

THE AVENUE OF ART

Dubbed the “Avenue of Art”, the Paseo del Prado is doubtless unique. Along this stretch of elegant free-lined boulevard, set in one of the most typical parts of Madrid and spaced within easy walking distance of one another, are three of the leading art galleries in the world, let alone Spain: the Prado, Thyssen Bornemisza and Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Museums.

Where else but along the Paseo del Prado could one have the chance of seeing art of the calibre of The Maids of Honour (Las Meninas) by Velázquez, Goya’s Maja Nude and Maja Clothed, Giovanna Tornabuoni by Ghilandaio, “Les Vessenots” en Auvers by Van Gogh and Picasso’s Guernica, to name but a few of the myriad masterpieces on display.

During the reign of the enlightened despot, Charles III (1759-1789), an urban renewal scheme was planned for what at the time was an outlying area on the city outskirts, the meadow of St Jerome (Prado de San Jerónimo). The Salón del Prado, as this large-scale renewal project came to be known, covered the river bed which then crossed the meadow, transforming this thickly-forested area into a park with gardens and fountains. Indeed the Cibeles, Apollo and the Four Seasons and Neptune fountains, designed by the architect Ventura Rodríguez, are still with us today. From the drawing board of another of the King’s master architects, Juan de Villanueva, came the Museum of Natural History (nowadays the main building of the Prado), Botanical Gardens and Astronomical Observatory, set in a space between two palaces. Art lovers, who can afford the time to take in the itinerary traced by the triangle centred on the Paseo del Prado, will find paintings, sculpture and architecture enough for many hours, or even days, of dreamy browsing.

THE PRADO MUSEUM

The Prado Museum contains the world’s finest collection of Spanish paintings, including masterpieces by El Greco, Velázquez, Goya. Vying for attention are the great artist of Spain’s Golden Age (Siglo de Oro) Ribera, Zurbarán and Murillo. The Flemish School is represented by no less than Van der Weyden and Hieronymus Bosch, among others. Other rooms are given over to Italian art, and indeed the gallery boasts the most complete collection of Titian and artists of the Venetian School under one roof. The German, French and English works on display, though fewer in number, are equally superb examples of their kind.



Since its establishment, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum has been the perfect foil for the Prado: what is absent in the latter tends to be splendidly present in the former. Unlike the Prado, with its single masterpiece of the period, Fra Angelico's Annunciation, the Thyssen Bornemisza is well endowed with Italian Primitives. There are also excellent examples of German Renaissance and Dutch 17th-century painting (of which the Prado has only a few) and 19th-century American painting, virtually non-existent elsewhere in Spain. From the first stirrings of modern art, as seen in Impressionism, up through the harsher years of German Expressionism and Russian Constructivism, to experiments with Geometric Abstraction and the tongue-in-cheek irreverence of Pop Art... all are represented in this wide-ranging retrospective that is the Thyssen Collection. Leaving the other two galleries behind, our last call brings us to one of the most famous and, in its time, controversial masterpieces of this century Picasso's Guernica, now hanging in the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. The permanent collection here is primarily made up of Spanish painting and sculpture: Picasso, Gris, Miró, Dalí, Chillida and Tápies, along with newer contemporaries.

Incredible as it may seem, works by figures such as El Greco, Ribera, Zurbarán, Velázquez, Murillo, Goya, Van der Weyden, Hieronymus Bosch, Titian and Rubens form only part of the Prado Museum's collection, considered by many to be one of the richest in the world for the quality and variety of its paintings.

Inside, Alvarez Cubero's statue of Isabel de Braganza, wife of Ferdinand VII, pays tribute to the museum's original patron, and in Bernardo López's portrait of her (Casón del Buen Retiro), she is depicted, surrounded by architectural plans, pointing to the building. The present-day museum was originally intended by Charles III and his architect, Juan de Villanueva, to serve as the Museum of Natural History and Academy of Science (1785). It was the Queen's energy and patronage that lay behind the initiative to convert the edifice into an art gallery, yet she died before its official inauguration as the Royal Museum of Painting and Sculpture in 1819.

