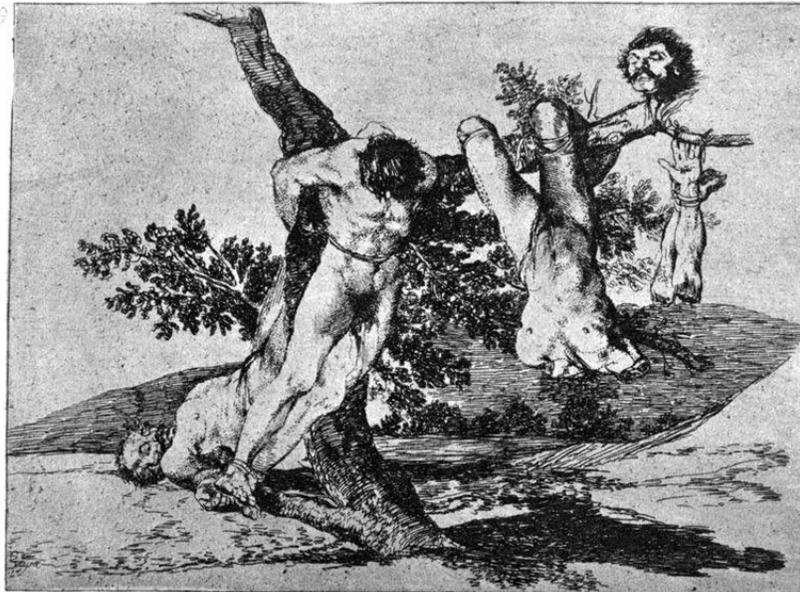


Witnessing Goya's *Disasters of War*: Aesthetics, Testimony, Critique

Lecture by Michael Iarocci (UC Berkeley)

MONDAY OCT. 13, 2014 at 2:00pm

McCune Conference Room (6020 HSSB), Interdisciplinary Humanities Center



*Grande hazaña! Con muertos!*

Across a broad range of engagements with Goya's work, the *Disasters* are understood today as a powerful exercise in visual testimony, an attempt to bear witness to the truth of war in a series of images that uncannily anticipate the modern photojournalism of armed conflict. This paper aims to reshape this common understanding of Goya's work by arguing that the lasting legacy of *The Disasters of War* is not so much its ostensibly straightforward, unflinching, quasi-documentary representation of war's horrors as it is the artistic complexity of the artist's graphical and lexical meditations on his subject-matter. Drawing on philosophical aesthetics and the phenomenology of the visual arts, Prof. Iarocci develops an account of Goya's prints as examples of *aesthetic witnessing*, a paradoxical form of testimony that aims to convey urgent truths while at the same time foregrounding art's fundamental untruth; that is, its illusion, its artifice, and its remove from the real world. In turn, this quasi-modernist turn points to the broader context of late eighteenth-century aesthetics from which Goya's art emerged.

Michael Iarocci is Associate Professor of Spanish and Acting Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Berkeley. His research and teaching focus on the art, literature and culture of modern Spain (18th-21st centuries).. His most recent book is the critically acclaimed *Properties of Modernity: Romantic Spain, Modern Europe, and the Legacies of Empire* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2006).

Co-sponsored by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Orfalea Center for Global & International Studies, the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, the English Department, the Comparative Literature Program and the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program. The talk is free and open to the public.