

# Banal art history. Baroque, modernization and official cinematography in Franco's Spain<sup>1</sup>

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## **Dictatorship, mass media and the nationalization of the masses**

After a failed military coup against the legitimate government of the Spanish Second Republic and a civil war (1936–1939) won by the rebels, the dictator Francisco Franco would rule Spain until his death in 1975. One of the most successful models for the new Spain was that of the Spanish Golden Age under the Habsburg dynasty that ruled an empire 'on which the sun never set'. This model was interpreted in many different and sometimes even contradictory ways by a number of individuals, groups and collectives that supported the regime. The resulting combination was flexible and adaptable and thus also extremely resilient throughout almost forty years of dictatorship. Artists, intellectuals, politicians and propagandists drew from this imagined tradition to legitimize not only Franco and the dictatorship, but also the right of the groups that supported it to be in relevant positions of power; that was the case of the Military, the monarchists, the Carlists, the conservative Catholics and the Falange party members.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the visual arts, there were references to the great masters of the Golden Age, to their creations and to the main values associated with them such as spirituality, realism and Spanishness<sup>3</sup> in all kinds of objects and cultural practices that were directed towards wide audiences. Francoism was nevertheless, certainly not inventing anything new, it was employing to its advantage strategies and accepted symbols that already existed. On the one hand, it mostly selected, combined and

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<sup>2</sup> On the ways images and symbols identified with each of these different groups were used during the war and immediate post-war to legitimize Franco's claims to leadership, see Miriam Basilio, 'Genealogies for a New State: Painting and Propaganda in Franco's Spain, 1936–1940', *Discourse*, 24:3, Fall 2002, 67–94.

<sup>3</sup> In this article quotation marks will be used only in the case of citations and to mark specific terms or concepts. Distancing quotation marks will be avoided for the sake of simplicity given that, in this text, a very important number of complex and problematic terms (such as spirituality, realism or Spanishness in this case) will appear because they were (and some still are) commonplace in cultural discourses on Spain during the chronological framework discussed. Discussing each of them in depth is beyond the scope of this article.

promoted, notions, values, and objects that were already embedded in the imaginaries and political cultures of several conservative groups. On the other hand, Francoism was implementing strategies that had already been used by previous political regimes in Spain to convey their messages to the masses. In both cases the acceleration of the steps taken by the state to implement the nationalization of the masses in the nineteenth century, especially after the loss of the Spanish colonies in Cuba in 1898, played a relevant role.

As Javier Portús explains, the nineteenth century was crucial for the international establishment of the concept of 'Spanish painting', a concept that brought, and still brings together a handful of artists, namely El Greco, Ribera, Zurbarán, Velázquez, Murillo, Goya and Picasso, and artworks and common characteristics identified with the Spanish spirit.<sup>4</sup> Many of these artists, and especially those associated with the baroque and the Golden Age, were already important figures in the discourses of the nineteenth century aimed at shaping cultural nationalization in Spain. They would continue to be discussed in the twentieth century and would play an important role in the shaping of the discourses of the dictatorship. The case of the ideas of the art critic Eugenio d'Ors is revealing. In 1922, influenced by Heinrich Wölfflin's formalist theories and Hippolyte Taine's determinism, d'Ors defined the concepts of the 'baroque' and the 'classic' and classified the paintings at the Prado Museum accordingly. These two terms did not refer to any specific chronology but to supratemporal qualities that could be found in different times and places.<sup>5</sup> Eugenio d'Ors further developed his ideas about the baroque style in the *Entretiens* or *Décades de Pontigny*<sup>6</sup> in 1931 that dealt with the terms 'baroque' and 'baroqueness'.<sup>7</sup> The materials that he presented at this meeting were published four years later in his book *Du Baroque*, which would be soon translated into Italian, Romanian and Portuguese.<sup>8</sup> Eugenio d'Ors was to occupy a prominent position in the cultural panorama of

<sup>4</sup> Javier Portús, *El concepto de pintura española. Historia de un problema*, Madrid: Verbum, 2012, 9–11.

<sup>5</sup> Eugenio d'Ors, *Tres horas en el Museo del Prado*, Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1922.

<sup>6</sup> The *Décades de Pontigny* were ten-day gatherings organized by the intellectual Paul Desjardins. They took place once a year between 1910 and 1913, and between 1922 and 1939 at the remote Pontigny abbey that had been purchased by Desjardins. As François Chaubet notes, they appeared at a time in which international scientific meetings were in great fashion, in those early years they reflected on the role of intellectuals in a mass democratic society, in the inter-war period they played a relevant role in the Franco-German rapprochement and, in the 1930s, they led to a critical reflection on totalitarian regimes. There was a 'literary' *décade*, a 'philosophical' one and a 'political' *décade*. In each of them thirty to fifty selected people discussed a specific subject for ten days. Every year Desjardins wrote a text that appeared in the *Entretiens'* programme where the terms of that year's problem were stated. Some of the most prominent writers, professors, journalists, politicians and intellectuals of the time took part in the Pontigny gatherings. François Chaubet, 'Les Décades de Pontigny (1910–1939)', *Vingtième siècle, revue d'histoire*, 57, January-March 1998, 36–37.

<sup>7</sup> Alfonso Pérez Sánchez, 'Prólogo', in Eugenio d'Ors, *Lo barroco*, ed. by Ángel d'Ors and Alicia García Navarro d'Ors, Madrid: Tecnos, 2009, 9.

<sup>8</sup> The book could not appear in Spain until 1944 when a censored version (in which the sections dealing with Portuguese art and Hitler had been removed) was published. Eugenio d'Ors, *Lo barroco*, Madrid: Aguilar, 1944.

Franco's dictatorship and to play an important role in the political cultures that shaped the dictatorship's nationalist discourse.<sup>9</sup>

It has been argued that the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera established the ideological foundations of Francoism to which it was a model, a mirror.<sup>10</sup> As Alejandro Quiroga has signalled, many ideological postulates, myths, ceremonies and traditions that had been invented or consolidated during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, became part of Francoism from its inception.<sup>11</sup> This would also be the case for the use Francoism made of the mass media for propaganda purposes. As Maria Luisa Ortega has pointed out in her analysis of the role of documentary film within discourses about cinema as an educator for citizens in the first half of the twentieth century, the propaganda machinery improved by the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera implemented a whole programme that targeted mass audiences; the role of spectacular forms and cultural products was very important as was evident in the propaganda plan that publicized the 1929 exhibitions in Seville and Barcelona.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the programme for 1929 was the dictatorship's most ambitious propaganda plan, and one that bore some similarities with the modern approach to propaganda in Benito Mussolini's fascist Italy. It included the participation of all sorts of agents and institutions such as embassies, public officers, travel agencies, hotels, health resorts, etc. and emphasized the use of posters, flyers and the cinema.<sup>13</sup>

Following Primo de Rivera's footsteps, Franco regulated and used the mass media with the aim of carrying out a process of nationalization of the masses and conveying the regime's ideas and values. In April 1938, only a few months after the first Francoist government was established, the Press and Propaganda Services of the nationalists (as this was the name the Francoist side fighting in the war always used to

<sup>9</sup> Maximiliano Fuente Codera, 'Eugenio d'Ors y la génesis del discurso del nacionalismo falangista', in Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, ed., *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, vol. 2, Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico (CSIC), 2013, 148–164.

<sup>10</sup> On these issues see Alejandro Quiroga, *Primo de Rivera and the Nationalization of the Masses*, Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Alejandro Quiroga, 'Miguel Primo de Rivera: Overture to Franco', in Alejandro Quiroga and Miguel Ángel del Arco eds, *Right-wing Spain in the Civil War era: soldiers of God and apostles of the Fatherland*, London, New York: Continuum, 2012, 27–59; Xavier Casals, *Miguel Primo de Rivera. El espejo de Franco*, Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Quiroga, *Primo de Rivera*, 187–188.

<sup>12</sup> Maria Luisa Ortega, 'Realismo, documental y educación ciudadana en España', *Cahiers de civilisation espagnole contemporaine*, 11, 2003, accessed 10 October 2016 <http://ceec.revues.org/4857>.

<sup>13</sup> Quiroga, *Primo de Rivera* 177. On the role of cinema in the promotion of the 1929 exhibitions in Seville and Barcelona, see Luis Fernández Colorado, 'Las exposiciones del Imperio', in Josep Maria Català, Jostexo Cerdán and Casimiro Torreiro cords. *Imagen, memoria y fascinación. Notas sobre el documental en España*, Madrid: Ocho y medio-Festival de cine español de Málaga, 2001, 65–75; Luis Fernández Colorado, 'La realidad y la duda. El cine español de propaganda en los albores de la Segunda República', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 23, 2001, 125–140; Begoña Soto Vázquez, *Las exposiciones de 1929. Cuatro reportajes cinematográficos sobre la Exposición Iberoamericana (Sevilla 1929)*, Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, Filmoteca Española, ICAA, 2009.

refer to themselves, stressing their identification with the nation) was reorganized, and the *Departamento Nacional de Cinematografía* (National Cinema Department) was created. This institution was responsible for the creation of the *Noticiero Español* (1938–1941), a newsreel that has been described as ‘an instrument of combat and counter-propaganda’ and which was part of a totalitarian propaganda programme aimed at Fascist mobilization.<sup>14</sup>

In 1942 the *Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular de FET y de las JONS* (Vice-Secretariat for Popular Education of the *FET y de las JONS*<sup>15</sup>) created *Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos* (Cinematographic Newsreels and Documentaries, NO-DO). Between 1943 and 1976 the projection of NO-DO's ten-minute news bulletin<sup>16</sup> was mandatory in all cinemas.<sup>17</sup> It had no competitors for a long time because NO-DO had the monopoly over the production and exhibition of cinema newsreels in Spain, as well as over the exchange of information and news with all foreign organizations. In contrast with the propaganda tone of the *Noticiero Español* of the National Cinema Department, but in tune with a different context in which totalitarian ambitions were not part of the desired referents for Francoism, NO-DO seemed to aim at demobilization, carefully avoiding politics, direct propaganda and agitation, and provided a high volume of historically irrelevant news. These characteristics of NO-DO have led Rafael Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca to conclude that these productions were in fact, a powerful and successful instrument of ‘long-reach rhetoric affirmation’.<sup>18</sup>

In the beginning, NO-DO produced one newsreel a week, but from May 1943 and, with some exceptions, until 1960 there were two editions (*Serie A* and *Serie B*) per week. They were projected in different cinemas in order to ‘avoid the reiterated exhibition of the same newsreel in all cinemas’.<sup>19</sup> Between 1960 and 1967, NO-DO's most productive years, a third edition (*Serie C*) was added. Following that, there were again, two editions of the bulletin that were reduced to only one in 1977. In addition to

<sup>14</sup> Rafael Tranche, Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, ‘Prólogo a la octava edición’, in Rafael Tranche, Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *NO-DO. El tiempo y la memoria*, Madrid: Cátedra, Filmoteca Española, 2006, X.

