

# IF IT DEFENDS ITSELF WELL

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (78/82)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1820 - 1823

DIMENSIONES

179 x 219 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Etching and burnisher

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

03 Mar 2013 / 24 May 2023

INVENTARIO

836 225

## HISTORIA

See *Sad forebodings of what is to come*.

The first condition test shows traces of burnishing on the horse's belly.

The title of the print was handwritten by Goya on the first and only series known to us at the time of its production, which the painter gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Thus the title was subsequently engraved on the plate without any modification from Ceán Bermúdez's copy for the first edition of the *Disasters of War* published by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid in 1863.

A preparatory drawing of this engraving is in the Prado Museum

#### ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In the centre of this picture, a white horse is throwing a blow. All around him are mastiffs, identifiable by the iron-tipped collars they wear to defend themselves against the wolves, who watch the horse's violent reaction undaunted. In the background of the picture, a pack of wolves is preparing to attack the horse.

Each of these three animals has its own symbolic meaning. The dogs could refer to revolutionary ideals, while the wolves have often been associated with the Inquisition; indeed Ruiz Padrón imagined the inquisitors as a pack of hungry wolves. The horse, however, could be an allusion to liberal Spain. In this way Goya might be thought to have captured the efforts that the constitutional monarchy was making to defend itself, on the one hand from the values of the Ancien Régime, and on the other from revolutionary impulses.

In any case, it should be pointed out that this engraving, like many others in the *Emphatic Caprices*, is quite complex and can be interpreted in other ways. Eleanor Sayre, for example, draws a comparison between the horse in Goya's print and the one in *Guernica* (1937, National Museum and Art Centre Reina Sofía) by Pablo Picasso (Malaga, 1881-Mougins, 1973), and believes that both artists use it to allude to the Spanish people who, in the present case, are being attacked by the followers of Ferdinand VII.

Juliet Wilson-Bareau also relates this print to the poem by Giambattista Casti (Viterbo or Acquapendente, 1724-Paris, 1803) *Gli animali parlanti* (1801) in which the horse is a symbol of monarchy fighting against the wolves, the king's corrupt ministers, although without the help of the dogs, who represent the anti-monarchist forces of the revolution.

This is an engraving in which Goya has captured the centrifugal force of the horse stretching out to throw its legs into the air. The intense energy of this animal could be related to engraving no. 8, *Always Happens* from *The Disasters of War*, a series in which the horse is involved in a scene of enormous intensity.

#### CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is in the National Chalcography (cat. 329).

#### EXPOSICIONES

##### **De grafiek van Goya**

Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam  
1970

from November 13th 1970 to  
January 17th 1971

cat. 88

##### **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. 160

##### **Francisco de Goya**

Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996

exhibition celebrated from  
September 22nd to November  
17th.

p.195, cat. 78

##### **Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996**

Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996

from November 21st 1996 to

##### **Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra**

San Donato Milanese 2000

Opere grafiche della Fondazione  
Antonio Mazzotta

cat. 158

##### **Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013

from October 11st 2013 to March  
16th 2014

cat. 117

January 1997

cat. 168

Madrid 2017

#### BIBLIOGRAFÍA

##### **Goya, grabador**

BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de  
cat. 180  
1918  
Blass S.A.

##### **A solution to the enigma of Goya's emphatic caprices nº 65-80 of The Disasters of War**

Apollo  
GLENDINNING, Nigel  
pp.186-191  
107  
1978

##### **Francisco de Goya. Los Desastres de la guerra**

GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel  
p.44  
2011  
La Central

CALVO RUATA, José Ignacio, BORRÁS GUALIS,  
Gonzalo M. and MARTÍNEZ HERRANZ,  
Amparo  
p. 202  
2017  
Gobierno de Aragón y Fundación Bancaria  
Ibercaja

##### **Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**

HARRIS, Tomás  
cat. 198  
1964  
Bruno Cassirer

##### **Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración**

PÉREZ SÁNCHEZ, Alfonso E. y SAYRE, Eleanor  
A. (directores) and MENA, Manuela B.  
(comisaria)  
pp.445-446. cat. 160  
1988  
Museo del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA,  
Wilfredo  
p. 158  
2013  
Pinacoteca de París

##### **Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
cat. 1130  
1970  
Office du livre

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

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)  
cat. 303  
1996  
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca  
Nacional

##### **Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet  
pp. 114-151  
2016  
Norton Simon Museum

#### ENLACES EXTERNOS