



Goya's Mastery in Prints: La Tauromaquia

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UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA MUSEUM OF ART

Acknowledgements

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All images created by the artist, Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828)

Cover Detail & Title Panel: *The Agility and Audacity of Juanito Apiñani in [the Ring] at Madrid (Ligereza y Atrevimiento de Juanito Apiñani en la de Madrid)*, 1816, etching and aquatint, Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Algur H. Meadows Collection.

Interior, from Left to Right:

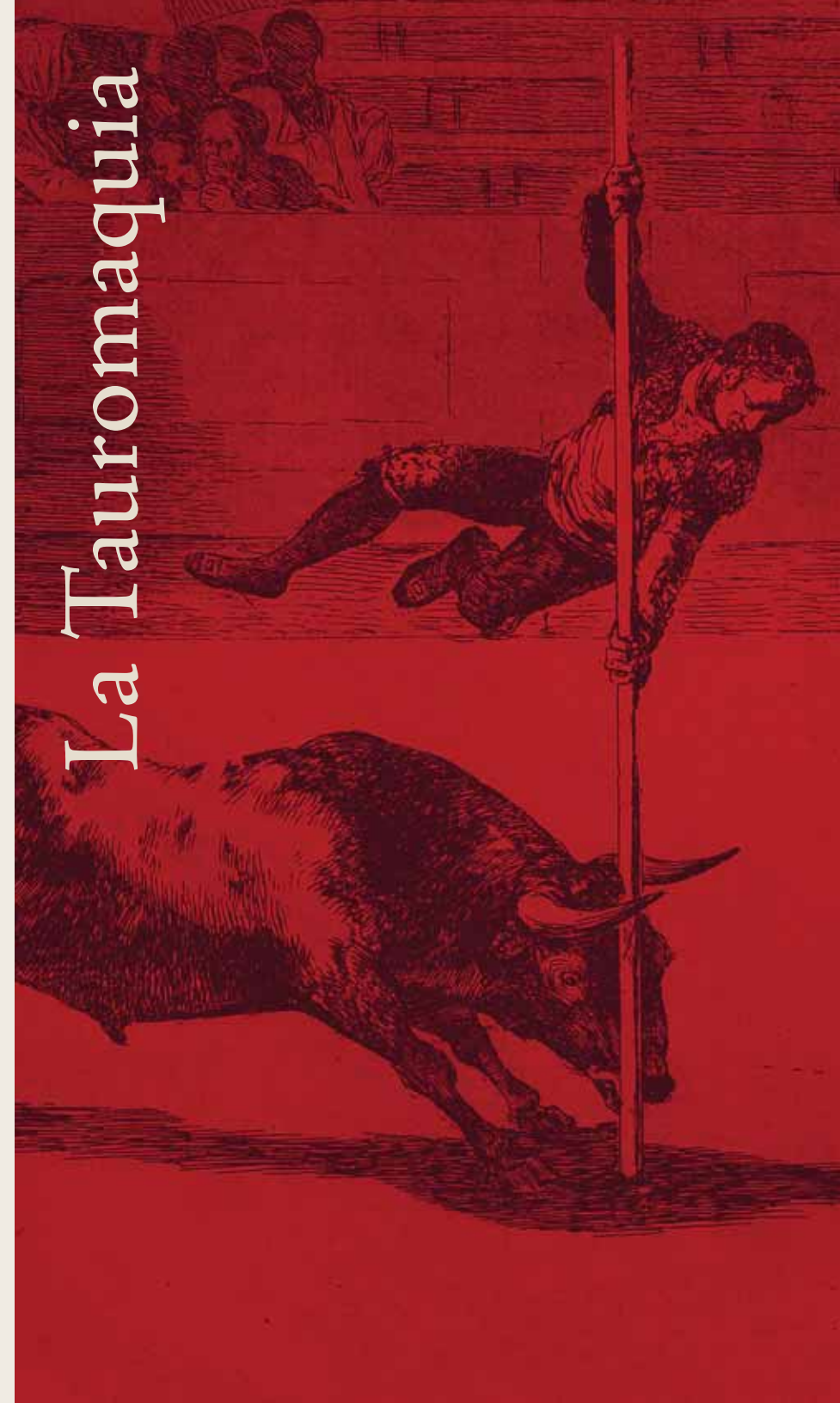
The Very Skillful Student of Falces, Wrapped in his Cape, tricks the Bull with the Play of his Body (El Diestrisimo Estudiante de Falces, Embozado Burla al Toro con sus Quiebros), 1816, etching, aquatint, drypoint and burin, University of Arizona Museum of Art, Gift of Jeannette and Neil Matthew.

