

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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SPANISH LEND FAMOUS MAJAS BY GOYA  
TO NATIONAL GALLERY FOR BICENTENNIAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. April 21, 1976. The Naked and Clothed Majas by Goya, together with a group of six additional pictures by the great Spanish artist illustrating the full range of his painting, will go on view at the National Gallery of Art at the beginning of May as a salute to the U.S. Bicentennial by the government of Spain.

All the paintings come from Spain's national gallery, the Prado in Madrid, which has the outstanding collection of Goyas in the world. The exhibition will serve as a prelude to the state visit to Washington of Their Majesties King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia on June 2.

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828) is generally considered one of the greatest painters in history. He was almost an exact contemporary of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the subject of the Gallery's Bicentennial exhibition opening June 5. The two Majas have been described by the eminent scholar Xavier de Salas as "one of the highest artistic achievements in the whole history of painting." The other paintings

(more)



include two portraits, designs or "cartoons" for two famous tapestries, and two examples of his later great "black paintings" including The Colossus (or Panic).

There are hardly any nudes in the history of Spanish art, and The Naked Maja is the only one by Goya. Little definite is known about the two Majas, but they have given rise to much romantic legend and speculation. It is known that Goya was passionately in love with the beautiful Duchess of Alba, one of the two highest ranking noblewomen in Spain and herself unhappily married at thirteen.

The discovery of a double frame of the dimensions of the Majas at the Alba estate at Rocío where Goya and the duchess stayed has led to speculation that the clothed picture was intended to be used instead of the nude one when desired. Others have theorized that Goya painted the clothed version as a virtuoso performance to prove that he could paint a dressed subject just as provocatively as a nude. Many other identities for the sitter have also been proposed.

The faces in the two paintings are frequently compared to a mask. They are not, in any event, the features of the duchess, in whose portrait by Goya at the Hispanic Society in New York she is depicted wearing two rings, and pointing to a signature



which a recent cleaning revealed to read "Only Goya."

The paintings in the show, entitled Goya in the Prado, were chosen to illustrate all the major aspects of the artist's production, both stylistically and in Goya's depiction of Spain at the time of the founding of the United States. They will be installed in galleries 69 through 71 off the East Garden Court. They are, in chronological order:

The Amateur Bullfight (La novillada)  
1779, 101-15/16" x 53-9/16"

The Injured Mason (El albañil herido)  
1786-1787, 105-1/2" x 43-1/3"

Carlos III  
c. 1786-1788, 82-2/3" x 50"

Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos  
1798, 80-3/4" x 48-7/16"

The Maja Clothed (La maja vestida)  
c. 1803-1806, 37-2/5" x 74-4/5"

The Naked Maja (La maja desnuda)  
c. 1790-1806, 38-3/16" x 74-4/5"

The Colossus (or Panic) (El colosso/El panico)  
c. 1810-1812, 45-2/3" x 41-1/3"

Witch and Wizard (Dos brujos)  
1821-1822, 20-7/8" x 33-7/16"

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