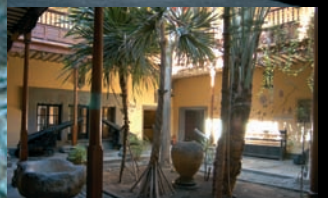
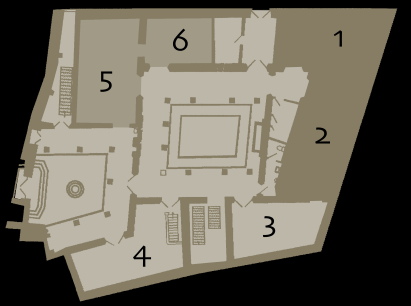
Guide COLUMBUS HOUSE

Guide COLUMBUS HOUSE

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

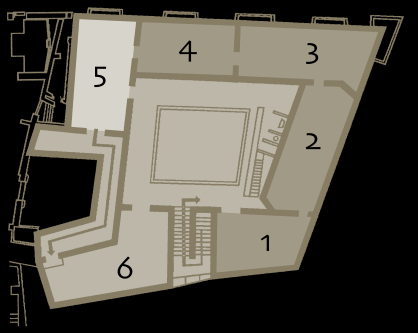


CASA DE COLON



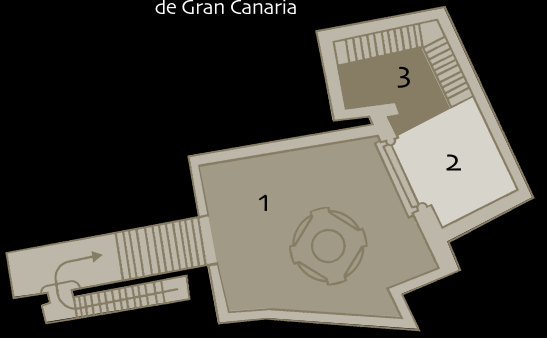
FIRST FLOOR

- Rooms 1-2 ▶ Columbus and his voyages
- Rooms 3-4 ▶ The Canary Islands and the discovery of the New World
- Rooms 5-6 ▶ Cartography and nautical instruments



SECOND FLOOR

- Rooms 1-4 ▶ Paintings from the XVI to the XX century
- Room 5 ▶ The Island of Gran Canaria
- Room 6 ▶ The City of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



CRYPT

1. Cultures from Ecuador
2. Mexican Cultures
3. The Yanomami Culture

Guide
COLUMBUS HOUSE

Las Palmas
de Gran Canaria

I.S.B.N. 84-8103-416-9
D.L. Gran Canaria -411/2005

1st Edition, 2003

Texts
Ramón Gil Romero
Jennifer Godoy Pérez
Ángeles Pérez Reyes
Vicente Ramírez Domínguez

Traslation to english
Maureen
Elizabeth
Mulligan

Desing
Extra

Printing
Daute Diseño

Photography
Ángel Gómez Pinchetti
Nacho González

S u m m a r y

Christopher Columbus opened the doors to a continent which was new to the eyes of Europe. In 1492 a process began which enlarged the known world, and it was at this moment when the shared history of the Canary Islands with the lands on the other side of the Atlantic began.

People, products and ideas left from or passed through our islands on their way to the New World, on an endless journey back and forth which has helped to form an important part of the identity of our archipelago.

The privileged geographical situation, the process of conquest and colonisation, the first foundation of the Castilian Crown in the Atlantic – these are just some of the factors that explain the connection between Gran Canaria and America, a connection which began in 1492 when Christopher Columbus landed at the island to repair the rudder of *La Pinta*.

Nearly five hundred years later, the *Cabildo* (Town Council) of Gran Canaria created the Columbus House as a research centre to encourage knowledge and study of the relations that have developed between the Canary Islands and the American continent.

This guide aims to introduce the user to this knowledge and the history of these connections, offering orientation and information not just about the specific pieces on display in the Museum's rooms, but also about its unique architecture.

Columbus House

The history of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria began on June 24 1478 when Juan Rejón founded the Real de Las Palmas. This small military encampment, which would give rise to the neighbourhood of Vegueta, was situated on the banks of the Guiniguada ravine.

The foundational nucleus was formed by a number of houses surrounded by a precarious wall. On the site of one of these buildings, the Governors' House, we now find Columbus House.

In 1492 Christopher Columbus undertook an expedition in search of a new route to the East Indies which, financed by the Crown of Castile, set off to the west, crossing the Atlantic. During this journey, the Genoese sailor put into the coast of Gran Canaria to repair the rudder of one of his ships. In the building now occupied by the Museum, Columbus presented his credentials and requested the help he needed to continue his journey from the Governor, the only representative of the Crown in the Canaries.

Fourteen years after its founding, Columbus would have seen a settlement now superior to the original military camp. The city at that time was formed by about a hundred houses, and by the most important secular and religious buildings, such as the Hermitage of Saint Anthony Abad with its square.

Interior Garden of the Weapons. Columbus House.

Because of these events, and with the aim of establishing a Centre for American Studies, the Cabildo of Gran Canaria, in the 1940s, set about the creation of the Museum, and it was considered essential to base it on the site of the former Governors' House. The architect Secundino Zuazo Ugalde was commissioned with the restoration project, and he could rely on the historical and artistic guidance of Antonio Rumeu de Armas, Néstor Álamo and Santiago Santana.

In 1951, although the reforms undertaken at the end of the 1940s still were not finished, part of the building was symbolically inaugurated with an exhibition of *Famous Sons of the Country*. Shortly afterwards, in 1954, the Museum officially opened its doors to the public. In the same year the Columbus House Trust was established, and the Provincial Historical Archive and the Museum of Fine Arts were created in the building. This latter development was of special importance for the Museum, as the creation of the Museum of Fine Arts meant the arrival of the collection from the Prado Museum in Madrid and the artistic collections from the Cabildo, which formed the basis of the present collection.

Gateway "Saint Gadea-Mansel".
Columbus House.
16th century. Columbus Street.

Green Gateway. Columbus House. Pilar Nuevo Square.

The current formation of Columbus House is the fruit of various different interventions. Between 1950 and 1960, in so-called Neo-Canarian style, the structure of the building has been altered to facilitate the annexation of the buildings surrounding it, so that it now occupies an entire block in the historic centre of Vegueta. Evidently, this modification has also affected the structure of parapets, windows and entrances.

The result of these reforms has been the creation of a unique building on whose walls we find, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, elements from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Alongside the balconies from the 18th century, which come from other mansions, we find the new entrances to the squares of Los Álamos and El Pilar Nuevo. Both doorways, built in stone extracted from the quarries of Tirma and Teror in the middle of the 1950s, follow the lines of the Neo-Canary aesthetic, clearly inspired by Elizabethan Gothic.

As far as the internal structure of the building is concerned, the layout adopted is that of traditional Canarian architecture. The building is based around four large *patios* or interior gardens, off which the various rooms open. This architectural model involves Roman and Muslim influences from the southern Iberian Peninsula, and would also exert an influence in the colonial tradition in America.

Gateway "Herrería Street".
Columbus House.
Los Alamos Square.

Coffered Ceiling. Gran Canaria Room.

As we have already noted, with respect to the outer walls, a significant aspect of the building is that the ancient parts alternate, overlap or are juxtaposed with the new. Like small jewels set in the building there also remain a Renaissance archway, a parapet and a doorway from the 16th century.

Among these small architectural jewels we should like to point out the so-called *Patio* (Interior Garden) of the Well. The current form of this space is determined by an interesting Renaissance archway and a wooden balustrade which encircles three of its four sides. These columns and archways, made of grey stone, come from the convent of Santo Domingo which was destroyed at the end of the 16th century during a pirate attack on the island. The central space is occupied by the parapet of the gothic well which belonged to the Governors' House.

Of similar interest, on one of the outside walls, is the doorway of Santa Gadea-Mansel, which belonged to an old mansion in Vegueta, built in the 16th century, where we can see the personal interpretation made in Canaries of the late Gothic elements, which helps to explain the process of our development.

