Paintings, drawings, prints, by George Grosz: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 7 to November 2

Author
Grosz, George, 1893-1959

Date
1941

Publisher
The Museum of Modern Art, Department of Circulating Exhibitions

Exhibition URL
www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2831

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.
The retrospective exhibition of the work of George Grosz, now being shown in the Museum of Modern Art, demonstrates the extraordinary versatility of this distinguished painter and caricaturist. Now one of the most brilliant American masters of watercolor, Grosz’s work has elicited high praise from our critics; some of his oils command attention throughout the country; but it was his satirical drawings done in Germany during the 1920s which brought him worldwide fame.

Born in Berlin in 1893, Grosz was educated in Dresden and Berlin art schools where he earned a living by drawing illustrations for book jackets and humorous magazines. Dissatisfied with the routine training of drawing from plaster casts, he searched for other and newer inspiration. A visit to Paris in 1912 familiarized him with the work of Picasso and Chagall which proved to be a great impetus to the young artist. But it was the large Italian Futurist exhibition held in Berlin in 1913 which actually turned Grosz onto the path he was to follow. The direct influence of the Futurists is apparent in the early works included in the Museum’s exhibition.

Except for two furloughs, Grosz served in the trenches from 1914 to 1918, but he nevertheless managed to produce so many drawings that he found himself famous upon his return to Berlin. For the next ten years, as Europe’s most renowned caricaturist, he produced one volume of drawings after another. These caricatures combine angry satire with ferocious ridicule. The discouragement and desperate poverty in Germany following the close of the first World War moved the artist to protest against both military leaders and war profiteers. He lashed at their arrogance, callousness and stupidity with an even fiercer hatred than that of Dean Swift whose implacable satire is at times close in spirit to that of Grosz. Like Swift, too, he was fascinated by the most sordid and bestial qualities of mankind. "We were young men in our formative years," says Grosz. "Perhaps unconsiously we became accusers, and fighters for a better humanity." So inciting were his vitriolic attacks that Grosz was actually jailed for a brief period in 1923 on fabricated charges of indecency and sacrilege.

Early in the rise of the Nazi movement Grosz turned his insulting attacks against this new outrage. By 1932 Grosz realized that he would have to leave Germany. On invitation of the Art Students League in New York, he came to the United States to teach and has returned only once to Germany to bring his family here.

This migration was, in a way, a fulfillment of a youthful dream, for even twenty-five years before Grosz had developed a romantic interest in America. He followed the American movies, read our comic strips and wore American ready-made clothes. Although he continued to depict the sordid and corrupt in some of his American work, he has nevertheless tried to forget the bitterness of his lost battle in Germany. In recent years his work has been largely in oils and watercolors rather than in caricature, and his vitriolic assaults upon human baseness have become less and less apparent. His satirical skill, however, may be seen in the recent drawings which illustrate Ben Hecht’s "1001 New York Nights."

