WORKS ON PAPER
Drawings, Lithographs, Photographs, Prints

The many and varied works on paper in the collection document the interrelation of art and politics during the Affair. As for other aspects of cultural production in Paris during period, the relations of imagery and text and the continuing dialogue of tradition and modernity are everywhere evident.

An important elaboration of the dreyfusard position occurs in a typical manifestation of the artistic fin-de-siècle, the album. During the 1890's many albums, on a variety of themes, were created by individual artists or groups. In 1898, an homage to the dreyfusard hero Georges Picquart was organized around a vast number of signatures collected in support of the persecuted officer. The signatures were assembled by several leading newspapers and subsequently published with twelve, black and white lithographs. The artists brought their particular vision to the Affair but were joined together in support of Picquart who had been imprisoned for attempting to establish the truth in the Dreyfus case. The "Homage to Picquart" was a mass protest demonstrating the importance of newspapers as centers of communication and the engagement of artists in affairs of state. (LP.6-17).

One of the most important expressions of Dreyfusard commitment occurs in the album which brings together the "Defenders of Justice." (LP 35). Photographic portraits of the principal figures (Dreyfus, Zola, Picquart, Bernard-Lazare) are followed by those of the ranks of activists and commentators. The entire document is an important declaration of dreyfusard strength and of the rise to public consciousness of the "intellectuals." Photographic portraiture was crucial for the production and appearance of this volume. Elsewhere, traditional concepts were subject to a "modernization" visible in the many informal "shots" of individuals and groups which the same photographer (Gerschel) made during the second court-martial of Alfred Dreyfus at Rennes. The latter were published in periodicals and brought together in a book entitled Five Weeks at Rennes. (LP.34). Photography was significant for dissemination of the "faces" of personalities engaged in the case, both for contemporaries and also for history. The American Ben Shahn, in constructing his own artistic monument to the memory of the Dreyfus Affair, turned to such period photographs for a series of paintings during the 1930's. Shahn's paintings were later transformed into prints and subsequently presented as an album. (LP 18-25).

Among the manifestations of international support, several Belgian artists are represented in the collection. French-speaking, and linked to France by geographical proximity and traditions, Belgium followed the Affair closely and passionately. Anderlecht's homage to Picquart depicts the courageous officer draped in the tricolor in a composition reminiscent of the Baroque. (LP.1). In the homage to Zola's quest for Justice, against the obfuscation of the French High Command, the print after the Belgian artist Devillers makes use of allegory to evoke the writer's championship of Dreyfus' cause. (LP.5). Several portraits of Auguste Scheurer-Kestner are also in the collection. The Senator is documented in prints and photographs, before and during his role in the campaign for justice and right.

The "realist" images of photography may be juxtaposed alongside the many caricatures produced during the Affair. Often the fantasy of the visual satirist depended on precisely such "documents" which, linked to a particular fantasy and wit, provide some of the more spectacular images of the Affair (see Broadsides and Posters above, in particular the Musée des horreurs). The attack on Zola by the pseudonymous "Lebourgeois" vilifies the author in his appearance and through his own oeuvre (LP 26-31, 36). This extraordinary series of prints, based on preliminary watercolors, was subsequently printed in postcard format—an eloquent statement on the "age of mechanical reproduction." An item of special resonance, significant of the historical context of the Affair, is the map of north-eastern France showing the division of Alsace-Lorraine following the war of 1870. Formerly belonging to Scheurer-Kestner this item was a gift to the collection by the Senator's descendants.

In documentation of the historical and continued social resonance of the Affair, several of the official photographs made during the ceremonies of February 1998 in Paris have entered the collection. During the proceedings at the Ecole Militaire the French Minister of Defense inaugurated a marble plaque in homage of Captain Alfred Dreyfus. A full-scale facsimile photograph of the plaque is in the collection, a gift of the French Ministry of Defense.