Iconographic and Chemical Analysis of the Molinari Medals in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA)

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My research primarily focused on the medal of Ferdinand VII (fig. 1) by Pedro José Maria de Guerrero. I worked on identifying iconography of the obverse and reverse, with an emphasis on the allegorical reverse inspired by humanist ideals popularized during the Renaissance. I was able to create a catalogue raisonné of Pedro José Maria de Guerrero, which compiles sixteen attributed works dating 1808-1823. I was also able to write a series of short essays with topics pertaining to the subject and artist, major findings/ conclusions included: our piece's role as the peak of the artist's career and embodiment of the transition between the reign of Ferdinand VII and the Mexican Revolution that led to the rule of Emperor Augustin I, as well as the identification of the audience using the inscriptions leading to the conclusion that monastic and scholastic institutions were targeted as places susceptible to propaganda (in the form of medals) in favor of Ferdinand VII. In concordance with Benjamin Wu's '18 project on the digitization of the Molinari Medals, I was also able to contribute further information on the museums object database, EMBARK, including an updated bibliography.

As originally proposed, I was going to use the Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) in the Earth and Oceanographic department at Bowdoin to chemically analyze a selection of medals with the aid of Professor Rachel Beane. The final selection of the medals resulted from a cross list of artists between the Molinari Collection and the Kress Collection, which was chemically analyzed in 1993 (Glinsman et. al.). A total of five specimens from the Molinari Collection were taken to the SEM to be analyzed. After one run by the SEM it was discovered that the wax coating on the medals was too thick to get an accurate reading. It was also determined that using X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analysis would be able to bypass the wax coating. Plans for using an XRF to carry out the chemical analysis are tentative for the Fall 2017. This data may help answer questions about provenance, artists' practices and alloys associated with specific regions.

Looking forward we are projected to open an exhibit highlighting this summers work the Summer of 2018. This will be a collaboration between Benjamin Wu '18, Art History Professor Susan Wegner, BCMA co-director Anne Collins-Goodyear, and me. Ben and I hope to focus on the idea of "Why do we collect medals?". A projected challenge and opportunity for innovative display grows from the fact that medals were made to be handled, and the tactile nature of the object is what gave its purpose. We hope to use technology in order to bridge this gap between viewing and feeling to create a strong experience for viewers with this introduction to a now unfamiliar art form.

Fig. 1 Pedro José Maria de Guerrero, *The Seminario Tridentino of Mexico to the Captive King of Spain*, 1809, 46mm, Gilt Bronze, struck, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick

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