

Ken Stuckey & Gunilla Stenberg Stuckey
Blindiana Stamps
Dalagatan 31, 2 tr
SE-113 23 Stockholm
Sweden
E-mail: ken.stuckey@bredband.net

Information Sheet #242
August 11, 2008
[Blind in Art; Mobility]



On July 29, 2008 **Spain** issued two souvenir sheets devoted to the *National Heritage* depicting two tapestries “The swing” and “*The blind man and the guitar*” sometimes called “*Blind man playing the guitar*”. Both made from tapestry cartoons by Goya with the thematic known as “Custom paintings”. These two tapestries, manufactured by the Real Fabrica de Madrid, were woven under the supervision of Cornelio Vandergoten, descendant of a family of master upholsterers from Antwerp whom in 1775 were in charge of the factory. Goya began making cartoons for the Real Fabrica in 1775 and did the portrait of Vandergoten, now in the Prado Museum, as director of this tapestry institution until 1782.

Both these tapestries belonging to the royal collection are made of wool and silk and are part of a series of thirteen pieces made to decorate the antechamber of bedrooms of Carlos de Borbon and Maria Luisa de Parma, in the El Pardo palace. In both tapestries predominate the popular customs style of Goya’s early years which continued throughout his career in tapestries and minor paintings.

“The Blind Man and the Guitar”

This tapestry/painting depicts a blind man with his guide and other figures watching him. The scene takes place in the Cebada plaza in Madrid on a market day where vendors, rogues and all sorts of people gather. In this composition, Goya displays a less class-minded, more colourful and easy going approach both in the strokes and colours.

Sociedad Estatal Correos y Telegrafos, S.A. 2005

The depiction of the blind man is consistent with how the blind were shown in art of this period. The itinerant blind musician accompanied by his sighted guide entertaining at fairs, taverns and in the houses of the gentry and nobility. This is in contrast to more often shown blind beggar. Blind musicians and ballad singers were and did not think of themselves as beggars.

Note: Both tapestry and painting are in the Prado Museum, Madrid.