

Francisco Goya was born Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes in Fuendetodos Spain in 1746. Goya was born into a rough time for Spain. Spain had just had a new reigning king and the people of Spain were looking for political and social reform. This period of time in Spain was known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was called such because the people truly were looking for enlightenment and were trying to get a better sense of community. The government at this time had been worried about succession from powers of Italy and France, therefore the royalty spent most of Spain's money on pointless wars leaving a very poor Spain. The rich people of Spain stayed so, while everyone else was poor. There really was no middle class at this time. The social and political state of Spain, affected Goya's life entirely.

Little is known about Goya's childhood in Fuendetodos. No information about Goya appears until he and his family had moved to Saragossa. Once Goya moved to Saragossa, he began attending a Christian school. This is where Goya was first influenced by art. Goya was amazed at the murals in the chapel of his school.

These murals provided plenty of inspiration for Goya, and he began to focus on studying art. After a while in the school in

Saragossa, the priests who had taught Goya there, told him to go and study under Jose Luzan y Martinez in Madrid. Martinez had studied art in Madrid and Italy for plenty of years and Goya was apprenticed under him. Under Martinez, Goya began painting copies of the popular art of the time. He painted prints of paintings, like Diego Velazquez, to get a feel for how art was created.

Martinez had another apprentice named Ramon Bayeu. Goya and Bayeu studied together for many years and became fairly good friends. Eventually, Goya would attempt to get a scholarship from the Royal Academy of Arts in San Fernando. In order to acquire this scholarship Goya had to submit a qualified painting. Goya was not accepted. Bayeu had also entered for the scholarship and won. Bayeu only won, supposedly, because his older brother Francisco was on the jury for the scholarship. Goya realized from this failed attempt that he needed to focus on his style, so he talked to Francisco Bayeu and got an apprenticeship under him. Goya's early court paintings had a style that is known today as baroque. Baroque is a dynamic and dramatic style of art and architecture in mostly Catholic countries, like Spain, during the 17th century that stressed emotion, variety and movement. It was a style that used illusionism and realism to achieve its purpose. You can really see this precisely in

his oil paint portraits of the royal family. He worked under Bayeu for almost three years and was getting real close with Bayeu's sister Josefa. At age twenty three, Goya decided he was not receiving what he had hoped from Bayeu, and decided to move to Italy for its tight art community. He studied and painted in Italy for a few years until he realized he would have more of an impact on a familiar society. So he moved back to Saragossa. Once returned to Saragossa, he wed the love of his life, Josefa. They later had many children but only one survived. Just prior to marriage Goya applied and fulfilled the duties of a court painter for the royal family in Madrid. Many of his famous early works are of the royal family, and later of the king. This was his jump-start to his career as a painter and he began to step into etching. Goya kept this court painter career until the end of the eighteenth century when he made a drastic change.

Around 1792, Goya was 46 and began showing signs of age. He was getting quite sickly and fell ill of a disease that left him deaf. This really changed his attitude about life. It was after his deafness that Goya decided to change his medium from canvas to copper plates and began to focus strictly on aquatinting. Until the appearance of aquatint the only way to have any value and tone on a plate was to cross-hatch. Rembrandt was the first to use this method but Goya really made this style of

etching popular. (*Goya, Hughes*) Cross hatching had been done for many years with etching, but aquatint provided something more. As opposed to regular intaglio etching, aquatinting allows the acid to bite a porous plate, usually covered with a fine grit, creating a wider scale of tone. The acid bites only the parts of the plate that do not have texture. The longer the plate is in the acid, the darker the tone. The illness and sudden change in media was a turning point for Goya, for now we begin to see his importance to the world of printmaking. (*Goya, Hughes*)

Los Caprichos

Goya, with his new attitude and emphasis on etching, began doing sketches that were much more expressionistic. These sketches combined the political and social unrest and later paved the way for his first 80 plates, later known as *Los Caprichos*. These caprices, or follies, consisted of 80 plates and were the first series Goya had done with etchings. *Los Caprichos* were made between 1796 and 1798. Goya wrote to the *Diario de Madrid* advertising the *Caprichos* as "the censure of human errors and vices that is the proper domain not only of rhetoric and poetry, but also of art." The government cited these works as too expressive and the ad was taken out of the paper. The 80

plates of the *Caprichos* are divided into three sections, the first plate being a self portrait etching. Plates 1-36 portray the follies of society, regarding prostitution, religion, witchcraft, and other social implications of the day. Plates 37-42 portray the leaders of the society as donkeys, with a hint of humor. The final plates, 43-80, are abstract versions of the first plates more hypothetical as opposed to literal in the first 36 plates. The *Caprichos* were made to have a social and political impact, trying to show the "follies" of war and the government through sarcasm and wit. This theme stretched throughout the 80 plates. These are 80 plates that were to be taken as a whole series as opposed to 80 separate plates. One piece from the *Caprichos* that seems to give a sense as to what is portrayed in the 80 plates, is plate 43 *The Sleep of Reason*. It is a self portrait in which Goya is sleeping with bats and demons haunting him, just as the evils of society do. His witty lines of text can also be seen in this plate; "The sleep of reason produces monsters".

The Disasters of War

More social conflict arose with the turn of the century. The people of Spain grew more upset with the government. Napoleon ruled France and wanted Portugal, so he and his troops in-

vaded Spain. The government of Spain put up no effort and gave Portugal to France. The Spanish people were outraged and tried to stand up to the French, but were basically helpless. A good example of the French invasion can be shown in Goya's painting "The third of May". This piece depicts French soldiers invading, and the Spanish people showing their fight but seem very helpless.

Goya's next series of etchings were in response to the horrors of war, and were appropriately entitled *The Disasters of War*. These were made from 1810 through the early 1820's and consisted of 82 plates concerning the brutalities of war. The first edition of the plates were done on backs of old plates and with poor tools and one could see the plate marks in some. Due to the invasion of the French, Goya was not able to publish these disaster plates, so he began work on a third series; *Tauromaquia*.

This third series was published in 1816. *Tauromaquia* depicted 33 plates of scenes of bullfighting the glorified Spanish sport. This may have hinted at what brought the Spanish together in times of uncertainty. After these 3 series were created, Goya left Madrid in 1824 for exile in France. He died in 1828 at the age of 82.

Goya's persistence in depicting the political and social reforms of Spain may have not been as influential during the times they were created, but they really gave insight to future generations through the help of the prints and paintings. His perfection of aquatint and his additions to printmaking are astounding and quite alive today. Francisco Goya truly is a master of modern artistic expression.