



Spanish Culture & The Lure of Black



A lectures series on how black has evolved as an aesthetic marker that has come to characterize, in the minds of many, the Spanish culture.

The phrase *The Black Legend* was coined in 1912 by a Spanish journalist in protest of the characterization of Spain by other Europeans as a backward country defined by ignorance, superstition, and religious fanaticism, whose history could never recover from the black mark of its violent conquest of the Americas.

Regardless of how and when black and Spanish culture came to be paired off, there is no doubt that both symbolically and as an aesthetic marker, this color has been associated with Spain and the Spanish ethos since the Middle Ages. In the 19th century, the trail-blazing baggage that Manet brought back from Spain was the color black, and Bizet appropriated both the notion of *black sorrow*, and of the *tragic sense of life* when composing *Carmen* (1873-74).

In this seminar we will examine how black punctuates and comes to define aspects of Spanish art, music, and cultural celebrations that include the bullfight, the *zarzuela*, (*Black the Clown*), and Holy Week. We will begin by closely examining paintings by Velázquez, Murillo, Ribera, Goya, Picasso, Juan Gris, and Tàpies, and then comparing them with the work of foreign painters who spent a great part of their lives in Spain (such as El Greco and Rubens). We will also consider the role of black in mysticism (Saint Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross), philosophy (Miguel de Unamuno), poetry (Federico Garcia Lorca), witchcraft (Goya's *Witches' Sabbath*, 1798), and gypsy culture. Our aim will be to show how black has evolved as an aesthetic marker that has come to characterize, in the minds of many, what is distinctly Spanish.

- On Thursdays: March 5, 12 & 19, April 2 & 9.

HERITAGE
DALLAS

Thu, March 12–
Thu, April 09, 2015

Venue

Bob and Jean Smith Auditorium,
Meadows Museum, 5900 Bishop Blvd,
Dallas, TX 75205

[View map](#)

Phone: 214-768-7787

Admission

\$50 for the 5-part seminar; Free for Museum members, SMU staff, faculty and students. Advance registration is required. For more information and to register, please call 214-768-7787.

More information

[Meadows Museum](#)

Credits

Organized by Meadows Museum.



- With Rene Prieto, Margaret McDermott Professor in Arts and Humanities and Guggenheim Fellow Arts and Humanities Chair, UT Dallas.