



QUEEN SOFÍA
SPANISH INSTITUTE
NEW YORK

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

JOAQUÍN SOROLLA & THE GLORY OF SPANISH DRESS

December 8, 2011–March 10, 2012

This December Queen Sofía Spanish Institute will present *Joaquín Sorolla and the Glory of Spanish Dress*, a seminal exhibition analyzing the rich history of Spain’s regional clothing styles through the monumental paintings of Valencian artist **Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida** (1863–1923). Celebrated as a painter of light and hailed as a “modern of the moderns” by art critic Duncan Phillips, Sorolla was one of the most successful artists of his time, lauded for his free brushwork and his exceptional ability to capture atmosphere. For the first time, Sorolla’s vivid depictions of Spanish life will be shown side by side with the types of costumes they portray in a spectacular display of Spain’s traditional dress in all its glory.

The exhibition will feature more than ten paintings and over thirty rare examples of men’s and women’s clothing and accessories. From rugged work wear to festive and ceremonial dress, the array of styles will include an intricately embellished shepherd’s ensemble from Extremadura, an eighteenth-century inspired Valencian gown of luxurious brocaded silk, and a dramatic wedding dress from La Alberca, resplendent in its abundance of jewelry. Bright color combinations, lavish ornamentation, and highly decorative jewelry and accessories are hallmarks of many of the traditional ensembles on view. A selection of clothing from contemporary designers, including **Cristóbal Balenciaga**, **Yves Saint Laurent**, **Stefano Pilati** for **YSL**, **Christian Lacroix**, **Karl Lagerfeld** for **Chanel**, **Alexander McQueen**, and **Marchesa** will show Spain’s enduring influence on fashion.

Joaquín Sorolla and the Glory of Spanish Dress was conceived by **Oscar de la Renta**, chairman of the Institute’s board of directors and a tireless patron of the arts who worked closely with the exhibition team to develop and realize the show. This compelling subject was inspired by the deep love of Spanish art and culture that Mr. de la Renta developed during his years living in Spain, where he moved at the age of eighteen to study painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid, where his own illustrious design career began.

The exhibition curator is **André Leon Talley**, editor of *Vogue*’s monthly column “Life with André.” Talley received a Master of Arts degree in French literature from Brown University and later moved to New York City to assist Diana Vreeland at The Costume Institute at The

Metropolitan Museum of Art. He is recipient of the Eugenia Sheppard Award for Excellence in Fashion Journalism by the Council of Fashion Designers of America and a member of the board of Trustees at Savannah College of Art and Design, where each year, the André Leon Talley Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a designer in recognition of their significant contributions to fashion.

In 1911 The Hispanic Society of America in New York commissioned Joaquín Sorolla to paint *Vision of Spain*, which was completed in 1919 and installed at the Society in 1926. The fourteen large-format canvases showcase eleven regions of the country, focusing on rural life and traditions. According to prominent Sorolla scholar Blanca Pons-Sorolla, to acquire “a more ‘real’ vision, *in situ*, of the people and varying landscapes,” the artist traveled throughout Spain, painting evocative snapshots of the provinces after conducting meticulous studies of regional customs and seeking out “the most authentic costumes and jewelry, which in many cases he would actually purchase.” Sorolla’s detailed renderings form an important record of this traditional dress, which by the early twentieth century was beginning to fade as a form of daily sartorial expression.

In an unprecedented partnership with the **Ministry of Culture of Spain**, the exhibition will highlight costumes and artwork never before exhibited in the United States. Key clothing from Madrid’s **Museo del Traje**, along with select pieces from the artist’s own collection now housed at the **Museo Sorolla** in Madrid will form the core of the show. A selection of paintings completed as preparatory studies for *Vision of Spain* from the Museo Sorolla will provide powerful visual context for the garments. Additional objects from **The Hispanic Society of America** and private lenders such as **Daphne Guinness** will also be on view. Bullfighters’ suits of lights worn by renowned matadors **Manolete, Juan Belmonte, Antonio Ordóñez, Carlos Arruza, Enrique Ponce, Miguel Báez Spínola “El Litri,”** and **Fermín Bohórquez Domecq**, and festive dress from notable private collections in Spain, including significant pieces owned by the **Duchess of Alba, the Countess of Romanones, the Baroness of Alacuás, Naty Abascal, and Sol Bohórquez Domecq**, will be shown.

The accompanying catalogue—featuring forewords by Oscar de la Renta and **Harold Koda**, curator in charge of The Costume Institute, and an introduction by André Leon Talley—will be edited by curatorial research associates **Molly Sorkin** and **Jennifer Park** and consist of an anthology of essays on Joaquín Sorolla and Spanish regional dress by prominent scholars in the fields of art history and costume studies. Catalogue design and exhibition graphics will be created by **Pace Kaminsky**. Set designer **Stefan Beckman**, whose prestigious client list includes Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen, Chanel, Cartier, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, will create the show’s dynamic design.

Joaquín Sorolla and the Glory of Spanish Dress will be accompanied by a series of related public programs. Please check the website www.queensofiaspanishinstitute.org for a schedule of events.

Press inquiries and image requests: press@spanishinstitute.org or 212-628-0420.

Queen Sofía Spanish Institute was founded as The Spanish Institute in 1954 to promote greater awareness and understanding of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world in the United States, and was renamed in November 2003 to recognize the support given to the Institute through the years by Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain. Since its foundation, the Institute has sought to further its mission through a variety of programs. The activities focus on particular aspects of Spanish culture, past and present, and the remarkable influence this culture has in the Americas. Throughout its 55 years, the Institute has maintained an especially strong commitment to the fine arts by exhibiting major masters and newly emerging artists from Spain, Latin America and Europe.

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Gallery hours:
Monday–Thursday 10am–6pm
Friday 10am–8pm
Saturday 10am–5pm

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Joaquín Sorolla
Characters from Lagartera or Lagartera Bride, 1912
Courtesy of Museo Sorolla, Madrid



Joaquín Sorolla
Couple from Salamanca, 1912
Courtesy of Museo Sorolla, Madrid



Joaquín Sorolla
Flamenco Dancer, 1914
Courtesy of Museo Sorolla, Madrid



Joaquín Sorolla
Study for Before the Bullfight, ca. 1900
Courtesy of Museo Sorolla, Madrid



Joaquín Sorolla
Harvest, Jerez, 1914
Courtesy of Museo Sorolla, Madrid



Mantón de Manila (shawl), 19th century
Collection of Naty Abascal
© Craig McDean / Courtesy of Art + Commerce



Traje de luces (bullfighter's suit) by Fermín, 1950s-1960s
Worn by Antonio Ordóñez
Capote de paseo (bullfighter's ceremonial cape), 1940s
Worn by Carlos Arruza
Collection of Bohórquez Domecq, S.L.
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Traje corto (riding ensemble), c. 1961
Collection of the Duchess of Alba
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