Interior Garden
of the Well.
Columbus House.

columbus and his journeys

First floor, rooms 1, 2 and 3

Before the Discovery, the best-known waters for Europeans were the Mediterranean and the North Sea, while the Atlantic Ocean was only known in terms of legends and scant news from sailors who ventured across it: for these reasons it was known as the "Dark Sea".

The flourishing spice, gold and silk trades with the East was threatened when the Ottomans conquered the remains of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-15th century. It was for this reason that people began to look for new, alternative routes to India.

Voyages by Columbus in the Atlantic Ocean before 1492, according to Paolo Taviani.

Columbus

Although his origin has been the source of much debate, most specialists agree that he was born in Genoa, probably in 1451. Little is known about his youth, and what we do know comes from the biography, *The Life of the Admiral*, written by his son Hernando Columbus. One of the main problems with this biography is that it offers a mixture of verifiable fact and invention.

Despite being the son of a wool merchant named Dominic Columbus, from an early age he preferred to dedicate himself to a life at sea. When he was 25 he began his Portuguese period, and around 1479 he married Felipa Moniz de Perestrello, the daughter of the first Governor of Porto Santo. During this time his undertook various commercial voyages in the Atlantic archipelagos, from the Azores to the Canaries.

In 1485, after the King of Portugal refused to back his plan to travel to India by a western route, he moved to Castile. In January 1486, in Alcalá de Henares, he managed to get an audience with the "Catholic" King and Queen of Castile, Ferdinand and Isabella, in which he proposed his plan. Ferdinand and Isabella called on a group of experts in what was known as the Salamanca Council, in order to examine Columbus's plan. However, these experts rejected the project, which they considered impossible and lacking in scientific grounds. Despite these rejections, the sailor did not abandon his idea, and managed to gain further royal audiences on various occasions. In 1489, Queen Isabella received him in Jaén and promised him that his plan would be reconsidered after the conquest of Granada.

A few years later, in 1491, Christopher Columbus held a meeting in the convent of La Rábida with Father Juan Pérez, former priest to the Queen, who interceded with her for him. Thanks to his intervention, in April 1492 Columbus was given the *Santa Fe Agreement*, in which the conditions requested by Columbus were granted.

In terms of artefacts from this first expedition, the Museum has the portraits of Columbus and the King and Queen of Castile. Worthy of special mention is *Isabella the Catholic with a Garland of Flowers*, as it is an original from the 17th century, by an unknown author.

Christopher Columbus.
1955 copy of the original, preserved in the Naval Museum in Madrid.

Queen Isabella the Catholic.
Artist unknown. 17th century.

Columbus´s Project

His plan consisted of finding a route to the East Indies by crossing the Atlantic Ocean westwards. Columbus believed this would be a shorter journey than following the African coast to the south, and then heading east for Asia.

There were various reasons for him to undertake this project. Firstly, we must remember that printing had already been invented, which meant Columbus was able to read and consult the works of Aristotle, Marco Polo, Jean de Mandeville, Toscanelli and Pierre d'Ailly, among others. Secondly, we should not forget that Columbus believed that the earth was round, and that not all of it had been explored. To this we must also add the knowledge that the Admiral had of the oceans. Columbus, thanks to the experience he had accumulated as a sailor in the waters of the archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira, knew all about the news of strange types of wood, as well as non-European corpses, found off the west coast of the Azores: it seemed likely that these had got there due to strong winds coming from the western Atlantic. This information led him to believe in the existence of land not far away to the west, an idea which gained strength in the light of the theory of the *Pre-discovery*, which affirmed the existence of an unknown sailor, Alonso Sánchez, whose caravel was forced towards America because of a persistent wind of great force. According to this hypothesis, this sailor gave Columbus information and useful data which helped in the elaboration of his plan. However, the idea of a previous, accidental discovery has been questioned by recent historians.

Despite all this, Columbus planned his expedition on the basis of erroneous data. Following the ideas of Toscanelli and Pierre d'Ailly, which Martín Behain reproduced in his terrestrial globe, the Admiral thought that the earth was much smaller, and its seas much narrower, than is in fact the case. It was for this reason that, when he arrived at the Caribbean islands, he thought he had found the gateway to the Asian continent.

Bulls and Agreements

Throughout the 15th century, the Crowns of Portugal and Castile had been involved in a growing exploration of the Atlantic Ocean, which led to the question of the division of lands and seas for both kingdoms. These divisions were set out in various papal bulls and treaties.

In 1479-80, after the War of Castilian Succession and the access of Queen Isabella to the throne, the *Treaty of Alcaçovas – Toledo* was signed, in which the Canary Islands and their waters were granted to Castile, while the other Atlantic archipelagos and the right to navigation to Guinea, were granted to the Portuguese.

The Treaty of Tordesillas. Facsimile of the original of June 7th 1494, preserved in the Indies Archives, Seville.

The subsequent discovery of America, in 1492, provoked new disputes between the monarchs of Portugal and Castile. Because of this, the Castilian Queen decided to turn to Pope Alexander VI (of Spanish origin) with the aim of finding a possible solution to the conflict. In 1493, the Pope passed five bulls

which established that Castile owned all lands discovered to the west of a meridian lying a hundred leagues to the west of the Azores and Cape Verde.

One year later, in 1494, the *Treaty of Tordesillas* was signed, which took into account the most recent modifications in the division of the new lands. A new point was fixed, at a meridian 370 leagues to the west of Cape Verde, instead of the previous 100 leagues. As in the papal bulls, the western part was given to Castile and the eastern area to Portugal, which is the reason why the north-east of Brazil, belonging to the Portuguese zone, was subsequently conquered by Portuguese troops. At the same time, both kingdoms agreed to explore and occupy only the area that corresponded to them, according to the agreement. Although navigation in other waters was permitted, both countries were obliged to communicate the discovery of new lands to the relevant party.

The voyages of Columbus

Columbus's voyages consisted of four journeys, from the years 1492 to 1504. The first of these is considered basically one of discovery, and the following three, of exploration and conquest. In the Museum we can see four panels, each one illustrating one of the itineraries.

The first voyage began on August 2nd 1492 in the Puerto de Palos, in Huelva. It involved just three ships and a crew of ninety men. Columbus was at the helm of *La Santa María*, Martín Alonso Pinzón commanded *La Pinta*, and Vicente Yánez Pinzón commanded *La Niña*. The first stop was in the Canary Islands, specifically in the islands of Gran Canaria and La Gomera. In Gran Canaria, the rudder of *La Pinta* was fixed, and the rigging of *La Niña* was changed. On September 6th they set off for the west from La Gomera, following the Trade Winds. After a long, difficult voyage across the Atlantic, on the night of the 11th to the 12th of October, the sailor Rodrigo de Triana shouted: "Land ho!"

First voyage of Christopher Columbus. 1492-1493.

The first island discovered was Guanahaní, and was named San Salvador. It was claimed in the name of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Subsequently, the expedition continued to sail around the nearby islands, landing in Cuba on October 28th and on December 6th on La Española, nowadays divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic. On December 24th *La Santa María* ran aground close to the island, and the so-called Christmas Fort was built from its remains, where 39 men were to remain. After exploring the area, the rest of the crew returned to the Iberian Peninsula. The journey ended on March 15th 1493, when Columbus was received in Barcelona by the King and Queen of Castile, and knowledge of what he had achieved began to circulate throughout Europe. We can find an account of what happened in this voyage, including the time spent in the Canaries, in the *Diary of the First Voyage*, a copy of which is on display in the Museum.

The second voyage set off from Cadiz on September 25 1493. On this occasion Columbus had control of seventeen ships and about 1,200 men. Once again they put into the islands of Gran Canaria and La Gomera before sailing for the Americas. They discovered the island of Puerto Rico and when they arrived at the Christmas Fort they found that it had been destroyed and its men had been killed by the indigenous population. On this second trip the expedition founded La Isabela, the first Castilian city in America, and explored the south coast of Cuba and Jamaica. Subsequently the crews returned to the Iberian Peninsula, where they landed on June 11th 1496, in Cadiz. The Admiral brought news of the first difficulties: hunger, thirst, and lack of gold and spices, among others.

