



# PRESS RELEASE

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## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### *Goya's Last Works*

## First Exhibition in North America to Focus on Final Period of Goya's Working Life

*February 22, 2006, through May 14, 2006*

Goya's luminous 1824 portrait of a woman known as María Martínez de Puga has always held a special place in the artist's oeuvre as one of his most direct and candid works, radical in its simplicity. Acquired by Henry Clay Frick



*Portrait of a Lady (María Martínez de Puga?)*, 1824. Oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 23 in. (80 x 58.4 cm). The Frick Collection, New York. Photography by Richard di Liberto

in 1914, the painting is the inspiration for the upcoming special exhibition, *Goya's Last Works*, the first in the United States to concentrate exclusively on the final phase of the artist's long career, primarily on the period of his voluntary exile in Bordeaux from 1824 to 1828. The exhibition will present over fifty objects including paintings, miniatures on ivory, lithographs, and drawings borrowed from public and private European and American collections. These works reveal the vitality and irrepressible creativity of an artist who, at age seventy-eight, in frail health and long deaf, pulled up roots in Madrid, his home for the preceding half century, and started over in France.

His final works have little in common with those of his contemporaries in France and in Spain and had almost no impact on the generations that immediately followed; in fact, they remained little known until the early twentieth century. It is only in retrospect that we can appreciate the extent to which a painting such as the Frick's *María Martínez de Puga* seems to anticipate the stark modernist style of Manet. The Frick is the exclusive venue for *Goya's Last Works*, organized by **Jonathan Brown**, Carroll and Milton Petrie Professor of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and **Susan Grace Galassi**, Curator of The Frick Collection. On public view from February 22 through May 14, 2006 in the Special Exhibition Galleries and Cabinet, it will be accompanied by a fully illustrated, scholarly catalogue and public programs.

Principal funding for the exhibition has been provided by the Robert Lehman Foundation, with major support from Merrill Lynch; Melvin R. Seiden in honor of Jonathan Brown and Susan Grace Galassi; The Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Eberstadt; The Samuel H. Kress Foundation; and The Getty Grant Program of The J. Paul Getty Trust. The catalogue has been generously underwritten by Lawrence and Julie Salander and made possible, in part, by Furthermore: A program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund. Support for scholarly programming has been provided by the Arthur Ross Foundation. Additional support has been provided by The Helen Clay Frick Foundation and the Fellows of The Frick Collection. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Comments Susan Grace Galassi, “The work that Goya created for his own pleasure in Bordeaux has long been appreciated by scholars of Spanish art and artists, but is little known to the public. Our goal is to bring this forward-looking final chapter of a great artist’s work to light in all of its diverse aspects.” Adds Jonathan Brown, “In the final four years of life, Goya confronted the challenges of old age, ill health, and family conflict with paintbrushes and crayons in hand. This twilight period is illuminated by innovative works that record what he saw, what he felt, and what he imagined.”

## **LAST OF THE OLD MASTERS AND FIRST OF THE MODERNS**

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746–1828) has been referred to as the last of the old masters and the first of the moderns. He was born near Zaragoza, the capital of Aragon. His father was a master gilder and his mother a member of the minor aristocracy. Goya received his early training with the local artist José Luzán. By 1774 he was settled in Madrid, where he eventually rose to the post of Painter to the King, serving in various capacities under the last three Bourbon monarchs (Charles III, Charles IV, and Ferdinand VII), as well as Napoleon Bonaparte’s brother Joseph, who ruled during the French occupation of 1808–13. For his royal patrons Goya produced tapestry cartoons depicting vivid scenes of everyday life, religious paintings and frescoes, and official portraits, to which he brought his unerring eye for character analysis. He also painted inventive portraits in an English manner of the men and women of the Spanish Enlightenment, among them the Duke of Osuna, whose image from the 1790s was acquired by the Trustees of The Frick Collection. Through contact with his sitters, Goya absorbed the Liberal ideas flooding into Spain from France and England.

A catastrophic illness in 1792–93 left the forty-three-year-old Goya totally deaf for the rest of his life. His work now took a more inward turn, and he began to delve more deeply into his imagination, exploring such subjects as superstition, dreams, madness, and sadism. In 1799 he announced the sale of his prodigiously inventive series of etchings *Los Caprichos* (The Caprices), a satire on people’s follies and vices, which breathes the spirit of the Enlightenment. The last decade of the eighteenth century and early years of the nineteenth century were marked by great political instability and antagonism between progressive and conservative forces. Napoleon’s invasion of Spain in 1808 and the abdications of Charles IV and his son Ferdinand VII initiated five years of French occupation

and continual patriot resistance. Goya commemorated the horrific events of the Peninsula War with his series of prints, *The Disasters of War*, begun in 1810, a searing indictment of man's brutality to man. With the retreat of the French in 1813, many of Joseph Bonaparte's sympathizers left Spain, a large number of them settling in Bordeaux. A constitutional monarchy had been declared in 1812, but with the return of Ferdinand VII in 1814, the constitution was abolished, and a period of absolutism and repression followed.

