

Realism in Art

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Thesis

- **Mid 19th-century artistic style, centered in France, that sought to portray everyday activities and people (especially the poor) as they appear in life, without embellishment to promote social change.**

Aspects of Realism

- Revolt against rococo, romanticism, classicism, academicism, anything that didn't deal with everyday life
- Felt mythology and histories of academies had no inspiration
- Didn't like the sentimentality and imagination of romanticism
- Artists often wanted to spark controversy, depict the problems of the underprivileged and promote social change

Realist Groups

-The Barbizon School (French)

- one of first group of artists to form outside of an Academy
- landscape artists, wanted to paint nature directly
- Millet

-The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (English)

- praised the art before Raphael and the Renaissance
- wanted to imitate nature and represent natural world
- great accuracy of detail and color

-The Realists (French)

- painted with the new method of pictorial representation
- scientific concepts of vision, optical effects of light
- work expressed want for democracy
- worked from life around them
- Gustave Courbet, Honore Daumier, Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet

Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875)

The Sower (1850)

- controversial- conservatives disliked, liberals liked
- sower scattering seeds for new crop
- crude, yet heroic appearance



The Gleaners (1857)

- poor peasant women pick up leftover harvest, one of the lowest jobs
- makes them the focus of the picture (usually servants are only in the background w/ nobles as focus)
- forms show balance and harmony, use of light and dark
- makes labor seem noble and beautiful

Honore Daumier (1809-1879)

The Third Class Carriage (1863-65)

- Daumier was interested in people, especially the poor
- depicts apparently fatherless family on a train - mother tenderly holding baby, grandmother lost in thought, boy asleep
- everyone is tightly packed
- shows difficulty of everyday life through weary poses



Rue Transunion (1834)

- depicts an event that occurred during the riots of April 1834, when government troops opened fire on inhabitants of a building
- shows brutality of government
- drawn based on eyewitness accounts
- after this, Louis Philippe ordered the all circulating prints to be destroyed

Gustave Courbet (1819-1877)



The Burial at Ornans (1849-50)

- based on the funeral of his grand uncle
- painted people who had been at funeral-
new technique
- realistic setting and realistic people give
a look of what life is like in Ornans
- huge painting, unusual for ordinary
activities to be painted with the same
dignity and importance as royal
activities

The Stonebreakers (1849)

- depicts two stonebreakers absorbed in their
work
- very detailed to show horrible conditions
- inspired by the “complete expression of human
misery.”
- Rejected by Salons, criticized for deliberately
painting a “cult of ugliness” and for attacking
social standards, praised by socialists as honest
portrayal of working class



Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899)



The Horse Fair (1887)

- depicts a horse market in Paris
- Bonheur went there twice a week for a year and a half to make sketches
- anatomical drawings of horses
- realist and romantic
 - realist because of subject matter and because it is a commonplace event
 - romantic because horses are idealized-they are perfect, also sky is cloudy