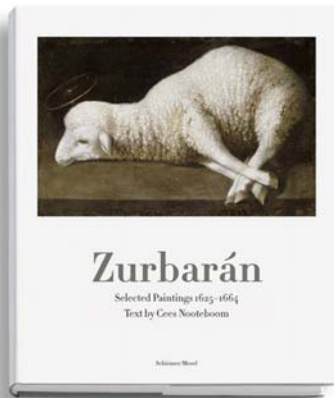


Munich, June 2011

PRESS RELEASE



ZURBARÁN
Selected Paintings
1625–1664

With an essay by
Cees Nootboom

132 pages, 50 color plates,
27 illustrations
978-3-8296-0510-6
Retail price US \$ 68.-

ZURBARÁN:
Dutch author Cees Nootboom
immerses himself in the world of Spanish mysticism

Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) was one of the great Baroque painters in Spain, and the strange, very Catholic world of his images is as fascinating today as it is essentially foreign. Schirmer/Mosel has just brought out the major picture book **Zurbarán: Selected Paintings 1625–1664**, with an essay by famous Dutch author Cees Nootboom. Schirmer/Mosel is championing a new aesthetics of the ‘art book’ with this concept of a book in which a renowned historical painter is commented on by a contemporary author – the result is far removed from the usually somewhat dry art historical analyses. Moreover, this volume is the very first Zurbarán monograph in a long time.

Zurbarán’s oeuvre is uniquely profound and stringent in its aesthetic-religious dimension. Christ on the Cross, dead martyrs and remote saints, meditating monks, the superiors of orders that have long since been dissolved, all appear in images, usually with a black ground, so realistically that you feel you could reach out and touch them – and yet they have the feel of messengers from a different world about them. For Cees Nootboom the images and the people are both “real and unreal”. He compares the figures with *aliens*, for “from their faces with the wide-open eyes comes a ray that is precisely not that of death, but speaks of a silent ecstasy, a mystical devoutness that is no longer of this world.”

For Zurbarán, a contemporary of Velázquez and Murillo, painting and religious immersion were two sides of the same exercise. Perhaps it is precisely this aspect of his art that is ensuring his images are once again attracting so much interest. We stand astonished before representations of suffering and wounds, the result of a mindset that has turned its back on the world. In his essay, Cees Nootboom, as a man of the word, highlights the historical context and, as a ‘man of the eye’, conveys an infectious fascination and admiration for these masterful works.

Cees Nootboom (born 1933 in The Hague) has published countless novels, travelogues and volumes of poetry since the mid 1950s, and has won international awards and honors with them.

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