eustace with the stag that inspired his conversion to Christianity, and Saint Andrew

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shown with the X-shaped cross of his crucifixion. Eustace, the only figure in contemporary dress, is shown kneeling in profile next to a coat of arms, suggesting it might be a portrait of the painting's patron, who wished to be shown in the guise of this saint. The saints are painted in grisaille, giving the illusion that they are stone sculptures. The small scale of the triptych suggests it was made for private devotion, either for a residence, or as a traveling altar.

Gallego's painting joins a growing collection of Spanish art at Mia and will go on view in the galleries later this year.

Albrecht Dürer, *Samson and the Lion* (c. 1497-98)

One of the greatest printmakers of all time, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) is credited with raising the craft of woodcut to high art and revolutionizing the business. He became his own publisher in the late 1490s, controlling all aspects of artistry and production of his illustrations for *The Apocalypse of St. John* (*The Book of Revelations*) and six independent illustrations, including the newly acquired *Samson and the Lion* (c. 1497-98). Reimagining the story of Samson protecting his parents from a lion attack with help from the Holy Spirit, Dürer mined long artistic traditions in Germany and Italy. Yet, he created a highly original, riveting image with the confrontation of man and beast set amid an enchanting landscape, all composed of supple, flowing lines.

A fine example from the first edition, printed when Dürer's woodblock was in pristine condition, *Samson and the Lion* will be on view with other masterpieces in Mia's upcoming exhibition "German Prints in the later 1400s", opening October 22, 2022.

About Mia's Collection of European Art

Mia's Department of European art is home to four curators and two curatorial fellows who research, manage, and judiciously expand an internationally acclaimed collection of some 35,000 artworks in all media, dating from antiquity to the present day, presenting them in over 50 permanent gallery spaces through exhibitions and programs. Many of the greatest European artists from the Renaissance to the present are represented, often in considerable depth and quality, and in various media. Mia's acclaimed collection of European paintings, prints, and drawings offers a broad survey and includes some of the most accomplished works by innovative and influential artists, with rich holdings of Italian Baroque, seventeenth-century Dutch, and Fauve, Cubist, German Expressionist, and Contemporary works. The department's textile collection has gained an international reputation for both its historic works and contemporary fiber art. A particular strength of Mia's decorative arts collection includes English and Continental silver, particularly from the eighteenth century. European sculpture from ancient times to the 1960s includes Mia's famed Doryphoros and important works by Amedeo Modigliani, Sir Jacob Epstein, Constantin Brancusi, Henri Matisse, and Henry Moore.



Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1549), *Samson and the Lion*, c. 1497-98, woodcut. The Barbara S. Longfellow Endowed Acquisition Fund and the John E. and Marion Andrus III Fund in Support of the Department of Prints and Drawings. Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art

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About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org