Between February and March 1498 the third voyage set off from Sanlúcar de Barrameda, with eight ships and 226 crewmen. Once more, the Canaries were witness to the voyage of Columbus, although on this occasion they only stopped in La Gomera, and then travelled down the Cape Verde archipelago, south of the Canaries.

Discovery Room.
Columbus House.

Once in American waters they discovered the island of Trinidad and followed the coast of Paria and the island of Margarita. On August 20th of that year they landed in Santo Domingo, the new capital of the West Indies, founded in 1496 by Bartholomew Columbus. All the problems previously encountered became worse due to the rebellion of the Spanish against Columbus's authority, and for this reason the Spanish monarchs decided to recall him, and sent a new governor, Francisco de Bobadilla, who was ordered to depose the Admiral. The latter arrived back in Castile in October 1500.

The fourth and final voyage set off from Cadiz on May 11th 1502. Columbus, by this time stripped of all the titles and privileges he had previously enjoyed, had only four ships and 150 men at his disposal. His main aim was to find the route that would lead him to Asia. Having spent time in Gran Canaria, both in the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and in Maspalomas in the south of the island, he set off for the west. When he had crossed the Caribbean he got as far as Honduras and followed the coast of Panama. However, he failed in his objective of reaching what he thought was Asia.

Fourth voyage of Christopher Columbus. 1502-1504.

On May 1st, being unable to land in Santo Domingo because of problems that had occurred during the previous trip, he headed for Jamaica. Yet another problem, damage to his last two ships, forced him to stay on the island until June 28th 1504. Months later, on November 7th, he reached Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Feeling that he had failed, and a sick man, he set off for the Court to try in vain to claim his rights. He died on May 20th 1506 in Valladolid.

As far as sailing vessels before Columbus's voyages are concerned, sea trade meant sailing close to land without losing sight of the coast, and the main vessels were the galley and the sailing ship. In the course of time other types of vessel appeared such as the "nao" and the caravel which incorporated a tiller in the stern and the keel, which made sailing on the high seas or the Atlantic easier, meaning it was possible to cross oceans, leaving the coast behind.

Model of *La Pinta*.

Sailing vessels developed in accordance with the new demands on them, which meant that in the 14th century the "nao" evolved, a vessel which was gradually improved until in the 16th century it possessed three or four masts with square sails and one triangular sail on the mizzen. Among its qualities worth noting are its round hull of great width, and its proportions which made it heavier and slower than the caravel, while being very suitable for the transportation of cargo.

The caravel, which dates from the 15th century, was well-proportioned between beam (width) and length. It had a double hull of considerable strength, and tall masts which could take a great number of sails, both triangular and square.

Model of *La Niña*.

Model of *La Santa María*.

In the museum an orientation room is designed to recreate the *Admiral's Stateroom* on the ship *La Niña*, the caravel in which Columbus returned to America after the loss of *La Santa María*. In this reproduction, which offers an accurate, nearly full-sized scale model of the original ship, we find evidence of the technology, the construction materials and the food available on the difficult journeys of the time. At one end we see the *Captain's Cabin*, equipped with bed, table, chairs and maps.

In the next room, next to the copies of the *Ensigns* of the First Voyage and the copy of the Ship's Log, we find models of the three ships which took part in this expedition, *La Santa María, La Pinta* and *La Niña.*

Recreation of the *Admiral's Chambers* in *La Niña.*

Cartography and navigational instruments

First floor, rooms 5-6

Cartography

Map-making and the study of maps as scientific and artistic documents is known as cartography, and its aim is to help to improve the perception of known lands, and the discovery of those unknown. As knowledge of the world grew, so did its cartographic representation. Catalans, Majorcans, Genoese and the Portuguese were all pioneers in the art of navigational map-making.

Atlases and the rediscovery of the work of Ptolemy were of enormous importance to cartography at the end of the Middle Ages, which led to a return to the idea of the earth as a sphere.

Detail of the *Catalan Atlas*.
Abraham Cresques and Jafuda Cresques.
Facsimile of the original of 1375, preserved
in the National Library of Paris.

The so-called "navigation charts" represented the most common routes, and enabled ships to set the direction and distance between ports, with the help of various navigational instruments such as the compass. They only showed the coast with a few details of the interior, such as mountains or rivers which could serve as reference points for the sailors, who never lost sight of the coast on their journeys.

In the Museum we can see a copy of the *Catalan Atlas* of 1375, attributed to Abraham Cresques, and considered the masterpiece of the Catalan-Majorcan school of cartography. In it we can appreciate the texts in Catalan and the characteristic ornamentation of this school, as well as elements which come from the medieval mapamundi. We can also see the way it adapts information from different sources, harmonizing an empirical base with religious and imaginary components. It was common in this period for imagination and myth to take such an important role in the understanding of geography. One novelty introduced here is a permanent calendar and the rose of the winds, which shows their directions and the cardinal points of the compass. Another characteristic of these atlas charts is the network of lines or routes which set off from a central wind rose in all directions, criss-crossing with those of the other roses drawn around the main one.

Map by Juan de la Cosa. Facsímile of the original of 1500, preserved in the Naval Museum in Madrid.

Terrestrial Globe.
Martin Behaim.
Facsimile of the original of 1492, preserved in the Germanic Museum in Nüremberg.

From the discovery of America onwards, an important school of cartography developed in the Trade House of Seville, which made the first maps of the New World, and which would affect the development of this science over the centuries to come. In 1492 the first spherical globe of the world appeared, made by Martin Behaim. It is interesting as it does not represent the American continent. Several years later, in 1500, Juan de la Cosa created his *Map*, which is now of special importance for being the first physical representation of America, and because it marks the transition from Majorcan map-making to cartography from Seville. On the left of the map, in green, the American continent is shown in rough outline, though the Antilles are drawn quite accurately. In the narrowest part we see a drawing of Saint Christopher with the Baby Jesus, in the style of the Majorcan map-makers. Some researchers believe this is in homage to the man who discovered the land, while others consider it marks the place where the author thought a route to the east existed. We can also observe the great wind rose decorated with the image of the Virgin and the Child.

In 1507 Martin Waldseemüller designed a map in which the New World for the first time takes the name of America, in honour of Amerigo Vespuccio, who proved that these lands were not an extension of Asia, but a separate continent.

Another map directly related to the voyages of the Discovery is the *Piri Reis*, printed in Gallipoli in 1513, and which seems to be based on first-hand information, copied from an Italian sailor who had been on Columbus's voyages.

In 1540 Sebastian Münster published his *Cosmography* in Basel, in which for the first time, on a separate map, the New World is shown united in the centre.

Navigational Instruments

Several examples of the main nautical instruments can be seen in the Museum, both originals and copies, which made it possible for sailors to get their bearings at sea. The compass, the astrolabe and the cross-staff made Atlantic crossings possible.

The use of the first compasses, called lodestones, became common in Europe in the 13th century when they arrived from the seas of Asia.

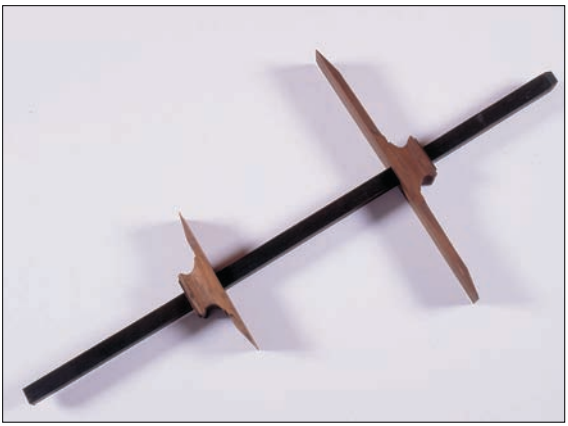
The astrolabe, of Arabic origin, was not a recent invention. Perfected by the Portuguese and Castilians, it was used to observe the position of the stars and to determine their height above the horizon. It was basically a circle with graduations, normally made of metal, which had a movable indicator which could be pointed at the sun, the Pole Star or the star whose height was to be measured. To do this, the marker of 0º had to coincide with the horizon and that of 90º, with the zenith. There were two ways to achieve the correct position: hanging the astrolabe from a tripod, which would position it vertically, or using a lead weight hanging from the axis.

