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Museums and Cultural Affairs Department **Press Release**

The El Paso Museum of Art announces Hidden Masterpieces Visiting Scholar Lecture Series with Dr. John T. Spike who will present *Innocence at Play: Humor, Insight, and Eros in Giuseppe Maria Crespi's cupids frolicking* Thursday, January 31, 2008

For Immediate Release: January 15, 2008

Contact: Melissa Ruisz, Interim Head of Education (915) 532-1707

Join us at the El Paso Museum of Art for another season of this popular program. This spring, world-renowned visiting scholars will participate in **Hidden Masterpieces**, a lecture series that explores topics related to the Museum's late Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo art. All lectures will take place in the El Paso Museum of Art's El Paso Energy Auditorium. **On Thursday, January 31, 2008 at 6:00 pm Dr. John T. Spike will present: *Innocence at Play: Humor, Insight, and Eros in Giuseppe Maria Crespi's cupids frolicking*. A reception will follow.**

BIOGRAPHY—DR. JOHN T. SPIKE

Dr. John T. Spike is one of the most distinguished authorities in the world on Italian art of the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. He serves on the faculty of the Masters in Sacred Art History program organized by the European University in Rome and the Pontifical Athenaeum, 'Regina Apostolorum.'

Born in New York City, Dr. Spike's writings are divided between Italian Renaissance painters and international contemporary art. In 1979, he earned his PhD from Harvard University with a dissertation on Mattia Preti, one of the foremost painters of the Caravaggio school. In recognition of his authoritative studies on Preti, he was named an honorary citizen by Taverna, the artist's birthplace, in 1997. He is permanent consultant to museums in Italy and Malta and his contributions to culture and history have been recognized in Italy by the bestowal of the Premio Anthurium, 1998, the

Annual Medal of the Accademia delle Belle Arti di Messina, 2001, and the Premio Anassilaos, 2002. In 2007, he was named Honorary President of the Florence Trevelyan Cultural Foundation in Taormina, Sicily,

Author of more than twenty books, Dr. Spike is currently writing a definitive biography of Michelangelo. He has published significant monographs on Masaccio, Fra Angelico, and Mattia Preti, as well as major books on the Florentine Renaissance: *Masaccio* (Abbeville Press, 1996) and *Fra Angelico* (Abbeville Press, 1997), both also available in Italian and French editions. His *Fra Angelico*, which also appeared in a German edition by Hirmer Verlag, was named "Art Book of the Year 1997" by the Hearst newspapers in the USA. His catalogue raisonné of the paintings of Caravaggio was published by Abbeville Press in 2001 and reprinted in 2003. His writings also encompass books and essays on many contemporary artists, including David Hockney, Angel Orensanz, Gerhard Richter and Cindy Sherman. Since 2003, his monthly column on contemporary art, *Closer Look*, has appeared on the end page of *Art & Antiques* magazine.

In addition, Dr. Spike continues to regularly contribute articles and reviews on a wide range of topics to art historical journals, especially the *Burlington Magazine*, *FMR*, *Il Giornale dell'Arte*, *Quadri e Sculture*, and *Treasures of Malta*, and serves as a permanent member of the international advisory boards of *Art & Antiques* and *FMR*.

In 1998, he was named Director of the *Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea* of Florence, Italy, in 1998. During his 7 year tenure as Director, the Florence Biennale grew into the world's largest and most influential survey of contemporary art in the world, representing more than 70 countries and 800 artists.

In the course of his career, Dr. Spike has organized art exhibitions and presented lectures at major museums and universities around the world, including the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi; The Pierpont Morgan Library and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Musée du Louvre, Paris; the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Harvard, Yale, and Princeton Universities, and the University of Malta. Since 1989, Dr. Spike and his family have lived in Florence, Italy.

Please call (915) 532-1707 for more information, or to RSVP. This event is free to the public and has been underwritten by the Peter and Margaret de Wetter Fund El Paso Museum of Art Foundation.

SAVE THE DATE – SUBSEQUENT VISTING SCHOLAR LECTURE SERIES, 2008

Please join us on Thursday, March 27 at 6:00 pm for *Tiepolo's Young Woman with a Parrot* presented by Norman Bryson. More information will be released shortly.

Please join us on Thursday, May 8 at 6:00 pm for *The Art and Legacy of Nicolas de Largilliere, Portrait Painter of the Ancien Regime* presented by Alan Wintermute. More information will be released shortly.

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