

Murillo

& Justino de Neve

The art of friendship

26th June – 30 September 2012

Museo del Prado

Curator: Gabriele Finaldi, Associate Director of Conservation and Research at the Prado Museum

Exhibition organised by the Prado Museum, the Focus-Abengoa Foundation and the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

“Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship” brings together a series of 17 late works by Murillo, from London, Paris, Houston, Madrid and Seville, among other cities, resulting from his relationship with Don Justino de Neve, Canon of Seville Cathedral, who was an important patron and personal friend of the artist. The exhibition makes a significant contribution to research into this specific period of Murillo's work, which has recently focused on his relationship with his patrons, the evolution of his technique, the collection of his works and on defining his catalogue. This exhibition will subsequently go on display in the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville between October and January 2013, and will end at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London from February to May next year.

Madrid, 22 June 2012. The exhibition, which can be seen in the Prado Museum from 26 June, comprises **17 paintings** of different types, five of which have been restored for this exhibition, including religious paintings and devotional works, portraits and allegories, and the only miniature known to have been painted by Murillo.

Since the major show on Murillo held in London and Madrid in 1982 there have been several exhibitions dedicated to particular aspects of the painter's work, but none specifically analysing the creative dynamism of the relationship between Murillo and Justino de Neve which generated such a significant series of paintings. The fruit of this friendship is precisely the subject of this exhibition, which is organised by the Prado Museum, the Hospital de Los Venerables Sacerdotes in Seville (constructed in the 1670s under Justino's supervision and today the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation) and the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, which is home to an important collection of works by the Sevillian artist.

The collection of paintings on display is an outstanding testimony to some of the most important artistic projects undertaken in Seville in this period, and takes the viewer on a journey into the very heart of the Sevillian Baroque, with its fusion of art, religiosity and culture.

In addition to the works belonging to the private collection of Justino de Neve, others were commissioned for the church of Santa María la Blanca in Seville (whose reconstruction he supervised), the cathedral and the Hospital de los Venerables, an institution for clerics that the canon, Justino de Neve, helped to found.

In this exhibition, de Neve reveals himself as a patron of some of the most outstanding and original works by the Sevillian painter, including the four large lunettes depicting the *Founding of Santa María Maggiore* (three of them restored for the exhibition) and the *Immaculate Conception of the Venerable* (also known as the “Soul” *Immaculate Conception*) in the Prado Museum, which will be displayed in its original frame, currently on deposit in the Los Venerables church at the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation; the allegories of *Spring* (*The flower girl*), also restored for the exhibition, and *Summer* (*Young man with a basket of fruit*), from the Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery respectively; and some highly detailed paintings on religious themes on obsidian from the Musée du Louvre and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts (Rienzi).

The art of friendship – Murillo and Justino de Neve

In the mid-17th century, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682) was the most famous painter in Seville; Justino de Neve (1625-1685) was a cultured and dynamic canon in Seville Cathedral. A professional relationship sprang up between them which soon developed into a genuine friendship. The fruit of this friendship was some of the most beautiful and ambitious works painted by Murillo in the 1660s and 1670s, when he had achieved his full potential as an artist.

The friendship of Justino de Neve, born in Seville into a Flemish family, lasted from at least the 1660s until Murillo's death in 1682, and was a decisive factor in the artist obtaining one of his most important commissions: the decoration of the church of Santa María la Blanca (1662-1665). Moreover the Canon commissioned the Sevillian painter to create various works for the Hospital de los Venerables, and also had several of the artist's most outstanding works in his own collection. As canon, Justino de Neve secured for Murillo the commission to paint a series of eight “tondi” of Sevillian saints, an *Immaculate Conception* which today still adorns the ceiling of the Chapter Room in the Cathedral, and the *Baptism of Christ* which crowns the altarpiece of San Antonio in the chapel dedicated to the saint.

Ruiz de Alarcón, 23
28014 Madrid. España

T: +34 913 30 28 60 / 23 73

F: +34 913 30 28 58

area.comunicacion@museodelprado.es

press@museodelprado.es

www.museodelprado.es

Murillo named him the executor of his will and painted his portrait in 1665 (National Gallery, London), featured in the exhibition, as a proof of his friendship, adding the inscription “*obsequium desiderio pingebat*” (painted with the desire to be given as a gift).