The Spanish monarchs, especially Charles V, Philip II and Philip IV, were avid art collectors. Indeed, the first works exhibited in the museum came from the Royal Collections of the 16th-19th centuries. In 1870, the Trinidad Museum collection was transferred to the Prado, with subsequent donations and acquisitions enormously enriching a collection which today includes 11th to 19th-century paintings,

sculpture (both classical and modern), drawings, and the decorative arts. Concentrated in the original building designed by Villanueva, is the world's most complete collection of Spanish painting, spanning the period from the 11th to the 18th centuries. The 19th-century paintings and sculptures, on the other hand, are exhibited across the way in the Prado Museum annexe, the Casón del Buen Retiro.

The earliest works provide the visitor with an invaluable introduction to Spanish art before entering the heady realms of the El Greco, Velázquez and Goya rooms. The gallery contains items exemplifying the Romanesque period, such as the Frescoes of San Baudelio de Berlanga, from the province of Soria, and the Frescoes of Santa Cruz de Maderuelo from the province of Segovia. Exhibits from the Gothic period include Fernando Gallego's Christ Giving His Blessing and St. Dominic of Silos Enthroned by Bartolomé Bermejo, where-as Yáñez de la Almedina's St. Catherine brings a touch of the Renaissance, and an air that is somewhat reminiscent of Leonardo de Vinci.

Domenikos Theotocopolous, the Cretan-born painter who settled in Toledo and became known as El Greco, reveals the influence of Michelangelo in his work, The Trinity. The maturity of his canvas, The Adoration of the Shepherds, condenses the mastery and the singular style of the artist: spare, elongated figures, and the dramatic play of light and shade. Of his portraits, doubtless the most outstanding is, Gentleman with his Hand on his Breast (El Caballero de la Mano en el Pecho).

Historians look upon the 17th century as Spain's Siglo de Oro or Golden Age, owing to the flourishing of art and literature which marked the period. The Prado Museum houses an ample collection of art from this time, with pride of place necessarily going to Velázquez. Born in Seville, he came to Madrid in 1622, and by the following year had already been appointed Court Painter by Philip IV, a post he was to hold until his death. Of the more than 100 paintings by Velázquez, the Prado possesses 51 including his masterpieces: The Maids of Honour (Las Meninas) and the Spinners (Las Hilanderas). These are mature works in which, thanks to the artist's sheer mastery of his craft, atmosphere is given a pivotal role in composition. The Forge of Vulcan, The Lances or The Surrender of Breda and Christ Crucified are only the forerunners of the veritable banquet on show, a collection covering different periods and subjects, ranging from mythology, religion and history to portraits and landscapes.



Other masters from the Siglo de Oro include Ribalta, who brought the chiaroscuro style to Spain, Ribera (nicknamed “Il Spagnoletto”), whose early work reveals the influence of Caravaggio, and the Seville School of Zurbarán and Murillo, Goya, a genius who, like Velázquez, rose to international renown, and who, again like Velázquez, became official Court Painter (though in this case to Charles IV), is also represented at the Prado in all his periods and facet. A cultured man by some accounts, he was, perhaps more importantly, a man who frequented liberal circles and thus became a steadfast and, at times, unflinching chronicler of the crucial period of Spanish history in which he lived. His tremendous creative capacity and constant evolution gave rise to a unique style which served to inspire many an artist thereafter, the impressionists (e.g., Manet) and Expressionists in particular.

In his tapestry cartoons for the Escorial,, Goya’s style was gay and colourful in his depiction of scenes of popular life in Madrid; The Parasolk, The Flower Girls (Spring) and La Maja and the cloaked men. Yet his art evolved continually and his brush had taken a very different turn when, as an old and ailing man, he painted the so called Black Paintings on the walls of his house on the Manzanares River, the “Quinta del Sordo”, such as Witches’ Sabbath (Acholuria) or Saturn devouring one of his sons.



In his numerous portraits, the artist has slyly captured, not only the personality of his subjects but also his personal feelings of warmth or animosity toward them. For instance, *The Family of Charles IV* and *The Duke and Duchess of Osuna with their Children* show special affection for the children. *Las Majas*, clothed and nude, are perhaps his most famous works, yet, while rumour had it that they depicted Goya's reputed mistress, the Duchess of Alba, no amount of speculation has, to this day, managed to uncover the true identity of the model.

The Second of May 1801 in Madrid: The Charge of the Mamelukes (as Napoleon's Egyptian troops were known) and, in the same vein, *The Third of May 1801 in Madrid: The Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill*, are landmarks in the history of art, for the dramatic nature of the events which Goya captured with such vividness.

