



The Sky of Salamanca, Under the same sky

Few cities can boast having two skies. One outside, the one that we see every day, and the other, in which the life and dreams of the city fuse together, consolidate themselves and take shape. They are special cities, aware of their own existence, built on a human scale, cities based on knowledge. In them, both skies, being different and fulfilling a different set of functions, are required. Salamanca is one of these cities.



"It is a sky that surprises you by its strength, its presence, its magnetism, and beneath it, we feel both safe yet insignificant at the same time"

The other sky, the one painted by Fernando Gállego, which was housed in the former University Library, and was moved to its current location in 1951, is very much in keeping with this premise. It represents one of the seven arts from the more liberal topics under study at the University, namely astrology, and introducing new painting techniques, and marking the start of a period of splendour at the University and the city and above all reflects a new world.

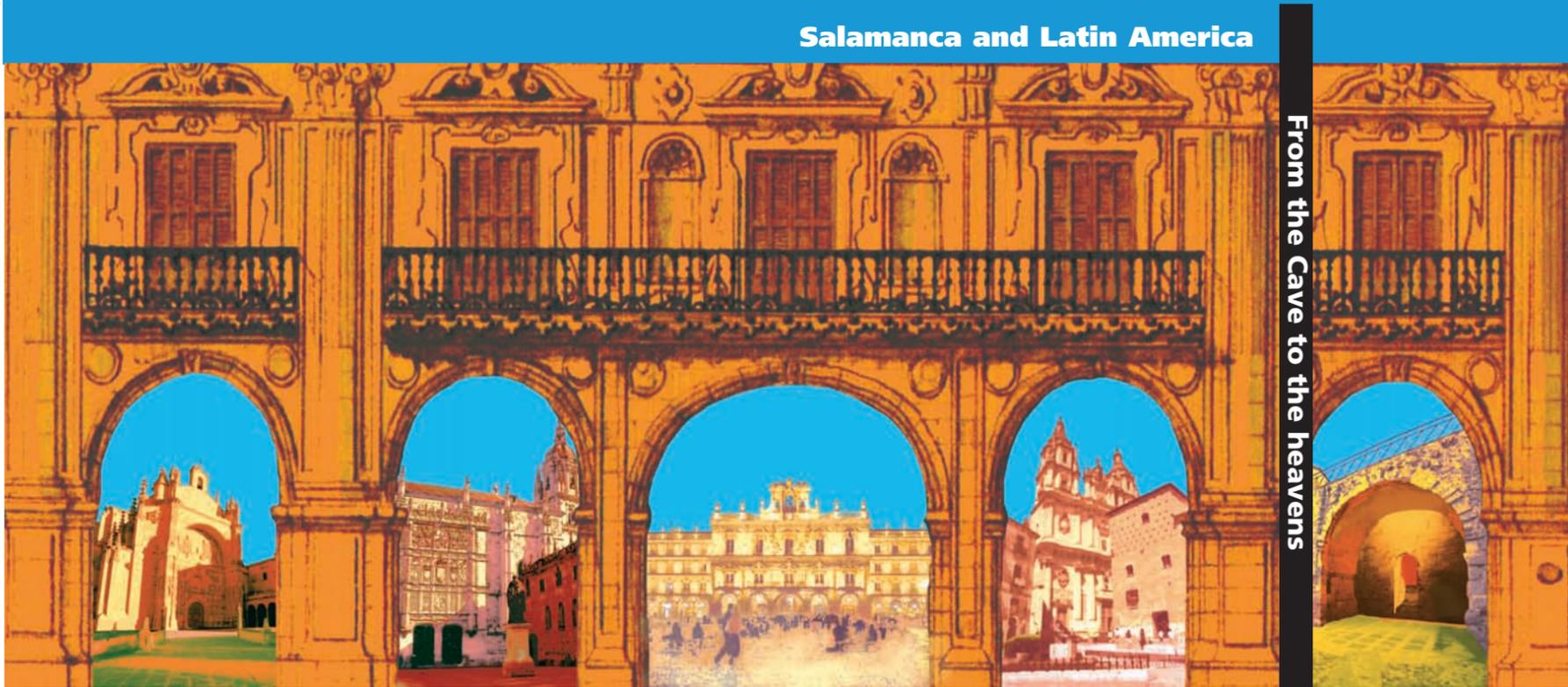
It is a sky that surprises you by its strength, its presence, its magnetism, and beneath it, we feel both safe yet insignificant at the same time. It is a symbolic umbrella which protects not only us, but everyone, and which symbolises better than anything else the importance and the influence that the University and the city has had on Latin America. It is lay, yet full of spirituality, renaissance yet medieval, it is the sky, yet at the same time it represents all skies, those here and those on the other side of the sea.

