

PRESS RELEASE

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An exhibition of timepieces will be the setting for the presentation of Annie Leibovitz's new royal portraits for the Banco de España's collection

The Tyranny of Chronos exhibition will be the setting for the presentation of Annie Leibovitz's portraits of the King and Queen of Spain and of the outgoing governor, Pablo Hernández de Cos. These are the two latest additions to the Bank's portrait collection and for the first time photography is the medium used. Leibovitz's portraits mark a turning point in a tradition that goes back to the institution's inception, while echoing artists such as Goya – also included in the exhibition – who have approached these commissions fully aware of their artistic intentions. The exhibition will also include a heterodox selection of timepieces and works from the Banco de España Art Collection by artists from diverse backgrounds and historical moments who question and transgress the predominant conception of time in capitalist societies.

How has modern linear time been conceived? How is it related to productivity control? What questions and transgressions arise in non-Western cultural environments and from an artistic standpoint in response to this conception? The main purpose of *The Tyranny of Chronos* exhibition is to delve into these issues, using the Banco de España's own artistic heritage as the main source, from which around fifty pieces are presented, while also drawing on loans from other Spanish and international institutions.

These pieces include a large selection of clocks conserved at the Banco de España. Clocks have played a key role in constructing the way time is perceived and represented in Western culture and, specifically, in the history of the Banco de España itself: they have been present since its foundation in the late 18th century by an emerging financial bourgeoisie, who considered them a symbol of progress and social distinction.

The origins of this exhibition are in research conducted by the Curatorship Division of the Bank on its collection of timepieces, which gave rise to the publication last year of a catalogue raisonné detailing the nearly 200 pieces it owns. The research allowed us to document, for instance, that the oldest clocks were acquired for the original head office of the Banco de San Carlos at Calle de la Luna, which is considered to be the first predecessor of the Banco de España.

Portraits over the course of time

Clocks are objects that combine art, and technology, representation and function. Both facets are featured in *The Tyranny of Chronos*, where all the pieces shown are working. This gives the exhibition a sound dimension and visitors may listen to the clocks ticking and chiming, much as the Bank's employees have done, for more than two centuries.

The exhibition is divided into three sections. The first one, *Portraits over the course of time*, shows how clocks, owing to their symbolic significance (they measure and mark obligations and times) have frequently been used as an artistic motif, especially in portraits of dignitaries and monarchs. Examples of this are several paintings in our portrait collection, which can be seen in the exhibition. These include the portraits of the Count of Floridablanca and Francisco de Cabarrús by Goya, that of Ramón de Santillán by José Gutiérrez de la Vega (1852) and that of the governor José Ramón Álvarez-Rendueles by the Madrid artist Isabel Quintanilla (1985), the first one painted by a woman.

Clocks are also present in the latest two additions to the collection: the portraits of King Felipe and Queen Letizia, and of the governor, Pablo Hernández de Cos, by Annie Leibovitz, a US photographer and winner of the 2013 Prince of Asturias Award for Communication and Humanities. This exhibition, with which the Banco de España seeks to take a fresh look at its own identity and institutional individuality, will be the setting for the presentation of these portraits to the public, updating and continuing a tradition that goes back to the Bank's foundation. This tradition has survived to date practically uninterrupted over more than 240 years, assembling works by the most prominent portrait painters at each historical moment, from Goya, Maella, Vicente López, Federico de Madrazo and Sorolla to, more recently, Isabel Quintanilla and Carmen Laffón.

However, this is the first time that traditional easel painting has been replaced by photography, which revolutionised portraiture from its birth in the 19th century. We have worked with one of the most renowned photographers of our time, author of iconic portraits in the visual culture of the 20th and 21st centuries. There is an invisible line across time linking Goya – and the golden age of the Spanish royal portrait tradition – to Leibovitz, not only because she seeks to perform her task with the minimum of ceremony, but above all because of the way in which she approaches her commission, fully aware of her artistic intentions, allowing her to create historically significant images.