<sup>15</sup> *FET y de las JONS* was the name of the political group that resulted from the (forced) merging of the fascist Falange party and the traditionalist Carlists in 1937.

<sup>16</sup> As has been common since NO-DO's times, here the term ‘NO-DO’ refers either to the institution *Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos* or to each of the newsreels produced by it.

<sup>17</sup> The mandatory projection of the NO-DO newsreels in all cinemas from January 1943 was imposed with the ‘Orden de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular de 17 diciembre de 1942’ (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*, BOE, 356, 22 December 1942). This was put to an end on 1 January 1976, when the ‘Orden de 22 de agosto de 1975’ (BOE, 225, 19 September 1975) that suppressed the mandatory projection of the NO-DO news bulletin had come into force. This means that although the decision was made before the dictator's death, it was not effective while he was alive.

<sup>18</sup> This is one of the strong theses sustained by both authors in the most detailed study of the NO-DO, its history, products (especially newsreels) and characteristics. Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca, ‘Prólogo’, XI.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Con ello [...] queremos evitar la exhibición reiterada de un mismo film de actualidades en todos los cines.’ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are the author's. ‘Rótulo informativo...’ *Noticiero NO-DO 20 A*, 17 May 1943.

newsreels, NO-DO made other audiovisual products such as the weekly journal *Imágenes*, which was made between 1945 and 1968, and different kinds of documentaries, it even produced newsreels for specific audiences outside Spain, from America to Portugal and Brazil.<sup>20</sup> Yet, unlike the case of the cinema news bulletins, NO-DO did not have the monopoly for the production of any of these other films and their projection was not mandatory.

In contrast with what would be expected from a news bulletin and with what similar newsreels in other countries were doing at the time, those produced by NO-DO included a very low proportion of breaking news and politics. In fact, as Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca have noted, one of the characteristic traits of the NO-DO was its high content of what Robert J. Schihl has called 'soft news' which are dateless news that can be produced and transmitted without pressure, in contrast with the immediacy required by 'hard news'.<sup>21</sup> Indeed the Francoist news bulletin gave preference to 'news of the period' rather than to 'the latest news'.<sup>22</sup> This was due to practical and logistical reasons, as well as to political ones. On the one hand, the people responsible for making the NO-DO knew that, because of the limited possibilities of its distribution, it was common that the newsreels were projected several months after their production. On the other hand, as it has been previously pointed out, the national and international context of the time advised the avoidance of the friction and political tension that could be provoked by latest news, especially in the regime's only newsreel.

NO-DO was made and shown in cinemas until 1981, several years after the death of the dictator, and there is no doubt that it reached a vast audience. As Vicente Sánchez-Biosca points out, going to the cinema was the most important leisure activity for Spaniards under Francoism because of its mass character, its capacity to integrate other spectacles, the various ways in which it could be consumed (i.e. by individuals, friends, couples, families, etc.) and because of its inter-class and inter-generational scope.<sup>23</sup> As he convincingly argues, NO-DO embodied the 'assertive spirit, of assent or consent' preferred by Francoism: the way it was consumed, together with its non exalted tone contributed to effectively disseminating and establishing some relevant symbolic aspects of Spanish life; it had a function 'close to liturgy' that had an important social impact, supporting the dictatorship's national project.<sup>24</sup>

Several specialists have analyzed a number of relevant aspects of the NO-DO newsreel, for example, how it elaborated a specific way of understanding time, the way it represented events or dates relevant to the dictatorship, how it helped build the

<sup>20</sup> For the NO-DO newsreels for Brazil (*Actualidades NO-DO para Brasil*) see Albina Luciani Albuquerque Pereira, *El noticiario cinematográfico 'Actualidades NO-DO para Brasil' (1950-1961)*, PhD thesis, Madrid: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Tranche and Sánchez Biosca, *NO-DO*, 85.

<sup>22</sup> Josetxo Cerdán and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'Newsreels, Documentary, Experimental Film, Shorts, and Animation' in Jo Labanyi and Tatjana Pavlovic, *A companion to Spanish cinema*, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, 528-529.

<sup>23</sup> Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'El NO-DO y la eficacia del nacionalismo banal', in Stéphane Michonneau and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, eds, *Imaginario y representaciones de España durante el franquismo*, Madrid: Collection de la Casa Velázquez, 2014, 177.

<sup>24</sup> '[...] el NO-DO encarnó el espíritu asertivo, de asentimiento o consentimiento por el que apostó el franquismo', Sánchez-Biosca, 'El NO-DO', 194.

dictator's and the regime's image, in which ways it showed its *lieux de mémoire*, how it represented notions such as nationalism or Hispanicity, or how it depicted celebrations like Christmas or the Holy Week.<sup>25</sup> Some interesting analyses have also been carried out that investigate the relationship between the Francoist newsreel, scientific discourses and the popularization of science.<sup>26</sup> The images and discourses related to the field of the visual arts were a regular feature of the NO-DO news: visually attractive, (apparently) non-political and hardly the latest news, there is no doubt the arts fitted well the category of the 'news of the period' preferred by NO-DO. Indeed, one of the recurrent sections of the bulletin was entitled 'Arts', although it is possible to find references to works of art, artists and artistic styles in any part of the newsreel. However, even though some publications have dealt with the way certain artists were depicted in the NO-DO, the attention devoted by scholars to analysing the role played by the arts in the Francoist newsreel is very scarce.<sup>27</sup> By focusing on the specific case of how the notions related to Spanish baroque art were conveyed by the NO-DO, this

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Román Gubern, 'NO-DO: la mirada del régimen', *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, 15, October 1993, 5–10; Ramón Sala, 'La memoria del franquismo', *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, 15, October 1993, 31–40; Rafael Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'NO-DO: entre el desfile militar y la foto de familia', *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, 15, October 1993, 41–54; Saturnino Rodríguez, *El NO-DO, ctecismo social de una época*, Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1999; Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca, *NO-DO*, 239–578; Miguel Ángel Hernández Robledo, *Estado e información. El NO-DO al servicio del Estado Unitario (1943–1945)*, Salamanca: Publicaciones Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 2003; Araceli Rodríguez Mateos, *Un franquismo de cine: la imagen política del régimen en el noticiario NO-DO (1943–1959)*, Madrid: Rialp, 2008; Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'Los lugares de memoria franquista en el NO-DO', *ArtCultura*, 11:18, January-June 2009, 95–108; Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'De independencias, guerras, pueblos e hispanidad. Ecos del NO-DO', in Jorge Nieto Ferrando, ed., *1808–1810. Cine e independencias*, Madrid: Abada, 2012, 81–95; Sánchez-Biosca, 'El NO-DO', 177–195.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, Felipe E. Ramírez, *Ciencia, tecnología y propaganda en el noticiario oficial del franquismo NO-DO (1943–1964)*, PhD thesis, Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2011; Alfredo Menéndez-Navarro and Rosa M. Medina-Doménech, 'Ausencia y primor: 'Mujer', tecnologías médicas e identidad nacional en el discurso visual de NO-DO', in Pilar Amador and Rosario Ruiz, eds, *Representación, construcción e interpretación de la imagen visual de las mujeres. Coloquio Insternacional de la AEIHM*, Madrid: Instituto de Cultura y Tecnología Miguel de Unamuno, 2002, 395–404; Javier Ordóñez and Felipe E. Ramírez, 'Los públicos de la ciencia española: un estudio del NO-DO', in Ana Romero de Pablos and María Jesús Santesmases, coords, *Cien años de política científica en España*, Bilbao: BBVA, 2008, 257–292; Alfredo Menéndez Navarro, 'Una cámara para nuestro amigo el átomo: la representación de las tecnologías médicas nucleares en NO-DO', *Quaderns del ciné*, 4, 2009, 47–56.

<sup>27</sup> There is an article analysing the figure of Salvador Dalí in the newsreel, Andrea Mariño, 'Dalí, ¿qué haces ahí? El personaje daliniano en el NO-DO (1948–1980)', *Documentación de las Ciencias de la Información*, 37, 2014, 91–115. It must be noted that there are publications on the art documentaries of the period (this includes but is not limited to, documentaries produced by NO-DO but does not consider the newsreels), the first ones were published during Francoism and there are also very interesting recent studies on the matter. See, for instance, José López Clemente, *Cine documental español*, Madrid: Rialp, 1960; Carlos Fernández Cuenca, *30 años de documental de arte en España*, Madrid: Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía, 1967; David Moriente, 'La pintura de Goya en el documental español: construcción y representación del imaginario cultural', *Iberic@al*, 4, 2013, 109–121.

study aims to be a first step in the investigation into how their productions contributed to popularizing art history notions and discourses among (captive) broad audiences, and consequently to understand their political, social and cultural roles.

