



Disparates (1815–1824)

In October 1862, after a process that began six years earlier and in addition to the *Desastres de la guerra* plates, the Academy of San Fernando acquired 18 copper plates belonging to the *Disparates* (*The Follies*) series. Unlike the rest of the series, where sufficient data exists allowing us to work out reliable titles in line with the artist's intentions, this series has no iconic reference whatsoever.

When the first edition was printed by the *Calcografía Nacional* in 1864, it was made known to the public under the title *Proverbios*. *Disparates*, which is the title by which it is known today, comes from some of the trial proofs in which this word appears.

Various factors have helped to reinforce the mystery surrounding this series: its inconclusive character, the absence of descriptive comments or legends, the lack of information on the period, the late publication of the prints, their arbitrary arrangement, etc. These works are enigmatic and the product of pure imagination. This series had a great influence and opened the path to modern art and the 20th century.

The Calcografía Nacional is home to the largest collection of plates and prints in Spanish graphic art, including the 228 engraved plates by Francisco de Goya, one of the most renowned Spanish artists.

The Goya's cabinet shows a selection of plates made by the artist, from his first contact with the world of engraving, copying works by Velázquez that were kept in the Royal Palace, and his first original engravings (*El agarrotado* and *San Francisco de Paula*), to the plates corresponding to his four series: *Caprichos*, *Desastres de la Guerra*, *Tauromaquia* and *Disparates*. All of them are a petition for the freedom of creation, fleeing from conventions and rules.

Goya's cabinet allows the public to get to know this side of the artist, showing not only the prints of his different series, but also the original plates, which offer two contrasting images depending on the point of view. It is a room that invites you to study and contemplate unique works.

At the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, Goya's copper plates were electroplated, which is how they are seen at present. By decision of the Royal Academy, they have ceased to be used for printing, thus becoming works of art in themselves, artistic objects worthy of admiration as masterpieces of the art of engraving. However, they still enable scholars to appreciate Goya's personal use of the different engraving techniques in each of his plates.



GOYA

1746–1828

Goya's cabinet

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Fran. Goya y Lucientes



Caprichos (1797–1799)

On 6 February 1799, an announcement was published in the *Diario de Madrid* newspaper about the sale of a “collection of prints of fanciful subjects, invented and engraved by Francisco de Goya”. Days later, on 19 February, Goya decided to withdraw the *Caprichos* (*Whims*) collection from sale, probably in the face of possible persecution by the Inquisition. In 1803, Goya gave all of the copper plates and 240 copies of prints of the complete series to the king, in exchange for an allowance for his son Javier. That same year, the king entrusted the 80 plates and the remaining prints in his possession to the Calcografía Nacional.

The *Caprichos* graphic series represents a changing society, depicting the end of the Old Regime and the birth of the liberal bourgeois thought. Goya criticises all levels of society, nothing and no one escapes his sharp gaze. We see a progression from images depicting courtship among common people and criticism of certain professions and the clergy, to grotesque images of superstition. The most significant print of the series is Capricho 43 entitled *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos* (*The sleep of reason produces monsters*), a metaphor that the artist uses to hide his critical stance towards the society in which he lives.



Desastres de la guerra (1810–1815)

The 82 copper plates that make up the *Desastres de la guerra* (*The Disasters of War*) collection have become a universal symbol of the monstrosity of war. Goya, who was a witness to the Spanish War of Independence (1808-1814), became an unbiased chronicler who blamed both sides for the atrocities and injustices. In his prints we can see universal symbols that are repeated throughout the centuries, as they will later be reflected in war photography. Goya was the forerunner of an anti-war plea that will be depicted in each and every print of this series.

Terror, fanaticism, injustice, misery and death are the terrible consequences of war and political repression. We are all victims and executioners, as the ultimate culprit of the nonsense of war is mankind as a whole, without distinction. Goya's overwhelming plea in this series is the first to portray warfare not as a heroic deed, but as an accumulation of cruelties and humiliations for which everyone is guilty.

The plates of the *Desastres de la Guerra* series were acquired by the Royal Academy in October 1862 and their first prints were made by the Calcografía Nacional in 1863.



Tauromaquia (1814–1816)

After much difficulty, the etchings of *Tauromaquia* (*Bullfighting*) series were acquired by the Royal Academy in 1979. When regrouped under their different editions, the prints appear to be structured in three parts: the history of bullfighting in Spain since Antiquity, the figures of the two main bullfighting schools during the 18th century (the Navarro-Aragonese school with the Estudiante de Falces, Juanito Apiñani and Martincho prints, and the Andalusian school with the Pepe Hillo and Pedro Romero prints) and, lastly, some bullfighting events that end tragically.

The *Tauromaquia* series has always been accepted as a series that delves into the romantic image of Spain. However, another interpretation shows a pathetic, unflattering image of bullfights. Goya was influenced by the atmosphere depicted at the time, which was against this form of popular entertainment. As a result, he moved away from the subject's usual format, creating disconcerting images using a brutally intense language. The lack of distance, the elimination of anecdotal elements and the dramatic portrayal of light and emptiness lend a sense of ambiguity to these scenes and have given rise to doubts about Goya's stance in later life, despite declaring himself an enthusiastic bullfighting fan in his youth.

Fran.^{co} Goya y Lucientes