

# THE UNFORTUNATE DEATH OF PEPE ILLO IN MADRID'S BULLRING

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: BULLFIGHTING(PRINTS AND DRAWINGS , 1814-1816) (33/46)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

1814 - 1816

DIMENSIONES

245 x 353 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Aguafuerte, aguatinata, punta seca, buril y bruñidor

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Documented work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

02 Oct 2021 / 22 Jun 2023

INVENTARIO

964 -

## INSCRIPCIONES

33 (print, upper right-hand corner)

## HISTORIA

See *How the ancient Spaniards hunted bulls on horseback in the countryside*

Two state proofs of this print have been preserved: the first before applying the aquatint and the second before applying the additional aquatint on the perimeter frame.

The plate is kept at the National Chalcography (no. 366).

See *How the ancient Spaniards hunted bulls on horseback in the countryside*

With this print Goya decided to bring to a close the Bullfighting series, which officially ended here during the artist's lifetime. It depicts the death of the famous bullfighter Pepe Illo (1754-1801), one of the most prominent bullfighters of the last quarter of the 18th century and the main rival of Pedro Romero (1754-1839), the bullfighter most admired by the artist. This death, which occurred on 11 May 1801 in the Madrid bullring, was very traumatic and went down in the history of bullfighting both for the importance of the bullfighter and for the fact that it was witnessed by many people and narrated by various writers, including Queen María Luisa, who witnessed the tragedy and recorded it in a letter. It is not known whether Goya attended the bullfight that day, but given the large number of surviving accounts of the tragic event, it must not have been difficult for him to depict it faithfully.

In the picture we see the bullfighter lying on the sand after having been previously wounded in the leg by the bull, which is on top of him, stabbing him in the stomach with one of its horns. At the same time, a member of his crew, using his cape, tries to pull the bull away from the bull in an attempt to save the master. In the background we see the barrier of the bullring and how two men are jumping into the ring to help in the situation. The shadow cast by the stands on the bullring helps to give an idea of where the action is taking place, as otherwise the space would not appear to be circular. Half of the scene is in shadow and the other half is illuminated.

On 11 May 1801, Pepe Illo (Pepe-Hillo), who had been bullfighting all day and who had suffered a minor mishap in the morning, continued to fight after lunch until this bull, the seventh of the afternoon, stuck his leg with a piton and threw him to the sand, where he fell face up and unconscious. Once he was there, the bull stuck one of his horns again, more viciously, in his stomach, a mortal wound from which he died in the infirmary twenty minutes later.

Goya engraved two other scenes capturing different moments of the bullfighter's fatal goring, which he eventually discarded and did not include in the official edition of *Tauromaquia*, although they were finally published in the enlarged edition that Loizelet produced in 1876: *The Death of Pepe Illo (Bullfight E)* and *The Death of Pepe Illo (Bullfight F)*. In this connection, Sayre believes that Goya rejected plates E and F for the final composition, finally publishing only the present print, which is undoubtedly the simplest and most desolate of the three.

The almost dead body of the bullfighter in the present print inspired Manet in his famous etching *Le torero mort* (1864-1868).

It is also worth noting that Goya dedicated another print in *Bullfighting* to Pepe Illo, very different from the previous ones, as it focuses on his great skills as a bullfighter although it also alludes to his tendency towards recklessness: *Pepe Illo trimming the bull*.

There is a preparatory drawing of this engraving, also titled *The unfortunate death of Pepe Illo in Madrid's bullring*

## EXPOSICIONES

**Grabados y dibujos de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**  
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1946  
catalogue Elena Páez Ríos

Boston 1974

**Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolutionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)**

Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980  
cat. 260

**Goya: toros y toreros**

Espace Van Gogh Arles 1990

displayed also at Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, consultant editor Pierre Gassier.

cat. 49

Zaragoza 1996

Madrid 2002

**Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013

from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014

cat. 38

**BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

LAFUENTE FERRARI, Enrique  
pp. 177-216, espec. pp. 207-210  
XIX (75)  
1946

HARRIS, Tomás  
vol. II, 1964, p. 349-350, cat. 236  
1964  
Bruno Cassirer

**Goya, Das Zeitalter de Revolutionen. 1789-1830**

HOFMANN, Werner (ed.)

p. 295

1980

Prestel-Verlag Münche und Hamburger Kunsthalle

MARTÍNEZ-NOVILLO, Álvaro

pp. 23 y 37

1992

Caser-Turner

MATILLA, José Manuel y MEDRANO, José Miguel

pp. 97-99

2001

Museo Nacional del Prado

**Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional. Exposición de grabados y dibujos en el sesquicentenario de su muerte**

Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1978

May – June 1978

1984

**Goya grabador**

Fundación Juan March Madrid 1994

consultant editors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Julián Gállego, from January 14th to March 20th 1994

**Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996

from September 19th to December 15th 1996

cat. 274

Madrid 2002

Zaragoza 2017

LUJÁN, Néstor  
1946 (reed. 1951)  
Tartessos-F. Oliver Branchfelt

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet

p. 280, cat. 1217

1970

Office du livre

HOLO, Selma Reuben

pp. 16, 19, 26-27 y 32

1986

Milwaukee Art Museum

**Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)

cat. 358

1996

Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo

p. 110

2013

Pinacoteca de París

**Grabados de Goya: colección propiedad de la Biblioteca Nacional, que se conserva en su Gabinete de**

Casa de la Amistad de Moscú Moscow 1979

exhibition displayed from January 18th to 31st 1979

Madrid 1987

**Goya grabador**

Museo del Grabado Español Contemporáneo Marbella 1996

from March 8th to May 5th 1996

**Schlaf der Vernunft. Original radierungen von Francisco de Goya**

Munich 2000

Bilbao 2012

GLENDINNING, Nigel  
pp. 120-127  
24  
1961

**The Changing image: Prints by Francisco Goya**

SAYRE, Eleanor

pp. 244-247, cat. 196-199

1974

Museum of Fine Arts

**Goya, toros y toreros**

GASSIER, Pierre

p. 116

1990

Ministerio de Cultura, Comunidad de Madrid

**Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

SANTIAGO PÁEZ, Elena y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet (comisarias)

p. 247

1996

Biblioteca Nacional, Sociedad Estatal Goya 96 y Lunweg

**Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp. 186-201

2016

Norton Simon Museum

PALABRAS CLAVE

**TOROS TOREO TORERO DIESTRO PEPE ILLO PEPE-HILLO COGIDA PITÓN HERIDA CORNADA  
MUERTE**

ENLACES EXTERNOS