

Good Times

Weekend Guide

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MACAO GRAND HOTEL

Holy House of Mercy Showcasing sacred art in the heart of Macau

It is not everyday Macau is offered the gift of a new museum or in this case a new extended gallery in an existing museum nucleus.

Located in the city's centre at Senado's Square and inside one of Macau's best-known ex-libris: the UNESCO heritage-listed building of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia (Holy House of Mercy), there is now an added attraction for lovers of Sacred Art and Religious and Cultural tourism, besides the São Domingos church's and St. Paul's Ruins' nuclei in that area.

This new gallery, officially inaugurated on Tuesday, gathers around two hundred pieces of Sacred Art relics and Christ's imagery. Mostly heraldic pieces branded with the monogram of the Companhia de Jesus, a society that left ineffaceable footprints not only in the local religious heritage but also in the areas of culture, education and social, among others. Traces of the Jesuits' presence and strong influence in the Middle Kingdom from the seventeenth-century onwards

are also felt in religious and everyday use objects, as well as in a map/chart that pinpoints regions of the Jesuits Catholic Missions in China.

The gallery, truly worthy of a visit, is also an extension of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia museum nucleus launched in 2001 by SCM's curator Antonio José de Freitas, with many pieces of religious art mostly from his own collection of nearly 30 years. Freitas once said he felt showing it to others instead of keeping it for himself would help enrich and preserve the over 400-year old history of Macau through the promotion of knowledge among interested visitors and locals.

With an average of 200 visitors per day, the SCM museum nucleus is already showcasing around 500 pieces of its vast collection in the first gallery now enlarged

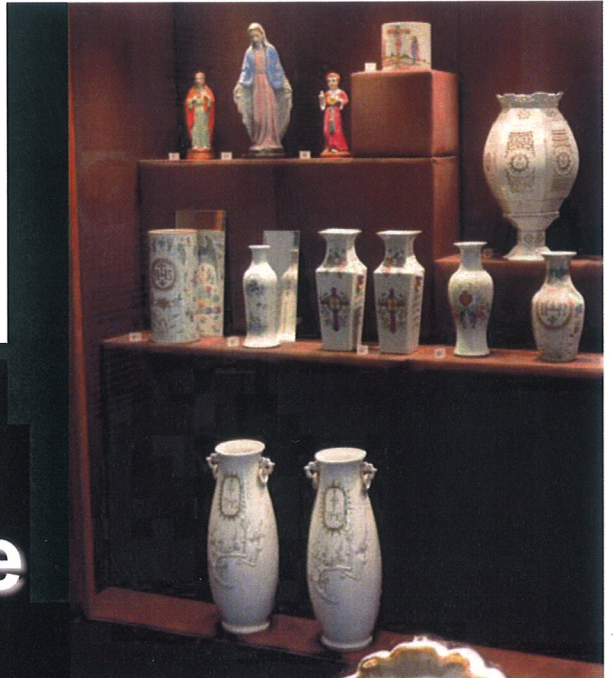
with another space.

The number of simultaneous group visitors remains limited to avoid overcrowding in the heritage-listed building, for safety and security reasons.

Really good tidings for the culturally minded visitors.

C.J.

More info: <http://www.scm.mo>



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Photos by Manuel Cardoso