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-With pictures-

£1.6M RESEARCH CENTRE FOR SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN ART TO BE CREATED IN NORTH EAST

- Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust to establish The Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art, a world-class beacon of excellence for the study of Spanish and Latin American art and culture.
- Santander is supporting the partnership with a £600,000 grant to Durham University – its largest single donation to a UK university.
- Durham University will contribute a further £1m over the next five years
- The partnership represents a joint ambition to expand and enhance the academic and cultural links between the UK, Spain and Latin America.
- It also forms part of a wider initiative using art to stimulate regeneration and public engagement

A corner of North East England is set to become an international centre for research and excellence into Spanish and Latin American art and culture under a new agreement announced today (Thursday 29 September 2016).

Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust have entered into a new partnership to create The Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art in Bishop Auckland, County Durham. The centre will link academic research by Durham University to the curatorial programme at Auckland Castle's Spanish Gallery and support public engagement and regional regeneration.

A formal partnership agreement was signed by Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, and Jonathan Ruffer, Chairman of Auckland Castle Trust, at a private event at Auckland Castle.

Professor Corbridge and Ana Botín, Santander Group's Executive Chairman, also signed a gift agreement which will see Santander donate £600,000 over a three year period to Durham University to help fund the centre - the largest single donation made by Santander to a UK university. The new centre will also receive an additional £1m investment from Durham University over the next five years.

The agreement builds on Santander's existing partnership with Durham University and the donation made to Auckland Castle to fund the "Santander Lord Burns Library" at the Spanish Gallery in recognition of Lord Burns' service as its former Chairman and his own connections with County Durham.

Lord Burns said: "As a native of the north-east, I'm delighted that Santander has chosen to make such a generous gift to Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust. And whilst it is indeed a great honour to have my name attached to the library, what gives me greater joy is the impact the investment from Santander will have in promoting the University and Spanish Arts, and in attracting students as well as tourists to come to this beautiful part of the world."

Ana Botín, Santander Group Executive Chairman, added: "The work being done by Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust will help to develop a world class centre for sharing and understanding Spain's art and culture. Santander has strong connections to County Durham through both our customers and people so we are delighted to support this outstanding partnership."

The Spanish Gallery forms part of a wider £70m investment by Auckland Castle Trust designed to stimulate economic regeneration in Bishop Auckland, by creating an art, faith and heritage destination of international significance.

It is hoped that the new partnership will make a significant contribution to the region's economy by attracting tourists and visiting scholars from around the world, in turn boosting employment and local business. According to a recent report by Ernst & Young this project, combined with others in the town, could attract more than 430,000 visitors per year by 2020 and boost the economy by up to £20m.

Recognising this regional rejuvenation, Ryanair recently announced a new direct route between Newcastle and Madrid, to start in March 2017, which will also help to cultivate links between these two major cities.

Jonathan Ruffer, Chair of Trustees at Auckland Castle, said: "County Durham and the wider North East is primed for this kind of support and investment."

“The Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art and Spanish Gallery are both a key part of our plans to draw more international visitors to the region and to stimulate economic regeneration both in Bishop Auckland and further afield.

“We are proud to be working in partnership with Durham University and Santander on a project of such international significance and look forward to also elevating the profile of Spanish and Latin American Art both in the UK and around the world.”

County Durham is already home to the UK’s largest collection of Spanish art outside of London, including the paintings of *Jacob and his Twelve Sons* by Spanish master Francisco de Zurbarán, which are currently housed at Auckland Castle.

The new Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art, named in honour of this series, will be run by Durham University and is due to open in 2017.

The Centre will undertake research and host major conferences and workshops in the field of Spanish and Latin American art, as well as offering postgraduate students the opportunity to study major artworks and rare objects while working alongside Auckland Castle’s curatorial staff.

It will be complemented by the separate Spanish Gallery, due to be opened by Auckland Castle Trust in 2019, which will explore Spanish art from the medieval period to the present day, focusing particularly on the Golden Age of art in the seventeenth century. It will also draw on works from the Trust’s extensive collection and on loan from partners around the world.

