# ON ACCOUNT OF A KNIFE (POR UNA NAVAJA)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (34/82)




**DATOS GENERALES**

| | |
|---|---|
| CRONOLOGÍA | Ca. 1812 - 1815 |
| DIMENSIONES | 157 x 208 mm |
| TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE | Aguafuerte, aguatinta, punta seca y bruñidor |
| RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA | Undisputed work |
| FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN | 08 Dec 2010 / 05 Jun 2023 |
| INVENTARIO | 836 225 |

**HISTORIA**

See *Sad presentiments of what must come to pass (Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer)*.

The title was handwritten on the print by Goya in the first and only series that is known to have been printed at the time the works were created, which the artist gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Therefore, the title was etched into the plate at a later date and left unchanged as of the first edition of the *Disasters of War* printed by the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid in 1863, after the printing of the series in the possession of Ceán Bermúdez.

There are no surviving preparatory drawings for this print.

**ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO**

From 19 October 1809, Joseph Bonaparte (Corte, 1768 - Florence, 1844) adopted the garrotte as the main method of execution in Spain. Generally, this practice was used to make an example of someone, serving to maintain order and warn the population of the possible consequences of any subversive act. The newspaper *Diario de Madrid* references more than 40 using the garrotte between 1810 and 1812.

In December 1808 it was decided that all inhabitants of Madrid who were found to be in possession of a weapon would be arrested and condemned to death. Those condemned for carrying a weapon were forced to wear that weapon around their neck, as well as a text explaining the precise circumstances in which they had been arrested.

This is exactly what Goya depicts in this print: the moment in which a man who has been discovered in possession of a knife is executed by garrotte. On his chest he bears the knife hanging from a cord and, below that, a text that recounts the circumstances leading to his arrest. His hands are clasped around a crucifix. The scene takes place in a public place before a crowd attending the execution. In contrast to the events shown in print no. 29, *He deserved it (Lo merecia)*, this crowd expresses distress and distaste, perhaps in solidarity with the death of a fellow Spaniard.

Goya has painstakingly depicted the face of the executed man, who is open-mouthed, his eyes staring into the distance. His hair stands on end, revealing the pain he has suffered before his death. It is a hard, realistic vision of the death penalty that leaves the viewer in no doubt as to the repulsion and disapproval that the artist feels towards this form of punishment, while the brief title *On account of a knife* is employed to suggest its disproportionate nature.

Goya also deals with this theme in *The garrotted man (El agarrotado)* and takes it up again in other prints in this series such as the following one, no. 35, *One can't tell why (No se puede saber por qué)* which depicts a mass execution.

#### CONSERVACIÓN

La plancha se conserva en la Calcografía Nacional (cat. 285).

#### EXPOSICIONES

**Exhibition of Spanish Art, Including pictures, Drawings and Engravings by Goya**
Burlington Fine Arts Club London 1928
*cat. 57*

**De grafiek van Goya**
Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam 1970
from November 13th 1970 to January 17th 1971
*cat. 75*

**Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)**
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
*cat. 240*

**Goya and the espirit of enlightment**
The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York 1989
scientific directors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor A. Sayre. From May 9th to July 16th 1989. Exhibited also in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, from January 18th to March 26th 1989
*cat. 87*

**Francisco de Goya: Maleri, Tegning, Grafikk**
Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996
from 10th to April 14th 1996
*cat. 168*

**Francisco de Goya**
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
*cat. 34*

**Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996**
Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996
from November 21st 1996 to January 1997
*cat. 120*

**Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra**
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
*cat. 114*

**Goya. Opera grafica**
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
*p. 69*

**Goya en tiempos de guerra**
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2008
consultant editor Manuela B. Mena Marqués, from April 14th to July

**Goya et la modernité**
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March

Marqués, from April 14th to July 13th 2008
*cat. 95*

16th 2014
*cat. 73*

**BIBLIOGRAFÍA**


**Goya, grabador**
BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de
cat. 136
1918
Blass S.A.

**Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 154
1964
Bruno Cassirer

**Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1049
1970
Office du livre

**Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 238
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 136
2013
Pinacoteca de París

**Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**
WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp. 114-151
2016
Norton Simon Museum


**ENLACES EXTERNOS**