

ART CORNER

Tribute to Historical Dermatology

C Daudén-Sala

Lately, I have been using the pictorial motif of a painting in which a bookcase is filled with a selection of books easily identified by their spines. Thus, the personality of the intended recipient of the painting is revealed by the various elements—the books and personal belongings that in some way represent the person's life providing evidence of both their professional and personal interests. At the same time, the combination of colors, *chiaroscuro*, positioning, and proportion, and the qualities of the various original bindings and objects, are designed to achieve the most realistic appearance possible within a logical balance. Continuing along these lines, I thought nothing could be better than paying homage to the history of dermatology, above all that period known as Scientific Dermatology—a great era for dermatology, over the last 300 years and up to the middle of the 20th century so often a source of reference—painting a work featuring publications bearing the names of some of the leading authorities on dermatology and, finally, showing admiration for some of the most recent figures.

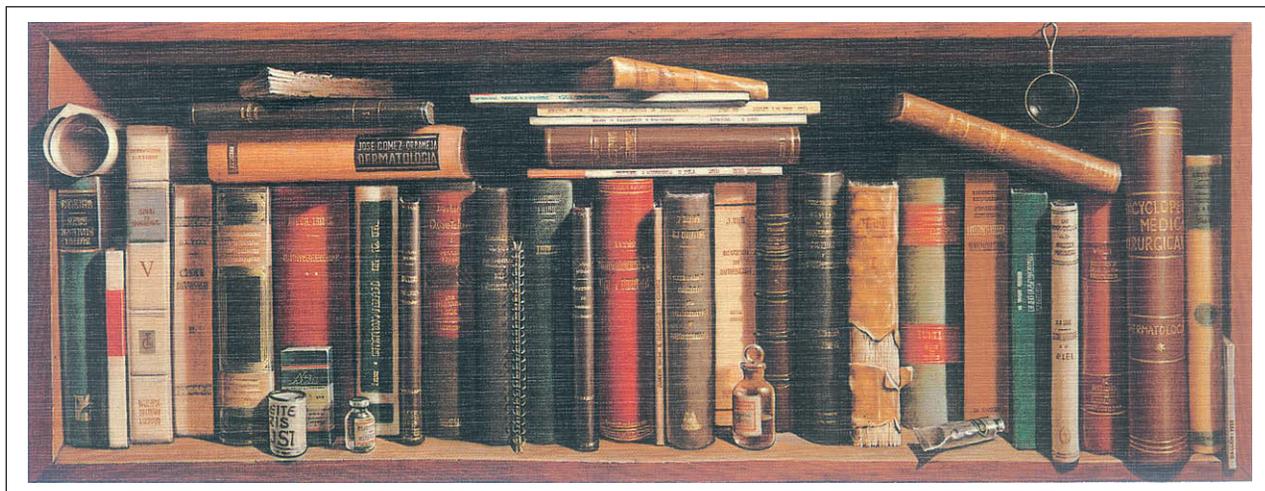
The painting features names that are well known in Spain. I wanted to include only those already dead by the date of the painting, but I made an exception for Professor García Pérez, who was still living at the time, as particular homage to a good friend with whom I had shared some time at the Hospital de San Juan de Dios. In particular, I included text

books by Gay Prieto and Gómez Orbaneja, since they meant so much in my time. I know they were followed by other prestigious dermatologists who also produced excellent publications but including these in the painting would have overextended the dimensions and motivation of the work. A notebook (11) contains the imaginary names of those who do not feature in the painting but who could be considered worthy of inclusion.

Professor Juan de Azúa, for whom I have no book references, could not be left out, and I have remembered him through a scroll of paper signifying the title of academician awarded him by the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (Academia Española de Dermatología y Venereología), an institution of which he was both the founder and first president.

The painting is a neo-realist oil produced in the summer of 1993 on a 45 cm × 120 cm prepared panel, finished with a Dutch varnish, which provides the necessary warmth, as well as conserving the work. The composition, which is presently hanging in the headquarters of the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology, contains the images of many books of my own and others kindly loaned by the Academy library. I took the liberty of inventing for myself the appearance of some of those shown, like Aicardius (31) and Astruc (31), as the originals were impossible to find. The former aroused my curiosity as it was apparently the first book dedicated exclusively to the study of skin diseases, and was, in reality, a compilation of lessons given by Aicardius' master, Mercurialis. Above all, I wanted to feature those authors of the European schools who were so influential in the understanding and development of

Correspondence:
Carlos Daudén Sala.
Paseo del General Martínez Campos, 117.
28010 Madrid. Spain
carlosdauden@wanadoo.es

