

Otto Dix's "Portrait of Josef May"

Author(s): William H. Robinson

Source: *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Vol. 74, No. 8 (Oct., 1987), pp. 306-331

Published by: Cleveland Museum of Art

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25160000>

Accessed: 13-11-2018 11:39 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Cleveland Museum of Art* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*

306 Cover. *Portrait of Josef May*. Mixed media on plywood, 84 x 68.3 cm., 1926. Otto Dix, German, 1891-1969. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund. CMA 85.40

Between the world wars and before the rise of Nazism, a remarkable movement known as *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (The New Objectivity) flourished in Germany that perfectly mirrored the depressed, neurotic spirit of the time. Until the recent acquisition of Otto Dix's *Portrait of Josef May* (Cover),<sup>1</sup> the Cleveland Museum had no paintings representing that particular style. This was unfortunate, since *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* was both the leading artistic movement in Germany during the 1920s and the most extreme manifestation of the general trend toward realism that flourished in Europe and America following World War I.<sup>2</sup> *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* blossomed during the early chaotic years of the Weimar Republic (1919-23), reached its zenith in the mid-1920s—when it attracted a broad spectrum of artists, photographers, novelists, playwrights, and filmmakers—and finally perished with the rise of National Socialism in the early 1930s. Of the many artists associated with the movement, Dix has been described as “the dominant personality of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in German painting.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to being a master of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*, Dix was one of the few great portraitists of this century. Although occupied with portraiture for more than five decades, Dix painted his finest works in this genre during the mid-1920s. The Cleveland Museum is especially fortunate, then, not only to have secured one of the artist's *Neue Sachlichkeit* paintings (many of which were destroyed by the Nazis during their purges of so-called “degenerate art”), but one of his more remarkable portraits.<sup>4</sup> To understand its importance, it is essential that we examine this work against the background of Dix's artistic development and within the context of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.

### *I. Early Life and Training: 1891-1914*

*The Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art* (ISSN 0009-8841), Volume 74, number 8. Published monthly, except June and August, by The Cleveland Museum of Art. Subscriptions: \$25.00 per year. Single copies: \$2.50. Copyright 1987 by The Cleveland Museum of Art. Postmaster send address changes to CMA Bulletin, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. Second-class postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio. Editor, Jo Zuppan. Photographer, Nicholas Hlobeczy; Assistant, Stephen Kovacic. Designer, Laurence Channing; Assistant, Richard Sarian.

The son of an ironworker, Dix was born in Untermhaus near Gera in the Thuringian region of central Germany. From 1905 to 1909, he served a four-year apprenticeship with a Dekorationsmaler (house painter and decorator) in Gera. He spent the next five years studying at a Kunstgewerbeschule (school for the applied arts) in Dresden. Historian Fritz Löffler notes that Dix “received no academic training” at this school, but rather, was “an essentially self-taught artist.”<sup>5</sup> While a student in Dresden, Dix became interested in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and the art of northern Renaissance masters, such as Hans Holbein the Younger and Albrecht Dürer. Dix's *Self-Portrait with Carnation* of 1912 (Figure 1), for example, appears to be based on Dürer's *Self-Portrait with Eryngium* (Musée de Louvre, Paris).<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1. *Self-Portrait with Carnation*.  
Oil and tempera on panel, 73.66 x  
49.53 cm., 1912. Otto Dix. Founders  
Society, Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of  
Robert H. Tannahill, 51.65.



Figure 2. *Self-Portrait as Mars*. Oil on canvas, 81 x 66 cm., 1915. Otto Dix. Haus der Heimat, Freital.



## II. Expressionism: 1914-19

*We had grown up in a material age, and in each one of us there was a yearning for great experience, such as we had never known. The war had entered into us like wine . . . anything rather than stay at home, anything to make us one with the rest. . . .*

—Ernst Jünger<sup>7</sup>

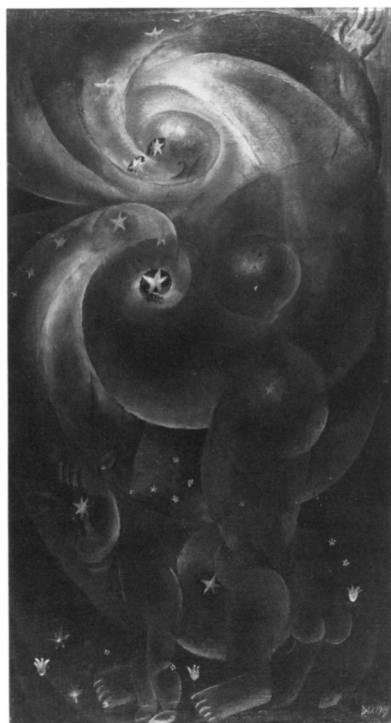
In *The Storm of Steel, From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front*, the novelist Ernst Jünger reflected on his state of mind as the world was preparing for war in August 1914. Jünger's enthusiasm for the war—his yearning for new experience—echoed the thoughts of hundreds of thousands of other young Europeans who volunteered eagerly that summer, then marched away smiling, singing, often adorned with flowers. Dix must have responded to the outbreak of war with similar emotions, because he enlisted immediately and was soon training as an artilleryman and a machine-gunner.

The fervor of the volunteers was fired in part by a belief that the war would transform society, and that from the destruction of the old social structure there might emerge a new, more vital civilization—perhaps a utopian, classless state. The German playwright Carl Zuckmayer, who also volunteered that summer, remembers the spirit of the time:

*We saw the meaning of the war in this inner liberation of the whole nation from obsolete conventions, in this “breakthrough” into the unknown . . . What animated the barracks and the encampments of volunteers and recruits in 1914 was by no means a “militaristic” spirit. It was revolutionary . . . Liberation from the pettiness and narrowness of middle-class life, from school and cramming, from doubts about the choice of a career, from everything which consciously or unconsciously we felt to be the stultification of our world. . . .*<sup>8</sup>

The war had an immediate and powerful effect on Dix's art. In *Self-Portrait as Mars* of 1915 (Figure 2), for example, Dix abandoned the controlled, linear precision of his *Self-Portrait with Carnation*, along with its implied “rationality,” for an essentially Expressionist style, characterized by savage brushwork, violent color, fragmented space, and dismembered forms. Dix now depicts himself as the ancient god of war, wearing a dark, antique-shaped helmet. While bullet holes form stars on his epaulet and helmet, exploding buildings, barbed wire, and screaming soldiers whirl around his cadaverous face in an endless cycle of death, destruction, and cosmic regeneration. Historian Diether Schmidt believes that the star motif in this painting refers to the symbolic “dancing star” in Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*:

Figure 3. *The Pregnant Woman*. Oil on canvas, 135 x 72 cm., 1919. Otto Dix. Galerie Valentien, Stuttgart.



