

Reviews

The Spanish Gesture: Drawings from Murillo to Goya in the Hamburger Kunsthalle

Exh. cat. by Jens Hoffmann-Samland, with contributions by María Cruz de Carlos Varona, Gabriele Finaldi, José Manuel Matilla, Manuela B. Mena Marqués, Gloria Solache, and Anne-Marie Stefes. Hamburg: Hamburger Kunsthalle, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-692-20786-4. 293 pp., with 244 color illus. \$75.00

While Spanish painting of the Golden Age from El Greco to Goya has always been popular, there has been a recent resurgence of interest and scholarly work on other aspects of Spanish art: polychromed sculpture, earlier Spanish painting, and Spanish drawings. The past few years have seen the publication of new catalogues of the Spanish drawings at, for example, the Hispanic Society of America, the Courtauld Institute, the British Museum, and the Princeton University Art Museum, and also of the Album Alcubierre in the collection of Juan Abelló, Madrid.¹ New *catalogues raisonnés* of the drawings of Antonio del Castillo and Alonso Cano, and a revised edition of Jonathan Brown's Murillo catalogue, represent other important milestones in the study of Spanish draftsmanship.² Recent exhibitions include *The Spanish Manner: Drawings from Ribera to Goya*, held at the Frick Collection in 2010–11, *Renaissance to Goya: Prints and Drawings from Spain*, shown at the British Museum in 2012–13, as well as the Morgan Library & Museum's *Visions and Nightmares: Four Centuries of Spanish Drawings*, the first presentation of the Spanish drawings from that collection. To this list must now be added *The Spanish Gesture: Drawings from Murillo to Goya in*

the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Meadows Museum, Dallas (25 May–31 August 2014), and the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (28 October 2014–8 February 2015), the latest in the series of important exhibitions resulting from the ongoing collaboration of those two institutions. The show includes 86 drawings, but the accompanying publication catalogues all 210 Spanish drawings from Hamburg, a collection that ranks alongside those of the Uffizi, the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Courtauld as constituting the largest group of Spanish drawings outside Spain. Although the Hamburg drawings have long been known, this is their first treatment as a group, and the catalogue brings the scholarship on them up to date. The catalogue also continues the efforts of the Kunsthalle to publish its holdings of drawings, following the important volumes on its German, Italian, and Netherlandish drawings, which have recently appeared.³

Despite the Kunsthalle's sizeable holdings of its Spanish drawings, all but five were acquired at one time and essentially by chance. In 1891, the dealer Bernard Quaritch tried to sell a set of 225 drawings bound in six atlas folios to the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett, which ultimately turned the offer down. While the volumes were on approval in Berlin, Alfred Lichtwark, the then director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle, saw them; learning that the drawings were not to be acquired for Berlin, he wrote to Quaritch and purchased the collection (consisting mainly of Spanish drawings,

with a handful of sheets attributed to Italian artists) for his own museum. As Jens Hoffmann-Samland, the main author of the present catalogue and curator of the exhibition, however, noted (p. 15), “this purchase marked the end of Lichtwark’s engagement with Spanish art. A few years later, when August L. Mayer inquired whether any of the Hamburg works might warrant inclusion in his *150 Spanish Drawings*... [Lichtwark] replied that ‘there was virtually nothing of importance on hand.’”

It has often been said that, unlike in Italy, there was relatively little tradition of collecting drawings in Spain from the sixteenth century onward. That such a large group of drawings was available to be purchased at the end of the nineteenth century is thus a noteworthy fact in itself, and Hoffmann-Samland, in his excellent introductory essay, reconstructs the provenance of the collection. Quaritch had bought the volumes from the estate sale of Frederick William Cosens (1819–1889), an English wine and sherry merchant who became fascinated with Spanish culture and was an associate member of the Real Academia de la Historia, the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, and the Sociedad de Bibliófilos Andaluces. In 1874 Cosens reported in the *Athenaeum* magazine that he had purchased a collection of drawings that had by the 1830s been in the possession of Julian Benjamin Williams (d. 1866), Seville’s British Vice-Consul (1831–56) and

