



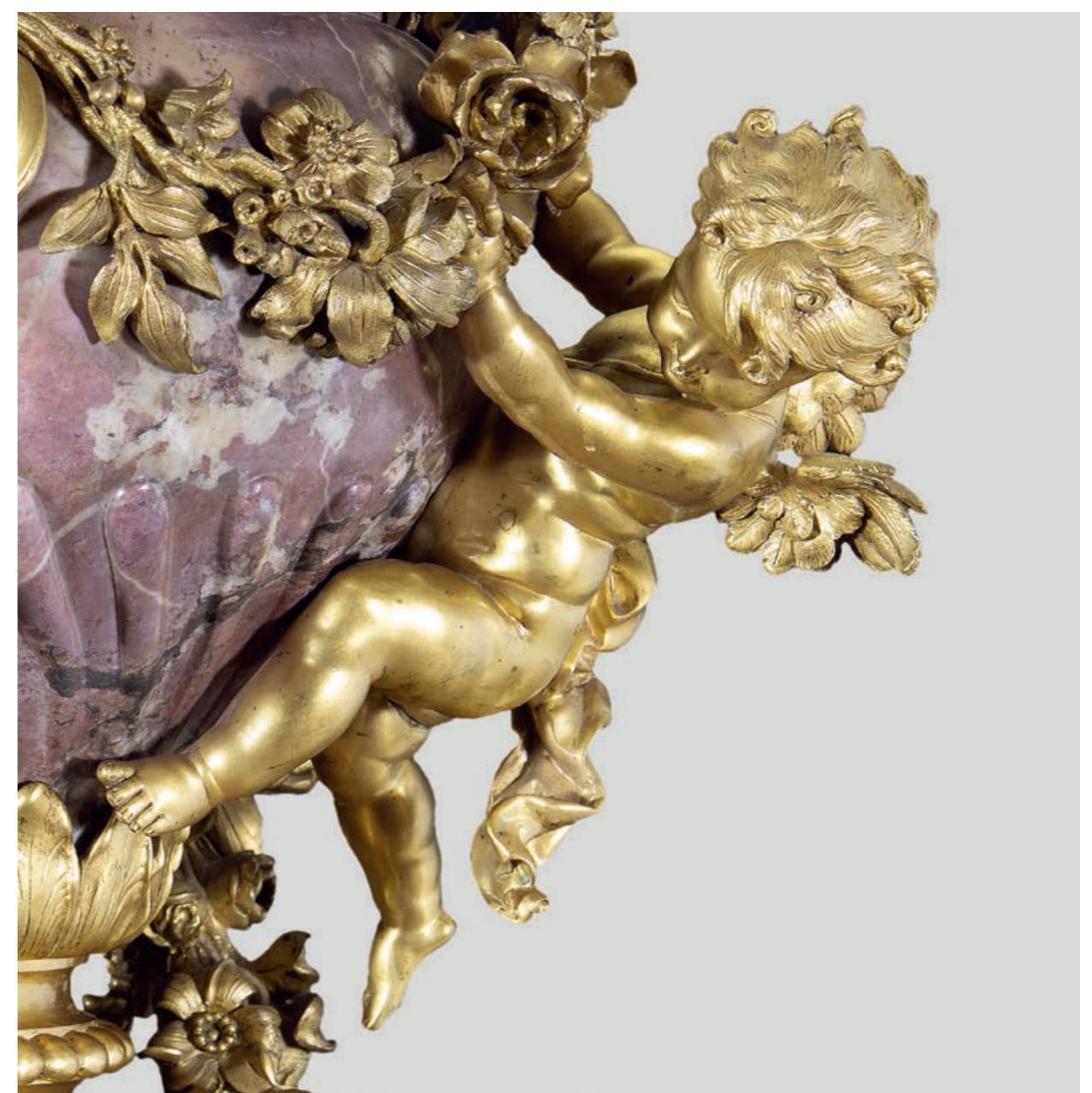
THE FRENCH TASTE

AND ITS PRESENCE IN SPAIN
[17th – 19th CENTURIES]

THE FRENCH TASTE analyzes the presence of French art in Spain through the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries; the period of greatest reciprocal influence and integration between the two countries.