Plaque nautical astrolabe.
c.1500-1520.

First independent map of America.
Copy of the original of 1540, published
by Sebastian Münster in Basel.

The Museum owns a Plaque Nautical Astrolabe dated between 1500 and 1520. It is made of bronze, with a diameter of 220mm and a graduated scale of 360º on its outer circle. Its origin is unknown and according to some authors it is one of the oldest nautical astrolabes in existence. It is an example which is considered atypical, as its formal characteristics are unique when compared with others of its kind.

Simpler and more practical was the cross-staff, also known as the "staff of Jesus" or the "geometric cross". It does not measure the angle directly as does the astrolabe, but by its tangent. It consists of a cross, usually made of wood, whose smaller piece, or "rattle", slides over the larger piece. The bigger the angle to be measured, the closer the rattle gets to the observer's eye. There is a graduated scale marked on the "arrow" or bigger arm of the cross. It does not need a support or lead weight, and can be used at any time or place. In the 16th century it became more common, as it was so easy to use.



Cross-staff.
Copy of an original of the 16th century.

America before the Discovery

Crypt

Nowadays we know that the American indigenous population came from Asia, arriving across the Bering Straits during the Later Palaeolithic period, when they were still frozen over from the last ice age.

The peopling of America was a long process which must have involved several generations of migrations arriving in small waves. Little by little, these made their homes throughout the unknown land, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

The nomadic tribes that arrived on the continent were gatherers and hunters, although the different ways of life of this period were never homogeneous. With time, the humans learnt to cultivate, breed and domesticate animal and vegetable species, from which the first farming villages developed.

The wide variety in terms of geography, climate and orography (the geography of mountains) that existed in the American territory meant that the different human settlements displayed characteristic differences, and for this reason, extraordinary cultural diversity. The most developed regions, also known as nuclear areas, Mesoamerica and the central Andes, were the cradle of the Inca and Aztec Great Civilizations.

The European explorers and conquerors who landed here found both tribal practices and cultures of a complex social, political and economic level.

The Museum holds a collection of Pre-Columbine archaeological material in which we can appreciate the great cultural variety of America.

America before the Discovery Room. Columbus House.

Ecuador and the Tolita Culture

The island of La Tolita, situated in the province of Esmeralda, at the mouth of the river Santiago on the coastal border between Colombia and Ecuador, takes its name from its many small mounds or "tolas" used for burial. The Tolita culture shows many of the characteristics typical of the period in which it developed: an agricultural economy that also relied on hunting and fishing; ceremonial centres with temples on platforms, and villages with houses set around a square; marked social stratification related to ceremonial hierarchies; production of ceramics; craftsmanship in precious metals, precious stones and textiles, and highly developed trade.

The collection of archaeological sites of the Tolitas has made it possible for scientists to discover a wide variety of valuable ceramic objects. The collection on display in the Museum, which consists of about a hundred pieces, mostly anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, was acquired by the *Cabildo* of Gran Canaria in 1975, and its chronology runs from 500 B.C. to 750 A.D. According to various

theories, it could involve ex-votos places in ceremonial sites. The zoomorphic representations are of interest for their extraordinary naturalism, and the jaguar is one of the most frequently represented animals, because of the way it was venerated for its strength and ferocity.

The human figures are a unique phenomenon on the American continent, both because of their immense number and for the wide variety of types, clothing and ornaments. However, it is important to underline that most of the remains discovered are only fragments, a fact which has been interpreted on occasion as a deliberate design with a specific aim. From the same geographical area, the Museum also owns ceramics from the Bahía, Jama-Coaque and Atacames cultures, dating from 500 B.C. to 750 A.D.

Female Figure. Jama-Coaque Culture.

Female Figure. Bahia Culture.
Ecuador, period of regional development.
Ceramic. 500 B.C. – 750 A.D.

Meso-América

The Meso-American area included a large part of what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Chronologically, and with some variations, it reached its highest point from the years 300 B.C. to the 10th century A.D.

Important societies developed throughout the whole area, and were known as the "High Cultures": Olmecas, Tehotihuacán, Colima, Zapotecas, Totonacas, Mayas – all shared a series of similar characteristics. Although each one had its own identity, trade, migrations and military expeditions spread the influence of the most advanced societies. For this reason there are customs, beliefs and ways of work that are common to all the Meso-American peoples.

The availability of water, the fertility of the land, the variety of plants and the improvements in the infrastructures led to intensive levels of agriculture, which supported a more numerous and densely-populated society than elsewhere in America. The diversity of climate and the natural products of Meso-America had encouraged cultural and commercial exchange between distant areas since the earliest times.

The development of great urban civilizations began. During this time, social organization became more complex. Alongside the warrior-priests were civil servants whose job was to administer justice and collect taxes, traders who travelled long distances, and highly specialized artisans. Religion occupied the central position in life, and all other activities revolved around it. The ceremonial centres of this period, the temples and pyramids, tombs and palaces, can provide us with an idea of how important this aspect was. The arts achieved great splendour and the advances in terms of astronomy and the creation of a calendar are evidence of the enormous scientific development that took place.

Among the pieces on show we find a collection of copies from the National Anthropological Museum of Mexico, donated by President José López Portillo in 1977. Of special interest are the *Head of the Great Mayan Lord* and the Teotihuacana vessels.

America before the Discovery Room.
Columbus House.

Yanomami

The Yanomami are an indigenous people who nowadays occupy land in different countries that border the Amazon, especially Venezuela and Brazil. At the end of the 20th century it is estimated that the population is not more than 10,000 individuals. They live in semi-permanent villages, situated in clearings in the tropical rainforest which can only be reached by river or waterway. Accustomed to a nomadic farming system of clearing ground, the search for cultivatable land involves burning areas of the jungle in order to obtain the land they need, which is then abandoned when it is exhausted for lack of fertiliser. To complete their subsistence they also collect fruit, hunt and fish.

The display of handicrafts which we can see in Columbus House offers us the opportunity to admire, among other qualities, the careful elaboration of their basketwork.

Utensils from the Yanomami culture.

The Canaries - America

First floor, rooms 3-4

The experience of the Conquest

The conquest and colonization of the Canaries is indissolubly linked to that of America. Although the islands began to be conquered at the beginning of the 15th century, and the New World at its end, the Canary Islands were not completely subjugated until years after the discovery of America. Thus, several characteristics of the "Canarian model" were applied in America, such as the ways in which the conquering enterprise was established using private individuals, and the ways in which the administration and political systems were organized.

Both in the Canaries and in America, some aborigines participated in the conquest of their own lands. Similarly, both countries share some legends about the identification of the conquerors with gods arriving by sea.

The geographical situation of the Canarian Archipelago had an important influence on the relations which began to exist between the Canaries and America from the first moments of the Discovery.

The Canaries-America Room. Columbus House.

The Canarian currents, which head west, and the Trade Winds facilitate navigation towards America. This helps us to understand why the fleets passed via the islands, as well as the emigration and the foundation of new settlements which took place on the New Continent. Among the explorers and "conquistadores" who passed through the Canaries were: Nicolás de Ovando in 1502, heading for Santo Domingo; Magallanes, in 1519, searching for a route to the Pacific; Diego García and Sebastian Cabot, in 1526, on route for the Plate River; Pizarro, in 1530, heading for the Inca Empire; and Francisco de Orellana, looking for the source of the Orinoco.

Along with the fleets of explorers setting off for America, there were also ships owned by islanders, whose cellars transported local produce or European re-exports. There were also traders, colonists or island soldiers who emigrated in search of their fortune.
When they returned to the islands, they brought with them good news, exotic merchandise, and new, promising commercial prospects.

