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## Madrid

by Richard G. Mann

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Located in the heart of Castile, the central region of the Iberian peninsula, Madrid is the political capital and economic and cultural center of Spain. The largest city in the country, Madrid has nearly four million inhabitants in its metropolitan area, including a substantial glbtq population.

Following the death of the homophobic dictator Francisco Franco (b. 1892, ruled 1939-75) on November 20, 1975, glbtq activists in Madrid emerged from clandestine associations, and gradually assumed leadership of a national effort for full civil rights. On April 21, 2005, Spain became the third country in Europe to legalize same-sex marriage, and polls indicate that this move is supported by a very large majority of the country, despite protests of the Roman Catholic Church.

Despite the current widespread acceptance of queer lifestyles, Madrid has a long history of official efforts to eradicate any type of sexual and gender deviance. Nevertheless, the limited documentation available suggests that there have been "underground" communities committed to same-sex love in Madrid from the sixteenth century onwards. This proto-"queer" subculture impacted mainstream culture in various ways. For instance, despite rigorous censorship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the theater literally served as the stage for the display of alternative lifestyles.

### Origins and Development of the City

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**Richard G. Mann** is Professor of Art at San Francisco State University, where he regularly offers a two-semester multicultural course in Queer Art History. His publications include *El Greco and His Patrons* and *Spanish Paintings of the Fifteenth through Nineteenth Centuries*.