Through numerous paintings (45), drawings (16), sculptures (8), sumptuary and decorative arts pieces (31) and a series of everyday objects, the exhibition intends to delve into the evolution of the French taste in Spain, a subject that has only been studied occasionally. A transversal project comprehending such an extensive period of time cannot be understood without its historical context. In this sense, the exhibition also analyzes aspects such as diplomatic relations, the history of collecting or the construction of national identities.

The approximately one hundred and ten pieces that are being presented, all belong to public and private



collections from Spain. The exhibition discourse begins at the point in time when French works started arriving in Spain and moves forward to when France established itself as the model for European taste. It concludes when the inverse phenomenon occurred, and Spain became the focal point for French culture due to the interest that it aroused in Romantic imagination throughout the 19th century.

LOUIS-VALENTIN-ELIAS ROBERT

Second Empire Vase,
second half of 19th century [detail]
Madrid, BBVA Collection

© David Mecha

CASA ZUBER & CIE

Les Jardins français, ca. 1836-1837
Panoramic wallpaper
Madrid, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas
© Pablo Linés



17TH CENTURY.

Difficult Relations: Portraits, Exchanges and Gifts

Under the reign of Louis XIII French painting reached a period of splendor with artists as significant as Simon Vouet, Charles Le Brun, Jacques Blanchard, Laurent de la Hyre, Philipe de Champaigne or the Le Nain brothers. After the monarch's death, some of these artists participated in the creation of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris in 1648, the first modern institution of its kind. Both the King and his adviser Cardinal Richelieu established active artistic policies while commissions proliferated, stimulating the artistic market.

Around 1650, Spain lost its supremacy as a global power to Louis XIV's (The Sun King) France. As a habitual way of sealing the peace, one of his strategies



was to establish alliances through a series of marriages with Spanish royalty. In this context, the exchange of a wide range of gifts was common: horses, jewelry and decorative arts, small pieces of furniture and, above all else, portraits.



CHARLES & HENRI BEAUBRUN

Maria Theresa of Austria and the Grand Dauphin of France, ca. 1664
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

© Archivo Fotográfico.
Museo Nacional del Prado. Madrid

JEAN NOCRET

Equestrian Portrait of the Dauphin of France at the Age of Three, 1665
Private collection

© Joaquín Cortés

18TH CENTURY.

THE ARRIVAL of ARTISTS to Bourbon Spain; THE EMERGENCE of THE FRENCH TASTE

Philip V was the first king of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain. After his rise to the throne in 1700 he sought to translate his French taste into the Spanish Court. Under his reign, the works for the renovation of the Buen Retiro garden began, as well as the renovation of the interior of the Alcázar, and he also initiated the construction of the Granja de San Ildefonso, in Segovia.

In order to create the official image of the new Spanish King, prestigious French painters were sought. In 1715, the painter Michel-Ange Houasse arrived to the Spanish Court from France and would be succeeded shortly thereafter by Jean Ranc. Likewise, in 1735, Louis-Michel Van Loo substituted the former and became the King's first painter, as well as the director of painting at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, founded in 1752.



SIMON VOUET

The Rape of Europa, ca. 1641-1642
Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

© Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.
Madrid

MICHEL-ANGE HOUASSE

Portrait of the Infante Carlos, the future Charles III, 1716
Private collection
© Fernando Maqueira





The emergence of French taste and culture in Spain reached its peak during the reign of Carlos IV, grandson of Philip V. His interest in jewelry and decorative arts, furniture, painting and sculpture became manifest early on. Gradually the King exhibited his taste for French luxury objects in the creation of the Bureau of Platinum at the Casa del Labrador in Aranjuez, fully constructed in an incipient Imperial style by French artists under the supervision of Napoleon's architect Charles Percier's. Carlos IV's passion for Imperial style watches was well established, to the point of being known by some as "Watchmaker King."

