

# LE CLAIRE KUNST SEIT 1982

HONORÉ DAUMIER

1808 Marseilles - Valmondois 1879

*André Marie Jean Jacques Dupin, also known as Dupin the Elder, 'L'Orateur'*

Bronze with dark brown patina, cast made after the polychrome, unbaked clay maquette executed in 1832 [Fig. 1]. Cast 15/25 from a total edition of 25 commissioned by Maurice le Garrec and cast by Barbédienne. Marked with the initials: MLG within a rectangle and stamped: BRONZE; bearing the cast inscription: 15/25 within a circle.

14.3 cm x 14.9 x 9.2 cm

PROVENANCE: M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York – Sold to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney F. Brody in May 1961.

LITERATURE: Maurice Gobin, *Daumier sculpteur (1808-1879), avec un catalogue raisonné et illustré de l'œuvre sculpté*, Geneva 1952, no. 10, titled *L'Orateur* – Jeanne L. Wassermann, *Daumier Sculpture, A Critical and Comparative Study*, exhib. cat., Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA 1969, p. 69-72, no. 9 d (illustration of the polychrome, unbaked clay maquette on p. 70-1; illustration of another cast of the present bust on p. 71).

*Les célébrités du Juste Milieu* is the title of a series of small, polychrome portrait busts executed by Honoré Daumier in the years 1831 to 1835. Made of unbaked clay, the maquettes are caricatures of *députés* and other politicians of the time. The title refers to something said by Louis-Philippe in his famous speech delivered on 30 January 1831, as *porte-parole* of the new regime: *We shall attempt to remain in the 'juste milieu' (the just middle), at an equal distance from the excesses of popular power and the abuses of royal power.*<sup>1</sup>

The busts almost certainly served as models for Daumier's eponymous series of lithographs commissioned by the publicist Charles Philipon. Philipon was the editor of two leading satirical journals – *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*. He was a professed Republican and fierce opponent of the July Monarchy. His intention was to publish a powerful, truthful gallery of portraits based on accurate observation. At the same time the portraits were to convey something of the opportunities for parody provided by these self-important high-ranking politicians.<sup>2</sup> Daumier's lithographic portrait of Dupin appeared in *La Caricature* on 14 June 1832 [Fig. 2].

In the 1830s, Daumier's work began to show a growing interest in three-dimensionality. His figures have an increasing compactness, their facial traits sharpen and the focus on volumes lends them sculptural qualities. However, Daumier went unnoticed in the medium of sculpture in his lifetime. The forty-five clay portrait busts and twenty-four figurines he produced were to remain largely unknown outside a close circle of friends. Their first public showing was in 1878 at a retrospective organized by the Galerie Durand-Ruel. This was only shortly before Daumier's death.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nous chercherons à nous tenir dans le juste milieu, également éloigné des excès du pouvoir populaire et des abus du pouvoir royal.*

<sup>2</sup> *'La Caricature' avait dans le temps promis à ses abonnés une galerie de portraits des célébrités du juste milieu, dont les ressemblances, consciencieusement étudiées, devaient posséder, outre un caractère énergique, ce trait burlesque connu sous le nom de 'charge'.* (Charles Philipon, in *La Caricature*, 26 April 1832).

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Of the original forty-five clay portrait busts of *Les célébrités du Juste Milieu*, only thirty-six have survived. They remained in the possession of the Philipon family from the 1830s until 1927, when they were sold to the art dealer Maurice le Garrec. Le Garrec commissioned the Barbédienne foundry to cast twenty-five of the clay maquettes in bronze, each bust in an edition of 25 numbered casts– the remaining 10 clay maquettes were cast in an edition of 30. Casting continued over a lengthy period and was not completed until around 1948. At some point after 1955 Le Garrec's wife commissioned a further three sets of the complete series for herself and her two daughters. These casts are stamped *Valsuani Cire Perdue, Paris*. Today, the surviving set of clay maquettes is held in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.<sup>3</sup>

Portrayed in the present bronze is André Marie Jean Jacques Dupin, also known as Dupin the Elder (1783-1865). He was a Paris lawyer elected to the Chambre des députés as a liberal in 1827. He championed freedom of the press, was appointed prosecutor general under Louis-Philippe and acted as advisor to the House of Orléans. Elected to the Académie française in 1832, he was president of the Chambre des députés from 1832 to 1839 and presided over the Assemblée législative from 1849 to 1851. He was appointed senator in 1857 under the Second Empire. A biographical note in the *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français* underlines the frequency and eloquence of his speeches in the years 1830-31: *When discussion grew heated, Casimir Perier, who was eager to employ him in his ministry, would say: 'Parlez, parlez, Dupin!' And Dupin would then give free rein to extraordinary flights of rhetoric, his language brutal, biting and vulgar but equally witty and imaginative.* This is how Daumier portrays him – in his robes of office, declaiming open-mouthedly, and symbolizing the power of the spoken word.

Daumier's portrait bust series was to herald a new artistic genre – caricatural sculpture. His sketchy, roughly modelled surfaces provide a foretaste of the work of Auguste Rodin and Medardo Rosso.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See *Portraits-charges. Les bustes-charges des 'Célébrités du Juste Milieu'*, in *Daumier 1808-1879*, exhib. cat., Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada, Ottawa, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris and The Phillips Collection, Washington, 1999-2000, Paris 1999, pp. 84-177.

<sup>4</sup> Ingrid Mössinger and Karin Sagner (eds.), *Honoré Daumier. Ein Spötter ist's und scharf sein Scherz. Lithographien, Skulpturen, Gemälde*, exhib. cat., Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, 2008, p. 33.



Fig. 1: *Dupin*; 1832. polychrome, unbaked clay maquette; 15.2 x 15.2 x 9.2 cm.  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris [inv. RF 3485]

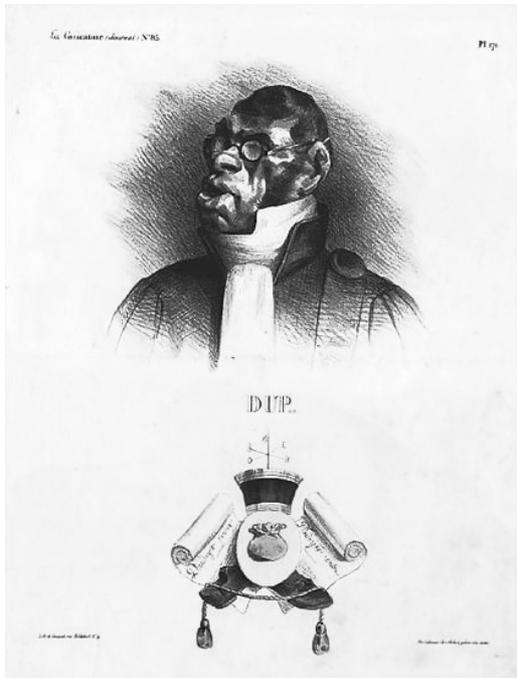


Fig. 2: *Dupin*; lithograph; published in *La Caricature*, Paris, 14 June 1832.