### Keywords and the NO-DO database

As has been previously explained, Franco's dictatorship would find in the Golden Age one of its referents and models. The idea of the 'Golden Age' is related both to culture and chronology as it loosely refers to the cultural splendour of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain. The contrast between this cultural splendour and the rise and fall of the Spanish empire together with that of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty that ruled it, that characterize the Spanish Golden Age have always been a relevant and much discussed issue which has informed the way in which the Spanish colonial past<sup>28</sup> has been understood and the future of the nation has been imagined. The term 'baroque' can also be used in a sense that involves both chronology and style although, as with Eugenio d'Ors or Heinrich Wölfflin, the term 'baroque' is frequently used to name a style or even a spirit that has no chronological limits and that in the case of Spain, can also make past *grandeur* live on throughout time, at least in a cultural sense. In addition, the great art and artists associated with the baroque and the Golden Age were frequent references to legitimize modern painting in Spain. As Julián Díaz Sánchez has shown, art critics considered that the abstract art that some Spanish painters were producing in the 1950s was concluding a cycle that had started with Spanish baroque painting; Velázquez's brushstrokes or Zurbarán's austerity were among the most frequent elements of the Spanish artistic tradition that were invoked in texts about Spanish abstract art.<sup>29</sup>

The selection of the case studies considered here responds to and is limited by the characteristics of the database of the *Archivo histórico de NO-DO* (NO-DO historic archive) that can be consulted online.<sup>30</sup> The database searches take into account the textual description of the audiovisual material made by the specialists responsible for the NO-DO archive that is now kept in the Filmoteca Española. These textual descriptions include some elements but also exclude others: for instance, they include the headings that identified each of the sections within each newsreel and the text in

<sup>28</sup> Although this will not be analyzed here, the relationship between the Spanish empire, America and the notion of Hispanicity also involves the baroque. The relationship between the baroque and Hispanicity, the tensions inherent to it, its blind spots and problems have been pointed out by authors such as Jorge Luis Marzo, *La memoria administrada: el barroco y lo hispano*, Buenos Aires: Katz, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Julián Díaz Sánchez, *La 'oficialización' de la Vanguardia artística en la postguerra española: el informalismo en la crítica de arte y los grandes relatos*, Cuencia: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1998, 3–4. On this issue see also Julián Díaz Sánchez, *La idea de arte abstracto en la España de Franco*, Madrid: Cátedra, 2013; Julián Díaz Sánchez, *El triunfo del informalismo: la consideración de la pintura abstracta en la época de Franco*, Madrid: Metáforas del Movimiento Moderno, 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Searches can be launched online at the website of the Radiotelevisión Española (RTVE)/Filmoteca Española, accessed 30 April 2016 <http://www.rtve.es/filmoteca/no-do/>.

each news bulletin's programme, but they do not consider any information about the music, most of the content of the voiceover, or a consistent description of the images.

That is why in our view, an analysis of only the results offered by the database using keywords like 'baroque' would not enable an accurate evaluation because of the extent this notion was relevant in the newsreel or how it was used by the regime.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, only five results of the more than four thousand NO-DOs that were produced between 1943 and 1981 contrast with the relevance of the notion of the baroque in the discourses of art critics and art historians at the time, and this suggests that much is missing in this database. It is certain that the database content does not consider all the artwork and artists that appear in many news bulletins or the shared imaginary associated with the idea of the baroque. As a result, some other keywords were added to that of 'baroque' for the purpose of the database searches to select the corpus of newsreels referred to in this account. All the news bulletins that have been described in the NO-DO database with the following keywords have been considered: 'baroque' (*barroco/barroca*), 'Golden Age' (*Edad de Oro/Siglo de Oro*), 'imagería/imaginerio' (Spanish terms referring to the art of sculpting and painting sacred images and to the artists that produced them), 'Velázquez', 'El Greco', 'Zurbarán', 'Murillo' and 'Gregorio Fernández'.<sup>32</sup>

The relationship between the notions of 'baroque' and 'Golden Age' justifies their obvious presence as keywords for our search. Religious wooden polychrome sculptures made in Spain during this period are frequently described as a very singular (yet, unknown outside the country) creation of Spanish art of that time.<sup>33</sup> Also, in general, these sculptures and the Holy Week processions which many of them are a part of, are generally associated with religion and with baroque spectacle. According to Ana Isabel

<sup>31</sup> Although it is not possible to know if the newsreels' audiences perceived this connection and in which ways they made sense of it, there is some evidence that points to how the equation Francoism-baroque was apparent to many. Otherwise, the Golden Age and the Baroque would not have been discussed as a way to criticize the regime: that was the case, as Aurora G. Morcillo recalls, of Enrique Tierno Galván's *Notas sobre el Barroco* or of the anti-Francoist artists who used visual references to some of the Spanish great masters such as Velázquez or El Greco to criticize different aspects of the dictatorship (for example in the print entitled *Barroco español* by Equipo Crónica in 1966). Aurora G. Morcillo, *The seduction of modern Spain. The female body and the Francoist body politic*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010, 33. Concerning the ways anti-Francoist artistic initiatives challenged and called into question the Francoist cultural hegemony, its legitimacy to represent Spanish identity (especially by connecting with the Spanish pictorial tradition) and how they frequently interpreted the notion of the baroque in a negative way, see Noemi de Haro-García and Julián Díaz-Sánchez, 'Artistic Dissidence under Francoism: The Subversion of the Cliché', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 91: 5, 2014, 735–754.

<sup>32</sup> These are the results (those in which the selected keywords do not refer either to art, to culture-related topics or to artists' names, have been excluded) for all those searches, numbers in brackets: 'baroque' (5), 'Golden Age' (2), 'imagería/imaginerio' (9), 'Velázquez' (13), 'El Greco' (5), 'Zurbarán' (3), 'Murillo' (1) and 'Gregorio Fernández' (1).

<sup>33</sup> See for example, the terms in which this kind of sculpture is described on the website *El Siglo de Oro. The Age of Velázquez*, or the exhibition *The Sacred Made Real* (London, National Gallery, October 2009–January 2010). 'El Siglo de Oro', 'The Sacred Made Real', *The Sacred Made Real. Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600–1700*, accessed 10 October 2016 <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/the-sacred-made-real>.

Álvarez Casado's studies on art bibliography in Spain between 1936 and 1948, El Greco and Velázquez were, together with Goya, the artists to which more articles were devoted both in academic and non-academic publications. Religious polychrome sculptures (*imaginería*) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the art of the baroque and the Golden Age followed the mentioned Spanish great masters in the ranking of preferred topics both for the press and specialized journals during that period.<sup>34</sup> Taking this into account, and because of the striking resonance in present interpretations of the Spanish baroque to those made in the recent past,<sup>35</sup> the artists' names finally chosen as keywords in the database searches made to elaborate this article are those that appear both in *Spain for you*, a tourist guidebook published in 1964 that was translated into several languages,<sup>36</sup> and in the online presentation of the exhibition entitled *El Siglo de Oro. The Age of Velázquez* which was open between July and October 2016 in Berlin's Gallery of Old Masters (*Gemäldegalerie*).<sup>37</sup> A selection of the most significant results obtained by these searches will be analyzed in order to shed some light on the role played by the imaginaries of the baroque in the official Francoist newsreels.

### Baroque art and religion

The NO-DO organized and grouped news into sections according to topic and typology. The order and number of sections, which were announced with specific headings, was not fixed and differed from one newsreel to another. The length of each piece of news within a section was short: between a few seconds and some minutes, usually no more than two or three. This, together with the preference for 'soft' news, responded to the intention of making the newsreel attractive and surprising for its audience. Indeed, its makers wanted the newsreel to be entertaining for its captive audience of cinema-goers that was thought to consist mainly of women.<sup>38</sup> The succession of short news items that this way of understanding the newsreel required could hardly provide an in-depth analysis of any topic. Although terms like 'baroque',

<sup>34</sup> Ana Isabel Álvarez Casado, *Bibliografía artística del franquismo: publicaciones periódicas, 1936–1948*, PhD thesis, Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1993, 76–84.

<sup>35</sup> See for instance, the predictable chapter on 'Baroque and Spanish Golden Age' that is included in the 'Styles' section of the *Spain is Culture* portal of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports: Diego de Velázquez, Golden Age, cultural splendour that contrasts with the decline of the monarchy and crisis, the Council of Trent and Counter-Reformation are among its main features. 'The Baroque and the Spanish Golden Age', *España es cultura/Spain Is Culture*, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, accessed 30 April 2016 [http://www.spainisculture.com/en/estilos/barroco\\_siglo\\_oro/](http://www.spainisculture.com/en/estilos/barroco_siglo_oro/); 'Baroque', *España es cultura/Spain Is Culture*, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, accessed 30 April 2016 [http://www.spainisculture.com/en/estilos\\_artisticos/barroco.html](http://www.spainisculture.com/en/estilos_artisticos/barroco.html).

<sup>36</sup> Máximo, *Spain for you*, Madrid: Ministerio de Información y Turismo, 1964, 35. This guidebook was published in Spanish, English, French, Italian and German.

<sup>37</sup> 'El Siglo de Oro –the golden age of Spanish art...', *El Siglo de Oro. The Age of Velázquez*, accessed 10 October 2016 <http://www.museumportal-berlin.de/en/exhibitions/el-siglo-de-oro-spanische-malerei-und-skulptur-des-17-jahrhunderts/>.

