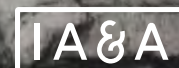


A detailed black and white engraving by Francisco Goya from his series 'Caprichos'. It depicts a man in a white shirt and dark trousers, slumped over a desk in a state of exhaustion or sleep, with his head resting on his hand. He is surrounded by several large, grotesque, owl-like creatures with human-like faces, some perched on his shoulders and others flying around him. In the bottom right corner, a small, startled cat is visible. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a night scene or a dreamlike atmosphere.

# GOYA's caprichos

**Fantasy, Satire,  
and Artistic Innovation**

TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE



INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS AND ARTISTS





**“A man must be born endowed  
with a rare, inventive talent,  
have had a wide experience of  
life and have plumbed the depths  
of the human heart in order ... to  
compose satires like these.”**

1. Detail Francisco de Goya, Plate 64 from “Los Caprichos”: Bon Voyage (Buen viaje), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, burin, image: 8 7/16” x 6 3/16” sheet: 12 5/6” x 9 5/8”



# GOYA's caprichos

## Fantasy, Satire, and Artistic Innovation

**F**rancisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828) is frequently celebrated as the last of the Old Masters and first of the Modern artists. His career spanned a complex and turbulent period in both Spanish and European history. Named Court Painter in 1789, the same year as the French Revolution, Goya would serve three Spanish Bourbon kings and one French "intruder king."

In addition to his work as a court painter, Goya was an innovative and subtle graphic artist. After a serious illness left him deaf in 1793, he wrote that he sought an outlet "to

2. Detail Francisco de Goya, Plate 49 from  
"Los Caprichos": Hobgoblins (Duendecitos),  
1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint,  
plate 8 3/8" x 6" sheet: 11 5/8" x 8 1/4"







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3. Francisco de Goya, Plate 3 from "Los Caprichos": Here comes the bogeyman (*Que viene el Coco*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate 8 3/8" x 5 15/16" sheet: 11 5/8" x 8 1/4"
4. Francisco de Goya, Plate 19 from "Los Caprichos": All will fall (*Todos caerán*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 7/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/6"



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make observations for which there is usually no opportunity in commissioned works, which provide no scope for caprice and invention." He turned increasingly to drawing and printmaking, finding in the graphic arts an ideal medium for recording his unvarnished observations of the world around him and exploring his imagination.

From 1797 to 1799, Goya embarked on an ambitious printmaking project that would become his famous series *Los Caprichos* (*The Caprices*). On February 6, 1799, he placed an advertisement in the newspaper, *Diario de Madrid*, announcing this collection of eighty prints "of capricious subjects." He chose the subjects for this, his first major print series, from the "multitude of follies and blunders common in every civil society, as well as from the vulgar prejudices and lies authorized by custom, ignorance or interest."

The term "capricho" was defined by the Spanish Royal Academy as "that which is executed by the force of genius more than by observation of the rules of art." Exploring a range of themes – relationships between men and women, the affectations of the upper classes, ignorance, superstition, and witchcraft – Goya's *Caprichos* reflect this definition, asserting his imagination, demonstrating his technical skill, and flouting artistic and social conventions. Printed with pithy captions that often bear an inscrutable relationship to the images themselves, *Los Caprichos* have evaded interpretation since Goya's time.

Goya only finalized the order of *Los Caprichos* shortly before their publication. While he occasionally created short sequences of related images, the series is characterized by discontinuities of theme and technique. Rather than recreate the published order, in this exhibition the prints are displayed thematically to provide a more intimate view of Goya's evolving concept for the series, as he moved from naturalistic portrayals of





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witches to increasingly incisive and fantastic social satires, and finally to depictions of supernatural creatures whose activities mirror humans’.