The current exhibition comprises 54 oils, drawings, watercolors and theatre designs from the years 1914 to 1940. This is one of the exhibitions which has been assembled and sent on tour through the country by the Museum’s Department of Circulating Exhibitions. This is its first showing in New York City.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td><strong>Pandemonium at the Outbreak of the War</strong></td>
<td>Ink drawing</td>
<td>Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Wild West</strong></td>
<td>Lithograph</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Memories of New York</strong></td>
<td>Lithograph</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td>1915</td>
<td><strong>Prisoners of War</strong></td>
<td>Lithograph</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Street Corner</strong></td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Lent by Erich Cohn</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Kleine Grosz Mappe&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Three lithographs from the portfolio</td>
<td>Published by Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1917</td>
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<td>Lent by J. B. Neumann</td>
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<td><strong>Card Players</strong></td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Lent by Dr. Victor Steiner</td>
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<td><strong>Big City</strong></td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>Lent by Herman Shulman</td>
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<td>1918</td>
<td><strong>A Piece of My World</strong></td>
<td>Watercolor and ink</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td><strong>Berlin</strong></td>
<td>Lithograph</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td><strong>Street Scene, Berlin</strong></td>
<td>Ink drawing</td>
<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td><strong>The Engineer Heartfield</strong></td>
<td>Watercolor and collage</td>
<td>Lent by A. Conger Goodyear</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Methusalem, the Eternal Bourgeois&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Four designs for dummies for the play</td>
<td>Watercolor and ink</td>
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<td>Lent by Associated American Artists</td>
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<td><strong>&quot;He&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Ink drawing</td>
<td>Lent by Erich Cohn</td>
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<td>1922</td>
<td><strong>&quot;Die Räuber&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Four lithographs from the portfolio</td>
<td>Published by Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1922</td>
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<td>Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis</td>
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<td><strong>&quot;Die Räuber&quot;</strong></td>
<td>A portfolio of nine lithographs to sentences from Schiller</td>
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<td>Lent by Erich Cohn</td>
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<td><strong>&quot;Androcles and the Lion&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Costume design for the play</td>
<td>Watercolor and ink</td>
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<td>Lent by Erich Cohn</td>
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<td><strong>Ecce Homo</strong></td>
<td>A portfolio of one hundred lithographs and watercolors</td>
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<td>Lent by Erich Cohn</td>
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TWO OLD MEN
Ink drawing
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis

1924 CASSIS
Watercolor and ink
Lent by Associated American Artists

1926 PORTRAIT OF JOHN FÖRSTE
Oil on canvas
Lent by Erich Cohn

PORTRAIT STUDY
Pencil drawing
Collection the Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Paul J. Sachs

1928 TEN POUNDS TOO MUCH
Watercolor and ink
Lent by Erich Cohn

THIRD CLASS FUNERAL
Watercolor and ink
Lent by Associated American Artists

NOCTURNE
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

1930 THE FAT RELATIVE
Watercolor and ink
Lent by Associated American Artists

AFTER THE BATH
Ink drawing
Lent by Associated American Artists

1932 THE BUTCHER SHOP
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

1933 NUNS
Watercolor
Lent by Erich Cohn

1934 IN THE SUBWAY
Watercolor
Lent by Erich Cohn

AFTER THE THEATRE
Watercolor
Lent by Herman Shulman

THE TIRED BOOTBLACK
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

LOWER MANHATTAN
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

1935 MORRO CASTLE
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

1936 NEW YORK HARBOR
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

CENTRAL PARK
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

THE WANDERER
Watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

STREET FIGHT
Oil on canvas
Lent by Associated American Artists

THE RIDER IS LOOSE AGAIN
Ink drawing
Lent by Erich Cohn

1937 A PIECE OF MY WORLD, OR THE LAST BATTALION
Ink drawing
Lent by Associated American Artists
THE THIN AND THE FAT
Ink and watercolor
Lent by Erich Cohn

STANDING NUDE
Oil on canvas
Lent by Harold Goldsmith

THE TRAMP
Oil on canvas
Lent by Associated American Artists

STILL LIFE WITH WALNUTS
Oil on canvas
Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art

1938 A PIECE OF MY WORLD, OR THE LAST BATTALION
Oil on canvas
Lent by Associated American Artists

PORTRAIT OF ERICH COHN
Oil on canvas
Lent by Erich Cohn

1939 DUNES AT TRURO
Watercolor
Lent by Herman Shulman

CAPE COD, 6
Chalk and watercolor
Lent by Associated American Artists

CAPE COD, 12
Watercolor
Lent by the Art Institute of Chicago
Watson F. Blair Purchase Prize

1940 NUDE
Chalk drawing on tinted paper
Lent by Erich Cohn

NUDE
Oil on canvas
Lent by Associated American Artists

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM
Oil on canvas
Lent by the artist

SELF PORTRAIT
Oil on canvas
Lent by the artist

DEPARTMENT OF CIRCULATING EXHIBITIONS
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.