<sup>38</sup> Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca, *NO-DO*, 107.

'Golden Age' or 'Renaissance' were used in the films their meaning was never defined or explained to the audience who were supposed to know or guess their meaning.

The earliest example of a NO-DO including the term 'baroque' among its descriptors is that of a newsreel dating from January 1944 that features the reconstruction of the baroque altarpiece of the Holy Spirit Church in Terrassa that had been destroyed by the 'Marxist Revolution', i.e. the Spanish Civil War.<sup>39</sup> The destruction, burning and sacking of religious art, symbols and buildings during the war was a typical trait of the Francoist depiction of the 'barbaric reds' and the 'chaos' created by them. It is worth noting that the altarpiece destroyed is specifically labelled as baroque when the voiceover describes it, but no images are shown. What might have been the role of flagging this stylistic reference? Miriam Basilio describes how the *War Exhibition* that was organized in San Sebastián in 1938 to commemorate the second anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish civil war, represented anticlerical vandalism through simulated scenes in its vestibule. These scenes contained elements and forms associated with the baroque: one 'featured truncated Solomonic columns typical of Spanish baroque church architecture and a fragment of a wooden crucifix missing the cross'.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps by stressing that the destroyed altarpiece in Terrassa was baroque it aimed to help the viewer understand this artifact as being a piece of artwork (because it was assigned to an artistic category), ancient, deeply and sincerely religious (as corresponded to the idea of Counter-reformation baroque Spain), rooted in Spanish tradition and probably, as many altarpieces in Spain typical of that period were, made of wood which would also make it easy to imagine its total destruction by fire.

In contrast to the Republic's mayhem, the regime appears as the representative of order, reconstruction and respect for tradition and religion. Yet, it is interesting to note that the old altarpiece was not rebuilt in its original form, but was newly created. In this case, as the voiceover proudly announces, the decoration of the altar and the façade of the church was carried out by the architect Lluís Bonet Garí, the painter Antoni Vila Arrufat and the sculptor Enric Monjo. The aesthetics of the new altarpiece clearly had nothing to do with the baroque style. Other restorations and reconstructions of the period frequently eliminated the not-quite-appreciated baroque elements that had been added to older buildings in order to recover what was considered to be the original appearance of the monument. In this case, the total destruction of the altarpiece probably made things even easier. Since the voiceover states that the artists had 'interpreted the subject of the old altarpiece according to the deepest liturgic feeling'<sup>41</sup> and had created one of the most important religious artworks of Spain at that time, one can assume that the intention might have been to stress the renovation, thanks to Francoism, of the religious feelings, but not necessarily the aesthetics, understood to be embodied in baroque art.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> 'Reconstrucción', NO-DO 54 A, 10 January 1944.

<sup>40</sup> Miriam Basilio, *Visual Propaganda, Exhibitions, and the Spanish Civil War*, Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2013, 187.

<sup>41</sup> '[...] han glosado el tema del antiguo retablo con arreglo al más profundo sentido litúrgico'. 'Reconstrucción', NO-DO 54 A, 10 January 1944.

<sup>42</sup> Several scholars have analyzed Francoism outlining that the regime and the Spanish Church (that also controlled education) used 'baroque' Counter-Reformation models to legitimize and impose their power. For instance, Giuliana di Febo has shown that at the time, the Spanish

In fact, the artistic and aesthetic quality of religious images for the new Spain was an important issue at the time, especially since those artifacts were in high demand after the war. In October 1945 an exhibition of religious sculpture reproductions was organized by the *Patronato Artístico Nacional* (National Artistic Patronage) at the *Círculo de Bellas Artes* in Madrid. According to the newspaper it was intended that these reproductions served as a guide for modern artists to create new religious art that was 'essentially Spanish'. A quote from the exhibition catalogue stressed this idea and participated in the generalized complaints about how cult needs were being covered by an industry that offered images that had not 'the minimum level of artistic dignity'.<sup>43</sup> The objects in the exhibition had been made by the artists of the *Servicio de Defensa del Patrimonio Artístico Nacional* (Service for the Defence of National Artistic Heritage), who had made reproductions of '19 pieces of artwork of classic Spanish *imagería*' and had restored some original pieces that were also on display. In addition, the reproduction process was also shown in the exhibition.<sup>44</sup>

In tune with the 'news of the period' spirit that characterized the newsreel, one NO-DO reported this exhibition one month after its inauguration. Although the soundtrack of the film has been lost and it is not possible to know the content of the voiceover, the images convey an idea of what was intended.<sup>45</sup> They stress the results of the restoration and the stages in the reproduction process at the beginning, and then concentrate on showing the sculptures, enhancing their dramatic effect using common resources in NO-DO productions on art, which were also commonly used in films about art at the time. The techniques used involved rotating the figures and using torches to create dramatic and changing lighting effects on sculptures. The last image of this piece of news seems to have been carefully chosen: it shows a sculpture that

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Church recuperated baroque models and celebrations that evoked those of the Counter-Reformation. Aurora G. Morcillo has also pointed out how Francoism revived notions of the Golden Age political discourse (such as 'organic democracy') to legitimize its power; she interprets 'the Francoist regime ideologically and culturally as neo-baroque, particularly when examined from a gender perspective'. Giuliana di Febo, *Ritos de guerra y de victoria en la España franquista*, Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2012, 16; Morcillo, *The seduction of modern Spain*, 17–18, 23.

<sup>43</sup> The exact words from the catalogue were: 'Es lo cierto que las imágenes modernas con que una industria poco escrupulosa provee las necesidades del culto no tienen el mínimo de dignidad artística que puede satisfacer a un espíritu medianamente cultivado.' Cecilio Barberán, 'El Ministro de Educación Nacional inaugura la exposición de imagería religiosa', *ABC*, Madrid, 23 October 1945, 23.

<sup>44</sup> All studies on the production of religious art of the time stress this increase in demand and the consequences it had on the poor quality of many of the objects created in response. The regime organized diverse activities and exhibitions to change this situation and in 1943 the 'Martínez Montañés' section of polychrome *imagería* (aimed to provide official adequate training to those willing to be *imageros*) was created in the recently funded Fine Arts School in Sevilla. It has been noted that during the second half of the twentieth century a clear valorization of neo-baroque forms was evident in the work of *imageros*. Significantly, in the 1970s the demand for this kind of sculpture decreased and this section of the Sevilla Fine Arts School was closed in 1976 as a result of insufficient students. Constantino Gañán, *Técnicas y evolución de la imagería policroma en Sevilla*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1999, 65–66.

<sup>45</sup> 'Arte', NO-DO 150 A, 19 November 1945.

represents the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As María Antonia Herradón Figueroa notes, the iconography of the Sacred Heart is not considered to have inspired any important works of art but as she analyzes, its image and the devotion to it were wide spread in Spain. Its cult had been appropriated by the rebels during the war; they reunited under the name of Spain, the ideas of fatherland, Catholicism and the kingship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; afterwards the National-Catholicism of the dictatorship continued promoting its devotion and during the 1940s and 1950s a number of new monuments were built as well as existing ones restored.<sup>46</sup> There was probably no better way of showing the viewers how the cult needs of the time could benefit from the inspiration provided by Spanish *imagería* than by showing its results on a sculpture for a popular cult the dictatorship so strongly identified with.

The close shots, careful lighting and montage of the 1950 NO-DO that showed the religious polychrome sculptures made by José Planes and Víctor de los Ríos for the Holy Week processions celebrated their success in creating the contemporary and truly religious sculptures that specialists were asking for at the time. The choice of NO-DO agreed with the position of the art critics. Although the voiceover is not conserved in this news bulletin, in the case of the sculpture by Víctor de los Ríos, for instance, the images filmed by the NO-DO operators seemed aimed at stressing exactly the same aspects of the sculpture that the art critic José Camón Aznar had praised in a text published in the newspaper *ABC*: the representation of each character's emotions, the outstanding modelling of their limbs and the scenographic composition of the whole sculptural group.<sup>47</sup> In tune with this, the newsbulletin combined images of details of the individual figures, namely close shots of their faces and hands, with others in which depth of field was used to show the spatial relationship between them.<sup>48</sup>

The results of our searches in the NO-DO newsreel database point to a lack of interest in indexing pieces of news as the work of modern *imageros* in NO-DO during the second half of the twentieth century. The most recent piece of news on contemporary *imagería* creations that we found concerns an exhibition of religious crafts in 1951.<sup>49</sup> It looks as if the idea of *imagería* and of *imageros* was no longer considered modern in the second half of the twentieth century, and so had to be restricted to a notion of tradition that was related to the past and with the conservation and not the actualization, of its aesthetics.<sup>50</sup> Although modern aesthetics would play an increasingly relevant role in the production of religious artwork in the second half of the twentieth century it seems that, at least in NO-DO, religious sculpture with modern aesthetics and its creators were not associated with the notions of *imagería* or *imageros* after the 1950s. Furthermore, it was probably not a coincidence that at this

<sup>46</sup> María Antonia Herradón Figueroa, 'Reinaré en España. La devoción al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús', *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares*, 65:2, 2009, 193–218.

<sup>47</sup> José Camón Aznar, 'El escultor Víctor de los Ríos presenta una original 'Santa Cena' en la Dirección General de Marruecos y Colonias', *ABC*, Madrid, 24 March 1950, 11–12.

<sup>48</sup> 'Arte religioso', NO-DO 377 A, 27 March 1950.

<sup>49</sup> 'Arte sacro', NO-DO 431 B, 9 April 1951.

