



Casa Fabiola

Mariano Bellver art donation

Mariano Bellver's art donation to Seville is an important event due to the variety of works, styles and techniques it brings together.

Seville City Council bought the house that currently holds the collection.

It has had various functions and owners:

it has been the home of the royal treasurer Manuel Levi and the **hospice** of the Madre de Dios convent.

Some legends say that Isabel the Catholic and Lord Byron stayed in this house.

During the **Mendizábal confiscation**

the house was sold to the Englishman J. Cunningham who reduced the size of the house.

Nicholas Wiseman was born in this house.

He was Archbishop of Westminster

and author of a novel entitled Fabiola

Fabiola is the name given to the house and the street.

A **hospice** was a place that provided accommodation for visitors and pilgrims.

The **Mendizabal confiscation** were laws allowing the government to take property away from the church and sell it to other people to pay off the state's debt.

Casa Fabiola is located in the Barrio de Santa Cruz.

It was designed by the Marquis de la Vega de Inclán

for the **Ibero-American Exposition of 1929**

so that visitors to the exhibition

could see what Romantic travellers describe in their works.

The Bellver collection in Casa Fabiola

is divided into 7 thematic areas.

Painting is the most important area.

There are works by 110 artists from Europe and America

whose works reflect the **Costumbrismo**

and **Romantic** Andalusia.

The works represent the characteristics

of life and customs in Andalusia,

sumptuary art, religious works

and Romantic landscapes.

The exhibition begins with the Romantic travelling painters

of the 19th century.

Andalusia becomes their focus.

They depict bullfighters, *majas*, gypsies and bandits

in their travelogues, drawings, paintings,

novels, plays and opera.

In their operas we find famous characters

Such as Don Juan, Figaro, or Carmen.

The **Ibero-American**

Exposition was held in Seville in 1929 to promote relations between Spain, Latin America, the United States, Portugal and Brazil.

Costumbrismo

is an art style that shows the customs of a place.

Romanticism

is an art style that began in Europe at the end of the 18th century.

Sumptuary arts are works of art that are made from precious metals such as gold.



José Domínguez Bécquer, the father of the poet Bécquer, published an album to explain to artists how to paint these Andalusian characters. This style was preserved until the 20th century.

In the 20th century Mariano Bellver began his collection, which includes Romantic and Costumbrista works and others of different techniques and styles, such as sculptures, sumptuary arts and clocks. The Bellver family acquired these works of art over 50 years and kept them in their home. Later, they donated the works to the city of Seville so that all its inhabitants and visitors could enjoy their beauty.

Andalusia and Seville together with their culture and customs represent the fundamental idea of Romanticism. They maintain their traditions through their costumes and the celebration of their festivals. It seems as if they are performing a ballet for all visitors to see.



Writer Susan Sontag says:

“Every culture has its southern people...

For if you Start to dance on tables,

to fan yourself, to feel numb when you pick up a book,

to develop a sense of rhythm,

to make love when you feel like it...,

then you know *the South has got you*".

Mariano Bellver and Dolores Mejías's collection

reflects the idea of Romanticism: I think, therefore I fly.

This idea also appears in a flamenco song

composed in the 20th century whose lyrics read:

"Flying I go, flying I come

and on the way I amuse myself".

