

MONTAÑÉS

maestro de maestros



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Juan Martínez Montañés (Alcalá la Real, 1568 – Sevilla, 1649) represents a milestone in Spanish Baroque sculpture and a timeless model in the Sevillian school.

This exhibition provides an insight into a select representation of 44 sculptures and reliefs by the brilliant artist, of a total of 58 works on display. Divided into three sections, the itinerary presents an exceptional repertoire of works that bear witness to the ambition of the major commissions he undertook, the sublime quality of his devotional images and the novelty of his iconographic models. The first section features works from his most outstanding groups or altarpieces, such as those from San Isidoro del Campo and the convent of San Leandro. The second one offers key examples of his magnificent religious imagery, such as *Saint Christopher* and *Saint Jerome*, and the third one highlights his most significant contributions to Sevillian Baroque iconography, as exemplified by the *Infant Jesus* from the Cathedral Side Chapel, *La Cieguecita* or *Little Blind One*, and the *Christ of Clemency*.

The connections with the artistic and intellectual world of the day reveal the collaboration between Montañés and other artists, also represented here by paintings that formed part of altarpieces or were the pictorial expression of the new iconographies which the sculptor helped to establish.

Many of the works on display have undergone conservation and restoration works specifically for the exhibition, enabling us to appreciate the extraordinary quality and beauty of the grand master's work in all its glory. Thanks to the generous collaboration of the Archbishopric of Seville, the exhibition also includes works which the general public rarely have the opportunity to admire, either because they are located high up on altarpieces or hidden away in convents and monasteries.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568-1649)

Juan Martínez Montañés was born in Alcalá la Real (Jaén province) to Juan Martínez, an embroiderer, and Marta González, both originally from Zaragoza. He began his training around 1580 in Granada with Pablo de Rojas. At the age of 19 he moved to Seville and married Ana de Villegas, with whom he had six children. He worked with Castilian sculptors like Nicolás Delgado until taking his qualifying examination in 1588, where he was declared able and sufficient to practise. His earliest preserved work is *Saint Christopher*, from 1597.

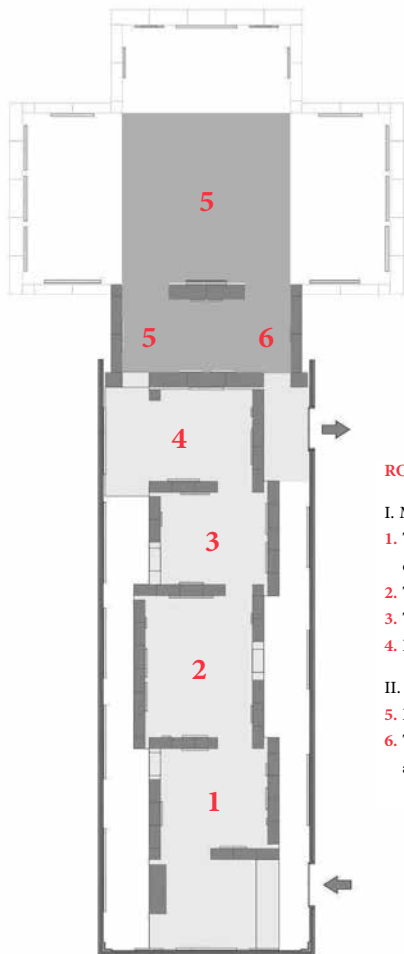
By the beginning of the 17th century, he was working for the city of Seville, the region of Andalusia and the Americas, producing masterpieces like the *Christ of Clemency*. The sculptor worked constantly with other artists, such as Juan de Oviedo, Juan de Mesa and Francisco de Ocampo on the altarpiece at San Isidoro del Campo. Francisco Pacheco polychromed several of his works and established the matt tones that Gaspar de Raxis and Baltasar Quintero would also use for the master's pieces. In 1613 he was widowed and married

Catalina Salcedo, with whom he had seven children. Around 1615 he finished his processional image, *Jesus of the Passion*.

In 1620 he embarked on a period of intense production. While working at the convent of San Leandro in 1621, he was engaged in a dispute with Pacheco over the contract for the polychromy of the altarpiece at Santa Clara. Meanwhile, Seville was entering an economic decline.

In the 1630s Montañés and his studio were increasingly active, producing the altarpiece for the church of San Miguel in Jerez de la Frontera, the sculptures of *Saint John Baptist* and *Saint John the Evangelist* for the convent of Santa Paula, and emblematic works like *Saint Bruno* and *La Ciegucecita (The Little Blind One)*. In 1635 he modelled the portrait of Philip IV for the equestrian statue made by Pietro Tacca, after which he came to be known as the Andalusian Lysippos.

He died during the plague of 1649 and was buried in the church of La Magdalena.



