Hispanic Art in British Regional Collections (Durham, 22–23 Sep 22)

County Durham, UK, Sep 22–23, 2022
Deadline: May 27, 2022

Claudia Hopkins

Hispanic Art in British Regional Collections: History, Display, Research

British regional galleries are extraordinarily rich in holdings of Hispanic art. County Durham alone has the largest concentration of Spanish artworks anywhere in the world outside Spain. In addition to Francisco de Zurbarán's cycle of Jacob and his Twelve Sons at Auckland Castle, significant holdings can be found at The Bowes Museum, Ushaw College, Durham Cathedral, Durham University, Raby Castle, and the recently established Spanish Gallery. The County's collections, which cover nearly 500 years, are wide-ranging, from the Galilee Chapel Altarpiece in Durham Cathedral through to Dalí's lithographs of the Bible at St John's College. Further afield, Hispanic artworks can be found throughout the country in galleries, museums, and country houses.

The majority of these works are largely unknown outside academia and have been comparatively under-researched. This two-day conference seeks to raise them to greater public prominence by shifting attention away from the collections in well-established locations in London and Edinburgh and encouraging new research into Hispanic art in a regional context.

On the one hand, the aim is to explore the history and politics of collecting and displaying Hispanic art. It asks how collectors, patrons, and curators have, both historically and in recent years, shaped narratives of Hispanic art. How do we account for the motivations and strategies that underpin the acquisition and display of Hispanic art? What has been the impact of these collections on the regional, national, and international contexts?

On the other hand, the conference seeks to examine individual artworks and artefacts from regional collections, evaluating their significance and trajectory from the original context of artistic production up to their relevance for audiences today. Beyond a possible focus on familiar artworks, such as Zurbarán's Jacob and his Twelve Sons, how might the study of less explored artists and iconographies advance a more complex understanding of artistic production and cultures of display? How might we work collectively to develop and share knowledge of Hispanic art?

Presentations may relate to (but are not limited to) the following themes:
The politics of collecting and displaying Hispanic art
Curatorial practices
Faith and devotion
Pain and suffering

Rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimage
Empire, colonialism, race
Gender and sexuality
Cultural relations and transfer
Centre and periphery
Decolonization agendas
Attribution
Materiality

The conference will offer delegates a unique insight into two of County Durham's most important collections, with the first day held in the Spanish Gallery in Bishop Auckland, and the second, at Ushaw College, Durham.

The conference is organised by Andy Beresford and Claudia Hopkins (Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art, Durham University).

Please send titles and 250-word abstracts to the conference administrator, Barbara Jackson (zurbaran.centre@durham.ac.uk) by 27 May 2022.

Reference:
CFP: Hispanic Art in British Regional Collections (Durham, 22-23 Sep 22). In: ArtHist.net, May 20, 2022 (accessed Nov 19, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/36742>.