THE KNIFE GRINDER (EL AFILADOR)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1808 - 1812
UBICACIÓN	Szépmüvészeti Muzeum. Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
DIMENSIONES	68 x 50.5 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	Szépmüvészeti Muzeum Budapest
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	25 Apr 2010 / 13 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	322 (763)

HISTORIA

See *The Water Carrier*.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

The knife grinder is shown in the middle of his task. He is bending over, leaning towards the wheel to place the knife on it, while his right foot rests on the barrow. The movement of the wheel and the heat it gives off as it spins round quickly is expressed in the red brushstrokes close to the axel. A thin trickle of water pours onto the wheel to counteract this heat. The pose of the figure is reminiscent of the *Belvedere Torso*, which

Goya drew in the pages of *the Italian Notebook*. The grinder is aware of the viewer, and his head is raised, looking directly at us, as if we had interrupted him at his work when he is too busy to stop. His face reveals the exhausting nature of his job. He is wearing a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows, some undone buttons revealing his bare chest. The setting for this scene is not defined, with a neutral, flat background offering no depth whatsoever.

This work and its companion painting, *The Water Carrier*, have been interpreted as paying tribute to the anonymous heroes of the war against Napoleon. In this case, the knife grinder would be in charge of sharpening the combatants' knives, sometimes the only weapons they had available to them. Goya knew how to reflect the inequality of the two sides, and in his war imagery there are numerous representations of Spanish fighters defending themselves with stones, pieces of wood, and, above all, knives.

EXPOSICIONES

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
cat. 66
cat. 99

Spanyol Mesterk
Szépm?vészeti Múzeum Budapest 1965

Goya. El Capricho y la Invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1993
from November 18th 1993 to February 15th 1994. Exhibited also at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, March 18th to June 12th 1994 and The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, July 16th to October 16th 1994, consultant editors Manuela B. Mena Marqués and Juliet Wilson-Bareau
cat. 67

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. 92

Goya: Prophet der Moderne
Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin 2005
from July 13th to October 3th 2005. Exhibitied also at the Kunsthistorischemuseum, Vienna, October 18th 2005 to January 8th 2006, consultant editor Manuela B. Mena Marqués
cat. 98

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. 68

Goya e il Mondo Moderno
Palazzo Reale Milan 2010
organized by SEACEX, Palazzo Reale and Fundación Goya en Aragón, consultant editors Valeriano Bozal and Concepción Lomba Serrano. From March 17th to June 27th 2010
cat. 23

Expérience Goya
Lille 2021
cat. 30

Agen 2019
cat. 15

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Goya. El capricho y la invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas

MENA, Manuela B. y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet (comisarias)
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1993
Museo del Prado

Goya en tiempos de guerra

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pp. 256-258, cat. 68 y p. 259 (il.)
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Museo Nacional del Prado

MOTTIN, Bruno, EFEDAQUE, Adrien and WILSON-BAREU, Juliet
p. 109
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