Sections of the exhibition

The exhibition is divided into five sections: the **portraits**; the **works** intended for the cupola and the end of the side naves in the church of **Santa María la Blanca in Seville**, which have been assembled for the exhibition in the Prado; a series of **paintings produced for the Hospital de Los Venerables**; the *Baptism of Christ* which crowns the altarpiece of San Antonio in the chapel to the saint in Seville Cathedral; and various **works that Justino de Neve** had in his private collection: two allegories, three small devotional works painted on Mexican obsidian, and a **miniature**, recently identified as the work of the *maestro* from Seville.

Portraits

On his death in 1685, Neve had in his possession at least 18 paintings by Murillo, including the portrait which stands as testament to the friendship between the painter and the Canon in gratitude for having commissioned the great works for Santa María la Blanca. Inspired by similar portraits by Italian artists and by Van Dyck, Murillo depicts Justino de Neve with an elegance and grandeur rarely seen in a Spanish ecclesiastic.

Murillo's particular sensitivity as a painter of children is highlighted in this exhibition with the work *The Infant Saint John with the Lamb*, a painting which depicts the young John the Baptist in the desert accompanied by a lamb. This was owned by Justino de Neve and was loaned by the cleric for the temporary altar installed outdoors to celebrate the completion of the reconstruction of Santa María la Blanca.

The *Self-portrait* by Murillo, together with that of Velázquez in *Las Meninas*, is one of the most sophisticated and influential portraits of an artist in 17th-century Spain. Conceived as a painting within a painting, it includes elements that allude to the intellectual nature of the artist's activity.

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T: +34 913 30 28 60 / 23 73

F: +34 913 30 28 58

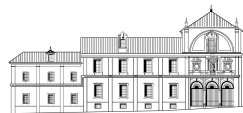
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Santa María la Blanca

The church of Santa María la Blanca, which had previously been a synagogue and subsequently a mosque, was administered by the chapter of the Cathedral of Seville. Reconstruction began in 1662 under the direct supervision of Justino de Neve. The dedication of the church was identical to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome “*Sancta Maria ad Nives*”, meaning Saint Mary of the Snows, thus combining the allusion to the immaculate white purity of the Virgin with a fortuitous but apt reference to Justino's surname (*Nives-Neve-snow*).



Press release

Murillo was commissioned to represent the origins of the Roman basilica on two large lunettes located beneath the cupola, and on another two smaller lunettes for the side naves, an exaltation of the Immaculate Conception and the sacrament of the Eucharist. The recent cleaning of the lunettes from the Prado and the *Triumph of the Faith* from Buscot Park have revealed Murillo's subtlety in the treatment of light, and the astonishing fluidity of his brushstroke.

The magnificence which accompanied the reopening of the church in 1665 is described in a work written by the priest and poet Fernando de la Torre Farfán (1609-1677), a friend of Neve. Temporary arches and altars were erected in the square adjoining the church and decorated with paintings by Murillo and other painters from Seville, and there were processions, liturgical services of great splendour, poetry competitions and an outdoor art exhibition.

The Hospital and the Brotherhood of 'Los Venerables Sacerdotes' of Seville

In 1676, the precarious situation of numerous poor and elderly priests, who were driven to begging in order to survive, led Justino de Neve, together with other grandees of Seville, including the Archbishop Ambrosio Ignacio de Spínola (1632-1684), to support the creation of this Brotherhood and the construction of the Hospital de Los Venerables Sacerdotes from 1676 to 1695. This hospital, with various premises including a church, refectory, infirmary, cells, etc. arranged around a large central courtyard, is one of the numerous charitable foundations that arose as a result of the economic crisis in the city of Seville, and was a reflection of the new charitable tendency of the Church. In addition to protecting and feeding homeless priests, the Hospital also gave accommodation to itinerant clerics.

The building contained four paintings by Murillo, none of which remained in Seville after the withdrawal of the Napoleonic troops in 1813: the *Portrait of Justino de Neve*, bequeathed by the subject himself to the institution with the express desire that the priests should pray to God for his soul; *The Virgin and Child distributing bread to the priests*, which was commissioned to Murillo to be hung in the refectory, *The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable*, acquired by the Brotherhood in 1686 on the death of Neve and exhibited here for the first time since 1813 in its original frame (conserved *in situ* in the Hospital), and *Penitent Saint Peter*, which has not been displayed in public since the 19th century.

Murillo and Seville Cathedral

The metropolitan cathedral was the centre of religious life in Seville, and the canons of its chapter, which governed one of the richest archdioceses in the whole of Spain, formed part of the city's cultural elite.

