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UIMP Universidad Internacional
Menéndez Pelayo

Society and artistic patronage in Murillo's Seville is the focus of the 9th edition of the Baroque School

- Over the course of three days, art historians, curators and restorers will explore Sevillian society in the second half of the 17th century.
- Gabriele Finaldi, deputy director of conservation and research at the Museo del Prado, will give the opening lecture.

Seville, 19th November 2012. The Focus-Abengoa Foundation, in collaboration with Menéndez Pelayo International University (UIMP), today opened the ninth edition of the Baroque School, entitled "Society and artistic patronage in Murillo's Seville", which will run until Wednesday 21st November and will bring together important historians, architects and art experts at the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville.

The opening ceremony was attended by Antonio Miguel Bernal Rodríguez, President of the Academic Council of UIMP-Seville and Professor of the Faculty of History and Economic Institutions of the University of Seville; Patrocinio Rodríguez, Director of UIMP in Seville; Anabel Morillo León, Director General of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, and Gabriele Finaldi, Deputy Director of Conservation and Research at the Museo del Prado. In his role as director of this new edition of the School, Gabriele Finaldi is responsible for giving the opening lecture entitled, "Murillo and Justino de Neve, an artistic friendship".

In his speech, Gabriele Finaldi highlighted the close friendship between the painter and the canon of Seville cathedral, which gave rise to "some of the artist's most beautiful and ambitious works in the 1660s and 70s". The director of the School also mentioned the important role that 17th century Seville played in the nature of that friendship, explaining that "Murillo and Justino de Neve navigated Seville's complex social framework during this period with great skill in order to collaborate on some of the most important pictorial projects undertaken in the city".

The objective of this course is to study society in Seville in the second half of the 17th century from the perspective of artistic patronage, with special emphasis on the relationship between the illustrious painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) and the canon of Seville cathedral, Justino de Neve (1625-1685). The Focus-Abengoa Foundation and UIMP have brought together a unique selection of expert historians, architects and restorers who will share their enormous knowledge of Seville at that time, with those attending the School.

This edition of the Baroque School arose from the exhibition entitled "Murillo and Justino de Neve, The Art of Friendship", which is currently on show until January next year in the Hospital de los Venerables, the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation and home to the School. The exhibition and the Baroque School 2012 also share the same theme of artistic heritage, inspired by the friendship that Murillo, one of the most well-known Baroque painters, had with his friend and patron, Justino de Neve.

In addition to more than 45 students from various universities who have registered for the course, this year the School will once again be open to anyone interested in this subject. Entry to all the lectures is free, while spaces are available. The School has also awarded 20 scholarships to the students that have registered as well as reserving a number of places for people over 65 years of age.

Tomorrow, Tuesday 20th, will begin at 9.30 am with a talk by the historian, Peter Cherry, lecturer in history of art at Trinity College, Dublin, who will discuss “Art and devotion: Murillo and his patrons”. He will be followed by María Álvarez-Garcillán, a restorer from the Museo del Prado, who will speak on “Murillo: the art of knowing how to paint (Pictorial forms for expressing a message)”. Óscar Gil, lecturer at the Architecture College of the University of Seville, will then present, “Baroque architecture in the Santa María la Blanca church in Seville”, which will be followed by a visit to the Santa María la Blanca church itself, guided by the lecturers Teodoro Falcón and Óscar Gil.

Tuesday will come to an end with a talk by María Cruz de Carlos, lecturer at the department of art history and theory of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, which will focus on the “Immaculate Conception, Art, Faith and Politics”.

The Baroque School is the product of a collaboration agreement between the Focus-Abengoa Foundation and Menéndez Pelayo International University, which has resulted in the organisation of two schools with a three-year schedule, which carry out their programs and activities during the autumn and the spring in the Hospital de los Venerables, turning the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation into a forum for learning and reflection, given by international lecturers and researchers.

The two schools, which form part of the academic program of the UIMP in Seville, combine educational, scientific and cultural issues in an interrelated way, and reflect the aim of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation to contribute to satisfying general interest needs based on a multi-disciplinary perspective.

Supplementary information

Wednesday 21st November

The third and final day of the Baroque School 2012 will start at 9.30 am with a lecture by the historian Enriqueta Vila, Director of the Royal Academy of Arts of Seville, entitled “The Neves and their circle: consequences of Indian silver”. It continues at 10.30 am with the turn of Juan Ignacio Carmona, Professor of Modern History at the University of Seville, with his talk on, “The needy and charity in 17th century Seville”. The day will include a guided visit of the exhibition, “Murillo and Justino de Neve: the art of friendship”, led by its curator, Gabriele Finaldi.

At 5.00 pm in the afternoon, the historian and documentalist, Fernando Olmedo, will give a lecture entitled, “The geography of friendship: places and relationships in Seville at the time of Murillo and Justino de Neve”, which will be followed by Javier Portús, head of conservation of Spanish painting at the Museo del Prado, who will talk on artistic literature in Murillo’s Seville.

The ninth edition of the Baroque School will be brought to an end by José Enrique Ayarra, principal organist of Seville Cathedral and Focus-Abengoa Foundation, who will give an organ concert in the church where the School takes place. The diplomas for the School will be presented at the end.

Menéndez Pelayo University

The UIMP has an interdisciplinary academic and cultural program, which combines tradition and innovation with quality and prestige. It is currently the only presence-based university associated with the Ministry of Education, although it does not have its own academic staff. It operates by continually inviting the academic, intellectual, scientific and artistic elite in Spain and internationally, to lecture in its auditoriums.

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 its 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, following the acquisition of Velázquez's Santa Rufina by the Foundation in 2007.

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