later Consul (1856–66), who was arguably the most important scholar and dealer of Spanish art in his day.⁴ Williams, however, had not assembled the collection himself, for it was prefaced by an inventory drawn up by the Mexican painter José Atanasio Echeverría (1773/74–c. 1819) sometime between 1812 and his death. The drawings have often thus been identified as Echeverría’s collection (assembled by him to use at the Academia de S. Carlos in his native Mexico), but Hoffmann-Samland argues that he was merely responsible for the inventory and that the collection was instead formed by Joaquín Cortés (1776–1835), the director of the Real Escuela de las Tres Nobles Artes de Sevilla, as the Seville academy was then called. If this is the case, then the collection relates to Cortés’s interests as the director of the academy in Seville itself. The majority of the drawings are by Andalusian artists from the early seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, but there is also a group by artists associated with the Madrid academy in the late eighteenth century. Lastly, at some uncertain time after Echeverría drew up his inventory, a handful of drawings by Goya, formerly in the collection of Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez (1749–1829), were added to the volumes eventually sold by Quaritch to Hamburg.

Given its provenance, the collection is a strong representation of the academic tradition in Spain,



Figure 1

FRANCISCO DE GOYA

Two Groups of Picadors Overrun Consecutively by a Single Bull, 1814–16

Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle



Figure 2

BARTOLOMÉ
MURILLO

Assumption of the
Virgin, c. 1665–68

Hamburg,
Hamburger
Kunsthalle

and particularly in Seville. There are several outstanding sheets—two red chalk bullfighting scenes by Goya, for example (No. 64; Fig. 1),⁵ or Murillo's beautiful *Assumption of the Virgin* (No. 112; Fig. 2)⁶—but the collection is admittedly not one limited to showing only the heights of draftsmanship by the most important Spanish artists. A number of major draftsmen such as Alonso Berruguete and Jusepe de Ribera are absent, and the drawings by Francisco Pacheco that were formerly part of the collection were removed by Cosens, given to King Alfonso XII of Spain, and now reside in the Real Biblioteca in Madrid. The virtues of the collection (and of this exhibition) are instead in its documentation of the general trends in Spanish drawing practice from the late sixteenth century to the early nineteenth.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, for example, the impact of Italian art is everywhere apparent in Spanish art, in the work of Italians in Spain, of Spaniards who had visited Italy, and of the influence of these on nearly all other artists. This is seen here, for example, in a drawing "attributed to Vicente Carducho" (No. 18), whose similarity to drawings and paintings by Pacheco is also noted in Hoffmann-Samland's catalogue entry. The evident Florentine character of the

sheet, calling to mind works by Santi di Tito, is indicative of the influence of artists like the Florentine native Bartolomé Carducho who worked under Federico Zuccaro at the Escorial. Indeed, the impact of the Escorial artists on Pacheco, and his subsequent transmission of those lessons to the artists who studied with him in Seville, is a topic for further investigation.

Another trend in Spanish art is more generally seen in a series of wash drawings by Francisco de Herrera the Elder (Nos. 71–82).⁷ These seem at first glance to constitute an *apostolado* (series of the twelve apostles) and, as such, evoke the burgeoning tradition for such series in the work of El Greco and his followers. Yet, in addition to the works in Hamburg, a number of drawings clearly from the same set are scattered in other collections and bring the number of related sheets up to twenty or more.⁸ One must question the intent or function of such a series of relatively small-scale drawings of polyvalent male figures. These are not strictly preparatory for a painted *apostolado*: some match Herrera's paintings closely, while others do not. Were these painterly sheets meant to serve as references in the studio, like a modelbook, or were they finished works intended for a collector? The lack of defining iconographical attributes argues against their having been a finished set of saints, apostles, and/or prophets, despite past efforts to define the set. Moreover, other sheets in the exhibition by Antonio del Castillo and by Francisco de Herrera the Younger (Nos. 23–24 and 88–89) provide an argument that there was a tradition for drawing expressive figure studies—they might even be described as *tronies*—that were ends in themselves, neither preparatory for a specific work, nor finished products for collectors.⁹

