

MASTERPIECE  
MINUTE



Welcome to Masterpiece Minute with Doc Brown on Virtual SDMA. I'm your host, Michael Brown, Curator of European Art at The San Diego Museum of Art. Drop in every Friday at 10am to pick up a new 60-second mini talk related to what's happening—virtually anyway—at the Museum. We start the series appropriately enough with a real survivor, a painting that lived through a plague worse than the current novel Coronavirus, a civil war, a harrowing Atlantic crossing, and a catastrophic mansion fire.

[Music]

Juan Sánchez Cotán was an artist and thinker who lived in Toledo until 1603, when he dropped everything and joined the Carthusian monastery as a lay brother.

We don't know more about the artist's life, other than the fact that he lent his friend El Greco the equivalent of several thousand dollars.

He painted at least twelve still life paintings in his lifetime, of which seven survive.

*Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber* (which our kids call a pickle) is his greatest masterpiece, and one of the most important Spanish paintings in the world.

The painter gave his friend the archbishop of Toledo the painting in 1603, and in turn the churchman gave it to the king.

The king's painter, Diego Velázquez, was responsible for hanging the painting in the royal palace right around the time a recurrence of the bubonic plague swept through Spain.

Velazquez was only the first of many great artists inspired by the painting, from generations of still life painters in Spain to modern and contemporary artists in the US, including Cauleen Smith, whose video you can see as soon as the Museum reopens.

This has been Doc Brown with Masterpiece Minute here on Virtual SDMA—catch ya next Friday!

BALBOA PARK  
THE SAN DIEGO  
MUSEUM OF ART