

FACT SHEET TEFAF MUSEUM RESTORATION FUND 2020
LACMA, USA - 'PIETÁ' BY MELCHOR PÉREZ HOLGUÍN



'Pietá', c.1710-20 by Melchor Pérez Holguín (c.1660–c.1732). Oil on canvas, 60 ¼ x 48 7/16 in. (153 x 123 cm). Purchased with funds provided by the Bernard and Edith Lewin Collection of Mexican Art Deaccession Fund.

The largest museum in the western United States, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) was founded in 1910 as part of the Museum of History, Science, and Art and established itself as an independent institution in 1961. Today, LACMA has a collection of 142,000 objects that encompasses 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. *Pietá* (c.1710-20), by the 18th-century Bolivian artist Melchor Pérez Holguín (c.1660 – c.1732), is the first painting from Bolivia to enter LACMA's collection of Spanish colonial art. With the TEFAF Museum Restoration Fund, LACMA will scientifically analyse and restore the painting.

Pietá, with its lavish application of gold (*brocateado*) – a technique generally associated with the Cuzco School but also used throughout the Hispanic world – reveals how Holguín skillfully absorbed various artistic traditions, representing a confluence of European and local styles, to create his own version of this canonical subject. Considering its age, the work is in good

condition, but it requires a careful restoration, which is in progress under Joseph Fronek, Head of Paintings Conservation.

LACMA's Conservation Science Department in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute has begun a complete analysis to document the painting's materials, techniques, and condition. Various scientific means, including macro XRF scanning (MA-XRF) that will result in elemental mapping of pigment application, will help to determine how the artist intended the paint to appear.

Following restoration, the *Pietá* will be much closer in appearance to what it was originally. The rich darkness of the background will be dramatic against the glowing gold decorations and the painting should delight and inform visitors to LACMA for years to come. *Pietá* will make its debut in LACMA's upcoming exhibition *The Eye of the Imagination: LACMA's Collection of Spanish Colonial Art*, curated by Ilona Katzew and scheduled to open in 2021. The accompanying catalogue will include an in-depth scholarly analysis of the painting.

TEFAF MUSEUM RESTORATION FUND COMMITTEE

Rachel Kaminsky, a private art dealer from New York who was formerly head of the Old Master paintings department at Christie's; **David Bull**, a painting conservator and former Chairman of Painting Conservation at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; **Dr Kenson Kwok**, the former and founding director of the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Peranakan Museum in Singapore; **Carol Pottasch**, a senior restorer and conservator from the Mauritshuis, The Hague; and **Ashok Roy**, a museum scientist and a leading international expert in the materials and techniques of European Old Master Paintings, make up the international panel of experts which made the decision for the 2020 grant of the Fund.