STROLLING PLAYERS (LOS CÓMICOS AMBULANTES)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SERIE: CABINET PICTURES (PAINTING, 1793 - 1794) (9/14)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1793 - 1794
UBICACIÓN	The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	42.5 x 31.7 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on tin
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
TITULAR	El Prado National Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	29 Apr 2010 / 14 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	357 (P03045)

HISTORIA

This canvas belonged to the collection of the Count of Adanero and was inherited by his brother, the Marquis of Castro-Serna. It then belonged to his son, the Viscount of Roda, then to the Marquis of San Clemente and finally to Ramón Jordán de Urries, who in 1962 sold it for the sum of two million pesetas to the National Ministry for Education, which bought it for the Prado Museum.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In 1792 Goya left Madrid to spend some time at the Cádiz residence of his friend and ilustrado Sebastián Martínez. He stayed there whilst recovering from an unknown illness which left him permanently deaf.

Whilst there, and until his recovery in 1793, Goya worked on a number of small-format paintings which were later presented, in January 1794, before the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid.

Goya gave these small works, painted on tinplate, the name of *National Pastimes (Diversiones nacionales)* (*Bulls in the Meadow*, *The Roped Bull*, *Banderillas in the Country*, *Clearing the Bullring*, *Passes with the Cape*,*Goring of the Picador*, *Matador Killing the Bull*, *Dragging Away the Bull*). Since they were not made for any commission, they became an exercise in free expression for the artist. Goya made reference to this series of works in two letters he sent to Bernardo de Iriarte, Vice-Protector of the Royal Academy in Madrid, in which he also expressed his gratitude to Iriarte for the interest he had shown in ensuring Goya's works were favourably received at that institution. About these paintings he said the following: "*I have been able to make observations which do not often occur in commissioned works, in which caprice and invention are limited*".

All of these works are painted in oil on thin sheets of tinplate, and all have more or less the same dimensions. These sheets of tinplate were coated with a pinkish primer over the top of a darker, reddish ground, which shows through in certain areas which Goya has left uncovered. Here we can see how he first sketched out the design in pencil, traces of which are still clearly visible.

In the centre of the painting stands a stage covered by a carpet and a tent tied to the branchless stump of a tree. In the background, low down, are the spectators. The protagonists of the scene are taken from the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* tradition. The various players represent the comical servant Colombina, Pierrot or Piedrolino, and the bourgeois Pantalone, shown wearing a striking white wig. To the left of these three, we see Harlequin addressing the crowd and balancing three cups, which symbolize the instability of the amorous relationship between the other characters. Also in the centre of the composition is a dwarf, who is dancing and holding aloft a bottle of wine and a glass.

This painting has been interpreted as a veiled allusion to the love triangle that existed between Manuel Godoy, María Luisa de Parma and Charles IV. Tomlinson believes that it was the rumours about the relationship between the queen and Godoy, which became particularly intense in the course of 1793, which suggested some of the symbolic content of this painting to Goya. However, she points out that these insinuations do not constitute the fundamental subject matter of the work but simply serve to create an enriching sense of ambiguity.

In the foreground, below three masks, there is a poster which reads "Aleg. Men.", thought to be a reference to the allegories of Menander (Athens, 342 BC-Athens, 292 BC), a Greek dramatist and author of satirical and moralistic comedies. This is most likely the source of the alternative title by which the painting is often known.

Manuela Mena and Julie Wilson-Bareau point out the similarities between the masks seen here, both those on top of the poster and the one which is shown peeking out of the tent opening, and those that appear on page 28r of Goya's *Italian Sketchbook*.

EXPOSICIONES

Goya 1900
Ministerio de Instrucción Pública and Bellas Artes
Madrid 1900
consultant editors Aureliano de Beruete, Alejandro Ferrant, Marqués de Pidal and Ricardo Velázquez.
May 1900
cat. 172

Goya
Festival Internacional de Granada, Palacio de Carlos V
Granada 1955
consultant editor Enrique Lafuente Ferrari
cat. 101

Francisco de Goya. IV Centenario de la capitalidad
organized by Ayuntamiento de Madrid and Dirección General de Bellas Artes at the Casón del Buen Retiro
Madrid 1961
consultant editor Valentín de Sambricio
cat. 53

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. 38

Goya. 250 Aniversario
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1996
consultant editor Juan J. Luna. From March 29th to June 2nd 1996
cat. 11

Francisco de Goya: Maleri, Tegning, Grafikk
Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996
from 10th to April 14th 1996
cat. 11

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. 1

Goya: Order and disorder
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014
cat. 22

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Museo del Prado

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LUNA, Juan J. (Comisario)
pp. 358 y 359, cat. 80
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pp. 62-63
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Museum of Fine Arts Boston Publications

TACK, Ifee and PISOT, Sandra
pp. 241-242
2019
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Goya. Traveler and artist of the Grand Tour (exp. cat.)
GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel (comisaria)
pp. 214-215
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ENLACES EXTERNOS

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