Both the notion of a cruel, Dionysian principle of chaos, destruction, and rebirth, and the notion of a dancing star, derive from Nietzsche. As Zarathustra said, one must have chaos within oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.<sup>9</sup>

Historian Matthias Eberle commented further, that Dix:

*is not only the perpetrator of this destruction and transformation, but part of it. This warlord wills chaos because he feels it within himself and because he sees it as an opportunity to transform the world.*<sup>10</sup>

Dix experienced trench warfare first hand, served on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, and was wounded repeatedly at the Battle of the Somme. He was still stationed in Flanders when news of the Armistice arrived in November 1918.

Peace did not bring immediate changes in Dix's art. After returning to Dresden in early 1919, he continued to paint in an Expressionist style for about a year. His hallucinatory, emotionally charged painting *The Pregnant Woman* of 1919 (Figure 3), for example, suggests a continued longing for primitive, mystical experience. By 1920, however, the exuberance of the war years had given way to new emotions. Bitterly disillusioned by political and economic conditions in Germany, Dix's growing mood of anger and cynicism set his art on a radically new course.

### *III. Die Neue Sachlichkeit: Origins and Definitions*

Although the first two decades of the twentieth century were dominated by radical avant-garde movements and bold experimentation in the arts, the 1920s witnessed a decided trend away from abstraction and toward more conservative, representational styles. In France, artists such as Pablo Picasso, André Dérain, and Fernand Léger explored variant modes of realism and neo-classicism; in America, Max Weber and Marsden Hartley abandoned abstraction, while Charles Sheeler adopted a style of meticulous realism called Precisionism; in Italy, the two dominant art movements of the 1920s, *Valori Plastici* and *Pittura Metafisica* (Giorgio de Chirico, Giorgio Morandi, Carlo Carrà), were also part of this "return to the object" and to the imitation of nature. Historians often attribute this "retrenchment" to a widely felt need for a peaceful respite after the chaotic and emotionally draining experiences of World War I.

The most extreme manifestation of this general trend toward realism to emerge in the 1920s was *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*—a movement confined to Germany and so strongly conditioned by the socio-political climate of the postwar period in that country that it can only be understood within a specific historical context.

The establishment of the Weimar Republic in 1919 raised widespread expectations that a revolutionary transformation of society, prophesied by many at the beginning of the war, might



Figure 4. *Dance Bar in Baden-Baden*. Oil on canvas, 108 x 66 cm., 1923. Max Beckmann, German, 1884-1950. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.



Figure 5. *Studio Roof*. Watercolor and collage, 45.8 x 63.8 cm., 1920. Rudolf Schlichter, German, 1890-1955. Galerie Alvensleben, Munich.

finally be realized. Those hopes, however, quickly dissipated amid the political and economic turmoil of the postwar period. From 1919 to 1923, Germany was besieged by crippling inflation and rampant unemployment, conditions made worse by the imposition of massive war reparations under the Treaty of Versailles. When Germany fell behind in its payments, a French army marched into the Ruhr Valley and seized control of all heavy industry in the region. From 1919 to 1923, the value of the deutsche mark fell from 4.2 DM to the U.S. dollar to the almost incomprehensible level of 4,200,000,000 DM to a single U.S. dollar. By 1923, an entire lifetimes savings could be exhausted on the purchase of one loaf of bread. While unemployment, crime, prostitution, and food riots were becoming epidemic in the cities, contemporary observers noted that the poverty of the general population contrasted sharply with the wealth of war profiteers. According to the novelist Otto Friedrich:

*By the middle of 1923, the whole of Germany had become delirious. Whoever had a job got paid every day, usually at noon, and then ran to the nearest store, with a sackful of banknotes, to buy anything he could get, at any price. In their frenzy, people paid millions and even billions of marks for cuckoo clocks, shoes that didn't fit, anything that could be traded for something else.<sup>11</sup>*

Such disastrous economic conditions naturally produced hostility toward the new government. Faced with mounting opposition from both left- and right-wing political groups, newly elected President Friedrich Ebert (a Social Democrat) employed loose bands of mercenaries, or *Freikorps*, to suppress riots and rebellions, such as the Spartacus uprisings of 1919 in which opposition leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered. These events led many to conclude that the new government was just as repressive as the old Hohenzollern monarchy, and that the so-called "revolution" of the Social Democrats was a fraud.

As early as 1920, a growing mood of cynicism and disillusionment among German intellectuals began to spark a reaction against Expressionism in the arts. "No more about war, revolution and the salvation of the world," demanded Paul Kornfield, once an Expressionist playwright. "Let us be modest and turn our attention to other and smaller things."<sup>12</sup> German artists responded by recording the actual conditions of life in postwar society with a new sense of sober, unsentimental detachment. They abandoned the idealism, ecstasy, and subjectivism of Expressionism for a cold, bitter, dry realism in which the world would no longer be "re-made" according to the fantasies of the artist, but simply "reported." Among the artists associated with this new trend were: Max Beckmann (Figure 4), Rudolf Schlichter (Figure 5), and Otto Dix (Figures 7-10).

Gustav Hartlaub, then director of the Mannheim Kunsthalle, circulated a letter in 1923 announcing that he intended to organize an exhibition documenting the recent trend toward realism in German art, for which he coined the term *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*.<sup>13</sup> Hartlaub observed that the movement:

*related to the general contemporary feeling in Germany of resignation and cynicism after a period of exuberant hopes (which had found an outlet in Expressionism). Cynicism and resignation are the negative side of the "Neue Sachlichkeit;" the positive side expresses itself in the enthusiasm for immediate reality. . . .*<sup>14</sup>

Other historians have since offered a variety of interpretations of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*. Fritz Schmalenbach, for example, described it as:

*A revolution in the general mental attitude of the times . . . it was a new disillusionment, a sobriety after the intoxication, the self-abandonment, the unrestrained and so to speak inflationary frenzy of expressionism's latest, postwar phase [i.e., 1918-19] . . . a radical rejection of all emotional bias, a deliberately cultivated unsentimentality, so to speak.*<sup>15</sup>

In his study of Weimar culture, Peter Gay observed that:

