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### **IRVINE MUSEUM'S "PLEIN AIR COLLECTION" ON DISPLAY AT MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO**

San Juan Capistrano, CA – December 18, 2009 – Mission San Juan Capistrano will now host Mrs. Joan Irvine Smith's collection of reproductions of historic plein air paintings from the Irvine Museum display beginning January 9, 2010 in the Soldiers Barracks daily from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

"Mission San Juan Capistrano is proud to partner with Mrs. Smith to display her private historic collection on loan from the Irvine Museum," said Mechelle Lawrence-Adams, Executive Director at the Mission. "This collection will be right at home at the Mission where so many pieces were inspired."

Smith and the Irvine Museum are committed to conserving the art of plein air painting and its ability to record history in a unique and beautiful way. It is through the generosity of Smith and in partnership with the Irvine Museum that the Mission is able to bring this collection of landscapes to Orange County's only mission, a historic landmark and museum.

"The Missions represented personal histories, legends, stories, travel and a sense of place. The artists interpreted the California Missions not as archeological sites, but rather as places where *people* had lived," stated Jean Stern, Director of the Irvine Museum. "As subjects for paintings, these sites represented life, death, happiness, and sadness - all elements of a golden past. To them, Mission San Juan Capistrano was something much more than the stones and the flowers; it was the site of our heritage."

Plein air paintings are inspired by the popular European Impressionism movement. Much of the art documents the splendor of the land before huge population growth and mass urbanization. In California, a regional variant of this American Impressionism developed and most works consist principally of landscapes that document the splendor of

California. Artists' love for Mission San Juan Capistrano as a painting subject over the years provided testament and insight into our history.

***About Mission San Juan Capistrano:***

*Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.*

*The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing.*

*The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County's only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.*

*Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County's only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.*

*Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$5 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit [www.missionsjc.com](http://www.missionsjc.com).*

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