

FRAGMENTS OF DEVOTION



Jewellery drawn from
THE CROWN OF THE ANDES



Created by Andrés Mesa



Popayán, 1590s

The city of Popayán, high in the mountains of southern Colombia, survived a smallpox epidemic in the 1590s that had emptied the towns around it. In thanks, its people commissioned a crown for the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception in their cathedral.

Goldsmiths worked on it for decades, raising the gold into acanthus leaves and shells and setting more than four hundred Colombian emeralds, one stone at a time.

For three hundred years it left the cathedral once a year, carried through the streets at Holy Week. In 1936 it was sold. Today it sits behind glass in Gallery 626 of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Devotion given, and given again.

These ten pieces were made to be worn. They are not copies of the crown. They are what was in the gold before it was gold. They carry what it was made of: the devotion of a city that believed it had been saved.

Every part of the crown can live somewhere else. What was carried above the Virgin's head becomes something worn by the faithful, and no part loses its meaning in the move. The emeralds stay set in gold as accents, the way they were in the original.

Each of the ten is worn by someone in Popayán on an ordinary morning. The crown itself is intact, safe in New York. These are fragments of what it used to mean to the locals.

Crown of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, known as the Crown of the Andes. Colombian (Popayán), c. 1660 and c. 1770. Gold, repoussé and chased, with emeralds. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession 2015.437, Gallery 626.





APPARITION

BROOCH. GOLD AND EMERALD.

The winged Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, crowned, standing on the crescent moon with the serpent beneath her heel and a sunburst rising behind her. Her gown is covered in emeralds set close together in a pavé pattern, and the crown on her head repeats the arched imperial bands and the cross finial of the original. Andean colonial workshops carved this winged Virgin in wood. Worn over the heart.





A great sign appeared in heaven.

001 · APPARITION



KEEPSAKES

CHARM BRACELET. GOLD AND EMERALD.

Five milagros, the small votive charms left at Colombian altars in thanks or in petition, and kept afterwards. Each one carries a single stage of the crown's life. There is the mountain the emeralds were mined from, two hands holding a single stone, the Virgin on her processional platform, the galleon that crossed the Atlantic, and a vitrine holding a crown with the number 626 on its base, the gallery in New York where the original sits today.



Ask, and it will be given you.

002 · KEEPSAKES

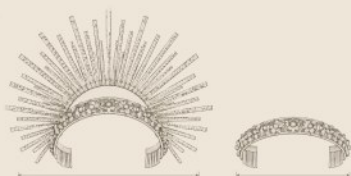




RADIANCE

HAIR ORNAMENT. GOLD AND EMERALD.

A sunburst of hammered gold rays mounted on a small chased comb whose teeth sink into the wearer's hair, so the radiance stands upright behind her head. The rays come from the aureole that surrounds Andean images of the Virgin, and the comb's scrollwork and emerald settings come from the crown's rim.





O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light.

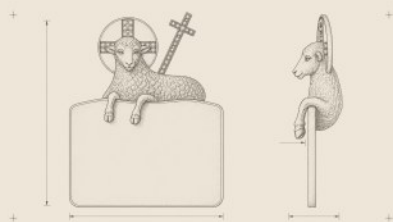
003 · RADIANCE



LAMB OF GOD

POCKET BROOCH WITH PRESENTATION CARD. GOLD AND EMERALD.

The Lamb of God in low relief, its body resting inside the breast pocket with its forelegs folded over the front edge. Behind its head there is a flat cruciform nimbus set with three emeralds, and a slender emerald cross angles back over its shoulder. It comes on a brushed gold card, die-cut to follow the lamb's back, engraved *SI DEUS PRO NOBIS / QUIS CONTRA NOS*, which means if God is for us, who can be against us.



If God is for us, who can be against us.

004 · LAMB OF GOD





THE MANTLE

EARRINGS. GOLD AND EMERALD.

A crowned figure sits at the top of each earring, her mantle fanning wide below in pierced gold filigree with a scalloped hem and a small gold cross hanging at the point. The openwork is drawn from the crown's pierced band, and the emeralds are set sparsely, the way they were in the original.





Under your protection we take refuge.

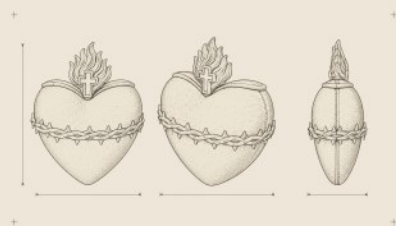
005 · THE MANTLE



RELIQUARY

HANDBAG. OXBLOOD CALFSKIN, GOLD AND EMERALD.