Unlike paintings, prints are an inherently mobile and public medium; they operate as multiples rather than as singular, unique objects. While paintings are often commissioned by a specific patron, prints usually are not. Instead, as in Goya’s case, an artist creates them on speculation for an anonymous public. Comparatively inexpensive, prints could easily be exchanged

5. Francisco de Goya, Plate 39 from “Los Caprichos”:  
*And so this was his grandfather (Hasta su abuelo)*,  
1799/1890, aquatint, plate: 8 7/16” x 6” sheet:  
11 9/16” x 8 1/4”
6. Francisco de Goya, Plate 34 from “Los Caprichos”:  
*Sleep overcomes them (Las rinde el sueño)*,  
1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate:  
8 7/16” x 5 15/16” sheet: 11 5/8” x 8 1/4”
7. Francisco de Goya, Plate 26 from “Los Caprichos”:  
*They’ve already got a seat (Ya tienen asiento)*,  
1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate:  
8 3/8” x 5 7/8” sheet: 11 5/8” x 8 1/4”



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between individuals and across geographic boundaries. Indeed, while in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Goya was best known within Spain for his paintings, outside of the Iberian Peninsula he was best known as a printmaker.

Today, Goya's *Caprichos* are celebrated as a defining body of work by an artist whose creativity and vision pushed the techniques of the Old Masters into the modern era. Goya, however, appears to have considered the prints a commercial failure. In 1803, he offered 240 unsold first edition sets of *Los Caprichos*, along with the copper plates, to the Spanish King in exchange for a pension that would enable his son to study and travel. Despite Goya's disappointment with *Los Caprichos* as a commercial enterprise, his liberal contemporaries appreciated the prints' complexity. In 1811, for example, a professor in Cádiz wrote: "A man must be born endowed with a rare, inventive talent, have had a wide experience of life and have plumbed the depths of the human heart in order ... to compose satires like these." This exhibition features a complete sixth edition published in 1890, a testament to the enduring popularity of *Los Caprichos* since Goya's time.



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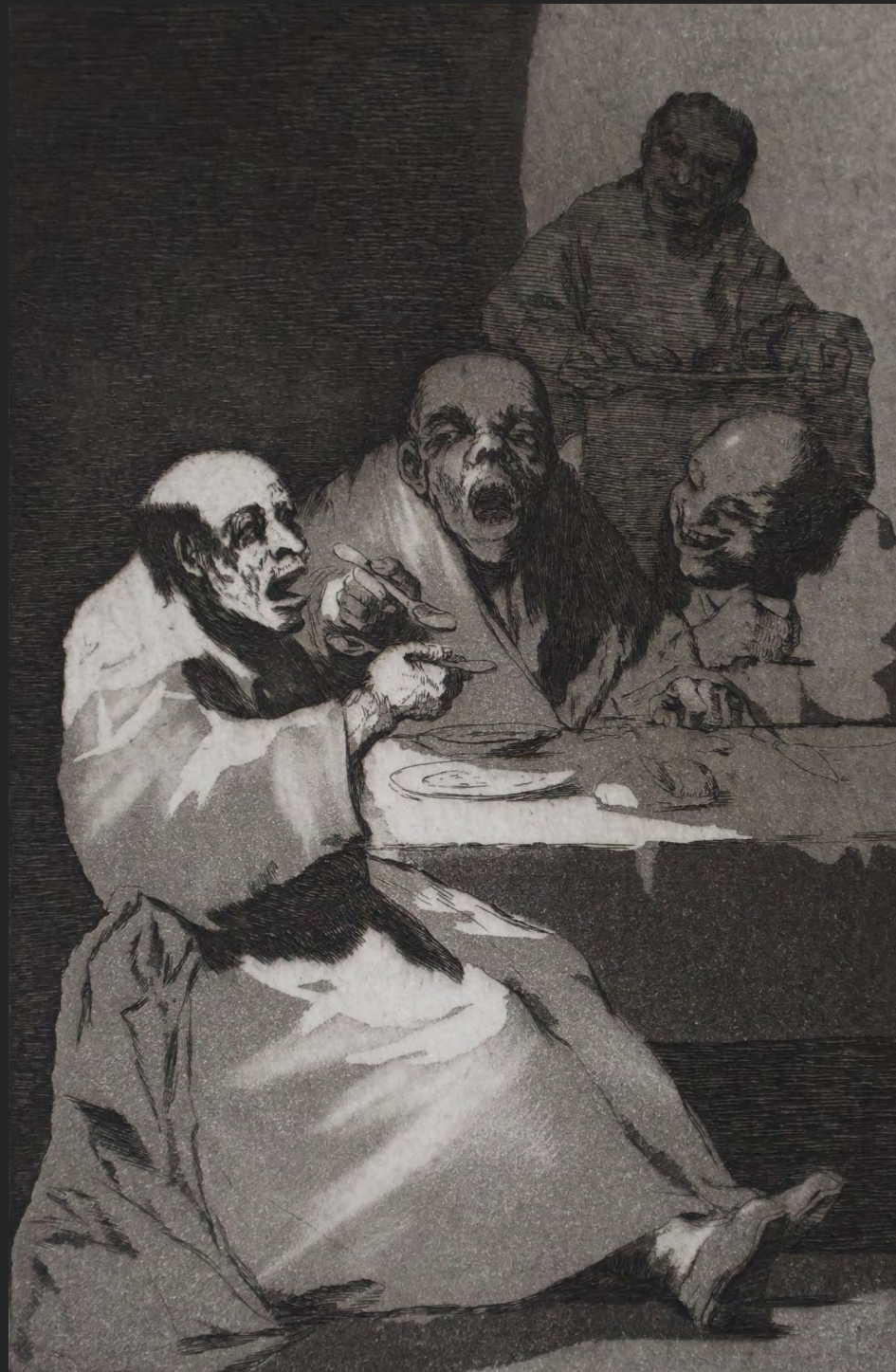
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8. Detail Francisco de Goya, Plate 19 from "Los Caprichos": All will fall (*Todos caerán*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 7/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/6"
9. Detail Francisco de Goya, Plate 19 from "Los Caprichos": All will fall (*Todos caerán*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 7/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/6"
10. Francisco de Goya, Plate 19 from "Los Caprichos": All will fall (*Todos caerán*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 7/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/6"



