THIRD OF MAY 1808 (EL TRES DE MAYO DE 1808)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. ALLEGORY, MYTHOLOGY, HISTORY

SERIE: MAY 2ND AND 3RD (PAINTING AND SKETCHES, 1814) (4/4)

DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1814
UBICACIÓN	The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	268 x 347 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	El Prado National Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	17 Mar 2010 / 28 Aug 2024
INVENTARIO	114 (P00749)

HISTORIA

See *Second of May 1808*.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

The executions of the insurgents depicted in this work's companion painting took place

during the night following the attacks on the French troops. As Murat said to the chaplain Francisco Gállego Dávila, also an insurgent, "he who lives by the sword dies by the sword", and this is how the first episode of the War of Independence played out.

The focus of attention in the composition is the condemned men who await their imminent death. At their feet are the bodies of those who have already been killed, portrayed with startling, realist brutality. On the right we can see the row of infantry of the line soldiers who point their bayonets at the men. They are portrayed as faceless: it does not matter who kills who - it is all irrational violence. The fundamental element of this painting is the different poses which Goya has given to each of the men who confront their destiny. Fear consumes them all, but we can also detect rage in the figure with the clenched fists, anguish in the man in the white shirt with the open arms, desperation for clemency in the figure who crosses his arms, or the regret of the figure who holds his hands up to his mouth in the group of figures approaching behind the rifles.

The background of this scene is the city, outlined against the sky which is in mourning, weighing down on the figures. The light coming from the lantern, which is cast in a cube-shaped pattern (and on many occasions has been referred to as a precursor to the cubism movement), accentuates the cruelty of the scene, highlighting the blood which bathes the floor of this place somewhere in the outskirts of Madrid. It has been suggested that the location might be the so-called mountain of Príncipe Pío, but some documents from the time show that there was no door like that depicted by Goya here. It has also been posited that this might be Puerta de la Vega, where executions also took place. Nevertheless, as in the case of its companion painting, identifying the setting is not important; what matters is the tragedy seen through the eyes of those who will die before the implacable French machine.

CONSERVACIÓN

Has been recently restored. On the lower left-hand corner there are remains of the damages happened during its moving to Valencia in 1937, because of the Spanish civil war.

EXPOSICIONES

Goya. 250 Aniversario
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1996
consultant editor Juan J. Luna. From March 29th to June 2nd 1996
cat. 142

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. 124

Goya: Order and disorder
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014
cat. 7

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DESPARMET FITZ - GERALD, Xavier
p. 254, cat. 226
1928-1950

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
pp. 207, 257, 267, cat. 984
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GUDIOL RICART, José
vol. I, p. 360, cat. 624
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L'opera pittorica completa di Goya
ANGELIS, Rita de
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Goya en tiempos de guerra
MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B.
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Goya: Order & Disorder
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pp. 28-29
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www.museodelprado.es

ENLACES EXTERNOS