

# Instinct and morals

Dalí, Goya, Picasso  
Graphic work

13 March - 25 May 08

## Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

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### Timetable

1 October - 31 March  
Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 20 h.  
Saturday: 11 - 20 h.

1 April - 30 September  
Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 21 h.  
Saturday: 11 - 21 h.

Sunday: 10 - 15 h.  
Closed on Monday.  
Holidays: Consult with Centre

### Access

Avda. Américo Vespucio nº2  
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

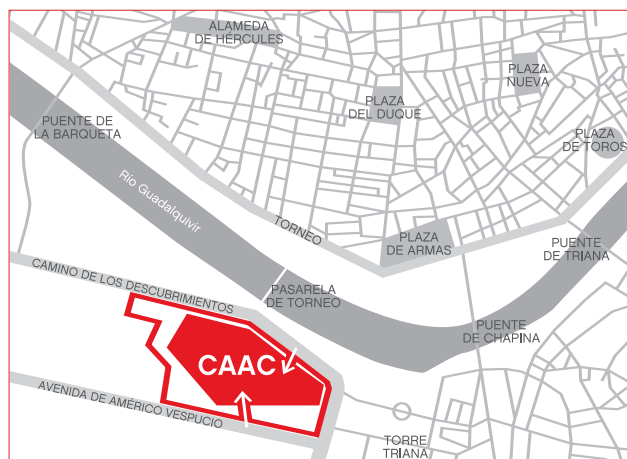
### Transport

C1 and C2 buses

Tickets sales until 30 minutes before closing

### Library

Monday to Friday (except holidays): 9 - 14 h.



With the collaboration of:  
Biblioteca de Catalunya  
and Museu Picasso, Barcelona

Cover: Dalí, Les chonts de Mardonor (detail).

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Picasso, *Suite Vollard*, 1933



Dalí, *Les Chants de Maldoror*, 1934



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### A selection of engravings from Goya's *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, Picasso's *Suite Vollard* and Dalí's *Les Chants de Maldoror*.

When art descends into the hell of the human spirit, the animal nature of being makes itself felt in a dialogue of the deaf between instinct and morals.

The brutality and savagery of instincts bereft of all morals were reflected by Francisco de Goya in his series of engravings, especially *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (1810-1815). In his *Suite Vollard* (1931-1937), Pablo Picasso expressed carnal and creative eroticism in the disguise of classical mythology, and, in 1934, Salvador Dalí illustrated the animal aggressiveness of language as the incarnation of evil in *Lautréamont's Les Chants de Maldoror* (1868).

In *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, Goya created a critical illustration and social chronicle of the cruelties committed during the Spanish War of Independence in the form of 82 engravings done using various techniques such as etching, aquatint, dry-point, and line engraving. For the first time, an artist portrayed the acts of war not as something heroic, but as a social disaster, placing the human being at the forefront of reality, whose fatalism seems to lead man to inevitable destruction. Goya portrayed terror and fear, hunger and torture, human misery and bitterness faced with the suffering and individualisation of death. The last scenes in the series, known as the "emphatic caprices", denounce the political and ideological attitudes that permitted the corruption and injustice of the deeds related and the return to the absolutist restoration in Spain. The series shown here was printed by the Calcografía Nacional [National Printing House] in 1937 in order to obtain funds for the Spanish Republic.

Picasso was commissioned to etch the *Suite Vollard* by his agent Ambroise Vollard and it consists of 100 engravings. They are dominated by a purity of line provided especially by the techniques of etching, line engraving, and dry point, although some were also done using sugar aquatint. The series develops four thematic groups: the sculptor's

workshop, the Minotaur, Rembrandt and the battle of love.

Picasso as carnal man and demiurge confronts woman, who appears naked as an object of desire and representation at a critical moment of their amorous acquaintance. In 1927, he had met the teenage Marie-Thérèse Walter, who became his lover when he was still married to Olga Koklova. His relationship with Marie-Thérèse lasted until 1935, when Dora Maar entered the artist's life. The *Suite Vollard* develops and describes amorous passion through the myths of the Minotaur and also Pygmalion as regards the relations between sculptor and model. It is a return to an archaic, Hellenic, classical, Mediterranean Greece, but it contains a restrained passion reflected, for example, in the *Woman-bullfighter*, an etching which, as in a mythological rape, immodestly shows the orgiastic ecstasy of love and death between a bull and a woman.

In 1934, Salvador Dalí was commissioned by Albert Skira to illustrate *Les Chants de Maldoror* by Isidore Ducasse (Montevideo, 1846 - Paris, 1870), Count de Lautréamont, the "damned", marginalised poet, who died young in strange circumstances, already become a myth of the amorality and the automatism proposed in the First Manifesto of surrealism in 1924. His aggressive writing and nervous poetry built up a literary machine in which the word sought action through impulsive,



Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, 1810

aggressive acts of language, a reading machine that devours time. The protagonist, Maldoror, is the hero incarnating the cruelty of the spirit of evil, that "*mal d'aurore*" (evil of dawn, whose equivalent pronunciation in French is *maldoror*) that has children and young people fall into his psychological and physical claws. This is the greatest masterpiece engraved by Dalí, who described the effects of the malign spirit on the body in the book's 42 etchings. He represents an aggressive, stark, devouring reality, that tears the flesh from the bones and the viscera in scenes of cannibal desire, castration and self-mutilation, that find the perfect machine of love and death in the scene of Millet's *Angelus*.

Three sequences in which instinct and morals struggle to break their inner barriers and exorcise the malign spirit underlying the human being, not from the side of good, but from the darker, more evil side, like a homeopathic cure.

The engravings from the series *Los Desastres de la Guerra* by Goya and *Les Chants de Maldoror* by Salvador Dalí have been loaned by the Biblioteca de Catalunya in Barcelona, while those of Picasso's *Suite Vollard* are on loan from the Museu Picasso in Barcelona.

