# ONE CAN’T TELL WHY (NO SE PUEDE SABER POR QUÉ)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (35/82)




**DATOS GENERALES**

| | |
|---|---|
| CRONOLOGÍA | Ca. 1812 - 1815 |
| DIMENSIONES | 154 x 256 mm |
| TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE | Etching, burnished lavis, drypoint and burin |
| RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA | Undisputed work |
| FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN | 08 Dec 2010 / 24 May 2023 |
| INVENTARIO | 836 225 |

**INSCRIPCIONES**

*2* (on the lower left-hand corner)

**HISTORIA**

See *Sad presentiments of what must come to pass (Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer).*

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 are no surviving preparatory drawings for this print.

#### ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Goya returns to the theme depicted in the previous print, no. 34, *On account of a knife (Por una navaja)*, although in this case the scene shows a mass execution. The compositional space is occupied by a group of men executed by garrotte. All the men's hands are clasped around crucifixes and they wear hats bearing more crosses. Almost all of them have the weapon for which they have been convicted hanging around their necks, excepting the third and last men on the right. Goya wishes to draw the viewer's attention to this detail in the title of the print: we cannot know why these figures have been condemned to death. By this means the artist sows the seed of doubt regarding the arbitrary and unjust application of such a severe punishment.

The image is markedly darker than the previous print in the series, suggesting that this mass execution takes place at night. It might also suggest that the unjust way in which some of the convicted men were executed was by this means hidden from the public. Moreover, the fact that there are no spectators to the act depicted in this image, in contrast to the scene depicted in print no. 33, could signify that the execution takes place in an enclosed space or in a place that the public were prohibited from entering.

#### CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is stored in the National Chalcography (cat. 286).

#### EXPOSICIONES

**Goya. Drawings, Etchings and Lithographs**
Goya. Drawings London 1954
from June 12th to July 25th 1954
*cat. 58*

**Goya and the espirit of enlightment**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York 1989
scientific directors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor A. Sayre. From May 9th to July 16th 1989. Exhibited also in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, from January 18th to March 26th 1989
*cat. 87*

**Francisco de Goya**
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
*cat. 35*

**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. 121*

**Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra**
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
*cat. 115*

**Goya's Realism**
Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen 2000
from February 11th to May 7th 2000
*cat. 115*

**Goya. Opera grafica**
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
*p. 68*

**Goya et la modernité**
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
*cat.74*

#### BIBLIOGRAFÍA

**Goya, grabador**
BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de
cat. 137
1918
Blass S.A.

**Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 155
1964
Bruno Cassirer

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1050
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)

**Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 240

**Goya. Die Kunst der Freiheit**
TRAEGER, Jörg
p. 149, fig. 54
2000

p. 300-302, cat. 87
1988
Museo del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 137
2013
Pinacoteca de París

1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

## Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum

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

Verlag C. H. Beck

### ENLACES EXTERNOS