*Whatever its ultimate meaning—and that meaning differed from artist to artist—in substance the Neue Sachlichkeit was a search for reality, for a place to stand in the actual world. . . . It called for realism in setting, accurate reportage, return to naturalistic speech, and, if there had to be idealism, sober idealism. It was a movement toward simplicity and clarity. . . .*<sup>16</sup>

Franz Roh has established the following categories of contrasting qualities that distinguish *Neue Sachlichkeit* from Expressionist art:

<i>Expressionism</i>	<i>Neue Sachlichkeit</i>
<i>ecstatic subjects</i>	<i>sober subjects</i>
<i>suppression of the object</i>	<i>the object clarified</i>
<i>rhythmical</i>	<i>representational</i>
<i>dynamic</i>	<i>static</i>
<i>loud</i>	<i>quiet</i>
<i>summary [form]</i>	<i>thorough [detailed]</i>
<i>monumental</i>	<i>miniature</i>
<i>warm</i>	<i>cold</i>
<i>thick color texture</i>	<i>thin paint surface</i>
<i>rough</i>	<i>smooth</i>
<i>visibility of painting process</i>	<i>effacement of painting process</i>
<i>expressive deformation</i>	<i>external purification of the object</i> <sup>17</sup>



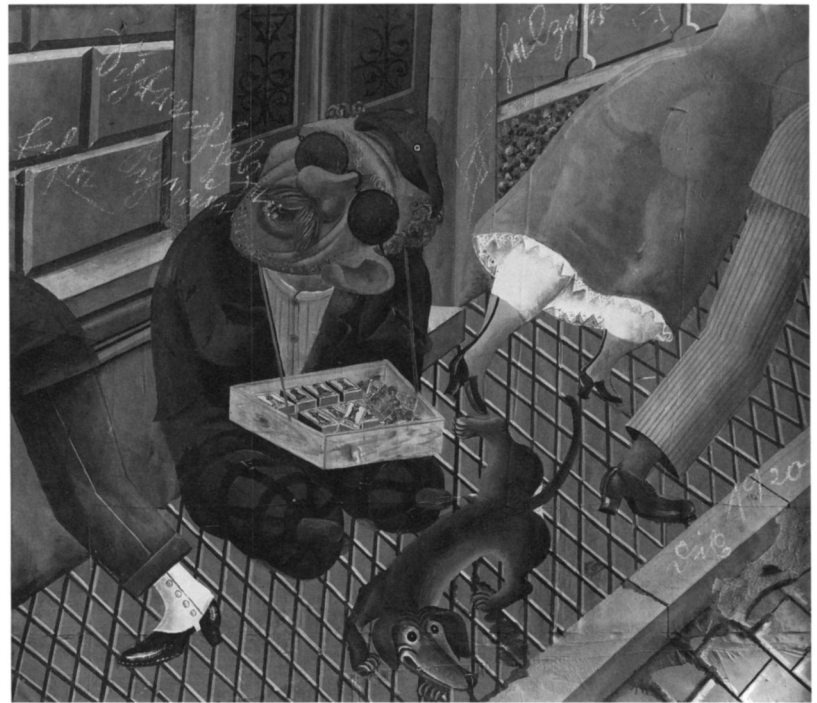
Figure 6. *Prague Street*. Oil on canvas with collage, 100 x 80 cm., 1920. Otto Dix. Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart, Otto Dix Stiftung.

In his circular of 1923, Hartlaub also identified two separate branches of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*: (1) a “Veristic” left wing and (2) a “Neoclassical,” or conservative, right wing. The art of the Verists is generally marked by strong social or political content; it commonly employed satire and irony to attack the Weimar government and the capitalist system (many Verists belonged to radical left-wing political parties). The Verists were concentrated largely in the industrial cities of the north, especially Berlin and Dresden. Among the artists associated with this group are: Dix, Beckmann, George Grosz, Georg Scholz, Rudolf Schlichter, Anton Räderschmidt, Christian Schad, and Otto Griebel.<sup>18</sup> The conservative right wing of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*, on the other hand, whose art is sometimes referred to as “magic realism,” preferred traditional and nonpolitical subjects, such as landscape and still life. Centered in Munich, this group included: Alexander Kanoldt, Carlo Mense, and the Neoclassicist Georg Schrimpf.<sup>19</sup>

#### IV. Dix’s Early Neue Sachlichkeit Paintings: 1920-23

Among the first artists to develop a *Neue Sachlichkeit* style, Dix abandoned Expressionism around 1920 in order to paint the tangible experience of everyday life. He recorded his observations of postwar society with unsparing, brutal directness; few details escaped his caustic eye. It soon became apparent, however, that Dix was interested in more than just surface realism; emphasis was

Figure 7. *The Matchseller I*. Oil on canvas with collage, 141.5 x 166 cm., 1920. Otto Dix. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Inv. Nr. L 772.





placed on exploring class distinctions and the cynical, depressed state of mind that characterized Weimar society. His early *Neue Sachlichkeit* paintings seem inspired by a desire to expose the underlying sociological/psychological conflicts of the age. Historian Brigid S. Barton comments:

*Dix's work of these years is important in that it confronts many of the most serious issues of the period. The themes of self-delusion, corruption, violence, and inhumanity were central to German history during the early years of the Republic . . . he conveys to the viewer much of the underlying discontent and conflict of these years.*<sup>20</sup>

The spirit of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* is clearly evident in two collage paintings, *Prague Street* and *The Matchseller I* (Figures 6-7), created by Dix in 1920. Stylistically, *Prague Street* (Figure 6) can be considered a transitional work: strong garish hues, areas of impasto, and compressed spatial organization betray lingering traces of Expressionism, as well as a brief flirtation with Dada in the use of collage elements. It is really the *subject*, rather than the style, that most clearly identifies this work as an early *Neue Sachlichkeit* painting. On a fashionable street in Dresden, a crippled veteran and a mutilated beggar are treated contemptuously by a snarling dog and two figures who disappear beyond the left and right edges of the picture. An anti-Semitic leaflet in the lower left warns the beggar to "Get Out." In the background, artificial limbs are offered for sale but kept out of the reach of the poor behind glass windows. In *The Matchseller I* (Figure 7), three figures dressed in expensive clothes turn their backs and flee from a blind beggar with amputated legs, while a dog urinates on him. Such scenes may not have been imagined by Dix, as his friend and fellow artist George Grosz observed:

*Real or fake war casualties were sitting at every street corner. Some of them sat there dozing until somebody came by, then they would twist their heads and start convulsive shaking. Shakers, we called them. "Look Ma, there's another one of those funny shakers." We had become quite immune to all the weird and disgusting sights.*<sup>21</sup>

Paintings such as *Prague Street* and *The Matchseller I* mark the emergence of a new spirit in Dix's art: they concentrate, not on the heroes or the experience of war, but on its victims, while informing us of the artist's growing revulsion at society's indifference to human suffering.