The role of the islands in the colonizing mission during the 16th century was of enormous importance. Apart from providing food supplies, ships and men for the expeditions, there was also the exportation of a series of products that would be of enormous importance for the future American economy.

Model of a Galleon
from the 17th -18th century.

Among these we can note: sugar cane, with the corresponding techniques for the working of its mills and refineries; vines; bananas; yams; pigs; goats; chickens… Thus, while the American need for new products increased, so did the Canarian exports.

Urbanization and the foundational process

The Hispano-American cities were vital centres where the conquistador or colonist could live and from which his civilization was spread. The State, after the establishment of treaties or formal surrenders, demanded the foundation of a certain number of towns. This, united with the urban mentality of a Spanish colonist, meant that the map of America would rapidly be filled with cities.

In America the colonists, when they had decided on a place to build their city, proceeded to its "foundation", which is the affirmation of dominion expressed in the ceremony of possession-taking, with full pomp including the Mass, the enthroning of the image and the recording of the foundational act before a notary and witnesses.

The cities were founded according to royal desire or by the so-called "way of surrender", or "way of colonisation" to establish the bases of the colonisation, for religious, military and administrative reasons. The city would be considered as an institution, a physical testimony to a legal and political situation. Its beginnings might be a fort, as was the case in Buenos Aires; a connecting port, as in Santo Domingo, Havana or Cartagena; an indigenous settlement, as in Mexico, Cuzco or Quito; a mining centre, as was the case in Guanajuato or Potosí; or a Catholic mission or settlement of Christianized Indians, as in Valladolid or San Paolo.

At the end of the 16th century, the network of foundational cities was almost complete and it included all the national capital cities. Here the administrative, religious and cultural services could be found, as well as the main commercial and handicraft activities.

The same process would occur in the Canaries, where the cities were founded in the same way as in America. Most of the settlements were established at the end of the fifteenth and the first decades of the sixteenth centuries, and followed the same scheme for construction, although taking into account specific characteristics in each place. The development of the architecture of the Canaries shows similarities with the formal language used in America. In the Canaries, a type of colonial architecture was outlined which would have repercussions in the cities founded by Spain in the New World, and which show influences mainly from Andalusia, Portugal and the Moorish culture in Spain.

The foundations and Canarian emigration

America provided the Canaries with land and fortune for its people, and its economy and culture were thus enriched. The greatest number of Canarian emigrants went to Cuba, Venezuela and Uruguay, where they were called "islanders", which meant the equivalent of "frontiersman".

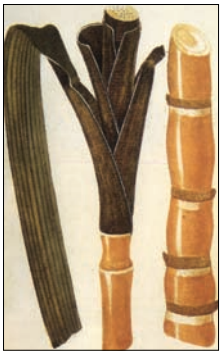
As López de Gomara commented, the islands became the "pathway to the Indies". Many islanders decided to emigrate, encouraged by the possibility of opportunities in the New World, and the continuing economic crises suffered

The First Canarian Families Disembark in Montevideo. November 19th 1726. J. M. Pagani. Copy of the original by Carlos Menk Freire, 1987.

by the Archipelago. Droughts, famine and poverty, apart from the laws passed by the Crown to populate the American lands, all contributed to this human traffic.

Initially the Canarian emigration to America was not particularly numerous. At the beginning of the conquest and colonisation, the migratory tendency of the Canarians was encouraged by the needs of the fleets, and by the support and stimulus of the Crown. Both in the conquest and in the colonisation and foundation of cities we can find Canarians, who were generally farmers, soldiers, sailors or specialized craftsmen, such as sugar makers.

The aims and the type of Canarian emigration changed in the second half of the 16th century. In this period, it was generally colonists, founders and middle class people who emigrated en masse, in groups of families. Initially they headed for the Antilles, especially the islands of Santo Domingo, La Española and Puerto Rico, which were unpopulated. This form of emigration was controlled and funded by the Crown and the Trade House in Seville.



Detail of the stem and leaves of sugar cane. F. P. Caumeton. *Medicinal Flowers.* 1814.

Detail from *The Greetings of the Burgomaster of Antwerp to the Canarian Sailors with the First Cargoes of Sugar from the Islands.* 16th century. Antwerp Town Hall.

In the 17th century, because of the depopulation of the Canaries, emigration was forbidden, although it continued illegally. Later on, the needs of the Crown meant new groups of Canarian families set off for America. Above all, Canarians were encouraged to settle in those relatively unpopulated areas in order to stop the colonial advance of other states. This was the period of Canarian emigration to Cumaná, Campeche, the Greater Antilles, Florida and Venezuela.

Trade between the Canaries and America involves a series of special circumstances which make the islands a unique territory. The history of Canary-American trade is marked by the confrontation between the Canaries and Seville: the former wanted free trade with America, and the latter tried to prohibit this possibility. The Castilian Crown, through the Trade House in Seville, controlled all trade with America. However it was impossible to control the Canaries, as, given their geographical position, they were able to trade directly with the American continent.

The Crown would only authorize ships that did not weigh more than 120 tonnes. The greater trade autonomy of the Canaries was especially relevant to the matter of contraband, especially in those times when the islands suffered

De Chàmisso e India, Sambago.
Artist unknown. Mexico, 18th century.

prolonged economic crises. Because of this, the Archipelago was not merely a stopping-point on the route to the Indies, but also a market for products. Sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, cheese, sugar cane, bananas, wine and liquors were all loaded up, destined for the new lands.

The result of all this was that the Trade House in Seville pressured the Crown to put tighter controls on the trade laws in the Canaries, and this in turn meant that the Council of the Indies, in 1678, stipulated that, in order for the islands to trade with the lands of the New World, shipments had to bring not just 100 tonnes of products, but also five Canarian families. In this way, the Canarians were forced to participate in the organized colonisation of unpopulated American lands that were in litigation with other powers.

In the 18th century, the Crown continued to control emigration with the aim of protecting the frontier zones. Families continued to arrive in Santo Domingo and Cuba, and the number of new arrivals in places such as Florida increased. This colonisation was funded with money, farming equipment, seeds and tax exemptions. It was in this period that Canarian settlements were founded in Montevideo, Matanza, San Antonio de Texas, Puerto Rico and La Luisiana, among others.

Columbus House.
Corner of Columbus Street.

Hermitage of Saint Antonio Abad.

The Island of Gran Canaria and the City of Las Palmas

Second floor, rooms 5-6

Gran Canaria

The Canarian archipelago is situated at an authentic crossroads of routes and cultures. Lying about 100 km off the African coast, in the last six centuries it has been closely linked to the European civilization.

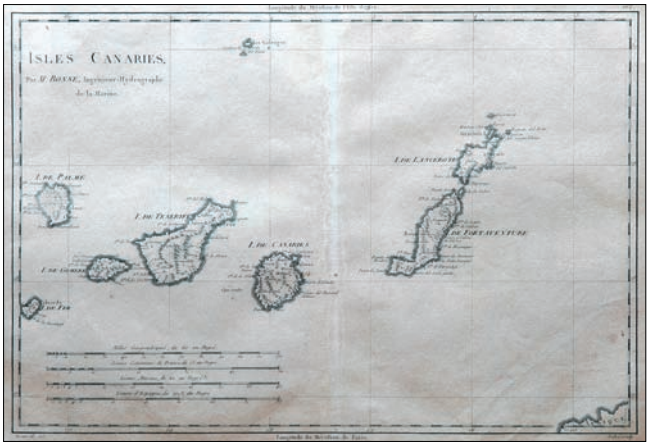
Gran Canaria lies almost in the centre of the archipelago, under the influence of the Trade Winds blowing from the north-east, and with a drier climate than that of the western islands. These winds affect it in a particular way because of its circular shape and its highest parts, at 1,900 metres. Because of this, on the north face of the island we find lush, damp green vegetation at an altitude of between 600 and 800 metres. This contrasts with the climate on the coast, where there is xerophilous vegetation (plants that can grow in very dry conditions), because of the salinity of the sea. In the highest part of the island, above 800 metres, the main vegetation is pine trees and some reserves of heather and other shrubs.