Some of the gallery's prize exhibits are the work of Flemish artists: *The Descent from the Cross* by Van der Weyden, is the very epitome of 15th-century Primitive, as are his *Pietá* and *Virgin and Child*. Canvases, such as the *Garden of Delights* and the *Hay Cart* (called variously, the *Hay Wagon* or *Haywain*), bear the singular weird quality that is the unmistakable hallmark of Hieronymus Bosch, known in Spain as *El Bosco*.

Charon Crossing the Styx stands out among the works of Patinier, said to be the first artist to concentrate on land- and seascapes in his compositions. Nearby, The Triumph of Death is a mature work and indisputable masterpiece of Brueghel the Elder.



Rubens, the most representative of the 17th-century Flemish school, is generously displayed, both in breadth and excellence, but to many his *The Three Graces* will always rank first and foremost. The series of Van Dycks, fine still lifes, floral works and landscapes, justify the Prado's collection of Flemish art being classed as among the best in the world. As for Italian masters, the Prado boasts *The Annunciation* by Fra Angelico, Botticelli's series, *The Tale of Nastagio degli Onesti*, *Dead Christ Supported by an Angel* by Messina and *Death off the Virgin* by Mantegna, 16th-century works include Raphael's *Portrait of a Cardinal* and *The Holy Family with the Lamb*, as well as oils by Andrea del Sarto (*Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede*, *the Painter's Wife*) and Correggio. The Prado's collection of Titian and others of the Venetian school is outstanding and is rightly considered the most valuable contained in any one art gallery. Paintings by Titian include *Charles V at Mühlberg*, *The Empress Isabel of Portugal*, *Danaë Receiving the Shower of Gold*, *The Bacchanal*, *Venus and Adonis* and *Self-Portrait*. The works of Tintoretto include *Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet*, and those of Veronese, *Venus and Adonis* and *Moses Rescued from the Waters of the Nile*. From the Naples school, comes *Solomon's Dream* by Giordano, and from the 18th century, *The Immaculate Conception* by the Baroque colourist, Tiepolo.

There is an interesting collection of French painting, which includes *Parnassus* by Poussin, Claude Lorraine's, *Landscape with the embarkation of Santa Paula romana at Ostia* and *Gathering in a Park* by Watteau as well as other 17th and 18th-century works. A recent addition is *The Panpipe Player* by De la Tour. Still lifes, landscapes and, above all, Rembrandt's masterpiece, *Artemisa*, represent Dutch art which, by the end of the 17th century, had developed its own style and asserted itself as distinct from Flemish art.

Cranach, Dürer's panels of Adam and Eve, his Self-portrait and a series of portraits by Mengs, form the core of the collection of German masters, Mengs. Court Painter to Charles III, was the first to suggest to the King the creation of a gallery open to the public. His too is the delicate portrait of María Lisa de Parma as Princess of Asturias. The 18th and 19th centuries are present in the eminent company of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney and Lawrence.



Some 700 sculptures, a collection begun at the behest of Philip II, run from antiquity (Sumerian, Egyptian, Ancient and Classical Greek, and Roman) to the 19th century, and serve as a splendid complement to the Prado's feast of paintings.

Classical sculpture includes important pieces, such as the Venus of Madrid and Venus with a Shell. The collection acquired by Philip V from Queen Christine of Sweden, the so-called San Ildefonso Group, is the most valuable in the museum. The most note-worthy Renaissance pieces are the bronzes by Leone Leoni and his son, Pompeo Leoni: Emperor Charles V and Fury and the Empress Isabella.

The Treasure of the Dauphin, which came down to Philip V from Louis XIV, contains opulent crystal and silverware, jewellery, coins, medals, armour and other assorted pieces, such as the exquisite onyx salt cellar supported by a gold mermaid. Furniture, an enamelwork and gold and silverwork are further items gracing the Prado's collection of decorative art.

EL CASÓN DEL BUEN RETIRO.

