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Majestic sculpture on view in New York City to be auctioned at Naples Winter Wine Festival
Artist Manolo Valdés' Reina Mariana to travel to Naples, Fla. for charity auction

NAPLES, Fla. (Dec. 21, 2010) – A unique, monumental bronze sculpture entitled Reina Mariana and created by Manolo Valdés, one of the most important and respected Spanish artists working today, will be transported from New York City to Naples, Fla. for the Jan. 28 – 30 Naples Winter Wine Festival. The sculpture currently is on view in Columbus Circle where it has been included in the Valdés on Broadway exhibition in conjunction with the Broadway Mall's Association.

Valdés and the Marlborough Gallery, which represents the artist, are donating the sculpture. It weighs over 2,000 pounds and is more than 8 feet in height. It will be among 70 one-of-a-kind lots auctioned at the festival, with proceeds benefitting underprivileged and at-risk children through the Naples Children & Education Foundation.

Valdés is scheduled to attend the festival and is being honored as the featured artist. He joins an illustrious group of featured artists from previous festivals, including one of the most renowned contemporary artists, the late Robert Rauschenberg.

“We are thrilled to bestow the honor of featured artist on Manolo Valdés and are very excited to auction his magnificent sculpture at the festival,” said Bruce Sherman, 2011 festival chair and a trustee of NCEF, the festival's founding organization. “Reina Mariana is a showstopper and one of the most striking and iconic pieces of art ever auctioned over the festival's 11 years.”

A private visit and tour, for two couples, of both the artists' Manhattan studio and Marlborough Gallery is also included in the Valdés lot. Other auction lots feature rare wines, once-in-a-lifetime trips and experiences, as well as a new and a vintage automobile. Since 2001, the festival has raised more than \$82.5 million for children in need.

About the artist and sculpture

Born in Valencia, Spain in 1942, Manolo Valdés is one of the few artists today who has successfully mastered the disciplines of drawing, painting, sculpture and printmaking. Impassioned by artists of the past ranging from Zurbarán to Velázquez, Matisse to Lichtenstein, Valdés finds more than inspiration in their paintings; he uses their work “as a pretext” (“como pretexto”) to create an entirely new aesthetic object – a painting or sculpture sourced from a known composition from which Valdés creates a uniquely brilliant work of art in itself.

The sculpture, Reina Mariana, was inspired by the mid-seventeenth century portrait of Mariana of Austria, Queen of Spain by Diego Velázquez in Madrid's Prado Museum. Valdés worked with the image of Reina Mariana for many years in paintings, drawings and prints before bringing it to three-dimensional form.

Commenting on the history of Reina Mariana, Valdés noted that, “the first sculpture version made was in wood, through the process of assembling different boards of 1 centimeter thickness. By this I mean, it was not a carved sculpture from one block of wood, but rather the volume was created by the accumulation of layers, the same way that volume is achieved by accumulating fragments of clay.” Valdés’ artistic method is an additive, not a reductive, process. He added, “The placement of this sculpture on the ground, without a pedestal, makes its interpretation very personal.”

The artist has enjoyed recent public exhibitions of his work in Beijing, Miami, Monaco and St. Petersburg. In New York City, this sculpture has been exhibited along with fifteen other Valdés sculptures since May. The exhibition ends Jan. 23, 2011.

Valdés’ work is included in over 40 public collections including the Guggenheim Collection, Venice; Menil Foundation, Houston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Musée National d’Art Moderne-Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centre de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

About the festival

The Naples Winter Wine Festival is an intimate weekend of exceptional food and wine for 550 guests. It includes a Meet the Kids Day for a firsthand look at festival proceeds at work; Friday vintner dinners at trustees’ homes prepared by famous chefs, with special wines poured by renowned vintners; a culinary feast and exquisite wine tasting on Saturday at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples, a founding sponsor of the festival. Following is the live auction of truly priceless auction lots. A Saturday evening “wine-down” party and Sunday celebration brunch bring the spectacular experience to a close.

The Naples Winter Wine Festival was founded and is hosted annually by trustees of the Naples Children & Education Foundation. Festival proceeds have helped nearly 100,000 children through grants to children’s charities and collaborative funding of major projects including a pediatric dental center and early learning center. The festival is ranked by Wine Spectator as the most successful charity wine auction in the nation since 2004 and a top 10 event for wealthy Americans by the Luxury Institute.

Festival ticket packages are \$7,500 per couple; \$20,000 for reserved seating at the same vintner dinner for two couples. For a festival schedule, detailed information on all 70 auction lots and additional details, visit www.napleswinefestival.com or call the wine festival office at 888-837-4919.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

Valdes, Reina Mariana, 2005, bronze, 98.5 x 78.75 x 47.25.jpg

Reina Mariana is a unique bronze sculpture created by noted Spanish artist Manolo Valdés. 98 ½ x 78 ¾ x 47 ¼ in. © Manolo Valdés, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

Manolo Valdés - Photo by Kike Palacio.jpg

Manolo Valdés in his sculpture studio. © Kike Palacio