

# AND IT CAN'T BE HELPED (Y NO HAI REMEDIO)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (15/82)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1810 - 1815

DIMENSIONES

139x164 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Aguafuerte, buril, punta seca y bruñido

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

30 Nov 2010 / 02 Jun 2023

INVENTARIO

836 225

## INSCRIPCIONES

22 (lower left-hand corner of plate).

## HISTORIA

See *Sad presentiments of what must come to pass*.

In the first state proof of this etching drypoint is used in the figures in the foreground, in the soldiers taking aim in the background, and in the fallen figure just visible on the left-hand side. This same figure is emphasized with the burin and there is some retouching in the area in the upper-right hand corner, where the etching had bitten too deeply.

The title was handwritten by Goya on the first and only print run that we know to have been made at the time, and which the painter gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. The title was engraved on to the copperplate at a later date, and no other modifications were made to the image for the first edition of the Disasters of War, which was printed by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid, in 1863.

There is a *preparatory drawing* in the Prado Museum.

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In the centre of the composition, in the foreground, we see a blindfolded man tied to a post. This calm, highly dignified figure is waiting, with resignation, his face turned down toward the ground, to be executed by firing squad. Beside him lies the body of another man who has just been killed, the blindfold removed from his face. We can assume that this same blindfold

has been reused to cover the face of the man who is now about to be executed in the foreground. Behind him we can see two more posts and two more men, shown in the exact moment in which they are being shot by a row of soldiers, their weapons held aloft.

In this one image, Goya brings together three different phases in the death of these prisoners: the preparation, the moment of the execution, and the resulting corpse. On the right-hand side of the image he has shown the barrels of the soldier's rifles but not the soldiers themselves. Both here and in the background, the executioners' faces remain hidden from view, making it impossible for us to identify them.

The artist has used short, tightly-packed horizontal lines to recreate the sky, the earth, and the posts to which the prisoners are tied. The light areas of the scene are mainly in the spotless clothes of the accused men, alluding to their innocence. In these areas Goya has left the surface almost entirely unworked, adding only some delicate lines to construct the sleeves, the lower part of the trousers, and the shoes. Lit up in this same way is the squad of soldiers in the background, making sure that we do not overlook what is happening in that part of the scene.

This etching is closely related to the previous one, no. 14, *The way is hard!*, in that these two prints constitute two variations on the same theme, capital punishment. However, in *And it can't be helped* instead of Spaniards putting Frenchmen to death we see the reverse, with French forces executing Spaniards. In this way Goya shows how the horror is equally present on both sides. The artist finds himself utterly unable to justify the events he depicts, both here and in the previous work. He creates an analogy between these two images, in a similar way to what he did with etchings no. 2, *With or without reason* and no. 3, *The same*.

The subject of capital punishment is reiterated in some of the later prints in this series, such as no. 26, *One cannot look at this*, no. 31, *That's tough!*, no. 32, *Why?*, no. 34, *On account of a knife*, no. 35, *One can't tell why*, no. 36, *Not in this case either* and no. 38, *Barbarians!*.

#### CONSERVACIÓN

The etching plate is conserved in the National Chalcography Museum (cat. 266)

This etching was made reusing half of the plate which Goya used for his *Landscape with Cliff, Buildings and Trees*

#### EXPOSICIONES

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

Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam  
1970

from November 13th 1970 to  
January 17th 1971

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

Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980  
cat. 82

##### **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. 86

##### **Francisco de Goya: Maleri, Tegning, Grafikk**

Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996

from 10th to April 14th 1996  
cat. 135

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

Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996

exhibition celebrated from  
September 22nd to November

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

Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996

17th.  
cat. 15

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

Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996  
from September 19th to  
December 15th 1996  
cat. 200

**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. 94

Zaragoza 2021

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

San Donato Milanese 2000  
Opere grafiche della Fondazione  
Antonio Mazzotta  
cat. 95

**Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013  
from October 11st 2013 to March  
16th 2014  
cat. 54

from November 21st 1996 to  
January 1997

cat. 103

**Goya. Opera grafica**

Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio  
Legnano 2006

exhibition celebrated from  
December 16th 2006 to April 1st  
2007  
p. 58

**Goya: Order and disorder**

Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014  
cat. 196

**BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

**Goya, grabador**

BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de  
cat. 117  
1918  
Blass S.A.

**Vicisitudes de algunas láminas grabadas por Francisco de Goya: Los desastres de la guerra, Los disparates, La tauromaquia**

Goya  
CARRETE PARRONDO, Juan  
p. 287  
145-150  
1978-1979

**El Libro de los Desastres de la Guerra**

BLAS BENITO, Javier and MATILLA, José  
Manuel  
II, pp. 35-37  
2000  
Museo del Prado

**Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**

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

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

HARRIS, Tomás  
cat. 135  
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. 299-300, cat. 86  
1988  
Museo del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA,  
Wilfredo

p. 127  
2013  
Pinacoteca de París

**Goya. Traveler and artist of the Grand Tour (exp. cat.)**

GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel (comisaria)  
pp. 246-247  
2021  
Gobierno de Aragón

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
cat. 1015  
1970  
Office du livre

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

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

**Goya: Order & Disorder**

ILCHMAN, Frederick y STEPANEK, Stephanie  
L. (comisarios)  
p. 291  
2014  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston Publications

**ENLACES EXTERNOS**