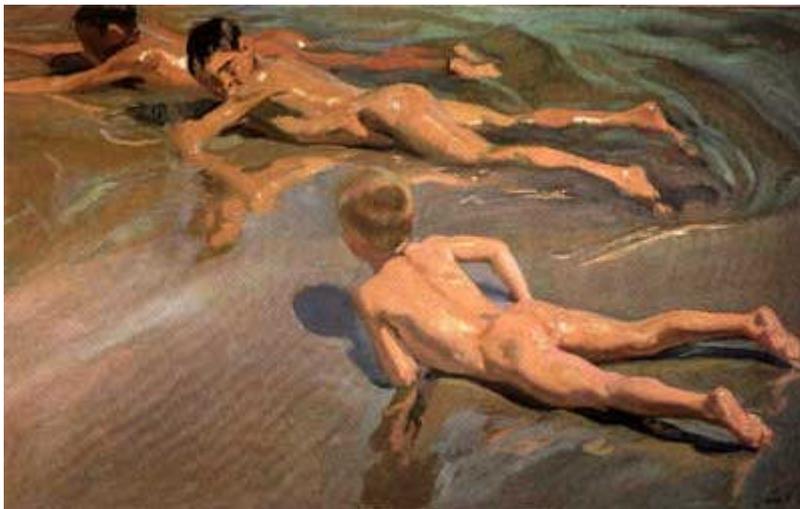
The Casón del Buen Retiro was originally designed as the ballroom to the palace built by Philip IV. The

frescoes in the grand hall were painted by Luca Giordano.

The collection includes some magnificent portraits by Vicente López, such as María Cristina de Borbón, Isabel de Braganza and Ferdinand VII, although perhaps the best work is that of Goya, which overlooks the hall. Also noteworthy is *The Death of Viriatus* by José de Madrazo, and *Las Presidentas* by Eugenio Lucas, similar to the *Majas* by Goya. Alenza painted *La Azofaifa*, and Esquivel, the famous *Contemporary Poets*.

Reputedly one of the most important portraits of the entire 19th century, *The Countess of Vilches* by Federico de Madrazo, plus Rosales' most famous work, *Isabella dictating her Will*, and Fortun's *The Children of the Painter in the Japanese Hall*, are all hanging in the Casón. Here too is one of Sorolla's first paintings, *They Still Say that Fish is Expensive*, as well as his unforgettably nostalgic, *Children on the Beach*.

The landscapes of Carlos Haes include *The Picos de Europa*. Other fine examples of the genre are *Winter Landscape* by Beruete, *The Vine* by Regoyos, *Aranjuez Garden* by Rusiñol, *Moguda Waters* by Joaquín Mir and *Houses of Segovia* by Zuloaga.



PRADO MUSEUM AND THE CASON DEL BUEN RETIRO ADDRESS

Paseo del Prado, s/n. 28014 Madrid.
Tel.: (91) 330 29 00 – (91)330 28 00
Fax: (91) 330 28 59

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Saturday: 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Sundays and public holidays.
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Closed Mondays.

TICKETS

500 ptas general public
250 ptas. Students
Free entrance: Saturdays 2:30 p.m., on wards, and Sundays,. For visitors over the age of 65, and under

18.

- Bono arte: 1.050 ptas. It can be bought at either one of the three Museums; it can be used during one year, one visit to each of them.

SCHOOL AND GROUP VISITS

Book in advance.

Tuesday to Saturday: 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Sundays and public holiday:

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

HANDICAPPED VISITORS

Accesses and facilities : ramps and wheel chairs.

Ground floor, Goya door.

BOOKSHOP – OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Saturday:

9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Sundays and public holidays:

9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: Ground floor.

SHOP – OPENING TIMES

Same as for bookshop

Location: Ground floor

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

Permits: apply to the Management,

(91) 330 28 94

CAFETERIA

Tuesday to Saturday: 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Sundays and public holidays:

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Location: Basement

RESTAURANT

Same as the cafeteria.

Location: Basement

OTHER SERVICES

Cloakroom, public telephone, medical assistance, information, lost property office, complaints and suggestions.

HOW TO GET THERE

Metro: Banco de España, Atocha

Bus: 9,14, 19, 27, 37, 45

RENFE (train): Atocha Station.

Public parking: Plaza de las Cortes.

THYSSEN BORNEMISZA MUSEUM

Medieval pieces bought in the 1920s were the modest beginnings of a collection that Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza was to put together over a lifetime. In the 1960s, his son, the current Baron, added to the collection with the acquisition of modern works, thereby making it a veritable showcase of the history of Western art. Since 1992, Spain has played host to the more than 800 items that go to make up this collection; paintings, sculptures, carvings, tapestries as well as gold and silverware. Apart from the priceless nature of many of the items (over 50 paintings being considered masterpieces), the collection serves as the ideal complement to the classical paintings of the Prado on the one hand, and the modern and contemporary art of the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía on the other. The Thyssen's strengths are the Achilles' heel of the other two galleries, namely, Italian and Flemish Primitives, German Renaissance, 17th century American painting, Impressionism, German Expressionism, Russian Constructivism, Geometric Abstraction and Pop Art.