Dix's early *Neue Sachlichkeit* paintings seem inspired by a desire to investigate the moral condition of his age, as they deal with such themes as social injustice, the impoverishment of the middle class, militarism, degenerate sexuality, prostitution, crime, and the dehumanizing effects of technology. In his *Portrait of the Dermatologist and Urologist Dr. Hans Koch* of 1921 (Figure 8), for example, Dix offered an especially caustic view of science and



Figure 8. *Portrait of the Dermatologist and Urologist Dr. Hans Koch*. Oil on canvas, 100.5 x 90 cm., 1921. Otto Dix. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

Figure 9. *The Salon II*. Oil on canvas, 1921. Otto Dix. Now missing.



Figure 10. Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings in *The Blue Angel*. A film by Josef von Sternberg, 1931. Museum of Modern Art, New York, Film Archive.

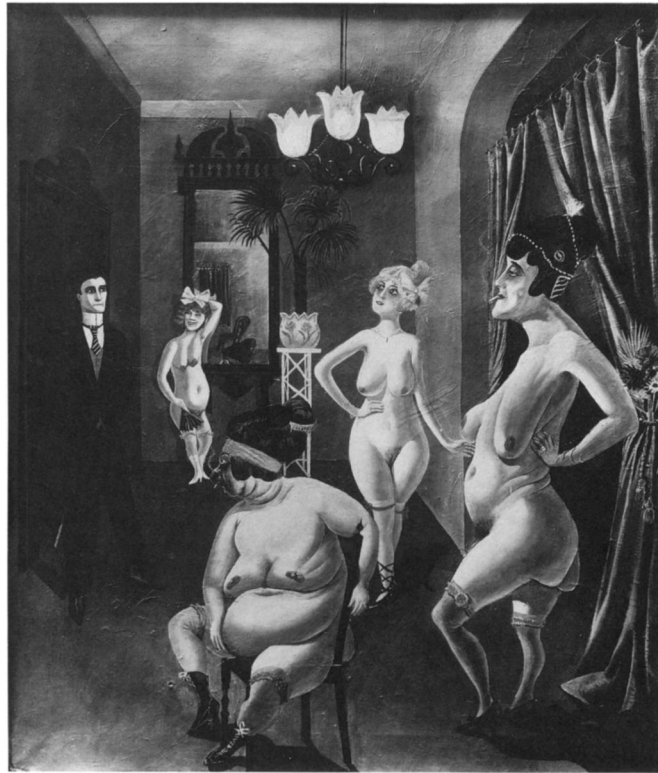


Figure 11. *A Sunday Walk*. Oil on canvas, 1922. Otto Dix. Now missing. Photograph courtesy of the Otto Dix Archiv, Schaffhausen, Switzerland.



Figure 12. Greta Grabo and Valeska Gert in *The Joyless Street*. A film by G. W. Pabst, 1925. Museum of Modern Art, New York, Film Archive.



technology: here, the instruments of modern medicine seem designed, not to save mankind, but to satisfy sadistic desires. *The Salon II* of 1921 (Figure 9) and *A Sunday Walk* of 1922 (Figure 11), on the other hand, are concerned with the moral and ethical degeneration of the middle class. Similar themes, which had been pioneered by Dix in the early 1920s, were later explored in such *Neue Sachlichkeit* films as Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (Figure 10) and G. W. Pabst's *The Joyless Street* (Figure 12).

Nor did Dix exclude himself from this critical examination of postwar society. In *Sex Murderer (Self-Portrait)* of 1920 (Figure 13), for example, he seems to indict himself as a co-participant in the prevailing decadence and corruption of the era. On a psychological level, this gruesome painting seems to express a feeling that the world has become a place of lawlessness and unreason, governed by chaotic impulses and psychotic tyrants. It is typical of Dix's art that the meaning of this painting resides partly in its sociological context: it can be related to the tremendous popular interest in the topic of sex crimes (Grosz and Schlichter also created images of the *Lustmord*), several actual cases of which were sensationalized in contemporary newspaper accounts.<sup>22</sup> The theme of the psychotic killer was also explored in several German films of the period, such as Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* of 1923, and Fritz Lang's *M (Murderer Among Us)* of 1930. Barton offers insight into the meaning of such themes in Dix's art:

Figure 13. *Sex Murderer (Self-Portrait)*. Oil on canvas, 170 x 120 cm., 1920. Otto Dix. Now missing. Photograph courtesy of the Otto Dix Archiv, Schaffhausen, Switzerland.



Figure 14. *The Prisoner*. Lithograph, 25.3 x 20.4 cm., 1920. George Grosz, German, 1893-1959. Gift of The Print Club of Cleveland. CMA 31.267

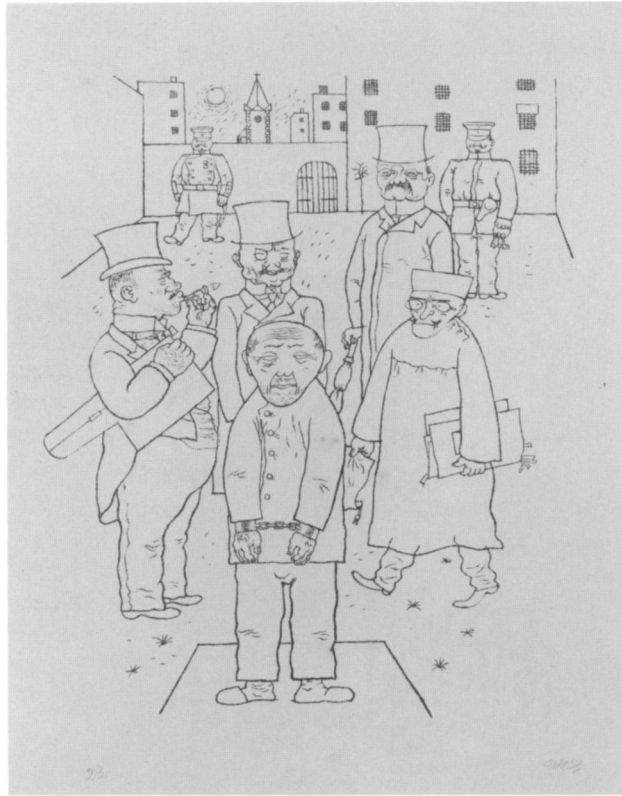
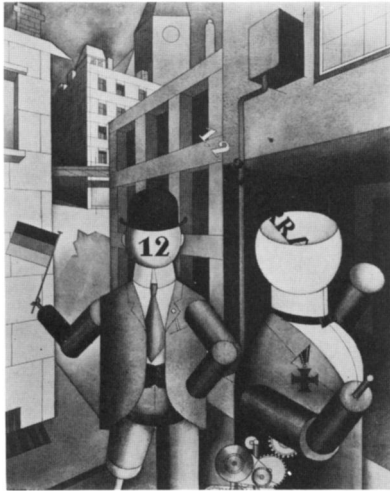


