

Gregorio Prieto



GREGORIO PRIETO (1897-1992)

Gregorio Prieto was born in Valdepeñas on 2 May 1897, and became passionate about art and painting at a very young age. At the age of eighteen, he won a place at the Escuela de San Fernando, securing a number of grants and holding his first exhibitions in Barcelona, Bilbao and Madrid. His first solo show took place at the Ateneo de Madrid in 1919.

His close ties with the European avant-garde and friendships with key members of the Generation of '27 impacted his artistic and intellectual development. He was especially close to Rafael Alberti, Luis Cernuda, Vicente Aleixandre and Federico García Lorca, and painted the latter's portrait several times. In 1925, Prieto moved to Paris to further his studies and in 1928 he was awarded a study grant from the Academia de España in Rome, where he spent several years completing his training and holding a number of exhibitions. There, he worked with Eduardo Chicharro Briones and met De Pisis, Marinetti, Carrà, Giorgio De Chirico and Alberto Moravia, among others.

His artistic output underscored his dedication to both the landscapes and the history of Spain, using an intense colour scheme and affording his representations a pronounced expressionist, surreal tone.

As of 1970, he began to receive prestigious awards, culminating with the Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts in 1982. Subsequently, in 1990, he was awarded the Gold Medal of Castilla-La Mancha, the Gregorio Prieto Foundation Museum was inaugurated and Prieto was named an Honorary Academic by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Gregorio Prieto died on 14 November 1992, at the age of 95.

Gregorio Prieto's artistic output comprises several thousand works showcasing a range of different techniques, including painting, drawing, photography, engraving, as well as illustrations for around a hundred books on Cervantes, Shakespeare, John Milton, Luis Cernuda and Vicente Aleixandre, among others. The quality and quantity of his work has earned Gregorio Prieto recognition as the greatest La Mancha-born artist of the 20th century.

A series of visits to Italy, Greece and Egypt inspired Prieto to touch on a topic he would further develop over the years to come: the Greco-Roman world. His works also featured sailors and mannequins, crafting a homoerotic iconography as surreal as it was innovative. After Prieto had travelled through several European countries, the Spanish civil war forced him to seek refuge in London, where he would remain in until 1950. In England, Prieto's passion for drawing intensified, but not at the expense of his painting; landscapes and portraits formed a significant part of his artistic output of the time.

In 1948 he was part – alongside Chicharro, Carlos Edmundo de Ory and Sernesi – of the avant-garde Postismo movement that was reviving the artistic landscape at the time. His return to Spain marked the beginning of a key period for the promotion of his work. He wrote several articles, published various books and was extremely active in terms of exhibitions.



THE GREGORIO PRIETO FOUNDATION

The Gregorio Prieto Foundation was founded by the painter himself on 13 March, 1968 in the Cave of Medrano in Argamasilla de Alba, using the notarial instrument issued, the Foundation was registered with the Ministry of Culture.

The Foundation enjoys recognition as a non-profit private legal entity with general interest purposes. Its main purpose is the dissemination and conservation of its founders' artistic legacy.

Opening hours

Winter: 10am-2pm and 5pm-8pm.
Summer: 10am-2pm and 6pm-9pm.
Sundays: 11am-2pm.
Mondays: closed

Photos and videos

Photography is allowed (no flash).

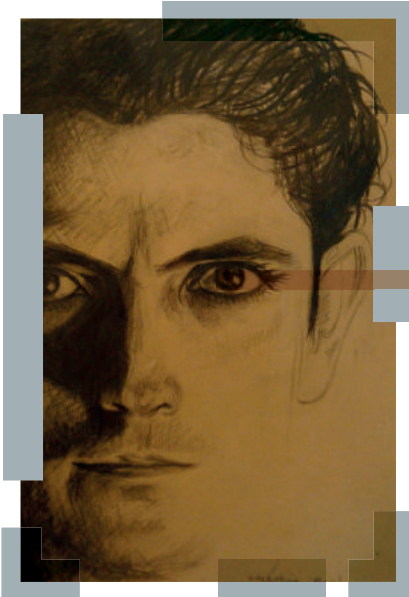
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The Gregorio Prieto
MUSEUM
FOUNDATION



