# THIN YARN

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: CAPRICHOS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1797-1799) (44/85)




**DATOS GENERALES**

| | |
|---|---|
| CRONOLOGÍA | Ca. 1797 - 1799 |
| DIMENSIONES | 219 x 153 mm |
| TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE | Aguafuerte, aguatinta, punta seca y buril |
| RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA | Undisputed work |
| FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN | 16 Dec 2010 / 29 May 2024 |
| INVENTARIO | 836 225 |

**INSCRIPCIONES**

*Hilan delgado.* (at the bottom left-hand corner)

*44.* (in the upper right-hand corner)

**HISTORIA**

See *Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Painter*.

A *preparatory drawing* of this engraving is in the Prado Museum.

**ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO**

Three old women with gaunt, caricatured faces are depicted in this engraving. One of them, the one in the foreground, is seated on a chair and is spinning. Somewhat further back, an older woman with a deformed face is also seated and gazes into the void with an absorbed air. Finally, a third female figure appears in profile, holding a broom in one of her hands. In the background, on the right-hand side of the engraving, there are ropes hanging from the ceiling from which children, probably foetuses, are hanging.

The upper part of the body of the first old woman is intensely illuminated and contrasts with the dark atmosphere created by the use of two aquatints. The drypoint is used to accentuate the yarn and burin on the neck and back of the spinner in the foreground, as well as the legs of the chair.

Three manuscripts on *The Caprices* coincide in explaining this engraving as a depiction of a henchwomen plotting something, although they could also be witches. With this print Goya thus began the series of images devoted to witchcraft and superstition. This theme had already been dealt with by the artist in the series of paintings he produced for the Duke and Duchess of Osuna around 1798. In one of them, entitled *Aquelarre*, Goya depicted human foetuses hanging, in this case from a rod, which are also present in *Caprice no. 43, The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters.* It is possible that they play an important role in the incantations that these women prepare or "spin", as the title of the engraving suggests. It has also been suggested that the three women are the Fates - Nona, Decima and Morta - who weave the thread of life, probably of the children hanging from the ceiling, from birth to death.

If we relate this engraving to the following one, no. 45, *Much to suck,* especially with the explanations provided in the manuscripts, we can conclude that the three old women are engaged in abortive practices. It is possible that this has to do with the use of children's corpses in spells or witchcraft.

**CONSERVACIÓN**

The plate is in poor condition, with the aquatint practically missing ( National Chalcography, no. 215).

**EXPOSICIONES**

**Goya. Gemälde Zeichnungen. Graphik. Tapisserien**
Kunsthalle Basel Basle 1953
from January 23th to April 12th 1953
*cat. 231*

**Goya. La década de Los Caprichos**
Madrid 1992
organized by Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando sponsored by Fundación Central Hispano, Madrid, consultant editor Nigel Glendinnig. From October 26th 1992 to January 10th 1993
*cat. 55*

**Goya**
Nationalmuseum Stockholm 1994
consultant editors Juan J. Luna and Görel Cavalli-Björkman. From October 7th 1994 to January 8th 1995
*cat. 65*

**Francisco de Goya**
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
*cat. 44, p.71*

**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. 50*

**Goya e la tradizione italiana**
Fondazione Magnani Rocca Mamiano di Traversetolo (Parma) 2006
consultant editors Fred Licht and Simona Tosini Pizzetti. From September 9th to December 3th 2006
*cat. 44, p.156*

**Goya. Opera grafica**
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
*p.34*

**Goya et la modernité**
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
*cat. 196*

London 2015
*cat. 30*

**Expérience Goya**
Lille 2021
*cat. 59*

2022

**BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

**Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**
HARRIS, Tomás
p.117, cat. 79
1964
Bruno Cassirer

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
p.181, cat. 539
1970
Office du livre

**Goya, la década de los caprichos: dibujos y aguafuertes**
WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp.92-93, cat. 55
1992
Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando

**Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
p.97, cat. 133
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

**El libro de los caprichos: dos siglos de interpretaciones (1799-1999). Catálogo de los dibujos, pruebas de estado, láminas de cobre y estampas de la primera edición**
BLAS BENITO, Javier, MATILLA RODRÍGUEZ, José Manuel y MEDRANO, José Miguel
pp.246-249
1999
Museo Nacional del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 262
2013
Pinacoteca de París

WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet y BUCK, Stephanie (eds.)
p. 139
2015
The Courtauld Gallery

**Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**
WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp. 42-75
2016
Norton Simon Museum

**Expérience Goya (cat. expo)**
COTENTIN, Régis
p. 118
2021
Réunion des Musées Nationaux

TORAL OROPESA, María and MARTÍN MEDINA, Víctor
p. 43
2022
Museo de Bellas Artes de Badajoz y Diputación de Badajoz

**PALABRAS CLAVE**

**CAPRICCIO ALCAHUETAS VIEJAS BRUJAS**

**ENLACES EXTERNOS**