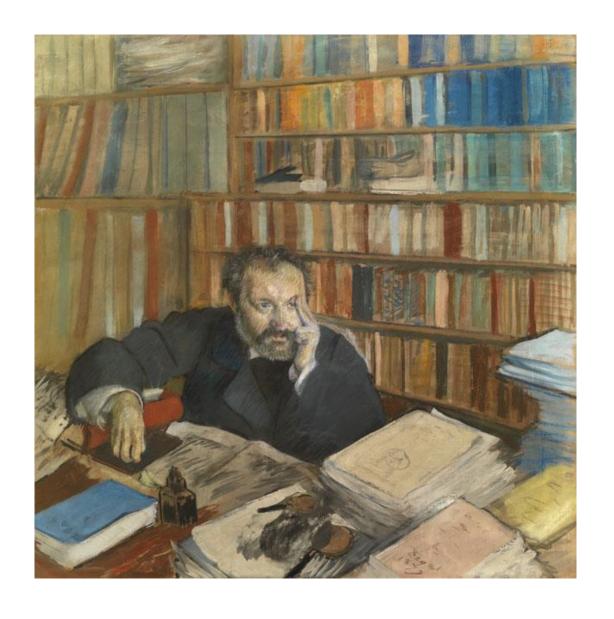
Degas and Antisemitism



Diego Martelli (1839 - 1896), Edgar Degas, 1879, oil on canvas, SNG



Portrait of Edmond Duranty, Edgar Degas, 1879, gouache with pastel enlivenment on linen, Burrell Collection

"sometimes our viewpoint is very high, sometimes very low; as a result we lose sight of the ceiling, and everything crowds into our immediate field of vision, and furniture is abruptly cropped".

"What we need are the special characteristics of the modern individual – in his clothing, in social situations, at home, or on the street [...] It is the study of the relationship of a man to his home, or the particular influence of his profession on him, as reflected in the gestures he makes: the observation of all aspects of the environment in which he evolves and develops."

La Nouvelle Peinture, 1876



Louis Edmond Duranty (1833-1880), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Émile Zola (1840-1902)



Woman with Field Glasses, Degas, c.1865, Burrell Collection

The Dreyfus Affair

- Political scandal that shook France.
- 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus accused of leaking secrets to Germany.
- 1894-99, sent to 'Devils Island' penal colony in French Guiana.
- His imprisonment questioned by many, including Zola.
- Set up by army as convenient 'un-French' scapegoat.
- Sparked anti-semitic sentiment, and country divided itself into Dreyfusards, and anti-Dreyfusards.
- Dreyfus was eventually exonerated in 1906.



Captain Alfred Dreyfus, c.1894

L'AURORE

ERNEST VAUGHAN

J'Accuse ...!

LETTRE AU PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE Par ÉMILE ZOLA



La Libre parole illustrée, 28/10/1893.

..." the old governess resumed reading aloud from an article in Libre Parole, a task that Pauline's arrival had temporarily interrupted. Degas listened with an attentive expression, nodding slightly here and there to signal his agreement with the author." Alice Michel, Degas and his Model (Zwirner books) p.28

"So, this afternoon you're going to pose for M. Blondin, who isn't blond at all, is he? "Not in the slightest. He has jet-black, curly hair and a beard to match."

"Is he a Jew?"

"I don't think so, Monsieur Degas."

With a brutal tone, Degas said:

"I detest them, those Jews! An abominable race that ought to be shut up in ghettos. Or even totally eradicated... They don't even have a homeland, and now they've overrun France; they've snuck in everywhere, they've stolen all the best positions for themselves!"...

"I never go into a store if I know it's owned by a Jew..."

"Pauline fell silent; she had no desire to admit that, as a matter of face, M.Blondin was indeed a Jew. Degas was perfectly capable of firing her for consenting to pose for such a man."

- Alice Michel, Degas and his Model, (Zwirner edition), p.47

