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NEWS RELEASE

El Paso Museum of Art to Renovate the Samuel H. Kress European Collection Galleries

On February 19, the El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA) will temporarily close the Kress European Collection Galleries to undertake the first major reinstallation since the Museum opened its doors nearly 20 years ago in its current downtown location. All three galleries, measuring over 3,200 square feet, will undergo significant renovations before presenting the works in new thematic installations that will open to the public on May 3.

Originally gifted by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1961, EPMA's Kress Collection encompasses 59 Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Flemish, and French works that span more than five centuries from a thirteenth-century *Madonna and Child* painted on a gold wood panel to eighteenth-century Italian pastel portraits. Many are attributed to the most significant names in the history of art, including Sandro Botticelli, Lorenzo Lotto, Artemisia Gentileschi, Jusepe de Ribera, Anthony van Dyck, and Canaletto. The newly installed galleries will display the extraordinary Kress gift alongside works from EPMA's permanent collection according to theme and chronology, allowing visitors for the first time to trace the evolution of iconic subjects like the Madonna and Child, portrait, and landscape. New, accompanying scholarship will offer fresh insight into the remarkable continuity and period-specific innovations that defined these popular subjects for centuries across Europe. The addition of new focus walls will allow the museum to showcase the entire scope of EPMA's collection. One wall will feature a built-in niche which will highlight both sides of an Italian altarpiece dating from the 1460s by the Sienese artist Sano di Pietro. Specially selected wall coverings will further highlight the often forgotten domestic function of works large and small, including Botticelli's *Madonna and Child*.

The museum director, Dr. Victoria Ramirez, shares the significance of this project: "EPMA is one of only 18 Kress Regional Galleries nationwide to receive a 'core collection' of European masterworks. Since its unveiling in 1961, our collection continues to draw praise for its incomparable quality. The unprecedented opportunity to reinstall the collection according to its thematic strengths will provide visitors a fresh perspective on one of the Southwest's most significant collections of European art."

"EPMA's Kress Collection reflects the history of El Paso. From 1929 to 1961, when Kress was researching locations to donate his collection, gifts were distributed according to an economic yardstick based on the success of the community's Kress Five and Dime store. The El Paso 'superstore' on San Jacinto Plaza reportedly led the nation in sales from 1938 onwards, ensuring the city a remarkable collection."

The project is made possible through generous funding from the City of El Paso's 2012 Quality of Life Bonds, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the EPMA Foundation. For additional information, visit EPMA's website at www.epma.art.

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