

Prints from the collection of Dr Walter Auburn

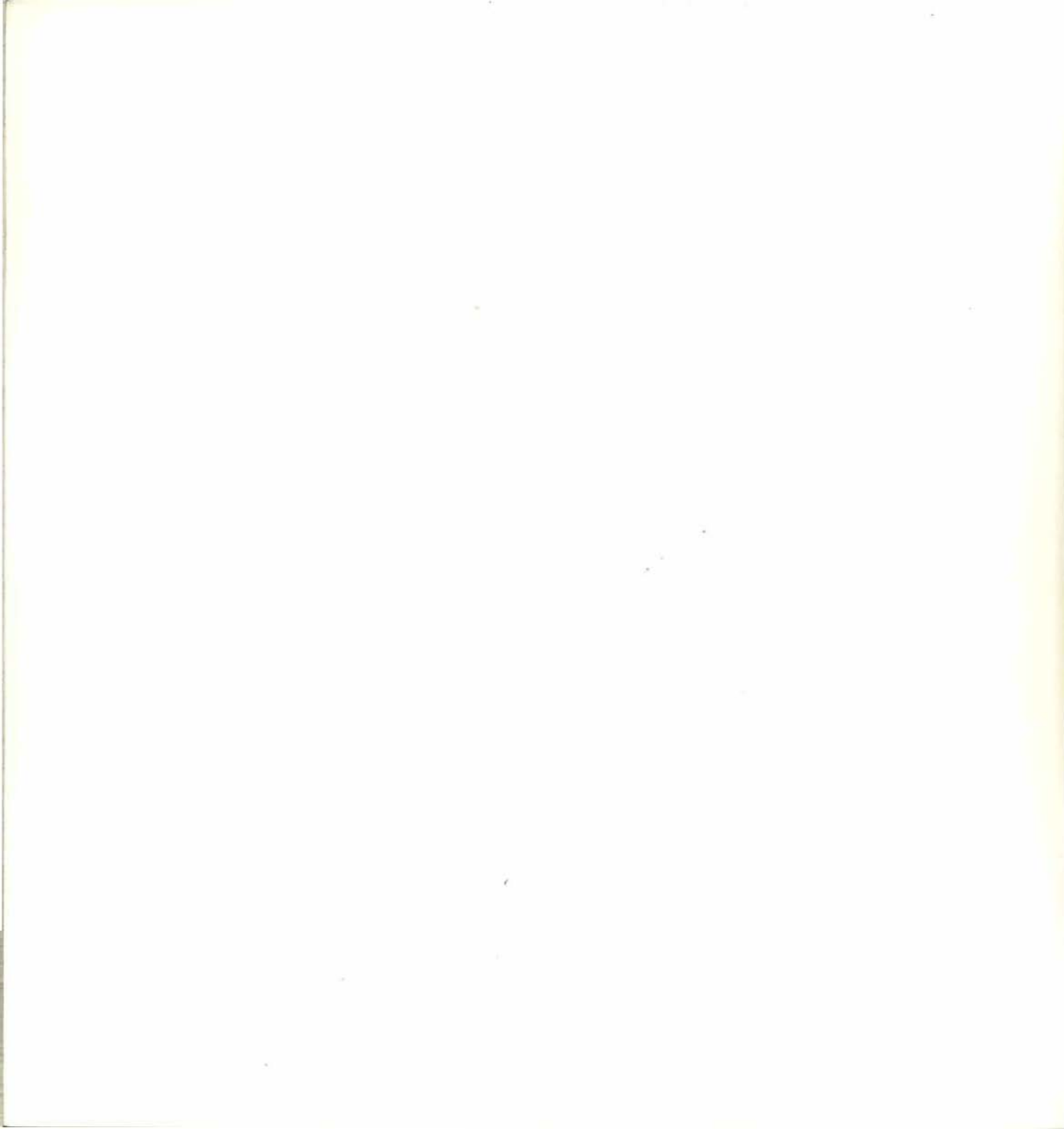
# Daumier

Centenary Exhibition

Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch 1979



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## Preface

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This exhibition is the second product of collaboration between the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Like the first, it has been an exercise of considerable value for both the Gallery and the senior students of art history and graphic design involved in it. We trust that it is also an exhibition which the public will find valuable.

As with the first joint exhibition, we are deeply indebted to Dr Walter Auburn of Auckland for his generous willingness to make works available from his truly remarkable collection. I would also like to express on behalf of the Gallery our thanks to Mrs Julie King, Mr Max Hailstone and Mr Barry Cleavin, all from the School of Fine Arts, who have individually, and as teachers, assisted with the preparation of the exhibition. Further, we must thank Mrs George Woods and Rudi Albers for their assistance with the audio visual programme. The students involved from the Art History Department, and Andrea Wilson who designed all the graphic material, are to be complimented for their very professional results. This exhibition, its predecessors, and, I hope, others to come, are invaluable in helping reinforce the bond which exists between city and its university.

*T. L. Rodney Wilson*

## Introduction

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All of the lithographs in this exhibition were originally drawn by Daumier to appear in *Le Charivari*. He worked for the paper, with only one brief interval, from 1832 until 1872, and made over four thousand lithographs for the press which means that during his working life he produced about two drawings a week. He also made sculptures and paintings although this work was less well known in his own day. It was as a lithographer and caricaturist of his time that he was known to his contemporaries who came across his work, as Baudelaire says, in the pages of their newspaper. The series of prints present a critical and perceptive commentary on over forty years of French history.