Fundación Gregorio Prieto

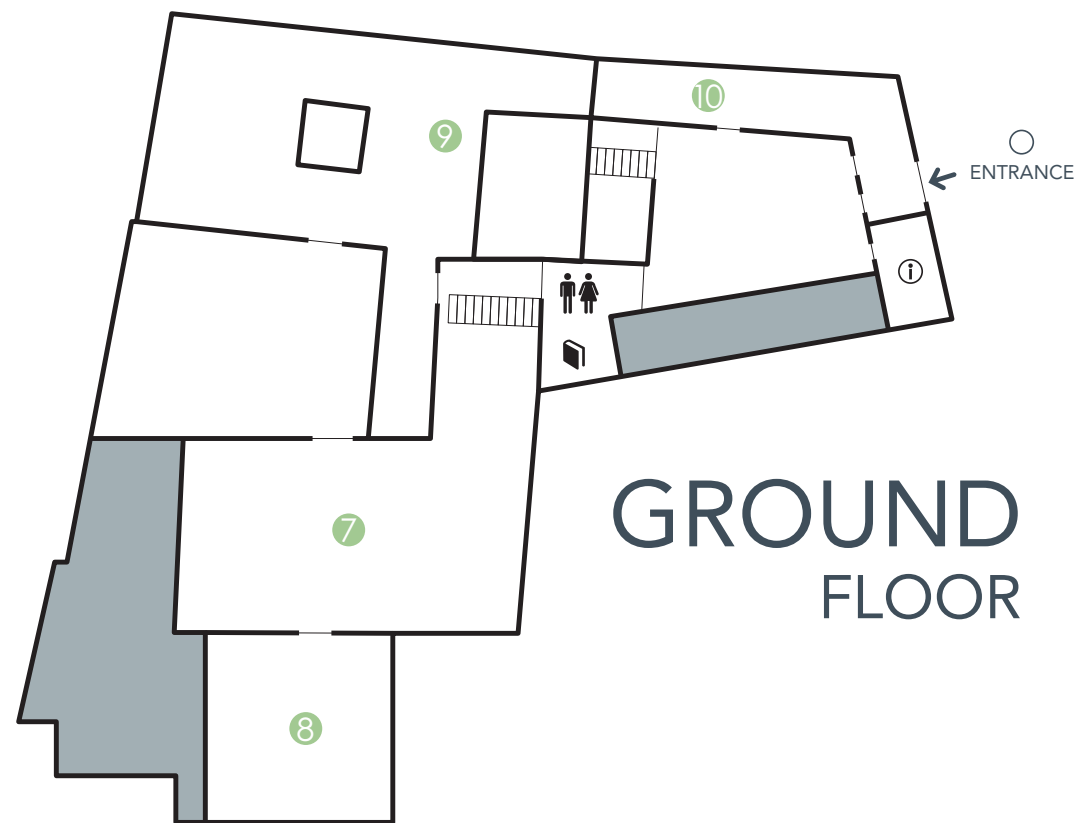


FIRST FLOOR

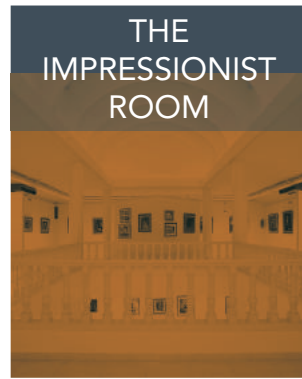
RECOMMENDED ITINERARY:

- 1 The Impressionist Room
- 2 The Greek-Italian Room
- 3 The Federico García Lorca Room
- 4 The Archangel Gallery
- 5 The Collage Gallery
- 6 The Upper Patio Gallery

- 7 The Portico Room
- 8 Cellar
- 9 The Temporary Exhibition Room
- 10 The Gregorio Prieto Private Collection Room



GROUND FLOOR



1.

This room houses the works created by Prieto during his studies at Madrid's Special School of Painting, Sculpture and Engraving. This period is characterised in general terms by the brushstrokes and light play inherited from Impressionism, and the practice of open-air painting which Prieto honed during his time on a study grant at the Residence of Landscape Painters at El Paular from 1918 to 1919.