ROOM V

I. MAJOR COMMISSIONS

1. The monastery of San Isidoro del Campo
2. The convent of San Leandro
3. The convent of Santa Clara
4. Private commissions

II. DEVOTIONAL IMAGERY

5. Devotional imagery
6. The Jerez de la Frontera altarpiece



TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS ROOM

III. ICONOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTIONS

7. The Society of Jesus
8. Childhood
9. The Immaculate Conception
10. Christ on the Cross

1

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint John the Baptist, 1609-1613

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,
Santiponce (Seville)

Ílvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



This sculpture of Saint John the Baptist forms a pair with the one of Saint John the Evangelist. The two sculptures flank the main altarpiece at the monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, widely renowned as one of the most outstanding works by Martínez Montañés.

Smaller than life-size, the last prophet and first Christian martyr is depicted in a *contrapposto* pose, with one leg slightly in front of the other. The camel skin is closely fitting and covered by a red cloak with an *estofado* (gilded and incised) pattern of scrolls and vegetal motifs. In his left hand he holds the *Agnus Dei*, the symbol of Christ, seated on the book. His face conveys a sense of profound spiritual concentration.

2

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Virgin and Child, 1609-1610

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,
Santiponce (Seville)

Ílvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



The historian José Gestoso echoed tradition when he affirmed that the Hieronymite monks at San Isidoro del Campo commissioned this *Virgin and Child* from Montañés to ascertain his calibre as a sculptor before asking him to make the main altarpiece for their church. Perhaps the reason why the legend has endured is that Montañés demonstrated great technical ex-

pertise in his carving of this exquisite small-format Marian sculpture, which occupies the central panel of the altarpiece in the Eucharistic Chapel in the private area of the church.

3 and 4

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, 1609-1610

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,
Santiponce (Seville)

Ílvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



These two figures depicted in their maturity, verging on old age, adopt an upright position and reverent gesture of adoration towards the central group of the aforementioned *Virgin and Child*, forming part of the same altarpiece. This tripartite composition evokes the theme of the Holy Kinship, made up on the female side by Christ's grandparents and his mother, with evident undertones of the Immaculate Conception.

The two sculptures are treated with great elegance and dignity, as manifested in their clearly delineated forms and strong facial features.

5

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, the Good, 1609-1613

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,
Santiponce (Seville)

Ílvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



The tombs that Montañés made for the monastery of San Isidoro del Campo hold the remains of its founders: Alonso, founder of the house of Medina Sidonia, and his wife. The sepulchres show them with all their symbolic apparatus and in a praying position, each kneeling on a cushion in front of a prie-dieu, beneath the coats of arms of both lineages. Alonso, the famous Guzmán the Good, wears a suit of armour with details inspired by a late medieval model, perhaps to create a faithful replica ñ albeit embellished with meticulous and anachronistic damascene work ñ of an older piece that may have existed in the ducal armoury.

6

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

María Alonso Coronel, 1609-1613

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,
Santiponce (Seville)

Álvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



The wife of Alonso Pérez de Guzmán [Nº5] kneels in front of an ornate prie-dieu on which rests a book of hours, a frequent motif in funerary portraits. Like her husband's sepulchre, the architecture that frames the praying statue

is decorated with an elaborate symbolic repertoire that includes references to her status as a mother of the second Isaac, a clear allusion to the sacrifice of her eldest son's life in the siege of Tarifa. Iconographically, she is depicted in a rich, medieval-style court gown with intricate lace sleeves.

7 and 8

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, 1620-1622

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of San Leandro, Seville



The iconographic programme of this altarpiece is completed with these two figures that serve to reinforce the exalted genealogy of John the Baptist and Christ.

Executed in a single block of wood and hollowed out to make them lighter, they display the formal characteristics associated with the master: the classical canon and technical solutions such as the placement of one leg in front of the other. Together with the exquisite skill evidenced in the carving of Our Lady's head, they anticipate devices that would become hallmarks of his style, consolidated in later works such as the Immaculate Conception known as *La Cieguecita* (*The Little Blind One*) [Nº51].



JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint John the Baptist in the Desert, 1620-1622

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of San Leandro, Seville



The main scene in the altarpiece depicts Saint John the Baptist in the desert. Wearing a camel skin and a red cloak, he holds a cross in his left hand and points with his other hand to the symbolic representation of the *Agnus Dei*. His heavenwards gaze reinforces the silent conversation with God.

Montañés did not always represent the saint with the same face. In this haut-relief he shows him beardless, emphasising the anatomy of the statue through the oblique pose and foreshortening of the figure, in contrast to the upright sculptures in the altarpiece.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Elizabeth and Saint Zachariah, 1620-1622

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of San Leandro, Seville



In the second register of the altarpiece, the niches in the side panels hold sculptures in the round that allude to the parents of the saint on the altar. They are a sculptural representation of Saint Luke's story in which the archangel Gabriel appears to Zachariah to announce that Elizabeth will bear a son, in spite of her advanced age.



