



NEWS

June 17, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Ron V. Wilson
Director, Bureau of Community Affairs

(650) 821-4000
SF-02-37

Exhibition “Silver of the Americas” Opens at SFO

SAN FRANCISCO—*Silver of the Americas*, a survey of the silversmithing techniques of North, Central and South America from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, is currently on display at the San Francisco Airport Museums. Located in International Terminal Gallery A-2, the exhibition contains approximately 200 objects from the collections of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Silver of the Americas begins by exploring the traditions of silver engraving, casting and chasing during the seventeenth century. Items such as silver bowls, teapots and cups reveal the interconnections and influences trade routes and migration patterns held for the colonial silversmiths.

The exhibition then explores the rise of the large, commercial North American silversmithing firms in the early nineteenth century. During this time period, the greatest demand was for presentation plates and trophies, including enormous sculptured silver centerpieces. Firms employed sculptors rather than silversmiths as their chief designers. Electroplating and electrotyping, which developed concurrently in the 1840s, removed the need for craftsmanship since any article could now be reproduced in perfect detail without effort or skill.

By the late nineteenth century, the arts and crafts movement developed as a direct revolt against mass production and the ensuing lack of craftsmanship. The movement returned the emphasis in silversmithing to creating silver that could be

seen to be handmade. The exhibition concludes with the work of August Tiesselinck, a Dutch immigrant to California who worked in the arts and crafts style.

Silver of the Americas will be on display at SFO in the International Terminal through October 2002. The exhibition is free of charge and accessible to the public twenty-four hours a day.

The San Francisco Airport Museums program was established by the Airport Commission in 1980 for the purposes of humanizing the Airport environment, providing visibility for the unique cultural life of San Francisco, and providing educational services for the traveling public. Today, the San Francisco Airport Museums features twenty-one galleries throughout the Airport terminals displaying a rotating schedule of art, history, science, and cultural exhibitions. A permanent collection dedicated to the history of commercial aviation is located in the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum.

For more information about the San Francisco Airport Museums, please contact Jane Sullivan at (650) 821-5123.

- SFO -