As of 1921, certain changes are detected in Prieto's art, including a gradual formal synthesis process, linked to Post-Cubism. This stems from the influence of Vázquez Díaz, and from the artist's contact between 1920 and 1921 with the light of Northern Spain, specifically the Basque Country, with a particular emphasis on the landscapes of Bermeo, Algorta and Bilbao.

From this point on, Gregorio Prieto became a key figure in the modern Madrid scene and the most prominent painter of the Generation of '27, with whose members Prieto would forge close friendships. In fact, during this visit we will observe his portraits of Alberti, Cernuda and Aleixandre.

9. THE TEMPORARY EXHIBITION ROOM

This space is used for the significant number of temporary exhibitions organised by the Gregorio Prieto Foundation, including the exhibition of the pieces entered in the Gregorio



2.

Gregorio Prieto studied at the Academia de España in Rome on a grant between 1928 and 1933. The experience made a profound impression on the artist, who would go on to offer an innovative interpretation of the ruins and vestiges of the Greco-Roman past, from a Surrealist perspective and with influences from *Novecento* and *Valori plastici*.

Mannequins became a key feature of Prieto's work in this period. Their ambiguous nature allows him to develop an intimate, homoerotic discourse, positioning the artist within a personal, innovative Surrealism. Among this series, salient works include *Luna de Miel en Taormina* (Honeymoon in Taormina) which was exhibited in the Spanish Pavilion at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937, as was Picasso's *Guernica*.

The connotations identified in relation to the mannequin also apply to the figure of the sailor. Gregorio Prieto blended the presence of these figures with his romantic, sensual admiration for ruins and classical statuary, as reflected in *Caballo de Bronce* (Bronze Horse), *Ruinas de Selinunte* (Selinunte Ruins) and *Danza del espectro marinero* (Dance of the Phantom Sailor).

Prieto International Drawing Contest, held every two years. The contest dates back twenty years and is one of the longest-standing of its time, attracting prominent Spanish and international artists alike.



3.

This room is presided over by the portrait of Federico García Lorca painted by Prieto as a posthumous homage in 1937. It houses a series of works that reflect the mutual admiration and the friendship enjoyed between the Granada-born poet and the La-Mancha born artist.

This is the largest collection of drawings by Lorca; emotive creations that the playwright gave Prieto as gifts over the years, or which simply formed part of their abundant correspondence. The first of the series is the *Virgen de los Dolores* (Our Lady of Sorrows), which Lorca gave Prieto the first time they met, on 24 April 1924. After García Lorca's assassination, these drawings became the votive offerings of a much-missed friendship.

Based on this series of drawings, Gregorio Prieto became a passionate advocate of Lorca's talent for the visual arts, which is clearly reflected in the books and catalogues displayed in the cabinets and through which, from very early on, Prieto paid tribute to the late playwright. This same sense of homage is underscored by the other portraits dedicated to Lorca which can be enjoyed by the viewer in this Room.



4.

One of the most curious – and simultaneously charming – collections housed in this Museum is the Archangels collection, particularly the carvings of St. Michael. This collection, amassed by Prieto throughout the course of his life, is accompanied by his collection of doves of the Holy Spirit. Prieto's interest in the doves was sparked when, on a visit to Picasso's studio in Paris in the 1930s, Picasso gave him one of the sculptures as a gift.

St. Michael also became one of Prieto's great devotions, and the artist turned to the saint for protection from his enemies. The creations dedicated by Prieto to the saint, and his passion for collecting sculpture of him, became a very fortunate obsession. Most of this collection of archangels and doves is comprised of Baroque carvings of a popular nature, dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries.

10. THE GREGORIO PRIETO PRIVATE COLLECTION ROOM

Since his initial successes in the early 1920s, Gregorio Prieto dreamed of bequeathing his art to a museum that would house his works, and he set aside his best creations for that purpose. His dream came

5. THE COLLAGE GALLERY

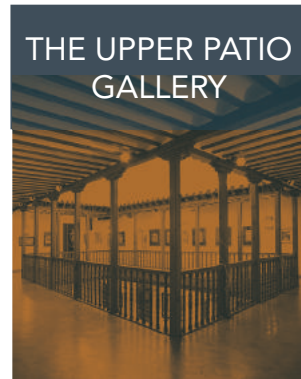
Here, we find a rich ensemble of collages mostly created as of Gregorio Prieto's return from London to Spain, after almost twelve years, in 1950. At a technical level the resources are similar, but aesthetically we can identify two trends: *Postismo* and "popares" (Pop Art).