Daumier was born in the Napoleonic period in 1808 and he died over one hundred years ago in February, 1879. During his life, France was affected by a succession of political upheavals and experienced enormous social changes. Paris, which he came to as a small boy of eight from Marseilles, had almost trebled in population by the time he died. In appearance, also, the city was transformed by Haussmann's planning, the introduction of gas lighting and the development of the railways. The city and its people provided him with an inexhaustible range of subjects. His series of lithographs are similar to Balzac's contemporary project, the *Comédie Humaine*, in that they are both a reflection and a definition of this changing society. At the same time, in his perception of human character, his incisive attacks on its viciousness, his understanding of its weakness and vulnerability, he comments as much on men and women of today as of his own time.

The prints in this exhibition include examples of his early and late work and give an indication of the range of his concerns and of his power as a graphic artist in making images. The following studies, written by students of Art History at the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, concentrate on what these prints reveal about Daumier as a social and political caricaturist and as an artist.

A number of students have worked on the exhibition and prepared papers. Bridget Gray, Gill Hay, Jill Huston, Cathy Lees, Pam Wilson and Margaret Woodward have considered Daumier as a Social Caricaturist and the

following study has been put together from their work. Andrew Annakin, Allan Langmead and Jeffrey Smith have prepared the study of Daumier as a Political Caricaturist and Cathy Inkster and Justine Olsen prepared the study of Daumier as an Artist. The catalogue has been designed by Andrea Wilson, a student of Graphic Design at the School of Fine Arts.

Jacqueline Ballard, John Cattell, Deborah Shepard and Jane Vial have prepared the audio-visual programme, "Daumier and his times" which accompanies the exhibition.

We would like to thank Dr Auburn for lending the prints and giving us the opportunity and pleasure of working with original material. We also thank Dr Wilson and the McDougall Art Gallery for initiating and supporting a project which has been of great value to us. Thanks also go to Mr Barry Cleavin and Mr Max Hailstone at the School of Fine Arts and to Mr John Harper at the McDougall Art Gallery for their time and advice. I would also like to thank Mr P. Daprini from the French Department at the University of Canterbury for checking the translations from French for linguistic errors.

*Julie King.*

## Catalogue

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All references to Delteil are to the standard catalogue of Daumier's lithographic work: Loys Delteil, *Le Peintre-Graveur Illustré* (XIXe et XXe siècles). Paris 1906–1930.

Catalogue numbers 1–14 are from *Croquis d'expressions*, Sketches of expression, a series published in *Le Charivari*, January, 1838–April, 1839.

190×300 mm  
Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, April 7, 1839)  
Delteil No. 521

1.

*Oui! Oui! C'est entendu, je comprends! . . .*

Yes! Yes! Alright, I know . . . how she goes on! . . . so let me get on with my drink . . .

This is Daumier's last print for the series, *Croquis d'expressions*. It is interesting to compare this plate with his first plate for the same series, *C'est comme moi, tout comme moi!* . . . (Cat. No. 2), where he portrays two men in a similar situation.

197×275 mm  
Third state (published in *Le Charivari*, January 28, 1838)  
Delteil No. 466

2.

*C'est comme moi, tout comme moi! . . .*

It's like me, just like me! . . . The National Guard caused my misfortune . . . one night . . . on patrol . . . I wanted to go home . . . then . . . I saw it as clearly as I see you . . .

215×264 mm  
Third state (published in *Le Charivari*, July 25, 1838)  
Delteil No. 486

3.

*Mon Cher! Vous vous êtes admirablement bien évanoui . . .*

My dear Sir! A wonderful collapse, you created a stunning effect!  
Pooh! You think so!

This is an early example of a subject which Daumier treated many times in painting and lithography. His criticisms of injustice within the legal system and his sympathy for its victims appear in his series *Les Gens de Justice*, *Le Charivari*, March, 1845–October, 1848.

220×275 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, December 15, 1838)  
Delteil No. 508

215×298 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, September 24, 1838)  
Delteil No. 496

193×270 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, March 3, 1839)  
Delteil No. 520

205×268 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, February 17, 1839)  
Delteil No. 513

204×297 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, February 6, 1838)  
Delteil No. 467

234×265 mm  
Second state (published in Le  
Charivari, October 21, 1838)  
Delteil No. 499

4.  
*Y n'y a rien comm'ça pour le rhume . . .*  
There's nothing like it for a cold in your head, it's worth gold! . . .

In a number of plates from this series, (Cat. Nos. 7, 13, 14) Daumier studies the effects of artificial light.

5.  
*Vilain, dormeur, va! . . .*  
Get away with you, wretched sluggard! . . .

6.  
*Elle dort toujours! . . . c'est bien amusant!! . . .*  
She's still sleeping! . . . it's really most enjoyable!! . . .

The joys and trials of married life are scrutinized in his series, *Les Moeurs conjugales*, Le Charivari, May, 1839–October, 1842.

7.  
*Est-il joli! . . . ce chérubin! . . .*  
Isn't he pretty! . . . the little cherub! . . .

8.  
*Crie donc, mâtin! . . .*  
Go on then, howl! . . . what jaws! . . . Cry yourself hoarse then and that'll put a stop to it! . . . You can't close your eyes for a wretched brat!!  
Confounded children! I'll not have any more . . .

9.  
*La maman—Est-il gentil à manger son sucre d'orge!!!*  
The mother—Isn't he pretty, how he eats his barley sugar! . . . you'd take him for a man of twenty by his mind! . . . I want him to be a lawyer . . .



Cat. No. 5

*Vilain, dormeur, va! . . .*

Get away with you, wretched sluggard! . . . 1838



223 × 284 mm  
Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, March 17, 1838)  
Delteil No. 471

221 × 292 mm  
Third state (published in *Le Charivari*, April 29, 1838)  
Delteil No. 474

223 × 290 mm  
Second state (published in *La Caricature*, No. 1, November 1, 1838)  
Rare.  
Delteil No. 502

211 × 280 mm  
First state (published in *Le Charivari*, March 31, 1839)  
Delteil No. 518

222 × 267 mm  
Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, March 28, 1839)  
Delteil No. 516

10.  
*Mon cher, je vous félicite . . .*  
My dear, let me congratulate you, your painting has a delirious effect!!—Oh, yes! that's just what I think, too.

