

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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January 2024

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Norton Simon Museum Presents *I Saw It: Francisco de Goya, Printmaker*

First exhibition on the West Coast to show the artist's four major print series
April 19–August 5, 2024

Pasadena, CA—Opening at the Norton Simon Museum on April 19, 2024, *I Saw It: Francisco de Goya, Printmaker* examines Goya's prolific and inventive printmaking. One of Spain's most influential and celebrated artists, Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) was the premier court painter of his time, and his portraits were sought after by the Spanish elite. However, he turned to printmaking as a way to chronicle and censure the world around him. Through his four major print series, *Los Caprichos*, *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, *La Tauromaquia* and *Los Disparates*, Goya scrutinized Spain's religious and political institutions, its ruling classes and the brutality of war. This is the first exhibition on the West Coast to feature Goya's major print series in their entirety, and includes more than 200 prints drawn from the Norton Simon's extremely rare, comprehensive collection.



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (Spanish, 1746-1828)
Caprichos: Fran.co Goya y Lucientes, Painter
(*Fran.co Goya y Lucientes, Pintor*), 1799
Etching, burnished aquatint, drypoint and burin on laid paper
Norton Simon Art Foundation

I Saw It will span the Museum's two rotating exhibition spaces. The lower-level exhibition wing will feature each complete series, with select impressions from trial and working proofs as well as hand-colored editions. The small focus gallery on the main level will feature works by modern and contemporary artists inspired by Goya's themes and imagery, including Enrique Chagoya, Leon

Golub, Pablo Picasso, Yinka Shonibare and Andy Warhol. The exhibition runs through August 5, 2024.

***Los Caprichos* (1799)**

Los Caprichos (The Caprices), the artist's largest series, with 80 prints, slides between the mundane and the supernatural, satirizing the evils that Goya perceived and characterized in terms of what he felt was a socially backward society lacking reason. Aristocrats, monks, witches and animals mimicking humans inhabit his darkly humorous, often baffling imagery. In one of the best-known prints, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (El sueño de la razón produce monstruos)*, Goya portrays himself slumbering as night creatures visit his dreams. The symbolism in this image is germane to the entire series and reflects the artist's embrace of Enlightenment ideals: sleep, the lack of seeing, provides no defense against ignorance and vice.

***Los Desastres de la Guerra* (c. 1810–15)**

In *Los Desastres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War)*, Goya transcribed his reactions to the misery and consequences of the Napoleonic occupation of Spain between 1808 and 1814 in 82 sharply drawn, frank depictions of conflict, suffering and famine. Rather than portray military heroes, he captured the brave achievements of ordinary men and women. *What Courage! (Que Valor!)* portrays a woman climbing over slain soldiers to fire a cannon to keep the French at bay. Throughout the series, Goya's purposeful arrangement of the action in the fore- and middle ground, often from a low point of view, suggests his position, and by extension ours, as witnesses to the horror. His massing of shape, and the play of light and dark, give rhythm and focus to compositions that would be otherwise chaotic. *I Saw It* presents a set of working proofs made by the artist himself. One of only two sets in the world, it reflects the images as Goya intended them to be printed.

***La Tauromaquia* (1815–16)**

As a respite from the war, and from polemical subjects that jeopardized his official role as court painter, Goya turned to the popular yet controversial sport of bullfighting in his third print series, *La Tauromaquia*. A longtime aficionado of the *corrida* (bullfight), he pays homage to the display of mortal danger posed to the bull, the matador and even the spectators themselves. In 33 crisply defined, highly orchestrated scenes, Goya communicates the grace, ferocity and death inherent in this power struggle between animal and man.

***Los Disparates* (c. 1815–23)**

Goya returned to composing intriguing, even inexplicable subject matter in his final print series, *Los Disparates*. The 22 scenes from the series are puzzling and complex and may relate to Spanish proverbs or carnival games. The etching *Ridiculous Folly* (*Disparate ridículo*), which shows its protagonists in an ambiguous space, their purpose unclear, is characteristic of the series. Perched on a tree branch, the figures seem spiritless, even blind to the cloaked orator who lectures them. The composition, in contrast, is firmly anchored by the deeply etched branch. Highlights give dimensionality to the figures, and a delicate veil of aquatint suggests dusk as the time of day.

I Saw It: Modern Artists Respond to Goya

On view in the Museum's focus gallery, works by artists Enrique Chagoya, Leon Golub, Pablo Picasso, Yinka Shonibare and Andy Warhol demonstrate these artists' deep connection with the concerns Goya expressed as a printmaker and even his direct influence on their art making. Seen side by side with the Goya prints that inspired them, these works highlight the artists' shared interest in examining moral frailty, the construction of cultural identity and the destructive potential of political institutions.

I Saw It provides an unmediated opportunity to view, appreciate and understand the graphic work of this great Spanish artist. Hailed as the last of the Old Masters and the first of the moderns, Goya created images that draw our admiration for their breadth of imagination and artistry, and for their expression of the artist's profound humanity. The exhibition is organized by Curator Gloria Williams Sander and includes a series of related programs, including scholarly lectures, a performance and guided tours. The Museum's opening weekend event, "An Evening in Focus: Francisco de Goya, Printmaker," will be held on Saturday, April 20, from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and feature live music in the galleries, art-making activities for all ages, pop-up tours of the exhibition and more. Details can be found at nortonsimon.org.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum's collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Thursday through Monday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. (Friday and Saturday to 7 p.m.). It is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors. Members, students with I.D. and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. The Museum provides free admission to all from 4-7 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free but limited, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** Pasadena Transit stops directly in front of the Museum. Please visit <http://pasadenatransit.net> for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules. **Planning Your Visit:** For up-to-date information on our guidelines and protocols, please visit nortonsimon.org/visit.