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# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON 25 DC • REpublic 7-4215 extension 247

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## EXHIBITION OF DAUMIER AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 9: John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that an important exhibition of sculpture, drawings and lithographs by the famous 19th century French artist, Honoré Daumier, will open on Saturday, March 12. The exhibition was assembled from the Rosenwald Collection belonging to the National Gallery of Art.

During his lifetime (1808-1879) Daumier made more than 4,000 lithographs. Included in the exhibition are a number showing his unparalleled talent for biting political satire. With the passing of laws restricting the freedom of the press, Daumier was forced to turn to social commentary. During the next few years he drew, with infinite wit and variety, all that was novel and ridiculous in the life of the middle class of Paris. There are amusing examples of conjugal follies, the joys and perils of fishing, and even the dangers and discomforts of traveling by railroad. One of the best of these series was the 39 plates of LAWYERS, showing the extravagances of the law courts.

Daumier's sculptures, less well-known than his lithographs, are equally trenchant. The 36 small bronze caricatures which he did

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of the Advocates and Judges have never been shown together in this country prior to the present exhibition. For a short period of time the artist haunted the visitors' gallery of the Court, and, from memory, modelled in clay the heads of various members, and a few full-length figures. In them he caught clearly the essential characteristics of these important gentlemen: malice, sloth, indifference, pride, disdain, pompousness and timidity. They have been rightly called a masterly suite, and are a scathing indictment of a decade of ineffectual legislation. Daumier also made a figure of a legendary rascal whom he invented and called RATAPOIL. A bronze sculpture of this figure is included in the exhibition, as is a large bas-relief of the EMIGRANTS which, in its understanding of human misery, shows a more compassionate side of Daumier.

Finally, a group of 31 drawings allows the visitor to the exhibition to judge the work of one of the greatest draughtsmen of the 19th century, and one who has few peers among draughtsmen of any century.

The exhibition, which is installed on the ground floor of the National Gallery of Art, will remain on view through April 17th.

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