

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION MARKS DAUMIER CENTENARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. September 18, 1979. A selection of 100 prints, drawings, watercolors and sculptures by Honoré Daumier, the nineteenth-century French political and social satirist, will be on view at the National Gallery of Art September 23 through November 25. Entitled Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), the exhibition marks the centenary of the death of one of the nineteenth-century's most observant spectators.

The exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Lessing J. Rosenwald, a founding benefactor of the Gallery and a former trustee. Mr. Rosenwald died in June. His interest in Daumier was lifelong and his collection comprises the entire series of Daumier portrait busts in bronze and many unusual and unique examples of his lithographic cartoons, illustrations, and social commentary in pictures with captions.

On view will be seventy-eight lithographic prints and nine sculptures, including eight portrait busts, all from the Gallery's Rosenwald Collection, and thirteen drawings lent from American public collections. Daumier lithographs were among Mr. Rosenwald's

(more)

earliest acquisitions. The prints are distinguished as early proofs with instructions by the newspaper caption writers, editors or censors to the printer.

Daumier modeled portraits in clay of government officials and supporters, which were intended as preliminary studies for future portrait prints. Bronze editions of most of the portrait busts appeared in 1929, and Mr. Rosenwald subscribed to the series of fifteen cast bronze busts beginning in 1930.

Scenes in trains were popular subjects for Daumier. Among those on view will be watercolors showing the occupants of the first- second- and third-class railway carriages.

Also on view will be a supplementary exhibition of twenty-five works of art in the Gallery's collection, mainly from the Rosenwald Collection. Included are watercolors, and pen and ink and chalk drawings.

The exhibition will provide an overall view of Daumier's work. His powerful caricatures of political figures, most of which appeared in the satirical weekly La Caricature, is a genre in which he excelled and is perhaps best known. He felt caricatures should carry their own weight, without need for captions or explanatory materials. Daumier is also known for his prints denouncing government and its activities, and specifically the wrongs inflicted against the French people.

(more)

Daumier also portrayed much of the daily life of Paris, including art connoisseurs, fair-ground performers, theater performers and theater goers, painters, lawyers and café patrons in Le Charivari, Le Boulevard and Le journal amusant.

Jan Rie Kist of The Hague, Netherlands, a Daumier scholar, organized the exhibition and wrote its accompanying catalogue.

END

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Pamela J. Driscoll, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 511.