

Artist: Diego Velazquez

Title: Las Meninas

Date:

Location: Spain

Velazquez was a Spanish painter who was the leading artist in the court of King Philip IV. He was an individualistic artist of the contemporary baroque period. He painted scores of portraits of the Spanish royal family, other notable European figures, and commoners, culminating in the production of his masterpiece *Las Meninas*. In *Las Meninas* (“The Maids of Honour”), also known as *The Royal Family*, he has created the effect of a momentary glance at a casual scene in the artist’s studio while he is painting the king and queen—whose reflection only is seen in the mirror in the background—in the presence of the infant Margarita with her maids and other attendants. In this complex composition, the nearly life-size figures are painted in more or less detail according to their relation to the central figure of the infanta and to the source of light, creating a remarkable illusion of reality never surpassed by Velázquez or any other artist of his age.

