

THE FIRE AT NIGHT (EL INCENDIO DE NOCHE)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS

SERIE: CABINET PICTURES (PAINTING, 1793 - 1794) (12/14)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1793
UBICACIÓN	Abelló Collection, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	43 x 32 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on tin
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
TITULAR	Abelló Collection
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	29 Apr 2010 / 22 Nov 2022

HISTORIA

Before arriving at its current location, this painting has belonged to a number of different owners, including: Ángela Sulpice y Chopinot, Madrid; the Count of Adanero, Madrid; the Marquis of Castro Serna, Madrid; the Duke of Campo Giro; and José Luis Várez, San Sebastián.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

This scene, painted whilst Goya was staying at the home of his friend Sebastián Martínez in Cádiz, is set in an indeterminate space in which a crowd of people is fleeing from a fire, which can just be made out in the background. It takes place at night and the people are dressed in white nightclothes, caught unawares by the fire as they slept. Many of them have already perished, whilst others run away in fear or are carried along by other survivors.

The predominantly dark painting features two lighter-coloured areas. One of these, intensely bright and flecked by yellow brushstrokes, is the light given off by the fire, whilst the other, somewhat more tenuous and dynamic, is formed by the mass of human beings dressed in white, escaping from the flames. Just as he did in *The Shipwreck*, in the foreground Goya has placed a half-naked body, its torso slightly arched, extended out across the ground so as to grab our

attention. This figure could have been inspired by the posture adopted by Abel as he is being brutally murdered in the drawing that the artist made on page 31a of his *Italian Sketchbook*.

In this painting, Goya has done away with any spatial reference that might help the viewer to orientate themselves. This vagueness heightens the sensation of helplessness and produces an atmosphere of terror and distress. As such, it seems unlikely that Goya was referring to any specific event and it is reasonable to assume that this image, verging on the abstract, is an allusion to tragedies and disasters in general.

This work is directly related to the scene of a fire which Goya painted on and which is now in the National Fine Arts Museum in Buenos Aires. That later work is even more abstract and essential in its references.

See *Bulls in the Meadow*.

EXPOSICIONES

Goya

Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis
The Hague 1970

organized by Ministerio de Estado
y Asuntos Culturales and Réunion
des Musées Nationaux, July 4th
to September 13th 1970.

Exhibited also at the Musée de
l'Orangerie des Tuileries, Paris,
October 25th to December 7th
1970, consultant editors Jeannine
Baticle and A. B. de Vries

cat. 14

Goya nelle collezioni private di Spagne

Villa Favorita Lugano 1986

consultant editor Marta Medina.
From June 15th to October 15th
1986

cat. 18

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. 39

Goya's Realism

Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen 2000

from February 11th to May 7th
2000

pp. 184-185, cat. 46

Goya: Prophet der Moderne

Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin 2005

from July 13th to October 3th
2005. Exhibited also at the
Kunsthistorischemuseum, Vienna,
October 18th 2005 to January 8th
2006, consultant editor Manuela
B. Mena Marqués

cat. 30

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. 2

Goya: Order and disorder

Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014

cat. 225

Goya

Basle 2021

p. 146

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GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet

p. 169, cat. 329

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des Musées Nationaux

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ANGELIS, Rita de

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Francisco de Goya, 4 vols.

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vol. II, p. 70

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PAZ, Alfredo de

p. 75, il. 63

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MENA, Manuela B. y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet

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pp. 200, 201, 202, 203 y 205 (il.), cat.
1993
Museo del Prado

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SUREDA PONS, Joan (comisario)
vol. II, p. 155, il. 6
2008
Fundación Goya en Aragón y Turner

ENLACES EXTERNOS