Martínez Montañés underlines this elderliness in the highly expressive, eloquent faces and in the extraordinary treatment of the garments, evidencing his great technical skill.

12 and 13

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Baptism of Jesus and Telamon Angels, 1620-1622

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of San Leandro, Seville



The composition of the scene is inspired by the engravings on which 17th-century artists in Seville based their work, although in this relief Montañés introduces certain variations and novelties

with respect to earlier ones on the same theme. In this case, the compositional solutions are focused on the standing figure of Jesus, his arms outstretched, whereas in other models the arms are crossed over the chest or the hands are clasped in prayer.

The pictorial treatment of the landscape, a documented intervention by the polychromer Baltasar Quintero, serves to complete and enrich the sensation of depth.

Adorning the altarpiece attic are two telamon angels with a muscular anatomy and exquisitely carved hair.

14

GASPAR NÚÑEZ DELGADO (circa 1555 ñ 1606)

Head of Saint John the Baptist, 1591

Polychromed terracotta
Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



While the young Montañés was still in the process of consolidating his reputation in the city, the sculptor Núñez Delgado carved and signed this severed head of

Saint John the Baptist, an outstanding work in his oeuvre and one destined to become an iconographic reference in the Council of Trent doctrine on religious imagery.

It highlights an evolution in his style in a decisive decade for Sevillian sculpture, gradually moving towards naturalism. With a verism verging on pathos, the detailed treatment of the anatomy contrasts with the meticulous execution of the wavy hair and the characteristic quiff, a device adopted by the younger generation of sculptors.

15 and 16

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Head of Saint John the Baptist and Platter-Bearer

Angels, 1620-1622

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of San Leandro, Seville



The head of Saint John the Baptist that Montañés made for this altarpiece is presented on a platter held by two angels. His interpretations on this theme tend towards a treatment less inspired by suffering, in contrast with the sculpture by Gaspar Núñez Delgado [Nº 14]. The Montañés model is both more serene and more restrained in terms of its expressiveness. Executed at the height of his mature style, it represents his

most idealised version of this theme, reinforced by the matt flesh tones painted by Baltasar Quintero. The only discernible traits of the martyr are the dissected neck, the cadaverous cheekbone and the slightly parted lips.

The platter-bearer angels display the same anatomical study as the telamon angles [Nº 13], although the craftsmanship suggests the intervention of Montañés's studio.

17

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint John the Baptist, circa 1623-1625

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero
Convent of Santa Clara, Archbishopric of Seville



The devotion to different versions of Saint John experienced an extraordinary boom in Spain during the Modern Age, to the extent that the saint became an essential object of worship in enclosed convents. Montañés depicts the Baptist as a hermit wearing a camel-skin tunic. In his left hand he holds a book and the lamb, to which he points with his right index finger. There was a long tradition in this type of iconography, and the artist himself had used it a few years earlier at the monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, achieving a finer effect with the more classical, slender bearing.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint John the Evangelist, circa 1623-1625

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero

Convent of Santa Clara, Archbishopric of Seville



In Sevillian enclosed convents the representation of the Evangelist on the island of Patmos chimed with the facet which the saint embodied in relation to the principles of the cloistered life. It was probably for this reason that the artist chose to depict the saint in a standing position and contemplative attitude,

his eyes raised heavenwards in search of inspiration to write the Apocalypse. Montañés follows the traditional, established iconography associated with the theme: the figure holds a book in his left hand and grasps a quill in this right hand. At his feet is the eagle, his faithful companion on Patmos and symbol of the revelation of Christ's divine nature.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Francis of Assisi, circa 1623-1625

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero

Convent of Santa Clara, Archbishopric of Seville



This is one of the finest saints in Montañés's oeuvre. He is garbed in the coarse Franciscan habit and presented in a standing position, the left leg slightly bent and placed in front of the other leg, lending balance to the figure. The head displays magnificent anatomical treatment. The artist eschews all

ascetic excess and offers a countenance pulsating with life, richly nuanced to highlight the perfectly modelled veins in the saint's temples and his eyelids and mouth. Meanwhile, the vibrant animation of the right hand draws the saint's entire attention towards the crucifix he holds.

20 and 21

FRANCISCO PACHECO (1564 ñ 1644)

Portrait of Miguel Jerónimo and his Son, 1612

Portrait of Miguel Jerónimo's Wife and Daughter, 1612

Oil on panel

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Pacheco painted the portraits of the patron and his family that adorned the predella of the altarpiece dedicated to Saint Albert, commissioned from Montañés. He followed the model established in the late 16th century: married couples or pairs of family members of the same sex depicted with clearly defined contours against a neutral background, their hands clasped in prayer. He also imitates 16th-century Northern European painting, with its meticulous attention to detail and naturalistic precision. The male figures are dressed in the austere Spanish style and the ruff that would cease to be used after 1623. The females wear hoods and veils with exquisite lace details.