The exhibition aims to present it as it really is, a sky that shines in the night through an exceptional lighting system and of the creation of audible atmospheres which also reflect its symbolic value. We are nothing without the skies, which is why we created them.

1. The Cave of Salamanca. 2. Convent of Saint Steven (Dominicans). 3. The Cerecia (Catholic University). 4. The Sky of Salamanca (Patio de Escuelas - Salamanca University).

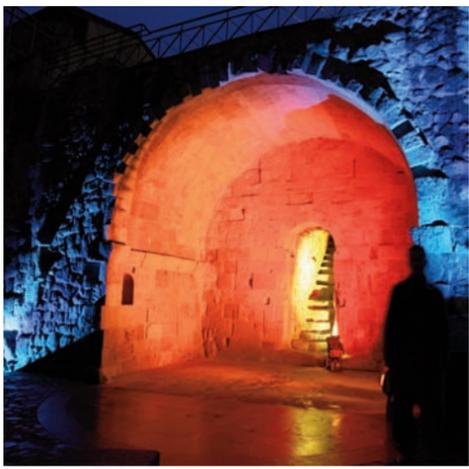
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From the Cave to the heavens





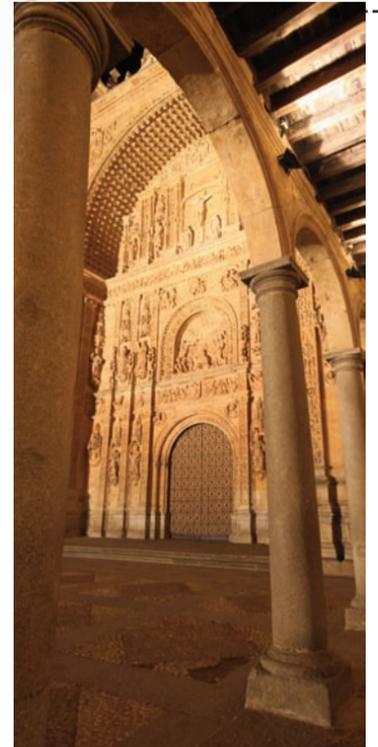
There are a number of rich and very vibrant ties between Salamanca and Latin America. Our city has been, and is a reference point for foreign lands and at the same time, Latin America has been present in our imagination like a mirror reflecting our most coveted dreams. You need only stroll around the city, read up on its history, get close to its very fabric, its heritage or listen to the word on the street, to be able to see these visible and invisible ties which connect us.

It is in this context therefore, that we wish to embark on this CITY TOUR, SALAMANCA-LATIN AMERICA, comprising four presentations at four of the most emblematic spots around the city: LA CUEVA, SAN ESTEBAN, SALAMANCA UNIVERSITY AND LA CLERECÍA. Presentations which clearly demonstrate the importance and the influence of the Latin America heartbeat on our city. The tour that goes from La Cueva to the heavens.

