

Sanya Kantarovsky
Teachers and Students

24 May–29 June 2024
Place de l'Alma, Paris

Teachers and Students.

Honoré Daumier published his titular series of lithographs in the journal *le Charivari* between 1845–46. With its title *Professeurs et Moutards*, the choice of words also suggested that the “students” depicted may have also been rascals, little devils – at least something about them had to merit the punishments, the revulsion exhibited by their authority figures. Rebellious, liberatory moments reoccur in the series. The young students subvert the foolish superiority of their elders, who appear pompously stately, perhaps as armatures of the state itself.

A painter is always already a student, a fact that Kantarovsky implies through rhyming with Daumier himself. What happens to knowledge as it's transmitted and perverted through another subjectivity? The paintings in *Teachers and Students* approach this question by presenting a group of actors in these two categories, with the artist himself occupying both.

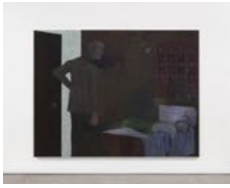
Unlike Daumier's young rascals, the children here seem resigned to punishment, with the initial act of transgression hidden from view. This omission does not seem to matter much; the focus remains on the child's consequential state of detachment. Quiet and submissive, the solemnity of the young figures could make one wonder: what is being taught here? Children are rendered in vague, unhardened features, as if to emphasize their youthfulness and vulnerable malleability. The adult figures of authority are at times entirely obscured, with faces that are marbled by swirling, evaporated paint or scumbled out of focus. Their features are marked by receding hairlines and a stiffness of form – a hand that never leaves its pant pocket, shoulder pads fitting just right. One figure casts a heavy shadow across an otherwise flat scene, suggesting the singularity of his stature. Depending on who is asked, these men may be custodians or they may be tyrants.

Is there space in this imbalance for a life lesson? While our teachers and guardians may hold precious knowledge, there is a certain irony witnessed in the stupidity of authoritarianism. In another scene, a young boy's shoulder acts as a resting surface for a towering forearm and limp wrist, which encases the child's head against their monolithic torso. An even more quiet form of hostage takes place in a scene painted from memory of Kantarovsky's Soviet school portrait: a freckled boy, suited, combed and buttoned, his stoic hand raised to formally request permission to speak. It is entirely coincidental that this face of good graces is also the one that most closely mimics the composure of an adult scholar. It could be the picture of a lifelong learner, or a childhood robbery.

For more information, please contact Charles Ndiaye (charles@modernart.net).

Modern Art

Gallery 1



Breach, 2024
oil on canvas
200.7 x 261.6 cm
79 x 103 in



Boy with Hole 4, 2023
earthenware, cobalt oxide
14.6 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm
5 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in



Boy with Hole 2, 2023
earthenware, cobalt oxide
14.6 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm
5 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in



Boy with Hole 5, 2023
earthenware, cobalt oxide
14.6 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm
5 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in

Gallery 2



Boy with Hole 3, 2023
earthenware, cobalt oxide
14.6 x 8.9 x 8.9 cm
5 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 in



The Answer, 2024
oil on linen
40.6 x 30.5 cm
16 x 12 in



A lesson in weakness, 2024
oil on linen
139.7 x 100.3 cm
55 x 39 1/2 in



Narrowing, 2024
oil on linen
90.2 x 69.8 cm
35 1/2 x 27 1/2 in

Gallery 3



Student (Daumier), 2024
pencil on paper
30.5 x 21.6 cm
12 x 8 1/2 in



Quiet hour, 2024
oil on canvas
219.7 x 167.6 cm
86 1/2 x 66 in

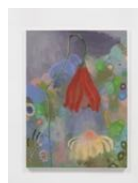


Diffusion, 2024
oil on linen
40.6 x 30.5 cm
16 x 12 in

Gallery 4



Drawing, 2024
oil on linen
139.7 x 100.3 cm
55 x 39 1/2 in



Aural Transmission, 2024
oil on canvas
190.5 x 139.7 cm
75 x 55 in