

# NOTHING. IT WILL SAY

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (69/82)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1820 - 1823

DIMENSIONES

155 x 201 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Aguafuerte, aguatinata bruñida, lavis, punta seca y buril

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

26 Dec 2010 / 05 Jun 2023

INVENTARIO

836 225

## HISTORIA

See *Sad forebodings of what is to come.*

In the first state of the proof, burin touches can be seen reinforcing the bald spots on top of the corpse's head.

The title of the print was handwritten by Goya on the first and only series known to us at the time it was made, which the painter gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Thus the title was subsequently engraved on the plate without any modification from Ceán Bermúdez's copy for the first edition of *The Disasters of War* published by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San

Fernando in Madrid in 1863.

In this case the title noted by Goya in Ceán's edition was Nada. It says... whereas the Madrid Royal Academy preferred to engrave the plate Nada. It will say.

A *preparatory drawing* is preserved in the Prado Museum.

#### ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In the foreground, a corpse lies down on its back and sits up slightly to write the word *Nothing* on a piece of paper. In the background, in a dark setting, a group of figures with somewhat caricatured faces that resemble masks can be made out with some difficulty. On the left side of the print, Goya has engraved a female figure reading while resting her elbow on a table and holding a scale in her other hand, probably an allegory of Justice. The scales are clearly visible in the first state of the proof, although Goya gradually covers them with the grain of the aquatint.

Several interpretations have been made of this print, perhaps one of the most literary of the entire series of *The Disasters of War*. It is most likely that this image refers to the situation in Spain after the end of the War of Independence. In reality, this war was both painful and painful for the population and, at the same time, absolutely useless, since once it was over, Spain returned to the same point from which it had started, that is to say, the Old Regime was reinstated in the figure of Ferdinand VII.

Nigel Glendinning has proposed a relationship between this print and the last plate of the *Moral Theatre* illustrated by Otto van Veen (Leiden, 1556-Brussels, 1629), as he considers that both are a meditation on death and have in common the recurrence of the corpse and the scales of Justice. He also believes that the crown in the corpse's hand could be a veiled allusion to the monarchy.

Valeriano Bozal has established a parallel between *Nothing It will say* this with the engravings No. 66, *Strange Devotion*, No. 67, *This Is No Less*, and No. 68, *What Madness!* in which the painter openly criticises certain aspects of the Church. Thus print no. 69 could be a reference to the culmination of this great deception constructed by the Church, the denial of a future life in which the believer projects himself.

To a large extent it could be said that this work continues the Baroque pictorial tradition in which the theme of *Vanitas* was addressed, especially in connection with some paintings by Juan de Valdés Leal (Seville, 1622-Seville, 1690) such as *Finis Gloriarum Mundi* (1672, Hospital de la Santa Caridad, Seville). Goya must have had occasion to see it during his stay in Seville around 1790, from where he went to Cadiz to spend a period in the company of his learned friend Sebastián Martínez y Pérez (1747-1800), where he remained until 1793. The Aragonese painter may have taken from this painting the idea of Justice, which in Valdés Leal's work is alluded to by the representation of a scale in the centre, as well as the decomposing corpse and the crown.

#### CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is in the National Chalcography (cat. 320).

#### EXPOSICIONES

**Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolutionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 - 1981)**  
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980  
cat. 241

**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,

**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. 159

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. 156*

### **Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996  
from September 19th to  
December 15th 1996  
*cat. 227*

### **Das Capriccio als Kunstprinzip**

Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1996  
from December 8th 1996 to  
February 16th 1997, exhibited  
also in Zurich, Kunsthhaus, from  
March 14th marzo 1997 to June  
1st 1997 and in Vienna,  
Kunsthistorisches Museum mi  
Palais Harrach, from June 29th  
1997 to September 21st 1997.  
*cat. 122*

### **Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra**

San Donato Milanese 2000  
Opere grafiche della Fondazione  
Antonio Mazzotta  
*cat. 149*

### **Goya en tiempos de guerra**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2008  
consultant editor Manuela B.  
Mena Marqués, from April 14th to  
July 13th 2008  
*cat. 114*

### **Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013  
from October 11st 2013 to March  
16th 2014  
*cat. 108*

Hamburg 2019  
*cat. 105*

Madrid 2017

#### **BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

#### **Goya, grabador**

BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de  
cat. 171  
1918  
Blass S.A.

#### **Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**

HARRIS, Tomás  
cat. 189  
1964  
Bruno Cassirer

#### **Vie et oeuvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
cat. 1112  
1970  
Office du livre

#### **A solution to the enigma of Goya's emphatic caprices nº 65-80 of The Disasters of War**

Apollo  
GLENDINNING, Nigel  
pp.186-191  
107  
1978

#### **Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración**

PÉREZ SÁNCHEZ, Alfonso E. y SAYRE,  
Eleanor A. (directores) and MENA, Manuela B.  
(comisaria)  
pp.436-438, cat. 156  
1988  
Museo del Prado

#### **Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)  
cat. 287  
1996  
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca  
Nacional

TACK, Ifee and PISOT, Sandra  
p. 313  
2019  
Hirmer

CALVO RUATA, José Ignacio, BORRÁS  
GUALIS, Gonzalo M. and MARTÍNEZ  
HERRANZ, Amparo  
p. 246  
2017  
Gobierno de Aragón y Fundación Bancaria  
Ibercaja

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA,  
Wilfredo  
p. 154  
2013  
Pinacoteca de París

#### **Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**

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

#### **ENLACES EXTERNOS**