11.  
*Dieu! quel nez vous me faites!*  
My goodness! What a nose you've given me!

Daumier devoted a number of plates to the problems of the portrait painter and his sitter. They reflect the rise in the numbers of portraits at this time which were commissioned by the bourgeoisie.

12.  
*Que diable Monsieur ne bougez donc pas . . .*  
Confound it, Monsieur, don't move your hands, you'll lose the pose . . .

13.  
*. . . princes trop généreux . . .*  
. . . most noble princes,  
Into what depths you have both transported me (Bérenice).

Daumier often dealt with subjects from the theatre in his paintings and lithographs. In a later series, *Physionomies tragico-classiques*, *Le Charivari*, January–November, 1841, he satirized an effete classicism which persisted in the nineteenth century.

14.  
*Pour aller jusqu'au coeur que vous voulez percer . . .*  
To reach the heart you want to pierce,  
See, by what path, your strokes must pass.



Cat. No. 7

*Est-il joli! . . . ce chérubin! . . .*  
Isn't he pretty! . . . the little cherub! . . . 1839

Catalogue numbers 15–17 are from *Locataires et Propriétaires, Tenants and Landlords*, a series published in *Le Charivari*, January, 1847–June, 1848.

255 × 216 mm  
Second state. Rare. 1848.  
Delteil No. 1625

15.

—*Tiens, voilà un écriteau que ma femme a passé . . .*

—Wait, here is a bill that my wife has missed . . . to let, accommodation for a bachelor . . . happy is the man who will live there! . . .

Proof printed on good quality white paper. This lithograph was never printed in *Le Charivari*.

245 × 211 mm  
Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, August 17, 1847)  
Delteil No. 1610

16.

—*Ah! ça mais . . . arriverons nous bientôt? . . .*

—Oh, yes . . . but will we get there soon? . . .

Proof printed on good quality white paper. A small number of proofs were often taken on white paper for trial and for sale before the lithograph appeared in *Le Charivari*.

258 × 228 mm  
Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, May 26, 1847)  
Delteil No. 1605

17.

*Brigand de propriétaire . . .*

A robber for a landlord . . . who wants to have repairs done for me only when the weather is fine! . . .

Proof printed on good quality white paper.

The scratch marks which have been caused by the grinding of the stone to rub out the previous drawing and prepare the ground for the present drawing, can be detected in the deep blacks of the background of this fine plate, and in the background of *Ah! ça mais . . . arriverons nous bientôt? . . .* (Cat. No. 16)

Catalogue numbers 18–21 are from *Locataires et Propriétaires*, 2e série, Tenants and Landlords, 2nd series, published in *Le Charivari*, February–April, 1854.

204×261 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, February 21, 1854)  
Delteil No. 2570

18.

*M. Vautour.*—*Bon! . . . voilà encore . . .*

*M. Vautour.*—Good! . . . there's another house demolished . . . I'll raise the rent of each of my tenants by two hundred francs!

About this time, a number of changes were made in reproducing Daumier's drawings. The drawings were reproduced from transfer papers and zinc instead of from the stone and with these changes in method, and the change in printer from Aubert to Trinocq, the deep textured blacks of the earlier lithographs disappear. Daumier seems to have adapted to the changes in processing by making his drawing and design gradually bolder as can be traced in later prints.

197×260 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, April 20, 1854)  
Delteil No. 2579

19.

*Le Portier de M. Vautour.*

*M. Vautour's* porter. It's a waste of time putting myself out and showing you the apartment to let . . . we don't want dogs or children in this house! . . .

179×221 mm

Second state. Rare.  
Delteil No. 2571

20.

—*Ça! . . . un appartement de huit cents francs! . . .*

So, this is a flat for eight hundred francs! . . . but I'd need one for more than twelve hundred francs for my hats.

192×270 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, March 3, 1854)  
Delteil No. 2574

21.

*Croquis pris aux Champs Elysées.*

A sketch at the Champs Elysées.

This series comments on Haussmann's plans for Paris which created wide and imposing boulevards but made the housing shortage more acute.

Catalogue numbers 22–24 are from *Les Bons Bourgeois*, a series published in *Le Charivari*, September–October, 1854.

250×220 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, September 23, 1854)

Delteil No. 2598

22.

—*C'est bizarre . . . en été . . .*

—It's funny . . . in summer, I can't bear the heat but in winter, I really love it! . . .

202×268 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, October 9, 1854)

Delteil No. 2599

23.

*Je veux laisser un monument . . .*

—I want to leave a permanent memorial of our visit to this cliff . . . I'll add your name as well, Adélaïde, indeed, the respect I profess for the fair sex, makes it my duty.

Daumier's portrayal of M. Prudhomme first appears in the Second Empire. He personifies, in his attitudes and reactions, the bourgeois of the time.

203×264 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, October 13, 1854)

Delteil No. 2600

24.

—*Tiens, papa, pourquoi que l'eau arrive . . .*

—Wait, father, why does the water flow towards us? . . .

—My son, I'm very glad that you have posed this question which reveals that you seek instruction and to probe the mysteries of nature . . . the waves reach the shore due to FLOW which is the opposite of EBB . . . both ebb and flow are caused by the pull of the mountains of the moon . . . remind me, this evening, my son, to explain to you with the same clarity, the lunar system.