In 1819 the artist, then seventy-two and widowed for some years, sought a more secluded life and moved from Madrid to the Quinta del Sordo, a house on the outskirts of the city, a transition that marks the beginning of his late period. Living with him were his much younger companion, Leocadia Zorrilla y Weiss, and her children. Toward the end of the year, Goya suffered another near-fatal illness and commemorated the experience in his *Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta* of 1820, one of his most original and moving works. The artist portrays himself as pale and lifeless, supported on the arm of his young physician. A kind of secular *ex-voto*, the painting bears a lengthy inscription in which Goya thanks his friend for saving his life.



*Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta*, 1820, Oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 31 1/8 in. (115.7 x 79.1 cm), The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund

A military coup in 1820 reinstated the constitution of 1812 and rendered the monarchy impotent, and a three-year Liberal interlude and period of optimism followed. Goya recovered his health, and his renewed energies are immediately manifest in his portrait of the architect Tiburcio Pérez y Cuervo (below, left). Goya captured his young friend in vigorous strokes of his brush and palette knife in subdued tones of black, gray, and white, with a touch of red. Standing before us in his shirtsleeves, glasses in hand, Pérez embodies the spirit of a new era in his casual stance and stylish disarray. The restrained palette and sense of immediacy that Goya achieves initiate his final style in portraiture. He painted other portraits between 1820 and 1823 and in a burst of creative activity, covered the walls of the Quinta del Sordo with fourteen phantasmagoric scenes known as the Black Paintings. Ferdinand VII returned to power in 1823, letting loose a brutal purge of Liberals, who fled to France in legions to escape persecution. Although Goya's political sympathies were with the Liberals, he was treated with generosity by the king and was granted permission to take the waters in Plombières in France for his health.



*Don Tiburcio Pérez y Cuervo, the Architect*, 1820, Oil on canvas, 40 1/4 x 32 in. (102.2 x 81.3 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.242), Photograph ©1988 The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Distrustful of the situation, the artist took advantage of the leave to join his friends in the thriving Spanish expatriate community in Bordeaux, where he spent the last four years of his life.

## THE ARTIST MOVES TO FRANCE

Goya arrived in Bordeaux in late June 1824, "deaf, old, clumsy, and weak, and without knowing a word of French and without bringing a servant (which no one needs more than he), and so content and so desirous of seeing the

world,” as a compatriot reported. Three days later, Goya was off to Paris, where he spent the summer. He explored the city and undoubtedly looked at works on view by Ingres, thirty-four years his junior, and Delacroix, who owned some of Goya’s prints. There is no record of his having met them or his reactions to their work. As a gift for a Spanish Liberal expatriate and businessman, Joaquín María de Ferrer (who also commissioned featured portraits by the artist), Goya painted a small, powerful bullfight that emphasizes the brutal, sacrificial aspects of the spectacle. In late September, Goya settled in Bordeaux and was joined by Leocadia Weiss and her children, who remained with him until his death. (His legitimate family, made up of his son and heir, Javier, his daughter-in-law, and his grandson, stayed in Madrid; the two families would later clash over Goya’s estate.)



*Maja and Celestina*, 1824–25, Carbon black and watercolor on ivory, 2 1/8 x 2 1/8 in. (5.4 x 5.4 cm), Private collection, Photograph ©1994 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Photography by Robert Lorenzson

Goya’s first sitter in Bordeaux was the poet and playwright Leandro Fernández de Moratín, one of his closest comrades, whose piquant letters to friends back home provide evocative details of the painter’s life in the cosmopolitan seaport. As is characteristic of the portraits of this period, the poet’s generous form is arranged in a simple composition, with an emphasis on silhouette and set against a neutral ground. Painted in somber tones and freely brushed, the work focuses on the inner spirit of the man as reflected in his thoughtful, melancholic expression. Goya painted other portraits in Bordeaux, mainly of his expatriate friends, but, at eighty, he also was eager to take risks and explore new media. In a letter to Joaquín María de Ferrer,

Goya described some of his recent experiments and added: “You should thank me for these few bad words because I have no eyesight, pulse, pen or ink. I lack everything and the only thing I have in excess is willpower.” The painter was referring to his exploration of the art of miniature painting during the winter of 1824–25. Goya’s improvised technique and subject matter have little in common with conventional miniatures. He covered a tiny ivory chip with carbon black and let a drop of water fall on it to create shapes, which he then developed into figures with touches of watercolor; then he scratched lines into the surface with a sharp implement. Perhaps an old procuress and her young charge would emerge, as in *Maja and Celestina* (above), or a man delousing himself. These marvelous little improvisations share the subject matter of the *Caprichos*; nine of them have been brought together in this exhibition.