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11. Francisco de Goya, Plate 13 from "Los Caprichos": *They are hot* (*Estan calientes*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate 8 7/16" x 5 15/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/8"
12. Francisco de Goya, Plate 56 from "Los Caprichos": *To rise and to fall* (*Subir y bajar*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 7/6" x 5 13/16" sheet: 12 3/8" 9 3/16"
13. Francisco de Goya, Plate 51 from "Los Caprichos": *They spruce themselves up* (*Se repulen*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, burin, plate: 8 1/4" x 5 13/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 1/4"





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## ABOUT THE CURATOR



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Dr. Alexandra Letvin is the Duane Wilder, Class of 1951, Associate Curator of European Art at the Princeton University Art Museum, where she guides the Museum's program in European painting and sculpture from the medieval period to 1945. A specialist in Spanish art, she was the curator of *Goya: A Lifetime of Graphic Invention* (Meadows Museum, 2014), which featured complete first-edition sets of Goya's four major print series, totaling over 200 works.

14. Francisco de Goya, Plate 72 from "Los Caprichos": *You will not escape* (*No te escaparàs*), 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, plate: 8 3/8" x 5" sheet: 11 5/8" x 8 5/16"
15. Dr. Alexandra Letvin, photographed by Tanya Rosen-Jones





FRONT Detail Francisco de Goya, *Plate 43 from "Los Caprichos": The sleep of reason produces monsters (En sueño de la razón produce monstruos)*, 1799/1890, etching, aquatint on wove paper, plate: 8 1/2" x 6" sheet: 11 15/16" x 8 3/8"

BACK Detail Francisco de Goya, *Plate 50 from "Los Caprichos": The chinchillas (Los chinchillas)*, 1799/1890, etching, burnished aquatint, burin, plate: 8" x 5 13/16" sheet: 11 9/16" x 8 3/16"

## EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

### Number of Works

80 prints

### Curator

Dr. Alexandra Letvin

### Organized by

International Arts & Artists,  
Washington, DC

### Requirements

Moderate security;  
2,000 - 2,500 square feet

### Shipping

Exhibitors pay outgoing shipping  
costs within the contiguous U.S.

### Booking Period

12 weeks

### Tour

July 2026 – June 2030

### Contact

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