*the hand put me down*  
*Crie donc, matin! ...*  
*vous ne pouvez pas fermer les yeux pour un pauvre*  
*enfant qui pleure dans son lit*  
*vous ne pouvez pas fermer les yeux pour un pauvre*  
*enfant qui pleure dans son lit*

Cat. No. 8

*Crie donc, matin! ...*

Go on then, how! ... what jaws! ... Cry yourself hoarse then and that'll put a stop to it! ... You can't close your eyes for a wretched brat ... Confounded children. I'll not have any more ... 1839

Catalogue numbers 25–28 are from *Croquis Aquatiques*, Sketches of aquatic sports, a series published in *Le Charivari*, September, 1854.

204×269 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, September 12, 1854)

Delteil No. 2592

206×270 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, September 9, 1854)

Delteil No. 2591

213×265 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, September 13, 1854)

Delteil No. 2593

194×264 mm

Second state (published in *Le Charivari*, September 21, 1854)

Delteil No. 2596

201×258 mm

Third state (published in *Le Charivari*, August 26, 1854)

Delteil No. 2583

25.

*M. Prudhomme—Je ne sais pas . . .*

M. Prudhomme—I'm not sure whether or not it's my naturally poetic imagination, but it seems to me, that as soon as we were afloat, I felt sick . . . and still due to the same fancies caused by the folly of these temporary lodgings, I could have sworn that I lost my . . .

26.

*—Mon fils, la vessie a été donnée . . .*

—My son, the bladder has been given to man in order that he might brave the waves! . . .

27.

*—Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas . . .*

—Mme Prudhomme, let us not hurry, let us recall that dignity must preside over all the acts of life . . . dignity, alone, distinguishes man from other animals! . . .

28.

*Un feu grégois.*

Greek fire. But I can't deceive myself . . . it is not a swimming lesson that gentleman is giving my wife . . . I'm beginning to get concerned . . . Adélaïde, swim . . . I entreat you to swim and especially to come and join me! . . .

29.

*Croquis d'Été. Une lecture intéressante et rafraîchissante.*

Summer sketches. An interesting and refreshing reading.

202×264 mm  
Second state (published in Le Charivari, August 7, 1854)  
Delteil No. 2587

30.  
*Paris l'Été. Vue prise sur n'importe quel boulevard.*  
Paris in summer. A view on any boulevard.

205×272 mm  
Second state (published in Le Charivari, February 7, 1854)  
Delteil No. 2567

31.  
*Croquis d'Hiver. Paris enrhumé.*  
Winter sketches. Paris overtaken by cold.

Catalogue numbers 32–37 appeared in *L'Album du Siège*, an album containing pictures of the Franco-Prussian War.

229×185 mm  
Third state (second state published in Le Charivari, October 19, 1870)  
Delteil No. 3814

32.  
*L'Empire c'est la paix.*  
The Empire means peace.

218×177 mm  
Third state (second state published in Le Charivari, November 28, 1870)  
Delteil No. 3824

33.  
*Square Napoléon.*

228×179 mm  
Third state (second state published in Le Charivari, December 10, 1870)  
Delteil No. 3828

34.  
*Un paysage en 1870.*  
A landscape in 1870.



230×180 mm

Third state (second state  
published in *Le Charivari*,  
January 11, 1871)  
Delteil No. 3838

234×194 mm

Third state (second state  
published in *Le Charivari*,  
February 1, 1871)  
Delteil No. 3843

238×199 mm

Third state (second state  
published in *Le Charivari*,  
February 9, 1871)  
Delteil No. 3845

35.

*Epouvantée de l'héritage.*

Terror-stricken at her heritage.

36.

*Pauvre France! Le tronc est foudroyé . . .*

Poor France! The trunk has been struck by lightning, but the roots still  
hold firm!

37.

*Ceci a tué cela.*

This has put an end to that.

## Daumier as an Artist

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Daumier was a prolific artist and during his lifetime, he produced an enormous volume of work. He has become well known for his fur thousand lithographs, but he was also active in the fields of sculpture and painting. His expertise in the lithographic medium is seen in the prints in this exhibition. Although only a selection from his total lithographic work, they do show Daumier's mastery of the medium.

Largely self-taught, Daumier did not go through the traditional painter's training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts with its academic leanings. Instead, he studied under Alexandre Lenoir, a painter and archaeologist. He was taught to draw from antique sculpture and he studied Venetian, Dutch and Flemish art. From the lithographer, Ramelet, he learned the lithographic process and from these teachers and from his studies of tradition, Daumier developed his own powerful style based on his acute observation of contemporary life in France. Selecting from his observations, he built up his designs to create general and universal statements. Such a selective process must be classical in conception. His originality rested on what Baudelaire described as, "an almost divine memory."<sup>1</sup> Without drawing directly from nature, he was able to synthesize his observations in his mind. Without the need for preliminary sketches, Daumier was able to translate his conceptions directly on to the lithographic stone. His ability to catch momentary situations when people were off guard must surely contribute to his significance as an artist. Such a skill anticipated the desire of later painters to capture a single moment in time. His strength as a draughtsman had a profound impact on Baudelaire who remarked in his review of the 1845 salon,

"We only know of two men in Paris who draw as well as M. Delacroix . . . the first is M. Daumier the caricaturist; the second M. Ingres . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Lithography was a relatively new process when Daumier began experimenting with it. It had first been discovered in 1798 by a German, Alois Senefelder, but was not known in France until early in the nineteenth century. This new technique provided a cheap and fast means of duplicating images and was highly suitable for newspaper illustration. The basic lithographic process involves surface printing. The design is drawn

