

Velázquez's Seville: The Birth of Spanish Golden Age Art

Date/Time	Tuesday 9 th March 2027 11.00-16.30	Price	£49 in person £44 post event recording
Venue	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9EB	Lecturer	Dr Nicola Jennings

The paintings of Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) include some of the most celebrated images of all time. In this day, we travel back to Seville circa 1600, witnessing the birth of the paintings of Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán and Bartolomé Murillo, and of the polychrome sculptures of Juan Martínez Montañés and Juan de Mesa. As the centre of the Spanish Empire, Seville was heralded as the new Rome. As the principal gateway to Europe and the Americas, it was the hub of imported art, books, and luxury goods from Flanders and Genoa and curiosities from the Indies and beyond. It was also the centre of the Spanish Inquisition, with over 100 churches and convents, and dozens of religious confraternities. Its landmarks included Roman temples, former mosques and synagogues, and a newly-built cathedral. Converts from Islam and Judaism, enslaved peoples from sub-Saharan Africa, street-children, beggars and thieves rubbed shoulders with foreign merchants, aristocrats, cartographers and seamen. It was this cosmopolitan crucible and the city's thriving community of poets, humanists, craftsmen and clerics, that fuelled the emergence of Spanish naturalism.

Lecture 1: Seville, 1600. This session sets the scene, exploring the cultural crucible that gave birth to the Golden Age of Spanish art.

Lecture 2: The Seeds of Naturalism. Next we track the impact of prints, paintings, texts, and craftsmen from Flanders and Italy on the unique, naturalistic style which emerged in early seventeenth century Seville.

Lecture 3: Painting in Golden Age Seville. Here we consider the paintings of Velázquez, Zurbarán and Murillo against the changing backdrop of the city's cultural and economic life from 1600 to 1650.

Lecture 4: The Gods of Sevillian Sculpture. In this session, we discover the contribution to Sevillian naturalism of the hyper-realistic, sacred sculptures of Juan Martínez Montañés and Juan de Mesa.

Lecturer

Dr Nicola Jennings is an art historian with a special interest in Medieval and Early Modern Spain and Director of the Athena Art Foundation, a UK charity promoting pre-20th and early 20th century art from around the world. After obtaining an MA and PhD at London's Courtauld Institute of Art, Nicola taught there for a number of years. Prior to that she was Director of Colnaghi Foundation and spent four years at the National Gallery in London.