

Art and Social Comment



Goya's *The Third of May*

The year was 1808, and Napoleon's troops had invaded Spain. In May, the Spanish people revolted and were repressed without mercy by French troops.

Francisco Goya represented this brutal suppression in the painting *The Third of May*. This has been at times referred to as the first modern painting that gave a photographic view of an event before the camera.

The use of light and dark in the painting moves the viewer from the center figure in white to the French troops who extend into the darkness. The central figure is posed with his arms out as if being crucified, and stigmata are imprinted on his hands as he waits for his execution among others who have already died. A monk prays over the dead and will soon be among them. This piece of art showing the innocence at the hands of tyranny set the stage for other works to express social concerns.



Honore Daumier in 1834 used art to show the brutality of the French troops with his *Rue Transnonain*, depicting the slaughter of innocence at 12 Rue Transnonain. The day before, an infantry captain had been shot and killed by a bullet aimed from a window. The army returned and set about the slaughter of every living soul in the hotel.

The influence of Goya can be seen in Edward Manet's *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian* and Pablo Picasso's works *Guernica* and *Massacre in Korea*.

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