The radial form of the ravines (*"barrancos"*) and the effect of the Trade Winds already mentioned lead to an abundance of microclimates. Another characteristic phenomenon of the relief shape of the island is the volcanic craters, of which Bandama, Los Marteles and Pino Santo are of particular interest.

Model of the Island of Gran Canaria.

The construction of reservoirs and water purifying plants has aimed to alleviate the scant water reserves in the island. Both the demand for water for urban supply and the spectacular collapse of the agricultural sector in recent years have led to very abrupt changes in the farming and environmental landscape in Gran Canaria.

Not all the islands can boast the same forms of access by sea; Gran Canaria has coves, inlets and bays in abundance, such as those of La Confital, Sardina del Norte, Arguineguín, Gando, and La Isleta, not to mention Las Palmas, which from a very early date became one of the most important harbours of the archipelago, in terms of marine and commercial traffic.



The Canary Islands.
M. Bonne. 1727-1795.

From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries onwards, the Canary Islands were visited regularly by the Europeans. They did not escape the scrutiny of the cartographers, who placed them in their maps and plans because of their strategic position. In the room dedicated to the island of Gran Canaria we can contemplate maps from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In them we can observe the geometric representation of the relief through perspective, in profile, or in shadow with an oblique light, but without previous knowledge of the heights above sea level. Of special interest here are many maps made by French cartographers, among them the *Map of the Canary Islands*, made in 1746 by J. N. Bellin and that of M. Bonne, *The Canary Islands*, from 1727-95.

The City of Las Palmas

The original nucleus of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria was the camp of the Real de Las Palmas, established by Captain Juan Rejón in 1478. This fortification was initially a thick wall made of stone and palm tree trunks, with two towers at its extremes.

When Gran Canaria was definitively annexed by the Castilian Crown in 1483, the functions of this foundational nucleus diversified: as well as a military role, it was also the administrative, religious, economic and political centre. In this period new buildings were planned and urban construction was carried out, such as the erection of the Cathedral, initially in Gothic style, which, as it took so long to build, became an amalgam of artistic styles. Other buildings include the convent of Santo Domingo, the hospital of San Lázaro and the building of the Town Hall, not to mention the many hermitages also constructed, such as those in honour of San Marcos, San Telmo and San Sebastián. Thus, in the last decades of the 15th century and the beginning of the sixteenth, Las Palmas spread out around the square of San Anton, gradually acquiring the character of a city, passing the limits of the Guiniguada and Vegueta.

Canon from the Redoubt of St Carlos.
16th century.

In this way the first suburb of the city was created: Triana. This area was built up during the 16th century and connected with Vegueta by a simple wooden bridge.

After the conquest of the Canaries, the crown had to consider its defence against the possible threat of pirate attack or invasions from national enemies. It was decided that a network of fortifications would be built throughout the archipelago.

Model of the Castle of Light. End of the 15th century.

The first fort in Gran Canaria was the *Castillo de la Luz* – the Castle of Light in Las Palmas, built in 1492-93 by Don Alonso Fajardo, the Governor and Chief Justice of the island. Originally it was surrounded by the sea, and must have been a small square fort with platforms where the artillery was placed.

However, it was not until the middle of the 16th century that constructions to defend the city were undertaken. Between 1577 and 1583, Las Palmas gained a system of walls to the north and south of the city perimeter, with their respective main gates on Triana and Los Reyes. But this defence system did not stop the city being invaded, sacked and burnt, from June 28th to July 8th, 1599, by troops led by Admiral Pieter Van der Doez. This led to a decline in what had been the trading centre of the archipelago since the end of the 15th century. Las Palmas collapsed, and would suffer nearly a century of urban remodelling (1600-1676).

Model according to the map, *City of Las Palmas in the Island of Gran Canaria*, collected in the *Description of the Canary Islands* by Pedro Agustín del Castillo, 1686.

In the first half of the 17th century the historic suburbs developed: the *"riscos"* (steep sides of the *barrancos*) of San Juan and San Nicolás. In the last third of the 18th century, the *riscos* of San José, San Roque and San Lázario were also built.
In the 17th century Las Palmas acquired the character of a city of convents, in which the weight of its religious role would be decisive until the middle of the 19th century, when religion would lose its importance after the sale of church lands.

Worthy of especial mention is the importance of the many British travellers who, whether attracted by a romantic vision or by scientific interest, visited the islands and analysed the customs and the 19th century lifestyle here. This was the case of J. J. Williams who managed to capture the countryside and local customs in his engravings especially of Gran Canaria and Tenerife. He

made several engravings of the city of Las Palmas which are characterized by a picturesque, even exotic vision; of particular interest is that taken from *La Montaña de San Roque*.

The growth of the city cannot be separated from the process of expansion of the Port, which, at the end of the 19th century, became a refuelling centre on the maritime routes. This process involved the abandonment of the harbour at San Telmo, and the clearing and preparation of the *Puerto de la Luz* – the Port of Light.

Accurate Engraving of the Island of Gran Canaria and its Situation. Theodore de Bry. *Collectiones peregrinatorium in India Occidentalem,* Frankfurt. 1599.

Art from the 16th century to the beginnings of the 20th

The Permanent Collection

Second floor, rooms 1-4

The collection of paintings in Columbus House is based on the works acquired from the *Cabildo* (Town Council) of Gran Canaria, from the *Council Responsible for Confiscation and Recuperation* (1941) and the archives in the Prado Museum (1940).

The itinerary that we propose here organizes the collections according to chronological and thematic criteria, which cover the period from the 16th century to the beginning of the 20th, and leads us from sacred paintings to those which are mythological and allegorical, taking in portraits and paintings of customs and manners.

Flemish Painting of the 16th Century

One of the many elements that shaped the particular culture of the Archipelago was caused, at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th, by the fact that the Canaries formed part of the routes for sugar cane. Its cultivation, refining and trade led to a commercial boom for the economy of the Archipelago, and the Flemish sugar-plantation owners, agents and traders were the principal motors of this economy.

Under the protection of this business was the arrival of Flemish art, dedicated to ornamenting and improving the ranches, chapels, hermitages and convents. It was a way of affirming the personality and social prestige of the new population, which formed part of what has been called the "Atlantic sugar culture".

In general the Flemish painting of the 16th century was done in oils. This technique gave the artist a high degree of control of colour and detail, which encouraged skill in minuteness and meticulousness, attention to volume, the transparency of canvasses and atmospheres, giving finishes of smooth, bright, almost enamelled surfaces.

Another identifying mark of this aesthetic style is the frequent reference to nature, whether directly in landscapes or hunting scenes, or as the background

Saint Lucia.
Gumart of Antwerp. 154?

Saint John the Baptist.
Gumart of Antwerp. 154?

to the main theme. Depth is reached through the representation of the vegetation and mountains which blur into the greyish blues of the skies.

In *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (artist unknown, end of 15th century), the forest, painted in exquisite detail, serves as a setting for the Saint who receives the stigmata while kneeling. Five fine lines, perfectly sketched, cut across his body, in symbolic remembrance of the martyrdom of the crucifixion.

The four Flemish panels painted by Gumart of Antwerp and the Master of Papagayo are a clear example of the Flemish aesthetic at the service of the sacred subject. Of particular interest is the one dedicated to *Saint John the Baptist*, signed by Gumart of Antwerp in the decade of 1540. It is a work that possesses a double message. On the one hand there is the representation of Saint John, and on the other, an allegory about redemption through baptism.

Emphasising this message, the artist presents us with two scenes: on the left, in the background we can see the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan; in the foreground St John the Baptist carries in his arms a lamb crowned with thorns, whose forehead, like that of Christ, is bleeding. It is a symbolic image of the son of God represented as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, a clear reference to the act of baptism.

