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
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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 unconsciously 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.
1914 **Pandemonium at the Outbreak of the War**  
Ink drawing  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis

**Wild West**  
Lithograph  
Lent by Associated American Artists

**Memories of New York**  
Lithograph  
Lent by Associated American Artists

1915 **Prisoners of War**  
Lithograph  
Lent by Associated American Artists

**Street Corner**  
Oil on canvas  
Lent by Erich Cohn

1917 **“Kleine Grosz Mappe”**  
Three lithographs from the portfolio  
Published by Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1917  
Lent by J. B. Neumann

**Card Players**  
Oil on canvas  
Lent by Dr. Victor Steiner

**Big City**  
Oil on canvas  
Lent by Herman Shulman

1918 **A Piece of My World**  
Watercolor and ink  
Lent by Associated American Artists

1919 **Berlin**  
Lithograph  
Lent by Associated American Artists

1920 **Street Scene, Berlin**  
Ink drawing (published in the portfolio “Ecce Homo,” 1922)  
Lent by Associated American Artists

**The Engineer Heartfield**  
Watercolor and *collage*  
Lent by A. Conger Goodyear

1921 **“Methusalem, the Eternal Bourgeois”**  
Four designs for dummies for the play  
Watercolor and ink  
Lent by Associated American Artists

**“He”**  
Ink drawing (published in the portfolio “Ecce Homo,” 1922)  
Lent by Erich Cohn

1922 **“Die Räuber”**  
Four lithographs from the portfolio  
Published by Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1922  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis

**“Die Räuber”**  
A portfolio of nine lithographs to sentences from Schiller  
Published by Malik-Verlag, Berlin, 1922  
Lent by Erich Cohn

**“Androcles and the Lion”**  
Costume design for the play  
Watercolor and ink  
Lent by Associated American Artists

**“Ecce Homo”**  
A portfolio of one hundred lithographs and watercolors  
Published by Malik-Verlag, 1922  
Lent by Erich Cohn
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
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<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Two Old Men</td>
<td>Ink drawing</td>
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<td>1926</td>
<td>Portrait of John Förste</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Ten Pounds Too Much</td>
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<td>The Fat Relative</td>
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<td>1934</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>The Tired Bootblack</td>
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<td>1937</td>
<td>Central Park</td>
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<td>1939</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>The Rider is Loose Again</td>
<td>Ink drawing</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>Nocturne</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>New York Harbor</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Morro Castle</td>
<td>Watercolor</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>Lower Manhattan</td>
<td>Watercolor</td>
<td>Associated American Artists</td>
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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