on a prepared limestone with a greasy crayon and then chemically treated to fix the grease content of the drawing. The stone is wetted. The water is repelled by the greasy area but accepted by the porous surface of the stone. Printing ink is then rolled over the surface of the stone and the crayoned area absorbs the ink and 'takes' the design. An unlimited number of prints can be made in this way from the original drawing on the stone. Prints from his series, *Croquis d'expressions*, (Cat. Nos. 1–14) and from *Locataires et Propriétaires*, (Cat. Nos. 15–17) demonstrate his mastery of lithography in the expressive drawing and handling of light and shade. *Y n'y a rien comm'ça pour le rhume* (Cat. No. 4) illustrates a night time incident in which the candle light shows up form and features. Daumier was constantly experimenting with different light sources in order to add force to his works. In the prints *Princes trop généreux* and *Pour aller jusqu'au coeur* (Cat. Nos. 13 and 14), dramatic effect is achieved by the light coming from below. He was interested in stage lighting and this effect was from his observation of footlights in the theatre. It is not merely the overall lighting effect that is interesting in these prints but also the use of highlights. He registers the effect of light reflected from glass in *Oui! Oui! C'est entendu* (Cat. No. 1) and this effect was probably obtained by scraping with a needle or knife blade on the surface of the stone. He also depicts the sheen of the top hat with a highlight in *La Maman—Est-il gentil* (Cat. No. 9). In *Brigand de propriétaire* (Cat. No. 17), he describes natural light streaming in through the window and its illumination of the room.

The series, *Croquis d'expressions*, shows aspects of Daumier's style that he was to continue to develop. His interest in expression and the relation between characters form the basis of much of his later work. Daumier's chief aim in this series was to portray expression and figures are set on a frontal plane without background detail in order to focus attention on the figures and their relationship. Most of the themes from this series are drawn from domestic situations and there is very little direct criticism of society. From the subjects of some of these prints, however, came several themes for later series. *Mon cher! Vous êtes admirablement . . . évanoui* (Cat. No. 3) anticipates a series dealing with lawyers, *Gens de Justice*, 1845–48. The series, *Histoire ancienne*, 1841–43, which satirizes an out-dated classicism, is perhaps anticipated in two prints from *Croquis d'expressions*, (Cat. Nos. 13 and 14).



Cat. No. 14

*Pour aller jusqu'au coeur que vous voulez percer . . .*  
To reach the heart you want to pierce,  
See, by what path, your strokes must pass. 1839

In the first and second series of *Locataires et Propriétaires*, (Cat. Nos. 15–21) Daumier comments on housing conditions and the attitudes of landlords and tenants. In the first series, he describes expressions and relationships but also the environment and setting. He continued to describe lighting effects, placing his figures within interiors. His second series, however, shows a change in lithographic technique and printing processes. A transfer method was developed whereby the image rather than being drawn directly by the artist on to the stone, was drawn on paper and the printer then transferred the drawing on to a zinc or stone plate. This seems to have reduced the fine gradation of shades which had been achieved in the prints from earlier series and the sharp contrast between lights and deep blacks are lost. A change in the quality of paper and a change in printer also had an effect. This is apparent in *Le Portier de M. Vautour* (Cat. No. 19) where there are no longer distinct black and white areas but rather an overall grey tonality. Daumier also changed his figure types and drew forms with big heads and small bodies. Lines are abbreviated and a sense of haste pervades these works. This may be related to his reluctance to draw on paper rather than directly on the stone. It may also be connected with his increasing involvement in painting which occurred about this time. It seems that he may have been devoting the day to painting and working on his lithographs at night. In other works of this time, however, he appears to accommodate changes in processing by using bolder designs and by developments in figure style so that forms are described by more incisive and economical lines and less by tonal modelling. This can be seen in *Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas* (Cat. No. 27). In this print, appears Daumier's portrayal of M. Prudhomme, the bourgeois type who first emerges in his work during the Second Empire. In this creation, Daumier caricatured the pompous, self-satisfied, newly-rich bourgeois. This was caricature at its height, an extreme characterization, in the portrayal of a type epitomizing a whole social class. In the print *Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas . . .* (Cat. No. 27), he is ridiculed for his pretension. In the largeness and grossness of the couple, their clothes and their posture, lie their pomposity and vulnerability. M. Prudhomme was only one of a number of types portrayed by Daumier to satirize aspects of society.

The final prints in the exhibition, (Cat. Nos. 32–37) show Daumier's late style. They differ in approach from earlier political and social caricatures in that they convey their point largely through symbolism. The recognisable human type who personifies an attitude or the caricature portrait of a con-



Gilbert Robert 25 de la Boue 25

Imp. d'Albert & C<sup>o</sup>

*Brigand de propriétaire... qui ne veut me faire faire des réparations qu'au beau temps!...*

Cat. No. 17

*Brigand de propriétaire...*

A robber for a landlord... who wants to have repairs done for me only when the weather is fine!... 1847

temporary, is replaced by a more universal symbolism. The designs are simple and bold, light is used for dramatic effect and the prints have a monumental quality.

The prints in the exhibition are good examples from the major periods of Daumier's development and illustrate the characteristics of his art; from early in his career in the prints from *Croquis d'expressions* (Cat. Nos. 1-14) and from the last period of lithographic work when he produced expressive and symbolic images. The prints are an indication of his determination to produce works which are forceful in their impact and didactic in their themes.

#### *Notes*

1. Jonathan Mayne, *Charles Baudelaire, The Painter of Modern Life and other Essays*, (London, 1964), p. 179.
2. Jonathan Mayne, *Charles Baudelaire, Art in Paris 1845-1862, Reviews of Salons and other Exhibitions*, (London, 1965), p. 5.

## Daumier as a Social Caricaturist

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Daumier began working for *Le Charivari* as a political caricaturist but with the restriction of the freedom of the press in 1835, he was no longer free to openly criticize the King and government and he turned, as a consequence, to explore a greater range of subjects drawn from nineteenth century Parisian life.

