

DANI MARTI

In the opening pages of his book, *Goya*, art critic Robert Hughes mourns the absence of a Goya for our time. What is not considered in this often-quoted lament is the late, and predominantly posthumous, reception of Goya's greatest works. Goya propelled himself across time, speaking not only to his own generation, but also to future beholders. We can't possibly know the Goyas of our time because they are, quite simply, not of our time.

Artist Dani Marti has made a selection of etchings from Goya's *Los Caprichos*, from the Art Gallery's collection, for inclusion in his 2014 Adelaide Biennial installation. Goya's etchings are exhibited with Marti's *Armour*, a series of suspended sculptures deftly woven in inky-black and ashen-grey synthetic rope, leather and industrial rubber. Marti, like Goya, makes art that unflinchingly exposes the caprices – the impulses and vices – of humanity. Hence this installation stages a conversation between these two artists of Spanish descent across more than 200 years of humanity.



In *Armour*, dark folds, velvety knots and sensual bindings suggest the tactile rewards and visceral tensions of love. Note how the title resembles, in appearance, *amour*, the French word for love. The forms originated conceptually in an earlier body of work titled *Mariposa* (meaning butterfly in Spanish) comprised of sculptural structures and video. However, the artist's viewing of Samurai armour at the Metropolitan Museum in New York triggered the extension of the sculptures into space. As suspended shadows, they offer protection and threaten the beholder with absorption into the inky blackness. Marti, who trained in Catalan tapestry techniques, has employed the same knot used in the body-wrapping forms of the Samurai's garments to create his shadow warriors. With an arsenal of stealth and superstition, the Samurai sits effortlessly within Marti's cast of characters, a cast that resembles Goya's own – those who live in *las sombras* (the shadows).

Lisa Slade



