

PRESS RELEASE



Copied by the Sun:

Talbotype Illustrations to the *Annals of the Artists of Spain* by Sir William Stirling Maxwell, Facsimile and Critical Edition, Edited by Hilary Macartney and José Manuel Matilla.

2 vols. Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado/ Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2016. 85.50 €. Studies & Catalogue Raisonné: paperback, 368 pp., 274 ills. 23.3 x 14.7 cm. Facsimile: hardback, 144 pp., 68 ills. 23.3 x 14.2 cm. ISBN (MNP): 978-84-8480-322-5 (vol. I); 978-84-8480-323-2 (vol. II). ISBN (CEEH): 978-84-15245-53-7 (vol. I); 978-84-15245-54-4 (vol. II) http://www.tiendaprado.com/es/libros/7599-cat-9788415245551.html?_ga=1.50390126.670877753.1439828249

By adding a volume of illustrations “copied by the sun” to his *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, published in 1848, the Scottish scholar Sir William Stirling Maxwell created the world’s first photographically illustrated book on art. The additional volume was a limited edition of just fifty copies, each containing sixty-eight illustrations. They were produced only a few years after the invention of photography itself, using the negative-positive process of the calotype or Talbotype patented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1842. These were the first photographic images representing Spanish art, architecture and design, and were taken by Talbot’s assistant Nicholaas Henneman in 1847, though D.O. Hill and Robert Adamson in Edinburgh were also commissioned to produce some photographs. The enterprise was fraught with difficulties, however. Only small, portable artworks could be photographed, and original oil paintings had to be reproduced via prints or painted copies. The chemical process, involving light-sensitive silver compounds, was also unstable, and the photographs suffered severe fading soon after they were mounted in the books. Nevertheless, the *Annals Talbotypes* volume was of enormous significance in pointing the way towards the use of photography as an essential tool in the study of art, and especially to its use in illustrated books on art. Until now, very few people, even specialists, have seen a copy, due to its rarity and fragility. The publication of this facsimile and critical edition at last offers much wider access to the volume and its images.

The creation of the facsimile and the accompanying volume of studies and catalogue raisonné of the Talbotype illustrations is the result of an international collaboration which enabled invaluable knowledge exchange between art historians, photographic historians, museum curators, librarians, conservators, conservation scientists and digital imaging specialists. Almost half of the fifty copies originally produced were sought out and examined in public and private collections in Britain, Spain, France and the United States, as well as the hundreds of proofs from Henneman’s stock in the National Media Museum in Bradford, and the prints, copies and original artworks they represent. Many of the latter are in the Prado Museum, which also owns one of the copies of the volume.

Since even the best surviving copies of the volume show considerable deterioration, it was decided to create an “ideal facsimile”, based on the best examples identified of each illustration or, where necessary, on composite examples, taking care, however, never to invent anything that was not present in any of the original Talbotype images. The digital reconstruction of the illustrations was carried out by the Photographic Archive at the Prado Museum, using high-resolution images

specially commissioned for the project, and is documented in the accompanying volume. Likewise, the illustrations in the present edition have been produced using modern photomechanical techniques and printed directly onto the pages of the volume, rather than as salted paper prints using the Talbotype process and individually tipped in. The paper and the binding in blue book-cloth with gold-tooled heraldic motifs are all similarly modern in their materials and manufacture. The resulting volume thus evokes the appearance of the original rather than being a literal recreation. Its use of modern technology and production methods are, nevertheless, in keeping with Stirling's in his own day and also with his vision to make art more widely available through reproduction in books.

The accompanying interpretive volume offers another kind of reconstruction, this time of the context and significance of the pioneering nineteenth-century volume. Drawing on a remarkable wealth of photographic and archival evidence, the essays chart the challenges of taking the photographs and producing the volume then. The evolution of the venture is likewise examined in relation to Stirling himself, his scholarship of Spanish art and his interest in the reproduction of art, and, in a chapter by Professor Larry Schaaf (University of Oxford), from the perspective of Talbot, Henneman and the history of photography. The specific relationship between text and image in the *Annals* is also explored, here and in the catalogue raisonné, and the often complex dialogue between source and illustration, original and copy. Reception of the volume is traced in a census of recipients of the bound copies and through survey of the wider impact. The problems of fading associated with the calotype process in the particular case of the *Annals Talbotypes* are studied for the first time through scientific analysis led by Dr Jim Tate at the National Museums of Scotland. The other studies and the catalogue are by the editors, assisted by colleagues at the Prado Museum and the National Media Museum.

Hilary Macartney is Research Associate and Lecturer in Spanish art, and Associate Editor of the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* at the University of Glasgow. Since 2010, she has directed the Stirling Maxwell Research Project there. She has special interests in Spanish art, including its historiography and reception, as well as in early photography and the reproduction of art. A graduate of the University of Glasgow, her doctoral thesis for the Courtauld Institute of Art in London focused on the Scottish scholar and collector of Spanish art, Sir William Stirling Maxwell. Her publications include *Spanish Art in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1920: Studies in Reception in Memory of Enriqueta Harris Frankfort*, co-edited with Nigel Glendinning (2010), which contained a chapter on the reproduction of Spanish art, and numerous articles in major peer-reviewed journals in Britain and Spain. She is also co-founder and Vice-President of ARTES Iberian & Latin American Visual Culture Group.

José Manuel Matilla is Head Curator of Drawings and Prints at the Museo Nacional del Prado. A graduate of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, he held posts as Events Coordinator and Researcher in the Study Centre of the National Chalcography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando before joining the Prado. He curated the Prado's first exhibitions on photography, the reproduction of art, and their important role in the history of the Museum, notably *The Graphoscope: A Century of Looking at the Prado* (2004), and *Velázquez in Black and White* (2000). His numerous exhibitions and publications include many on the Prado's outstanding collections of works by Goya and Old Master drawings and prints. He has also led many international collaborations and touring exhibitions of the Museum's collections. He is currently President of the International Advisory Committee of Keepers of Public Collections of Graphic Art (the '50 Lux Club').