Paris, at this time, was a place of growth and rapid change. Industry and commerce were two emerging forces which determined the structure of society and the middle class, largely a creation of the new economic order, was thrust into prominence. It is this class, in particular, from its lower to higher levels, that Daumier portrayed. He records their pride and bewilderment at the changes in society occurring around them, as well as scrutinizing their life and attitudes at home. One characteristic of his caricature is the delight he takes in exposing the 'truth' that lies behind appearance, the often harsh and unromantic reality behind the façade of social convention or expectation. Baudelaire recognized these aspects of his work in his essay on Daumier:

"By spying on the bourgeois day and night he penetrated the mysteries of his bedroom, consorted with his wife and children. He understood the form of his nose and construction of his head . . . look through Daumier's work and you will see parading before your eyes all that a great city contains of living monstrosities in all their fantastic reality."<sup>1</sup>

Baudelaire's comments make an apt introduction to the prints in this exhibition from Daumier's series, *Croquis d'expressions* (Cat. Nos. 1-14) in which he concentrates on describing, through facial expression and gesture, the attitudes and reactions of the Parisian bourgeois to a variety of situations. In *Oui! Oui! C'est entendu* (Cat. No. 1) and *C'est comme moi, tout comme moi* (Cat. No. 2), the first and last prints of Daumier's series, he portrays two men in a classic situation, each lamenting his troubles with his wife and seeking consolation over a drink. The point of the image emerges at once. Even if the newspaper reader failed to recognize himself in the caricatures, at least, he could recognize his neighbour. Every detail of the ordinary citizen's day to day life was treated by Daumier in his satirical history; in *Vilain, dormeur, va!* . . . (Cat. No.



5) and *Elle dort toujours* (Cat. No. 6), he enters the recesses of the bedroom and shows the state of affairs which often exists in the life of the ordinary citizen. It was not the romantic, idealized view of marriage which he chose to illustrate but the frustrations, disillusionments and the unguarded moments. In these prints, he removes the veil screening the private moments of nineteenth century bourgeois existence from the public eye and catches his characters, off guard and exposed. The joys of parenthood were described many times with humour and facetiousness. We can smile with recognition at the expressions of the dotting couple in *Est-il joli . . . ce chérubin!* (Cat. No. 7) and wonder at the continuing blindness of parents to the monstrous nature of their children. Perhaps the realities of parenthood are portrayed in *Crie donc mâtin . . .* (Cat. No. 8). As the bourgeois class increased in size, so did their aspirations, and the ambitions of over fond parents for their offspring are shown in *La maman—Est-il gentil* (Cat. No. 9). The cultural pretensions of the bourgeoisie gave Daumier fertile material for satire. *Dieu! Quel nez vous me faites!* (Cat. No. 11) and *Que Diable Monsieur* (Cat. No. 12) show their desire to be immortalized in portraiture and the indignity they suffered to achieve this aim. *Dieu! Quel nez vous me faites!* (Cat. No. 11), shows the outrage of one lady who considered herself to be of more noble appearance than the artist chose to represent. The high rise in the numbers of portraits hung in each Paris Salon exhibition, testifies to the abundance of bourgeois portrait commissions. The artistic pretensions of the Bohemian artist, another phenomenon of nineteenth century society, are not spared in *Mon cher, je vous félicite . . .* (Cat. No. 10).

In the art and literature of nineteenth century France, the classical ideal was still strongly upheld; Daumier, however, negates this ideal by emphasizing in his figures, those very features which the classicist would beautify or improve and by choosing undignified situations in which to place his anti-heroes. In his satirical attacks on classical idealization, he joins the side of the realists in art, anticipating the development of Realist painting in the mid-nineteenth century. He turns his attention to an effete classicism in *Princes trop généreux* (Cat. No. 13) and *Pour aller jusqu'au coeur . . .* (Cat. No. 14) where mediocrity of mind and body is clearly at war with the exalted phrases being launched from the stage. The underlying link beneath all the prints in *Croquis d'expressions* is the realistic portrayal of character and expression; realism taken to the point of exaggeration, in fact, to the point of caricature. It is, also, worth noting the wide popular interest and belief in physiognomy and phrenology in nineteenth century



de l'air de l'air

de l'air de l'air

*Oui! oui! C'est entendu, je comprends! ...*

Cat. No. 1

*Oui! Oui! C'est entendu, je comprends! ...*

Yes! Yes! Alright, I know! ... how she goes on! ... so let me get on with my drink ... 1839

France. Many people believed that a person's character and intelligence could be deduced from the shape of the skull or the expression of the face and a great number of illustrated books were published as guides to the popular pursuit of character analysis. Daumier's vision as a caricaturist was sharpened by this interest as was his viewers' reception to his *Croquis d'expressions*.

The exhibition, also, includes prints from Daumier's first and second series on *Locataires et Propriétaires* (Cat. Nos. 15–21) in which he comments on housing conditions and the relationship between landlord and tenant. In many of the poorer areas of Paris, houses had been left to decay and a rise in the population, in conjunction with this, had meant that many of the poor were left homeless or at least, insufficiently housed. Daumier's observation of this problem led to these series of lithographs which leave no doubt as to where his sympathies lie. Many of his social comments within society, can be considered equally well as political or social caricatures. The Second Empire had begun in 1852 and under the direction of Napoleon III, Haussmann had devised a plan for the reconstruction of Paris to relieve pressure on congested areas, improve access and sanitation within the city and also, boost the prestige of the Emperor. The plan, however, involved the wholesale removal of some districts with little concern for the immediate needs of the poorer classes. With the availability of accommodation so drastically reduced, the kinds of situations were found that are illustrated in Daumier's second series (Cat. Nos. 18–20).