Figure 15. *Republican Automatons*. Watercolor and cardboard, 60 x 47.3 cm., 1920. George Grosz, German, 1893-1959. Museum of Modern Art, New York, Advisory Committee Fund.



Scenes of brothels, murders, and warfare all illustrate the artist's fundamental pessimism about his own age and his desire to expose what he felt to be the true nature of his society to its participants . . . realism for Dix meant a complex intermingling of visual accuracy and thematic truth. An artwork was meant to exhibit both a clear definition of physical reality and a view of society which exposed its true corruption and degenerate state.<sup>23</sup>

Although associated with the Veristic branch of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* because of the social criticism inherent in his subject matter, Dix rarely used his art to support any specific political party or ideology.<sup>24</sup> This attempt to avoid direct political statements sets Dix apart from many of the other Verists.<sup>25</sup> Grosz, for example, was an ardent Communist who used his art as a weapon to assault the Weimar government and the capitalist system. In *The Prisoner* (Figure 14) and *Republican Automatons* (Figure 15), Grosz satirized the Weimar Socialists for maintaining what he considered to be an oppressive, police state. Grosz had also abandoned Expressionism around 1920 for a more detached, "realistic" style (he even signed *Republican Automatons* with a rubber stamp) in order to show that man had become de-personalized and "mechanized" under capitalism.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 16. *Young Woman before a Mirror*. Oil on canvas, 20 x 15.5 cm., 1921. Otto Dix. Destroyed. Photograph courtesy of the Otto Dix Archiv, Schaffhausen, Switzerland.



Figure 17. *Les Amants trépassés*. Oil on panel, 64.7 x 39.5 cm., ca. 1470. Maître des Panneaux de Sterzing. Musée de L'Oeuvre Notre Dame de Strasbourg, Strasbourg.



While Grosz directly attacked the Weimar government, Dix was interested in broader, more philosophical issues, such as investigating the dark side of human nature and man's capacity to succumb to folly and evil.<sup>27</sup> At times, Dix even assumed the role of the northern "moralizer," following in the tradition of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Dix's *Young Woman before a Mirror* of 1921 (Figure 16), for example, descends from traditional vanitas images and is only slightly more grotesque than a fifteenth-century German panel painting depicting a blissful bridal couple on the front, while revealing a shocking prophecy of their ultimate fate on the reverse (Figure 19).<sup>28</sup> Even *The Matchseller I*, which seems to derive from Dix's immediate observations of postwar society, has a precedent in Bruegel's painting titled *Cripples* (Musée de Louvre, Paris). Many other examples could be cited here of Dix's strong ties to the northern tradition.

*If I were to say in a few words what will remain of Dix, I would name in the first place, the portraits. . . .*

—Will Grohmann<sup>29</sup>

*The moderns of today regard portrait-painting as a subordinate activity: nonetheless, it is one of the most exacting and difficult tasks a painter can undertake . . . with us Germans everything we paint is a portrait in any case.*

—Otto Dix<sup>30</sup>

While the twentieth-century has produced few great portraitists, Dix made portraiture central to his investigation of the human condition and the nature of the modern age. From his early *Sister Toni by a Window* of 1908, painted while still a student in Gera, to his late *Mrs. Rosennast* of 1969, Dix may have executed more than two hundred portraits, or portrait subjects, many of extraordinary power and originality.<sup>31</sup>

Dix's early *Neue Sachlichkeit* portraits—such as *The Old Worker* of 1920 (Figure 18) and *Portrait of The Artist's Parents I* of 1921 (Figure 19)—tend to emphasize class distinctions and the dreariness of life during the early years of the Weimar Republic. Most of these portraits depict friends or fellow artists; Löffler and Barton note that such paintings were probably not commissioned.<sup>32</sup>

Toward 1924-25, striking changes began to occur in Dix's portraits that can be linked both to events in the artist's personal life and to changing political conditions in Germany. One such event was the implementation of the Dawes Plan in 1924, which initiated a brief period of economic and political stability lasting until the world financial collapse of 1929. During this period (1924-29), living conditions in Germany improved vastly and large numbers of people, including many in the middle class, could afford to purchase works of art. Consequently, Dix began to paint more and more portraits on commission, and often for a more prosperous clientele. His relationship with his new patrons tended to be less personal than it was during his early *Neue Sachlichkeit* period. These changing conditions certainly contributed to the shift in emphasis from concern with social commentary, which dominates Dix's portraits of the early 1920s, to the greater interest in exploring the individual personality of his sitters, which characterizes his portraits of the later 1920s.<sup>33</sup>

This was also a decade of increasing personal prosperity and happiness for Dix. After moving to Düsseldorf in 1922, he married Martha Lindner, and the couple's first child—a daughter named Nelly—was born in 1924. Dix then spent two years in Berlin

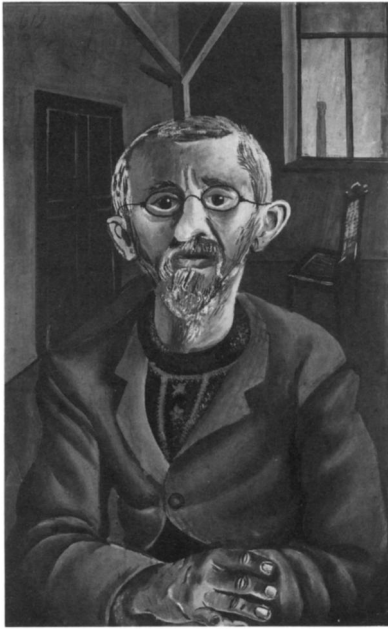


Figure 18. *The Old Worker*. Oil on panel, 76 x 47.5 cm., 1920. Otto Dix. Haus der Heimat, Freital.

