

# THE NUDE MAJA (LA MAJA DESNUDA)

CLASIFICACIÓN: EASEL PAINTING. VARIOUS SUBJECTS



## DATOS GENERALES

|                                      |                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| CRONOLOGÍA                           | 1795 - 1800                                      |
| UBICACIÓN                            | The Prado National Museum. Madrid, Madrid, Spain |
| DIMENSIONES                          | 98 x 191 cm                                      |
| TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE                    | Oil on canvas                                    |
| RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA | Documented work                                  |
| TITULAR                              | El Prado National Museum                         |
| FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN          | 03 Feb 2010 / 14 Jun 2023                        |
| INVENTARIO                           | 379 (P00742)                                     |

## HISTORIA

This work formed part of Manuel Godoy's art collection. Following the Aranjuez uprising of 1808 and the abdication of King Charles IV that same year, the work was seized, along with other items, by order of Ferdinand VII. Between 1808 and 1813 it was stored, together with *The Clothed Maja*, at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando and in 1813 it was confiscated by the Inquisition. It was kept at the Madrid academy from 1836 until 1901, when it entered the collection of the Prado Museum, being mentioned in the museum's catalogue for the first time in 1910.

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

The first reference we have to *The Nude Maja* dates back to 1800, when it is mentioned as being in Manuel Godoy's palace, where it was hung above a doorway. No mention is made of *The Clothed Maja*, however, suggesting that at that time it had not yet been painted. In 1808 the present work appears once more in the inventory that Frédéric Quilliet, an agent of Joseph Bonaparte, made of Godoy's estate.

The *Nude Maja* is paired with *The Clothed Maja*, since the two works were probably commissioned by Manuel Godoy, the prime minister of King Charles IV. This would not have been the first painting of a female nude in Godoy's collection. His private study also contained *The*

*Toilet of Venus (La Venus del Espejo)* (1647-1651, National Gallery, London) by Velázquez, and a copy of another Venus by Titian.

The identity of the woman posing for Goya in this painting remains a mystery although it has been suggested that it could be either the Duchess of Alba or alternatively Pepita Tudó, Godoy's lover from 1797 onwards.

The theme of the female nude has few precedents in the history of Spanish art, perhaps because it was considered to be an obscene subject matter. One only has to consider that, whilst in the academies of the period it was relatively common to copy from nude male models, the nude female body was instead studied by looking at classical sculpture or existing paintings, and never from life.

This vision of the female anatomy that Goya depicts so freely in *The Nude Maja* resulted in the painter being investigated by the Inquisition. On 16 March 1815, the Secret Chamber of the Inquisition of Madrid ordered, in reference to the two majas, that "said Goya be brought before this tribunal so that he might recognize them and declare whether they are his work, for what reason he made them, by commission for whom, and what ends were intended". Unfortunately we do not know what happened in the course of this process nor do we have any evidence of the statements that Goya made, which would have served to shed some light on the episode.

The woman, entirely naked, is shown in the same position as in *The Clothed Maja*, reclining on a green divan covered by a white bedspread and pillows. According to Xavier de Salas, the two majas were not painted at the same time, owing, in part at least, to the technical differences between the two works. In his opinion, *The Clothed Maja* was painted after the nude. In reality, the explanation for these technical differences stems from the need Goya felt to tackle these two works according to different criteria. So as to enjoy rendering the fabrics in *The Clothed Maja*, the painter used looser, freer brushstrokes to better capture the different qualities of the materials that cover the woman's body. However, the anatomical representation of *The Nude Maja* resulted in the adoption of a more academic vision for the work, in which draughtsmanship took on greater importance.

When making this painting, Goya may have referred to works such as Velázquez's *The Toilet of Venus*, Titian's *The Venus of Urbino* (1538, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) or *Venus with the Organist*, by the same artist (Ca. 1550, Prado Museum, Madrid). He may even have seen *Female Nude seen from Behind* (Ca. 1739, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica Palazzo Barberini, Rome) by Pierre-Hubert Subleyras (Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, 1699-Rome, 1749).

#### 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. 9*

##### **El arte de Goya**

Museo de Arte Occidental de Tokio Tokyo 1971  
from 16th 1971 to January 23th 1972. Exhibited also at the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, January 29th to March 15th 1972.  
*cat. 31*

##### **Les chefs-d'œuvre du Musée du Prado**

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Geneva 1939  
consultant editors Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor y Pedro Muguruza Otaño. From June to September 1939  
*cat. 6*

##### **Goya**

Palacio de Pedralbes Barcelona 1977  
from April 12th to June 30th 1977  
*cat. 36*

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

The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963  
*cat. 66*  
*cat. 85*

##### **De El Greco a Goya**

Palacio de Bellas Artes Mexico D.F. 1978  
November-December 1978  
*cat. 37*

##### **Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art**

##### **Realidad e imagen. Goya**

##### **Goya. 250 Aniversario**

**MUSEUM OF ART**  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York 1995  
consultant editors Colta Ives and Susan Alyson Stein. From September 12th to December 31st 1995  
*cat. 6*

**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. 9*

**1746 - 1828**  
Museo de Zaragoza Zaragoza 1996  
consultant editor Federico Torralba Soriano. From October 3th to December 1st 1996  
*cat. 43*

**Goya: Order and disorder**  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014  
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Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1996  
consultant editor Juan J. Luna.  
From March 29th to June 2nd 1996  
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LUNA, Juan J. (Comisario)  
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Museum of Fine Arts Boston Publications

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

## PALABRAS CLAVE

### DESNUDO FEMENINO LIENZO OLEO

## ENLACES EXTERNOS

### WIKIPEDIA

La maja vestida

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/La\\_maja\\_vestida](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_maja_vestida)

Josefa Tudó

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Venus del espejo

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### GOOGLE RESULT

La familia de Carlos IV (Francisco de Goya)

<https://www.google.com/search?q=La+familia+de+Carlos+IV&stick=H4slAAAAAA>

AAONgFuLUz9U3MDNMMolX4glxjdMrjcwstPgdi0rk84uygzNTUssTK4sB5jOUJSoAA  
AA&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjv1qXfzoHgAhUNnhQKHd-8CkkQsQ4lejAU