GENERAL PALAFOX ON HORSEBACK (EL GENERAL PALAFOX A CABALLO)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. PORTRAITS



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1814
UBICACIÓN	The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	248 x 224 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	El Prado National Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	18 Apr 2010 / 15 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	441 (P00725)

INSCRIPCIONES

El Excmo. S.or D.n Josef Palafox y Melci / por Goya, año de 1814 ("His Excellency Señor Don Joseph Palafox y Melci, by Goya, in the year 1814", lower left-hand corner).

HISTORIA

Goya may have been commissioned to paint this portrait by General Palafox himself. In a letter the artist

wrote to the general, dated 4 January 1815, Goya reports having satisfactorily completed the portrait.

However, it appears that the painting was still in the possession of Javier Goya, the artist's son, in 1831, who in this same year wrote a letter to the general offering him the work. Palafox finally purchased the portrait.

It was bequeathed to the Prado Museum by Don Francisco Palafox y Soler, the general's son.

It entered the museum's collection in 1884.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

José Rebolledo de Palafox y Melci was born in Zaragoza in 1776. At the age of seventeen he entered the Royal Guard Corps. He soon reached the position of brigadier of the Royal Armies. In 1808 he was named Captain General of Zaragoza. A hero of the Spanish War of Independence, he defended the city of Zaragoza against the French assault.

This painting, which, thanks to its inscription, we know was painted after the Spanish War of Independence, was made in the same year as two other works that occupy an important place in the artist's career, those of the Second and Third of May.

Goya, who always claimed that the most difficult task that could be asked of an artist was the execution of an equestrian portrait, abandoned in this instance the Velázquez-style models that he had used in earlier works in preference of a dynamism and movement that the earlier equestrian portraits of, for example, *Maria Luisa* or *Charles IV* had lacked. This painting gives us the sensation that the model has not stopped to pose but rather that the artist has managed to capture the moment in which he heads towards the battlefield, with great momentum and bravery, wielding his sabre is his right hand.

The general is dressed in military uniform, his dress coat decorated with epaulettes and medals that Goya has painted with somewhat imprecise, quick brushstrokes.

In a private collection in London there exists a bust portrait of Palafox (measuring 76 x 52 cm) which some consider to be a preparatory work for this equestrian portrait.

EXPOSICIONES

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. 75

Goya. 250 Aniversario
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1996
consultant editor Juan J. Luna. From March 29th to June 2nd 1996
cat. 143

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. 126

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

L'œuvre peint de Goya. 4 vols
DESPARMET FITZ - GERALD, Xavier
p. 198, cat. 487
1928-1950

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
pp. 262, cat. 901
1970
Office du livre

GUDIOL RICART, José
vol. I, p. 359, cat. 620
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Francisco de Goya, 4 vols.
CAMÓN AZNAR, José
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Goya en tiempos de guerra
MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B.
pp. 377 y 378 (il.), cat. 126

1980-1982	1996	2008
Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja	Museo del Prado	Museo Nacional del Prado

www.museodelprado.es/goya-en-el-prado

PALABRAS CLAVE

JOSÉ PALAFOX GENERAL CABALLO

ENLACES EXTERNOS