THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON ON HORSEBACK (EL DUQUE DE WELLINGTON A CABALLO)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. PORTRAITS



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1812
UBICACIÓN	Apsley House, London, United Kingdom
DIMENSIONES	294 x 240 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	Wellington Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	18 Apr 2010 / 16 Jun 2023

HISTORIA

According to the inscription found on a preparatory drawing of the Duke of Wellington, in pencil and sanguine and now in the collection of the British Museum, this work was produced whilst the Duke of Wellington was staying in Madrid, and was made for the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando. In 1812, in the issue of the Diario de Madrid newspaper dated 1 September, an advertisement declared that, for a few days, the rooms of the main wing of the Royal Academy would be opened up to the public, and that in one of these rooms Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington was hanging.

Today, this same painting hangs on a wall in Apsley House, London.

There was a rumour that, whilst Goya was making the portrait or the preparatory studies for it in the presence of his model, the two men had an argument. This appears to have been little more than a romantic tale, however, derived from the fact that, whilst the painter was in the company of Wellington, the duke received a visit from Sir James McGrigor, the head of the Staff Medical Services, whom he violently recriminated for providing certain medical treatment to the wounded during combat.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Lord Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), was an English general who commanded the British troops fighting in Spain against Napolean's forces during the Spanish War of Independence. On 22 July 1812 he won a decisive battle at Arapiles, prior to the liberation of Madrid.

This life-size portrait depicts the Duke of Wellington mounted on a horse, which is rearing up on its hind legs. He is shown wearing a dark civilian riding outfit, white shirt and red sash. In his right hand he is holding his hat, whilst holding his horse's reins in the other. Sitting very upright on the horse, he looks straight out at the viewer in a pose identical to that in the pencil and sanguine drawing made that same year. This portrait was painted on a canvas on which another equestrian portrait had been painted before. It has been suggested that the identity of the original subject was Manuel Godoy or Joseph Bonaparte. It is very possible that Goya produced this more recent painting by referring to the small *bust portrait* that he painted earlier, and which is now located in the National Gallery, London, and the drawing of the same subject.

For further biographical information *The Duke of Wellington*.

EXPOSICIONES

Loan exhibition of Painting by El Greco and Goya
M. Knoedler and Co. New York 1912
April 1912
cat. 18

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
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cat. 105

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p. 189, cat. 476
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Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
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GUDIOL RICART, José
vol. I, p. 344, cat. 557
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Francisco de Goya, 4 vols.
CAMÓN AZNAR, José
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1980-1982
Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja

Diplomatario
GOYA Y LUCIENTES, Francisco de
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Goya en tiempos de guerra
MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B.
p. 275 y 278 (il.)
2008
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ENLACES EXTERNOS