

# 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

##### **Goya**

Festival Internacional de Granada, Palacio de Carlos V Granada 1955

consultant editor Enrique Lafuente Ferrari  
cat. 108

cat. 69

##### **Exposición histórico-artística del Centenario del Dos de Mayo**

Museo Arqueológico Nacional Madrid 1908  
cat. 256

##### **De Tiépolo à Goya**

Galerie des Beaux-Arts Burdeos 1956

consultant editor Gilberte Martin-Méry. From May 7th to July 31st 1956  
cat. 122

##### **Goya and his times**

The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963

cat. 66  
cat. 96

##### **Pinturas de Goya**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1928

consultant editor Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor. From April to -May 1928  
cat. 56

##### **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

##### **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 Andrade. From December  
1982 to January 1983

cat. 3

### **Goya en las colecciones madrileñas**

Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1983

consultant editor Enrique  
Lafuente Ferrari. From April  
19th to June 20th 1983

cat. 37

### **La alianza de dos monarquías: Wellington en España**

Museo Municipal Madrid 1988

organized by Fundación  
Hispano-Británica in  
collaboration with  
Ayuntamiento de Madrid. From  
October 19th to December 11th  
1988

cat. 1.6.9.

### **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

### **Goya**

Nationalmuseum Stockholm 1994

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

cat. 37

### **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  
June 2nd 2002, consultant  
editor Francisco Calvo Serraller

cat. 54

Zaragoza 2021

### **BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

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DESPARMET FITZ - GERALD, Xavier  
vol. I, p. 140, cat. 97  
1928-1950

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GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet  
pp. 253, 261, cat. 874  
1970  
Office du livre

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

#### **L'opera pittorica completa di Goya**

ANGELIS, Rita de  
p. 123, cat. 509  
1974  
Rizzoli

#### **Diplomatario**

GOYA Y LUCIENTES, Francisco de  
p. 367, n°s 237-238  
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Institución Fernando el Católico

#### **Goya, la imagen de la mujer**

CALVO SERRALLER, Francisco (comisario)  
pp. 228, 335, cat. 54 y p. 229 (il.)  
2001  
Museo Nacional del Prado y Fundación  
Amigos del Museo del Prado

#### **Goya. Traveler and artist of the Grand Tour (exp. cat.)**

GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel (comisaria)  
pp.220-221  
2021  
Gobierno de Aragón

### **ENLACES EXTERNOS**