Figure 19. *Portrait of the Artist's Parents I*. Oil on canvas, 101 x 115 cm., 1921. Otto Dix. Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum.

(1925-27), where he acquired a considerable reputation as a portraitist. Finally, he accepted a teaching position at the Dresden Academy in 1927, which gave him a secure income for the next six years. All of these factors seem to have contributed to the generally more sanguine tone of Dix's portraits of the mid- to later 1920s.

Around 1925, Dix also began to employ new techniques that significantly altered his portrait style. In particular, he abandoned all traces of collage and *alla prima* brushwork for a laborious method (which he claimed was based on the methods of the old masters) of applying numerous thin, transparent glazes of tempera and oil applied over gesso grounds and wood panel supports. These new techniques produced a style of pristine clarity, brilliant hues, smooth surfaces, and extreme linear precision (even more so than in Dix's early *Neue Sachlichkeit* paintings). Scholars have often attributed these changes to the influence of Dürer and Philipp Otto Runge, as well as to the influence of the mannerist portraits of Agnolo Bronzino and Jacopo Pontormo that Dix saw on a trip to Italy in 1925.<sup>34</sup> New ideas about the sources of this change in Dix's technique, however, are presented by Bruce Miller in the following article.

If one compares Dix's *Portrait of the Artist's Parents I* of 1921 (Figure 19) with his *The Artist's Parents II*, painted in 1924 (Figure 20), it becomes apparent that subtle changes began to appear in the artist's style nearly a year before his trip to Italy. The mood of

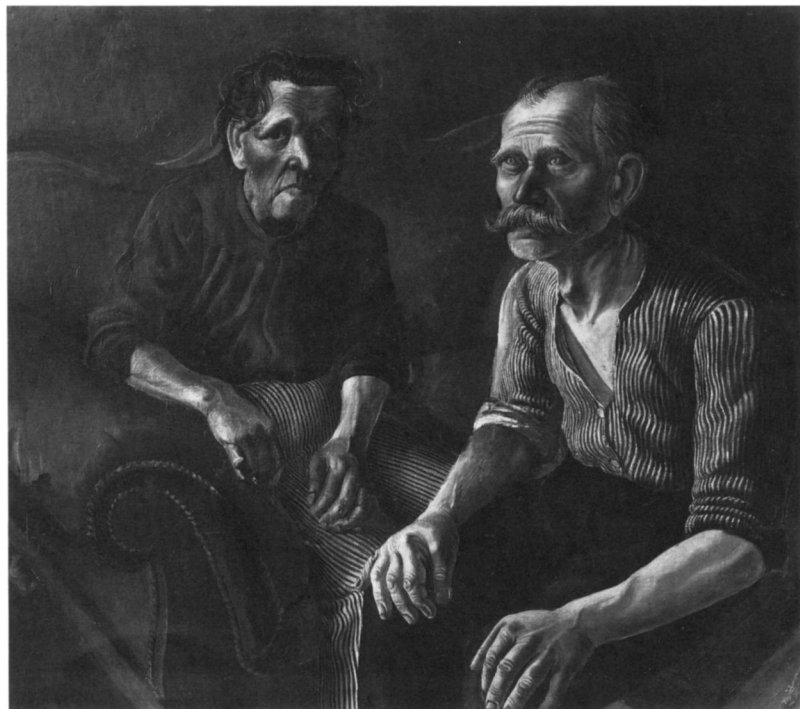




Figure 20. *The Artist's Parents II*. Oil on canvas, 118 x 130.5 cm., 1924. Otto Dix. Sprengel Museum, Hannover.

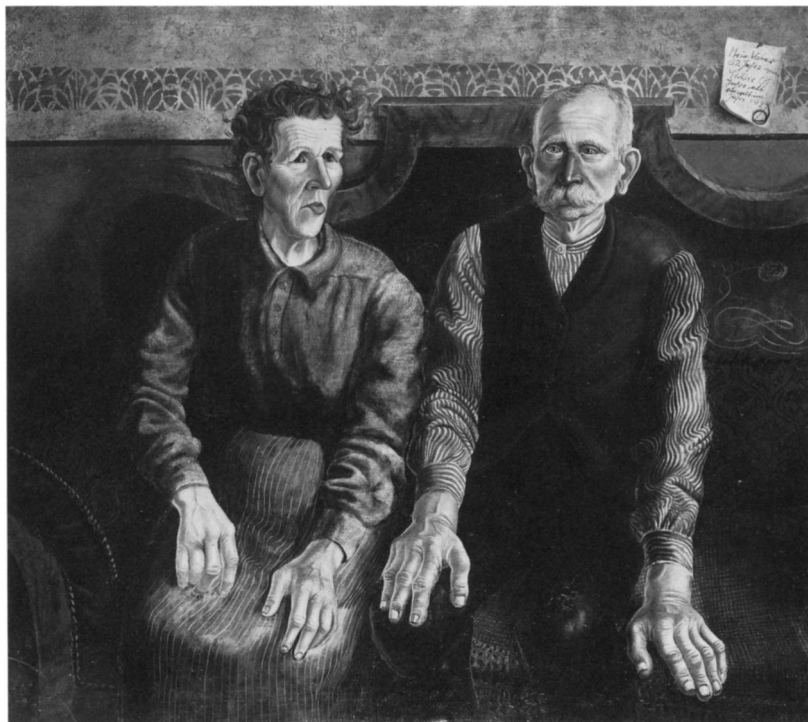


Figure 21. *The Dancer Anita Berber*. Tempera and plywood, 120 x 65 cm., 1925. Otto Dix. Otto Dix Stiftung, Vaduz, Switzerland.



the first portrait is dreary and oppressive. Illuminated by a stark, dramatic light, his parents are seated on an old couch set before a bare wall. Forms are pushed forward in space by the diagonal in the lower left. While the rolled-up shirtsleeves and gnarled hands of his parents point to their proletarian social status, the gloomy setting speaks of their depressed psychological state. The 1924 portrait, on the other hand, is filled with bright, cheerful colors and lively, linear patterns: distortions of space and anatomy are now used for comic effect. Dix thus replaced the intense drama and harsh social commentary of the early portrait with delicate decorative patterns and light-hearted humor in the latter.