It was during the Second Empire that Daumier created his character, M. Prudhomme, the pompous, self-important and yet, redeemingly human composite embodiment of middle class respectability. He found his model in the fictitious Joseph Prudhomme, created by Henri Monnier, a playwright and actor. Prudhomme features in a number of Daumier's series at this time and is exposed to a variety of situations (Cat. Nos. 23–29). In *Je veux laisser un monument . . .* (Cat. No. 23), he is seen at the seaside, braving the elements to leave his name on a cliff for posterity and in *Tiens, papa* (Cat. No. 24), he gives a pseudo-scientific explanation of the origin of waves to his son. Prudhomme, a nineteenth century man, believes in progress, the advance of civilisation and strives towards some measure of cultural sophistication. His achievements always fall short of his aspirations because of his human condition. He feels sick on his boat ride in *M. Prudhomme—Je ne sais pas si* (Cat. No. 25) and all dignity seems lost in



— Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas, ne nous pressons pas, rappelons nous que la dignité doit présider à tous les actes

Cat. No. 27

— *Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas . . .*

— *Mme Prudhomme, let us not hurry, let us recall that dignity must preside over all the acts of our life . . . dignity, alone, distinguishes man from other animals! . . . 1854*

*Madame Prudhomme, ne nous pressons pas* (Cat. No. 27), where he strides forward, with wife and child, turned out in their outrageously striped bathing costumes. M. Prudhomme, with his well-fed stomach and disproportionate thin legs, delivers solemn pronouncements and platitudes to his small family, over which he exercises a supreme but benign authority.

In a number of these prints, Prudhomme is taken from his familiar Parisian milieu and placed in the perilous countryside. Such scenes show how much Prudhomme is a product of his urban environment where everything can be ordered and structured. The fact that he ventures to the countryside and coast, is a consequence also, of developments in the railway and reflects the new relationship to the countryside which developed amongst city dwellers. Daumier shows him swimming at the seaside, boating and in search of fresh diversions, even if this means simply sitting by the river, with his feet immersed in the water (Cat. No. 29).

Daumier was one of the first major figures in nineteenth century French art to fully explore the contemporary world. He believed that an artist must be of his own time and his four thousand lithographs are a testament to this belief. They make up an amusing and yet, often, a serious and reflective comment on his own times and on human behaviour. He manages to strip the world of all its façades and show it as it is. In this sense, the prints have a universal appeal which goes far beyond their historical interest.

*Notes*

1. Oliver Larkin, *Daumier Man of his Time*, (London, 1967), pp. 35–36

## Daumier as a Political Caricaturist

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Daumier's vision reveals a sensitive political awareness aligned to his powers of observation and his Republican beliefs. These are important aspects of his genius for his beliefs conditioned and qualified his experiences and expression of his world; a world with a heritage of violence and political instability begot from the revolution of 1789. As a child, he had seen the final overthrow of the Emperor Napoleon and the subsequent Restoration monarchy. Later, he witnessed the turbulent events of 1848, the abdication of Louis-Philippe and the proclamation of the Second Republic which was followed swiftly by the establishment of the Second Empire. He was to witness its decline with the Franco-Prussian War and the horror of the Paris Commune. The political caricatures in this exhibition are from the last phase of Daumier's political satire, 1870–1871, the years of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune.

The corruption and incompetence in the political arena throughout his life provided him with a wealth of subjects. The effectiveness of his satirical comments and of the criticism of his journalist associates can be seen in the fact that for thirty of the forty years of his active career, official political censorship of the press existed in some form. His first political cartooning had begun in 1831 when the Republican press began to voice its resentment at the unfulfilled promises of Louis-Philippe and his Cabinet. In February, 1832, Daumier was charged with "fomenting disrespect and hatred against His Majesty's Government" and was sentenced to six months in prison and fined five hundred francs. Far from deterring Daumier, his prison term seems only to have matured his perception and increased his anti-monarchical feelings. So effective was the satire against the enraged government that it issued the September Laws in 1835 which prohibited political and anti-government comments. Freedom of political expression vanished from France for the next thirteen years and during this period Daumier turned to social subjects. It is within this context that he first turned to social caricature and by masking overt political comments, he escaped the censor and was able to define political questions in a cogent and readily accessible form. He also explored less critical fields in a more lighthearted manner; new fashions and even the weather provided a wealth of material and from 1836 to 1848 he drew more than one thousand six hundred lithographs, as well as making hundreds of woodcuts.

On February 24, 1848, Louis-Philippe abdicated. In March, the new Provisional Government of the Second Republic decreed "all condemnations for political and press offences are annulled" and Daumier's second cycle of political cartooning began. At first, Daumier seems to have been elated; consciousness of issues like universal suffrage, freedom of the press, the right to work and hope for peace in Europe made the future look bright. From the revolution, however, to the coup d'état of Louis-Napoleon, the idealism began to disintegrate for no-one was ready for the problems which 1848 had raised. National sentiment and reactionary elements led to Louis-Napoleon's election as a Deputy and then as President of the Republic. The increasing powers of the President captured Daumier's attention. Satire always has a serious element as its underlying basis and the fears expressed in Daumier's cartoons were realized with the proclamation of the Second Empire in 1852. Daumier had invented the character Ratapoil (rat-face or rat-beard; Louis-Napoleon had a small pointed beard, moustache and beady eyes) to express his abhorrence of the imminent leadership of Napoleon III. Ratapoil was presented as the leader of the strong arm brigade who shouted, 'Long Live the Emperor' at parades and beat up the non-acquiescent. It was about this time that Michelet, the historian and Republican had told Daumier that "through you, the people will be able to speak to the people."<sup>1</sup> Between 1851 and 1868, however, political prints were only allowed when it suited the government of Napoleon III and satire was carefully guided away from home. Finally, in 1868, the press laws were relaxed.