The museum is housed in what was the Duke of Villahermosa's Palace (and thus still bears the family name), a late 18th-century building, refurbished in the early part of the 19th century by López Aguado, a Neo-Classical architect and disciple of Villanueva. The latest renovation of the building, purpose-designed as the new home for the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, was carried out by Rafael Moneo, a project for which he received the Madrid City Council's VII Town-planning, Architecture and Public Works Award in 1992. The Italian Primitives, the seed from which the collection flowered, still figure among the most important works on show: Madonna and Child, by the Master of the Magdalen (late 13th century), and Christ and the Samaritan Woman, by Duccio di Buoninsegna.

From the brush of Jan Van Eyck, the famed Flemish master of the early northern renaissance and one of the first to work in oils rather than eggtempera technique, comes the Diptych of the Annunciation, the most important work of its kind in the collection. The finest work of the late Gothic period is the Assumption of the virgin by Johann Koerbecke, a painting which heralds the passage from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, a period represented by Bramantino's Resurrected Christ.

A fascinating aspect of the collection is the portrait-work, which includes exceptional items such as the late 15th-century piece, Giovanna Tornabuoni, by Ghirlandaio.

Examples of German Renaissance and an excellent collection of scenes from everyday life, interiors and landscapes by 17th-century Dutch painters (Family Group in a Landscape by Hals, for instance) are some of the other great attractions to be seen in this gallery. St. Catherine of Alexandria, a canvas by the young Caravaggio, belongs to the early Baroque period, while Bernini's sculpture, St. Sebastian, shows all the exuberance of the Baroque. French Classicism, Spain's Golden Age and 17th century Flemish painting (such as Venus and Cupid) are all represented. Furthermore, in addition to examples of Rococo and the Neo-Classical counter reaction, the collection devotes an entire section to 19th-century American painting, virtually unknown on this side of the Atlantic.

Of the Europeans, Goya better than any other artist, illustrates the progression of styles from the Enlightenment onwards, as is eloquently brought out by his Portrait of Asensio Julia and the "black painting", Tío Paquete.

Outstanding among the romantic paintings is Constable's *The Lock*, a tribute to nature and an introduction to the Realist and impressionist movements.

Not only are the great impressionist-Manet, Monet and Renoir among other- in evidence, but the paintings of Gauguin, Degas, Van Gogh and Toulouse Lautrec attest to the importance of the Post-Impressionist movement in the ever-changing history of art, with Cézanne, arguably the one member of this select group who most influenced 20th-century painting, paving the way for the Cubism of Braque and Picasso.

Expressionism is yet another forte of the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection: Schmidt-Rottluff, Heckel and, most importantly Kirchner, are well worth seeing .

While the works of the avant-garde movements show strong similarities, this is due to stylistic affinities rather than sequence in time: Picasso's *Man with a Clarinet*, a landmark in Cubism; *New York City, New York*, by Mondrian, pioneering the rigorous reduction of artistic language to its physical elements; Russian Constructivism, demanding that the work ideally represent nothing. The juxtaposition of all these styles allows the viewer to trace the evolution of modern art. In this connection, see also *Harlequin with Mirror* by Picasso in his classical period, *Catalan peasant with Guitar* by the surrealist Miró, and *Painting with three Spots* by the abstract artist, Kandinsky.

After World War II, the epicentre of modern art shifted to New York. Two of the most representative paintings of American post-war painting are *Green on Purple*, by Rothko, and *Brown and Silver I*, by Pollock.

Predominant though it might have been, Pop Art was by no means the only trend being explored in the 60s.

Surrealism is based on spontaneous associations of images, as shown by Dalí's, *Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee Around a Pomegranate a Second after Waking*. Magritte, founder of Belgian Surrealism, bases his paintings on conceptual paradoxes.

Figurative painting is yet another of the friends that has left its mark on this century., Until his death in 1967, the most important Realist at work was Hopper, whose works, *Hotel Room*, *Girl at Sewing Machine* and *Martha McKeen* by Wellfleet, now form part of the collection.