A Sacred Heart in deep oxblood leather at full volume, encircled at its widest point by a polished gold crown of thorns, with a gold flame rising from the notch at the top carrying an emerald cross. It opens across the top and hangs from a gold chain.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark green long-sleeved dress, is looking down. She has a small gold stud earring and a heart-shaped maroon leather bag with a gold chain strap. The bag features a gold cross with green flames on top and a gold chain with a cross-like pattern around the bottom. She is handing a banknote into a wicker basket held by someone in a dark suit. In the background, a religious procession is taking place on a street, featuring a large blue and gold canopy (baldachin) over a figure, surrounded by people in purple robes and white flowers.

God loves a cheerful giver.

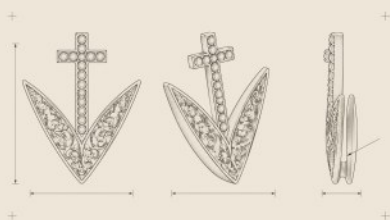
006 · RELIQUARY



THE POINTS

COLLAR TIPS. GOLD AND EMERALD.

A pair of collar tips in chased gold, the acanthus taken from the crown's pierced band and emeralds set flush into the metal. They are worn at the points of a shirt collar. They are the smallest pieces in the collection, and the only ones most people would never notice.





Faithful in the smallest things.

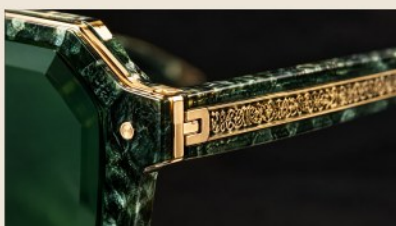
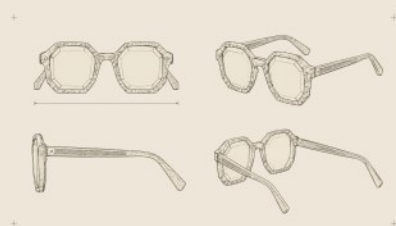
007 · THE POINTS



ECLIPSE

SUNGLASSES. JAPANESE ACETATE AND GOLD.

Octagonal emerald-cut mineral glass lenses in deep green, set seamlessly into slim bottle-green marbled acetate, with a gold brow bar across the top and a single gold rivet at each outer corner. The crown's filigree runs the length of the temples, where only the wearer knows it is there.



In your light we see light.

008 · ECLIPSE

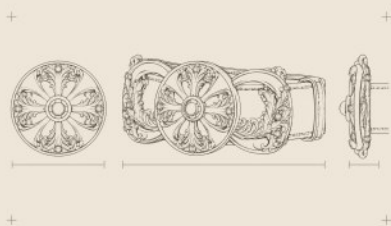




MERIDIAN

BELT. CALFSKIN, GOLD AND EMERALD.

The arched bands that rise over an imperial crown are meridians, the lines that map a globe. Two sections of the crown's own arch, with their acanthus and their emeralds, grow from the sides of a round gold medallion. The medallion is a cross whose four arms flare outward to a circular rim, with a raised ring encircling the crossing and a domed boss at the centre. The three parts are joined as one cast piece on a wide calfskin strap.





To the ends of the earth.

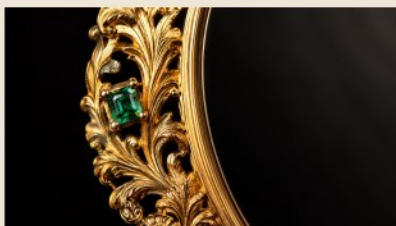
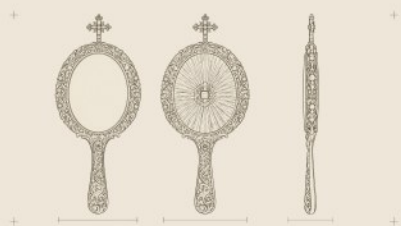
009 · MERIDIAN



WITHOUT STAIN

HAND MIRROR. GOLD AND EMERALD.

Speculum sine macula means mirror without stain, and it is one of the titles given to the Virgin in the Litany of Loreto. It belongs specifically to the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin this crown was made for. The mirror has an oval frame of pierced gold acanthus, sparse emeralds, an emerald cross rising from the top, and a handle cut from a section of the crown's arched band. The back is a repoussé sunburst radiating from a single emerald.





My soul magnifies the Lord.

010 · WITHOUT STAIN

COLOPHON

Fragments of Devotion

Ten pieces drawn from the Crown of the Andes.

CREATED BY

Andrés Mesa

BUILT ON



PRESENTED THROUGH



Crown of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception (Crown of the Andes). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession 2015.437, Gallery 626. The pieces in this catalogue are original designs. They are not reproductions of the object and are not affiliated with or endorsed by the museum.

