ALLEGORY OF THE CITY OF MADRID (ALEGORÍA DE LA VILLA DE MADRID)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. ALLEGORY, MYTHOLOGY, HISTORY



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1810
UBICACIÓN	Madrid History Museum, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	260 x 195 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	Madrid City Hall
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	03 Apr 2010 / 14 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	108 (35.352)

HISTORIA

In 1809 the council of the City of Madrid proposed the commissioning of a portrait of the new French monarch of Spain, Joseph I. Tadeo Bravo de Rivero, who was in charge of the project, commissioned Goya to paint the work in February 1810. According to Bravo de Rivero's reports to authorities, the artist could not accept a fee of less than 15,000 reales, suggesting that this is the amount that he was paid for his work.

The painting has always remained in the possession of the municipal government of Madrid.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

As source materials for this royal portrait, Goya had only a print depicting the King's face produced in Rome. The lack of a model led him to design an intelligent composition based on an allegory of the city. A woman of harmonious proportions wearing a crown, a white tunic, and a pinkish mantle leans against a shield carrying the coat of arms of the city of Madrid. She is pointing to a majestic oval where the artist painted the face of Joseph I. Two angels hold the portrait of the monarch, while another two winged figures representing Fame and Victory fly above, accompanied by their respective attributes - a trumpet and a laurel crown. The artist's allegorical scheme is completed by a dog signifying loyalty, which is discreetly hidden behind the woman representing Madrid.

Historical events led to the painting being altered on various occasions in order to adapt it to the political tide of the times. Thus, following Wellington's victory at the Battle of Salamanca, Joseph I fled the city, and Goya hastened to paint over the Frenchman's face with the slogan "Constitución" ("Constitution"). When Napoleon's brother returned in November, Felipe Abas - one of Goya's disciples - eliminated his master's repainting to recover the figure of Joseph Bonaparte, as evidenced by the letter sent by Goya to the Secretary of the city of Madrid informing him of the events. The definitive victory over the French in 1813 led to another change to the oval, where Dionisio Gómez, another of Goya's disciples, wrote the motto "Constitución" once again. The story continued when Ferdinand VII returned to Spain and ordered the abolition of the Cádiz Cortes, which meant that Goya had to substitute the writing with a portrait of Ferdinand "the Desired". The result was not up to scratch, most likely because he commissioned the work to one of his collaborators. In 1826, taking advantage of Goya's absence (he had moved to Bordeaux), the royal portrait was repainted by Vicente López. Ten years after the death of Ferdinand VII, the city of Madrid requested the covering of the portrait with the inscription "Libro de la Constitución" ("Book of the Constitution") until in 1872 it was definitively replaced with the phrase "Dos de mayo" ("Second of May") which we see today. Interestingly, this last lettering is a homage to the day when the Spanish rose up against the French invaders led by Bonaparte, the first occupant of the frequently altered oval.

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. 21

Exposición histórico-artística del Centenario del Dos de Mayo
Museo Arqueológico Nacional Madrid 1908
cat. 256

Pinturas de Goya
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1928
consultant editor Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor. From Apri to -May 1928
cat. 56

Goya
Festival Internacional de Granada, Palacio de Carlos V Granada 1955
consultant editor Enrique Lafuente Ferrari
cat. 108

De Tiépolo à Goya
Galerie des Beaux-Arts Burdeos 1956
consultant editor Gilberte Martin-Méry. From May 7th to July 31st 1956
cat. 122

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. I

cat. 69

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
cat. 66
cat. 96

Madrid testimonios de su historia: hasta 1875
Museo Municipal Valencia 1979
from December 1979 to February 1780
cat. I-155

Goya y la Constitución de 1812
Museo Municipal de Madrid Madrid 1982
organized by Madrid Town Hall, consultant editor José Manuel Pita

Goya en las colecciones madrileñas
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1983
consultant editor Enrique Lafuente Ferrari. From April 19th to June 20th

La alianza de dos monarquías: Wellington en España
Museo Municipal Madrid 1988
organized by Fundación Hispano-Británica in collaboration with

Andrade. From December 1982 to January 1983
cat. 3

Goya (1746 – 1828)
Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca'Pesaro Venecia 1989
consultant editor Antonio Fortún Paesa. From May 7th to July 4th 1989
cat. 38

1983
cat. 37

Goya
Nationalmuseum Stockholm 1994
consultant editors Juan J. Luna and Görel Cavalli-Björkman. From October 7th 1994 to January 8th 1995
cat. 37

Ayuntamiento de Madrid. From October 19th to December 11th 1988
cat. 1.6.9.

Goya. La imagen de la mujer
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2001
from October 30th 2001 to February 10th 2002. Exhibitied also at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, March 10th to June 2nd 2002, consultant editor Francisco Calvo Serraller
cat. 54

Zaragoza 2021

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vol. I, p. 140, cat. 97
1928-1950

L'opera pittorica completa di Goya
ANGELIS, Rita de
p. 123, cat. 509
1974
Rizzoli

Goya. Traveler and artist of the Grand Tour (exp. cat.)
GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel (comisaria)
pp.220-221
2021
Gobierno de Aragón

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
pp. 253, 261, cat. 874
1970
Office du livre

Diplomatario
GOYA Y LUCIENTES, Francisco de
p. 367, nºs 237-238
1981
Institución Fernando el Católico

GUDIOL RICART, José
vol. I, p. 343, cat. 555
t. I
1970
Polígrafa

Goya, la imagen de la mujer
CALVO SERRALLER, Francisco (comisario)
pp. 228, 335, cat. 54 y p. 229 (il.)
2001
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ENLACES EXTERNOS