In the fall of 1925, Dix moved to Berlin, where he painted many of his finest portraits. Still the center of German financial and political power, of commerce and the national film industry, Berlin in the 1920s was a city teeming with exotic personalities. The depressed value of the mark and the collapse of social conventions had transformed the old Prussian city into a mecca for international travelers and adventurers of all sorts. "Berlin had become a kind of bazaar," wrote Marc Chagall, "where everyone coming and going between Moscow and the West met. . . . You felt as though you were living in a dream and, at times, a nightmare."<sup>35</sup> This was also a city of vast contrasts: of both bohemian and "official" culture, of wealthy industrialists and immense poverty, of



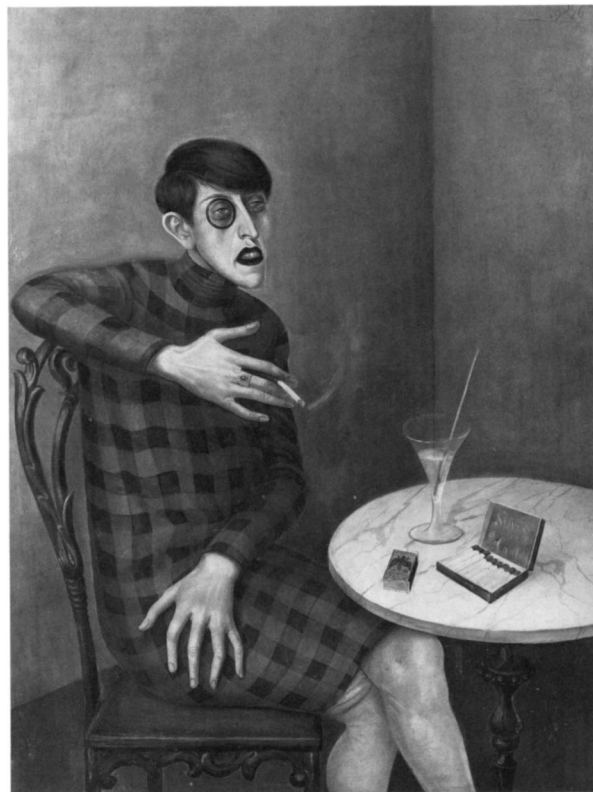
international banking and experimental theater, of great scientists (Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, Max Planck) and the decadent cabarets romanticized in the novels of Christopher Isherwood.

During his two years in Berlin (1925-27), Dix was besieged with requests for portraits. He painted exotic dancers, journalists, art dealers, photographers, doctors, industrialists, wealthy financiers, merchants, lawyers, politicians, fellow artists, and the bohemians who frequented the infamous Romanische Café (Figures 21-28).

Dix's Berlin portraits provide remarkable insights into the personalities that made up this cynical, dispirited society. Anita Berber, for example, the subject of one of Dix's most famous portraits (Figure 21), was an exotic dancer and a notorious underworld figure, a lesbian who married several times and suffered from tuberculosis, alcoholism, and heroin addiction (she died at age twenty-nine of a drug overdose).<sup>36</sup> Dix has appropriately portrayed her in a dazzling scarlet dress that clings tenaciously to her sinuous body; menacing nails sprout from her clawlike hands; her puckered face is punctuated by ruby-red lips and two dark, languid eyes lying beneath flaming orange hair. In Dix's portrait, Berber seems part serpent, part corpse—a symbol of the nihilistic, self-destructive impulses of the age.

The journalist Sylvia von Harden, the subject of Dix's best-known Berlin portrait (Figure 22), wrote for *Die Rote Erde* and was known as both a "morbid character" and "the terror of the middle class."<sup>37</sup> Dix consequently painted her with yellow teeth and

Figure 22. *Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden*. Mixed media on wood, 120 x 88 cm., 1926. Otto Dix. Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris.



in strident blood-red and black tones that convey something of her combative, predatory personality. "Every person," Dix once observed,

*has his own quite specific color which affects the whole picture. The nature of every person expresses itself in his exterior. The exterior is the expression of the interior, that is the outside and inside are identical. This goes so far that even the folds of the dress, the person's bearing, his ears immediately afford the painter information about the model's soul—the last more than the eyes or mouth.*<sup>38</sup>

In this particular portrait, von Harden's monocle, shapeless body, affected gestures, and even the "von" of her surname—can be interpreted as references to the debauched state of the former aristocracy and to the sexual amorality of the era.<sup>39</sup>

Dix reserved some of his most pungent satire for his portrait of Albert Flechtheim (Figure 23), an influential art dealer who believed the French Cubists were the greatest modern artists and privately derided Dix as a "fart painter."<sup>40</sup> Dix returned the compliment

Figure 23. *The Art Dealer Alfred Flechtheim*. Mixed media on wood, 120 x 80 cm., 1926. Otto Dix. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie, Berlin (West).