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Murillo painted important artworks for various parts of this institution over the course of his career, and this increased and consolidated his prestige. Some of these pieces were financed by private individuals and then donated to the cathedral, while others were commissioned by the chapter itself – the archbishops *San Isidoro* and *San Leandro* (1655) for the sacristy; *St Anthony with the Christ Child* (1656) for the Baptismal Chapel, and a *Birth of the Virgin* (1660) for the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. When, in 1667, Justino de Neve became *mayordomo de fábrica* (responsible for maintaining the building and its artworks) following his election to this post by the cathedral chapter, of which he had been a member since 1658, he embarked upon various actions to enhance the artistic heritage of this place of worship, eventually becoming so heavily involved in this work that on occasions he provided financing from his own pocket. It was at this time that Murillo received a further two major commissions for the cathedral. The first of these was to decorate the vaulted ceiling of the chapter house, where the canons held their meetings, with themes designed to inspire virtue and devotion: an *Immaculate Conception* and eight “tondi” representing the most important saints of Seville (San Isidoro, San Leandro, San Fernando, San Hermenegildo, San Pío, San Laureano, Santa Justa and Santa Rufina). The other commission was to paint the large canvas of the *Baptism of Christ* for the Chapel of San Antonio or the Baptismal Chapel, which has been restored by the Prado Museum for this exhibition.

The collection of Justino de Neve

The inventory of the collection of Justino de Neve, drawn up immediately after his death on 28 June 1685, lists 160 paintings – a considerable number given that this was not the collection of an aristocrat. This collection, along with his library of books on religion, history and poetry, reveals him as a man of extensive cultural interests. The inventory also includes 18 works explicitly attributed to Murillo, as well as a portrait of the painter (not attributed to him), highlighting Neve’s loyalty towards him and his continuous desire to support him. These 18 works included *The Immaculate Conception* (Prado), which was soon acquired for the Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes, and the *Portrait of Justino de Neve*, as well as some small devotional pictures painted on obsidian, flower vases and allegories of the stations.

The collection was split up when it was publicly auctioned, with the painter’s son Gaspar Murillo acquiring several of the works. Others ended up in the collection of Nicolás Omazur (c.1630-1698), a Flemish merchant who came to own more paintings by Murillo than Neve himself. The canon had paintings on board, stone and copper, and a series of miniatures that were later attributed to Murillo in the inventory of Omazur’s collection, one of which could be *St Joseph’s Dream*, on show here.

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Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue, which comes in a bilingual Spanish and English edition, includes six essays written by Gabriele Finaldi, Javier Portús, Peter Cherry, Teodoro Falcón, Benito Navarrete and Ignacio Cano. It also contains the technical data relating to the works shown and a documentary appendix about Justino de Neve.

Special activities related to the exhibition

The Museum has organised a special programme of activities to run parallel to the exhibition, in addition to the usual **lecture series**, **educational talks** and **specific tours for young people** (El Prado Joven). These additional activities include a **special concert**, to be held on 26 September, entitled *Sevilla al compás de Murillo* (Seville at the rhythm of Murillo), and a **monographic course** with the participation of leading Spanish and international experts, who will focus on the work that this *maestro* from Seville created during the last years of his life.

Complete program available at www.museodelprado.es and on previous pages of this press file.

Access to the exhibition

There is a **single price for entry to the Museum of 12 Euros** (reduced or free according to the usual pre-established concessions), which provides access to the permanent collection, the “Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship” exhibition and any temporary exhibitions that may be open at the time.

Opening times for the exhibition will be from **Monday to Saturday, from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm**, and on **Sundays and public holidays from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm**.

Program of activities for “Murillo and Justino de Neve. The art of friendship”

Monographic course: murillo and justino de neve: the art of friendship

To mark this exhibition, the Prado Museum is organising a monographic course to study the later works by the painter that resulted from his relationship with Justino de Neve, canon of Seville Cathedral and patron of the Hospital de los Venerables, who commissioned various works to him. The course will be given by leading Spanish and international experts, who will offer an in-depth study of the work of the Sevillian *maestro* during the last years of his life.

Places on the course are limited and registration will be on a strictly first-come first-served basis. The deadline for submitting the registration form, which can be downloaded from www.museodelprado.es, is 4th July (or while places are available), to the Museum’s offices at calle Ruiz de Alarcón nº 23, or by e-mail to area.educacion@museodelprado.es or by fax to 91 330 28 59.

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Students from UCM and UAM that attend the course may be able to obtain free credits (under negotiation), upon evaluation of the supplementary work.

Prices

Students: €45

Teachers, museum professionals and researchers: €60

Friends of the Prado Museum: €70

General public: €90

9th and 10th July

Auditorium. Registration deadline 4th July or while spaces are available.

For more information visit www.museodelprado.es or call 91 330 28 31.