By the same artist and from the same period is *Saint Lucia*, who holds in one hand the salver with her eyes, while the other holds the bodkin or stiletto with which she was martyred. Continuing with the Flemish panels on display, painted by the Master of Papagayo between 1545 and 1550, we can see how the different images of the saints are represented along with their attributes, as in the *Penitent Mary Magdalene*, who has at her feet the bottle of perfume which she will use to anoint and perfume the feet of Christ.

We conclude this exploration of the Flemish aesthetic with a *Still Life* (artist unknown, beginning of the 17th century) in which the rich table laden with special dishes and exquisite objects reveals the opulent daily life and the economic potency of this new commercial bourgeoisie.

Finally in this room we should note the sculpture ***Saint Anne teaching the Virgin Mary to Read*** (artist unknown, beginning of the 17th century). This simply-made piece, possibly from Seville, reveals its connection with the Renaissance, especially in the face of the Virgin.

Saint Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary to Read.
Artist unknown. Spain.
First third of 16th century.

Renaissance and Baroque

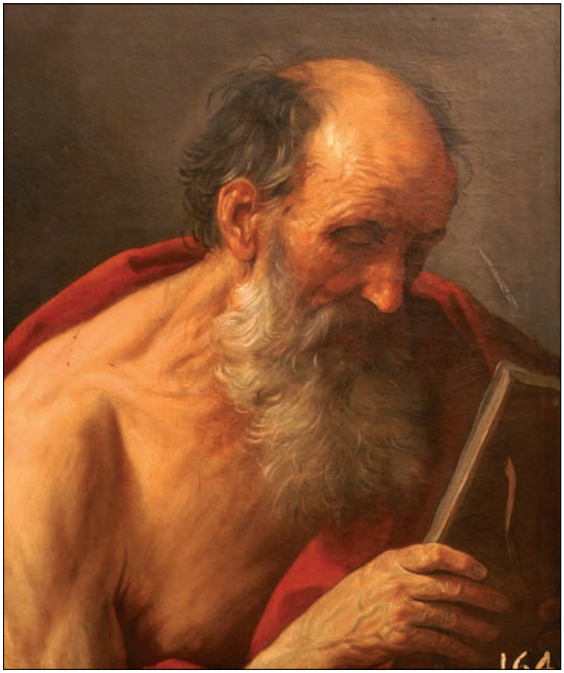
In the period of transition from the mid-15th century to the end of the 16th, the strengthening of the monarchies, the Atlantic expansion and scientific advances all contributed to the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age.

During these centuries, in parallel with the Flemish School which developed in the north of Europe, the Renaissance flowered in Italy. This new aesthetic style began its investigations into colour and light, shadows and volume, space and perspective. Giotto would be one of the creators of the foundations of the new style of painting, as would Dante and Petrarch in literature.

As an artistic style, the Renaissance would centre its attention on humankind as the measure of all things. Exploration of ancient history would recover the classical traditions of Greece and Rome as sources of knowledge and inspiration.

The mythological subject is represented by the work ***Cupid Fashioning a Bow*** (artist unknown, middle of 16th century). This painting is a replica of the original by Parmigianino (1503-1540). Its composition fills the canvas completely, giving the impression that it is the character of Cupid which is

Cupid Carving a Bow.
Artist unknown.
First half of 16th century.
Copy of original by Parmigianino
preserved in the Art History
Museum in Vienna.



Saint Jerome. Guido Reni. (1575-1642). Preserved in the Prado Museum.

subject to the format, and not the other way round. Textures, colour, composition, as well as the lengthening of the figures take us to the style of the Renaissance, specifically to the moment known as Mannerism.

During the 17th century Europe went through a long and wide-ranging crisis. From a political perspective it passed through the apogee of Absolutism. In terms of religion, the Catholic Counter-reformation, a direct heir of the Council of Trent (1542-1564), determined divine and human destinies in heaven and on earth.

In 17th century Europe, the Classical period of the Renaissance was projected in new aesthetic formulas, giving way to the Baroque. The creative repertoire of this style was marked by a complex reality involving sensationalism in performance: what counted was theatricality, colour, light or sinuosity.

The great patrons of this period were the Absolute Monarchs and the Counter-Reformation Church. The overwhelming need to affirm political and religious power found a valued ally in the Baroque. The grandiloquence of the plastic arts of the 17th century subjugates the observer who, undaunted, is present at a scenic display which serves to justify the divine design of the Absolute Monarchy and the Papacy.

The sacred pictorial repertoires are plagued with saints and martyrs showing the extremes of their pain, while the portraits of monarchs and aristocrats exhibit the distance given them by their possession of the extremes of earthly power.

The Baroque is not a monolithic movement. Its adaptation to individual circumstances has left us with paintings ranging from the most classical and controlled styles, to others which are more expressive. Artists such as Carracci, Guido Reni and Guercino represent, within the Italian arts of the 17th century, the most classical and austere positions.

Annibale Carracci (1560-1609) in his work ***Satyr Offering Venus a Glass of Wine*** approaches the Baroque in the early period through mythology. The work, despite certain formal defects, shows a recumbent Venus who, declining to please, turns her back on the spectator. This central figure absorbs the light on her semi-naked body, leaving the rest of the work in noticeable shadow.

Coronation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Trinity.
Joseph de Páez. 1756.

In 17th century Europe, the Classical period of the Renaissance was projected in new aesthetic formulas, giving way to the Baroque. The creative repertoire of this style was marked by a complex reality involving sensationalism The artistic genre that is particularly cultivated is that of allegory, in which abstract qualities or ideas such as goodness, beauty, poetry or liberty among others are represented symbolically, normally with characters given certain attributes. This is the case in the painting by Guercino (1591-1665), ***Titian and Painting***. The female character in this example does not represent the woman painted; as she holds the paintbrushes and palette as if they were emblems, she assumes the quality of Painting as an artistic genre.

Guido Reni (1575-1642), in his painting ***Saint Jerome***, portrays one of the four Fathers of the Roman Church (St Augustine, St Ambrose, St Jerome and St Gregory the Great). Here the saint appears absorbed in his reading of the Holy Scriptures, in clear reference to the Bible which he translated in around the 5th century, from the original Hebrew. Following the same iconography, Stephen March (1610-1668) also paints ***St Jerome***, but in this case the character has a more arrogant, haughty expression, looking directly at the observer.

The Baroque portrait is represented in the figure of the ***Child Hunter*** (artist unknown, French School, 17th century). The figure painted, despite his youth, presents an arrogant air, much to the liking of the aristocracy of the period.

The Martyrdom of St Agatha (artist unknown, 17th century) is one of the most clearly Baroque paintings. This woman, according to legend, was martyred by order of a Roman Prefect, who ordered that her breasts should be ripped out with pincers. The scene acquires unusual force and is noticeably dramatic, due to the shadowy use of light. While the face and breasts of St Agatha are clearly illuminated, her tormentor holds the pincers used for the martyrdom in the background, in the darkness.

In the 18th century there was fierce criticism of the aesthetic grounds of the Baroque. The Enlightenment, the dominant philosophy of Europe in this century, based its foundations on Reason, the only acceptable way forward for the analysis and critique of ideas. At this time, Neo-classic academicism proposed the revival and exploration of classical models, both Graeco-Latin and Renaissance, rather than the exhausted forms of late Baroque and the propositions of Rococo.

Various works on display correspond to this period, and elements of the Baroque can still be identified in some of them, as is the case of ***The Coronation of the Virgin*** (1756), a work by the Mexican painter Joseph de Páez (1720-1790). The Virgin is crowned by the Holy Trinity in its anthropomorphic forms: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit take part in the scene. The three figures are shown with an identical face. The centre is taken by the Father, on the right is the Son who shows the stigmata of the crucifixion, and on the left is the Holy Spirit, holding at its breast the dove which is its symbol. In the foreground

Samson and Delilah.
Artist unknown.
Spanish School, c.1770.

we can see the donor, Juan Agustín Eduardo, a native of La Laguna (Tenerife), who is painted at his devotions like the other figures.

The portrait of ***María Luisa de Saboya*** (artist unknown, first half of the 18th century) presents us once again with the aristocracy. She is a distant character with a cold air, far from Baroque disturbance.

