

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



HONORÉ DAUMIER

1808 Marseilles - Valmondois 1879

Le Peintre / Portrait de Corot / Portrait présumé de Corot

Pen and black ink on laid paper; executed c.1866-70.

Unsigned.

24.8 x 18.4 cm.

PROVENANCE: Madame Daumier, Paris – Arsène Alexandre, Paris (1859-1937, art critic), to whom given by the above – Louis Morin, Paris (1855-1938, caricaturist, illustrator and painter), to whom given by the above – Tyge Möller, Paris, by whom acquired from the above in 1910 – Claude Roger-Marx, Paris (1888-1977, writer, playwright, art critic and art historian) – André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Paris (1884-1974, painter and graphic artist) by 1936 – Private collection, Vienna, acquired in the 1980s – Private collection, United Kingdom, since 2005.

LITERATURE: Eduard Fuchs, *Der Maler Daumier, Supplement*, Munich 1930, no. 311 b, p. 64, repr. – Raymond Escholier, *Daumier*, Paris 1913 (this edition Paris 1930, first reprint 1921), p. 74 – Raymond Escholier, 'Daumier, le lithographe, le peintre, le sculpteur', in *L'Art et les Artistes*, no. 37 (November 1938), p. 38 – George Besson, *Daumier, Cercle d'art*, Paris 1959 (repr. on the title page) – Karl Eric Maison, *Honoré Daumier, Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings*, London and Greenwich CT, 1968 (reprint, San Francisco 1996), II (*The Watercolours and Drawings*), p. 44, no. 80, plate 14 – Louis Provost and Elizabeth Childs, *Honoré Daumier, A Thematic Guide to the Oeuvre*, New York and London 1989, p. 11

EXHIBITED: *Fransk Malerkunst fra det 19. Järhundrede*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 1914, no. 252 (repr. on the cover of the catalogue) – *Honoré Daumier. Peintures, aquarelles, dessins*, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris 1934, no. 147, repr. – *Paintings, Drawings and Lithographs by Honoré Daumier*, Leicester Galleries, London 1936, no. 59 – *Honoré Daumier, le peintre-graveur*, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris 1958, no. 207

The present sheet depicts the half-length figure of a painter grasping a brush with two fingers of his right hand, a palette in his left hand. He seems in good spirits. His head is turned to the right to study the sitter whom he fixes with a trained eye and concentrated expression. A cap is perched on the full head of unruly, brushed-back curls.

In early exhibition catalogues the drawing is titled *Le Peintre* and a label on the backing board bears a hand-written inscription stating that the work is a *premiere pensée du tableau: le peintre* [lit.: a very first idea for the painting *Le Peintre*]. Although Daumier executed a number of paintings depicting an artist at work none are directly related to the present drawing. The label of the Leicester Galleries exhibition held in London in 1936 carries the title *Portrait de Corot* and the lender's name is given as André Dunoyer de Segonzac, painter. It is possible that the previous owner, the art critic Claude Roger-Marx, had seen in the painter's physiognomy a similarity with the features of Corot. Alternatively, it may have been the lender, Dunoyer de Segonzac, who found a new title for the portrait in 1936.

Karl Eric Maison, writing in 1968, exercises caution, speaking simply of a *Portrait présumé de Corot* [alleged portrait of Corot].

Maison lists a total of eighty-eight individual portrait studies of heads and half-length figures in the catalogue raisonné of Daumier's drawings. Most of these portrait studies depict imaginary characters. The group does, however, contain a number of genuine portraits, such as the four sketches of the sculptor Carrière-Belleuse (Maison 47-50). It is therefore entirely conceivable that Daumier's drawing is a portrait sketch depicting his friend Corot.

Corot and Daumier, two major nineteenth-century artists, became lifelong friends even though they each had a different approach to painting and to the choice of subject matter. In the 1850s they both belonged to the circle of artists around Charles-François Daubigny. The artist Félix Braquemond described the regular get-togethers at Daubigny's house in Auvers-sur-Oise: 'In my youth, I frequently dined at Daubigny's house. Gathered there were artists whose conversations would abruptly change subject - jumping from the antique torso to the boats filled with apples moored in front of the house. Animated conversations on the "direct study of nature" or the comparative merits of paint dryers from Haarlem and greasy oil paints would often be interrupted by some amusing comment - the product of the high spirits of one of these table companions who included none other than Corot, Daumier, Geoffroy-Dechaume and so on.'¹ Corot and Daumier worked together and both made major contributions to the decoration of Daubigny's house.² Eventually, in 1868, when Daumier suffered from partial and intermittent blindness and became impoverished, Corot purchased a house for him in the village of Valmondois-sur-Oise. Corot had a large number of works by Daumier in his collection, among them five paintings.³ How much Corot understood and loved the art of his friend is conveyed by Arsène Alexandre. Writing about the collector Henri Rouart, Alexandre notes: *M. Rouart fut avec le Comte Doria, celui qui (sauf Corot) comprit le mieux Daumier de son temps et l'aima le plus sincèrement.*⁴ [Monsieur Rouart, like Count Doria, was someone who of his day (apart from Corot) best understood Daumier and loved him the most sincerely].

