

Homerton College, Cambridge

This year is the 250th anniversary (1768-2018) of the founding of Homerton College, University of Cambridge. This is of particular interest to those interested in the evacuation of the Basque children from Bilbao for two reasons.

Firstly, it is the college where Leah Manning (née Perrett) went in 1906-1908 to train as a teacher. She went on to become, amongst other things, one of the first women MPs, an educator and a key figure in organising of the evacuation of the 4,000 children from Bilbao.

Back in Britain she continued to be closely involved with the children, many of whom remembered her very fondly. There is a Leah Manning meeting Room at Homerton College, where she, her works and influence are commemorated, and where there is hung a painting by Coqué Martínez.



The second reason for our interest is that Homerton College houses the largest collection in this country of artwork by José María Martínez. When he started exhibiting in his early twenties José María decided to adopt the name Koke Markíniz as a poet and Coque Martínez as a painter. He was the eldest of three brothers who were evacuated to Britain in 1937 on the *Habana* and then lived in several *colonias*. Koke (as he signed himself in letters) studied art at Croydon College and lived in Croydon for the rest of his life.



His artistic executors were left with the daunting task of distributing his 200+ works to places where they would be used for education, and so in 2011 ten paintings were donated to Homerton College, because of the links to Leah Manning, where they have been restored and are on exhibition in various rooms and corridors of the college.

I think that both Leah Manning and Coque Martínez would be happy with this arrangement.

More at <https://homerton250.org/curiosity/coque-martinez-collection/>

CK