Annie Leibovitz's photographs are included in *Portraits over the course of time*, the first of the three sections of the exhibition. The other two, *I have no time* and *A time without timepieces*, present works from our contemporary collection. Some of them are recent acquisitions, highlighting an openness towards new artistic languages and the internationalisation process promoted in recent years.

I have no time

This section reflects on the deeply rooted troubling contemporary sensation that time no longer belongs to us. Its title, *I have no time*, was taken from a piece by the Croatian artist Mladen Stilinović in which he tirelessly repeats that phrase. This gesture serves as an introduction to artists' responses, of an essentially conceptual nature, to the Western notion of time and its role in a capitalist society. Such a

society would not have been possible as we know it without timepieces, machines that are able to measure time accurately and exchange it for goods.

Some of the issues addressed by the pieces in this section are work as a source of alienation, job insecurity for the new creative classes, the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life and the relationship between time and money. There is also a group of works that speaks about the role timepieces (a metaphor for regulation and order) have had and still have in the Bank's daily activity as elements that are present in its buildings and work spaces, not only as an item in a collection or a pictorial motif. Aside from the aforementioned Mladen Stilinović, this section also includes pieces by Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, Ibghy & Lemmens, Raqs Media Collective, Inmaculada Salinas, Juan Luis Moraza, Manolo Laguillo and Candida Höffer. Also shown is a fragment of Charles Chaplin's film "Modern Times", one of the most lucid precursors of contemporary critical theories about the capitalisation of life and human bodies.

A time without clocks

The third and last section is the one that most clearly responds to the concept of a linear, measurable and predictable time, which is the basis of contemporary productive logic. It does so through a selection of works that show that there are other ways of conceiving, experiencing and representing time that are based on the language of creativity or on non-Western cultural contexts, such as indigenism, which revolve around a different concept of time linked to natural cycles or ancestral knowledge.

Together with this notion of an alternative, reversible, non-linear time, other art processes in this sample propose different models of time that are linked to the slow movement or that directly question the principle that time is money and cannot, therefore, be squandered. These are artists who conceive and experience time from more liberating positions or who question the regulation of time imposed by the consumer society. The works of Yto Barrada, Antonio Pichillá, Ángel Poyón, Manuel Chavajay, Pieter Vermeersch, Javier Núñez Gasco, Victoria Civera, Chema Madoz and the aforementioned Inmaculada Salinas included in this third section vindicate and explore this defiant and potentially emancipating dimension of a non-colonial and poetic notion of time.

The exhibition "The Tyranny of Chronos", curated by the Banco de España curator Yolanda Romero, includes over 50 works by 24 artists or art groups, including tapestries, paintings, sculptures, photographs and timepieces. The oldest work, "The Triumph of Love and Eternity over Time", a tapestry based on a design by David Teniers III, is from 1684, while the most recent works are from the 2020s. In addition, around 20 clocks are showcased, mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries, although there are also a few from the 20th century. The exhibition boasts works of art loaned by six institutions: Patrimonio Nacional, the Museo Nacional del Romanticismo, the Museo Naval de Madrid, the Musée international d'horlogerie La Chaux-de-Fonds and the Gerardo van Waalwijk van Doorn Collection.

In parallel, a catalogue has been published which, aside from providing detailed information on all the pieces showcased, includes essays that help us delve into the issues and problems addressed in the exhibition. This publication, together with the catalogue *Colección de relojes del Banco de España: Las*


horas ya de números vestidas is the starting point for this project and they can both be downloaded from the Banco de España's Collection web portal (<https://coleccion.bde.es/>).

The Tyranny of Chronos can be visited in the exhibition hall at the Banco de España's Cibeles building (Alcalá 48, Madrid) from 27 November 2024 to 29 March 2025 from 11:00 to 14:00 and from 16:00 to 20:00, Tuesday to Saturday. These visits are free of charge and must be reserved in advance. There will be guided tours on Wednesdays from 18:00 to 19:00 and Saturdays from 11:00 to 12:00 and for families on Saturdays from 12:15 to 13:15.

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