22

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint John the Evangelist, circa 1638

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid



This sculpture was the last example of this iconography in the master's oeuvre. Already seventy years old when he made it, he opted for an elderly image of the apostle, with a long grey beard like that of *Saint Paul* in Jerez de la Frontera [Nº37]. This appearance coincides with the period in which the saint wrote his gospel in Ephesus, at the end of his long life, rather than with the youthful appearance associated with the apocalyptic revelation on Patmos. This would explain why the quotation from the Apocalypse, scratched on the parchment, was subsequently covered with the beginning of his gospel.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist, 1638

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



The piece narrates the martyrdom of the saint, who was condemned to death by immersion in a barrel of boiling oil from which he escaped unscathed by divine intercession. The half-length figure, somewhat blandly modelled, emerges from a cask in the form of a Greek crater with an oriental appearance. The

saint's hands are clasped in prayer and his face is serene, lost in thought, oblivious to the torture to which he is being submitted. The haut-relief is completed by a pictorial background that depicts a high viewpoint of a deserted, dry landscape with sparse vegetation.

FRANCISCO VARELA (1580/1585–1645)

Saint Augustine, 1639

Oil on panel

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



This work and its pair [Nº 26] are somewhat backward-looking for the time when they were made, well into the 17th century. *Saint Augustine* is depicted as an essentially static figure, an impression interrupted only by the flexion of the foot, the raised arm and the direction of the gaze, although his face has a certain naturalistic quality.

As the bishop of Hippo Regius, he is dressed as befits his ecclesiastical dignity, with a cope, mitre and crozier. His most personal attribute is the heart, emblazoned with the monogram of the name Jesus, IHS (Iesus Hominum Salvator).

FRANCISCO VARELA (1580/1585–1645)

*Saint Catherine of Alexandria
and Saint Teresa of Jesus, circa 1638*

Oil on panel
Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Also from the old convent of Santa María de la Piedad, this is a simple composition: two half-length saints depicted against a neutral background.

Saint Catherine of Alexandria is shown with the palm, wheel and sword of her martyrdom, while Saint Teresa receives the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Of all the female saints that Varela painted, it is this depiction of Saint Teresa that is based on a real-life portrait by Fray Juan de la Miseria.

FRANCISCO VARELA (1580/1585–1645)

Saint Christopher, 1639

Oil on panel
Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Saint Christopher appears in a forced posture, even to the extent of the hand he places on his hip. He conveys the physical strength for which he is renowned as the proud giant in the medieval text *The Golden Legend*. The figure, aided by a tree trunk to cross the river, reflects the heavy burden of carrying Christ who, although still a child, bears the weight of the world's sins.

This painting provides a counterpoint to the stasis of *Saint Augustine* [Nº 24], its companion piece. It is signed and dated in the bottom left-hand corner.

FRANCISCO VARELA (1580/1585–1645)

Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Lucy, circa 1638

Oil on panel

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



This panel is the companion piece of *Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Teresa of Jesus* [Nº 25]. Saint Catherine of Siena wears the Dominican tunic and habit and holds in her hands the symbolic lily that alludes to virgins and a crucifix; Saint Lucy is shown with the palm of martyrdom and eyes on a plate.

These works contain the painter's defining traits: fine, slender hands, minutely detailed drawing and a precise palette of soft hues.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 – 1649)

Saint Anne, 1632–1633

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero

Convent of El Buen Suceso, Seville



This image was the companion piece of a Child Mary, now lost. Saint Anne is represented as if guiding or steering her daughter. For this reason, she is turned towards the child, rather than facing the viewer, and she places her right hand protectively on Mary's shoulder. Her serious expression is accentuated by the hood that envelops and surrounds the oval shape of her head. In a splendid naturalistic touch, her left hand draws the voluminous cloak across the front of her body.

FRANCISCO VARELA (1580/1585–1645)

Portrait of the Sculptor Juan Martínez Montañés, 1616

Oil on canvas

City Hall, Seville

On permanent loan to the Focus Abengoa Foundation,
Seville



We know what Juan Martínez Montañés looked like because of the portraits made by three prominent painters of the sevillian school: Francisco Pacheco, Diego Velázquez and Francisco Varela.

This portrait is one of the earliest known works by Varela, a painter who had close contact with Pacheco's circle and frequently mixed with the Sevillian intelligentsia. A fascinating historical testimony, it is painted in the late Mannerist style frequently found in portrait galleries and is based on a precise, confident drawing with shaded volumes. Montañés is immortalised as he makes the preliminary clay model for the *Penitent Saint Jerome* [Nº 33], one of his most important works, and he looks directly at the viewer as if to assert the intellectual work of the master.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568–1649)

Saint Christopher with the Christ Child, circa 1597–1598

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Church of El Divino Salvador, Seville



The powerful image of *Saint Christopher with the Christ Child* anticipates the aesthetic innovations that Sevillian sculpture embraced at the beginning of the 17th century. The presence in Andalusia of artists from Castile enabled Montañés to introduce a series of common traits in his early works. Particularly noteworthy in this sculpture are the dynamic position of the saint's body and the exquisite carving.

