

# THE FIRE AT NIGHT (EL INCENDIO DE NOCHE)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SERIE: CABINET PICTURES (PAINTING, 1793 - 1794) (12/14)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1793

UBICACIÓN

Abelló Collection, Madrid, Spain

DIMENSIONES

43 x 32 cm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Oil on tin

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

TITULAR

Abelló Collection

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

29 Apr 2010 / 22 Nov 2022

## HISTORIA

Before arriving at its current location, this painting has belonged to a number of different owners, including: Ángela Sulpice y Chopinot, Madrid; the Count of Adanero, Madrid; the Marquis of Castro Serna, Madrid; the Duke of Campo Giro; and José Luis Várez, San Sebastián.

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

This scene, painted whilst Goya was staying at the home of his friend Sebastián Martínez in Cádiz, is set in an indeterminate space in which a crowd of people is fleeing from a fire, which can just be made out in the background. It takes place at night and the people are dressed in white nightclothes, caught unawares by the fire as they slept. Many of them have already perished, whilst others run away in fear or are carried along by other survivors.

The predominantly dark painting features two lighter-coloured areas. One of these, intensely bright and flecked by yellow brushstrokes, is the light given off by the fire, whilst the other, somewhat more tenuous and dynamic, is formed by the mass of human beings dressed in white, escaping from the flames. Just as he did in *The Shipwreck*, in the foreground Goya has placed a half-naked body, its torso slightly arched, extended out across the ground so as to grab our attention. This figure could have been inspired by the posture adopted by Abel as he

is being brutally murdered in the drawing that the artist made on page 31a of his *Italian Sketchbook*.

In this painting, Goya has done away with any spatial reference that might help the viewer to orientate themselves. This vagueness heightens the sensation of helplessness and produces an atmosphere of terror and distress. As such, it seems unlikely that Goya was referring to any specific event and it is reasonable to assume that this image, verging on the abstract, is an allusion to tragedies and disasters in general.

This work is directly related to the scene of a fire which Goya painted on and which is now in the National Fine Arts Museum in Buenos Aires. That later work is even more abstract and essential in its references.

See *Bulls in the Meadow*.

#### EXPOSICIONES

##### **Goya**

Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen  
Mauritshuis The Hague 1970

organized by Ministerio de  
Estado y Asuntos Culturales and  
Réunion des Musées Nationaux,  
July 4th to September 13th 1970.  
Exhibited also at the Musée de  
l'Orangerie des Tuileries, Paris,  
October 25th to December 7th  
1970, consultant editors  
Jeannine Baticle and A. B. de  
Vries  
cat. 14

##### **Goya nelle collezioni private di Spagne**

Villa Favorita Lugano 1986

consultant editor Marta Medina.  
From June 15th to October 15th  
1986  
cat. 18

##### **Goya. El Capricho y la Invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1993

from November 18th 1993 to  
February 15th 1994. Exhibited  
also at the Royal Academy of  
Arts, London, March 18th to  
June 12th 1994 and The Art  
Institute of Chicago, Chicago,  
July 16th to October 16th 1994,  
consultant editors Manuela B.  
Mena Marqués and Juliet  
Wilson-Bareau  
cat. 39

##### **Goya's Realism**

Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen 2000

from February 11th to May 7th  
2000  
pp. 184-185, cat. 46

##### **Goya: Prophet der Moderne**

Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin 2005

from July 13th to October 3th  
2005. Exhibited also at the  
Kunsthistorischemuseum,  
Vienna, October 18th 2005 to  
January 8th 2006, consultant  
editor Manuela B. Mena  
Marqués  
cat. 30

##### **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. 2

##### **Goya: Order and disorder**

Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014

cat. 225

##### **Goya**

Basle 2021

p. 146

#### BIBLIOGRAFÍA

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GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
p. 169, cat. 329  
1970  
Office du livre

##### **Goya**

BATICLE, Jeannine y VRIES, A.B. (comisarias)  
vol. I, p. 293, cat. 345  
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Ministère d'Etat-Affaires culturelles y Réunion  
des Musées Nationaux

##### **L'opera pittorica completa di Goya**

ANGELIS, Rita de  
p. 169, cat. 329  
1974  
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CAMÓN AZNAR, José  
vol. II, p. 70  
1980-1982  
Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja

##### **Goya. Arte e condizione umana**

PAZ, Alfredo de  
p. 75, il. 63  
1990  
Liguori editore

##### **Goya. El capricho y la invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas**

MENA, Manuela B. y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet  
(comisarias)  
pp. 200, 201, 202, 203 y 205 (il.), cat.  
1993

**Goya e Italia, 2 vols.**

SUREDA PONS, Joan (comisario)

vol. II, p. 155, il. 6

2008

Fundación Goya en Aragón y Turner

**ENLACES EXTERNOS**