INTERIOR OF A PRISON (INTERIOR DE PRISIÓN)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SERIE: CABINET PICTURES (PAINTING, 1793 - 1794) (14/14)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1793 - 1794
UBICACIÓN	The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, United Kingdom
DIMENSIONES	42.9 x 31.7 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on tin
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
TITULAR	The Bowes Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	13 May 2010 / 14 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	359 (29)

HISTORIA

This work came from the collection of the Count of Quinto, Madrid. It was acquired by J. Bowes in 1862.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

This work may have belonged to the set of paintings that Goya made during his stay in Cádiz at the home of

Sebastián Martínez and which he presented at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid in January 1794 (see rec. no.).

The scene takes place inside a prison cell, in which we can see light pouring in through an archway, a visual device that brings to mind that used in the work *Children Playing at Bullfighting*.

Inside this room, Goya has painted a number of prisoners, lying down, sitting on the ground and leaning against the walls, fettered with handcuffs and shackles, and all of them dressed in rags, if at all. These are miserable, dejected men, themselves as surely imprisoned by fear and desperation as their arms and legs are by the chains and manacles. Goya emphasized the importance of these elements by placing at the centre of the composition the shackles which bind the feet of the prisoner lying on the ground, well lit by the light coming in through the archway.

We do not know whether the artist had the opportunity to visit a real prison or whether he was told of the state of these places by others, but we do know that he took a keen interest in the situation that prisoners found themselves in. It is quite likely that he would have read the text by Cesare Beccaria (Milan, 1738-Milan, 1794) entitled *On Crimes and Punishments (Dei delitti e delle pene)* (1764). In this treatise, the Italian author called for the abolition of the death penalty and proposed measures to humanize the punishments employed in prisons. He stated the need for policies which aimed to prevent crimes rather than ones which focussed chiefly on dishing out punishments, in most cases disproportionate ones at that, for them.

Goya's interest in the work of Beccaria would also be seen in some of the etchings in his Disasters of War series, in which he portrays a number of brutal executions (for example, no. 14, *The way is hard! (Duro es el paso!)*, and no. 15, *And it can't be helped (Y no hai remedio)*).

EXPOSICIONES

Exposición conmemorativa del centenario de Goya
Palacio de Oriente Madrid 1946
organized by Patrimonio Nacional. June 1946
cat. 50

cat. 57

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
cat. 66
cat. 102

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. 71

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. 42

Goya's Realism
Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen 2000
from February 11th to May 7th 2000
pp. 156-157, nº 32

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. 31

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. 3

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 148

Goya
Basle 2021
p. 140

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MENA, Manuela B. y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet (comisarias)
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il. 141
2008
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Goya's prison: the year of despair
JENKINS, Adrian
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www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

ENLACES EXTERNOS