

## Cultural Crossroads: Echoes of Flemish Sculpture in Spain (Brussels, 28 Nov 25)

Brussels, Nov 28, 2025

Deadline: Jun 6, 2025

Wendy Frère

Journée d'étude – Cultural Crossroads: Artistic Encounters between the Low Countries and Spain, 15th-17th Centuries. III. Echoes of Flemish Sculpture in Spain from Gothic to Baroque.

Since 2020, the Moll Institute (Madrid) and the Fondation Périer-D'leteren (Brussels) have been conducting a research program aimed at identifying and studying the art that developed in the Low Countries between the 15th and 17th centuries and that is preserved in Spanish collections. As part of this collaboration, a series of study days has been organized since 2023 to stimulate and disseminate research conducted in this field. The first and second study days (2023 Brussels; 2024 Madrid) focused on, respectively, painting and tapestry. The third study day will be dedicated to sculpture and will be organized in Brussels, at the Fondation Périer-D'leteren.

### Cultural context

The period of the 15th-17th centuries witnessed a significant increase in contacts and exchanges between the Southern Netherlands and Spain. These exchanges, facilitated by trade routes and strengthened by close dynastic ties as evidenced, e.g., by the marriage of Philip the Handsome to Joanna of Castile and the installation of the Habsburgs into Spain, had a profound impact on the artistic development of both regions.

The Spanish interest in Flemish art was stimulated particularly by the unique craftsmanship and identity of the Flemish artistic production, making it a symbol of high quality that seduced patrons in search of prestigious works. One of the consequences of this fascination for all things Flemish was the massive importation of sculptures from the southern Netherlands. Brabant altarpieces, for example, were particularly prized for private chapels and churches in Spain, as they demonstrate an exceptional mastery of detail. These monumental works integrated harmoniously into local architectural settings, while sometimes adapting their style to suit local tastes. Alongside these large-scale works, small polychrome statuettes produced among other places in Mechelen responded to a demand for more intimate devotional objects, highly prized by the Spanish elite. Flemish funerary monuments, such as those produced by Egas Cueman for the monastery of Guadalupe, display an innovative combination of Flemish techniques and iconography with local artistic trends.

Many Flemish sculptors settled in the Iberian Peninsula, attracted by prestigious commissions and unprecedented opportunities. Some of them, like Hannequin and Egas Cueman at the end of the 15th century, chose to develop their careers in Castile, forming in the process important

Flemish artistic dynasties on Spanish territories and leaving a significant mark on Spanish sculptural production. Others, like Jean Mone in the 16th century, trained as a sculptor in Barcelona before pursuing a career elsewhere. Conversely, some sculptors only came to Spain for specific commissions. These one-off assignments were often in response to prestigious contracts. All these artists helped to forge a hybrid Hispano-Flemish sculptural style.

Finally, cities such as Burgos, Toledo, Seville, and Madrid played a key role in the dissemination and reception of Flemish sculpture. The cities in the region of Castile, in particular, established themselves as vibrant centers for Flemish art thanks to their contacts with the Southern Netherlands. The ports of the Iberian Peninsula facilitated the swift introduction of Flemish art works, while trade fairs such as those in Medina del Campo served as platforms for exchange and negotiation. These networks, reinforced by trade routes and diplomatic interactions, enabled the export of sculptural works, often offered as prestigious gifts.

The 2025 study day will provide a forum to engage in scholarly discussion and exchanges on the topics outlined, some of which have yet to be fully explored, and as such will open new research perspectives in the field of Flemish sculpture and its Spanish reception.

#### Focus & Scope

Contributions may relate to the following areas:

- Mobility of artists and local settlement: trajectories of Flemish artists; establishment of artistic hubs in centres such as Seville and Burgos; social and professional integration of sculptors and their workshops; the importance of ports and trade fairs for cultural exchanges.
- Patrons and commissions: the role of the royal court; commissions from the nobility and the bourgeoisie; the impact of religious institutions.
- Typologies and specific features of the works: sculpted altarpieces integrated into local architecture; funerary monuments and their iconography; small devotional pieces adapted to the Spanish market etc.
- Technique and materials: introduction of new techniques; adaptation of local materials by Flemish sculptors.
- Conservation and restoration issues: exploring conservation challenges and restoration solutions for a distinctive Flemish art form in Spanish collections.

#### Submission

We welcome all paper proposals (English, French, Spanish) related to the topics outlined above. Duration per paper is maximum 20 minutes. Accepted papers will be considered for publication in a collective volume, to be published in the series *Cahiers d'études* of the *Annales d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie* (Brussels). In addition, the artworks discussed in these papers will be included in the Flemish Art in Spain database: <https://www.flemishartinspain.com/en>.

Paper proposals can be submitted until and including June 6, 2025, and should include a title and short abstract of approximately 300 words, along with a concise CV (to be submitted to [congreso@institutomoll.es](mailto:congreso@institutomoll.es) and [fondation@perier-dieteren.org](mailto:fondation@perier-dieteren.org)). Notification on the acceptance or rejection of papers will be done before August 31, 2025. Please note that transport and accommodation costs are not borne by the organizing institutions.

#### Organizing Committee

- Dr. Sacha Zdanov, Fondation Périer-D'leteren / Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Dr. Wendy Frère, Fondation Périer-D'leteren
- Dr. Ana Diéguez Rodríguez, Instituto Moll / Universidad de Burgos

Reference:

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