

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA PRESENTS EXHIBITION EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY VIEWPOINTS ON THE SPANISH CONQUEST

Works by contemporary Latino and Native artists draw on traditional Catholic iconography to contemplate the heritage of Spanish colonialism

Exhibition explores current perspectives on California's complex history

(OAKLAND, CA) February 10, 2011—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) presents *Contemporary Coda*, a companion installation to *Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest* showcasing contemporary perspectives on the legacy of the Spanish conquest of California. On view, **February 26 through May 29, 2011**, the exhibition features 17 works by contemporary artists that address issues of immigration and regional connections across the current border; religion and Chicano identity; and the cultural survival of the Native peoples of California. Five centuries have passed since the arrival of Europeans in the Americas; however, issues persist with the legacies of this conquest. *Contemporary Coda* forms a coda, or end-piece, to the larger context of the exhibition *Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest*, exploring these issues and how they affect us today.

“OMCA is committed to connecting communities to the cultural and environmental heritage of California,” says Executive Director Lori Fogarty. “Through *Contemporary Coda* and the larger context of *Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest*, visitors will not only learn about our state’s history, they will also have the ability to explore the connections between that history and contemporary issues that affect Californians today.”

Featuring artwork created primarily by Native and Latino artists; *Contemporary Coda* examines the heritage of Spanish colonialism by drawing on traditional Catholic themes, legacies, and iconographies. Many artworks included in the exhibition confront the uneasy history of encounters between indigenous people and the Church. For example, works such as Ester Hernandez's *Wanted* (2010) or Alma Lopez's *Our Lady* (1999), explore modern depictions of venerated figures like the Virgin of Guadalupe. Carmen Lomas Garza's *Heaven and Hell III* (1993) and Harry Fonseca's *The Discovery of Gold and Souls in California* (1991–92) consider potent concepts of Heaven and Hell. Other works express devotion through the blending of traditional religious images with high-tech materials, such as Marion C. Martinez's *Librada* (2007), depicting a cross made of computer circuit board, ribbon cable, and computer posts.

“The works on view in *Contemporary Coda* showcase a variety of viewpoints and motivations,” says exhibition curator Drew Johnson. “Through this exhibition and the larger context of *Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest*, OMCA hopes to encourage reflection on the complex legacy of the mission experience. This story is about all of us, and we hope that this exhibition will create dialogue and discourse about our history and how that history still affects our state today.”

Contemporary Coda, presented as a companion exhibition to the larger exhibition *Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest*, opens at the Oakland Museum of California on February 26, and will be on view through May 29, 2011. The installation is curated by Curator of Photography Drew Johnson.

Splendors of Faith/Scars of Conquest

February 26 – May 29, 2011

Explore the Arts of the Missions of Northern New Spain in this stunning exhibition exploring the rich artistic legacy of the Franciscan and Jesuit mission churches in northern Mexico, the American Southwest, and California. Many of the missions were exuberantly decorated with lavish paintings, sculpture, furniture, and liturgical objects and vestments. For the first time, this exhibition brings together more than a hundred sacred and ceremonial artworks from collections throughout Mexico, the U.S., and Europe. OMCA is the only California venue for this major traveling exhibition and one of only two in the United States.

ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

On May 1, 2010, the Oakland Museum of California welcomed back the public with a dramatically different presentation of its renowned collections of California art and history. Created in 1969 as a "museum for the people," OMCA has revived its founding vision by introducing innovative exhibitions and programming, setting a new paradigm for the way a museum engages the public. OMCA's transformation is enhanced by the renovation and expansion of its iconic building. Renovation and reopening of the Natural Sciences Gallery is scheduled for 2012.

OMCA's groundbreaking exhibits tell the many stories that comprise California with many voices, often drawing on first-person accounts by people who have shaped California's cultural heritage. Visitors are invited to actively participate in the Museum as they learn about the natural, artistic, and social forces that affect the state and investigate their own role in both its history and its future.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Museum admission is \$12 general; \$9 seniors and students with valid ID, \$6 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of 10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the new 1000 Oak Street main entrance.

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For more information and visuals, please contact:

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