

ACTIVITY: DO YOU RECOGNISE THE PAINTING?

DESCRIPTION OF A PAINTING OR OTHER ARTISTIC WORKS ADAPTED FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE

QUEEN MARIANA OF AUSTRIA

<https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/queen-mariana-of-austria/1a32172a-5ffd-4da2-9df4-998f99f6176e>



TECHNICAL DATA:

- AUTHOR'S NAME:** VELÁZQUEZ, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y (Sevilla 1599- Madrid 1660)
- TITLE OF THE WORK:** La Reina Mariana de Austria (Queen Mariana of Austria)
- DATE IT WAS PAINTED:** 1653-1655
- SIZE :** 234.2 x 132 cm
- TECHNIQUE:** Oil
- SUPPORT :** Canvas
- STYLISTIC PERIOD:** Spanish Baroque
- LOCATION:** Museo del Prado (Madrid)

1. SUBJECT AND THEME:

This is a full figure portrait of the queen of Spain Mariana of Austria, the daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand III and María of Hungary.

She married Philip IV , King of Spain in 1649, when she was fifteen.

In this portrait the Queen was 18 years old.

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2. GENERAL OVERVIEW: ORIENT THE VIEWER WITH DIRECTIONS

- The Queen is in the foreground standing in the centre of the picture and occupies almost the entire canvas or frame.
- Mariana's body is slightly turned to the right edge of the painting but she is looking straight at the viewer.
- Queen Mariana is extending her right arm towards a chair back.
- In her left extended hand she holds a white handkerchief.
- There is no much space in the background.
- Behind the Queen, on the right side of the painting (at three o'clock) there is a clock on a table with a red cloth.
- Above the Queen, there is a luxury curtain drawn towards the left that occupies the upper part of the painting.

3. DETAILS, FORM, COLORS

The main feature of the portrait is the elaborate clothing, the surprising shape of the dress and the amazing hairstyle befitting a queen.

- The Queen's hairstyle, probably a wig, is three times larger than the head of the Queen (is bigger than a motorcycle helmet).
- It is like a semicircle of curls that surrounds her head. Ten ringlets on each side go from the center of the head to the cheeks and end up having a red ribbon and golden adornments. A gold brooch and a large white and red feather decorate the right side of the hairdo.
- The Queen is wearing a spectacular dress:
 - The top is very tight with a circular neckline made of tulle, a kind of transparent and soft fabric, edged with a gold border and embroideries. It has a very narrow waist.
 - It has elegant wide sleeves embroidered with silver threads to decorate it.
 - The skirt is huge: more or less one meter and a half wide, so the Queen can rest her arms on it.
 - Probably, the skirt is made of soft dark silk fabric.
 - Many silver strips or laces are embroidered to the skirt.
- In both hands she is wearing gold rings and gold bracelets at her wrists with a red ribbon tied to them.
- The queen's face is made up very lightly wearing blush on the cheeks and red lipstick.

4. FOCUS ON THE STYLE

This is a portrait of the court painted in a studio. It does not reflect spontaneity. The queen seems a bit stiff, uncomfortable, and a little sad. Just imagine her 18 years old, married to a man 19 years older than her, dressed in an uncomfortable and narrow top, an enormous skirt and with a huge, heavy wig that barely allows her to move naturally.

The portrait marks a high point in the evolution of the artist's work as a court portraitist.

One of the features of Velázquez painting is his realistic style, his free and modern brushstroke, and his ability to use different tones, combining blacks, greys, silvers and reds.