The saint's name is a reference to his status as the bearer of Christ, and by extension he was entrusted with the safekeeping of travellers. He became famous as the protector against evil and was a popular colossal presence at the entrance to churches in Seville.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Penitent Saint Jerome, 1604

Polychromed carved wood

Polychromy by Juan de Uceda

Convent of Madre de Dios y los Pobres, Llerena (Badajoz)



This sculpture formed part of the old main altarpiece in the conventual church of Santa Clara in Llerena, sponsored by Jerónima Delgado, the widow of Hernán Delgado Mexía the Elder. Juan de Oviedo was responsible for

the carpentry and Martínez Montañés for the carving. Juan de Uceda was the author of the gilded and incised decoration and the polychromy. The central figure of *Saint Jerome*, by Montañés, is the only part of the altarpiece that has survived to this day and it was made during the period when the artist had established his reputation. It displays the aesthetic legacy of the recent past, most notably that of Torrigiano, who introduced the iconographic model of the saint into Seville.

PIETRO TORRIGIANO (1472 ñ 1528)

Penitent Saint Jerome, circa 1525

Polychromed terracotta

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Torrighiano brought the finest aspects of the Italian avant-garde to Seville. In this *Saint Jerome* he adopts an innovative approach to concepts and forms using a material widely employed in local sculpture: fired clay, or terracotta. The work became an archetype in Sevillian sculpture.

This admiration remained as profound as ever in the following century, and there is no better proof than Juan Martínez Montañés. It is impossible to gain a true appreciation of his most esteemed creations, such as the *Penitent Saint Jerome* at San Isidoro del Campo and the *Penitent Saint Dominic of Guzmán*, without considering the precedent of the Florentine sculptor.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Penitent Saint Jerome, 1609-1612

Polychromed carved wood

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo,

Santiponce (Seville)

Álvarez de Toledo y Mencos Foundation



This is one of the most outstanding works by Juan Martínez Montañés as well as a masterpiece of Andalusian Baroque sculpture in general. It occupies the central niche in the main altarpiece at the monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, and its sources of

inspiration are no less than the famous *Penitent Saint Jerome* by Pietro Torrigiano, on display in this exhibition, and the haut-relief by Jerónimo Hernández in the Visitation altarpiece in Seville Cathedral. Martínez Montañés exquisitely captured on wood the privations and discipline of the hermit's life. Curiously, the terms and conditions of the contract established the provision that the statue could be used for processional purposes.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Penitent Saint Dominic of Guzmán, 1605-1609

Polychromed carved wood

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



The *Penitent Saint Dominic of Guzmán* is one of the most outstanding creations of Martínez Montañés's mature period and it became a model for subsequent generations. It occupied the central niche in the main altarpiece of the church of the Dominican monastery of Porta Coeli in Se-

ville. Francisco Pacheco was the author of the polychromy and used the more realistic matt finish, which he recalls in his *Art of Painting* in a graphic, jocular manner: "God, in His mercy, banished from the earth these glazed flesh tones and caused the more harmonious matt flesh tones to be introduced".

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Bruno, 1634

Polychromed carved wood
Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Montañés made this sober, characteristically elegant carving for the Carthusian monastery in Seville, skilfully combining the essence of Bruno, promoter of the cloistered life as the path to sanctity, with the Carthusian precepts of silence, solitude and austerity. Saint Bruno, an almost life-sized full-length figure, is

represented in a standing position wearing the habit of the order, the cowl, with heavy, voluminous folds that suggest the sturdiness of the fabric. The *estofado* or gilded and incised decoration of the cloth, which together with the polychromy is the work of an unknown painter, perhaps added to better represent the spirit of the saint, is still discernible today beneath the nuanced white of the habit.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Peter, 1633-1638

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration
Church of San Miguel, Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz)



Saint Peter is depicted as a standing figure in a static, powerful pose, holding the attributes that identify him: the gold key in allusion to the gates of Heaven and the gospels. The exquisitely carved head has wavy hair and the characteristic Montañés quiff, while the realism of the carving reinforces the expressiveness of the face.

The tunic and cloak lend movement to the statue and are decorated with gold *sgraffito* vegetal motifs. The border of the garments also displays rich polychromy, ornately applied with the tip of the paintbrush.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Paul, 1633-1638

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Church of San Miguel, Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz)



Montañés depicts the saint with long, grey wavy hair and a beard, in keeping with iconographic models very similar to those which Francisco de Ocampo had established in earlier years.