<sup>50</sup> The three most recent NO-DOs that are described with terms related to *imagería* deal with traditional religious sculpture, not with modern interpretations: 'Belenes artísticos', NO-DO 522 A, 5 January 1953; 'Semana Santa', NO-DO 536 B, 13 April 1953; 'Imagería', NO-DO 706 B, 16 July 1956.

moment the dictatorship's discourse on contemporary art was making its very well-known decisive shift towards the support of modern aesthetics that were compatible with international abstract western trends, especially with the celebration of events such as the *I Bienal Hispanoamericana de Arte* of 1951.<sup>51</sup>

But *imagería* would not disappear from NO-DO. Even though most of the NO-DOs are not indexed using the keywords '*imagero*' or '*imagería*' the regime's newsreel devoted footage to Holy Week processions every year and the artwork of great artists, old traditions and popular devotion were recurrent topics when describing the processions.<sup>52</sup> The regional differences between the celebrations were also stressed, usually by focusing on the contrast between the austerity of Castille (with cities such as Cuenca, Zamora and Valladolid) and the extroversion of Southern Spain (i.e. Sevilla, Granada, Málaga or Murcia). This is the reason why the tourist guide *Spain for you* stated that the 'greatest possible contrast [...] is Semana Santa, or Holy Week' and suggested its readers go 'to Seville or to Valladolid, to Málaga or to Cuenca, to Murcia or to Zamora' thus making pairs of cities according to their contrasting nature.<sup>53</sup> Sánchez-Biosca has noted how the tension between these two poles is also present in the NO-DO depiction of Holy Week.<sup>54</sup> This can be seen for example, in a news report about Holy Week in Spain in 1946 that lasted for the unusual length of time of six minutes. Its images had been shot in Sevilla, Murcia, Zamora, Valladolid, Cartagena, Málaga and Granada and concentrated mainly on the sculptures in the processions.<sup>55</sup> They showed the diversity of the religious celebration and were at the same time proof of the Catholic character of the whole country. The newsreel's heading and its images had been extracted from a longer production by NO-DO, an almost thirteen-minute black and white documentary entitled *Semana Santa en España*, also made in 1946. Such transfers between different productions was quite frequent for NO-DO.

The regular presence of religious and baroque polychrome sculptures screened in the news about Holy Week contributed to stressing their relationship with national identity as they were part of what was presented as a singular Spanish tradition that remained unchanged, identical to itself throughout time and that had the faithful

<sup>51</sup> The historiography on contemporary Spanish art has always considered this exhibition as the turning point in the regime's official artistic policies that from then on would try to be aligned with the dominant aesthetics in the West. On the *I Bienal Hispanoamericana de Arte* see Miguel Cabañas Bravo, *La política artística del franquismo: el hito de la Bienal Hispano-Americana de Arte*, Madrid: CSIC. 1996.

<sup>52</sup> For instance, a NO-DO made in 1953 (which is actually described in the database with the keywords '*imagería/imagero*') the description of the processions in Valladolid included explicit references to the 'severe Castilian Holy Week' and to the names of the *imageros* Gregorio Fernández, Juan de Juni and Alonso Berruguete as well as to some of their sculptures which were said to only have their whole meaning on the day they were on procession. 'Semana Santa', NO-DO 536 B, 13 April 1953.

<sup>53</sup> Máximo, *Spain for you*, 42.

<sup>54</sup> Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca, *NO-DO*, 567–571.

<sup>55</sup> 'Semana Santa en España', NO-DO 171 B, 15 April 1946.

support of the people.<sup>56</sup> Specialists have concluded that one of the characteristics of the Francoist newsreel is that it conveys an immobilistic image of time where nothing flows, where elements of the past and traditions such as Holy Week are commemorated in a cyclic way, and where the images make it very difficult or even impossible for spectators to associate the news they are seeing with a specific year or chronology because of the very few elements of the period in which they were made are visible on the screen.<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt that the traditional and unchanging baroque aesthetics of Holy Week *imagería* which appeared again and again every year on the screens contributed to conveying this sense of atemporality to the yearly information on this religious celebration.

### Golden Age modernization

The keyword 'Velázquez' provides the highest number of results in the searches in the NO-DO database. The first corresponds to a piece of news from 1950 about an exhibition of 'classic painting' in which according to the images, *The three musicians* by Velázquez, was on display. Because there is no sound on the film available online it is not possible to identify which exhibition this bulletin is referring to, although the paintings displayed on the film<sup>58</sup> lead us to believe it might have been one of the

<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that the news bulletin discourses on the art of *imagería* usually emphasized how these sculptures had characteristics that connected them both to an elitist idea of art (they named their authors, their chronology and frequently associated them to an artistic style) and to a popular idea of art as they also stressed their links with craftsmanship and with popular devotion.

<sup>57</sup> Tranche and Sánchez-Biosca, *NO-DO*, 277, 283–293.

<sup>58</sup> The film shows that among the paintings on display were the *Portrait of a young girl* by Petrus Christus, *The glass of wine* by Johannes Vermeer, *The witch of Haarlem* and the *Singing boy with a flute* both by Frans Hals, the *Portrait of a man with carnation* by Jan van Eyck, *The preaching of Saint John the Baptist* by Rembrandt van Rijn, *The man with the golden helmet* attributed to Rembrandt at the time and *The three musicians* by Diego Velázquez. With the exception of the Velázquez all these works of art are reproduced in the catalogue of the exhibition *Masterpieces from the Berlin Museum* that could be seen in the United States between 1948 and 1949. According to its catalogue, the exhibition displayed some of the artwork from Berlin museums that had been discovered in a salt mine at Merkers by the American army. The paintings were transported to the United States for safekeeping. When it was considered they could be returned to be kept safely in Germany a touring exhibition of some of the paintings was organized by museums in Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Toledo with the cooperation of the Department of the Army of the United States. (*Masterpieces from the Berlin Museums. Exhibited in cooperation with the Department of the Army of the United States of America*, Cleveland: the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1948). Other exhibitions in which some of these pieces were on display were organized in Europe afterwards. The information in *The Rembrandt Database* regarding the exhibitions in which *The man with the golden helmet* has been on display has been taken into account in order to identify the exhibition that might have been filmed and shown in this particular NO-DO newsreel. 'The man with the golden helmet', *The Rembrandt Database*. Accessed 10 October 2016 <http://www.rembrandtdatabase.org/Rembrandt/painting/202398/the-man-with-the-golden-helmet/exhibitions>.

exhibitions of masterworks of the Berlin museums that toured different countries during this time, probably the one entitled *120 Beroemde schilderijen uit het Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum te Berlijn* (120 Famous paintings from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin) that took place at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam between June and September 1950. The exhibition was probably not filmed by NO-DO but by one of the foreign agencies it exchanged materials with. Nevertheless, the fact that the last image in this newscast is precisely the painting by Velázquez shows how the producers of the newsreel probably wanted to stress the Spanish presence in the exhibition. Even though it is not possible to know how the newsreel made sense of this footage, given the role the Allies played in such exhibitions, it makes sense to think that it was probably in line with the reorientation of the regime's position from a pro-axis to a pro-allied position that had taken place during the 1939–1945 war.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, the dictatorship had to erase its former links with fascism to survive in the new international context. A slow discursive shift took place during the late 1940s and the early 1950s, the regime's politics changed and Spain opened up to other countries, abandoning autarky. In 1953 Spain signed economic and military agreements with the United States and a concordat with the Vatican (Catholicism remained among the best legitimizing tools of the regime). In 1955 Franco's Spain was recognized by the United Nations. This was the end of a decade of international ostracism and meant the partial integration of Spain into the existing (Western) international community. Years of accelerated economic modernization followed and were much celebrated. These were the years of the 'Spanish economic miracle' (*milagro económico español*) and had much to do with the rise to power of members of the Prelature of Opus Dei to key positions in Franco's ministries since 1957.

As previously mentioned, the official Spanish artworld and politics also experienced changes; the dictatorship started promoting Spanish abstract painting that resonated with the Western international panorama of the visual arts.<sup>60</sup> Abstract art that had formerly being accused of being 'red' and 'foreign', was now used to demonstrate the opening of the regime to external influences and to international modernity. Nevertheless, the spirit of the great Spanish masters was also to be found in modern Spanish painting both in the country and abroad. In 1960 curator Frank O'Hara presented abstract painting in the exhibition *New Spanish Painting and Sculpture* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York: he compared Martín Chirino to Zurbarán, stressed Velázquez and Goya's influence on Spanish modern art, and wrote that Manuel Millares endowed his paintings with the 'ceremonial vestiges' of the bull ring.

<sup>59</sup> For more information about the way that the newsreels represented the Second World War see Vicente Sánchez-Biosca and Rafael R. Tranche, 'NO-DO y la Segunda Guerra Mundial', *CERS Co-textes*, 27–28, 1994, 129–158; Mercedes Rodríguez Sánchez, *La Segunda Guerra Mundial en el NO-DO (1943–1945)*, PhD thesis, Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> In the case of the NO-DO newsreels, the decade of the 1960s was according to Sánchez-Biosca, the moment in which 'change, finally' occurred because the discourse and rhetoric of development appeared. The panorama changed due to the forced coexistence of the messages of tourism, consumer culture, de-ideologization, 'peace' and economic development with the previous messages such as those of the ritualistic Francoist commemorations of the past that contributed to giving a sense of circularity and immobility to time. Cerdán and Sánchez-Biosca, 'Newsreels, Documentary', 531; Sánchez-Biosca, 'NO-DO: el tiempo.'