Drawings by Bartolomé Murillo, Herrera the Younger, and Juan de Valdés Leal constitute the center of the exhibition. The Seville academy, which those three artists led from its founding in 1660 through the next decade, is thus frequently mentioned in the catalogue, but the actual impact of the academy on drawing practice in Seville is not fully discussed. If there is a distinctive Sevillian graphic style before 1660, it is the bold-



Figure 3
JUAN DE VALDÉS
LEAL

Vision of St.
Anthony, c. 1665

Hamburg,
Hamburger
Kunsthalle

ly hatched penwork seen in drawings by Herrera the Elder, Herrera the Younger, Murillo, and others. In the exhibition, however, one was struck by the diversity of media and techniques adopted by Murillo and Valdés Leal: pen and ink, wash, red chalk, black chalk, red and black chalk together (see, for example, No. 168; Fig. 3),¹⁰ and even combinations of red, ocher, and blue wash. It might be suggested that in their drawings, Murillo and Valdés Leal sought to evoke the looser pictorial qualities of their later paintings rather than using drawings in a clearly defined preparatory method, but such an assertion does not answer how such drawings would then function in a studio as large as Murillo's. The exhibition also demonstrates, alas, that Sevillian artists in the wake of Murillo and Valdés Leal were rarely able to replicate the rich work of their masters.

A group of drawings by Goya documents not so much a general trend as that artist's own idio-

syncratic and radical development. Eight preparatory studies by Goya for reproductive etchings after paintings by Velázquez (Nos. 50–57; four of which were shown in the exhibition) reveal the young artist in a traditional mode: not only do the careful red chalk studies seem conventional, but the impetus for the prints was to make available works that were relatively inaccessible in the royal collection. Drawings of embracing couples and *majas* from the Madrid Album of the mid-1790s (also known as Album B; Nos. 58–61), however, carried out in a far more adventurous black ink wash technique, are wholly modern in subject, and the album is a decidedly private venture, even if some of the scenes would later reappear in *Los Caprichos*. The later red chalk and red wash drawings for the *Tauromachia* of 1814–16 (Nos. 63–64; see Fig. 1 above) are simply a *tour-de-force* of technique and psychology, a world beyond the red chalk drawings of a few decades earlier.

Since the catalogue of the Hamburg collection provides an overview of many basic trends in Spanish drawing, so, too, it highlights many of the issues attendant on the study of this material. One persistent question concerns the reliability of inscriptions. It is one thing when a drawing is optimistically assigned to a great master (No. 198, for example, is inscribed *Belazquez*), but it is another when a very old inscription identifies it as the work of someone like Luis de Vargas (No. 197). In the absence of a secure set of drawings by an artist, we need to evaluate whether such inscriptions are credible. Given the differences between the forthright naturalism of No. 197 and the Mannerist qualities of Vargas's painting, María Cruz de Carlos Varona is probably correct in rejecting the old attribution and assigning the work to an anonymous Spanish artist of the early seventeenth century.¹¹ As we move further into the seventeenth century, however, despite the still relative rarity of collector-connoisseurs, we do find that artists were more likely to sign their drawings: Alonso Cano and Murillo are important examples.¹² A particularly notable inscription is found on Antonio del Castillo's *David and Goliath* (No. 22; Fig. 4),¹³ where Castillo wrote promi-

nently across the center of the sheet, in brown ink, *Porque otra Vez no Lo niegue y / Sepa que es mio. Antº de el / Castillo Saave^a* (“So that he might never again deny it, and know that it is by me. Ant[onio] del Castillo Saave[dra]”). Hoffmann-Samland recalls the explanation first advanced by August Mayer a century ago—that the angry commentary relates to doubts about Castillo’s authorship of the painting now in the Yale University Art Gallery¹⁴ and serves as a kind of copyright. Castillo, incidentally, emerges as one of the more engaging graphic personalities in the exhibition and is an artist due more attention than he usually receives, especially in the Anglophone world.