Key points about the “Murillo and Justino de Neve: The art of friendship” exhibition

This activity, which is free to Museum visitors, will take place in the auditorium during the months of June to September.

The Prado Museum will offer a short educational talk about the artist, his style and his work, which will be given to visitors prior to their tour of the rooms, pointing out the key aspects to further their appreciation and understanding of the works in the exhibition.

This activity is conditional upon the availability of the auditorium.

July

Wednesdays at 11.00 am

Thursdays at 5.00 pm

August

Wednesdays at 5.00 pm

Thursdays at 11.00 am

Except 15th and 16th August

September

Wednesdays at 11.00 am

Thursdays at 5.00 pm

Auditorium. Free for all visitors to the Museum.

El prado joven

Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 will have the opportunity to visit the exhibition, exclusively and for free, on the **last Friday of the months of June, July and August from 8.30 pm to 10.30 pm**. During their visit, they will be able to discuss the content of the exhibition with young history of art graduates. Entrance door: Puerta de los Jerónimos

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Friday 29th June, 27th July and 31st August from 8.30 pm to 10.30 pm
Entrance via Puerta de los Jerónimos

Extraordinary concert

An extraordinary concert will be held in the Museum's auditorium on 27th September, entitled "*Sevilla al compás de Murillo*" (Seville at the rhythm of Murillo).

Series of conferences

Wednesday 27th June 2012. 6.30 pm

Murillo and Justino de Neve: The art of friendship

Gabriele Finaldi

Prado Museum

Saturday 30th June 2012. 6.30 pm

Sevillian painting at the time of Justino de Neve

Ignacio Cano

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville

List of works

Portraits

1. Portrait of Don Justino de Neve

Oil on canvas, 206 x 129.5 cm

1665

London, The National Gallery, London. Purchased 1979

2. Self-portrait

Oil on canvas, 122 x 107 cm

h. 1670 - 1673

London, The National Gallery. Purchased 1953

3. The infant St John

Oil on canvas, 165 x 106 cm

1660 - 1665

London, The National Gallery. Purchased 1840

Santa María la Blanca

4. The triumph of the Immaculate Conception

Oil on canvas, 172 x 298 cm

1665

Paintings Department, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Soutl Collection. Purchased 1817

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5. *The triumph of the Eucharist*

Oil on canvas, 165 x 251 cm
Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park, Oxfordshire

6. *The patrician's dream*

Oil on canvas, 232 x 522 cm
1662 - 1665
Prado Museum, Madrid

7. *The patrician revealing his dream to the Liberian Pope*

Oil on canvas, 232 x 522 cm
1662 - 1665
Prado Museum, Madrid

The Hospital and the Brotherhood of Los Venerables in Seville

8. *Baby Jesus sharing bread with the priests*

Oil on canvas, 219 x 182 cm
1678 - 1679
Budapest. Museum of Fine Arts. Szépművészeti Múzeum

9. *St Peter repentant*

Oil on canvas, 212 x 155 cm
Private Collection

10. *The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable /Soul*

Oil on canvas, 274 x 190 cm
h. 1678
Prado Museum, Madrid

Original frame from the work "The Immaculate Conception of the Venerable (or the 'Soul')" (Prado Museum, P-2809)

Water gilded and polychromed, 349 x 265 x 40 x 25 cm
17th century

Seville, Archbishopric of Seville (from the church of the Hospital de los Venerables). Focus-Abengoa Foundation, Hospital de los Venerables, Seville

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Murillo and Seville Cathedral

11. *The Baptism of Christ*

Oil on canvas, 283 x 210 cm



1668
Seville Cathedral, Seville

The collection of Justino de Neve

12. *Summer (Young man with a basket of fruit)*

Oil on canvas, 102 x 81.5 cm

h. 1640 - 1650

Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland. Purchased with the assistance of the Art Fund, 1999

13. *The Nativity*

Oil on obsidian, 38.1 x 34.1 cm

h. 1665-70

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

14. *Spring (The flower girl)*

Oil on canvas, 120.7 x 98.3 cm

1665 - 1670

Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

15. *St Francis of Paula in prayer (obverse)/ St Joseph's dream (reverse)*

Oil on oval copper, painted on both sides, 5.8 x 4.8 cm

h. 1670 - 1680

Galería Caylus, Madrid

16. *The prayer in the orchard*

Oil on obsidian, 35.7 x 26.3 cm

Paintings Department, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

17. *Christ tied to the column*

Oil on obsidian, 33.7 x 30.7 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris

R Ruiz de Alarcón, 23
228014 Madrid, Spain

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FF: +34 913 30 28 58

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