



Smithsonian
*Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture*
National Portrait Gallery

News

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Sept. 12, 2007

**“Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence, 1763-1848”
Opens at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery Sept. 27**

The National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian Latino Center, together with the Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior and the Fundación Consejo España-Estados Unidos, present the exhibition “Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence, 1763-1848,” which examines the story of Spain’s role in the history of the United States. Although it is widely known that France was a key partner in the fight for American independence from Britain, few are aware that independence was only possible with the financial and military support of Spain.

“At the heart of the National Portrait Gallery is our goal to ensure that the country remembers its past,” said Marc Pachter, director of the Portrait Gallery. “The aptly named exhibition ‘Legacy’ explores the role of Spain and Mexico in the development of this nation with that goal in mind.”

The exhibition brings together stunning portraits and compelling original documents to explore Spain’s role in the American Revolutionary War and the development of the United States. It begins in 1763—when the Treaty of Paris was signed and Spain controlled approximately one-half of the land that is now part of the United States—and continues through 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed to end the Mexican-American War. The exhibition also will illustrate the social, cultural and political influence of Hispanic culture through 1848.

“This exhibition invites people to immerse themselves in this era and learn more about Spain’s key role in the Revolution and the early days of the American republic through extraordinary portraits, original treaties and maps,” said Carolyn Kinder Carr, deputy director of the National Portrait Gallery and “Legacy” exhibition co-curator. “The political and geographic changes that happened during this 85-year period still reverberate in American culture today.”

Some of the individuals represented by renowned artists include names familiar to the American story: “George Washington” by Charles Willson Peale, “Benjamin Franklin” by Joseph

SI-287A-2007

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Siffred Duplessis and “Davy Crockett” by Chester Harding. But the exhibition also demonstrates the connections between these Americans and political figures in Spain during the American Revolution and later the individuals, both Americans and individuals of Hispanic descent, who led Florida, Louisiana, the Upper Mississippi, California and the southwest. For example, three men who determined Spain’s foreign policy during the time of the American Revolution were King Carlos III, who is portrayed by court painter Anton Raphael Mengs; José Moñino, the Count of Floridablanca, who was prime minister and is portrayed by Folch de Cardona; and Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea, the Count of Aranda, who was a longtime champion of the American cause and was painted by Ramón Bayeu, brother-in-law to the famed Francisco de Goya.

The exhibition includes five portraits by Goya: those of the Conde de Cabarrús, King Carlos IV of Spain, Felix Colón de Larriategui, King Ferdinand VII of Spain and el general don José de Urrutia.

“Few Americans realize that Hispanics have played an important role in our country since its founding,” said Pilar O’Leary, director of the Smithsonian Latino Center. “The fact that Hispanic-Americans fought alongside Anglo-Americans to help obtain independence from Britain, for example, is not often taught in U.S. classrooms or history books today. This exhibition will raise public awareness of the historical role and roots of Hispanic-Americans in U.S. society.”

Symposium

In addition to the exhibition, a symposium will take place Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 27–29 entitled “The Spanish Contribution to the Independence of the United States: Between Reform and Revolution.” The symposium will address the presence and impact of Hispanic culture in the United States, with a special focus on Spain’s role in the American Revolution.

“In many history books, the Spanish contribution to the American Revolution has been ignored or underestimated, with the belief that Spain was playing only second fiddle to France in this international conflict,” noted Ambassador Eduardo Garrigues, Advisor for Hispanic Affairs in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is organizing the symposium. “But, in fact, France had lost most of her American territories in the previous war with England, while Spain still controlled vast territories in both North and South America. As the leaders of the American Revolution expressed, without the financial and military support of Spain, the outcome of the war might have been different.”

Scholars from Spain, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States will attend.

Family Programs

On Saturday, Sept. 29, from noon to 4 p.m., family programming highlighting the historical connections between Spain and the United States will feature hands-on activities in the National Portrait Gallery's Education Center. In addition, there will be English- and Spanish-language tours of the exhibition. Reservations not required to attend these activities. For more information, the public may call (202) 633-1000.

Drop-in family programs also are scheduled for the Saturdays of Oct. 6, Dec. 15 and Feb. 2 and will feature a new hands-on activity each date in the Portrait Gallery's Education Center. English- and Spanish-language tours of the exhibition will be offered. Reservations not required. The public may call (202) 633-1000 or visit www.npg.si.edu for more information about drop-in family programs.

Exhibition Credit

The exhibition co-curators are Carolyn Kinder Carr, deputy director and chief curator of the National Portrait Gallery, and Mercedes Águeda, art history professor of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. The exhibition is organized by the National Portrait Gallery, Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, the Smithsonian Latino Center and the Fundación Consejo España-Estados Unidos. It has been made possible by a generous grant from The Walt Disney Company.

Additional support has been provided by BBVA, Grupo Barceló, Iberdrola and Iberia. Educational programs and materials have been funded by the Smithsonian Latino Fund. The exhibition and symposium opening reception has been sponsored by Goya Foods. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, the Ministry of Culture of Spain, and the Embassy of Spain in the United States also contributed to the realization of this project.

Exhibition Publications

A bilingual family guide, brochure and catalog accompany the exhibition. The family guide and brochure will be available in the exhibition. The catalog, entitled "Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence, 1763-1848," will be distributed in the United States by the University of Washington Press and may be purchased in the museum book store.

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