

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Romance of the Bells: The California Missions in Art  
September 28, 2008 - January 4, 2009**

**LEFT-RIGHT:** Julie Morrow, *In the Mission Garden, Capistrano*, Oil on Canvas, 26 x 30 inches, Collection of the Irvine Museum. Henry Chapman Ford, *San Luis Rey Mission, 1883*, Etching, 7 x 13 inches, Private Collection, Courtesy of the Irvine Museum

**Pasadena, CA** – The images of rolling hills dotted with weathered adobe walls and red-tiled roofs featured in the exhibition *Romance of the Bells* are iconic markers of California's identity as a state. The first mission was founded by the Spanish in 1769, and from then until 1823, twenty-one California missions and a number of branch missions (*asistencias*) were built. Although that period spanned just over fifty years, there has been a lasting effect on the social and artistic history of California.

After Mexico's independence in 1822, the missions, which had been maintained by the Spanish, began to dissolve and decay. However, their intriguing combination of majesty and neglect made them popular subjects for artists. By 1850, when California became part of the United States, the missions were easily accessible to artists, and thus became an integral subject in the California Impressionist movement.

Not only has the significance of these old missions been immortalized in the naming of major California cities and roads, their beauty and grandeur have long been captured by artists who sought

to record the unique historical heritage of old California. The exhibition features works by such important Impressionist painters as Franz Bischoff, Alson Clark, Joseph Kleitsch, Arthur G. Rider, Elmer Wachtel, and William Wendt, each bringing their own personal interpretation of the importance of these ruined structures.

*Romance of the Bells* is organized by the Irvine Museum and is supported by the Historical Collections Council of California, Josh Hardy Galleries, Robert Giem, and PMCA Board Member Simon Chiu.



Charles Harmon (1859-1936) *San Luis Rey*, Oil on Board, 30 x 46 inches, Private Collection, Courtesy of the Irvine Collection.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM DAY**

Saturday, September 27, 2008

12-5pm

Present the Museum Day admission card to receive general admission. The card is available in the Smithsonian magazine or can be downloaded at

<http://microsite.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/admission.html>

### **OPENING RECEPTION**

Sunday, September 28, 3-5pm

Opening reception for *Romance of the Bells: The California Missions in Art, Seeing Greene & Greene: Architecture in Photographs* and *William Stranger: Second Growth*.

Wine and Music

Free for Members. \$5 admission.

### **LECTURE**

Sunday, October 26, 2008, 3-4pm

Jean Stern, Executive Director of the Irvine Museum

Jean Stern gives a lecture on the history of the California missions and the art of the *Romance of the Bells*.

Free with museum admission.

### **PMCA FAMILY DAY**

Sunday, December 7, 2008, 3-5pm

Please join us in making arts and crafts based on themes in our current exhibitions. Refreshments will be provided. Fun for the whole family!

Free with museum admission, RSVP to 626-568-3665 x17

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#### **About the PMCA:**

The Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA) is dedicated to the exhibition of California art, architecture, and design from 1850 to the present. Informed by the state's rich mixture of cultures and inspired by its impressive geography, California art has long been defined by a spirit of freedom and experimentation. PMCA exhibitions and educational programs explore the cultural dynamics and influences unique to California that have shaped and defined art in all media.

#### **Hours:**

Wednesday – Sunday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm.

The Museum is closed July 4th, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's Day.

#### **Admission:**

\$7 for Adults, \$5 for Seniors (65+) and Students with valid ID; free to PMCA Members and children under 12. Access for people with disabilities is provided.

#### **Location/Parking:**

The Museum is located at 490 East Union Street. From the 210 Freeway, take the Lake Avenue exit. Go south and take a right on Union Street. From the 110 Freeway/Downtown Los Angeles, follow the freeway until its end, then take Arroyo Parkway and turn right at Colorado, then left at Oakland to get to Union Street. Parking is available at the Museum.

#### **PMCA Tours:**

At this time, the museum does not offer regularly scheduled docent tours of our special exhibitions. However, docent tours are available to private groups for a fee of \$75. A non-refundable deposit of \$40 is due two weeks prior to the scheduled date in order to guarantee a tour. We regret that we are unable to accommodate tours for groups smaller than 10 or larger than 50 people. Before requesting a tour, please check the exhibition calendar to see which exhibitions will be available during your visit.

A discounted group rate of \$3 per person is available for groups of 20 or more, and free admission is offered to school groups of K-12 public school students. Please call to notify us at least one week in advance for these special admission rates.

For any questions or to make reservations for a tour or group rate, please call Shirlae Cheng at 626-568-3665 x17.

#### **PMCA Information:**

For information, the please call 626-568-3665 or visit the website: [www.pmcaonline.org](http://www.pmcaonline.org)