

À Honore (à jamais) Daumier Max Skorwider vs Honoré Daumier

Curator: Mateusz Bieczyński

‘Yes all resemblances belong to us!’¹, Charles Philipon wrote in a satirical weekly *La Caricature* of 24 November 1831, thus confirming the right of satirical cartoonists to portray the imperfections of the surrounding world, often against the official social expectations and so-called political correctness. Philipon argued that ‘a resemblance, even if perfect, is never an attack; you must not recognize it as such...’² Honoré Daumier, an artist and at the same time a publisher of lithographs, thus expressed his support for this new type of artistic creation. Art, which had been closed so far to social issues, opened up to them and began to play an active role in breaking up the false cognitive schemas that supported the relative social order.

Although the French caricature is rarely treated as one of the sources of the so-called critical art, from the perspective of the history of ideas, it paved the way for avant-garde trends and inaugurated the active participation of artists in political and social life in the new formula in the nineteenth century.³ Today caricature is considered to belong to popular rather than high art. However, is it possible to create fresh and accurate satirical drawings meeting high cognitive expectations?

Max Skorwider’s works seem to answer this question in the affirmative. Aware of the historical origins of thinking about artistic creativity as a tool of social transformation, the artist turned in his latest project to the sources of Honore Daumier’s political caricature. The exhibition entitled ‘À Honore (à jamais) Daumier’ presents dozens of graphic works of both authors compiled in a creative dialogue. The works created by the outstanding representative of French realism in art in the first half of the nineteenth century are sometimes referred to as ‘the archives of the French society’. Max Skorwider directly addresses Daumier’s works and highlights the versatility and topicality of his ideas. The exhibited works refer to aspects of contemporary culture, such as fashion and art trends, social norms and technological progress. They are a tribute to the extraordinary output of the French predecessor from before two centuries, which has not lost its potency.

¹ O. Watts, *Daumier and Replacing the King’s Body*, [in:] A. Wagner, R. Sherwin (red.), *Law, Culture and Visual Arts*, New York/London 2014, p. 431.

² O. Watts, *Daumier and Replacing the King’s Body*, [in:] A. Wagner, R. Sherwin (red.), *Law, Culture and Visual Arts*, New York/London 2014, p. 431.

³ E. Childs, *The Body Impolitic: Press Censorship and the Caricature of Honore Daumier*, [in:] D. De la Motte, J. M. Przybylski (ed.), *Making the News: Modernity and the Mass Media in Nineteenth-Century France*, University of Massachusetts Press 1999, p. 56.