

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation opens the “Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship” exhibition at the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville

- The exhibition, organized by the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, the Museo Nacional del Prado and the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, will be on show to the public from October 9 to January 20, 2013.
- This is also a unique occasion to see “*La Inmaculada de los Venerables*” in its original frame and location.

Seville, 8 October 2012. The Focus-Abengoa Foundation, in collaboration with the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid and the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, today opened the exhibition entitled, “Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship”, which brings together 16 of the later works by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) that resulted from his relationship with Justino de Neve, canon of Seville cathedral and an important patron and personal friend of the artist.

The opening ceremony at the Hospital de los Venerables, the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, was presided over by the president of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, Felipe Benjumea, and the acting president of the board of trustees of the Museo del Prado, Amelia Valcárcel.

The ceremony was also attended by Miguel Zugaza, director of the Museo del Prado; Gabriele Finaldi, curator of the exhibition; and Anabel Morillo León, director general of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation.

The exhibition, which makes a significant contribution to the body of research about the Sevillian painter, has been on display at the Museo del Prado in Madrid since 30 September. It can now 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 Hospital de los Venerables has a special relevance for this exhibition, since it was Justino de Neve himself who founded this institution in the 1670s. 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 will be in its original home. The exhibition is therefore a unique opportunity to see the “*Inmaculada de los Venerables*” in its original frame and in the original altarpiece where it hung until 1813.

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; 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 will be hosting other *ad hoc* events such as recitals on the Los Venerables organ, as well as conferences and debates, supplemented with an educational visits program for schools, families and the general public, to provide a better insight into Seville at the time of Murillo and Justino de Neve, and the art of friendship.

Baroque School
*Society and artistic patronage
in Seville at the time of Murillo*
Director: Gabriele Finaldi,
exhibition curator
19-21 November 2012

Organ concerts
*Organ music in Seville at the time of
Murillo*
Luis Pedro Bráviz, 12 November
José Luis Echechipía, 13 November
Susana García Lastra, 14 November

The activities will take place in the Hospital de los Venerables, the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation

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 which is still on one of the altars of the church of the Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes; the allegories of *Spring* and *Summer (Young man with a basket of fruit)*, 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

1. The Infant Christ Distributing Bread to Pilgrims

Oil on canvas, 219 x 182 cm

1679

Budapest, Szépmvészeti Múzeum, inv. 777

2. The Penitent Saint Peter

Oil on canvas, 212 x 155 cm

ca. 1675

Private collection

3. A Young Man with a Basket of Fruit (Personification of “Summer”)

Oil on canvas, 102 x 81.5 cm

1660 - 1665

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

4. The Nativity

Oil on obsidian, 38.1 x 34.1 cm

1665 - 1670

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

5. Don Justino de Neve

Oil on canvas, 206 x 129.5 cm

1665

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1979

6. Self-Portrait

Oil on canvas, 122 x 107 cm

ca. 1668 – 1670

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1953

7. The Infant Saint John the Baptist with a Lamb

Oil on canvas, 165 x 106 cm

1660 – 1665

London, The National Gallery. Bought, 1840

8. The Flower Girl

Oil on canvas, 120.7 x 98.3 cm

1665 - 1670

London, By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

9. The Dream of Saint Joseph (obverse) / Saint Francis of Paola in Prayer (reverse)

Oil on copper, 5.8 x 4.8 cm

ca. 1670

London, private collection

10. The Foundation of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome: The Dream of the Patrician and his Wife

Oil on canvas, 232 x 522 cm

1664 – 1665

Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

11. The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable Ones, or of Sout

Oil on canvas, 274 x 190 cm

1660 - 1665

Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

12. Faith or The Church Triumphant

Oil on canvas, 165 x 251 cm

1664 – 1665

Oxfordshire, Trustees of The Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park

13. The Immaculate Conception

Oil on canvas, 172 x 298 cm

1664 – 1665

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Collection Sout. Acquis en 1817

14. Agony in the Garden of Olives

Oil on obsidian, 35.7 x 26.3 cm

1665 - 1670

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures

15. Christ at the Column

Oil on obsidian, 33.7 x 30.7 cm

1665 - 1670

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures

16. The Baptism of Christ

Oil on canvas, 283 x 210 cm

1667 - 1668

Seville, Catedral de Santa María, capilla de San Antonio