

# Fatal Consequences

## The Chapman Brothers & Goya's *Disasters of War*

14 October 2014 - 8 February 2015  
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge | Free admission

A glimpse into the Chapman Brothers journey of ideas through war, the genesis of life, artistic creation and death has gone on display through 100 remarkable and intricate prints, giving a unique insight into the Chapmans as printmakers.

Now on display at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, the exhibition *Fatal Consequences* explores the extraordinary ways in which Jake & Dinos Chapman have used printmaking as part of their creative process. At the heart of the exhibition is their series *The Disasters of War*, which began by adapting Francisco Goya's etchings of the cruelty and suffering of the Spanish Peninsular War (1808-14).

For the first time different versions of *The Disasters of War* and related Chapman prints have been brought together to show the way the images were adapted and ideas evolved in different printing methods, including white on black, black on white, and, most intriguingly, a version printed on pages from a child's picture book. A few sets were even modified again by hand-colouring. These are shown alongside eight prints from Francesco Goya's original series.

Jake & Dinos Chapman's prints *The Disasters of War* took ideas from Goya's print series of the same name and recycled, reinvented and extended the imagery and horrors with a cornucopia of ideas from later conflicts – particularly the Second World War and the Nazi holocaust – and from contemporary culture. But they also go beyond imagery of war, drawing on other areas of interest, such as Symbolism and Surrealism.

The set was first printed in white ink on black paper, but the Chapman's manipulated the imagery and impact by printing a second version in white ink on black paper, and then made a third version on pages from a child's colouring book, with chilling and sometimes comic effect. The set was commissioned by Charles Booth-Clibborn and published under his imprint, The Paragon Press, in London in 1999. The etchings were proofed and printed at Hope (Sufferance) Press, London.

*Fatal Consequences* is part of a sequence of exhibitions at the Fitzwilliam Museum marking the centenary of the First World War, and in this case also marking the 200th anniversary of the Spanish Peninsular War. Goya worked on the plates for the original powerful series *The Disasters of War* (*Los Desastres de la Guerra*) from 1810 to 1820, but due to the political sensitivity of the subject matter (critical of the restored Bourbon monarchy) it was not published during his lifetime. He wrote his own title for the series on an album of proofs given to a friend: *Fatal consequences of Spain's bloody war with Bonaparte, and other emphatic caprices*. His attitude is also clear from the series of caustic, sometimes ironic or nihilistic titles that he gave to the prints, matching the savagery of the images. He ignored major battles of the Spanish Peninsular War and depicted the anonymous incidents of cruelty suffered by the Spanish people as a consequence of French invasion.

Before making prints based on Goya, the Chapman Brothers had made sculptures derived from Goya's *Disasters of War* – notably *Great deeds against the dead* (1994), which used shop-window mannequins to recreate one of Goya's scenes. This image and others from Goya's set recur in various mutated



The Disasters of War, 1999  
Jake & Dinos Chapman (born 1966 & 1962)  
Etching printed in black on white paper,  
Collection of Charles Booth-Clibborn



The Disasters of War, 1999  
Jake & Dinos Chapman (born 1966 & 1962)  
Etching printed in white on black paper,  
Collection of Charles Booth-Clibborn



The Disasters of War, 1999  
Jake & Dinos Chapman (born 1966 & 1962)  
Etching printed in black on white paper and coloured  
by hand  
Collection of Charles Booth-Clibborn

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guises in the Chapmans' prints as the artists raise the stakes – or twist the knife – for today's audience. Two of the Chapmans' mannequins and a print showing how they relate to the *Disasters of War* prints are on display in the concurrent *Silent Partners* exhibition.

In the plates where they kept closest to Goya's images, Jake & Dinos Chapman chose mostly subjects in which Goya dealt with the direct horrors of the war against the French, rather than the prints in which he depicted the famine that ravaged Madrid in 1811-12, or the plates of political and social allegory.

The artists widened the scope of their series beyond an interrogation of Goya's prints, and the references to theatres and horrors of war go beyond the Spanish Peninsular War that Goya had witnessed, taking in more recent conflicts and war crimes to such an extent that the Nazi swastika is one of the most pervasive symbols in the set. There are conscious but non-specific references to other series of war prints, such as Jacques Callot's *The great miseries of war* (1633) and Otto Dix's *The war* (1924). Where the Chapmans' series continues to echo Goya's is in the range of tone – from horror to satire to allegory to scenes of great affective power.

The 83 prints of *The Disasters of War* which are on display were bought by the Fitzwilliam Museum in 2010 with the help of the Art Fund and the V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund.

*Fatal Consequences: The Chapman Brothers & Goya's Disasters of War* is at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge from 14 October 2014 to 8 February 2015. Admission is free.

-Ends-

**For further information and images contact the Press Office:**

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#### Notes to editors:

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB  
FREE ADMISSION

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00  
Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00

CLOSED: 24-26 & 31 December, 1 January and Good Friday.

#### The Chapman brothers

Jake Chapman (born 1966) and his brother Dinos (born 1962) have worked as a collaborative team since the early 1990s. They rose to prominence as part of the Young British Artists movement in the *Sensation* exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1997, and were shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2003. Their first major work was a 1/32 scale model based on the 83 etchings in Goya's print series *The Disasters of War* (1993). They have repeatedly returned to Goya ('like a dog returns to its vomit') and also to Nazi atrocities as themes – the latter in the vast *mise-en-scène* with 10,000 tiny figures entitled *Hell* (1999-2000), which fed into the *Disasters of War* etchings. Their work can be visually tantalizing and revolting, witty and subversive.

The exhibition contains 108 works: 100 by Jake & Dinos Chapman and eight by Goya.

#### Note on technique and printing

Jake & Dinos Chapman's *Disasters of War* was created in 28 days by drawing on the plates with a variety of etching techniques (hardground, softground and aquatint), and sometimes incising the metal directly with drypoint or a drill. Proofing on different coloured papers led to printing three different versions: 15 sets were printed in black ink on white paper (300gsm Somerset Textured); 10 sets were printed in white ink on thin black Mingei *chine collé* (stuck onto white Somerset Textured); 4 sets were printed on pages cut from a children's colouring book (*The big fun colouring book*).

**Founded in 1816 the Fitzwilliam Museum** is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and lead partner for the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Major Partner Museum programme, funded by The Arts Council. The Fitzwilliam's collections explore world history and art from antiquity to the present day. It houses over half a million objects from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts, to medieval illuminated manuscripts, masterpiece paintings from the Renaissance to the 21st century, world class prints and drawings, and outstanding collections of applied arts, ceramics, coins, and Asian arts. The Fitzwilliam presents a wide ranging public programme of major exhibitions, events and education activities, and is an internationally recognised institute of learning, research and conservation.

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