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Intro To The Visual Arts
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Videos #:4 Honore Daumier: The Moral Gaze

Honore Daumier was known as one of the greatest French Caricaturists of his time. Being one of the first artists of modernism in the 19th Century, he very often created works that directly engaged his viewers with subjects in modern life. Creating works that exposed the corruption in society. He didn't shy away from attacking specific political figures, demonstrating their corruption and greed in the form in which he depicts them. This was all in accordance with his belief that "One must be of one's own time." Described as the Michelangelo of architecture, his sculptures visualized the complexities of personality. Daumier was very often capable of capturing the essence of a narrative. He did what was called, a moral gaze, in which he depicted a work that would cause the conscience of the viewer to react to situations. He expressed his realist method, and demonstrated the moral gaze in many different drawings.

I was truly taken aback at the detail in some of his drawings. In his drawing *The Legislative Belly*, I was surprised at the way the political figures looked. Their moral corruption was obvious. What was also surprising was *The Incriminating Evidence*. In this work he drew three oblivious judges, implying that injustice in the court was simply inevitable. However, one can see that his intentions when drawing *First, Second and Third Class* were different. In these drawings, he instead draws day to day people that you would run into during this time. They were drawn normally, which I believe is a testament to the fact that Honore actually knew the distinction between bad and good humans and wanted to translate that to his art. This distinction is shown, and expressed in *Second Class* where they are described as travelers to be joined. He uses mainly grey, white and black which doesn't at all take away any power from the art.