

Andalusian artists



Vocabulary

Describing works of art

diminutive – very small
visceral – provoking a strong instinctive reaction
exuberant – happy and energetic
muted – dark and lacking bold colours
humorous – funny
arresting – very noticeable, holding the attention
stunning – extraordinary, amazing
lifelike – very realistic
uncanny – very unusual and unsettling or disturbing
dramatic – with much excitement and energy
haunting – remaining in the mind and causing fear or discomfort
macabre – related to death and violence
moving – provoking a strong emotional response
gloomy – dark and depressing



1 Reorder the letters to make an adjective for describing a work of art.

- 1 g.v.o.m.i.n
- 2 g.a.t.u.i.h.n.n
- 3 d.u.t.m.e
- 4 t.i.e.i.v.d.n.m.u.i
- 5 n.c.n.a.u.n.y
- 6 e.l.f.e.k.l.i.l
- 7 u.o.u.o.m.h.r.s
- 8 o.l.m.o.g.y

2 Match the word (1-8) with its definition (A-H).

- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|------------|
| 1 | humorous | 5 | moving |
| 2 | lifelike | 6 | haunting |
| 3 | gloomy | 7 | diminutive |
| 4 | stunning | 8 | macabre |
- A looking very like the real thing
B making you feel strong emotions
C bloody, morbid
D making you laugh
E less than normal size
F with very little light and an unhappy feeling
G making you think about it for a long time afterwards
H fantastic, brilliant

3 Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

- 1 Velazquez's portraits are so **lifelike** / **uncanny**. They almost look like photographs.
- 2 Picasso's painting 'The Weeping Woman' is a really **muted** / **haunting** image. Even a week after seeing it, I still feel disturbed by it.
- 3 The Saeta was so **moving** / **uncanny**; half the crowd was in tears by the end.
- 4 It's such a/an **arresting** / **gloomy** image that you can't walk past it without stopping to look at it.
- 5 I hate horror films, they're so **diminutive** / **macabre**. Can't we watch something a little less bloody and violent?
- 6 Francisco de Zubaran is known for painting dark and **exuberant** / **gloomy** images.
- 7 Despite the picture's **diminutive** / **uncanny** size, it has a big impact on visitors to the museum.
- 8 The views from here are absolutely **stunning** / **visceral**.



Grammar

Non-finite clauses after subordinating conjunctions

Non finite clauses are clauses that contain a verb that does not show tense. We often use non-finite clauses after the subordinating conjunctions 'although/though', 'if', 'unless', and 'after'.

After leaving the museum, we went home.

Although really hot in the summer, Seville is a great place to live.

This painting, **if** certified as an original Velazquez, will be worth a fortune.

Unless told otherwise, we will meet you outside the Granada Museum of Fine Art.

1 Read the sentences and choose the correct option.

- 1 The bus timetable said that, unless **delayed** / **delay** in traffic, the bus should arrive at three.
- 2 After **seeing** / **seen** all of the Velazquez paintings in the museum, we decided to leave.
- 3 Although **painting** / **painted** in France, I still consider Guernica to be one of the great works of Andalusian art.
- 4 Despite not **understanding** / **understood** the rules, we really enjoyed the game.
- 5 This wine, if **combining** / **combined** with the correct tapa, is quite delicious.
- 6 We saw, after **checking** / **checked** our watches, that we were very late.
- 7 This book, if **believing** / **believed** to be true, will completely change the way people think about this artist's work.
- 8 This museum will, unless **helping** / **helped** by the government, have to close down.



2 Read the sentences and choose the correct subordinating conjunction.

- 1 **Although** / **If** seen at sunrise, the Alhambra is stunning.
- 2 The portrait, **unless** / **if** believed, shows the king to have been a very handsome man.
- 3 **Unless** / **After** told differently, we are to meet by the bridge.
- 4 We decided, **unless** / **although** bored, to try to visit every room in the museum.
- 5 We discovered, **if** / **after** seeing the magnificent paintings inside, why the church was such a popular destination for tourists.
- 6 **If** / **unless** needed, audio guides of the museum are available.
- 7 They told us that, **after** / **although** visiting Cordoba, they would head to the coast.
- 8 The painting, **after** / **though** being stolen, turned up in Italy.



3 Rewrite the sentences using non finite clauses.

- 1 Unless you tell me not to, I will send you the money next week.
- 2 If people believe what it says, this article will cause a huge scandal.
- 3 After we saw the main attractions of the town, we went to get some lunch.
- 4 If I was offered a job as a curator in this gallery, I would definitely accept.
- 5 Unless you see it under bright lights, the painting seems quite dull.
- 6 Although they seem quite macabre, some of his paintings are actually very beautiful.
- 7 If it is performed correctly, this song is very moving.
- 8 Though it is not one of his best novels, I still really like it.

