



## **The Focus-Abengoa Foundation presents its activity program for 2013/2014**

- This edition features the exhibition “Nur: Light in Art and Science from the Islamic World”, which will open to the public on 26 October at the Focus-Abengoa Foundation’s headquarters.
- The Foundation’s Baroque School will be directed by the Jesuit, Fernando García Gutiérrez, a leading expert on Japanese history and culture.

October 3, 2013.- The Focus-Abengoa Foundation has presented its activity program for 2013-2014, which as usual will take place at the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville. As a result of the Foundation’s commitment to disseminating scientific and cultural knowledge and research, a comprehensive program has been designed for this year aimed at undergraduates, the general public, young people, children and professionals.

This year’s program features the exhibition “Nur: Light in Art and Science from the Islamic World”, which opens to the public on 26 October at the Focus-Abengoa Foundation’s headquarters. The exhibition seeks to recognise the cultural and artistic heritage of the principal Islamic civilisations. With a focus that is unprecedented to date, Nur examines and demonstrates the use of light as a universal symbol and a common theme in the artistic contributions of the Muslim world. Furthermore, it illustrates the relationship between light, art and science, subjects that have a common and unifying artistic language in Islam, from Spain to China.

The exhibition will be presented by Doctor Sabiha Al Kemir, scientific director and curator. It features 150 objects that have been specifically lent by public and private collections, which embody the legacy of *Al-Andalus*. The works come from all around the world, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Armenia, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Germany, Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Holland, India, Malaysia and the USA.

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation is organising various activities for school children and the general public that will run in parallel to the exhibition to enable these groups to discover some of the hidden aspects of the objects in the exhibition in a fun and educational way. The Foundation is also organising weekend workshops during the year for families interested in different techniques of working with ceramics.

The exhibition will quickly be followed by a new series of the Young Organists’ Concerts in early November, which are intended to make organ music more accessible to university students. This year the concerts will be given by Alberto Sáez Puente, Jordi Cabré Roca and Aaron Ribas under the theme of “The Baroque organ in the cultural globalisation of the 17th century and beyond”.



This series forms part of the music program that the Focus-Abengoa Foundation has been offering for the last 22 years based around the organ of the Los Venerables church, one of the Foundation's most emblematic assets. Once again the organ will be the centrepiece of the educational auditions for secondary education students, as well as in the Organ Master Classes aimed at university lecturers and students, which take place in February. During the same month the Foundation will host the Master Concerts series featuring Theo Jellema from Holland, Mari Mihara from Japan and Ullrich Böhme from Germany. Thanks to these concerts, auditions, recordings and master classes organised by the Foundation, organ music in Seville continues to attract the leading talent and experts in this instrument both nationally and internationally every year.

The Hospital de los Venerables will also host the Focus-Abengoa Foundation's Baroque School between 18 and 20 November, which will be directed by the Jesuit, Fernando García Gutiérrez, formerly a lecturer at the University of Sophia in Tokyo and the University of Seville. His extensive knowledge of Japanese history and culture will undoubtedly make him an exceptional director for this latest edition entitled, "East and West. The first globalisation in Baroque times". The School will look in detail at the earliest surmised "globalisation" during the 17th century, which is considered to be a universal and wide-ranging phenomenon influencing culture, economics, the arts, politics, religion, science, literature and history.

Next year the Focus-Abengoa Foundation will organise a new edition of the Focus-Abengoa International Painting Prize, which has a long tradition and a prestigious reputation. Having been held for more than 26 years, it has become one of the foremost European and American awards in the art world. This international prize is an example of the Foundation's ongoing commitment to contemporary art, contributing to the exchange of artistic experiences with countries outside of Spain, reflecting the concerns and wishes of the award's founders. The International Painting Prize is a unique experience, being open to both recognised artists and talented newcomers.

The Foundation's annual program for this academic year will also feature a new edition of the Prize for best doctoral thesis on an artistic, historical, literary, scientific or technical theme related to Seville, which has been presented since 1983. In addition to a financial award of €3,000, the prize includes publication of the work if the Foundation's trustees deem it suitable when making the award. This prize highlights the Foundation's commitment to promoting culture in all its various forms, especially conserving, promoting and developing Seville's historical and cultural heritage and its influence in Latin America.

Lastly, all visitors to the Hospital de los Venerables will be able to enjoy the permanent collection of the Diego Velázquez Research Centre, comprising 16 works, including three pieces from Velázquez's Seville period, namely the *Santa Rufina*, the *Imposición de la casulla a san Ildefonso* and the *Inmaculada Concepción*. In addition to these, the collection contains masterpieces by Pacheco, Martínez Montañés, Herrera "the Elder", Zurbarán and Murillo. The permanent collection has been specifically created with educational and scientific purposes to demonstrate how Velázquez "revolutionised" the history of painting while in Seville, by highlighting the beauty of the real world, using careful arrangements, putting museography at the service of museology. This



philosophy is embodied by the work *Vista de Sevilla*, the most important depiction of the city that Velázquez painted in the 17th century, showing the flow of merchandise and the seething mass of people that existed at the time in the capital of Seville, and which helps the viewer to imagine what the city that witnessed Velázquez's birth and early days was really like.

### **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.

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