

# WOMEN / SNAKE

CLASIFICACIÓN: DRAWINGS

SERIE: REFLECTIONS IN THE MIRROR (DRAWINGS, CA. 1797-1799)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

1797 - 1798

UBICACIÓN

The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain

DIMENSIONES

210 x 147 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Documented work

TITULAR

El Prado National Museum

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

20 Aug 2021 / 08 Jun 2023

INVENTARIO

915 D4169

## INSCRIPCIONES

22 (in pencil, lower left)

Watermark. Lettering "YSIDRO / ESTEVAN".

## HISTORIA

By inheritance it passed in 1828 to Javier Goya, the painter's son, and in 1854 to Mariano Goya y Goicoechea, the artist's grandson. It was subsequently owned successively by Valentín

Carderera (ca. 1861) and Mariano Carderera (ca. 1880). In 1886 it was acquired from Mariano Carderera by the Directorate General of Public Instruction and was assigned to the Prado Museum, where it is now located.

#### ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Between 1797 and 1798 Goya executed a series of seven drawings that were never engraved and which form a homogeneous group known as *Magic Mirror*. In all of them a figure, either a man or a woman, stands in front of a mirror in which he sees his image reflected in the form of an animal. Gassier states that these drawings are highly symbolic and represent the different types of human personalities.

Several scholars of Goya's work have analysed these drawings in depth, such as Folke Nordström, who in his *Goya, Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in the Art of Goya*, published in 1962, devoted an entire chapter to a detailed study of the compositions, giving each character a different type of temperament. Thus, the woman/snake would be the melancholic; the dandy/monkey the sanguine; the bailiff/cat the choleric; and the student/frog the phlegmatic. However, in 2000, the French Hispanist René Andioc contradicted Nordström in his article "Characters and faces of the late 18th century. El currutaco, according to Goya and the literature of his time", pointing out that the meaning of these drawings should be sought in the Aragonese artist's Madrid environment, as Pierre Gassier had already suggested in the catalogue *Drawings by Goya* of 1975, in which he pointed out that the symbolism of these drawings could come from the readings Goya regularly attended and the conversations he held in the gatherings he attended in Madrid. Gassier also suggested that these drawings could simply be a way of ridiculing certain of the artist's contemporary types, relating this attitude to that also found in some of the *Caprices*.

In this drawing, an elegantly dressed lady stands without looking in front of a large mirror in which her image is reflected in the form of a snake coiled around a scythe and shackled to it. Nordström, following López-Rey, claims that Goya was familiar with Bernard de Montfaucon's famous work *L'Antiquité expliquée* of 1719, in which several illustrations of Saturn appear as a half-naked man with two symbols: a scythe or sickle and a serpent coiled around a trunk. According to Nordström, the planet Saturn controls the melancholic temperament, which is considered to be characteristic of the female sex.

The drawing, mainly in pen, is characterised by its masterly and modern abbreviated technique.

#### EXPOSICIONES

##### **El arte de Goya**

Museo de Arte Occidental de Tokio Tokyo 1971  
from 16th 1971 to January 23th  
1972. Exhibited also at the Kyoto  
Municipal Museum of Art, January  
29th to March 15th 1972.

1972

##### **Los dibujos de Goya**

Museo Provincial de Zaragoza Zaragoza 1978  
exhibition organized by Museo  
Provincial de Zaragoza, Ministerio  
de Cultura and Ayuntamiento de  
Zaragoza, exhibition guide written  
by Miguel Beltrán Lloris and  
Micaela Pérez Sáenz. October  
1978

cat. 45

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

Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980  
cat. 238

Madrid 2019  
cat. 70

## BIBLIOGRAFÍA

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**Goya, Saturno y melancolía. Consideraciones sobre el arte de Goya**  
NORDSTRÖM, Folke  
pp. 94-115  
1962  
Alquimis & Wiksell

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**  
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
p. 187, cat. 648  
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**Dibujos de Goya, 2 vols**  
GASSIER, Pierre  
p. 491, cat. 320  
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**El mundo de Goya en sus dibujos**  
LAFUENTE FERRARI, Enrique  
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**Goya, Das Zeitalter de Revolutionen. 1789-1830**  
HOFMANN, Werner (ed.)  
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ANDIOC, René  
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MATILLA, José Manuel y MENA, Manuela B.  
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Museo Nacional del Prado

## PALABRAS CLAVE

**DAMA SERPIENTE GUADAÑA ESPEJO ESPEJO MÁGICO TEMPERAMENTO  
MELANCÓLICO**

## ENLACES EXTERNOS