Like Saint Peter [Nº 36], he is presented in an upright position, with

a slight *contrapposto* that is reinforced by the oblique line of the cloak over the floor-length tunic, drawing our eyes to the attributes he holds: the sword, which symbolises his martyrdom, and the New Testament.

The garments display rich damascene decoration, which is completed with an ornate border along the bottom.

FRANCISCO DE HERRERA, THE ELDER (circa 1590-1654)

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, circa 1622

Oil on canvas

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Seville was accustomed to decking itself out in glory for grand events and in 1622 the city pulled out all the stops to celebrate the canonisation of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier. This canvas in grisaille must have adorned one of the ephemeral altars erected for

the solemn occasion. In the early days of his career, Herrera the Elder had engraved a *vera effigies* of Saint Ignatius for the celebration of his beatification in Seville. In the grisaille, made a little over a decade later, he repeats the face and sets the figure of the saint within a convoluted frame of foreshortened celestial beings.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, 1610

Polychromed carved wood and cloth stiffened with glue

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Church of La Anunciación, University of Seville



Francisco Pacheco, who polychromed this Saint Ignatius, says in his *Art of Painting* that the figure “surpasses all the other images that have been made of this glorious saint because it seems really alive”. As his model for this carving, Montañés must have used the cast of the death mask that Pacheco owned. The Jesuits commissioned the

work in 1610 for their professed house in Seville to celebrate the saint’s beatification, and the two artists combined their consummate skill to create a veritable *vera effigies* of the order’s founder.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Francis Borgia, 1624

Polychromed carved wood and cloth stiffened with glue

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Church of La Anunciación, University of Seville



Like the figure of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, this work has a sobriety that is closely akin to classical sculpture. For the polychromy, Pacheco uses shadows on the cheekbones and nose, applies colour to the veins and dots the irises with white, adding an egg-white varnish to the eyes to make them more realistic. A particularly moving

element of this figure is the saint’s self-absorption as he gazes at the skull in his hand, an allusion to the death that cut short the life of the lovely empress Isabella of Portugal. As viewers, we are drawn into the reflection about the fragility of life and the fleeting nature of time.

ALONSO CANO (1601 ñ 1667)

Saint Francis Borgia, 1624

Oil on canvas

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Presented as a monumentalised full-length figure, the saint wears the Jesuit habit, with the cincture at the waist, and the long cloak draped over his shoulders. His expression is mystical as he gazes at a crowned skull in deep meditation about the fleeting nature of life, an allusion to the death

of Queen Isabella of Portugal, the wife of Charles I of Spain. After this episode, the erstwhile Duke of Gandia abandoned the court and joined the Society of Jesus, vowing to never again serve an earthly sovereign.

CIRCLE OF JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS

Infant Jesus, first third of the 17th century

Polychromed carved wood with gilded and incised decoration and cloth stiffened with glue

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



As a result of the custom of dressing life-size mannequins of the Infant Jesus, the richest and most varied repertoire of which is found in convents, many of the figures that have survived to this day are clothed in striking ornately embroidered fabrics and wear halos and jewels. To dress

this anonymous image, whose entire body is carved, cloth stiffened with glue and then painted with gilded and incised decoration was used to recall the Jesuit collegial garments in the days of Philip V. The model for this work was the famous sculpture of the *Infant Jesus* which Martínez Montañés made in 1606 for the sacramental confraternity of the Side-Chapel of Seville Cathedral, also present in this exhibition.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Virgin and Child, Our Lady of the Ribbon, 1616

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Huelva Cathedral

On permanent loan to the Provincial Council of Huelva



This figure follows the iconographic model of the *Virgin Hodgetria* (‘she who shows the way’). Our Lady is shown in a standing position with her left arm holding the Child, who gazes at and blesses the faithful. She does not have any of the attributes of the mural painting of Our Lady of the Ribbon in her chapel. Montañés

carved this figure at the height of his career and it is related to the relief of the *Purification* at the church of San Francisco in Huelva and the works at San Isidoro del Campo. The monumentality of the composition is complemented by the sweet expression of the faces, while the exquisitely executed tiny folds of the cloth contrast with the more voluminous parts.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Anne Teaching the Virgin to Read, 1627–1628

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Convent of Santa Ana, Seville



The peculiar position of Saint Anne’s body with the head held high and eyes looking heavenwards, in a gesture reinforced by the raised right hand, is more easily appreciated if we remember that surmounting the central niche that must have accommodated the group was the Holy Spirit, pouring out inspiration to the saint.

With her half-closed eyes and innocently humble expression, the figure of Our Lady represents one of the most charming interpretations of Mary’s childhood that exists in the entire repertoire of Sevillian sculpture and evokes the modesty and serious countenance of the Immaculate Conception in the city’s cathedral, the popular *La Cieguecita* (*The Little Blind One*) [Nº51].

