

The exhibition “Murillo y Justino de Neve. The art of friendship” held by the Focus-Abengoa Foundation at the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville comes to an end

- This is the first time ever that this series of works has been brought together, which has been visited by more than 46,000 people at the Hospital de los Venerables.
- Sunday 20 January will be the last day to visit the exhibition and to see “*La Inmaculada de los Venerables*” in its original frame and as part of the same altarpiece where it was displayed until 1813.

Seville, 18 January 2013. On Sunday 20 January, the “*Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship*” exhibition will draw to an end at the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, organised in conjunction with the Museo Nacional del Prado and the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London. The exhibition brings together 16 of the later works by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682), which resulted from his relationship with Justino de Neve, canon of Seville cathedral and an important patron and personal friend of the artist.

“*Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship*” will be remembered as one of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation’s most emblematic temporary exhibitions, alongside previous successes such as “*From Herrera to Velázquez*”.

The Hospital de los Venerables has taken on a special relevance for this exhibition, since it was Justino de Neve himself who founded this institution in 1675. The four paintings by Murillo that hung in the Hospital de los Venerables at that time were painted by the artist in Seville for the city, although they were subsequently plundered. Today only one of them is in its original setting.

More than 46,000 people have visited the exhibition, partly drawn by the unique opportunity to see “*La Inmaculada de los Venerables*” for the first time in 200 years in its original frame as part of the altarpiece where it was first displayed.

The exhibition, which makes a significant contribution to the body of research about the Sevillian painter, was on display at the Museo del Prado in Madrid until 30 September. It can currently be seen at the Hospital de los Venerables until 20 January 2013. It will then travel to London where it will go on show at the Dulwich Picture Gallery from 6 February to 12 May 2013.

The “*Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship*” exhibition features a unique selection of works that decorated the Santa María la Blanca church, the cathedral, or

which were destined for the Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes, among other locations; nearly 20 paintings, large commissions and portraits, as well as allegories and religious works.

The exhibition has a catalogue that includes six essays by Gabriele Finaldi, Javier Portús, Peter Cherry, Teodoro Falcón, Benito Navarrete and Ignacio Cano, which are accompanied by the fact sheets for each of the works (Gabriele Finaldi, Elena Cenalmor and Xavier Bray), and an appendix on the life, family and activities of Justino de Neve.

Various exhibitions dedicated to specific aspects of the artist's work have taken place since the major exhibition on Murillo held in London and Madrid in 1982, such as the exhibition dedicated to the "Murillos" of the Museo del Prado, acquired by Queen Isabel de Farnesio (Focus-Abengoa Foundation, Seville, 1996); his paintings of children (Munich, Dulwich and Madrid, 2001), and his works in American collections (Fort Worth, 2002). An important exhibition of the earlier works by the artist was also held recently in Seville and Bilbao (2009-2010). The current exhibition focuses on the creative dynamism of the relationship between Murillo and Justino de Neve, which resulted in a series of works of extraordinary beauty and quality, all from the last two decades of the artist's life.

Activities related to the exhibition

In addition to the exhibition in Seville, the Foundation has organised other *ad hoc* activities, including music events such as the series of Young Organist Concerts 2012 performed on the Los Venerables organ featuring organ music in Seville at the time of Murillo, as well as the Baroque School, which this year was entitled "Society and Artistic Patronage in Murillo's Seville". These were supplemented with an educational visits program for schools, families and the general public, to provide better insight into Seville at the time of Murillo and Justino de Neve, and the art of friendship.

Useful details

"Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship" exhibition

From 9 October 2012 to 20 January 2013.

Hospital de los Venerables, plaza de los Venerables, 8 (Seville)

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Visiting times

- Monday to Sunday, from 10.00 am to 1.30 pm, and from 4.00 pm to 7.30 pm.

Ticket prices

- General: €5.50

- Concessions: €2.75 (according to the usual pre-established conditions)

Advanced ticket sales and for more information: 902 091 137

Justino de Neve

Justino de Neve (1625-1685) is revealed in this exhibition as the patron of some of the most outstanding and original works by the painter from Seville, such as the large lunettes on the *Founding of Santa Maria Maggiore* – which are unveiled in their full splendour after their restoration and cleaning – and *The Immaculate Conception of the Venerables* (also known as the *Soult Immaculate Conception*) from the Prado Museum, here seen in its original frame on one of the altars of the church of the Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes; the allegories of *The Flower Girl (Spring?)* and *Young Man with a Basket of Fruit (Summer)* from the Dulwich Picture Gallery and the National Gallery of Scotland, respectively; and some extremely intricate works on religious themes painted on obsidian, from the Musée du Louvre and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts (Rienzi).

