



# BACHELOR PROGRAM OF CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

COVA 2220: 16<sup>TH</sup> -19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY VISUAL ARTS

# WHAT IS REALISM?

**Realism**, in the arts, the accurate, detailed, unembellished depiction of nature or of contemporary life.

It is recognized as the first modern movement in art, which rejected traditional forms of art, literature, and social organization as outmoded in the wake of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

# WHEN DID IT APPEAR?

Adopted as an [aesthetic](#) program in the mid-19th century in France. It became a major trend in France in 1850 and 1880.

# WHAT DID THEY PORTRAY?

The lives, appearances, problems, customs, and mores of the middle and lower classes, of the unexceptional, the ordinary, the humble, and the unadorned. Indeed, they conscientiously set themselves to reproducing all the hitherto-ignored aspects of contemporary life and society—its mental attitudes, physical settings, and material conditions.

# BY WHAT IT WAS STIMULATED?

Realism was stimulated by several [intellectual](#) developments amongst them:

- Anti-Romantic movement in Germany, with its emphasis on the common man as an artistic subject
- [Auguste Comte](#)'s [Positivist](#) philosophy, in which sociology's importance as the scientific study of society was emphasized;
- The rise of professional critical [journalism](#) and caricature with its accurate and dispassionate recording of current events;
- and the development of [photography](#), with its capability of mechanically reproducing visual appearances with extreme accuracy

# KEY IDEAS

- Realism is broadly considered the beginning of modern art.
- Realism concerned itself with how life was structured socially, economically, politically, and culturally in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Realism was the first explicitly anti-institutional, nonconformist art movement.
- Realism brought in a new conception of the artist as self-publicist.

# ARTIST: GUSTAVE COURBET (FRENCH)

He viewed the frank portrayal of scenes from everyday life as a truly democratic art.

*The Artist's Studio*, showing Gustave Courbet at the easel, oil on canvas by Courbet (1854–55)



# ARTIST:GUSTAVE COURBET (FRENCH)

He believed that if he could not see something, he should not paint it. He also decided that his art should have a social consciousness that would awaken the self-involved Parisian to contemporary concerns: the good, the bad and the ugly.



*The Stonebreakers* (1849)



# ARTIST: GUSTAVE COURBET (FRENCH)



*A Burial at Ornans (1849-50)*

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/realism/v/courbet-a-burial-at-ornans>

# ARTIST: ADOLPH VON MENZEL (GERMAN)

- Best known for demonstrating scenes from the life of *Frederick the Great*
- Capturing, with amazing detail and precision, *the scenes and objects of everyday life*

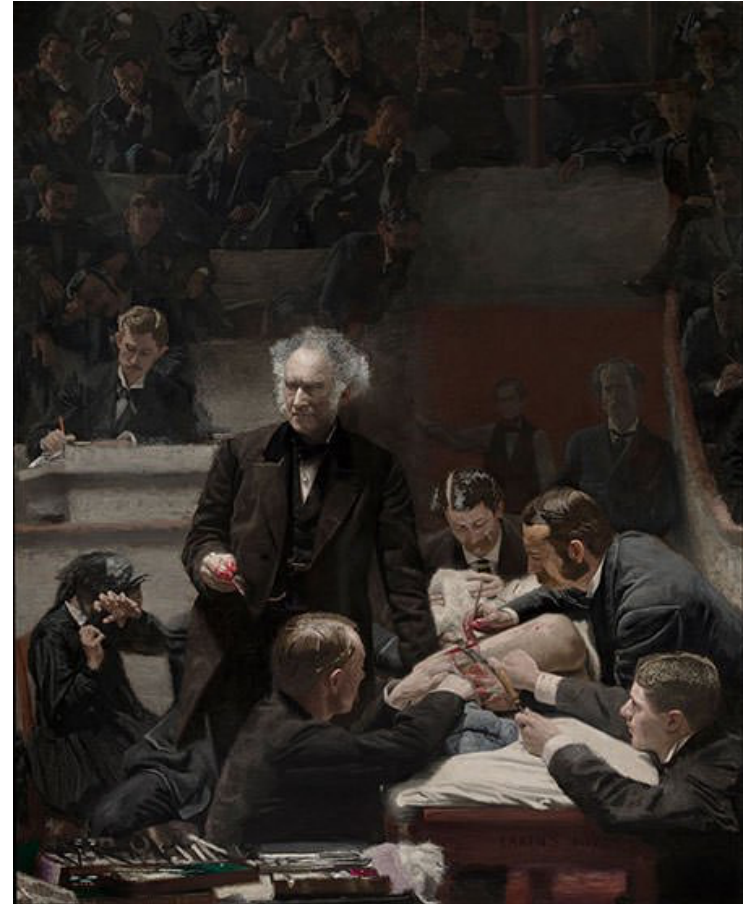
*Eisenwalzwerk, Iron Rolling Mill (1875)*



# ARTIST: THOMAS COWPERTHWAIT EAKINS (AMERICAN)

- A painter, photographer, sculptor and fine arts educator
- Was interested in *bringing out the individuality of his models*

*The Gross Clinic (1875)*



# ARTIST: THOMAS COWPERTHWAIT EAKINS (AMERICAN)



*Between Rounds (1844)*

# ARTIST: HONORÉ-VICTORIN DAUMIER (FRENCH)

- Though a prominent painter, sculptor and printmaker, he is *best known for his caricatures of 19th century French political and social life.*
- He satirized government officials and the manners of the bourgeoisie while finding heroes in the working class



*Rue Transnonain (1834)*

# ARTIST: WINSLOW HOMER (AMERICAN)

- His paintings depicting rural scenes of young people, children and life in a farm
- *He showcase man's dramatic struggle with nature.* Homer's realism was objective, true to nature and emotionally controlled



*The Gulf Stream (1899)*

# ARTIST: EDOUARD MANET (FRENCH)

His distortion of perspective, a refusal to follow the Renaissance model of the canvas as a "window onto the world," laid the groundwork for the formal experimentation of Impressionism and later movements.

Manet's artworks during the mid 1850s depicted contemporary themes and everyday life situations including bullfights, people in pavement cafes, singers, and Gypsies. His brush strokes were also rather loose, and the details were quite simplified and lacked much transitional tones.



*Luncheon on the Grass (1862-63)*

# ARTIST: EDOUARD MANET (FRENCH)



*Olympia (1863)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJpvwaNV1tU>



# JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET (FRENCH)

- Part of a "trilogy" of paintings celebrating France's rural denizens



*The Gleaners (1857)*