

**December 18, 2020**

## **University of Notre Dame receives Lilly Endowment grant to fund Snite Museum of Art initiative on religion, spirituality and faith**

The University of Notre Dame has received a five-year, \$2.4 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative to implement Inspiring Wonder: An Initiative on Religion, Spirituality, and Faith in the Visual Arts.

Designed to invite diverse audiences into meaningful conversation, Inspiring Wonder will significantly advance the Snite Museum's efforts to deepen its constituencies' understanding of religion, spirituality and faith in a deliberate and mission-driven way.

Notre Dame is one of 18 organizations from across the United States receiving grants through the Lilly Endowment initiative. The group includes fine arts museums, historical societies and history museums, museums dedicated to serving children and families and museums dedicated to particular locations and cultures.

“On behalf of the entire museum, I express our deepest gratitude to Lilly Endowment and their Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative,” said Joseph Becherer, director of the Snite Museum. “Such generosity is a profound investment in the future of the museum and countless lives that will be touched through education and programming. More than just faith in the future good work of this museum and University, this grant is a commitment to regional and national audiences through a deepened appreciation of and enlightenment through art that we can uniquely provide.”

The primary project component is the Museum Education Fellowship in Religion and Spirituality in the Visual Arts. The endowed, two-year fellowship will allow for the creation of innovative programming around religion and spirituality, and will help train the next generation of museum professionals and bring their fresh perspectives about museum education into the Inspiring Wonder initiative. This grant-funded work at the Snite Museum includes the development of two major thematic exhibitions, course development, research mini-grants, academic symposia and strategic acquisitions during the grant period.

Lilly Endowment awarded grants totaling more than \$43 million through the initiative. These grants will enable the organizations to develop exhibitions and education programs that fairly and accurately portray the role of religion in the U.S. and around the world. The initiative is designed to foster public understanding about religion and lift up the contributions that people of all faiths and diverse religious communities make to our greater civic well-being.

“Museums and cultural institutions are trusted organizations and play an important role in teaching the American public about the world around them,” said Christopher Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “These organizations will use the grants to help visitors understand and appreciate the significant impact religion has had and continues to have on society in the United States and around the globe. Our hope is that these efforts will promote greater knowledge about and respect for people of diverse religious traditions.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative in 2019 and awarded planning grants to organizations to help them explore how programming in religion could further their institutional missions. These grants will assist organizations in implementing projects that draw on their extensive collections and enhance and complement their current activities.

“The Snite was founded on the principle that art is essential to understanding human experiences and beliefs. To that end, it is committed to providing its patrons with opportunities to engage in informed dialogue with scholars, artists and each other — or simply to spend time in silent communion with art,” Becherer said. “These efforts soon will be enhanced by the construction of the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art at Notre Dame, which is designed to be more community-facing and will have an active chapel at its heart. This is therefore an opportune moment for the museum to take a bold step forward in deepening its mission as a leader in engagement and education around art and religion, both on campus and in the broader region.”

**MEDIA CONTACT:** If you would like high-resolution images or in-depth information, please contact Gina Costa, Marketing and Public Relations Program Manager, (57) 631-4720, [gcosta@nd.edu](mailto:gcosta@nd.edu)



## Images:

Anonymous 18th century Mexican (Mexican, 1701-1800), Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, February 15, 1729, Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. Ignacio Aranguren, ND '52, his wife Pirri, and their sons Luis ND '84, Ignacio ND '85, and Santiago ND '92. 2002.01

Unknown Irish artist, Crucifix, 1776, Yew wood. Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame. Gift of Rev. James S. Savage, 1966.031

Paul Henry Wood (American, 1872-1892), Absolution Under Fire, 1891, Oil on canvas. Gift of the artist, Collection of the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, 1976.057

## **About The Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame**

Considered one of the leading university art museums in America, the Snite Museum's permanent collection contains nearly 30,000 works that represent many cultures and periods of world art history. Exceptional holdings include the Jack and Alfrieda Feddersen Collection of Rembrandt Etchings, the Noah L. and Muriel S. Butkin Collection of 19th-Century French Art, the John D. Reilly Collection of Old Master and 19th-Century Drawings, the Janos Scholz Collection of 19th-Century European Photographs, the Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh Jr. Collection of Meštrović Sculpture and Drawings, the George Rickey Sculpture Archive, and the Virginia A. Marten Collection of 18th-Century Decorative Arts. Other collection strengths include Olmec and Mesoamerican art, 20th-century art, and Native American art.

Sculpture is displayed in the Mary Loretto and Terrence J. Dillon Courtyard and in The Charles B. Hayes Family Sculpture Park.

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Hours:  
Due to restrictions by the University of Notre Dame during the pandemic, the Snite Museum of Art is currently only open to Notre Dame, Saint Mary's, and Holy Cross College students, staff and faculty.

Admission is free

Directions: [nd.edu/visitors/directions](http://nd.edu/visitors/directions)