Another question that arises is the use of drawings by the workshop. There are, of course, cases where a drawing is by the master, and a related painting by an assistant or follower. There are also, however, trickier cases where a painting by the master relates to a drawing by a follower. This seems particularly to be a problem for sheets by Murillo and his studio and underlies some long-running debates between Jonathan Brown and Manuela Mena. Of the ten drawings given to Murillo and/or his workshop in the exhibition, Mena and Brown differ on the attribution of six;¹⁵ an additional drawing (No. 92) is given by Brown to Murillo but catalogued here by Hoffmann-Samland as the work of Herrera the Younger. Even when these scholars agree on an attribution, there are many further notes in the catalogue about their disagreements concerning the function, date, or provenance of many drawings. It is striking that the two leading scholars on this material should have such widely differing views. On the one hand, the variety of the commonly accepted drawings suggests that Brown’s more inclusive view of Murillo’s drawing is perhaps to be preferred to Mena’s highly restricted corpus. On the other hand, certain drawings like the two angels now accepted by Brown (Nos. 116–17) seem a bit feeble to be by Murillo himself, and one must agree with Mena in considering them the work of a follower trying somewhat unsuccessfully to replicate Murillo’s expressive pen lines and subtle washes.

The issue with Murillo drawings is the over-

abundance of sheets associated with his name, but the absence of drawings by Velázquez and Zurbarán, Murillo’s two great predecessors in Seville, is another long-standing problem in the study of Spanish graphic art. Velázquez was an artist *sui generis*, and drawing seems not to have played a significant role in his art, despite his training under Pacheco and alongside Alonso Cano, both prolific draftsmen. Zurbarán probably represents a middle ground, and a series of ten studies in Hamburg of figures in voluminous drapery (the drawings seem to study drapery more than anatomy) bring the question to the fore. These drawings evoke the figures in paintings by Zurbarán and his workshop—although none relates directly to a known painting—and they seem all to be by the same hand, but that hand is not the same as that which produced the well-known *Head of a Monk* in the British Museum, which is the most often argued—but still far from certain—candidate to be Zurbarán’s own draw-



Figure 4

ANTONIO DEL
CASTILLO Y
SAAVEDRA

David and Goliath,
1646–55

Hamburg,
Hamburger
Kunsthalle

ing.¹⁶ Summarizing the problem of the Hamburg set, Gabriele Finaldi writes that Hoffmann-Samland and he “have adopted a position both cautious and traditional, describing them as from the ‘Circle of Zurbarán’” (p. 52).¹⁷

The present catalogue thus fails—or perhaps more accurately, refuses—to resolve a number of long-standing questions regarding the Hamburg drawings. Yet in summarizing the scholarship on these works, many of which are so often mentioned in literature on Spanish draftsmanship, and in proposing a number of new ideas, the catalogue becomes an essential addition to any reference library on drawing in Spain. Despite this collection, Hamburg has hardly been the first city a scholar of Spanish art would think to visit, so the exhibition, bringing the drawings first to the United States and then to Madrid, greatly facilitates the study in person of these sheets and will undoubtedly lead to further engagement with the questions and debates mentioned above.