In the work ***Samson and Delilah*** (artist unknown, c.1770), the influence of classicism is notable, principally in the controlled use of colour and in the clothes the characters are wearing. In this well-known episode from the Bible the techniques of Baroque are avoided, the scene is more controlled, and its development reminds us of the sacred works of the Renaissance.

The Canarian painter Juan de Miranda (1723-1805) can be situated in the period of transition between the 18th century and the 19th. His work, although mostly from the second half of the 18th century, shows an important debt to the late Baroque style of the Spanish Peninsula, as is clear in the blue mantle of the ***Immaculate Conception***, which is based around a stylized figure like a spiral full of movement.

19th Century Painting

The Industrial Revolution, which began in Great Britain, led to the rise in power of the bourgeoisie and the consolidation of contemporary capitalism which supported the doctrine of economic and social Liberalism. In the area of artistic creation in the 19th century, various movements came to the fore and were juxtaposed, ranging from Romanticism to Realism. With the beginnings of the 20th century, Post-impressionism would definitively open the doors to the *avant-garde* movements.

Romantic Lady.
Attributed to Luis de Madrazo y Kuntz.
c.1850.

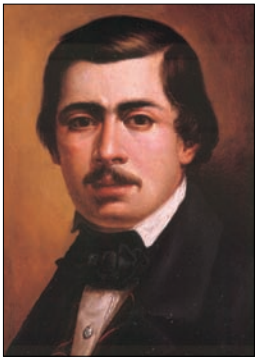
Classical restraint gave way to the turbulence of Romanticism. In contrast to the stylistic determinism of the Academy another reading of reality was offered, whose key was to be found in the sensitivity and unease of the human soul at a time of profound changes. The pain of the most human aspects of Frankenstein; the fatalism of Shakespearean tragedy; the sublime and the recuperation of the past in a desperate escape towards the future: these are some of the premises explored by this movement. In this search we go into the abyss and through storms. Humankind has to face its solitary state, as its value system changes.

This marked tendency towards fatalism tends to lend an air of laconic absence to the portraits of the age, although with a marked degree of refinement and elegance which denote the high degree of social background of the subjects, as we can see in the following works.

The Canarian painter Luis de la Cruz y Ríos (1776-1853) painted ***Bishop Verdugo*** (c.1800). The subject, with his friendly face and faculties sweetened by age, seems to be tired and has a troubled air; in contrast, the ***Romantic Lady*** (c.1850), attributed to Luis de Madrazo y Kuntz, shows us a character that is exquisitely dressed, with a serene and distant attitude. The jewels and the goblet in the background underline the economic power of this bourgeois lady, who has been painted in order to assert her social status.

One final painting is that by Antonio María Esquivel (1806-1857) of his son ***Carlos María Esquivel*** (c. 1850). This work combines two elements which are characteristic of the painter: on the one hand, the painstaking drawing, typical of Classicism, and on the other, the colour and light of Romanticism.

Within the field of Spanish customs and manners paintings, the work of Eugenio Lucas Velázquez (1817-1870) deserves special mention. Among other things, his country scenes of bullfights show the clear influence of Goya.



Carlos María Esquivel.
Antonio María Esquivel.
c. 1850.

The Waiting Room.
Ferdinand Heilbuth. c. 1870.

As the 19th century progressed, an interest developed in reflecting surrounding reality with the greatest possible objectivity. In contrast to the Romantic view, Realism proposed a less pleasurable interpretation of the world. The Industrial Revolution became more entrenched, and the background of social inequality that it enforced meant the life of the less fortunate classes arose as a subject for Realism. A less celebratory customs and manners style developed which analysed in depth the daily existence of people defined by their incomes. Like an extract from a novel by Benito Pérez Galdós, ***The Waiting Room*** (c.1870), by the French painter Ferdinand Heilbuth (1826-1889) shows in great detail a profoundly grey scene, not just in terms of colour but in a vital sense: those abandoned by Fortune wait, defeated, for the unknown.

The Amanuensis (c.1877) by Manuel Cabral y Aguado Bejarano (1821-1891), shows us a young woman who needs the services of this masculine character who understands the bottomless mystery of writing. He is the amanuensis, the 19th century scribe who converts speech into writing or letters into words.

Capri.
Juan Rodríguez Botas y Ghirlanda. 1910.

We conclude this brief trip through the portraits and landscapes of Realism produced in the Canaries at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

Nicolás Massieu Falcón (1853-1934), in his work ***Venice Beach*** (1910), presents us with a detailed landscape presenting the work of fishing, while Nicolás Massieu Matos (1876-1954), in his ***Self-Portrait*** (1909), observes us at the same time he is being observed, with a clear allegorical meaning as the painting contains those characteristics of the art of painting: the palette and the paintbrushes. By the same artist we also find ***Portrait of my Mother***, in clear Impressionist style.

The Impressionist collection is completed by Juan Rodríguez Botas y Ghirlanda (1882-1917). In his landscapes there is a strong predominance of blocks of colour, which reveal a deliberate abandonment of academicism in favour of chromatic abstraction, as is clear in his canvases ***Marina*** and ***Capri***, painted around 1910.

Portrait of My Mother.
Nicolás Massieu y Matos. 1936.

Services and activities in Columbus House

Library and Documentation Centre

The library specializes in American history and relations between the Canaries and America. It possesses around 24,000 works, organized into two main archives: an old archive, called *Ballesteros*, with around 20,000 volumes, and a new archive of around 4,000 volumes, as well as about 4,000 journals dealing with the same theme.

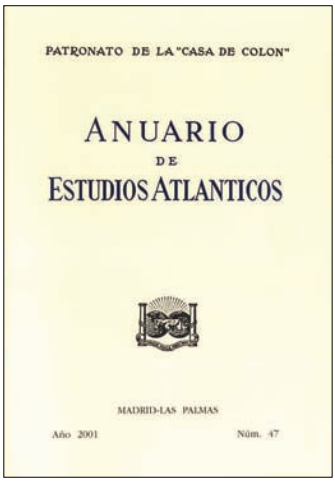
The Documentation Centre contains important archives essential for the history of the Canaries and America, as well as other texts relevant to its activities, such as the *Annual Review of Atlantic Studies* produced by Columbus House. It is connected to the most important international networks, which makes it possible to get access to the entire collection of current Americanist research.

Library. Columbus House.

Activities and Services

Throughout the year, Columbus House organizes a series of activities aimed at the conservation of, and research into, the archives in its collection, designed to extend awareness of these archives. To do this, it organizes temporary exhibitions, which are normally thematic, and, through its Department of Education and Cultural Action, other activities, such as: guided visits, educational workshops, pedagogical kits, training courses, educational folders and teaching materials.

Among the permanent activities designed mainly to improve research into the history of the Canaries and its relations with America, we can highlight the



Annual Review of Atlantic Studies.
Published by Columbus House.

Guided visit to a temporary exhibition.

Colloquium of Canarian-American History, which is held biennially. Organized by Francisco Morales Padrón, it has been held to date uninterruptedly since 1976. The published Minutes of these conferences are a topical reflection of the current state of research into Canarian – American relations.

Special mention must be given to the journal *Annual Review of Atlantic Studies*, published since 1955. Edited by Antonio Rumeu de Armas, nowadays it is a fundamental tool for increasing knowledge of Canarian culture.

The *Research Awards "Viera y Clavijo"*, the Grants for research projects into Canarian – American Relations, and the *Special Canarian – American Prize*, complete a cluster of activities aimed at encouraging research.

In addition, throughout the year Columbus House organizes a series of temporary events, such as courses, seminars and conferences, in which there is space not just for the major historical themes, but also time to reflect on the most relevant aspects of contemporary thought and history.

Indice

Cabildo de Gran Canaria

CULTURA

CASA DE COLON

www.grancanaria.com

COLÓN 1
35001 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
TELS. 928 312 373 · 928 312 384-86
FAX 928 331 156
E-MAIL casacolon@grancanaria.com
www.grancanariacultura.com