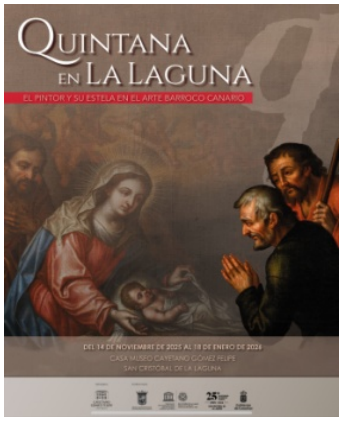
“Quintana in La Laguna.
The painter and his legacy in Canarian Baroque art”



Temporary exhibition commemorating the 300th anniversary of the death in La Laguna of Cristóbal Hernández de Quintana, the leading representative of Baroque painting in the Canary Islands.

Who was Cristóbal Hernández de Quintana?

Cristóbal Hernández de Quintana (La Orotava, 1651-San Cristóbal de La Laguna, 1725) was a painter who left a deep impression on Baroque art in the Canary Islands. His first documented stay in this city dates back to the early 1680s. Although he was not born here, he can also be considered a painter from La Laguna, the town in which he settled during the last decades of his life, where most of his works are preserved, where he developed some of his most important projects and from where he continued to take on commissions for other towns and islands, as his fame was not limited to Tenerife.

His preferences

A particularly devout man, his documented works, signed or attributed, which number more thanone hundred paintings, are almost entirely religious in nature.The religiosity that prevailed during the Baroque period explains the extraordinary importance of this theme in his painting. The devotional preferences of his time, the childhood of Jesus – particularly representations of the Virgin and Child and scenes set in the manger in Bethlehem – feature prominently in his paintings.

Prints as models

The interpretation and copying – partial or complete – of printed sources was a common practice among painters. Examples of this procedure, which left room for creativity and personal contributions, have progressively been detected in Quintana's catalogue. Compositions by painters (especially Flemish and Italian) reproduced in prints were disseminated widely throughout Europe and America and also reached the Canary Islands. These engravings, many of them published in Antwerp, were the most popular and explain the repetition of models in distant places over time.

His disciples and followers

Quintana's art lives on in numerous works, in which insistent references to his models can be seen. His followers, of varying quality, and some of whom are still anonymous, have been described as *Quintanesque*.

Quintana copies Quintana

Several works by Cristóbal Hernández de Quintana show that he substantially repeated some of his compositions. Here we show *Saint Pius V praying for Christian victory in the Battle ofLepanto*to, which he signed at the end of his life and kept in his home alongside another from a private collection, now in the Episcopal Palace of La Laguna.

Polychromist of altarpieces and coffered ceilings

He was also a polychromist of altarpieces and coffered ceilings, for which he would have had collaborators. In this field, we can mention the two fragments with a similar format of San Juan de Dios from the Church of the Hospital of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. It is known that he was also a polychromist of severalsculptures in the city.

True portraits and local devotions

On the islands, those of the Virgin of Candelaria stand out for their volume and dissemination. He also portrayed the Virgin of Los Remedios and the Christ of La Laguna several times, the most popular images of his time in the city.

Quintana the portraitist?

Recently, the possibility has been raised that he did, in fact, take on commissions of this type. One of the works on which this option is based is shown here: the portrait of the French merchant Bernardo de Fau, who had settled in Tenerife, painted hastily after his death in 1718.

Religious art in homes

The presence of paintings with sacred themes was not limited to temples and religious establishments. Documentation –particularly inventories– and private collections that have survived to this day confirm that they were also preferred for domestic settings. There they could *coexist* with portraits, landscapes, mythological scenes or genre scenes, which were not so common. In one of the exhibition rooms, using furniture and other objects from the Cayetano Gómez Felipe collection, the aim is to recall the spontaneity with which paintings of sacred subjects were integrated into civil spaces.