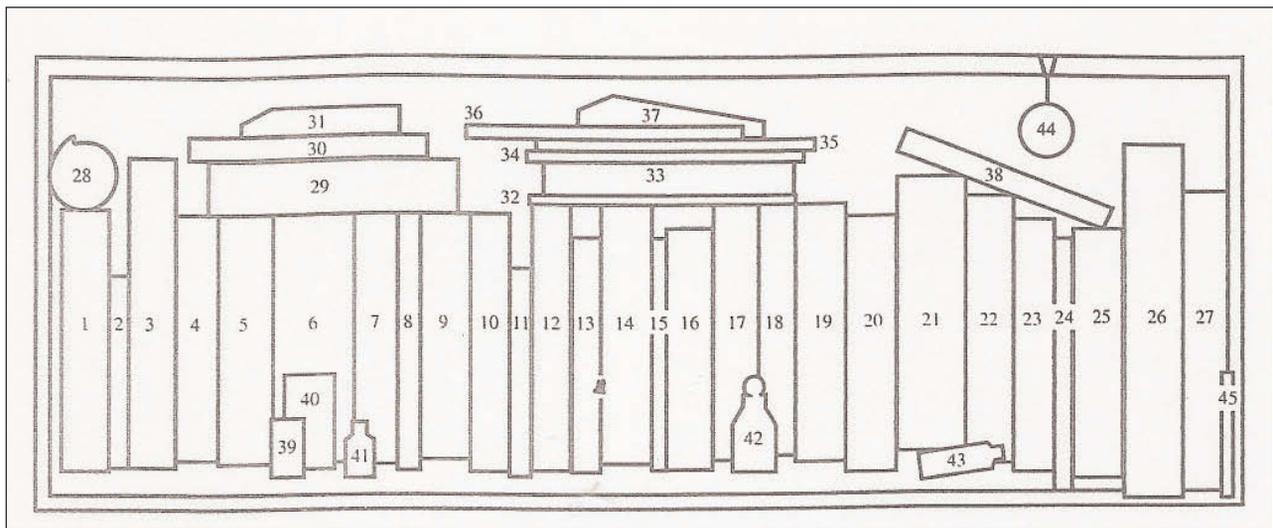


dermatology in that period, many of them teaching our own teachers. Classic books, seminal works, some international journals, and naturally, our very own Actas.

The books are accompanied by representations of those antisyphilitic treatments of the period that represented milestones in the treatment of the disease: a mercury-based compound (39), salvarsan (40), and penicillin (41). The solution (42) and the ointment (43) had to be included as they symbolize 2 forms of treatment still extensively used

today. Lastly, the magnifying glass stands for the objective examination of dermatologic conditions that is so important in their clinical diagnosis.

My aim throughout was to fulfill a moral duty toward a specialty practiced by myself for many years, attempting to assimilate, as far as I possibly could, the knowledge of many of those featured in the painting. Some of them had already provided guidance for my father, many were my teachers, and all, without a doubt, will provide an example for my son.



- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Andrews, Kerdel-Vegas, Domonkos. <i>Tratado de Dermatología</i>. 2. Fernández de la Portilla. <i>La Lucha Antivenérea en España</i>. 3. P. de Graciansky, S. and M. Boulle. <i>Atlas of Dermatology</i>. 4. J.L. Brocq. <i>Cliniques Dermatologiques</i>. 5. J. Darier, R. Sabouraud, Gougerot, Milian, Pautrier, Ravaut, Sézary, Clément Simon. <i>Nouvelle Pratique Dermatologique</i>. 6. R. Degos. <i>Dermatologie</i>. 7. W.F. Lever. <i>Histopathology of the Skin</i>. 8. E.A. Sainz de Aja. <i>Sífilis, Blenorragia y Matrimonio</i>. 9. A. Rook, D.S. Wilkinson, F.J.G. Ebling, R.H. Champion, J.L. Burton. <i>Textbook of Dermatology</i>. 10. J. Sánchez Covisa, J. Bejarano. <i>Elementos de Dermatología</i>. 11. <i>Notebook containing a list of all the illustrious dermatologists not represented in the books painted</i>. 12. E. Jeanselme, A. Sézary. <i>Traité de la Syphilis</i>. 13. J. Sánchez Covisa et al. <i>Modernos Estudios sobre Dermosifiliografía</i>. 14. E. Lesser. <i>Tratado de Enfermedades de la Piel y Venéreas</i>. 15. E. Hoffmann. <i>Concepto actual de la Infección Sifilítica</i>. 16. J. Barrio de Medina. <i>Tratado Español de Dermatología y Sifiliografía</i>. 17. J. Darier. <i>Compendio de Dermatología</i>. 18. R. Sabouraud. <i>Maladies du Cuir Chevelu</i>. 19. E. Riecke. <i>Tratado de las Enfermedades Cutáneas y Venéreas</i>. 20. J.J. Plenck. <i>Doctrina de Morbis Cutaneus</i> (1776). 21. E. Besnier, L. Brocq, L. Jacquet. <i>La Pratique Dermatologique</i>. 22. M.L. Quiroga, C.F. Guillot. <i>Dermatología Cosmética</i>. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. A. García Pérez. <i>Dermatología Clínica</i>. 24. G.A. Rost. <i>Diseases of the Skin</i>. 25. <i>Handbuch der Haut und Geschlechtskrankheiten</i>. 26. <i>Encilopédie Médico-Chirurgicale. Dermatologie</i>. 27. E. Jacobi. <i>Atlas der Hautkrankheiten</i>. 28. Juan de Azúa y Suárez. Academician. First Dean of the Academia Española de Dermatología y Sifiliografía. Founder of Actas Dermo-Sifiliográficas (1922). 29. J. Gómez Orbaneja. <i>Dermatología</i>. 30. Fabre. <i>Tratado completo de las Enfermedades Venéreas</i> (1849). 31. Aicardius. <i>Afecciones de la Piel</i> (1572). 32. <i>Medicina Cutánea</i>. 33. . Gay Prieto. <i>Dermatología y Venereología</i>. 34. <i>Annales de Dermatologie et de Vénérologie</i>. 35. <i>Archives of Dermatology</i>. 36. <i>British Journal of Dermatology</i>. 37. Astruc. <i>Tratado de las Enfermedades Venéreas</i> (1772). 38. <i>Actas Dermo-Sifiliográficas</i>. Tomo I-II. (1909-1910). 39. Cusi grey oil 40. Neo Abelló 41. Sodium Penicillin 42. Solution 43. Ointment 44. Magnifying glass. Symbolizes clinical dermatological examination 45. Signature on the work (DAUDEN, 1993). |
|--|---|

