

## CANONS AND REPERTOIRES:

### Constructing the Visual Arts in the Hispanic World

**Durham University**  
**20–21 June 2019**



Genaro Pérez Villaamil y Duguët, *Diptych with 42 Monumental Views of Spanish Cities*, 1835–39, oil on paper, panel, tinsplate, 172.5 x 182 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, P008065

The visual arts in Spain have long been haunted by the spectres of six giants: El Greco, Ribera, Velázquez, Murillo, Goya and Picasso. Still today, these canonical figures tower over all others and continue to shape the story of Spanish art, which has been traditionally told in monographic form. Although the strength of the Spanish canon has informed different disciplines (literature, aesthetics, performing arts), given the recent ‘material turn’, the prosopographical dimension of the visual arts in Spain poses a disciplinary challenge. Similarly, following the ‘global turn’, the visual arts of Iberia pose a geographical challenge, intersecting with the Mediterranean, Arabic, Latin American, British and continental European worlds. The notions of ‘Spain’ and ‘Spanish art’, therefore, are necessarily nebulous and problematic, raising a host of questions: To what extent does Spanish art exist before the establishment of Spain as a nation state? To what extent is the art of the Habsburg and Bourbon empires a

Spanish art outside Spain? What is the role of Spain in the wider canon of European art? Who has exploited the visual arts of the Hispanic world, geographically, politically and intellectually? These questions ultimately point to a tension between canons and repertoires; between centres and peripheries; and between consolidating the 'core' and expanding the 'remit' of the so-called Spanish school.

This conference will explode the disciplinary, material and geographical limits of Spanish art, inaugurating the Zurbarán Centre as a critical and innovative research institution for the study of Spanish and Latin American art in the twenty-first century. Papers may challenge the canonical construction of Spanish art, which can be traced back to writings from Palomino's *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors* (1724) to Stirling Maxwell's *Annals of the Artists of Spain* (1848), to more recent publications by scholars in the field. Papers may also probe the chronological, geographical and material boundaries of the 'El Greco to Goya' survey, interrogating the ways in which academics, curators, scholars and teachers narrate this material through various platforms, including publications, museum displays, exhibitions, lectures, gallery talks and academic courses. Speakers are encouraged to address the various 'terrains' of Spanish art, from geographical constructions of Iberia as Europe's frontier or edge, to exchange with all that lies beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- What is 'Spanish art'?
- Who are the cultural stakeholders of Spanish art?
- What are the discords between regional, national, anti-national and transnational narratives of Spanish art, for example in museum collections and displays?
- How does Spanish art feature in diplomatic exchanges?
- Collections of Spanish art as an 'imprint' of Spain, and the role of foreign collections in disseminating Spanish art as a distinct school
- Spain at the intersection of Christian, Jewish and Islamic cultures
- Copies, quotations and appropriations of Spanish art
- Languages and literatures: strategies of describing, narrating and translating Spain in word and image
- Performing 'Spanishness' in the arts, including music, theatre and film
- Spanish discourses in aesthetics
- Spanish art beyond Iberia
- Mobility and portability of Spanish art
- Travel and discovery: geographies, centres, peripheries and liminal spaces
- Legacies: textual and visual responses to Spain abroad
- Eschewing binaries: high and low, sacred and secular, medieval and renaissance
- Writing *against* the canon: filling gaps, promoting underdogs, navigating uncharted territories

Specialists of Spanish arts, artistic communication and exchange, as well as experts of other regions are invited to discuss the role and definition of Spain in their own disciplines. Presentations may be delivered in English or Spanish. Please send paper titles and abstracts of no more than 250 words, together with a CV and 150-word biography, to Dr Edward Payne by **31 March 2019**: [edward.a.payne@durham.ac.uk](mailto:edward.a.payne@durham.ac.uk).