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José Ramón Marcaida wins the fourth edition of the Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez “Baroque Art” International Prize from the Focus-Abengoa Foundation

- **The work by the lecturer Marcaida López, entitled “Art and science in the Spanish Baroque. Natural history, collectionism and visual culture” explores the relationship between scientific knowledge and culture in the Spanish Baroque period.**

Seville, 16 January 2014.- The lecturer José Ramón Marcaida López has won the Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez “Baroque Art” International Prize from the Focus-Abengoa Foundation for his work entitled, *Art and science in the Spanish Baroque. Natural history, collectionism and visual culture*. This fourth edition of the prize is worth €24,000

The jury highlighted the work’s “Innovative contribution about scientific knowledge applied to the history of Baroque art from an interdisciplinary perspective”, adding that “it was impressed by the methodology used, studying the science of the Modern Age as a way of interpreting Baroque culture”.

José Ramón Marcaida López graduated with first class honours in philosophy from the University of Deusto before going on to study his doctorate at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in 2011. He currently works as a post-doctorate researcher at the University of Cambridge.

The winning submission is the result of reworking his doctoral thesis (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2011), carried out at the Spanish Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) under the direction of Juan Pimentel. The research originated from a series of questions about the relationship between two central themes in the culture of the Modern Age – the growth of science on the one hand, and Baroque art on the other, which are traditionally considered to be exclusive or even incompatible cultural realities.

Under the title, *Art and science in the Spanish Baroque. Natural history, collectionism and visual culture*, Marcaida López analyses issues such as the practice of collecting curiosities and paintings and their relationship with natural history; the visual representation of natural motifs in scientific subjects and in pictorial genres typical of Baroque culture, such as still life and *vanitas* paintings, or the interpretation of nature, especially from the New World, in



focus ABENGOA

emblematic and religious contexts. With this multidisciplinary perspective, the author seeks to bridge the usual separation between studies of art and science in order to combine the rich tradition of history of art from the Spanish Baroque period and the no less considerable tradition of analysing the scientific revolution.

The jury for the prize, chaired by Anabel Morillo León, director general of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, comprised Aurora Egido Martínez, professor of Spanish Literature at the University of Zaragoza; Marcello Fagiolo, professor of History of Architecture at the Sapienza University of Rome; Karin Hellwig, researcher at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich; Ronda Kasl, curator of Latin American art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York; Manuela Mena Marqués, head of painting conservation for 18th century works and Goya at the Museo Nacional del Prado; Benito Navarrete Prieto, senior lecturer in History of Art at the University of Alcalá, and Jesús Urrea Fernández, senior lecturer of History of Art at the University of Valladolid.

Created in 2009, this Focus-Abengoa Foundation prize also recognises Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez (1935-2010), an exceptional historian of Spanish and Italian Baroque art, university lecturer and director of the Museo del Prado, who was the Foundation's artistic adviser.

The first edition of the prize in 2009 was awarded to Marta Cacho Casal for her work entitled *Francisco Pacheco and his 'Book of Portraits'*, which was subsequently published by the Focus-Abengoa Foundation in collaboration with the publishing house Marcial Pons. The second edition of the prize was won by Luis Méndez Rodríguez for his work *The adventure of Jerónimo Köler, Seville 1533*, which was recently published at the end of 2013.

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

Page 2 of 3



focus ABENGOA

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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