

**THE SPANISH LINE:  
DRAWINGS FROM RIBERA TO PICASSO  
13 October 2011 to 15 January 2012**

*Organised by the IMAF Centre for Drawings at The Courtauld Gallery  
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This exhibition explores the rich, intriguing and varied territory of Spanish drawings, a field that remains relatively little known. The Courtauld Gallery holds one of the most important collections of Spanish drawings outside Spain, totalling approximately 100 works ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A selection of some 40 of the finest and most representative drawings has been chosen for the exhibition. They include examples by many of Spain's greatest artists, such as Ribera, Murillo, Goya and Picasso. The exhibition also invites visitors to explore lesser-known treasures from the Golden Age of Spanish art created by Francisco Pacheco, Antonio Garcia Reinoso, Vicente Carducho, Antonio del Castillo and others. Many of these works have never previously been exhibited and they are presented here in the light of important new research.

*The Spanish Line* is the first substantial exhibition on the tradition of Spanish draughtsmanship to take place in London and reflects the growing scholarly interest in the subject. The exhibition marks the completion of a four-year research project and the publication of a complete scholarly catalogue of The Courtauld Gallery's collection of Spanish drawings. In many public collections 'Spanish school' was often used as a convenient label for anonymous drawings, frequently from other countries and of lesser quality. Significant discoveries are still regularly made and The Courtauld's exhibition aims to stimulate further discussion and research in this exciting field of study.

The Courtauld Gallery's collection has its origins with the MP and celebrated Hispanist Sir William Stirling Maxwell (1818-78), whose pioneering *Annals of the artists of Spain* (1848) helped lay the foundations for the later scholarly study of Spanish art. Sir Robert Witt (1872-1952) acquired a substantial part of the Stirling Maxwell collection when it came on the market. Witt was able to expand the group with further acquisitions, often made for small sums and against prevailing taste. In 1952 they formed part of his magnificent bequest of approximately 3,000 drawings to The Courtauld Gallery.

The exhibition is arranged in broadly chronological order, emphasising various aspects of Spanish draughtsmanship. The first highlight is a rare double-sided sheet of studies for *Saint Stephen taken to his martyrdom* (fig. 1), by the Renaissance artist Juan de Juanes. It was produced in preparation for an altarpiece which is celebrated as one of the early masterpieces of Spanish art (now in the Museo del Prado in Madrid). The back of the drawing gives rare insight into Spanish workshop practice in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as it includes recipes for the painter's materials and contractual information about the altarpiece, here fully deciphered for the first time.

Other early drawings testify to the important role of the Italian High Renaissance as a model in Spain: Pablo de Céspedes, for example, captured a figure from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* soon after its completion, in a meticulously modelled pen and ink drawing. Jusepe de Ribera was one of several 17<sup>th</sup> century artists to participate in the exchange between Italy and Spain. Known as 'Lo Spagnoletto' (the little Spaniard), he settled in Italy as a successful follower of Caravaggio. His *Man tied to a tree* (fig. 2) is one of the most arresting and mysterious images in the exhibition.

Spanish painters also drew inspiration from Dutch and Flemish artists, whose work was most readily available through prints. A beautiful study sheet in red chalk (fig. 3) by the Andalusian artist Antonio Garcia Reinoso (1623-1677) shows how Northern prototypes were imaginatively reworked in a local idiom. Prominently signed and dated 1647, this is one of the most important drawings by Reinoso, of whom the early artists' biographer Antonio Palomino (1653-1726) wrote: "He had great facility in invention, and left a great many drawings, which he executed exquisitely, in wash, pen, charcoal or chalk; not content with one drawing of a subject, he liked to make many, and all very different [from each other]."

Reinoso's contemporary, Antonio del Castillo y Saavedra (1616-1668), also used Northern print sources, but to a very different effect. This can be admired in his carefully arranged and beautifully controlled pen drawing of four male heads, proudly signed with his initials in the very centre (fig. 4).

Another facet of Spanish draughtsmanship can be studied in Alonso Cano's drawings, which are particularly well represented in The Courtauld's collection. In some of his sketches, his dark pen seems to scratch tiny agile figures swiftly on the paper. A brilliant example is his *Saint Bernardino and Saint Juan of Capistrano*, a study for a painting today in Granada's Museo de Bellas Artes which originally formed part of an altarpiece for the Franciscan monastery of San Antonio and San Diego in Granada (fig. 5). Cano was particularly well known and later collectors erroneously inscribed his name on many drawings. The exhibition proposes new attributions for several of these sheets.

Cano's teacher, Francisco Pacheco (1564-1644) is also represented in the exhibition. Pacheco was an influential earlier writer on art, and both master and father-in-law of Diego Velasquez. His highly finished *Saint Mark* is dated to the specific day of its creation: 23 October 1632 (fig. 6). The drawing shows Saint Mark in fervent devotion and reflects the importance of the cult of saints in Spain. Strong devotional feeling is a common characteristic of religious subjects in Spanish drawings, although these are richly varied in technique, style and interpretation. The particularly strong Spanish devotion to the Virgin Mary led to many depictions of her. Other expressions of Spanish Catholicism include the image of the soul being guided by guardian angels, here represented in a rapidly sketched brush drawing by the Sevillian Francisco de Herrera the Younger (fig. 7).

Such small but vigorously executed works lead the way to the most powerful and original of all Spanish draughtsmen: Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828), whose *Cantar y Bailar* (*Singing and Dancing*) stands out for its energy and freedom of execution. This work comes from the *Witches and Old Women Album*, one of Goya's celebrated private drawing books (fig. 8). An old woman, who appears to be levitating, grasps a guitar and sings open-mouthed. Seated on the ground another figure gazes beneath her skirt whilst holding her nose. Goya's impact on the following generation is clearly evident in the highly expressive *Woman walking* by Eugenio Lucas y Padilla (1824-1870) who demonstrates in a tiny format an astonishing technique which pushed the conventional boundaries of drawing (fig. 9). Ink is rubbed and brushed onto the paper leaving different textures and marks which characterise this drawing as one of Lucas's *manchas* (literally, "stains").

The exhibition concludes with two works by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). These include a delightful early drawing of pigs, executed in 1906 and once owned by the American writer Gertrude Stein, a close friend of the artist (fig. 10). The other is a pen and ink drawing of 1923 titled *Femme Assise*.

The four-year research project which underpins the exhibition has been funded by the Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica and is the first such comprehensive assessment of Spanish drawings in a public collection in Britain. It will result in the first catalogue of a national school of drawings held by The Courtauld Gallery. Written by Zahira Veliz-Bomford, author of the only monograph on Alonso Cano's drawings, the catalogue includes detailed analysis of the individual works as well as an introductory essay on Spanish drawings. This scholarly publication represents an important contribution to this rapidly developing field of study.

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