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Infant Jesus, 1606-1607

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Sacramental Arch-Confraternity of the Side-Chapel
of Seville Cathedral



In 1609 the Sacramental Confraternity of the Cathedral Side-Chapel commissioned Montañés to make a Triumphant Infant Jesus in cedar wood, with a cross, an iconography in keeping with the Council of Trent postulates. The original polychromy is by Gaspar de Raxis, his habitual partner. In 1629 the confraternity altered

the original iconography and commissioned Pablo Legot to replace the cross with a chalice. This sculptor changed the position of the hands and made them out of lead. The image was conceived to be clothed and has a rich repertoire of garments and accessories. This figure of the Child became the most representative iconographic model for the devotion to the Sweet Name of Jesus.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Saint Joseph and the Christ Child, circa 1610-1620

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Church of Santa María Magdalena, Seville



This exquisite sculptural ensemble, somewhat smaller than life-size, has recently been attributed to Montañés, who cultivated this popular iconography of Saint Joseph leading the Christ Child by hand.

The saint is standing in a resting *contrapposto* pose, the left leg slightly in front of the right one. The cloak, with its sumptuous gilded and incised decoration added at a later date, is caught up over his left arm and he holds his traditional staff of lilies in that hand while holding the Child's hand in the other one. The morphology and expression of the Infant Jesus, in the act of blessing, clearly denote the master's mark.

47 and 48

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, 1605-1608

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Church of San Antonio Abad, Seville

Archconfraternity of Jesus of Nazareth (El Silencio)



Montañés makes a free interpretation of the engravings and other works on the theme of the Holy Family, presenting the figures separately, without any physical contact between them. Mary is on the Child's right-hand side, her hand placed on her breast in a gesture of bliss. Complementing her, Saint Joseph on the opposite side reverses the movement of the arms and once held a staff with flowers that has now been lost. The Child Jesus, also lost, must have occupied the centre of the composition but there is no known description of the figure.

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JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

The Immaculate Conception, 1606-1608

Polychromed carved wood with gilded
and incised decoration

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Church of Nuestra Señora de la Consolación,
El Pedroso (Seville)



This was the sculptor's first figure of the Immaculate Conception. Standing on a crescent moon, she presents a slight *contrapposto* pose achieved by the flexion of the knee, the off-centre position of the hands and the face turned to the opposite direction. This delicate rhythmic contrast reinforces the modest expression on her face, as if eschewing a direct gaze.

The figure still displays Pacheco's original polychromy, based on matt flesh tones and exuberant gilded and incised decoration with vegetal motifs painted with the tip of the brush on striped backgrounds. In a show of optical refinement, the pink *sgraffito* zigzags of the lining emulate a moiré effect, achieved by the sheen of the silk.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

The Immaculate Conception, circa 1621-1625

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Convent of Santa Clara, Archbishopric of Seville



Compared with *La Cieguecita* (*The Little Blind One*) [Nº 51], of which it is thought to be the immediate precedent, this figure appears more serious due to the forcefulness and sturdiness of the cloak with its deep, voluminous folds. This mitigates the *contrapposto* pose of the sculpture, which displays a greater elegance

than the figure in the cathedral thanks to the base with three cherub heads, instead of two, emerging from the crescent moon.

The polychromy displays a variety of incisions in the gilded decoration and subtle work with the tip of the paintbrush on the tunic, adorned with lovely floral, vegetal and bird motifs.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

The Immaculate Conception, The Little Blind One,

1629-1631

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Seville Cathedral



This Immaculate Conception popularly known as *The Little Blind One* earned universal acclaim as Montañés's finest version from the moment it was completed. The iconography responds to the apocalyptic model of the Virgin Mary: a crown of stars, hands folded together, with a throne of angels and the moon at

her feet, the points facing upwards to complete the composition and frame it within an oval shape.

Two centuries before the Church declared the universal dogma of the Immaculate Conception, *La Cieguecita* established the visual prototype of this mystery, both instructing and entrancing the faithful. Her unadorned beauty and grace incite devotion and invite prayer.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

The Immaculate Conception, circa 1620

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Church of San Andrés, Seville



In this version of the *Immaculate Conception* the fabric displays a particularly exquisite execution by the master. We are immediately drawn to the sheer audacity and splendid rhythm of the twists and curves of the material, from the hollow fold of the edge of the cloak to the folds rendered as a triangle with the vertex

pointing to the knees and culminating at the base in the head of an angel emerging from the centre of the crescent moon. The figure bears similarities to the *Immaculate Conception* at San Julián [Nº53], most notably in the downward gaze, somewhat more inclined at the front, which adds to the beguiling charm of the Virgin's spiritual beauty, gentle yet profound.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

The Immaculate Conception, circa 1625

Polychromed carved wood with gilded

and incised decoration

Church of San Julián, Seville



Very similar to the previous work, the handsome face of this figure, with its downward gaze, denotes the Montañés ideal of humility and modesty. At the waist on the front of the clothing is a triangular pattern of inverted folds frequently found in other figures by Montañés, both of the Virgin Mary and various saints.