The *Postismo* aesthetic is reflected by photomontages created from photographs taken by Prieto with Eduardo Chicharro during his spell in Rome; these photographs once again reveal his appreciation of mannequins, sailors and classic statues. These compositions were created in the context of *Postismo*, a fleeting avant-garde movement which, in the forties and early fifties, sought to revive the creative spirit of the Spain of the era. Gregorio Prieto was a prominent figure among the creators comprising the *Postismo* movement.

The "popares" compositions are Prieto's personal, traditionally Spanish take on United States Pop Art. Here, Hollywood's star system is replaced in these collages with an assortment of coupletists and bullfighters, and around them, Prieto uses a range of embroidery and braiding to build a kitsch aesthetic.

true, and we can now enjoy these works at the Gregorio Prieto Foundation Museum.

Alongside his own creations, Prieto nourished his own private portfolio with other collections, such as the previously mentioned carvings of the Holy Spirit and the Archangels. Other additions include the exquisite collection of



6.

Some of the photographs displayed here complement the pieces exhibited and detailed in the cellar, as they are part of the same series created by Gregorio Prieto and Eduardo Chicharro at the Academia de España in Rome in the early 1930s.

Based on the same collection of photographs taken in Rome, Prieto created a series of collages and photomontages which would see him join the ranks of the avant-garde artistic and literary *Postimo* movement in post-war Spain, which Prieto himself developed well into the 1960s. One way or another, all of these images depict the artist himself. He interacts with a broad range of objects, underscoring a clear narcissism that owes itself to his time in Rome, as well as to certain principles of Surrealism and Dadaism.

engravings and paintings by some of the most celebrated contemporary artists, both Spanish – Vázquez Díaz, Rafael Alberti, Benjamin Palencia and Gutiérrez Solana – and from other countries that were home to Prieto during his lifetime, including the Englishman Francis Bacon and the Italian Giorgio de Chirico.



7.

Gregorio Prieto sought refuge from the Spanish Civil War in London, where he lived from 1937 until almost 1950. The pieces on display in this Room are from that time in his life.

Gregorio Prieto's British period was remarkable for the artist's particular dedication to drawing, a technique he had mastered with great success previously. Gregorio Prieto's drawing is characterised by its subtle, fluid lines, reminiscent of Picasso's Ingres-influenced style of the 1920s. In this style, the artist captured the essence of students at Oxford and Cambridge, and the effigies of certain Spanish intellectuals who were also exiled there, such as Jiménez Fraud, Natalia Cossio and Salvador de Madariaga.

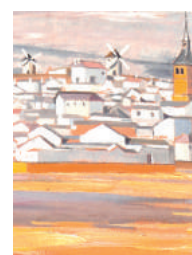
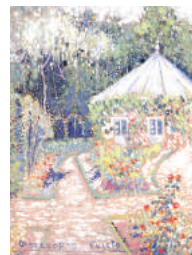
In terms of painting, we can observe here Prieto's remarkable dedication to the British landscape. The landscapes are accompanied by a series of portraits, in which Prieto's brushstrokes recreate the faces of important figures of British culture and the aristocracy, such as Lord Berners. These paintings are intensely coloured and painted using the *impasto* technique.



8.

Housed among the huge earthenware vessels in the old cellar of this ancestral home, we discover another of the multiple facets of Gregorio Prieto's art. This is a selection of photographs taken while the artist was on a study grant at the Academia de España in Rome from 1928 to 1933.

The series of images was envisaged by Gregorio Prieto and Eduardo Chicharro, a classmate at the Academia, and Prieto himself appears in many of these photographs, which are clearly rooted in Surrealism. Prieto takes on varying roles and poses in the images, with evident homoerotic and narcissistic connotations. Sailors and classic statues accompany the painter in this peculiar world, where irony, dreams and surprise combine to create an innovative, surreal collection.



THE GREGORIO PRIETO MUSEUM FOUNDATION