Spanish tradition was the reason why, despite the stimuli received from international trends, Spanish artists remained 'different, aristocratic, intransigent, articulate'.<sup>61</sup>

Spanish old masters were referents not only for the art critics that interpreted and legitimized abstract art but also for other painters. In 1960 the 300th anniversary of the death of Velázquez was celebrated and this led to the organization of a number of events that attracted the attention of the NO-DO cameras. Between January and June 1961 several NO-DOs gave details about different events related to the commemoration. Among them was an exhibition of contemporary painters that interpreted the scenery of the *Casa de Campo*, Madrid's largest green area. The exhibition was presented in the newsreel as a tribute to Velázquez who had represented such a landscape in many of his paintings.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, as it was believed that this landscape had remained the same since Velázquez's times, drawing inspiration from it enabled contemporary artists to connect directly with the essence of that past Golden Age which was in fact also the essence of the country.<sup>63</sup>

Apart from some other newsreels that reported events related to the celebration of Velázquez's anniversary,<sup>64</sup> the one that depicted the closing of the exhibition organized by the Prado Museum for this commemoration stands out because of which aspects it chose to outline as the major signs of its success. The exhibition was entitled *Velázquez y lo velazqueño. Exposición homenaje en el III centenario de su muerte (1660-1960)* and was open to the public from the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1960 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1961. The newsreel reported the closing of the exhibition in March 1961, some days after it had actually closed, but in contrast with other occasions in which the focus was solely on politicians and other public figures attending the official ceremony,<sup>65</sup> the NO-DO operators only devoted a few seconds to them. Other features of the show attracted the lenses of their cameras.

<sup>61</sup> Frank O'Hara, *New Spanish Painting and Sculpture*, (exhib. cat.), New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1960, 9–10. For this and other Spanish art exhibitions in the United States in 1960 see Robert Lubar, 'Millares y la pintura vanguardista española en América', *La balsa de la Medusa*, 22, 1992, 49–72; Julián Díaz Sánchez, '1960: Arte español en Nueva York. Un modelo de promoción institucional de la vanguardia', *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte*, 12, 2000, 155–166.

<sup>62</sup> 'Homenaje a Velázquez', NO-DO 939 B, 2 January 1961.

<sup>63</sup> It must be pointed out that many intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as those of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* had found Spanish identity in the Castilian landscape. This contributed to the promotion of the study of Spanish classic painting and to the great importance of Velázquez's art that paid special attention to the background landscape. María del Carmen Pena, *Pintura de paisaje e ideología. La generación del 98*, Madrid: Taurus, 1983, 8.

<sup>64</sup> For more on these newsreels and other NO-DO productions concerning Velázquez at the time, see Noemi de Haro García, 'Velázquez y lo velazqueño en las producciones de NO-DO', in Miguel Cabañas and Wifredo Rincón, eds., *Imaginario en conflicto: lo español en los siglos XIX y XX*, Madrid: CSIC, 2016 (forthcoming).

<sup>65</sup> See for example the images in the newsreel reporting the inauguration of the exhibition *Velázquez y su época* in Barcelona which centred on the public figures present at the ceremony, on their words and their actions, and also paradoxically on a painting by El Greco to which was the last close up shot in this piece of news was devoted. 'Arte', NO-DO 962 A, 12 June 1961.

The exhibition was described as a success which, in the vein of the technocratic spirit of the times, was evidenced by figures: those of the numbers of visitors, of works of art on display, of lenders from the whole world and the amount of money collected.<sup>66</sup> The commentator proudly announced that 86744 tickets had been sold, pointing out that this impressive number did not even reflect the total number of visitors because it did not include those who had attended the exhibition on the free-entry days, or those who were part of educational or cultural groups.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile the images showed the sale of the last ticket in a way that is vaguely reminiscent of some of the images the mass media used to celebrate the millions of tourists that arrived in the country during the 1960s. Although there are some images that show what the exhibition looked like, dedicating some shots to relevant paintings on display such as *The toilet of Venus* as well as to the public figures in the closing ceremony, the most interesting images are those that capture the bustling masses that filled the galleries. The NO-DO cameras filmed men and women, young and elderly, nuns, priests and young couples moving and crowding together in front of the paintings, and then everybody being herded out of the museum by a guard at the end of the last day of the exhibition. These shots in the filled rooms contrast with the following (and prepared) shots that show the empty gallery and the museum workers taking down the *The toilet of Venus*, preparing it to be boxed up for its journey back to London, under the 'attentive look' of a person from the National Gallery who was overseeing the process. The words of the commentator stated that of the 176 paintings on display, 61 had been loaned by European and American museums and collections, and finally and significantly, the last words of the voiceover, accompanied by triumphant music, were that almost one and a half million *pesetas* had been collected by the sale of tickets. All of which served to remind spectators how successful modern developing Spain was. It organized ambitious exhibitions, it was an accepted and respected interlocutor in international relations that could receive important pieces of artwork and specialists from museums such as the London National Gallery, and was able to transform its culture and traditions into money.

Spanish culture was one of the main ingredients presented as a singular, marketable product, not in vain was the slogan for the very successful official tourist campaign at the time 'Spain is different.' Tourism, which was considered one of the most important tools for economic development by the regime's technocratic politicians, benefitted from the new more liberal politics of the dictatorship. In addition, Spain's cooperation with other countries such as the United States was crucial for the creation of its infrastructure and the introduction of new management models that were key for the tourist sector; as a result, in the mid 1960s Spain was the top destination for international tourism.<sup>68</sup> Interior tourism also grew as people used their recently acquired affordable new cars to visit the country. The introduction of messages in the regime's newsreels related to promoting tourism and its success was in

<sup>66</sup> 'Actualidad nacional', NO-DO 948 A, 6 March 1961.

<sup>67</sup> The press at the time affirmed that the exhibition had had more than 150,000 visitors. CIFRA, 'Ciento cincuenta mil personas visitaron la exposición *Velázquez y lo velazqueño*', ABC, Sevilla, 23 February 1961, 25.

<sup>68</sup> Ester M. Sánchez Sánchez, 'El auge del turismo europeo en la España de los años sesenta', *Arbor*, 152: 699, September 2001, 203–204.

line with this orientation towards mass tourism. In fact, since the creation of the new Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1951, NO-DO had been transferred to it, and the use of the regime's production company to convey such messages was by no means, an exception but the consequence of the policies of the dictatorship.<sup>69</sup> Not even the religious topics escaped this, NO-DO's cyclic time was also compatible with tourism. It has been suggested that some of the NO-DO films of the Holy Week processions in Salamanca were made because religious brotherhoods had requested this in order to promote tourism.<sup>70</sup>

Spanish artistic tradition was also employed to legitimize a number of contemporary practices beyond the artistic field that could be loosely associated with modernization. The great masters, their paintings and in general the spaces associated with them, and therefore, with high culture, such as museums are mentioned in order to provide a high-culture varnish and to hispanicize what otherwise could simply be considered as foreign use and consumer culture. In a newsreel made in 1965 the introduction points out that the Prado Museum is a constant attraction for 'tourists and art lovers' and that the rooms devoted to Velázquez always attract large audiences. This led to the creation of the *Línea Velázquez* (Velázquez line) by a hairdresser.<sup>71</sup> The way he had been inspired by Velázquez is explained by the commentator, who compares him with the copists who work at the Prado Museum, and by the images that show him as an attentive observer of the paintings that surround him while he works, just as the copists (and the public at the museum) have previously been portrayed. The only difference is that he applies his hands and tools, initially a twin tailed comb that the images show him holding as if it were a painter's brush, not on a canvas, but on model's hair. Although one part seems to have been filmed in the Prado Museum and the other part at a fashion show, both spaces are presented as equivalent in this NO-DO because in both cases they show the artists copying from the great masters, an attentive audience looking at the artistic creations and rooms with images on the walls. The connection with the museum is stressed by the fact that every hairstyle has a title referring to a well-known painting by Velázquez, such as *Conde Duque*, *Fragua* or *Breda*. Even if the commentator says that the hairdresser has in mind the coiffures of the figures in the paintings, at best it is only possible to find a vague resemblance between them. However, the aim of the titles of these creations might not have been to indicate that they were a faithful copy of a painting, but that they could be easily recognized by the spectators who would find these hairstyles fashionable, modern and traditional at the same time. International but with a Spanish twist. Pieces

<sup>69</sup> Previously NO-DO had already been transferred to the Ministry of National Education that meant it no longer depended on the regime's unique political party. This transfer significantly took place in 1945 and as Rafael R. Tranche noted it meant a shift in the regime's concept of propaganda because its actions were hidden in the educational milieu. Rafael R. Tranche 'NO-DO: la memoria documental del Franquismo', in Josep María Català, Josetxo Cerdán and Casimiro Torreiro, coords., *Imagen, memoria y fascinación, Notas sobre el documental en España*, Madrid: Ocho y Medio, Festival de Cine Español de Málaga, 2001, 99–114. Cited by Ortega, 'Realismo, documental', accessed 10 October 2016, <http://ceec.revues.org/4857>.