La Cueva de Salamanca, la Cueva and the American "Salamanacas"

Every city has its "hidden corners" where history and legend meet and where sometimes, the legend manages to weigh heavily on historic fact. This was the case of the former San Ciprián or San Cebrián Church, known simply as the Cueva de Salamanca (the Salamanca Cave). As to its origins, some say it was founded by Hercules, others say it has Arabic and even Celt origins; then there are others who state that the cave is the entranceway to a labyrinth of tunnels that stretch below the whole city. The hidden, cursed Salamanca, a necessary evil so that the other one, the golden, the plateresc one can exist.

Its fame was so widespread that it captured the interest of writers and intellectuals - Cervantes, Quevedo, Calderón, Feijoo, Botero, Walter Scott, Rojas...- and word of it even made its way across the seas. Thus, in Latin America, the caves or the hidden spaces are known as the "Salamanacas", a place where black magic, initiation ceremonies and fortune telling took place. Places associated with a magical, non-rational vision of the world. The daytime visit to the Cueva provides a tour of the crypt of the San Cebrián Church, which according to legend was home to the school of occultism, as well as the old city wall and the Villena tower, and a part of the medieval, Renaissance and plateresque city, overflowing with history. At night, with the help of lighting, projections and sound, we delve into this underworld city, the inspiration of myths and legends, and which was also a universal reference point for the teaching of magic, alchemy, the occult and hematicism, for those looking to learn more about the darker side of reality. During the summer months, this magical venue plays host to chamber music concerts and plays.



San Esteban Convent – the Dominicans-, Dominican presence and action in the Americas

San Esteban is the central focus of this exhibition. The convent, the stones, the building which gave shelter to Domingo de Soto, Martín de Azpilcueta, Diego de Deza or Father Francisco de Vitoria, the venue for Dominican teachings, in their search for truth and knowledge. Only then, given its strength and its culture can one understand the support that Columbus received from the Catholic Kings, the Derecho de Gentes or Natural Law, the precursor to International Law, the Code of Good Governance, the discourse by Montesinos, the struggle of Bartolomé de las Casa, the acknowledgement of the other and the swift deployment of the Dominicans to the other side of the Atlantic.

The tour gives visitors an opportunity to learn more about the Convent. It shows the frontispiece replete with symbolism, the imposing cloisters, classical in design but which at the same time transmit peace, and the Domingo de Soto stairway, which symbolises the search for truth, its starting point firmly anchored to the ground. Discover its imposing church, used for the word of God and preaching, or the church chapters, but above all the antiquity, a place to discuss matters, convincing others through the use of the word, the decisions and the memoire; the veritable heart which once gave, and continues to give life to the whole building. It is a walk to contemplate, listen, sense, and above all understand the importance of San Esteban (Saint Stephen) and the role he played in Latin America.



La Clerecía or Ministry. Vita Ignatii, Action and Contemplation

The Royal San Marcos College, nowadays Salamanca Pontificia University, was at the heart of the Company of Jesus in the city. A building conceived for the education of laymen and religious orders and which despite the toll taken by the years, the wars, the destruction and divisions, still harbours the spirit of a period, the Baroque, profoundly contemporary, and reflects a manner of understanding the world, namely that of the Jesuits, both globally and locally, always respectful of others and their culture, and which left behind it a important and unparallel legacy in Latin America.

The upper cloister is home to 28 paintings depicting the life of San Ignacio de Loyola, by Neapolitan artist, Sebastián Conca. Large canvases , which continue along the same lines as works by Rubens which depict the life of the founder of the Jesuit order and which speak of the central role given to San Ignacio in the paintings, at the service of faith; namely the "teaching of the emotions".

The place also makes certain references to the Jesuit reserves. A controversial undertaking, a dream, the new republic of God, for some, the acknowledgement of the rights and culture of the native Indians, while for others, the symbolic engineering or a way to finance Jesuit operations in Europe. But in any case, a place of great beauty, the exaltation of the Baroque, of cultural fusion, of values, strength and dignity, an experience which had major repercussions in the composition of the modern Latin American identity.

The tour finishes in the Torres de La Clerecía, where visitors can enjoy some spectacular views over the city's historic centre.

