SELF-GUIDED TOUR

Welcome to At the Manger presented by the Marian Library at the University of Dayton. This guide will take you through the three floors of the exhibit and provide insight on each display. Please return the guide before exiting the building so that it is available for other visitors.

FIRST FLOOR

From the Land Where Donkeys Have Butterfly Wings

This exhibit of Nativities from Mexico highlights the customs of a country that is close to us not just geographically, but also culturally. In its Nativities, known as nacimientos, one can see influences of indigenous culture as well as contrasts between the contemporary and traditional.

The crèches in this display, some of which are gifts from the collection of Bob and Judy Davis, represent many of the 32 states of Mexico. A graphic on the wall of the gallery describes Mexican Nativity culture, the styles and materials of different regions, and artist interpretations.

CASE 35
This detailed setting illustrates the craft of the Huichol people. Liquid clay is poured into molds, dried and fired, then covered with beeswax. While the wax is soft, tiny beads are embedded to add color and pattern to each piece. Look closely at the figures and see the flowers — then see if you can find the row of orange ducks on an animal.

CASE 32
In this Nativity made of woven straw, the artist used differing amounts of straw — from a single strand to a bundle — to vary the width of the weave. The straw is soaked to make it pliable. Note the hanging bells.

CASE 18
This popular set is made of automobile parts.

CASE 19
Artist Josefina Aguilar is part of a family of artists represented in museum collections worldwide. In the upper right corner of this clay scene, Mary is inspired by the image enshrined within the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, the most visited Catholic pilgrimage in the world. In the upper left corner is Mary of Soledad, the Patroness of Oaxaca (pronounced “wa-HAH-ka”), home of this artist family. Clay used by the Aguilars is dug from a depth of 12 feet. Josefina and her sisters learned the craft from their mother and passed the skills down to their children, who in turn are teaching their children.

CASE 1
This brilliant carved-wood set was painted, laid with gold leaf, and painted again with forefront details. Each figure is clothed in a “garden of flowers” and leaves.

CASE 22
The church in this crèche is made of cut, flattened metal, textured and brightly colored. The circles, triangles, and free-form shapes were punched out using metal stamps and a hammer. Compare this Nativity with the contemporary mobile hanging in the lobby atrium. That too is made of cut and hammered metal, the figures’ eyes cut using metal stamping.

CASE 27
With all but the visitors’ gifts made of woven ixtle — fibers from the agave and yucca plants — this set demonstrates the skills of a Mexican weaver. Notice the thin, delicate fiber that lines Jesus’ crib. These same strands, woven together, make up the rope-like fibers used in the larger figures.

Mirror of Hope

Along the gallery’s west wall is Mirror of Hope. It is more than a simple Nativity set; it depicts the history of salvation from creation to the heavenly Jerusalem. Created by artist Kevin Hannah, it is a permanent installation in Roesch Library. If you look closely, you will see a rendition of UD’s Immaculate Conception Chapel.
**SECOND FLOOR**

**A World of Memories**

The Nativity sets on the second floor will take you on a global journey. Find examples of Nativity sets that are similar to those your ancestors may have treasured during the Christmas season.

**CASE 59**

Notice the Alaskan Nativity on the right, depicting an igloo-style home and native animals. The angel is dressed in Eskimo clothing.

**CASE 52**

See the crèche on the left from Fiji. The figures are made of tapa (masi in the native language), a barkcloth of the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Notice that the heads are made of seeds, and shells depict the leaves of the tree.

**CASE 51**

Artists often use materials from food sources. On the second shelf from the top is a Peruvian Nativity made of gourds (small squash). The plant is dried for several months until hardened, then decorated using wood-burning and carving tools. Notice the detail on the faces. On the right of the third shelf is a Nativity made of corn husks.

**CASE 54**

Compare the styles of the two Italian Nativities on the left side of the case. The simplified lines and shapes of the contemporary porcelain set contrast starkly with the traditional style used in the terra cotta set to its right.

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**A Provençal Welcome**

**Railway to the Past**

Detailed information is available in the booklet provided.

Follow along with the audio by using the booklet provided.

**CRÈCHE MUSEUM**

The Marian Library at the University of Dayton has been exhibiting crèches for more than 20 years. The collection, which now exceeds 3,500 crèches, represents more than 100 cultures and countries. While most crèches are donated, the Library occasionally commissions or purchases sets in order to more fully represent the range of historical, cultural, and regional Nativity traditions worldwide. In the course of a year, volunteers commit more than 6,500 hours to the care and creation of settings for At the Manger. Thousands of visitors view the collection at UD and across the nation each year.

Thank you for touring At the Manger. Please return this guide before exiting the building. Be sure to sign our electronic guestbook in the lobby for a chance to win the Blue Nativity Retablo by Alejandro Chavez.