



**Series of Paintings by Spanish Golden Age Master Francisco de Zurbarán Travel
to Israel for the First Time**

**Opening May 24 at the Israel Museum, *Zurbarán's Jacob and His Twelve Sons: Paintings from
Auckland Castle* follows landmark U.S. tour**

Jerusalem (May 17, 2018) — Extending a major U.S. tour of Spanish Baroque masterworks from Auckland Castle, United Kingdom, 12 life-size paintings by Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) will travel to Israel for the first time.

On view at the Israel Museum starting May 24, 2018, *Zurbarán's Jacob and His Twelve Sons: Paintings from Auckland Castle* provides audiences the rare opportunity to enjoy the series, which has been presented outside of the United Kingdom only twice (1994–95 and 2017–18) since its original purchase in 1756 by Richard Trevor (Bishop of Durham 1752–1771).

The series, which depicts the Twelve Tribes of Israel, who represent the foundation of the Jewish faith, has hung in the Long Dining Room at the castle of the Prince Bishops of Durham for more than 250 years.

“We are thrilled to share with our audiences these extraordinary paintings whose history has a strong connection to the Jewish people,” said Ido Bruno, the Anne and Jerome Fisher Director of the Israel Museum. “As part of our ongoing commitment to bringing masterworks from around the world to Israel, it is an honor to partner with Auckland Castle to shed new light on this exceptional artist.”

Zurbarán's Jacob and His Twelve Sons: Paintings from Auckland Castle was co-organized by the Meadows Museum, SMU; The Frick Collection; and Auckland Castle in association with the Kimbell Art Museum. It was made possible by Anthony and Vanessa Beyer of Palm Beach, Florida, with additional support provided by Fundación Hispanojudía, Madrid and anonymous donors.

The exhibition's presentation in Israel is curated by Shlomit Steinberg, senior curator of European art at the Israel Museum, and follows similar exhibitions at both the Meadows Museum and The Frick Collection in recent months.

In preparation for their display, the paintings spent a year undergoing conservation and technical analysis under the supervision of Claire Barry, head of the conservation department at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue detailing some of this research and in-depth curatorial analysis, with a special preface by Lord Jacob Rothschild and foreword by Ido Bruno. This has been underwritten by the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica and the Center for Spain in America.

The paintings were created between 1640 and 1645 by Francisco de Zurbarán, an artist whose technique and approach to painting religious figures helped define the style of Seville's Golden Age, a period of economic prosperity in the late 16th and 17th centuries. The 13 life-size portraits provide a visual interpretation of Jacob's blessing on each son, prophecies which foretold their destinies and those of their

tribes. The works were owned by a Jewish merchant named James Mendez before being purchased by Bishop Richard Trevor at a London auction in 1756. Having not been able to purchase the painting depicting Benjamin, Trevor commissioned a copy by British artist Arthur Pond (1701–1758) in order to have the entire group represented at his residence. This 1756 copy will be on view at the Israel Museum alongside the 12 original works by Zurbarán.

An advocate for religious tolerance, Bishop Trevor voted in favour of the Jewish Naturalisation Bill of 1753, which expanded the rights of Jews in the U.K. He displayed the paintings in his newly refurbished Long Dining Room at Auckland Castle, alongside paintings of the Apostles, to highlight the typological relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

Following their presentation in Israel, the paintings will return home to Auckland Castle ahead of its reopening to the public in December 2018. The 900-year-old castle is currently undergoing a multimillion-pound conservation programme as part of new arts, faith, and heritage destination, The Auckland Project, which will also include a Spanish Gallery and Faith Museum.

Dr Edward Payne, Head Curator: Spanish Art at The Auckland Project, said: “European art rarely depicts the subject of Jacob and his sons, so this is an extremely special collection. We are delighted that the temporary closure of Auckland Castle has allowed us to share Zurbarán’s masterpieces with the world, first in America and now in Israel.”

About Auckland Castle

Long a symbol of power and authority in the North East of England, Auckland Castle was built as one of the primary castles and hunting palaces of the Prince Bishop of Durham. The castle and its park are at the center of a wider sacred Christian landscape that is more than 1,500 years old, and it remains one of the most important and best-preserved medieval bishops' palaces in all of Europe. Auckland Castle is now held in trust for the people of the North East as part of The Auckland Project.

About The Auckland Project

Auckland Castle will form the centerpiece of The Auckland Project, a new world-class visitor destination, being created in and around the Castle grounds. Other elements include a Faith Museum, Spanish Gallery, Walled Garden, Auckland Tower visitor centre, Deer Park, a hotel, and a number of restaurants, all opening in stages over the next three years.

At the heart of The Auckland Project is a mission to use art and heritage as a circuit-breaker to drive economic and social regeneration. To date, more than £130m has been committed to achieving this long-term ambition, including £11.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the conservation of Auckland Castle.

For more information visit www.aucklandproject.org

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over its first 50 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of more than 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide.

The Museum’s 20-acre campus, which underwent a comprehensive renewal in 2010, features the Billy Rose Art Garden, the Shrine of the Book, and more than 225,000 square feet of collection, gallery, and temporary exhibition space. The Museum also organizes programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the

Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the ancient Land of Israel, and at its historic Ticho House, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.

For more information about the Israel Museum exhibition please contact:

Ran Lior
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
ranli@imj.org.il
+972 (54) 7950459

Chelsea Beroza/Racheal Campbell
Resnicow and Associates, New York
cberoza / rcampbell@resnicow.com
212.671.5160/5157

For more information about Auckland Castle please contact:

Claire Buchan
The Auckland Project, England
Claire.buchan@aucklandproject.org
+44 1388743799