



For immediate release | May 2013

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SPAIN arts & culture presents

IMAGINING LA FLORIDA



Introductory Panel to the exhibit

Grupo Abbsolute / Carmen Bueno for AC/E

WHAT

EXHIBITION "IMAGINING LA FLORIDA"

WHEN

May 30 - August 17 2013

Opening hours: Wednesday - Sunday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

WHERE

Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College,
600 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL 33132

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Washington, D.C.- As part of the activities scheduled for the 500th anniversary celebration of Ponce de León's landing in Florida, SPAIN arts & culture together with the state of Florida and the Spain-Florida Foundation, will open the exhibit "**Imagining La Florida: Juan Ponce de León y the Quest for the Fountain of Youth**" this upcoming **May 30**.

Curated by historian J. Michael Francis, and produced by Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), **Imagining La Florida** offers to the visitors a new perspective on Florida, from the time of Ponce de León's 1513 expedition to the 1739 establishment of Fort Mose, the first free black settlement in the United States. Imagining Florida's primary purpose is to unveil the historical legacy of Ponce's voyage and the evolution of the colonial society in Florida.

Imagining La Florida is divided into four distinct sections. A careful selection of exhibition panels with illustrations, artifacts, documents and maps take visitors on a remarkable journey, told from both sides of the Atlantic.

.-The first part of the voyage, **Path into the Unknown**, begins in Seville, Spain, on the eve of a trans-Atlantic voyage. Visitors enter a Spanish galleon replica as it prepares to depart to the New World. We learn about the navigational instruments, technology, and the range of occupations of those who joined such expeditions.

.-Section two, **The Age of Exploration and Encounter**, focuses on the age of exploration, from Ponce de León's first voyage to Florida to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the foundation of St. Augustine, the oldest permanent European settlement in the United States. Visitors will also discover the rich diversity of Florida's Indian populations on the eve of Ponce's 1513 voyage.

.- **Europeans, Africans and Indians in La Florida** is the third section, which highlights the evolution of Florida's early history, as Europeans, Africans (both free and enslaved), and Indians struggled to create a colonial society. Violent clashes certainly occurred, but so did long periods of peace and coexistence. Lasting alliances were forged; in the sixteenth century, Jesuit and Franciscan missions spread from south Florida north to Chesapeake Bay. And in the eighteenth century, Florida became the home of the first free black community in the United States, Fort Mose.

.- The fourth and final section, **Seeking the Fountain of Youth**, explores the origin and evolution of one of the most enduring foundation myths in the United States, Juan Ponce de León's Quest for the Fountain of Youth.

Imagining La Florida aims to go beyond the myths of Florida's early colonial history, revealing some of the many forgotten characters and episodes. The exhibit also features detailed models produced specifically for this occasion, like that of a seventeenth-century church, or the Apalachee Indian Council House at Mission San Luis in Tallahassee. Another model, the first of its kind, recreates the 1595 wooden fort in St. Augustine, reconstructed from original sixteenth-century illustrations.

The exhibition features several AV and interactive elements: an animation of the sixteenth-century neighborhood of Arenal, in Sevilla, Spain, the port of the Americas; a summary of the early voyages that were crucial in establishing the routes to the New World –the Fleet System, or Carrera de Indias–; a brief biography of Ponce de León, and a video animation, made from original maps from the General Archives of the Indies, which takes the visitors on a visual tour of sixteenth-century St Augustine and the Indian missions of San Sebastián and Nombre de Dios.



In addition, visitors will be able to discover, using interactive ipads, the routes of the earliest European explorers who first traveled across Florida's territory.

Imagining La Florida also includes several recordings of short stories, narrated in Spanish and English, which complement the biographies of some of the most fascinating characters and episodes that helped shape Spanish colonization of Florida.

As visitors depart the exhibit, a remarkable animation of The Fountain of Youth, inspired by the famous painting by Cranach de Elder, projected on the floor, will offer the chance of a virtual rejuvenating bath, whose effects will be visible on a "magic mirror".

Imagining La Florida offers a new perspective on the rich, yet long-forgotten history of colonial Florida. It is designed to open eyes and minds, highlighting one of the most intriguing and dramatic periods in US history.

Imagining La Florida will be open to the public until August 17, 2013 at the Freedom Tower in Miami.

Opening hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

This exhibit has been organized by Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) in collaboration with the Embassy of Spain in Washington DC and its cultural program SPAIN arts&culture, the Centro Cultural Español in Miami, The Spain Florida Foundation, *Viva Florida 500*, the Miami Dade College, and they MDC Museum of Art + Design.

Some Links of interest

<http://www.spainculture.us/calendar/880/>

Viva Florida 500 (www.VivaFlorida.org)

Spain-Florida Foundation (www.spain-florida.org)

To obtain images of the exhibition, please click here

SPAIN arts & culture features the most cutting-edge works of international renowned Spanish artists in fields such as design, urban culture, architecture, visual arts, film, performing arts, literature and music. A series of exhibitions, conferences, showcases, and performances take place every year at the most prestigious American cultural institutions bringing a taste of all the creativity, history, and talent of Spanish artists to the American public. This program is organized by the Embassy of Spain's Cultural Office in Washington, D.C. and its network of General Consulates and Cervantes Institutes in the United States together with the Spain-USA Foundation.

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