As for post-war use of figuration (termed New Humanism in the USA), the gallery exhibits the new realism of Lucian Freud and *Portrait of George Dyer in a Mirror* by the self-taught Francis Bacon, whose tortured images are, in part, a legacy of his experiences in London during the blitz.

Pop art, with its garish, blown-up, ready-made images lifted from advertising, comic strips and the mass media, rounds off the collection. Some of the most representative works are *Express* by Rauschenberg and *Woman in the Bath* by Lichtenstein

THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA MUSEUM

ADDRESS

Paseo del Prado, 8.

Palacio de Villahermosa . 28014 Madrid.

Tel.: (91) 369 01 51 (Museum)

Fax: (91) 420 27 80

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Sunday: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Closed Mondays

TICKETS

600 ptas.

350 ptas. For students and senior citizens

- Fee to be revised

SCHOOL AND GROUP VISITS

Contact education department

Reservations: (91) 369 91 51

Group visits: Tuesday and Friday:

10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sundays: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

HANDICAPPED VISITORS

The museum provides accesses and has special elevators, telephones and rest-rooms.

BOOKSHOP – OPENING TIMES

Same as for museum

Objects on sale; postcards, poster,

T-shirts, icons, scarves, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

The taking of photographs and videos is not allowed inside the museum.

Permits: contact the Communication

Department for press photographs and the Conservations Departemente for book illustrations.

CAFETERIA-RESTAURANT

Open 10 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Location: first basement floor.

OTHER SERVICES

Cloakroom, public telephone, medical assistance, information, lost property office, complaints and suggestions.

HOW TO GET THERE

Metro: Banco de España

Bus: 1,2,5,9,10,14,15,20,27,34,37,45,51,52,53,74,146, and 150

RENFE (train): Atocha and Recoletos stations

Public parking: Plaza de las Cortes.

CENTRO DE ARTE REINA SOFÍA NATIONAL MUSEUM

Standing at the southernmost end of the Avenue of Art is the art gallery which proudly bears the name of the present-day Queen of Spain: the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía National Museum. Although the permanent collection was inaugurated by the King and Queen on 10th September 1992, it had actually started life in 1986 as a centre primarily intended to act as a venue for temporary exhibitions.

Owing to its unique characteristics and multiple activities, the Reina Sofía is more than a gallery. While attracting enthusiasts of contemporary painting and sculpture of all ages, it has nonetheless become Madrid's most popular gallery among youngsters. It seeks to cater to this public through educational programmes designed to foster creativity and interest in art among children. The section of the gallery housing its permanent collection is hung with masterpieces of early 20th-century Spanish avant-garde, with Picasso, Miró and Dalí at the fore. In addition, the gallery puts on a large number of temporary exhibitions, some devoted to leading artists who have already received critical acclaim, others to up-and-coming creators who have either given signs of promise or provoked controversy due to the radical nature of their work. For those weary of gallery gazing, relaxing alternatives include the latest in international video art and film, avant-garde musical compositions, art books and publications from all over the world, or perhaps just a quiet stroll through the inner patio.

The Reina Sofía is situated at one of Madrid's busiest hubs, the Glorieta de Carlos V ("Glorieta" meaning a roundabout or a London-style Circus), commonly known as "Atocha". It is housed in one of the city's most historic buildings; the erstwhile General Hospital. The original, late 18th-century building was left unfinished by Francisco Sabatini, the favourite architect of Charles III, a king considered by the inhabitants of Madrid (Madrileños) to have been their "best mayor".

The restoration of the building, begun under the direction of Antonio Fernández Alba, has respected the plans of the period and the overall architectural design. Nonetheless Fernández Alba thoroughly renovated the structure so as to equip it with all the features demanded of a first-rate, technologically up-to-date museum.

On entering the plaza where the main entrance to the museum is located, the first thing that strikes the visitor are the two tall, transparent towers housing the building's elevators. The structures were designed by José Luis Iñiguez de Onzoña and Antonio Vázquez de Castro, in collaboration with British architect, Ian Ritchie. Rapidly rising above the colourful mosaic of the old quarter's rooftops, the visitor is transported to the enormous light-filled expanse of the centre's exhibition rooms. The Reina Sofía is, in fact, one of the world's largest art galleries, with 36,701 square metres of useable surface area, a third of which is allocated to exhibition space.