JEAN RANC

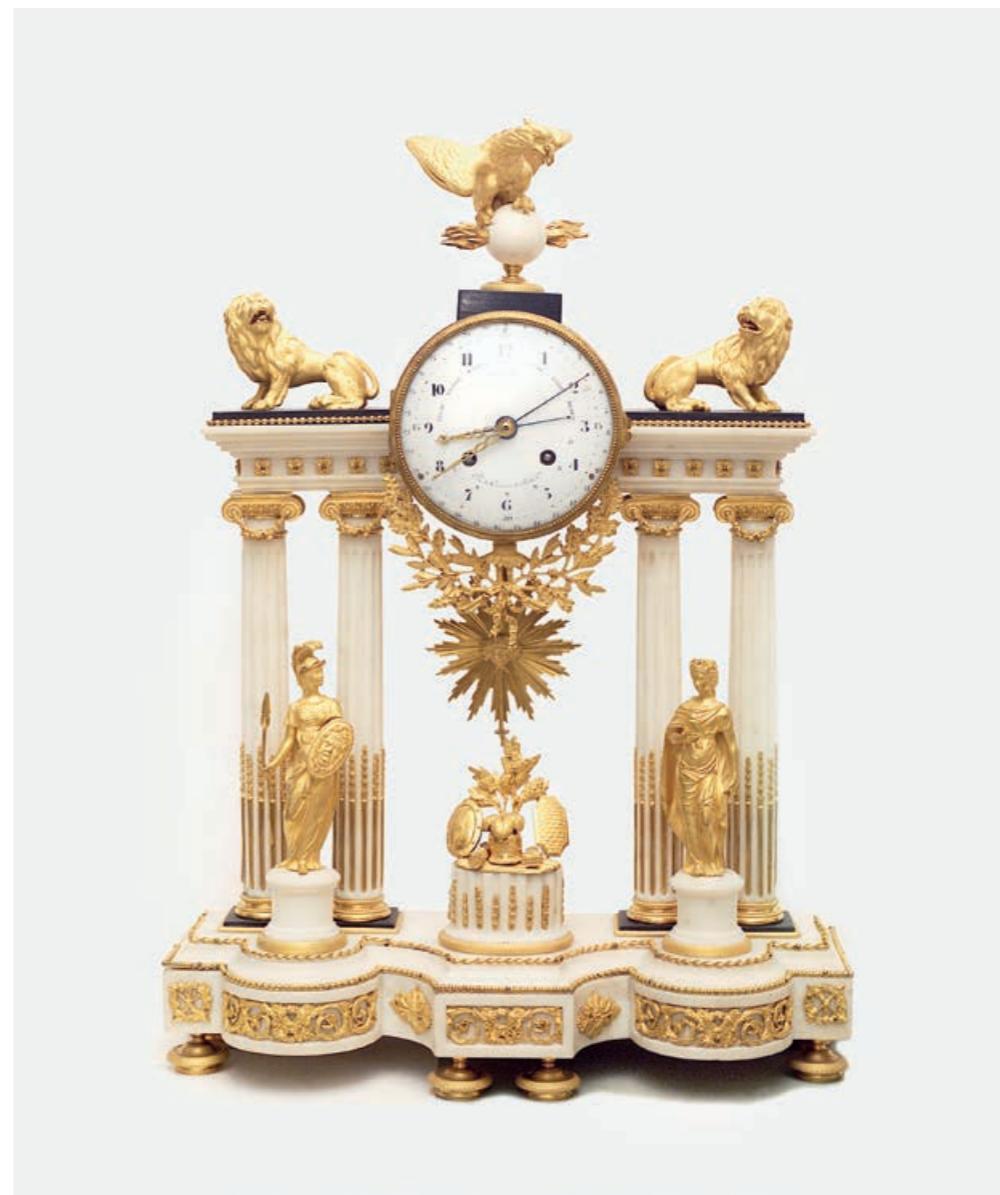
Philip V, 1723
Private collection
© Fernando Maquieira

