

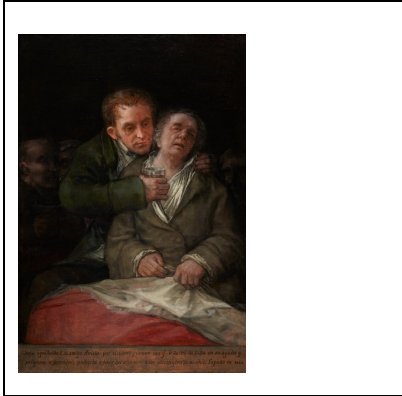
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## Title of Object

Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta

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## Photo of Object (optional)



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## Object Information

**Artist:** Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes

**Country:** Spain

**Date of Object:** 1820

**File Created:** 11/15/2016

**Accession Number:** 52.14

**Author of File:** Jeanne Lutz

**Material/Medium:** oil on canvas

**Reviewer of File:** Kara ZumBahlen

**Department:** Paintings

**Last Updated/Reviewed:** 7/11/2017

**Culture:** Spanish

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## Tour Topics

Betrayal, Love\_Honor\_and\_Betrayal, Group 5, Highlights 1600-1850, relationships, artist/patron, stories, emotion, friendship, Romanticism, drink, gratitude, Enlightenment

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## Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

1. Describe what you see that tells about the subject and the scene.
2. What are the ideas or feelings being communicated? What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What do you think is the work's purpose?
4. Who would you like to honor by putting him or her in a self-portrait with you? Why?

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## Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)

At the age of 73, Goya fell dangerously ill and was administered back to health by his friend and physician Dr. Arrieta. In this painting, Goya chose to show himself in the grim throes of sickness: pale, ragged, perhaps delirious, and slumped heavily against the doctor. And the doctor, rather than recoil at Goya's rancid breath or the possibility of infection, leans in, his cheek against Goya's ear, as if to whisper encouragement. The doctor's left hand gently grasps Goya's collar and nightshirt, steadying him while he offers medicine or perhaps water with his right hand.

The painting is an intimate and generous tribute to Dr. Arrieta. Just as the doctor demonstrated his humanity in nursing Goya back to health, Goya responded in kind: he rendered himself in the worst possible light and his friend in the best. He positioned Arrieta's face in the center of the canvas and painted his features in warm, luminous tones that stand out from the surrounding darkness and eerie figures in the background. While Goya's own eyes are blurry, Arrieta's are clear and focused, his embrace is firm. Reliable. Even heroic. It is a stunning and personal tribute. We see the helplessness that accompanies serious illness and the dependency on the kindness of others. We see how much gratitude and love Goya felt for Dr. Arrieta and how he honored him with this painting.

Goya recovered to live another eight years and produce many more pictures, including this gift of thanks for his doctor. (artsimia)

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## Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)

Goya studied painting in Rome. He got his start creating designs for tapestries to decorate the walls of royal palaces. Before long, he was named painter to the king. He served three rulers, painting many portraits of the royal family and other people he met at court. He was commissioned to be a court painter for Spain under King Charles III and Charles IV. The remarkable thing about Goya's court paintings is that though they are considered masterpieces, they were not painted in a way to flatter members of the court. (Object in Focus, Teaching the Arts)

This is Goya's last self-portrait. He is considered the most important Spanish artist of late 18th and early 19th centuries. Throughout his long career, he was a commentator and chronicler of his era. Goya is often referred to as both the last of the Old Masters and the first of the Moderns. (Wikipedia)

Regarding the drink being offered to Goya, "In the Age of Reason, doctors began to supplant priests at sickbeds. Is Goya alluding to the latter's chalice of Communion wine with this glass of red medicine? He clearly puts his faith in the good doctor's tonic." "Scholars argue about whether the shadowy figures in the background are Goya's servants and a visiting priest, or demonic spirits populating his feverish dreams." (ArtStories)

The history of the subject matter: "The Ars Moriendi, or "The Art of Dying," first appeared during the Black Death plagues and offered advice on how to die well. It was full of graphic illustrations, including an angel counseling a dying man at his bedside while demons struggled for a last chance at his soul. Versions of the book were popular across Europe for centuries after it first appeared in the 1400s, especially in Goya's homeland of Spain. Goya clearly borrowed some elements from the Ars Moriendi for the last of his many self-portraits—an ailing man in his bed, supported by a savior (here a doctor, not an angel). In this context, it is hard not to view the shadowy figures as demonic spirits. By inscribing his thanks to Dr. Arrieta across the bottom of the painting, Goya evoked another type of devotional image,

the ex voto. Normally an ex voto is made as an offering to a saint or divinity in gratitude for answering a prayer, with words of thanks penned beneath a picture illustrating the trouble.” (ArtStories, see prop photos below.)

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### Current Mia Label Information (optional)

As court painter to both Charles III and Charles IV of Spain, Goya achieved considerable fame as a portraitist. Self-Portrait with Dr. Arrieta, the last of his many self-portraits, was executed late in his life. In 1819, Goya had fallen seriously ill and his doctor, Eugenio Garc’a Arrieta, nursed him back to health. On recovering, he presented Arrieta with this painting which shows the physician ministering to his patient. The words at the bottom read in translation, Goya gives thanks to his friend Arrieta for the expert care with which he saved his life from an acute and dangerous illness which he suffered at the close of the year 1819 when he was seventy-three years old. He painted it in 1820. This inscription gives the canvas the look of an ex-voto, a type of religious painting still popular in Spain, which expresses gratitude for deliverance from a calamity.

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### Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Goya, on Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco\\_Goya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Goya)

Mia label

Mia ArtStories: <https://artstories.artsmia.org/#/o/1226>

Object in Focus, <https://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/goyas-self-portrait-with-dr-arrieta/>

Matthew Welch, "Understanding Art’s Alchemy," in *The Art of Wonder: Inspiration, Creativity, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art 2015*, ed. Jeff Johnson (Minneapolis: Books and Projects LLC 2015), 153-154.

Prop idea, *Ars Moriendi, Art of Dying*, Germany, 1466:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbc.2009rosen0020/?sp=30>