Dreadful Events in the Front Rows of the Ring at Madrid and the Death of the Mayor of Torrejón (Desgracias Acaecidas en el Tendido de la Plaza de Madrid, y Muerte del Alcalde de Torrejón), 1816, etching, burnished aquatint, drypoint and burin, University of Arizona Museum of Art, Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Edward J. Gallagher, Jr. Memorial Fund.

Francisco Goya y Lucientes, Painter, 1797-98, etching and aquatint, Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Algur H. Meadows Collection.



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The University of Arizona Museum of Art proudly presents *Goya's Mastery in Prints*, a celebration of the graphic techniques and visionary achievements of Spanish master Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828). The exhibition series presents in succession the artist's four most significant print suites— in first-edition imprints— on loan from the Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.



This extraordinary cycle of exhibitions premieres with *La Tauromaquia* (*The Art of Bullfighting*), Goya's chronicle of the evolution of bullfighting from the ancient Spanish sport of hunting bulls to the graceful art of the

early 19th-century ring. While the precise date of the series is unknown, it was completed during the later years of the artist's life, and first published in 1816.

La Tauromaquia represents the artist's life-long interest in bullfighting; the motifs of bull and ring recurred in his work from very early paintings through a set of lithographs he produced at the end of his career. In his analysis of the suite, Dr. Mark Roglán, Director of the Meadows Museum, writes that "men and animals are all victims and heroes inside the bullring, and death and glory are essential characteristics of the drama. Sometimes bull and man are the only figures in the scene, while in others the composition is much richer and more complex. In all of the prints, the essence of the bullfight is present. With the vigor of his drawing, the modernity of his compositions, and the mastery of his reproductions of light and shadow, Goya, as no other artist had before, reproduces with all its intensity and dynamism both the frenetic movement and understated grace of the Spanish bullfight."

The individual plates in the suite are characterized by a graphic vitality attributable to Goya's use of dramatic compositional tensions and his use of

empty space to focus attention and action. Moreover, Dr. Roglán notes: "As a draftsman, Goya shows a very fast technique with a special interest in the reproduction of movement and light. The silhouette of animals and people is firmly inscribed on the paper, while volumes and shadows are reproduced with a much lighter and more delicate pencil work. In the few cases where we find sanguine wash, Goya achieves some of his finest results. Working with a brush, he reaches the complete surface of the paper with the sanguine wash, obtaining a much more diverse range of color intensity."

Goya's *La Tauromaquia* is documentarily compelling and aesthetically inspired, a product of Goya's intense personal interest in the sport, his dramatic compositional style, and his full mastery of the etching technique.

The UAMA presentation contains the 33 etchings originally grouped as *La Tauromaquia*, plus two additional late prints assumed by scholars to have been created as part of the series.



Dr. Lisa Fischman
Chief Curator, University of Arizona Museum of Art
March, 2007

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes

Born on March 30, 1746 in the Spanish village of Fuendetodos, Francisco de Goya would prove to be one of the most innovative and provocative artists of all time.



Although he came of artistic age surprisingly late in life, Goya produced a revolutionary and unforgettable oeuvre.

The young Goya sought education through studio apprenticeships and travel, yet it was not until 1773 that he was formally engaged as an artist. By painting tapestry cartoons for the Royal Tapestry Workshop in Madrid, he garnered the attention of the Spanish royal court. In the years following, Goya found increasing favor among noble society and received many distinguished portrait commissions.

In 1777 and 1778, Goya executed his first etchings, copies of paintings by the highly regarded 17th-century Spanish court painter, Diego Velázquez (1599-1660).

Scholars posit Goya's deafness, the result of illness in 1792, as a turning point in his subject and style. In 1794, he wrote: "In order to occupy my imagination which was troubled by the consideration of my ills... I dedicated myself to painting a set of cabinet pictures in which I have succeeded in making observations for which the commissioned works, in which fantasy and invention had no place, never gave the opportunity."

By 1797, Goya was at work on a suite of satirical etchings, known as *Los Caprichos* (which were published in 1799). In that same year, Goya was appointed First Court Painter and with the enhanced social access of the position produced his greatest aristocratic portraits— those marked by a distinctive and often unflattering realism.

In 1808, amidst the war against Napoléon in Spain, Goya's world of court patronage dissolved; the artist found himself increasingly isolated and gripped by psychological crisis. After the death of his wife, in 1812, the artist produced some of his most politically charged work, including the print suite *Los Desastres de la Guerra*.

Through his last years, Goya was astonishingly prolific— producing portraits, religious paintings and genre scenes, the series known as the Black Paintings, and various drawings and print suites, including *La Tauromaquia* and *Los Disparates*. Threatened by escalating political, social and artistic repression under the regime of Ferdinand VII, Goya chose self-exile in 1824. He settled in Bordeaux where he died, on April 16, 1828, at age 82.