<sup>70</sup> Miguel Ángel Hernández Robledo, *La pasión de Jesús en el cine. La presencia cinematográfica de la Semana Santa de Salamanca en el NO-DO*, Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> 'Información nacional', Noticiero NO-DO 1193 A, 15 November 1965.

of news like this bring the newsreel's content closer to those of a fashion or celebrity magazine and are good examples of NO-DO's 'soft news'. It also demonstrates to what extent these pieces of news could contribute to reinforcing the Golden Age Spanish artistic canon, making it relevant to the present even by referring to it in an indirect way or as a mere excuse.<sup>72</sup>

### Pages in colour

Although Televisión Española (TVE) regular broadcasting had started in Spain in 1956, its popularization did not take place until the 1960s. Until then cinema remained the main form of entertainment for Spaniards and afterwards both media and their different social practices of consumption had to coexist. In 1968 the Francoist administration was restructured and NO-DO started to depend on TVE. Because the news was better and conveyed faster by television, it was considered necessary to reorient the NO-DO newsreel which changed its name accordingly to *Revista Cinematográfica Española* (Spanish Cinematographic Journal). Until then all NO-DOs had been filmed in black and white but now the new format included one 'Page in colour' (*Página en color*) at the end in order to make it more attractive. The combination of black-and-white and colour footage was used until 1977 when the whole NO-DO was filmed in colour.<sup>73</sup>

NO-DO's 'Pages in colour' would frequently deal with topics related to culture, the arts or tourism. For example, the two-minute 'Page in colour' from a bulletin made in 1973 focused on the city of Jaén and devoted the initial ten seconds to the cathedral which was filmed so that it stood out as the biggest building in the city. The cathedral was described as a combination of gothic, plateresque, renaissance and baroque elements. However, no further explanation was given as to what the characteristics of any of these styles were, or which of them could be found in this specific building. The terms were just mentioned, merely flagged, as were the artists that made the building, the symmetry of the façade, and the names of the religious figures on its balustrade. In summary, according to NO-DO the style, authorship, composition and iconography seem to be the key features to be observed in an artistic artifact such as this. Immediately afterwards, the contrast between this monumental tradition and the modern urban planning of the city centre was noted and put into images with shots of a couple of tall modernist buildings and streets filled with cars. It was precisely this combination of past *grandeur* and modern comfort which was outlined, together with the views, in the description of the National *Parador* of Jaén.<sup>74</sup> The *Parador* had

<sup>72</sup> In the same vein see for example, the NO-DOs that showed a biopic on El Greco made by Luciano Salce and filmed in Toledo with the presence of international stars like Mel Ferrer and Rosanna Schiaffino (and also Ferrer's wife, the fashionable Audrey Hepburn). 'Cinematografía', NO-DO 1135 B, 5 October 1964; 'Película 'El Greco' en Toledo', NO-DO 1222 A, 6 June 1966.

<sup>73</sup> At the time TVE broadcasts were in black and white, in 1972 the first television programme in colour was made and TVE combined programmes in colour and black and white until 1975 when colour broadcasting was generalized in Spain.

<sup>74</sup> The network of national *paradors* consists of hotels located in restored historic buildings throughout Spain. The creation of this network during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was

formerly been a castle and had castilian-style furniture but there were telephones in the rooms, a restaurant and waitresses who wore the regional costume as their uniform. This appeared to be the place where tourists were recommended to stay, probably while travelling to other places in Southern Spain because as the voiceover informed at the beginning, 'Jaén is the entrance door of Andalucía.'<sup>75</sup>

In addition to other information filmed in black and white about topics such as the celebration of a contemporary art biennale in the tourist town of Marbella with a common topic related to Velázquez for its first edition,<sup>76</sup> or the making of one more film related to El Greco's Toledo and its continuing traditions,<sup>77</sup> there were also several 'Pages in colour' that included topics related to the art of the baroque and the Golden Age. Three were made in the 1970s and presented several aspects of the paintings by Velázquez. They stand out because of their approach, and because they were filmed by Jesús Fernández Santos, a writer and filmmaker who specialized in the documentary genre for his living. He worked for NO-DO but also made films for other ministries and other producers, in addition he also worked for TVE and some of his documentaries were awarded national and international prizes.<sup>78</sup> More than a decade before, in the commemorative year of 1960, Fernández Santos had made an eleven-minute documentary on Velázquez for NO-DO that focused on the artist's life and work.<sup>79</sup> These brief three minute 'Pages in colour' on Velázquez made by Santos for the NO-DO bulletin in the 1970s were conceived almost as short documentaries that tried to present the paintings as historical sources. In these the camera focused only on the paintings, and the spectators' eyes were led, and trained to look at art in this way, by the usual zooms in and out of the paintings, together with tracking shots to show details that were described or commented on by the voiceover.

The paintings were presented as sources to learn from and to reflect on the historical moment the painter lived in. Some questions regarding the paintings were presented to the viewer and answered taking into account the (not very recent) work of specialists<sup>80</sup> and some observations. Thus, the voiceover wondered whether the horses painted by Velázquez existed or were inventions, if the fools had any kind of medical condition or how they felt about their role in the court, or why Velázquez included anachronic spears in *The Surrender of Breda*. The realism of Velázquez was taken for granted and was the common ground on which most questions were answered.

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related to the promotion of mass tourism. Francoism would contribute considerably to its development.

<sup>75</sup> 'Página en color', Noticiario, NO-DO 1596 A, 6 August 1973.

<sup>76</sup> 'Informaciones y reportajes', NO-DO 1511 A, 20 December 1971.

<sup>77</sup> 'Informaciones y reportajes', NO-DO 1567 A, 15 January 1973.

<sup>78</sup> Luis Miguel Fernández, *Escritores y televisión durante el franquismo (1956–1975)*, Salamanca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 2014, 116–122.

<sup>79</sup> *Velázquez* (Jesús Fernández Santos, 1960).

<sup>80</sup> However, it appears that the intention was not to stress the novelty of the interpretations that were presented because one of the studies cited had been published 'more than fifty years ago' ('Los bufones de Velázquez', NO-DO 1654 A, 23 September 1974) and a statement of Eugenio d'Ors that everything had already been written about *The Surrender of Breda* was cited at the beginning of the 'colour page' on this painting ('Las Lanzas de Velázquez', NO-DO 1713A, 10 November 1975).

Consequently, because his other figures were true depictions of reality there was no reason to think that this should be different in the case of the horses which were thus taken as truthful representations of those at the Spanish court.<sup>81</sup> The portraits of the fools were accurate representations of both their physical and psychological appearance and so it was possible to make a diagnosis of the illnesses they suffered, as well as to imagine how they might have felt.<sup>82</sup> Velázquez's greatness was outlined in the case of *The Surrender of Breda* which was used to illustrate the narration of the historical event, 'one of the crucial moments for the Spanish empire', and the relevance of the painting for political representational purposes, justifying historical inaccuracy as pictorial license, i.e. the presence of the anachronic spears was not a flaw in his realism but a proof of his artistic extraordinary competence.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to naming some of the always cited characteristics of Velázquez's paintings (such as the accuracy of his portraits that even captured the moral qualities of its models, or the way he was able to depict the effects of light, air and smoke in the representation of space) the voiceover stressed that *The Surrender of Breda* outlived the Habsburg monarchs it was made for, and that it was an exemplary piece of artwork and a moral model in the fair treatment of the defeated.<sup>84</sup> How would such a reference to the defeated be interpreted at the time? Would it be associated with the treatment given to the defeated in the Spanish Civil War?<sup>85</sup> This bulletin is dated only a few days after the dictator was taken to the hospital where he died some weeks later. Could it be that these references to the fall of the Habsburg monarchs were associated with the uncertain times Francoism was facing at that moment?

Another 'Page in colour' reported the exhibition *The Golden Age in Spanish Painting* celebrated at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The images, which may not have been filmed by NO-DO, focused on the paintings and on the visitors to the exhibition, mentioning that it was very well received by art critics and naming the title and authors of all the paintings appearing on screen. The voiceover noted how relevant this event was because it was the first display of Spanish art taking place in London since 1920.<sup>86</sup> The most recent newsreel that includes a reference to the baroque in its description was made in 1976, several months after Franco's death. It is an introduction to Nuevo Baztán, a village close to Madrid built in the eighteenth century by the architect José Benito de Churriguera for the Goyeneche family.<sup>87</sup> The narrator states that the palace of the Goyeneche family shows the 'traces of the *churrigueresco* style, variant of the baroque' but the images that illustrate his words reveal a quite

<sup>81</sup> 'Los caballos de Velázquez', NO-DO 1609 B, 5 November 1973.

<sup>82</sup> 'Los bufones de Velázquez', NO-DO 1654 A, 23 September 1974.

<sup>83</sup> 'Las Lanzas de Velázquez', NO-DO 1713 A, 10 November 1975.

<sup>84</sup> 'Las Lanzas de Velázquez', NO-DO 1713 A, 10 November 1975.

<sup>85</sup> Indeed, it is worth noting that the NO-DO newsreel had repeatedly shown this particular painting by Velázquez, for example in the case of official political visits to the Prado Museum. De Haro García, 'Velázquez y lo velazqueño' (forthcoming).

<sup>86</sup> 'La Edad de Oro de la pintura española', NO-DO1731 B, 29 March 1976.

<sup>87</sup> The narrator attributes it to Juan de Churriguera, a mistake probably due to the fact that Juan de Goyeneche commissioned it. 'Nuevo Baztán, pueblo madrileño, casi abandonado', NO-DO 1751 B, 16 August 1976.

deteriorated building. In spite of the stylistic label used on this occasion,<sup>88</sup> it is hard to find anything that points to any ornamental excess; decadence and ruin seem to prevail. The voiceover labels the village as 'unique', with streets that are considered to be 'anticipating modern urbanism', its church is described as one of the 'most beautiful examples of Churriguera's art.' The last phrase in the voiceover states that, 'as time went by, the village lost its relevance until being almost abandoned; today only a few families live in it, unable to stop its inevitable ruin'.<sup>89</sup> The images that accompany the voiceover seem again to stress this ruinous state, which is not just portrayed by the architecture but also by the people: an old man with a cap and a very voluminous woman, who seem to be alien to modern times and uses. These individuals are visually associated with debris, in contrast with the image of a lonely kitten, maybe the only one that is expected to survive the decline of the village if nothing is done about it.