The anchor and heart of the gallery's activities is, logically, its permanent collection. The second floor is given over to a careful selection of works from a collection which contains over 10,000 items, all told. Place of honour has been accorded to Picasso's famous Guernica, owing to its historical and artistic importance, a symbol not only of civil liberties for several generations of Spaniards, but also, since its return to the country, of a new period of co-existence. Room 7 had to be specially altered and readied before the painting could be moved from its former home, the Casón del Buen Retiro. Accompanying it are the Malaga-born artist's preparatory sketches, along with contemporary works by Alberto Sánchez, Salvador Dalí and Le Corbusier.

The content and structure of the permanent collection highlights the close ties between 20th-century art in Spain and avant-garde movements abroad. Early contact between Spanish artists and Europe is to be seen in the paintings of artists, such as Hermenegildo Anglada Camarasa, Isidre Nonell, Ignacio Zuloaga, José Gutiérrez Solana or Francisco Rubio. In their wake came the Cubist and Surrealist movements, with Picasso, Miró, Dalí, Juan Gris, Julio González, María Blanchard, Oscar Domínguez and the like. European influence also visible in the work of the so-called Parí School: Vázquez Díaz, Pancho Cossío, Alfonso Pérez de León, among others. Space is likewise afforded to alternative

currents which flowered alongside the avant-garde movements, e.g., Mediterranean Classicism as represented by Joaquín Sunyer and Manolo Hugué, and New Objectivity, through the eyes of José Velasco and José Togores. From the period preceding the Civil War, the gallery offers examples of figurative work and the Realism of Antonio López Torres and Daniel González Lastly, the collection documents the resurgence of avant-garde ideas in the 40s and the importance of abstract trends during the 50s and 60s . It includes the informalist works of the Grupo El Paso, Antoni Tàpies (the leading exponent of Arte Povera in Spain) and the abstract expressionism of Eduardo Chillida, as well as the geometric constructivist works of Equipo 57, led by Pablo Palazuelo. However, the gallery-goer is by no means confined to an academic and rather passive review of the history of art in the 20th century; demands of modern art and a generalized desire for greater participation have given birth to a series of so-called “Proposals”, whereby the viewer is freed from such a purely chronological approach. By taking leading figures in Spanish art in recent years (Luis Gordillo, Eduardo Arroyo, Equipo Crónica, Miguel Navarro, Susana Solano) and contrasting them against others active on the international art scene (Lucio Fontana, Barnett Newman, Ellsworth Kelly, Bruce Nauman, Dan Flavin), the curators have set themselves the dual goal of forcing the viewer to reflect on the diversity at work in today’s art world and ensuring continued expansion of the gallery’s core collection.

In short, the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía National Museum offers the visitor the privilege of reviewing the history of art in recent times, while simultaneously experiencing the dynamic of a collection in evolution... a 20th –century gallery for the 21st century.

CENTRO DE ARTE REINA SOFIA NATIONAL MUSEUM

ADDRESS

Santa Isabel, 52. 28102 Madrid.

Tel: (91) 467 50 62 . Fax: (91)467 31 63

OPENING TIMES

Monday to Saturday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Sundays and public holidays:

9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Closed Tuesdays.

TICKETS

500 ptas. General public

250 ptas. Students

Free entrance :Saturdays 2:30 p.m.

Onwards, and Sundays. For visitors over

The age of 65, and under 18.

SCHOOL AND GROUP VISITS

Information and reservations:

(91) 527 72 05

Free guided visits for general public:

Monday & Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Saturdays at 11 a.m.

HANDICAPPED VISITORS

The museum provides special accesses
For the handicapped

BOOKSHOP – OPENING TIMES

Same as museum. Specialized in art, catalogues and educational guides.

SHOP – OPENING TIMES

Same as for museum

Objects on sale: designer objects, decorations, jewellery, stationery, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

The taking of photographs and videos is
Not allowed inside the museum

CAFETERIA – OPENING TIMES

Same as for museum.

RESTAURANT

1 p.m. – 4 p.m., except Tuesday and Sunday.

OTHER SERVICES

Cloakroom, public telephone, medical assistance, information, lost property office, complaints and suggestions, 4B automatic teller.

HOW TO GET THERE

Metro: Atocha (line 1)

Bus: 6,10,14,18,19,26,27,32,36,37,41,45,47,55,57,59,68,86,119, Circular.

RENFE (train): Atocha Station.