Reading

- 1** You are going to read an article about a painting. Answer the questions 1-6 by selecting the correct answer A, B, C, D.

An encounter with a Sevillian masterpiece

On a walk through the Prado's permanent collection last week, I came across a painting that I had seen many times before but had never really taken the time to spend any time contemplating. I'm referring to the diminutive Agnus Dei by the Sevillian master Francisco de Zubaran. It is a painting that is so much reproduced - on notepads, postcards, posters, t-shirts and place mats - that it is easy to overlook its unique and visceral power. So I have decided to dedicate this weekly column to explain a little about what makes this painting one of the great masterpieces of the Spanish counter reformation.

Zubaran lived in the seventeenth century - a period of painting more commonly associated with exuberant colours, high drama and cherubic figures ascending to heaven. Zubaran is a figure much more in the mold of Caravaggio, dealing in muted colours, personal trials of faith and everyday settings. In fact, after the death of Philip IV, who favoured Zubaran, he soon fell out of prominence in Spanish art and was passed over for more overtly sentimental artists. By the end of his life, he was unable to find buyers for his work in Spain and had to turn to the New World in search of a market.

Zubaran's most famous canvases depict monks, nuns and martyrs with often only a single figure filling the entire frame. They show their subjects in states of suffering, guilt and repentance and force the viewer into the dark ascetic worlds that they occupy. It is hardly surprising then that most visitors to the Prado breeze past them in favour of the lighter and more humorous works of Zubaran's fellow Andalusian painter - Velazquez. This is exactly what I had done on my many previous visits to the collection until I found myself face to face with the Agnus Dei last week.

Like most of the great artist's works, the Agnus Dei is executed in a subdued palette and shows a single figure drawn from everyday life. What is unusual about it is the way it seems to transcend the boundary between still life and religious painting. The painting shows a lamb with its legs bound together and hanging over the edge of a table top seeming to emerge out of the pictorial space. Its one open eye gives the impression that it is still alive. The great mastery of the painter is on full display in the incredibly lifelike fur whose texture is so well depicted that you feel like you could reach out and stroke it.

Despite the simplicity of its subject matter, the spiritual connotations of Agnus Dei are undeniable. In fact, in other versions of the same image, Zubaran was much more explicit on this matter. The lamb represents the suffering, innocent soul of Christ as he contemplates his fate. He is the shepherd but he is also the sheep, suffering for the sins of man. He is of this world and yet he is also not. The extreme realism of the painting serves to heighten this sense of the divine emerging into the world.

Amongst the more conventional showstoppers of the museum, the Agnus Dei is simple, sad and gloomy, seemingly lacking in drama and excitement but I think this is exactly why it is such

an arresting work. It is a perfect encapsulation of the burden of belief, the humanity of fear and suffering and the beauty of the natural world. It is a vision of religion that even those with no faith whatsoever can identify with.

- 1 What point is the writer making in the first paragraph?
A The Agnus Dei is not as famous as it should be.
B The writer went to the Prado to see Agnus Dei because he had seen a reproduction of it.
C The fact that the image is so familiar means that people can miss its impact.
D The Agnus Dei is such a powerful painting and that explains why it is so frequently reproduced.
- 2 What does the writer say about Zubaran's style in the second paragraph?
A His artwork is very sentimental.
B His style is similar to Caravaggio.
C His style comes from Caravaggio.
D His style is very dramatic.
- 3 What is not surprising to the writer in the third paragraph?
A that most visitors to the Prado ignore Zubaran's paintings
B that people find Velazquez's paintings humorous
C that he hadn't noticed the painting before
D that Zubaran's paintings depict suffering
- 4 What is strange about Agnus Dei?
A that it has a religious theme
B that it is so lifelike
C that it combines two different genres
D that it is transcendental
- 5 According to the writer, what do other versions of the painting show?
A that the lamb represents suffering
B that the painting has a religious message
C a very realistic depiction of the lamb
D a very simple scene
- 6 What does the word 'showstoppers' in the final paragraph refer to?
A different themes that artists explore in their work
B experts on painting
C visitors who are not interested in the painting
D more exciting paintings in the museum

2 Read the text in activity 1 again and match the words (1-8) to their definitions (A-H).

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|------------|
| 1 | come across | 5 | ascetic |
| 2 | overtly | 6 | still life |
| 3 | canvas | 7 | shepherd |
| 4 | repentance | 8 | burden |

- | | |
|----------|---|
| A | in a very obvious or clear way |
| B | abstemious, with great self control |
| C | someone who looks after sheep |
| D | a heavy weight - either physical or emotional |
| E | a type of painting depicting objects such as fruits and flowers |
| F | to find something that you were not looking for. |
| G | expressing regret for a sin |
| H | a woven material used for creating paintings on |

Writing

- 1** You have had a class discussion about subjects that should be taught in school. Three of the subjects discussed are mentioned below as well as comments that members of your class made about them.

