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Ceán Bermúdez: historiador del arte y coleccionista ilustrado. Editado por Elena María Santiago Páez. Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional de España/Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica. 2016. 543 pp.; 276 ilustraciones en color.

Academic art historians rarely achieve much posthumous fame and, even more rarely, major exhibitions devoted to their life and work. Juan Ceán Bermúdez (1749–1829) however, was more than a simple art historian; he was also a collector, friend to artistic contemporaries, promoter of diverse styles and a highly original writer whose opinions have proved influential over two centuries. In this large catalogue, which is a veritable collector's item in its own right, Ceán is memorialized as a crucial figure in the historiography of Spanish art and criticism, well known in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for the volumes of his *Diccionario histórico de los más ilustres profesores de las bellas artes en España* (1800) which is still used today as a reference-work by modern scholars.

Considered as the first major Spanish art historian, Ceán Bermúdez was also known outside Spain. In his 1848 *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, William Stirling Maxwell wrote: 'these *Annals* [...] cannot be more fitly closed than with a notice of the able and indefatigable historian of Spanish art, to whose rich harvest of valuable materials I have ventured to add the fruit of my own humble gleanings'. Even earlier, the first British woman art historian of Spanish art, Mrs A. O'Neill, who lived in London, based her own *A Dictionary of Spanish Painters Comprehending Simply That Part of Their Biography Connected with the Arts* (1834) on Ceán's book.

The richness of Ceán Bermúdez's scholarship is reflected in the careful choice of items and wide-ranging parameters of this catalogue which lays before us the portrayal of a remarkable man, more complex and interesting than previously considered. Close patron of Francisco Goya, Ceán Bermúdez was immortalized in Goya's inestimable full-length oil (Catalogue

1.1), arguably one of the artist's best dating from the late 1780s to the 1790s, the period of a stylistic consolidation of his portrait style and which included portraits of other such notable Spanish Enlightenment figures as Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and Juan Meléndez Valdes. Significantly, Goya's portrait of Ceán Bermúdez is thought to derive from a British pictorial precedent, George Romney's 1780 portrait of the British ambassador in Madrid, Lord Grantham, reproduced in the 1783 print by William Dickinson (Figure 31), perhaps reflecting the fact that Ceán Bermúdez was among the earliest Spanish critics to admire British art. In Volume V of his *Historia de la pintura*, written at the end of his life, he expressed his interest in the work of William Hogarth, Thomas Gainsborough and Henry Fuseli, and even mentioned William Blake. From his strikingly diverse collection which Goya knew, the Aragonese artist may well also have learned to admire a wide range of models, including Piranesi and Dürer. Ceán was to record giving Rembrandt etchings to Goya while the artist worked on his own print series *Los Caprichos*, published in 1799.

Ceán Bermúdez's researches into the great Spanish artists of the past, as well as those of his own time, included a veritable treasure trove of prints and drawings and it is this aspect of his historical significance which formed the major part of this exhibition. As a collector he was indefatigable, attending regular auctions when living and working in Seville. Occasionally dismissed as an unregenerate neoclassical theorist, Ceán Bermúdez became in fact an important influence on the study of Spanish art and was sufficiently sophisticated to admire Ribera as well as Murillo. Unlike Palomino, he remained objective in his assessments with a documentary style derived from known facts and an understanding of what each individual artist was trying to achieve. His relationship with Goya became closer than the usual artist-patron collusion. Although Goya was excluded from the *Diccionario* because he was still alive in 1800, he remained one of Ceán Bermúdez's closest artistic allies who was open-minded enough to learn from the scholar without necessarily adapting his style. In his ground-breaking publication *Goya and His Critics* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1977), Nigel Glendinning aptly characterized this working relationship: 'Goya aroused in Ceán alternately wonder and dismay'. Ceán's influence on Goya was not without its contradictions and disagreements, but the long relationship between the two men anticipates later great nineteenth-century artistic partnerships such as that between Baudelaire and Delacroix, and Ruskin's promotion of Turner.

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