



Art in Madrid

The Great Galleries

15–19 April 2026 (MM 939)

5 days

Lecturer: Professor Claudia Hopkins

4–8 November 2026 (MM 225)

5 days

Lecturer: Dr Xavier Bray

Includes a private visit to the Prado plus the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection and the Reina Sofia, home to Picasso's *Guernica*.

Lesser-known places include the Archaeological Museum & the Lázaro Galdiano Museum.

Also visit the newly opened Galería de las Colecciones Reales, showcasing the finest works from Spain's royal collections.

While the Museo del Prado alone might justify a visit to Madrid – and this tour has two sessions there, including a private out-of-hours visit – the city has other excellent collections which reinforce its reputation as one of the great art centres of Europe.

This city of Velázquez and Goya has been enormously enhanced over the years by the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection and the Reina Sofia Museum. Both these and the Prado boast superb facilities and exhibiting spaces thanks to the work of architects Jean Nouvel (Reina Sofia), Manuel Baquero and Francesc Plá (Thyssen) and Rafael Moneo (Prado) converting them into world-class galleries. Our stints at the 'big three' are interspersed with less-visited collections.

The great Spanish painters – including El Greco, Murillo, Velázquez, Goya and Picasso – are of course magnificently represented on the tour, but the collecting mania of the Habsburgs and Bourbons and their subjects has resulted in a wide range of artistic riches which will surprise and delight. There is a large number of outstanding paintings by Titian and Rubens, for example, and the Prado has by far the largest holding of the bizarre creations of Hieronymus Bosch.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Heathrow to Madrid (Iberia Airlines). Begin at the Archaeological Museum, good on ancient Iberian civilization and Roman Spain. Settle into the hotel before dinner.



Madrid, San Francisco El Grande, 20th-century watercolour.

Day 2. Start with a visit to the Royal Collections Gallery, a major new museum in Madrid with works by El Greco, Caravaggio, Goya, Titian and Bosch. Then visit the church of San Antonio de la Florida, with fine Goya frescoes (*subject to the completion of ongoing restoration works, which are due to finish before our tour though delays are possible*). In the afternoon make a first visit to the Prado Museum, which is among the world's greatest art galleries, concentrating on the Spanish school.

Day 3. Return to the Prado for a private out-of-hours visit, this time primarily to see the Italian and Netherlandish schools. Continue to the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, housed in the 18th-century Palacio de Villahermosa, one of the world's largest private art collections until its purchase by the Spanish state in 1993.

Day 4. Morning visits to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the Lázaro Galdiano Museum, with works by Goya, Zurbarán, Ribera, Murillo, and El Greco. The afternoon is free to allow for temporary exhibitions or a visit to the 18th-century Royal Palace. *We hope to offer an optional visit to the Sorolla museum, in the charming house of the eponymous Impressionist painter, subject to its reopening following a major refurbishment.*

Day 5. Walk via Herzog & de Meuron's CaixaForum to the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, one of the greatest modern art museums and home to Picasso's *Guernica* plus works by Miró, Dalí and Tàpies. Fly to London Heathrow, arriving c. 6.15pm.

Art in Madrid
continued

Lecturer

Professor Claudia Hopkins. Professor of Art History at the University of Edinburgh and former Director of the Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art at Durham University (2020-2023). A specialist in Spanish art, Orientalism, and Anglo-Spanish cultural relations, her publications include *Art and Identity in Spain 1833-1956: The Orient Within* (2024), *Hot Art, Cold War-European Writing on American Art 1945-1990* (edited with I.B. Whyte, 2020), and the award-winning *Romantic Spain: Genaro Pérez Villaamil and David Roberts* (2021), which accompanied the eponymous exhibition at Madrid's Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in 2021.

Dr Xavier Bray. Art historian specialising in Spanish art and sculpture and Director of the Wallace Collection, London. Formerly Chief Curator of Dulwich Picture Gallery and Assistant Curator of 17th and 18th-century European paintings at the National Gallery. His exhibitions include *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700* (National Gallery 2009), *Murillo & Justino de Neve: The Art of Friendship* (Dulwich 2013) and *Goya: The Portraits* (National Gallery 2015-16). He completed his PhD at Trinity College, Dublin.

Practicalities

Included: private coach for transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine or beer, soft drinks, water, coffee or tea; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. **NH Collection Palacio de Tepa, Madrid** (nh-collection.com): a small and excellently located 5-star hotel. Rooms are comfortable and décor is contemporary. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? The tour involves a lot of walking and standing in museums (which can be more tiring than moving around). A good level of fitness is essential. You will be on your feet for lengthy stretches of time.

Group size: between 9 and 19 participants.