Which subjects should be taught at school?

Art	"Drawing pretty pictures isn't going to help me get a job so why do I have to study it in school?"
Music	"Music is something personal; I have my own taste and don't need a teacher telling me what is good or bad."
History	"Education should be about the future, not the past."

Write an essay discussing two of the subjects. You should explain which subject you think it is most important for children to learn about in school giving reasons to support your answer. You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed by members of the class but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Write your essay in **220 - 260 words** in an appropriate style.

- 2** You see the following announcement in a magazine.

Reviews wanted!

We are looking for reviews of moving works of art. It might be a painting, a film, a book, a play or a piece of music.

What emotions did the work of art provoke in you and why? Do you think other people would have a similar reaction to it?

Send us your reviews!

Write an essay discussing two of the subjects. You should explain which subject you think it is most important for children to learn about in school giving reasons to support your answer. You may, if you wish, make use of the opinions expressed by members of the class but you should use your own words as far as possible.

Write your review in **220 - 260 words** in an appropriate style.



Listening

- 1** You will hear five short extracts in which five art experts discuss a painting they have decided to include in a new book about Andalusian art.

Which speaker chooses:

- a painting of a war scene?
- a painting of an old person?
- a painting of two people?
- a painting with a religious subject matter?
- a still life?



- 2** Listen to the extracts again.

For extracts 1-5, choose from the list why they chose to include the painting.

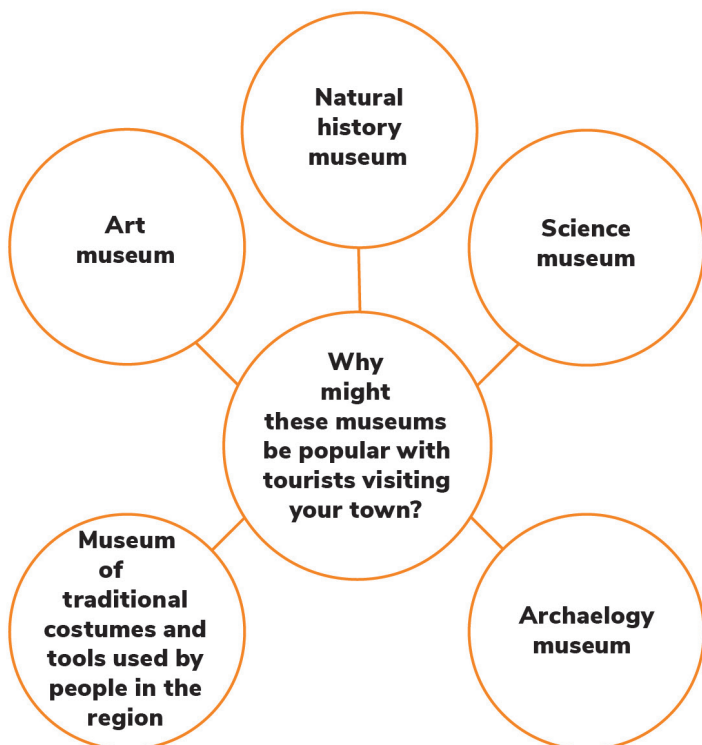
- It shows the artist's great skill
- It has a lot of drama
- It is very famous
- It gives a view of normal life at that time
- The composition is very unusual
- It is very different from other paintings of the era
- The artist lived outside Andalusia most of his life
- Other painters learned from this artist

For extracts 1-5 choose from the list what the speaker likes most about the painting.

- It is very dark
- It communicates the feelings of its subjects well
- its realism
- the use of light in the image
- It is a very unusual image
- It is scary
- the colours
- The image is very harmoniously arranged

Speaking

- 1** The mayor of your town wants to build a museum to attract more tourists. Discuss why the following options might be popular with tourists:



Now discuss which option you think would be most popular with young people.

- 2** You see three pictures of people in art galleries. Compare two of these pictures. Say why you think the people might want to see the art works in these galleries and what they might enjoy about their experience.



Now say which of these galleries you would most like to visit and why.

