



## EXCEPTIONAL PICTURE FRAMES

7 October 2024 to 21 January 2025

Curator: Mar Borobia

The Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza is presenting a display of eleven paintings from its permanent collection dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries with frames - three of them the original ones - that reveal the artistic importance of this element. Made in Spain, France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, they exemplify a wide variety of styles which reflect both the artistic period in which they were made and changing tastes, principally in relation to furniture, while contributing additional aesthetic value to the works they accompany, embellish and protect. Opening to the public on 7 October, the first visitors to enjoy this display will be those benefiting from “Mondays with Mastercard”, with free entry.

While the collection does not include a large number of the original frames, it does feature many old and important examples. Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza paid particular attention to this aspect of collecting and in the 1980s commissioned two scholarly studies of the frames in his collection. The examples chosen for the present exhibition are of a high technical and stylistic level, making them unique and valuable objects in themselves. They also provide additional information which assists in a more complete understanding of the historical and artistic context of the works they surround.

Of the eleven paintings included in the exhibition, three have their original frames. One is the *Portable Triptych with a central Crucifixion* (ca. 1370-75) by Lorenzo Veneziano. Its frame, of a type termed “architectural”, is carved from the same panel on which the artist painted the work and imitates the portico of a Gothic church. Secondly, *The Annunciation*

**Images from left to right:** Michiel Sweerts, *Boy in a Turban holding a Nosegay*, ca. 1658-1661 / Jan van Eyck, *The Annunciation Dyptych*, ca. 1433-1435 / Andrea Solario, *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1490's

Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

**More information:** Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. Press Office.

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<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/private-area/press/dossiers/exceptional-picture-frames>



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*Dptych* (around 1433-35) by Jan van Eyck falls within the tradition of Northern European Renaissance altarpieces and is unique in the fact that the artist painted two, trompe-l'oeil frames; a principal one imitating reddish marble and a secondary one that simulates grey stone, seemingly marble or alabaster. Finally, *Portrait of Johann von Rűckingen* (recto) and *Figure with Coat-of-arms* (verso) (1487) by Wolfgang Beurer has a typically German Renaissance frame with pictorial decoration on the vertical moulding, indicating that it was made specifically for the painting.



Lorenzo Veneziano, *Portable Triptych with a central Crucifixion*, ca. 1370-1375. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

The frames in this display have characteristics and elements which reveal the diversity of styles and techniques used in the different geographical areas and chronological periods in which they were made. These features include the different types of decoration; from the zigzags and circular motifs on the possibly Spanish frame used for *Portrait of a Young Man* (1490s) by Andrea Solario to the foliate motifs on others such as the frame employed for *Portrait of Doge Francesco Venier* (ca. 1554-56) by Titian, made in Italy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and that of *The Parable of the Sower* (around 1560) by Jacopo Bassano, a style of decoration known as “Auricular Medici” which was devised to re-frame the paintings displayed by Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici in the Pitti Palace in Florence.



El Greco, *Christ with the Cross*, ca. 1587-1596. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Foliate decoration is also to be seen on the moulding of the two works by El Greco present in the exhibition, which furthermore create interesting interplays of light and shade that add volume to the paintings and frames as a whole. These are *Christ with the Cross* (ca. 1587-96), which has a French, Louis XIII-style frame, and *The Immaculate Conception* (ca. 1608-14), painted in collaboration with the artist’s son Jorge Manuel Theotokópoulos, which has a typical Spanish Baroque frame.

Also notable is the use of parcel-gilt or luminolegno on the frame of *View of a River Port with the Castel Sant’Angelo* by the Master of the Monogram IDM, a technique employed in the Veneto based on the interaction of the gilding and the wood, and the sobriety of *The West Façade of the Church of Saint Mary in Utrecht* (1662) by Pieter Jansz. Saenredam,

which has a Baroque frame typical of Holland and southern Germany, of a dark tone and made in hardwood with a decoration known as Dutch ripple.

The most recent frame in the exhibition is the one surrounding the painting by Michiel Sweerts *Boy in a Turban holding a Nosegay* (ca. 1658-61), which dates to between 1735 and 1750. Made in Rome, this type of frame was widely used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was named after two Italian painters, Carlo Maratta and Salvator Rosa.

## **EXHIBITION INFORMATION**

**Title:** *Exceptional Picture Frames*.

**Organiser:** Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.

**Venue and dates:** Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, 7 October 2024 to 21 January 2025. Room 17.

**Curator:** Mar Borobia, head of Old Master Painting at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.

**Technical curator:** María Eugenia Alonso, curator of Old Master Painting at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.

**Number of works:** 11.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**Address:** Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014, Madrid. Room 17 of the Permanent Collection.

**Opening times:** Mondays with Mastercard, noon to 4 pm (free entry); Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 am to 7 pm.

**Ticket prices:** Combined entry: Permanent Collection and temporary exhibitions.

- General: 14 €.
- Reduced: 10 € for visitors over 65, pensioners and students with proof of status.
- Groups (7 and more people): 12 € per person.
- Free: visitors aged under 18 years of age, officially unemployed Spanish citizens, visitors with disabilities, Large Families, working teachers, and holders of the Youth Card and European Youth Card.

Advance ticket sales at the box office, on the museum's website and on tel: + 34 91 791 13 70.

**More information:** <https://www.museothyssen.org/en>

## **PRESS INFORMATION**

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