FRANÇOIS-LOUIS GODON & JOSEPH COTEAU

Clock of Strength and Prudence,
ca. 1795-1800
Royal Collections. Patrimonio
Nacional, Royal Palace of Madrid
© Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid

JOSEPH-MARIE BOUTON

Maria Luisa of Bourbon-Parma and her Son, the Infante Francisco de Paula, in the Gardens at Aranjuez, 1805
Miniature. Colección Abelló
© Joaquín Cortés



In the early 18th century the French miniature became one of the pictorial genres par excellence –often associated to women, who became great specialists of this meticulous technique–, and one of the most sought after by the aristocracy. The taste for French miniatures would also permeate into Spain and its popularity extended through the 19th century until the irruption of photography marked the onset of its decline in 1855.



19TH CENTURY.

THE ROMANTIC IMAGE OF SPAIN

The War of Independence (1808-1814) gave way to a true transformation of the vision that existed in France of Spain until that time. Some soldiers amid the lines of the French invading troops were painters who would not only produce paintings of the feats of war, but also portraits.

From 1830 onward, waves of Romantic French painters began arriving to the peninsula with the objective of capturing the picturesque landscape and Spanish customs that had been vilified up to that point but would become the object of desire for foreigners who saw in Spain the epitome of a free and exotic nation. Some of the most significant figures who contributed to this new image of



Spain were Antoine d'Orléans, Duke of Montpensier and of Galliera, and Eugenia de Montijo.



ANICET-CHARLES-GABRIEL LEMONNIER

Doña María de los Dolores Leopolda Cristina de Toledo y Salm-Salm, Duchess of Beaufort-Spontin, with her Children, ca. 1789
Colección Duque del Infantado

© Pepe Morón

ALFRED DEHODENCQ

The Duke of Montpensier with his Family in the San Telmo Gardens, 1853
Private collection

© Pablo Linés



ÉDOUARD ODIER

Eugenia de Montijo on horseback, 1849

Fundación Casa de Alba

The Duke of Montpensier married the sister of Queen Isabel II, the Infanta Luisa Fernanda. After the revolution of 1848, the couple left France and established themselves in Seville in 1849. Their presence generated a surge in culture and popular events in the city, as Seville became known as the Corte chica [Lesser Court]. On her side, Eugenia de Palafox Portocarrero de Guzmán y Kirkpatrick, commonly known as Eugenia de Montijo, the future wife of Napoleon III, would be one of the people in charge of exporting



JEAN-BAPTISTE ACHILLE ZO

Fruit Seller in Seville, ca. 1864

Madrid, BBVA Collection

© David Mecha

the “Imperial style” to the Spanish Court by virtue of her education and refinement.

The graphic image of Spanish monuments, customs and traditions that had been constructed by French Romantic artists was perhaps their most important contribution toward the discovery and comprehension of the Romantic image of Spain outside its borders, an image that Spanish artists themselves would continue to explore in their work thereafter.



JEAN-DÉMOS THÈNE DUGOURC

Customs Scene, 1813

Madrid, Instituto Ceán Bermúdez

© Pablo Linés

Curator

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assisted by

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Dates

11 February to 8 May 2022

Opening times

Mondays (except public holidays): 2 pm to 8 pm

Tuesdays to Saturdays: 11 am to 8 pm

Sundays and public holidays: 11 am to 7 pm

Last entry 30 minutes

before closing time.

Visitors must leave the galleries 10 minutes

before closing

Ticket prices

Standard: 5 €

Reduced: 3 €

Free entry: Mondays (except public holidays)

Guided tours

7 €

Times and booking:

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<https://exposiciones.fundacionmapfre.org/FrenchTasteExhibition>

COVER: Louis-Michel Van Loo. *Maria Antonia Fernanda of Bourbon, Infanta of Spain*, ca. 1737 [detail].
Oviedo, Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias.
On deposit from the collection of the 9th Count of Villagonzalo
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