

COLNAGHI



Ignacio Zuloaga,
Basque villager having a snack, 1935

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IGNACIO ZULOAGA

(Élbar 1870 – Madrid 1945)

ALDEANDO VASCO MERENDANDO, 1935

oil on canvas

152 x 141 cm; 59 7/8 x 55 1/2 in.

Exhibition History

Venice, 1938, n° 15.

London, 1938-1939, n° 10.

Madrid, 1941.

Barcelona, 1942.

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Ignacio Zuloaga was one of the most important Spanish painters of the 20th century. He was born to a reputed family of artisans, and received a thorough artistic education from his infancy, training in the workshop of his father, a famed damascene artisan, son of the better-known Eusebio Zuloaga. His life is characterised by the ceaseless search for knowledge and inspiration which would lead him to travel and constantly change residency. In 1887, he visited the Museo del Prado, in order to discover the great masters of Spanish painting, El Greco, Velázquez, Ribera, Zurbarán and Goya, whose work caused a significant impact on him. In 1889 he resided six months in Rome, where he was immersed in renaissance culture, and then in Segovia, location of his uncle Daniel's important ceramics workshop. A year later, he settled in Paris, where he attended the drawing school La Palette. His circle, formed of numerous French painters such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Jean-François Raffaëlli or Maxime Dethomas –and Spanish ones such as Santiago Rusiñol and Ramón Casas, exerted a notable influence on his style and his ideas of naturalism.

In search of new stimuli, he travelled to Andalucía in 1892, attracted by the world of the gitanos (gypsies) and their traditions. However, for economic reasons, he moved shortly afterwards to London, where he started to realise portraits of high society that would strongly mark his career. In England, he came into contact with the work of James Whistler, whose style was added to the influences of the artist. With the arrival of the 20th century, the work of Zuloaga gained stature on a European level: the artistic press published his work and he won various international prizes. From 1909 the artist started his tour of the new continent, first exhibiting in the Hispanic Society of New York, and continuing in Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Saint Louis and other American capitals, where his portraits were very successful. After the Great War broke out, he settled again in Spain, first in Eibar, and after 1920 in Madrid. From 1931 he presided the Board of Trustees of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Madrid (Museum of Modern Art), and in 1938 he won the grand prize of the Biennial of Venice, in recognition of his artistic career.

This piece, created in 1935, is one of the few examples of Zuloaga's mature painting. The last years of his life composed a period in which he focused on the production of landscapes and portraits. In this case, we observe a villager from the Zumaia area, the town where the Zuloaga family resided. For the production of this work, the artist used numerous preparatory drawings, such as the one held in the San Telmo Museum in San Sebastián. It is important to mention the mountainous landscape in the background, characterized by a new chromatic and luminous treatment. The same author, marked by his typical tenebrism, defined this work as the brightest painting he had created to date.

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