Lithography had only been invented at the end of the eighteenth century, and Goya had tried it without great success before leaving Madrid. With the Bordeaux lithographer Cyprien Gaulon, whose superb portrait is in the show, Goya now mastered the technique, creating the famous series of four large prints depicting scenes of bullfighting known as *The Bulls of Bordeaux*. As with his miniatures, he adapted the technique to his own ends. He placed the lithographic stone upright on an easel and created the scene with a blunt crayon and then scraped away areas to make highlights.



*Dibersión de España (Spanish Entertainment)*, 1825, Crayon lithograph with scraper on white paper, 11 7/8 x 16 3/8 in. (30.2 x 41.5 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.60.3), Photograph ©1994 The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The furious energy of Goya's late style is evident in such works as *Spanish Entertainment from the Bulls of Bordeaux*, a scene of foolhardy amateurs play at being toreros.

Nowhere is Goya's irrepressible verve more evident than in his drawings, the favorite medium of his last years. The largest section of the exhibition is devoted to works from his two final private albums. These personal (as opposed to preparatory) drawings, which Goya had begun to create not long after losing his hearing in the early 1790s, have been described as a form of "talking to himself"; in them he put down his unedited thoughts, observations, and fantasies. In Bordeaux, Goya switched from the more precise medium of pen, brush, and ink to greasy black crayon, undoubtedly inspired by his work in lithography. This soft, forgiving medium allowed for greater breadth of execution and velvety tonal effects and may have compensated for the artist's diminishing eyesight and



*Feria en Bordeaux (Fair in Bordeaux) (The Female Giant)*, Album H. 39, c. 1826, Black crayon on paper, 7 5/8 x 5 7/8 in. (19.3 x 15.0 cm), The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Gift of Gertrude Weyhe Dennis in honor of Felice Stampfle on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Morgan Library and the 50th anniversary of the Association of Fellows, 1999.20, © The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 2004

manual dexterity. On his walks through the city, Goya took note of its singular inhabitants, such as legless old beggars or fairground figures, as seen at left in *Feria en Bordeaux (Fair in Bordeaux) (The Female Giant)*, or entertaining characters, such as a reckless roller skater. His style is energetic and cartoonish rather than classical, with bodies in exaggerated poses and states of emotion. He also returned to past themes, such as madness and witchcraft, and made puzzle



*Man on a Swing*, Album H. 58, 1824–28, Black crayon on paper, 7 1/2 x 5 7/8 in. (19.0 x 15.1 cm), The Hispanic Society of America, New York. Photography by Roberto Sandoval, Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York

pictures in which the meaning is left deliberately ambiguous. Works such as *Man on a Swing* (right) directly address the leitmotif that underlies all of his last works: the gravity-defying forces of creativity, humor, and perseverance against the entropy of old age—the final testament of one who had seen it all and was, in his own words, “still learning.”

### THREE FREE PUBLIC LECTURES (SEATING FOR LECTURES IS LIMITED AND UNRESERVED)

**Date:** Wednesday, March 1, 2006, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Janis A. Tomlinson, Director, University Museums, University of Delaware  
**Title:** *The View from Bordeaux: Looking Back on Goya's Life*

In 1824, at age seventy-eight, the Spanish artist Francisco de Goya settled in Bordeaux, where he remained until his death four years later. In this lecture, 1824 serves as a pivotal point from which to look back on the evolution of Goya's life and art, and also to consider how this evolution led to the creation of the works he produced while in Bordeaux.

**Date:** Wednesday, April 26, 2006, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Priscilla E. Muller, Curator Emerita of the Museum, The Hispanic Society of America

**Title:** *Prelude to Exile: Goya's Theater(s) of the Absurd*

Dr. Muller will examine Goya's Black Paintings and his series of etchings known as the Disparates (or Proverbios), works the artist left behind in Madrid upon emigrating to France.

**Date:** Tuesday, May 2, 6:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Juliet Wilson-Bareau, independent scholar

**Title:** *"Plumbing the Depths of the Human Heart" in Goya's Graphic Work*

Drawings are the most authentic, untrammled expression of the artist's thoughts and feelings. This lecture will examine Goya's late drawings, which sum up a lifetime's experience while still exploring new paths.

## CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue (280 pages) published by Yale University Press. It includes two major essays and entries on the works in the show. The first essay, by Jonathan Brown, retells the story of Goya's eventful late years, when, plagued by ill health, displaced by exile, and preoccupied with family matters, he continued to make remarkable art. The second essay, by Susan Grace Galassi, sets the scene of Goya's last years in the rich historical and cultural milieu of Bordeaux within a circle of expatriate friends. The book will be available in softcover (\$45) and hardcover (\$60) editions in the Museum Shop of the Frick, on the institution's Web site ([www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)), and by phone (212) 288-0700.

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** (212) 288-0700

**Website:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org)

**Where:** 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

**Hours: open six days a week:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Admission:** \$15; senior citizens \$10; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

**PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection, and those under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult.**

**Subway:** #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

**Tour Information:** included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Museum Shop:** the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

**Group Visits:** Please call (212) 288-0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing, or Geetha Natarajan, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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