Together, the research centre and gallery will link new academic research with new exhibitions and events designed to expand and enhance the public profile and understanding of Spanish and Latin American art, both in the UK and globally.

Durham University will begin an international search to recruit a director for the new centre in autumn 2016.

Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, said: “Durham University is ranked in the world top 50 for Arts and Humanities and is also establishing itself as a leading international centre for the study of visual culture.

“This new research centre and partnership with Auckland Castle, with its access to extensive collections of Spanish art, allows us to further enhance this work.

“Not only will it offer our students the chance to study some of the world’s most important artworks, it is also a way of connecting the wider public with our research expertise and is a commitment to the cultural regeneration of Bishop Auckland.”

The Zurbarán Centre for Spanish and Latin American Art will complement the work of Durham University’s Centre for Visual Arts and Culture, as well as its highly regarded Department of Hispanic Studies, within the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, and additional work in Spanish and Latin American art across a number of other departments.

In partnership with Auckland Castle Trust’s Spanish Gallery, it will offer a direct link between new research and new exhibition programming, while also allowing visitors to the gallery to benefit from the world-class study carried out there.

It will also ensure that the next generation of curators and museum professionals benefit from a hands-on experience of an evolving collection.

Nathan Bostock, Santander UK CEO, said: “Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust have ambitious plans for this project and we are very proud of our partnership and the opportunities it will create in the local economy.”

The partnership between Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust formalises a number of other joint projects between the two organisations including archaeological work at Auckland Castle, student placements and joint research projects across a number of the University’s subject areas.

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MEDIA INFORMATION

Interviews

Durham University:

Professor Andy Beresford, Associate Director in the Centre for Visual Arts and Culture, at Durham University, and an expert in early Spanish literature and art is available for interview at on Thursday, September 29, 2016. To arrange please contact Durham University Marketing and Communications Office on +44 (0)191 334 6075; communications.team@durham.ac.uk

A broadcast quality ISDN radio line is also available at Durham University and bookings can be arranged via the Marketing and Communications Office on the details above. The ISDN number is +44 (0)191 386 2749.

Auckland Castle Trust

Dr. Christopher Ferguson, Curatorial Director of Auckland Castle is also available for interview. Please contact sophie.vonhahn@flint-pr.com or (0) 203 463 2095 to arrange.

Santander

Matt Hutnell, Head of Santander Universities UK will be available for interview on Thursday 29th September

Photographs

Photo captions: Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, signs the partnership agreement with Jonathan Ruffer, Chairman, Auckland Castle Trust at Auckland Castle. Picture by Sean Elliott and courtesy of Auckland Castle Trust.

Jonathan Ruffer, Chairman, Auckland Castle Trust, shows the Zurbarán paintings in Auckland Castle's Long Dining Room to Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University and Ana Botín, Santander Group Executive Chairman. Picture by Sean Elliott and courtesy of Auckland Castle Trust.

Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, signs the partnership agreement between Durham University and Santander with Ana Botín, Santander Group Executive Chairman and Nathan Bostock, Santander UK CEO. Picture by Sean Elliott and courtesy of Auckland Castle Trust.

Additional photographs of the partnership signing between Durham University and Auckland Castle Trust, and images of the gift signing between Durham University and Santander Universities UK are available on request.

Photographs of Spanish and Latin American art from the collections of Auckland Castle Trust and Durham University are also available.

Please contact Claire Buchan, Communications Manager at Auckland Castle Trust on 01388 743799 or email Claire.buchan@aucklandcastle.org

Alternatively contact Durham University Marketing and Communications Office on +44 (0)191 334 6075; communications.team@durham.ac.uk.

Useful web links

[Centre for Visual Arts & Culture, Durham University](#)

[School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Durham University](#)

[Auckland Castle](#)

[Santander](#)

[Santander Universities](#)

Background

Spanish Art in County Durham:

County Durham's rich collection of Spanish art is held at a number of organisations including Auckland Castle, The Bowes Museum, Durham Cathedral and Durham University.

