



Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Sabine Rewald, Ian Buruma, Matthias Eberle

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In the 1920s Germany was in the grip of social and political turmoil: its citizens were disillusioned by defeat in World War I, the failure of revolution, the disintegration of their social system, and inflation of rampant proportions. Curiously, as this important book shows, these years of upheaval were also a time of creative ferment and innovative accomplishment in literature, theater, film, and art.

Glitter and Doom is the first publication to focus exclusively on portraits dating from the short-lived Weimar Republic. It features forty paintings and sixty drawings by key artists, including Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, and George Grosz. Their works epitomize Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity), in particular the branch of that new form of realism called Verism, which took as its subject contemporary phenomena such as war, social problems, and moral decay. Subjects of their incisive portraits are the artists' own contemporaries: actors, poets, prostitutes, and profiteers, as well as doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and other respectable citizens. The accompanying texts reveal how these portraits hold up a mirror to the glittering, vital, doomed society that was obliterated when Hitler came to power.

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