



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Only:** Amanda Young, (860) 838-4082  
amanda.young@wadsworthatheneum.org

## **WADSWORTH ATHENEUM AWARDED INTERNATIONAL GRANT TO RESTORE SEMINAL WORK BY FRANCISCO DE ZURBARÁN**

The Executive Committee of The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF, organizer of TEFAF Maastricht) has awarded the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art a grant to fund the restoration of the museum's seventeenth-century masterpiece by Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán, "St. Serapion" (1628). The Wadsworth Atheneum is one of two museums bestowed with this honor; the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf will share the award for the restoration of its Zurbarán painting, "Saint Francis of Assisi in Meditation" (c. 1630-1635). A total grant of €50,000 will be shared between the two museums to cover the cost of conservation efforts surrounding the preservation of these two important works.

"St. Serapion," a 1951 acquisition by the Wadsworth Atheneum, is a key work in the museum's collection of seventeenth-century paintings—one of the strongest repositories of such works in the United States. Painted in 1628 for the monastery of the Shod Mercedarians in Seville, it is considered one of Zurbarán's masterpieces.

"We are truly honored by The European Fine Art Foundation's recognition and generosity in funding this significant project for the Wadsworth Atheneum," said Susan L. Talbott, Director and C.E.O. "It is with great anticipation that we begin the process of restoring a seminal work in our collection, and we are eager to share the process with our esteemed colleagues at the Museum Kunstpalast."

Ulrich Birkmaier, Chief Conservator, will be performing conservation treatment on the painting, including the removal of previous restorations and old varnish, to restore the work's former integrity. The restoration of "St. Serapion" will be a crucial stabilization, placing the work in a new light by allowing the viewer to fully appreciate the artist's original intent.

Once the restoration of “St. Serapion” is complete, it will be unveiled as part of the reinstallation of the Wadsworth Atheneum’s European art collection, opening September 2015 after a five-year renovation of the museum’s buildings. The new presentation of European paintings, organized by Susan Morse Hilles Curator of European Art Oliver Tostmann, will provide visitors with a fuller understanding of the history of art and culture as told through the museum’s renowned collections.

The Wadsworth Atheneum will produce a video documenting the restoration process of “St. Serapion,” to be presented at TEFAF Maastricht March 2015, as well as via the museum’s website at <http://thewadsworth.org>, and via social media at <http://twitter.com/thewadsworth> and <http://facebook.com/wadsworthatheneum>.

### **About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

Founded in 1842, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest public art museum in the United States. The museum’s nearly 50,000 works of art span 5,000 years, from Greek and Roman antiquities to the first museum collection of American contemporary art. The museum’s five connected buildings—representing architectural styles from Gothic Revival to modern International Style—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Conn. Since 2010 the museum has been undergoing a major, \$33 million renovation, slated to be complete 2015. Hours: Wed – Fri: 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat and Sun: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; First Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Admission: \$5 – 10; discounts for members, students and seniors. Phone: (860) 278-2670; website: <http://thewadsworth.org>.

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