Painting

"Beauty is that which gives pleasure..."
IMMANUEL KANT

The vagaries and tricks of memory can make us forget the shadows thrown by things. What I mean is that within our interior landscape images can exist that are senseless, unconnected, without significance, without shadow. This phenomenon, falling between the intellectual and the sensory, can also occur in a collective manner. Events which were of far-reaching importance can be represented once time has passed in history, as something humorous, absurd, deformed, inane, without shadow.

Even in the art of painting, the most universal and protohistoric of the arts—that in which our ancestors at Altamira showed us the way with their cave paintings—this situation occurs: our eyes travel as though blind, anonymous, and invisible over paintings without substance, without meaning.

Nonetheless, the most beautiful and frequently visited art galleries of the world carry on their walls charismatic, unforgettable, living paintings, complete with shadows. And this is not only a result of impeccable technique, of their perfect reproduction of reality, of their originality in distribution of the content, or of their truthful or provocative colors. They are admired, commented upon, and indexed in the catalogue of artistic marvels, above all, for their ability to reach inside us, for their capacity to evoke emotion, for the effects they ultimately have on the feelings of the observer.

Las Meninas (the Maids of Honor) by Diego de Silva Velázquez is a clear example of paintings of this type, a group of ageless works widely considered immortal. Here the juxtaposition of perspectives is unsurpassable, and this, combined with the studied illumination of the mirror, produces the sensation that the air between the figures is also painted. There is also an encoded message: a promising

future for the Spanish monarchy with their succession assured.

And, of course, the universal example of the Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci. The enigmatic smile of the sitter, Madonna Elisa, second wife of Bartolomé, the Marquis of Giocondo—or perhaps the Spanish beauty Constanza de Ávalos, or even Giuliano de Medici's lover, or, who can tell, even Leonardo himself with womanly features—she seduces us with sweetness and irony, surrounded by the *sfumato* of an atmospheric and mysterious landscape.

Or the more recent example of the *Homenaje a la Dermatología Histórica* (Homage to the History of Dermatology) by Carlos Daudén Sala, dermatologist and national and international award-winning painter, whose works hang in museums including: the Spanish Society of America, the Museo del Barrio, Godwin-Ternbach Museum, the Spanish National Tourist Office in New York, the Princeton University Art Museum in New Jersey, the Museo de Ponce in Puerto Rico, and many private collections in Spain, North America, and the Phillipines.

There can be nothing to object to here; in fact, there is much to praise in the technique, the colors, the pictorial perfection. But I want to focus attention on the descriptive, conceptual, and transcendent nature of the work, which is almost like a treatise where we can discover a large part of our history without even opening the cover, without turning the pages. Like a set of Russian dolls, each hiding a fresh enigma within, Carlos Daudén's pictorial representation allows us to discover a new encoded message with each careful look. It admires and illustrates those from whom it learnt without living the experience directly.

Yet, at the same time, this beautiful painting is executed with such realism and naturalism that if it were to be admired in a library, among bookcases full of ancient books, it could easily be said, like Teophile Gautier when shown *Las Meninas*,

"But... where is the painting?"

A. GUERRA TAPIA