



# Vault to Screen: Carmen Amaya and Flamenco



Programmed in conjunction with the exhibition “Sargent and Spain,” two archival film titles celebrate the revolutionary career of Spanish Romani Flamenco dancer and singer Carmen Amaya (1913-1963).

Born in Barcelona, Catalonia, Amaya’s skill and command of Flamenco steps usually reserved for male performers was celebrated on stage and screen. Her breakout performances in *Maria de la O* and *Los Tarantos* echo the spirit of Sargent’s painted dancers and bracket Amaya’s all-too-short cinematic legacy.

## MARÍA DE LA O

- On Saturday, December 17 at 2 pm.
- Directed by Francisco Alías, 1939, Spain, 109 minutes.
- In Spanish with English subtitles.

Based on a play by the same name and inspired by the eponymous popular Flamenco song, *María de la O* was one of the first films to celebrate Flamenco dance and music. Shot on location in Andalusia, this Spanish classic features a breakout performance by the captivating Romani Flamenco dancer and actor, Carmen Amaya. María (played by Amaya), whose mother was killed when she was a girl, grows up without her father, a painter who fled after avenging his beloved’s death, abandoning his daughter. Under the care of an adoptive mother, María comes to perfect the art of flamenco dance and, as she grows up, becomes a source of local pride. When her father returns under a false identity and unwittingly becomes a caretaker of María, she is torn between her Romani lover and a wealthy payo (non-Roma person) to whom she has been promised.

## LOS TARANTOS

FILM  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat, December 17–  
Sun, December 18, 2022

### Venue

National Gallery of Art, East Building  
Auditorium, 4th St NW &, Constitution  
Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001

[View map](#)

### Admission

Free, [RSVP required](#). Registration opens  
on Friday, December 9 at noon.

### More information

[National Gallery of Art](#)

### Credits

Presented by the National Gallery of Art  
in collaboration with Filmoteca Española,  
and Filmoteca de Catalunya. Curated by  
KJ Mohr. Still from *Los Tarantos*.



- **On Sunday, December 18 at 2 pm.**
- Directed by Francisco Rovira Belt, 1963, Spain, 83 minutes.
- In Spanish with English subtitles.

Born of two rival Romani families in Barcelona, Juana La Zoronga and Rafael El Taranto are a young couple in love. Like Romeo and Juliet, their romance is forbidden and must be carried out in secret. Featuring Flamenco virtuosa Carmen Amaya as Rafael's mother Angustia in her last film role before her untimely death, *Los Tarantos* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1964 and remains an important part of Amaya's legacy and of Spanish film history.

This film series is part of the program related to the major exhibition *Sargent and Spain* at the National Gallery of Art on view from Oct. 2, 2022 to Jan. 2, 2023.