Much of the work can be traced back to the times of the Prince Bishops who governed the region for over 800 years from their seat at Auckland Castle, and includes examples of Golden Age Spanish art by Zurbarán and El Greco to modern works by artists such as Salvador Dalí and Pablo Picasso.

The Auckland Castle Trust:

The Auckland Castle Trust is transforming Auckland Castle into a heritage, arts and faith destination of international significance, helping to reinvigorate Bishop Auckland and stimulate economic regeneration both in the town and surrounding areas.

In autumn 2016 the charity will begin a major development project designed to realise this vision, including restoration of the 900 year-old Castle, as well as the creation of a new, 10 gallery Faith Museum, exploring a history of faith in the British Isles from pre-history to the modern day and the Spanish Gallery.

The new Spanish Gallery will house a permanent collection of key works from the Spanish Golden Age and other periods, supplemented with loans from the UK's leading institutions and is due to open in 2019.

It has been inspired by the paintings of *Jacob and his Twelve Sons* by Francisco de Zurbarán, painted between 1640 and 1644, which have hung in Auckland Castle for more than 260 years.

The works are believed to have originally been destined for the New World, where in the seventeenth century it was commonly believed the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas were descended from the dispersal of the so-called 'lost' Tribes of Israel.

They have hung in a specially constructed gallery at Auckland Castle since 1756, when the Bishop of Durham, Richard Trevor, bought the series at auction. The paintings are a powerful and artistically unusual symbol of the Judeo-Christian story and their purchase, soon after parliament had repealed the Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1753, was a major political statement about the principle of religious freedom and the integration of Jewish people into British life, as well as the Jewish roots of Christian heritage.

Auckland Castle Trust is supported by:

About Durham University

- A world top 100 university (74th QS World University Rankings 2016/17; 96th THE World University Rankings 2016/17)
- A member of the Russell Group of leading research-intensive UK universities
- Ranked 39 globally for the employability of its students by blue-chip companies worldwide (QS World University Rankings 2016/17)
- In the 2017 Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, Durham was ranked fourth in the UK
- Research at Durham shapes local, national and international agendas, and directly informs the teaching of our students
- Durham was named as The Times and Sunday Times 'Sports University of the Year 2015' in recognition of outstanding performance in both the research and teaching of sport, and student and community participation in sport at all levels

About Santander

Santander UK is a financial services provider in the UK that offers a wide range of personal and commercial financial products and services. It has brought real competition to the UK, through its innovative products for retail customers and relationship banking model for UK SMEs. As at 30 June 2016, the bank serves around 14 million active customers with c. 20,000 employees and operates through 847 branches (which includes 58 university branches) and 69 regional Corporate Business Centres. Santander UK is subject to the full supervision of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) in the UK. Santander UK plc customers are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) in the UK.

Banco Santander (SAN SM, STD US, BNC LN) is a leading retail and commercial bank, based in Spain, with a meaningful market share in 10 core countries in Europe and the Americas. Santander is the largest bank in the euro zone by market capitalization and among the top banks on a global basis. Founded in 1857, Santander had EUR 1.52 trillion in managed funds, 12,500 branches and 190,000 employees at the close of June 2016. In the first half of 2016, Santander made underlying profit of EUR 3,280 million.

Santander Universities

Santander, through Santander Universities, tops the list of Fortune 500 in investment in education (Source: Varkey Report/UNESCO). The Bank has established partnerships with over 1,200 universities in 20 countries, of which 81 are in the UK. Through these agreements Santander promotes entrepreneurship, employability and internationalisation. Santander Universities and Durham University have been partners since 2009 and this latest donation, the largest single donation made to a UK university by Santander Universities, builds upon that relationship. Further information please visit: www.santander.co.uk/uk/santander-universities

END OF MEDIA RELEASE