

El Perro Goya- Emi Slater

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This artwork is "El perro" or the dog by Francisco de Goya, circa 1819-1823. The black paintings were initially oil painted on the walls of his house and then were transferred to canvas. It is now hung in Museo del Prado in Madrid Spain. The work is abstract, with only one recognizable figure. It could be a landscape or a seascape it's hard to say. I'd say the dog is the emphasis and it's where my eye goes first. Even when I follow the sweeps of paint going up and around into the sky, they bring me back to the dog. He's also the darkest figure on this painting. The texture of the painting doesn't really create any recognizable pattern besides a kind of energy, the hazy downward brushstrokes in the "sky" push down. This painting has other titles (not given by Goya as he never intended for the walls of his house to be on display): the drowning dog or the half-submerged dog. The dog's head is the only visible part, with his eyes looking up. To me it feels like that panicked feeling when you're searching out for anything to help, and when you're drowning the only help you're getting is going to be from above. Overall the feeling evoked is desperation, back pressed to the wall out of options. Having the dark sweep covering the dog and a giant yellow sky taking up most of the piece, truly makes the dog seem so small. And me as the viewer, empathizing with the dog, I feel small and overwhelmed. The large, vertical composition in person towers over you. And as I said, it truly makes you feel like the dog.

