

# THE DUCHESS OF ALBA AND “THE SANCTIMONIOUS” (LA DUQUESA DE ALBA Y “LA BEATA”)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

1795

UBICACIÓN

The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid,  
Spain

DIMENSIONES

30.7 x 25.4 cm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Oil on canvas

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Documented work

TITULAR

El Prado National Museum

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

21 Jun 2010 / 13 Jun 2023

INVENTARIO

360 (P07020)

## INSCRIPCIONES

*Goya año 1795* ("Goya, 1795", incised in the lower right-hand corner).

## HISTORIA

Luis Berganza, son of Tomás Berganza, the Duchess of Alba's administrator and one of the inheritors in her will, became the new owner of this canvas and its companion piece, "*The Sanctimonious*" with *Luis de Berganza and María de la Luz*. The work remained the property of this family's descendants until it was sold at Sotheby's in 1985. It was bought by the Spanish state, which acquired the work, by right of first refusal, for the Prado Museum.

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

When Goya painted this canvas he was fifty years old, and had only recently recovered from the illness which left him deaf. During his convalescence from this illness, spent in Cádiz, Goya made a series of small-scale cabinet paintings. These afforded him an opportunity to express himself freely in an artistic arena outside that of official, academic painting. Once he had returned to Madrid, the artist carried on working along the same lines as in those highly personal paintings produced during his seclusion. This same freedom of expression can be appreciated in the portraits he painted during this period of members of Madrid's aristocracy, among which are this work and its companion piece, "*The Sanctimonious*" with *Luis de Berganza and María de la Luz*.

The close relationship between Goya and the Duchess of Alba, whom he painted on several occasions, meant that the artist enjoyed access to the private sections of the palace, located in Madrid's Calle del Barquillo. This oil painting, which was made when the duchess was thirty-three years old, captures the moment when she attempts to frighten her elderly maid, Rafaela Luisa Velázquez, with a small red object. The old woman wards her off with the crucifix she holds in her hand. The maid was known as "the Sanctimonious" ("la Beata") thanks to her piety and devotion to prayer, which also seem to have made her the target of many jokes at the palace. In this work, Goya achieves an unusual, intimate portrait of the Duchess of Alba which manages to capture something of her rather irreverent character.

In terms of its style and subject matter, this portrait can be considered a prelude to the so-called *Sanlúcar Album*, *Album A*, which Goya made in 1796 during his stay in Cádiz. *The Duchess of Alba and "the Sanctimonious"* anticipates some of the stylistic characteristics of those drawings, as well as the importance they give to the human figure and the total absence of any description of the surrounding space.

## EXPOSICIONES

### **De Greco á Picasso. Cinq siècles d'art espagnol**

Musée du Petit Palais Paris 1987

from October 10th 1987 to  
January 3th 1988

cat. 101

### **Goya**

La Lonja, Torreón Fortea y Museo Pablo  
Gargallo Zaragoza 1992

consultant editor Julián Gállego

cat. 23

### **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. 64

### **Goya**

Nationalmuseum Stockholm 1994

consultant editors Juan J. Luna  
and Görel Cavalli-Björkman.

From October 7th 1994 to  
January 8th 1995

### **Goya. 250 Aniversario**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1996

consultant editor Juan J. Luna.  
From March 29th to June 2nd

1996

cat. 86

### **Goya. La imagen de la mujer**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2001

from October 30th 2001 to  
February 10th 2002. Exhibited

also at the National Gallery of  
Art Washington March 10th to

**Goya luces y sombras**

CaixaForum Barcelona 2012

consultant editors José Manuel  
Matilla and Manuela B. Marqués.  
From March 16th to June 24th  
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Madrid 2017

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[www.museodelprado.es](http://www.museodelprado.es)

**ENLACES EXTERNOS**