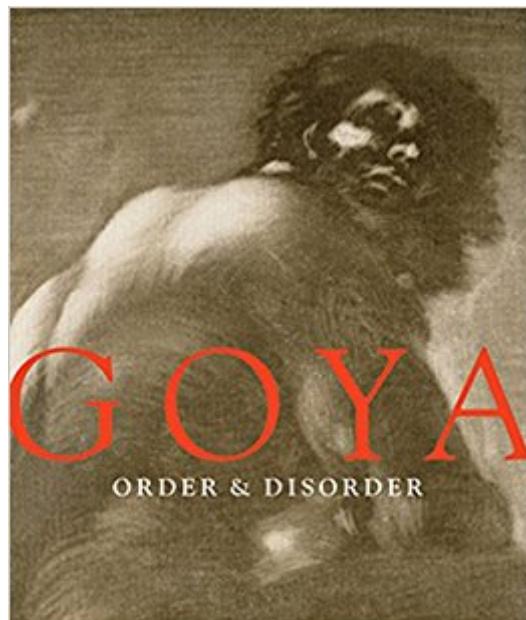


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Goya: Order & Disorder



Synopsis

Francisco Goya has been widely celebrated as the most important Spanish artist of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the last of the old masters and the first of the moderns, and an astute observer of the human condition in all its complexity. The many-layered and shifting meanings of his work have made him one of the most studied artists in the world. Few, however, have made the ambitious attempt to explore his work as a painter, printmaker and draftsman across media and the timeline of his life. This book does just that, presenting a comprehensive and integrated view of Goya's most important paintings, prints, and drawings through the themes and imagery that continually challenged or preoccupied the artist. They reveal how he strove relentlessly to understand and describe human behavior and emotional states, even at their most orderly or disorderly extremes, in elegant and incisive portraits, dramatic and monumental history paintings, and series of prints and drawings of a satirical, disturbing and surreal nature. Derived from the research for the largest Goya art exhibition in North America in a quarter-century, this book takes a fresh look at one of the greatest artists in history by examining the fertile territory between the two poles that defined the range of his boundlessly creative personality. Francisco José Goya y Lucientes (1746–1828) was born in Fuendetodos, Aragón, in the northeast of Spain. Goya was court painter to the Spanish Crown, and famously documented the Peninsular War (1807–1814) between France and Spain in his harrowing Disasters of War series. An important bridge to the modernist era, Goya's oeuvre provided a crucial precedent for artists such as Manet, Picasso and Francis Bacon.

Book Information

Hardcover: 400 pages

Publisher: MFA Publications, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (October 31, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0878468080

ISBN-13: 978-0878468089

Product Dimensions: 1.5 x 9.8 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (16 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #269,652 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #232 in Books > Arts & Photography > Individual Artists > Monographs #2027 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > History

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When his fame was firmly established, Goya declared that, "There are no rules in painting." He thought of himself as an "inventor" and felt that the traditional academic program for training artists stifled their creativity. He himself defied the laws of gravity with his images of creatures in flight – witches suspended in the air, flying bulls, floating crones and combatants tumbling in space. He dramatized the evils of war in drawings and prints – at the same time as he was painting portraits of the aristocrats and officials whose ambitions and privileged status fed political conflict. This book paints an interesting portrait of Goya in his contradictory roles – Goya the court painter to four successive monarchs, Goya the subversive social critic, Goya the satirist of human folly and superstition, and Goya the master of fantasy. The authors of this book help us understand the motives behind Goya's bizarre and nightmarish images. They cover the political and artistic climate in which he had to make his name; the effect of his health problems on his work; his innovations in serialized printmaking; his purpose in depicting witches, spirits, grotesque creatures and states of madness...The scope of this book is as broad as Goya's preoccupations and achievements. Serious students of Goya will appreciate the chronology at the back of the book and the section on the materials and techniques used by Goya. The book is beautifully produced with thick silky paper that brings out the excellence of the many reproductions. But it's not easy to read. The book is so big and heavy I had to read it on a table. The line length of most of the text is too wide for the eye's comfort.

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