Although this NO-DO production did not explain the reason why the village had lost its relevance and was in ruins, other mass media that shared an interest in it and that portrayed it as a potential destination for travellers did. The very influential newspaper *El País* which was created in May 1976, and referred to in 1981 as the 'collective intellectual' of the time<sup>90</sup> and in the mid 1980s as 'the dominant reference newspaper'<sup>91</sup> devoted the first article in its travel section to Nuevo Baztán.<sup>92</sup> It also published several articles on the problems of the village. For example, one published in 1977 when the first democratic elections had already taken place in Spain, complained of the lack of services and the bad living conditions of the few remaining inhabitants of this and other villages close to Madrid. According to the newspaper these locations were destined to be the weekend residence of those who worked and lived in the capital during the week; however, the unemployment resulting from the crisis in the construction industry was cited as the cause for the massive migration.<sup>93</sup> In addition, this newspaper latterly reported that the neighbours complained that the owner of the

<sup>88</sup> It was precisely the name of the Churriguera family of artists that motivated the label '*churrigueresco*' that was commonly applied as a pejorative term to excessive ornamentation in sculpture and architecture and that was associated with the idea of bad taste and decadence. However, in this case, the negative connotation is not evident, in fact, it is probable that the clarification in the voiceover that indicated that this style was a variant of the baroque, combined with the images of buildings that looked by no means excessive, and the addition of further positive terms related to beauty, to modernity or to the singularity of the village, was aimed at presenting this notion in mere stylistic terms.

<sup>89</sup> 'Con el paso del tiempo, el pueblo fue perdiendo su importancia hasta quedar casi abandonado; hoy solo unas cuantas familias lo habitan, incapaces de detener una ruina inevitable'. 'Nuevo Baztán, pueblo madrileño, casi abandonado', NO-DO 1751 B, 16 August 1976.

<sup>90</sup> José Luis López Aranguren, 'EL PAÍS como empresa e 'intelectual colectivo'', *El País*, 7 June 1981. Accessed 10 October 2016 [http://elpais.com/diario/1981/06/07/opinion/360712807\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1981/06/07/opinion/360712807_850215.html)

<sup>91</sup> Gérard Imbert and José Vidal Beneyto, coords., *El País o la referencia dominante*, Barcelona: Mitre, 1986.

<sup>92</sup> Fernando Bayón Marín, dir., *50 años de turismo español. Un análisis histórico y estructural*, Madrid: Editorial Centro de Estudios Ramón Areces, 1999, 513.

<sup>93</sup> 'Problemas económicos en los pueblos cercanos a Guadalajara', *El País*, 6 February 1977. Accessed 10 October 2016 [http://elpais.com/diario/1977/02/06/madrid/224079858\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1977/02/06/madrid/224079858_850215.html)

village monuments had neglected all his obligations and was responsible for the deplorable state of the constructions.<sup>94</sup>

It is not possible to know how the information such as that conveyed by NO-DO might have been interpreted and received by its viewers. Nevertheless, it is significant that these last three pieces of information in the NO-DO bulletin that revolved around the art associated with the baroque and the Golden Age in the late 1970s combined the usual references to great art, to singularity and to the glory of the past, either with the idea of restarting certain activities after many years, as in the case of the exhibition in London, or with a feeling of decadence and the end of an era whose legacy had to be reflected and acted upon.

### **Banal Art History**

Sánchez-Biosca has concluded that NO-DO is a good example of the success of what Michael Billig has analyzed as 'banal nationalism',<sup>95</sup> pointing out its effectiveness as a powerful instrument for nationalization depended on the fact that it did not act as active propaganda.<sup>96</sup> Billig's analysis looks at the ways in which nationalism is present in the daily lives of 'settled nations' i.e. those developed, cosmopolitan, Western nations, that are not usually labelled as nationalist. According to Billig "national identity' is short-hand for a whole series of familiar assumptions about nationhood, the world, and 'our' place in that world. [...] These assumptions have to be flagged discursively. And for that, banal words jingling in the ears of the citizens, or passing before their eyes are required. [...] Banal nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted and which in doing so, inhabit them'.<sup>97</sup>

In spite of the obvious differences between the cases analyzed by Billig and those of Francoist Spain, we agree with Sánchez-Biosca and believe that NO-DO productions did indeed contribute to have some of these 'banal words [...] passing before the eyes of the citizens'. Among them were also the names and images of artists and artwork, styles and periods, such as Velázquez, the baroque or the Golden Age. They were all an inherent part of the national idea propagated during Francoism and NO-DO was a potent instrument in its dissemination. Neither were the main recurring figures of the national narrative new at the time, nor was the desire to define Spanish national identity. Under Franco's rule however, they were presented and interpreted so as to be connected to the regime's values and thus reinforcing them. These values included the Catholic religion, a sense of past cultural greatness that fed present creations and, connected with this, the idea that everything could be adopted and nationalized if some relationship with that glorious past could be established. This helped to actualize the Francoist national image and values, making the incorporation of new elements such as modernization and the promotion of tourism possible while

<sup>94</sup> 'Solicitan la declaración de conjunto histórico para Nuevo Baztán', *El País*, 14 October 1978. Accessed 10 October 2016 [http://elpais.com/diario/1978/10/14/madrid/277215859\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1978/10/14/madrid/277215859_850215.html)

<sup>95</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, London Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, SAGE Publications, 1995, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Sánchez-Biosca, 'NO-DO', 177–195.

<sup>97</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 93.

keeping them rooted in seemingly timeless tradition. A central characteristic of the actualization of familiar cultural notions and artifacts such as baroque art, was their lack of any explicit definition.<sup>98</sup> It was precisely this quality that made them adaptable to very different circumstances. Paradoxically, their lack of clarity contributed to their resilience.

Sánchez-Biosca maintains that Spaniards recognized the elements and characteristics of the NO-DO (i.e. the theme music, the singular voices of the commentators, the headings, and the graphics, etc.) and identified them as signs of their belonging to a national community.<sup>99</sup> It was one of the ways in which people were reminded of the Francoist idea of Spanish national values in a quiet and unnoticed way, which was all the more effective. NO-DO was the principal media for conveying audiovisual information associated with the position of the government so that anything provided by it would be interpreted within a framework related to the dictatorship.

The popular Spanish art history<sup>100</sup> found in the celebration of Golden Age masters, baroque artwork and supposed values one of its most recurrent tropes was a key element of 'banal nationalism' under Francoism and NO-DO contributed to its dissemination. The case studies analyzed in this article demonstrate to what extent it would be worth paying more attention to the ways in which such 'banal nationalism' is connected with what could be considered as 'banal art history'. Reinterpreting Billig's ideas, this 'banal art history' would be made possible because of the mundane reproduction of a complex set of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices that are associated with the field of art in general and with art history in particular.<sup>101</sup> Education, exhibitions as well as popular culture play a relevant role in the dissemination and trivial repetition of these ideas.

It could be argued that, according to the results obtained from our searches of the database, the presence of such tropes was not relevant given the total amount of NO-DOs that were made. However, even without taking into account the limitations of the database that have already been mentioned, it has to be taken into consideration that: (1) people were exposed to other media and situations in which the elements of this banal art history were also present (i.e education, books, publications, exhibitions, stamps, etc.), (2) the recurring but not overwhelming presence of the elements of this banal art history in NO-DO might actually have contributed to its impact. Indeed, as James Cutting has shown when studying 'mere exposure'<sup>102</sup> in the case of

<sup>98</sup> Of course, this observation refers to the case of NO-DO: there were academic studies devoted to the baroque and the art of the Golden Age that tried to define these concepts and such notions were also taught in formal education. But here the possibilities were many. As has been previously indicated, being the sole news bulletin of the regime, NO-DO carefully avoided conflict and tension.

<sup>99</sup> Sánchez-Biosca, 'El NO-DO', 179.

<sup>100</sup> We use this term following Doris Berger, *Projected art history: biopics, celebrity culture and the popularizing of American art*, New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

<sup>101</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 6.

<sup>102</sup> As Cutting explains, the mere exposure effect is a phenomenon that was discovered by Robert Zajonc in the late 1960s and its validity has been confirmed by a number of laboratory studies: "the basic finding is that, all other things being equal, we tend to like things we have

Impressionism, 'repeated exposure to particular images creates and reinforces preferences'<sup>103</sup> but he indicates that two conditions have to be met for mere exposure to work best: 'for mere exposure to affect positively the evaluation of a given item it should be initially perceived as at least neutral. Unpleasant items typically become more unpleasant with exposure.[...] [M]ere exposure works best either when one does not pay much attention to each presentation, or when the intervals between presentations are relatively long'.<sup>104</sup> We think it can be argued that NO-DO met this criteria: on the one hand, the visual arts and especially accepted and well-known artists such as Velázquez or El Greco could hardly be considered 'unpleasant' and on the other hand the artwork and artists such as those in our case studies appear regularly but not excessively in NO-DO productions. Therefore, even if the public was exposed to them in other situations as well, it makes sense to think that for most people the intervals between presentations were relatively long. Given the resonances it is possible to appreciate of the approach to this art and notions in the past in the present one, it would be interesting to study to what extent notions of 'banal art history' such as 'baroque' or 'Golden Age' are still indebted to their predecessors when used in relation with definitions of Spanish art and nationhood, or in the promotion of the country as a tourist destination.

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seen before, indeed we tend to value them more". James Cutting, 'Mere exposure, reproduction and the impressionistic canon', in Anna Brzyski, ed., *Partisan canons*, Duke: Duke University Press, 2007, 81–82.

<sup>103</sup> Cutting, 'Mere exposure', 81.

<sup>104</sup> Cutting, 'Mere exposure', 92.