

NICOLÁS CORTÉS

GALLERY

Manuel García y Rodríguez

(Seville, 1863 - 1925)

Terraces in Triana

Signed and dated 1907

Oil on canvas

40 x 60 cm

Manuel García y Rodríguez received a strict religious education that led him to embark on studies for the priesthood at the diocesan seminary in his native Seville. He did not, however, complete his training and transferred to normal middle-school education, gaining his baccalaureate. It was at school that his interest in art first emerged, which displeased his parents and he was thus obliged to fund his own training by playing the organ at the parish church of San Esteban and by painting fans. ¹

Under the supervision of José de la Vega, an artist associated with the Academia Libre de Bellas Artes in Seville, an institution that followed the Romantic tradition and favoured a detailed, descriptive approach, ² García y Rodríguez focused on copying works by the old masters. At the same time he took classes at the Escuela de Bellas Artes e Industrias in Seville with Manuel Wssel and Eduardo Cano. Attracted to Sánchez Perrier's landscapes, he made solitary trips that reflected his quiet, timid nature to the outskirts of Alcalá de Guadaira in search of locations which he depicted in his paintings with a precise and meticulous technique. In the words of Juan Fernández Lacomba, the proximity of García y Rodríguez's work to that of Sánchez Perrier at this period "almost reached the point of suggesting not just a student-master relationship but rather one of friendship given that they painted outdoors and made trips together."

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A sensitive individual, García y Rodríguez also painted in the city itself, employing great spontaneity in his quest for inspiration among its most typical

¹ Sánchez Trigueros, J. A.: *Concha Barrios y la pintura española del S.XIX. Diez años de exposiciones: 1978-1988*, Galería Concha Barrios, Madrid, 1988, unpaginated.

² Fernández Lacomba, J.: "Manuel García y Rodríguez" in *Enciclopedia*, Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga.

³ Fernández Lacomba, J.; op. cit.

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sights and locations, among them the banks of the river, as in the case of the present beautiful work. ⁴

García y Rodríguez was a regular participant in numerous competitions and exhibitions and was awarded a third prize medal in the National Exhibition of 1887 for *The Banks of the Guadalquivir*; a bronze medal for *Seville* at the Universal Exhibition Barcelona (1888); and second prize medals at the National Exhibition of 1890 for *Afternoon* in that of 1895 for *The Dam at the Mill*. ⁵ In 1891 his painting *Entrance to a Fruit and Vegetable Garden in Seville* was acquired by the museum in Barcelona while *Seville* was purchased at the International Exhibition in Berlin. Also dating from that year is *December in Seville*, now in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba in Havana (fig. 1). ⁶ In 1899 the artist's success in official art circles reached its peak when he was made a member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. ⁷

Largely limited to landscape, García y Rodríguez's work is imbued with a tone of sentiment and delicacy that distinguishes each of his compositions. Greatly appreciated in Seville, his paintings became known at a national level through various magazines of the day. From 1885 he collaborated as an illustrator for several publications including *La Ilustración Artística*, participating in 1886 in the special issue devoted to Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, ⁸ and *Blanco y Negro*, which reproduced much of his work over the years. An issue of the latter publication of December 1907 includes an illustration with a landscape by the artist that has a composition almost identical to that of the present painting (fig. 2).

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Juan Fernández Lacomba has offered an interesting reflection on the success of landscape as a genre in 19th-century Andalusian society, locating its starting point in Romanticism and in the topographical views produced by travellers (principally English and French visitors) in the first half of the 19th century: "These concepts of understanding and constructing the landscape from

⁴ Sánchez Trigueros, J.A.; op. cit.

⁵ Sánchez Trigueros, J. A.: *Concha Barrios y la pintura española del S.XIX. Diez años de exposiciones: 1978-1988*, Galería Concha Barrios, Madrid, 1988, unpaginated.

⁶ Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba (Havana), inv. no.: 93-452.

⁷ Fernández Lacomba, J.: "Manuel García y Rodríguez" in *Enciclopedia*, Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga.

⁸ Segovia y Ardizzone, G.: "Introducción" in *La Ilustración Artística* (Barcelona), no. 261 (special issue) of 27/12/1886, p. 358: "The monastery of San Jerónimo, drawing by M. García y Rodríguez".

⁹ "Terraces in Triana/ by García y Rodríguez" in *Blanco y Negro* (Madrid), no. 868 of 21/12/1907.

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a pictorial point of view were adopted and developed by local Romantic painters, of whom a notably skilled exponent was Manuel Barrón y Carrillo, a professor at the Academia in Seville where most of the Sevillian painters of the second half of the century trained [...] among them Romero Barros, Sánchez Perrier, A. Cánovas and García y Rodríguez.”¹⁰

The Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga has a landscape by the artist (fig. 3)¹¹ which is notably similar to the present work and is also dated 1907. With regard to the example in the museum in Málaga, Fernández Lacomba has noted that 1907 was a key year for the artist following the death of Sánchez Perrier who had influenced him so significantly: “It is not surprising that at the start of the 20th century, specifically in 1907 - the year of the death of Emilio Sánchez Perrier, who had shared our artist’s youthful landscape activities - a Sevillian painter such as García y Rodríguez should continue with works of this kind, all of them based on sketches and observations from life, subsequently worked up or reinterpreted in the studio.”¹²

In this magnificent landscape the view opens out before the viewer through the vegetation in the foreground, introducing the eye into a composition divided into two. On the left is a group of women resting in the shade on a terrace in Triana, a motif that enlivens the whole scene and gives it a specific subject of a picturesque and pleasing type. On the right, the principal motif is the Guadalquivir in all its splendour, used by the painter as a surface on which to play with the effects of light and shadow on the water and the boats. The horizon line is emphasised by the bridge in the background which has a markedly industrial character and helps to contextualise the scene in space and time.

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¹⁰ Fernández Lacomba, J.: Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga, inv. no.: CTB.1995.24 (catalogue entry).

¹¹ Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga, inv. no.: CTB.1995.24.

¹² *Ibid.*

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Fig.1: Manuel García y Rodríguez, *December in Seville*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba (Havana).

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AZOTEAS EN TRIANA

COLECCIÓN
BLANCO Y NEGRO

LIQUO
DE GARCÍA Y RODRÍGUEZ



Fig. 2: Page from the magazine *Blanco y Negro* illustrating a work by Manuel García y Rodríguez that is very close to the present painting. From: "Terraces in Triana/ by García y Rodríguez" in *Blanco y Negro* (Madrid), no. 868 of 21/12/1907.

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Fig. 3: Manuel García y Rodríguez, *Fishing*,
Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga.



Fig.: Manuel García y Rodríguez, *Terraces in Triana*, Nicolás Cortés Gallery.