THE WORST IS TO BEG (LO PEOR ES PEDIR)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (55/82)

DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1812 - 1815
DIMENSIONES	154 x 207 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Aguafuerte, lavis y bruñidor
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	16 Dec 2010 / 02 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

Goya (lower left-hand corner, with the "y" written backwards); 37 (lower left-hand corner).

HISTORIA

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

The second artist's proof shows that the lavis extends up to the edges of the plate with light burnishing on the ground area and the sky towards the left-hand edge.

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 this print Goya continues to explore the subject of famine begun in print no. 48, *A cruel shame! (Cruel lástima)*. In the middle of a waste ground a group of starving people beg the help of a young woman who passes by them, head lowered. In the background a French officer watches the scene.

Goya has left the sky completely clear, omitting the aquatint he uses for skies in other works. The faces of the starving figures in the centre of the composition are picked out in aquatint. Their faces are gaunt, their eye sockets sunken, while their legs and arms are mere bones and their clothing is ragged.

The well-dressed young woman has been the subject of much discussion. Eleanor Sayre believes that it might be the Spanish wife of the French officer that also appears in the print: a depiction of a mixed marriage. Lecaldano suggests that this figure might be a young middle-class woman who cannot bear the sight of the starving people and for this reason turns her gaze away from them, although he does not link her to the soldier in the background. Jesusa Vega and Juan Carrete raise the possibility that the figure is a prostitute, a profession that offered many women a solution to the difficult circumstances caused by the war. This would explain why the young woman does not look at the dying figures as she passes by, her gaze fixed on the French officer who would represent the best potential client of the time.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is stored in the National Chalcography (cat. 306).

EXPOSICIONES

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1988
from October 6th to December 18th 1988. Exhibited also at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, January 18th to March 26th 1989; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nueva York, May 9th to July 16th 1989, Madrid curator Manuela B. Mena Marqués, scientific directors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor A. Sayre
cat. 91

Francisco de Goya
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
cat. 55

Francisco de Goya: Maleri, Tegning, Grafikk
Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996
from 10th to April 14th 1996
cat. 145

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. 139

Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996
from September 19th to December 15th 1996
cat. 222

Goya. Opera grafica
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
p. 78

Goya en tiempos de guerra

Goya luces y sombras

Goya et la modernité

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2008
consultant editor Manuela B. Mena Marqués, from April 14th to July 13th 2008
cat. 108

CaixaForum Barcelona 2012
consultant editors José Manuel Matilla and Manuela B. Marqués. From March 16th to June 24th 2012
cat. 48

Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 94

2022

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Blass S.A.

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 175
1964
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Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1084
1970
Office du livre

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
PÉREZ SÁNCHEZ, Alfonso E. y SAYRE, Eleanor A. (directores) and MENA, Manuela B. (comisaria)
p. 309-310, cat. 91
1988
Museo del Prado

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 265
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

El Libro de los Desastres de la Guerra
BLAS BENITO, Javier and MATILLA, José Manuel
pp. 105-107
2000
Museo del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 147
2013
Pinacoteca de París

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

TORAL OROPESA, María and MARTÍN MEDINA, Víctor
p. 76
2022
Museo de Bellas Artes de Badajoz y Diputación de Badajoz

ENLACES EXTERNOS