WHAT IS THE USE OF A CUP? (DE QUÉ SIRVE UNA TAZA?)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (59/82)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1812 - 1815
DIMENSIONES	157 x 207 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Aguafuerte, aguatinta bruñida y lavis
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	20 Dec 2010 / 02 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

3 (on the lower left-hand corner of the plate).

HISTORIA

Véase *Sad presentiments of what must come to pass*.

The second artist's proof shows that the aquatint extends right up to the edges of the page.

The title was handwritten on the print by Goya in the first and only series that is known to have been printed at the time the works were created, which the artist gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Therefore,

the title was etched into the plate at a later date and left unchanged as of the first edition of the *Disasters of War* printed by the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid in 1863, after the printing of the series in the possession of Ceán Bermúdez.

There is a surviving *preparatory drawing* for this print which is housed in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In the middle of a desolate landscape a woman helps others who are suffering from the terrible famine that affected Spain during the Spanish War of Independence, in particular between 1811 and 1812. One of the starving women in the centre of the composition lies prone on the ground with her eyes closed, exhausted, with the body of a child in her lap. Behind her, an older woman dressed entirely in black watches with a pained expression as the first figure helps the others.

Goya employs aquatint to render the sky and ground, achieving a granular effect in both areas to the point that it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. Aquatint is also used to depict the women in the centre of the composition in great detail, while some areas on the body of the woman who is lying down and the one holding the cup in her hand have been left blank. There are no other elements to distract the eye from the figures being helped or spatial and temporal references: this gives the scene a markedly abstract, universal air.

The title of the print expresses the futility of the gesture, despite the good will of the person carrying out the act of helping the starving: the famine was extreme, and the available resources were scarce and insufficient.

This print, in which Goya continues to explore the theme of famine experienced during the Spanish War of Independence started in print no. 48, *A cruel shame! (Cruel lástima)*, can be linked to no. 52, *They do not arrive in time (No llegan á tiempo)*, which also depicts a merciful act in which women have a central role.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is stored in the National Chalcography (cat. 310).

EXPOSICIONES

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
cat. 66
cat. 249

Francisco de Goya
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
cat. 59

Francisco de Goya: Maleri, Tegning, Grafikk
Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996
from 10th to April 14th 1996
cat. 147

Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996
Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996
from November 21st 1996 to January 1997
cat. 143

Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996
from September 19th to December 15th 1996
cat. 220

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
cat. 139

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 98

2022

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Goya, grabador
BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de
cat. 161
1918
Blass S.A.

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 179
1964

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1092
1970

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 272
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

TORAL OROPESA, María and MARTÍN MEDINA, Víctor
p. 79
2022
Museo de Bellas Artes de Badajoz y Diputación de Badajoz

Bruno Cassirer

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 149
2013
Pinacoteca de París

Office du livre

Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp. 114-151
2016
Norton Simon Museum

ENLACES EXTERNOS