The art of friendship

Justino de Neve was born into a Flemish family in Seville and ordained a priest in 1646. He was appointed Canon of Seville Cathedral in 1658. A cultivated and dynamic man, his friendship with Murillo from at least the early 1660s was instrumental in ensuring that the artist obtained some of his most important commissions: the decoration of the Church of Santa María la Blanca (1664-1665), the decoration of the Chapter Room in the Cathedral (1667-68), and the central panel in the altarpiece of San Antonio (with the *Baptism of Christ*) in the chapel dedicated to the saint (1667-68). Furthermore, Justino de Neve commissioned various works from the painter for his foundation for retired priests, the Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes, and had in his own collection some of the most outstanding works by the artist. Murillo painted his portrait in 1665 (National Gallery, London), featured in the exhibition, as a testament to his friendship, adding the inscription “*obsequium desiderio pingebat*” (painted to be given as a gift), and named him executor of his will in 1682.

Focus-Abengoa Foundation

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation was created in 1982 as a result of the cultural work begun in 1972 by Abengoa with the publication of the works *Temas Sevillanos* (Themes of Seville) and *Iconografía de Sevilla* (Iconography of Seville). A collection of documents, books and engravings on the Kingdom of Seville and by Sevillian authors was created during the same period. This initial cultural work showed Abengoa's directors the importance of the company's involvement in activities that directly benefit society, beyond the firm's core technology work, which led to the creation of the Seville Cultural Fund Foundation. The Hospital de los Venerables, a 17th century monument and the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation in Seville, has housed the Diego Velázquez Research Centre, a leading institution for studying and disseminating the Baroque era and the Sevillian period of this universally renowned artist, since the acquisition of Velázquez's *Santa Rufina* by the Foundation in 2007.

Exhibit List

Portraits

1. *Justino de Neve*

Oil on canvas, 206 x 129.5 cm

1665

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1979

2. *Self-portrait*

Oil on canvas, 122 x 107 cm

ca. 1668 - 1670

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1953

3. *The Infant Saint John the Baptist with a Lamb*

Oil on canvas, 165 x 106 cm

1660 - 1665

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1840

Santa María la Blanca

4. *The Immaculate Conception*

Oil on canvas, 172 x 298 cm

1664 - 1665

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Collection Soult. Acquired in 1817

5. *Faith or The Church Triumphant*

Oil on canvas, 165 x 251 cm

1664-65

Oxfordshire, The Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park

6. *The Foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome: The Patrician's Dream*

Oil on canvas, 232 x 522 cm

1664 - 1665

Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

Hospital and the Hermandad de los Venerables de Sevilla

7. *The Virgin and Child distributing Bread to Priests*

Oil on canvas, 219 x 182 cm

1679

Budapest. Szépművészeti Museum

8. *The Penitent Saint Peter*

Oil on canvas, 212 x 155 cm

1675

Private collection

9. *The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable Ones / or of Soul*

Oil on canvas, 274 x 190 cm

ca. 1660-65

Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

Original frame of the work "The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable Ones / or of Soul" (belonging to the Museo Nacional del Prado, P-2809)

Water gilded and polychromed wood, 349 x 265 x 40 x 25 cm

17th century

Focus-Abengoa Foundation. Hospital de los Venerables, Seville

Murillo and Seville cathedral

10. *Baptism of Christ*

Oil on canvas, 283 x 210 cm

1667-68

Seville, Seville cathedral

The Justino de Neve collection

11. *Young Man with a Basket of Fruit (Summer)*

Oil on canvas, 102 x 81.5 cm

ca. 1660-65

Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, 1999

12. *Nativity*

Oil on obsidian, 38.1 x 34.1 cm

ca. 1665-70

Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, The Rienzi Collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III

13. *The Flower Girl (Spring?)*

Oil on canvas, 120.7 x 98.3 cm
1665 - 1670
London, Dulwich Picture Gallery

14. *The Dream of Saint Joseph (obverse) / Saint Francis of Paola in Prayer (reverse)*
Oil on copper, painted on both sides, 5.8 x 4.8 cm
ca. 1670
Madrid, private collection

15. *Agony in the Garden of Olives*
Oil on obsidian, 35.7 x 26.3 cm
1665-1670
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures

16. *Christ at the Column*
Oil on obsidian, 33.7 x 30.7 cm
1665-1670
Paris, Museo del Louvre