THE MEADOW OF SAN ISIDRO (LA PRADERA DE SAN ISIDRO) (SKETCH)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. TAPESTRY CARTOONS

SERIE: TAPESTRY CARTOONS:COUNTRY SCENES (PAINTING AND SKETCHES, 1788) (2/6)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1788
UBICACIÓN	The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain
DIMENSIONES	41.9 x 90.8 cm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Oil on canvas
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Documented work
TITULAR	El Prado National Museum
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	17 Dec 2009 / 14 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	62 (P00750)

HISTORIA

The tapestry cartoon for which this sketch was made was never in fact painted. It formed part of the series that would have decorated the bedroom of the Infantas, a commission that Goya received towards the end of 1787 (see *Blind Man's Buff*).

The sketch was acquired from the artist by the Duke and Duchess of Osuna in 1798 and it remained in the cabinet that the Duchess had in La Alameda until it was sold at the time of the bankruptcy of the ducal household in 1896, when it was bought for the Prado Museum by the Spanish Ministry of Development, for the sum of 15,000 pesetas. It entered the museum's collection on 5 June 1896.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Intended to become a tapestry cartoon, this work never got any further than the oil sketch, thereby preventing the creation of what would without a doubt have been the largest canvas ever painted by the artist, as well as one of his greatest. Unfortunately, the death of Charles III in December 1788 interrupted the work on the décor of the palace of El Pardo, which the royal family stopped using shortly afterwards.

This painting has been highly praised. Arnaiz highlights the complexity of its composition, its rapid, fresh

execution and its precise colouring. Camón Aznar says that not even the Venetians of the 18th century were able to create such a delicate overall effect.

On the skyline we can make out the silhouettes of the Segovia bridge, the church of San Francisco el Grande and the Alcázar Nuevo. This is a place very familiar to Goya thanks to the proximity of the Royal Palace and the home of the Duke and Duchess of Osuna. Years later, the artist's own home - the Quinta del Sordo - was also very close to this spot.

The way in which the canvas is composed recalls the work of other artists that Goya may have drawn inspiration from, such as *View of Zaragoza*, by Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo; *The Royal Couples* by Luis Paret; certain *vedute*, or views, of Madrid painted by Antonio Joli; and the work of the French artist Claude-Joseph Vernet.

The subject matter of religious celebrations attracted the attention of politicians, intellectuals and other artists, as well as painters. In the *sainete*, or short comical play, of the same name by Ramón de la Cruz we find a magnificent literary parallelism to Goya's representation of the fiesta of San Isidro Labrador. In Ramón de la Cruz's work, the distinct social groups are played off against each other, whilst in that of Goya they appear to mingle amicably. The *ilustrado*s with whom the artist was on very friendly terms were opposed to celebrations of this kind as they would often degenerate into quarrels in which the authorities were forced to intervene. However, the image that Goya offers us of this particular celebration is an idyllic one.

The sketch for *The Meadow of San Isidro* had given Goya quite a few problems. The artist wrote in a letter to his friend Martín Zapater that he had had to work hard on the difficult matter of the meadow on the saint's day, with all of the hustle and bustle that the work involved. In fact, the sketch presents a great variety of colour and countless figures, leading writers such as Mayer and Beruete to consider that this could not possibly be a sketch for a cartoon that would be transferred to a tapestry. However, if we take into account the dimensions specified by the carpenter Serrano for the stretcher that Goya would have used for the finished cartoon, 348 x 752 cm, there would have been enough space to fit in even all these tiny details. Furthermore, just as with the only cartoon in this series actually to be executed,*Blind Man's Buff*, Goya would have simplified the composition slightly to facilitate the work of the tapestry weavers.

CONSERVACIÓN

Restored in 1987. Conserved unlined and on the original stretcher

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1896
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Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Geneva 1939
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cat. 29

El arte europeo en la corte de España durante el siglo XVIII
Galerie des Beaux-Arts Burdeos 1979
Exhibitied also at Grand Palais, París y Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid
cat. 21 (17)

Obras maestras de la pintura española de los siglos XVI al XIX
Museo Pushkin Moscow 1980
Exhibited also at the State Hermitage Museum, San Petersburgo
cat. 28

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1988
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Goya. El Capricho y la Invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1993
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