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NOTES

1. See Priscilla Muller, *Dibujos españoles en la Hispanic Society of America del siglo de oro a Goya*, exh. cat., Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 2006; Zahira Véliz, *Spanish Drawings in the Courtauld Gallery: Complete Catalogue*, London, 2011; Mark P. McDonald, *Renaissance to Goya: Prints and Drawings from Spain*, exh. cat., London, British Museum, 2012–13; Lisa A. Banner, *Spanish Drawings in the Princeton University Art Museum*, Princeton, 2013; and Benito Navarrete Prieto and Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, *Álbum Alcubierre: Dibujos de la Sevilla ilustrada del Conde del Águila a la colección Juan Abelló*, Madrid, 2009.
2. See Benito Navarrete Prieto and Fuensanta García de la Torre, *Antonio del Castillo (1616–1668), dibujos: Catálogo razonado*, Santander, 2008; Zahira Véliz, *Alonso Cano: Dibujos, catálogo razonado*, Santander, 2011; and Jonathan Brown, *Murillo: Virtuoso Draftsman*, New York, 2012.
3. See Peter Prange, *Deutsche Zeichnungen, 1450–1800: Zeichnungen aus dem Kupferstichkabinett der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, 2 vols., Cologne, 2007; David Klemm, *Italianische Zeichnungen, 1450–1800: Zeichnungen aus dem Kupferstichkabinett der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, 3 vols., Cologne, 2009; and Annamarie Stefes, *Niederländische Zeichnungen, 1450–1800: Zeichnungen aus dem Kupferstich-*
4. On Williams and other British collectors in Spain, see Nigel Glendinning, “Nineteenth-century British Envoys in Spain and the Taste for Spanish Art in England,” *Burlington Magazine*, 131, no. 1031, 1989, pp. 117–26. Although not reported by Cosens in the *Athenaeum*, Hoffmann-Samland has determined that the collection had passed from Williams to John Wetherell (1790–1865), from whose heirs Cosens acquired it.
5. Inv. no. 38541. Red chalk and red wash; 180 x 313 mm. The book’s catalogue numbers somewhat confusingly relate to the alphabetically organized checklist of all the Hamburg drawings at the back of the catalogue and not to the order in which longer entries appear for the sheets actually included in the exhibition. The earliest drawing in the show—the first discussed at length in the book—is, for example, No. 98, which is followed by No. 190.
6. Inv. no. 38570. Black chalk, pen and brown ink, with brown and gray washes; 216 x 198 mm.
7. These drawings have sometimes been attributed to Herrera the Younger, but the prevailing opinion now seems definitively to have swayed in favor of the Elder.
8. See, for example, Jonathan Brown *et al.*, *The Spanish Manner: Drawings from Ribera to Goya*, exh. cat., New York, Frick Collection, 2010–11, no. 14, repr. (in color).
9. See also the sheets by Antonio del Castillo at the Hispanic Society, New York, and the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; see New York 2010–11, p. 60, no. 15 and fig. 11, both repr. (in color).
10. Inv. no. 38627. Black and red chalk; 176 x 152 mm.
11. Two drawings in the Album Alcubierre are more convincingly given to Vargas; see Navarrete Prieto and Pérez Sánchez 2009, nos. 3–4, both repr. (in color).
12. On the subject of inscriptions and signatures for Murillo’s drawings, see Brown 2012, pp. 29–36.
13. Inv. no. 38509. Red chalk; 293 x 192 mm.
14. Inv. no. 1991.139.1 (oil on canvas; 147 x 108 cm); see Navarrete Prieto and García de la Torre 2008, p. 178; and <http://artgallery.yale.edu/collection>.
15. Of the eight additional Hamburg drawings by Murillo and/or his school (in the catalogue but not the show), Brown and Mena disagree on the attribution of at least three.
16. See London 2012–13, pp. 134–35.
17. While the catalogue generally reviews alternate attributions, Priscilla Muller’s suggestion (“Review of *A Corpus of Spanish Drawings, Volume III, Seville School, 1600–1650*,” *Master Drawings*, 25, no. 2, 1987, p. 170) that these drawings might be from an entirely different milieu—that of the Madrid artist Eugenio Cajés—is not mentioned nor even included in the bibliography here.