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Is that a Velázquez in the basement?

Specialists to debate authenticity of controversial painting at conference in Seville

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The Education of the Virgin, 1617-18. Photo: Yale University Art Gallery

For more than a century, *The Education of the Virgin* was believed to be the work of an unknown 17th-century Spanish artist and was kept in storage. But in 2004, the painting owned by Yale University was examined by a young curator, John Marciari, now the head of drawings at New York's Morgan Library and Museum, who attributed it to Velázquez.

He published his findings in 2010 and scholars have argued about the attribution ever since. The foremost dissenter is Jonathan Brown, a professor of art at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, who is considered the top authority on Velázquez in the US.

Now the specialists will battle it out at a symposium in Seville (15-17 October) sponsored by the Spanish bank Santander, which has paid for the work to be restored.

It was donated to Yale in 1925 by two alumni, sons of a US merchant sailor whose ships often travelled to Spain. The work is due to be shown in Madrid (Sala de Arte de la Fundación Santander, until 8 October) and Seville (Espacio Santa Clara, 15 October-15 January), and then at the Grand Palais in Paris, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Yale University Art Gallery.