The political prints in this exhibition are from the last phase of Daumier's political satire. A new, more sombre mood prevails. Perhaps the turmoil and strain of decades of political contradiction within France, of rigorous mental exertion, had taken their toll. Daumier was rarely bitter but even the hopeful glimmer of the Third Republic was an evanescent vision. The matured, worldly artist had seen it all before; his knowledge of human nature was too profound to be fooled. The humour, the delightful comic sense of the younger man had sobered. *L'Empire c'est la paix* (Cat. No. 32) and *Square Napoléon* (Cat. No. 33) are powerful, symbolic works. Daumier's cartoons rarely need captions, even for modern viewers, but especially in these prints the message is contained in crayon, not printer's type. They are more than cartoons; they are works of art, as forceful as the best history painting. Daumier's ability to evoke atmosphere and colour in black and white drawings is epitomized in these two prints. *L'Empire c'est la paix* (Cat. No. 32) first appeared in *Le Charivari* in October, 1870,



Cat. No. 36

*Pauvre France! . . . Le tronc est foudroyé . . .*  
Poor France! . . . The trunk has been struck by lightning but the roots still  
hold firm! . . . 1871



after the Emperor's surrender to the German army at Sedan in September. It is a tragic and ironic comment on the Emperor's own words, "The Empire means peace," which he had proclaimed almost twenty years earlier. The print shows the land reduced to desolation. The simplicity and boldness of the composition, the sharp contrast of the black foreground and white house, the billowing smoke give a haunting air of death and destruction over which a few black birds fly. In *Square Napoléon* (Cat. No. 33) Daumier has produced his own historical summary of Napoleon's reign. The 'highlights' of that reign are shown as four tombstones behind which is a huge graveyard extending to the horizon where the moon rises. The background is dark and contrasts with the brightly lit tombstones which stand as unmistakable accusations. They refer to Louis-Napoleon's troops firing at opposition in the Rue Montmartre. Cayenne and Lambessa refer to the transportation of citizens who had opposed the establishment of the Empire. Cayenne is in French Guiana and Lambessa in Algeria. The fear of transportation wrought terror on the French people as the Emperor's deputies scoured the country for democrats and revolutionaries. Many of those transported, never survived the journey and the harsh climate and conditions generally took care of those who made it to Guiana or Algeria. Transportation, therefore, deserved its ominous title of the "Guillotine sèche", the bloodless axe. The last tombstone refers to the Emperor's defeat by the German army at Sedan. In the foreground, the large tombstone of which we can only see half, may well be France viewing these disasters in silent contemplation.

In *Un paysage en 1870* (Cat. No. 34) Daumier has again produced a scene of desolation. A single cannon looks out over an empty landscape marred only by the remnants of a town. Even the sky appears bleak and empty. Much of the Franco-Prussian war was fought by heavy exchanges of artillery. This lithograph testifies to the destructive power of that weapon and the meaningless waste it was capable of creating. The Franco-Prussian war was one of the first modern wars and Daumier was one of the first commentators to fully appreciate its implications. *Epouvantée de l'héritage* (Cat. No. 35) is another comment on the wastefulness of war. As in *Un paysage en 1870*, an expansive landscape and a large stretch of open sky convey in the simplest of terms the magnitude of death and destruction caused by modern war. This print depicts the year, 1871, called the 'Terrible Year' by Victor Hugo; it was first published in January of that year and a tall woman, enshrouded in black and silhouetted against the plain, bewails her past. She stands with her hands covering her veiled face in

1871



Cat. No. 35

*Epouvantée de l'héritage.*  
Terror-stricken at her heritage 1871

a gesture of anguish and sorrow.

*Pauvre France! . . . le tronc est foudroyé* (Cat. No. 36) is one of the few works that displays the faith Daumier had in France's ability to recover. France is depicted as a great tree that has been struck by lightning in a viscious storm but as a territorial entity, her roots, remain intact and the sole remaining branch, bearing leaves, promises regrowth. In *Ceci a tué cela* (Cat. No. 37), an angry France is depicted pointing at the ballot box and declaring, "the one has killed the other". The work is dominated by the anger of France, anger at the foolishness of the voters whose votes enabled Napoleon III to make a war which killed so many.

Daumier drew his last lithograph for *Le Charivari* on 24 September, 1872. His retirement had come suddenly and sadly. His eyesight had been bothering him for sometime and one day, he exclaimed to his editor, "I can't see any more. Today I drew a figure whose lines wandered so that I couldn't bring them together."<sup>2</sup> Although his sight improved, he never resumed his career as a political caricaturist.

#### Notes

1. J. R. Kist, *Daumier Eyewitness of an Epoch*, (London, 1976), p. 2
2. H. P. Vincent, *Daumier and his World*, (Evanston, 1968), p. 203

## Daumier Chronology

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1808	Honoré Daumier was born at Marseilles on 26 February
1815	Waterloo. Napoleon defeated; return of Louis XVIII
1816	Daumier family settled in Paris
1822	Daumier's first lithograph
1824	Death of Louis XVIII; succession of Charles X
1830	July Revolution
1830-1848	Reign of King Louis-Philippe
1830	Freedom of the press
1830	Daumier contributes to La Caricature
1832	Daumier contributes to Le Charivari Imprisonment for six months in Ste Pélagie
1835	Suppression of liberty of the press
1848	Revolution. Abdication of King Louis-Philippe
1848-1852	Second Republic
1848	Daumier begins to devote more time to painting
1851	He creates 'Ratapoil'
1852-1870	Reign of Emperor Napoleon III
1853	Hausmann plans to modernize Paris
1852	Monsieur Prudhomme makes his first appearance in Daumier's prints
1860-63	Daumier ceases to work for Le Charivari and works on his painting
1863	Resumes his position as contributor to Le Charivari
1868	Freedom of the press
1870	Start of Franco-Prussian war on 19 July Surrender of Napoleon III at Sedan on 1 September
	Third Republic
1870-71	The siege of Paris and the Commune

1872  
1878  
1879

Daumier suffers from an eye disease and retires from *Le Charivari*  
A large exhibition of his work is held at Durand-Ruel's in Paris  
Died at Valmondois on 11 February

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