Two splendid heads of angels with exquisitely carved hair emerge from the half moon at the base. The cherubs' loose tresses appear to sprout from the forehead in long locks of thick curly strands, lending great fluidity and movement to the composition.

FRANCISCO PACHECO (1564–1644)

*The Immaculate Conception with**Mateo Vázquez de Leca, 1621*

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Seville



Canon Mateo Vázquez de Leca was one of the advocates of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as well as a driving force behind this devotion that was particularly fervent in Seville at the beginning of the 17th century.

The smiling Virgin gazes at the clergyman who appears in the attire of a canon, holding the black biretta and a book of prayers as he raises his eyes heavenwards. The painting bears witness to the configuration of the Immaculate Conception iconography which Pacheco helped to establish and would subsequently share with Montañés, and indeed there is an unquestionable similarity with the sculptor's figures.

GASPAR NÚÑEZ DELGADO (circa 1555–1606)

Crucifix, 1588

Ivory, ebony, mahogany and silver

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville



Núñez Delgado was a versatile artist who worked skilfully with various media, including ivory, a technique that few of his contemporaries mastered. In this aspect of his production he specialised in small chapel crucifixes of Christ expiring, a devotion that had gained great popularity in Seville.

Still with an incipient naturalism, the Seville-born artist introduced what would become an enduring model, from the minutely detailed yearning expression on Christ's face to the brow pierced by a thorn – undoubtedly in metal and now lost – and the original loincloth composed of deep oblique folds around the rope.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Christ of Clemency, 1603

Polychromed carved wood

Polychromy by Francisco Pacheco

Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville

On permanent loan to Seville Cathedral



Canon Mateo Vázquez de Leca commissioned Martínez Montañés to make what became one of the sculptor's most emblematic works for his private chapel. The contract set out the specifications for the crucifix, which was to represent Christ still alive, before expiring, with his head inclined to the right

to invite the faithful to pray.

The harmony of the proportions, the expressive balance and the serenity conveyed have an extraordinary naturalism that is further accentuated by the light, matt tones of Francisco Pacheco's polychromy. The result is a seminal work in the oeuvre of both artists.

COMMISSION FOR THE CHRIST OF CLEMENCY BY
MATEO VÁZQUEZ DE LECA

May those who see this letter know that I, Juan Martínez Montañés, a sculptor residing in this city of Seville (...) undertake to make and complete to perfection a crucifix of cedar wood with a coarse cross in the same manner (...) This Christ on the cross shall be alive, having not yet expired, with the head inclined to the right, looking at anyone who were to be praying at His foot, as if Christ were speaking to him and lamenting the suffering for which he is praying, and thus shall the eyes and face have a certain severity, and the eyes wide open (...) For I have a very great desire to make and complete such a piece and that it remain in Spain rather than being taken to the Indies or any other parts, and that it shall be known that the master made it for the glory of God.

Seville, 5 April 1603

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Christ of the Helpless, 1617

Polychromed carved wood

Convent of El Santo Ángel, Seville



Made at the height of the master's career, this crucifix represents the body of the dead Christ on an arborescent real cross, pierced by three nails, unlike the Christ of the Clemency and bearing greater similarity to Juan de Mesa's productions. This elongates

the canon, as clearly evidenced by the stylised classicist anatomy. The face, with its calm expression of pain, displays the usual forked beard, lightly carved like the locks of hair, a device that his disciple would also use.

The pale flesh tones have been attributed to Pacheco, although there are no documents to support this hypothesis.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS (1568 ñ 1649)

Crucifix, 1621-1624

Polychromed carved wood

Polychromy by Baltasar Quintero

Convent of Santa Clara, Archbishopric of Seville



This crucifix forms part of the iconographic programme that was made for the attic of the main altarpiece, which presents a sculptural ensemble of great theological significance: the so-called *Throne of Grace*, a version of the Passion of the Holy Trinity in which God the Father holds

the crucified Christ in his arms.

In this exquisite, perfectly carved crucifix, the sculptor shortened the canon with respect to its free-standing precedents. Baltasar Quintero is recorded as the polychromer, an intervention that occurred as a result of the controversial lawsuit that Pacheco brought against Montañés for having pledged to carry out the gilding and apply the flesh tones to the altarpiece, which painters were traditionally commissioned to perform.

... suffice it to say that it is the work of that distinguished master Juan Martínez Montañés, marvel of the present centuries and admiration of those to come, as manifested by these works by his hand so celebrated and applauded by all kinds of people

Fray Juan Guerrero*

** Account of the foundation and age of the royal convent of Nuestra Señora de la Merced in the noble city of Seville (circa 1650).*

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