Corot painted two portraits of Daumier. One shows him preparing a lithographic stone,⁵ and the other, executed in 1870-2, depicts him in his studio, at work on a painting [Fig. 1]. In both paintings the image of Daumier is executed in a monochrome palette. The preference for a brown palette was also a trademark of Daumier's work, and Corot may have adopted this technique for the two portraits of his friend. Conversely, a portrait in watercolour of Corot by Daumier is recorded. Executed in 1866-8, it depicts Corot reading or possibly sketching on a garden bench at his house in Ville-d'Avray [Fig. 2].

¹ Madeleine Fidell-Beaufort and Janine Bailly-Herzberg, *Daubigny*, Paris 1975, p. 41.

² See Rena M. Hoisington, 'Exkurs. Arbeit und Freundschaft: Corot, Oudinot und das Atelier in Daubignys Haus in Auvers', in exhib. cat., Karlsruhe 2012, op. cit., pp. 301-13.

³ David Ogawa, 'Corot's Daumiers', in Deborah J. Johnson and David Ogawa (eds.), *Seeing and Beyond, Essays on Eighteenth- to Twenty-First-Century Art in Honor of Kermit S. Champa*, New York 2005, pp. 125-48.

⁴ Arsène Alexandre, *La collection Henri Rouart*, Paris 1912, p. 35.

⁵ Oil on panel, 20.5 x 15 cm. Alfred Robaut, *L'œuvre de Corot*, Paris 1905, III, no. 1584, repr.

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST

Comparison between the present drawing and two photographs of Corot taken in the late 1850s and early 1860s [Figs. 3 and 4] shows that there are a large number of convincing parallels: the full head of curly, brushed-back, slightly bouffant hair; the large nose that became more prominent with age; the bright, wide-open gaze shown in the Nadar photograph; the painter's smock and the soft cap on Corot's head – two attributes with which Corot had portrayed himself in the self-portrait *Corot, la Palette à la Main* of circa 1835. [Fig. 5].

The excellent provenance of the drawing deserves a special mention. Its former owners include the two distinguished Daumier specialists Arsène Alexandre and Claude Roger-Marx, both of whom published extensively on Daumier; the caricaturist Louis Morin; and the painter André Dunoyer de Segonzac.



Fig. 1: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot,
Portrait de Daumier dans son atelier, c.1870-2,
oil on panel, 34.9 x 26.6 cm.
Private collection, Germany;
acquired from Le Claire Kunst in 2016.
(Dieterle and Pacitti, *Quatrième supplément à 'l'oeuvre de Corot' par Robaut et al.*, no. 46)

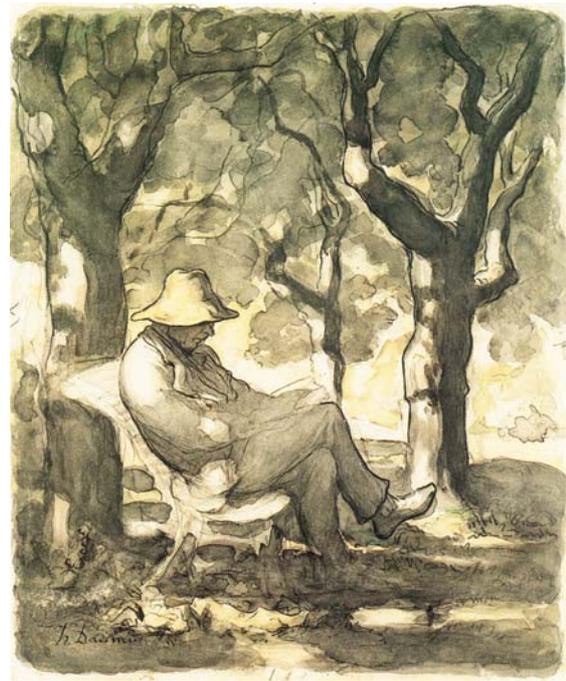


Fig.2: Honoré Daumier,
Le Liseur or Corot dessinant à la Ville-d'Avray, 1866-8,
watercolour, pencil, black ink and conté crayon on
paper, 338 x 270 mm.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, collection
H. O. Havemeyer [inv. 29.100.199]
(Maison D 361)



Fig. 3: H. Lavaud, *Portrait of Corot*, albumen print.



Fig. 4: Nadar, *Portrait of Corot*, c.1863, salted paper print.



Fig. 5: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Corot, la palette à la main*, c.1835, oil on canvas, 34.0 x 24.8 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence [inv. 1890 n.2063] (Robaut 370)