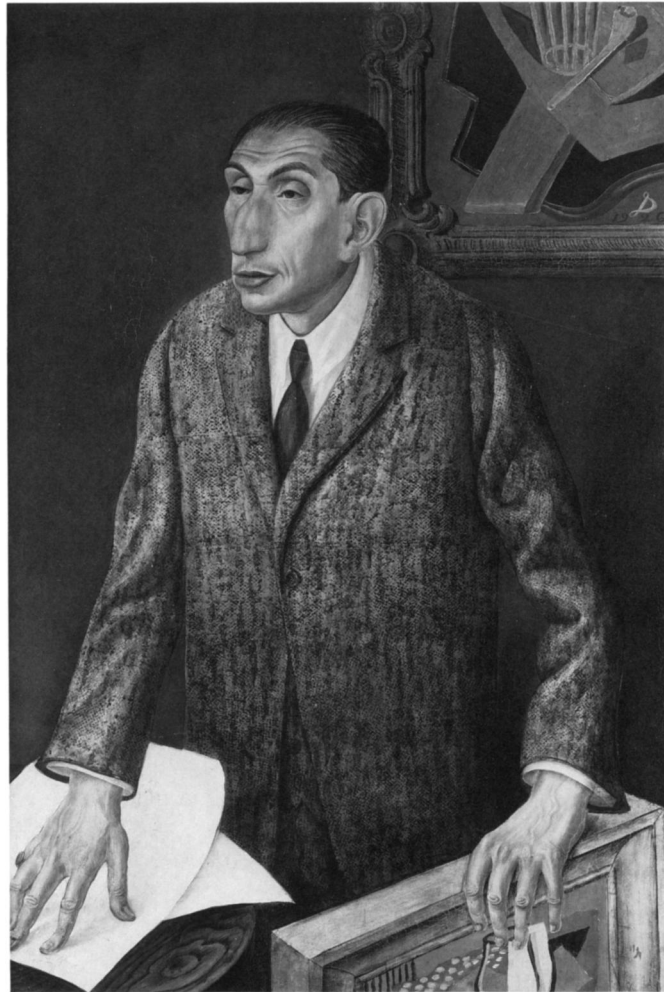




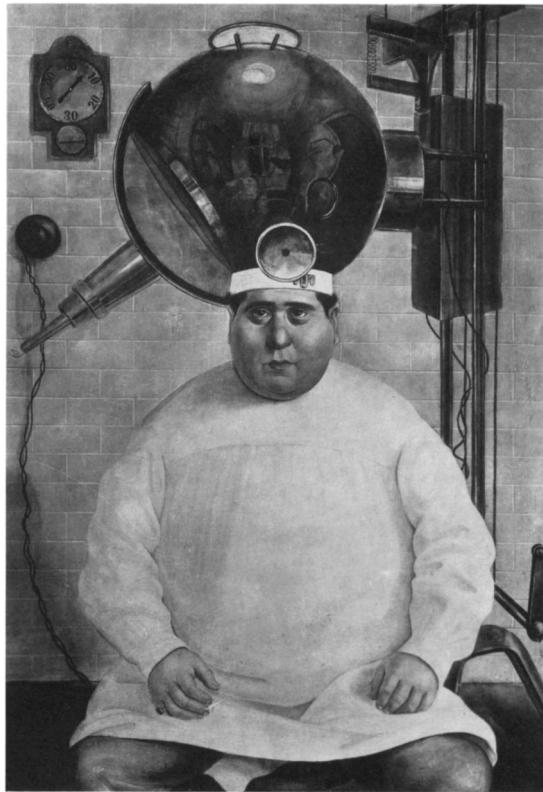
Figure 24. *Portrait of the Photographer and Art Dealer Hugo Erfurth*. Tempera on wood, 75 x 60 cm., 1926. Otto Dix. Staatsgalerie moderner Kunst, Sofie-und Emanuel-Fohn Schenkung, Munich.

here by painting Flechtheim with spiderlike fingers, hunched shoulders, a rat-like face, enormous ears, sickly yellow skin, and greedy myopic eyes (perhaps a pun on Flechtheim's "short-sightedness"). In a gesture of supreme irony, Dix signed the Cubist painting hanging on the wall directly behind Flechtheim with his own name. Löffler notes that, despite the satirical tone of this portrait, "Flechtheim's only reaction . . . had been to criticize Dix for dressing him in an unfashionable jacket."<sup>41</sup>

Not all Dix's sitters were so imperceptive (or ironic!). It has been reported, for example, that the Oberbürgermeister (mayor) of Dresden "refused to allow Dix's portrait of him to be hung in the Rathaus [city hall]," and when Dix gave the banker Kurt Arnoldt his portrait, Arnoldt silently set the painting face down on the floor.<sup>42</sup>

We may assume that Dix's distortions of color and form, often used to caricature his sitters, were quite deliberate, because he did not always depict his sitters so unfavorably. It is instructive in this regard to compare Dix's portrait of Flechtheim with his *Portrait of the Photographer and Art Dealer Hugo Erfurth* (Figure 24). In the latter, Erfurth delicately holds a camera lens as a Renaissance scholar might have held a globe or a scientific instrument in a sixteenth-century painting by Holbein or Dürer, thus suggesting that Erfurth is a sensitive, intelligent man. Both Flechtheim and Erfurth sold works of art, but Dix clearly had far more respect for Erfurth and consequently portrayed him in a sympathetic manner.

Figure 25. *Portrait of Dr. Mayer-Hermann*. Oil and tempera on wood, 149.2 x 99.1 cm., 1926. Otto Dix. Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Philip Johnson, 3.32.



Even during his *Neue Sachlichkeit* or “realist” period, Dix continued to exaggerate and distort forms—sometimes to grotesque proportions—in order to intensify and exaggerate the essential character of his sitters. Sometimes, as in his portrait of the laryngologist *Dr. Mayer-Hermann* of 1926 (Figure 25), these distortions are employed for comic effect. At other times, as in the portrait of *Flechtheim*, Dix relentlessly stripped his sitters of self-delusion to reveal their true nature.

#### VI. *The Portrait of Josef May*

Dix’s *Portrait of Josef May* (Cover) was painted in 1926, during the period when the artist was living in Berlin and at the height of his powers as a portraitist. It is roughly contemporary with the artist’s portraits of *Sylvia von Harden*, *Anita Berber*, and *Albert Flechtheim*, which are generally ranked among Dix’s finest works and certainly his greatest portraits. Primary evidence for dating Dix’s *Portrait of Josef May* to 1926 is provided by the object itself, which is signed with the artist’s monogram *OD* and dated 1926 in the lower right of the image. On the back of the plywood panel there is another inscription that reads: *Josef May Aus Düsseldorf/Gemalt von O. Dix 1926* (*Josef May from Düsseldorf/ Painted by O. Dix 1926*). In addition to these inscriptions, the style of the portrait (a detailed analysis of the physical materials and

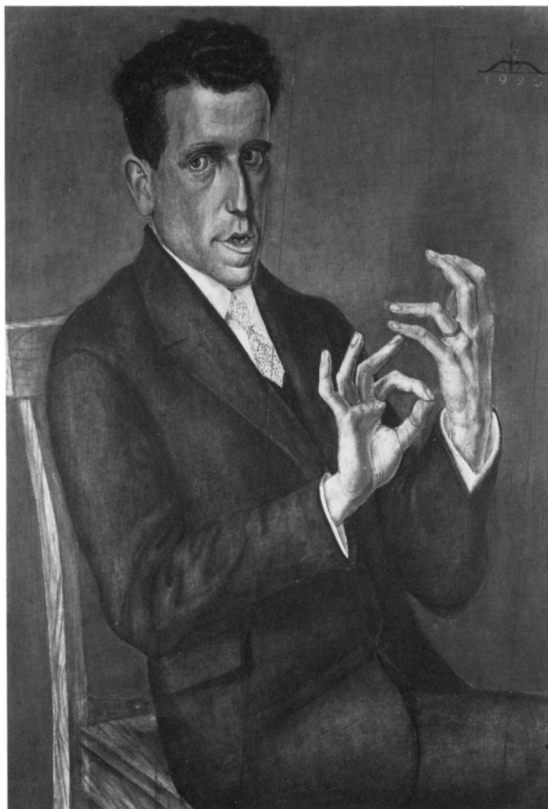
techniques used to create this painting can be found in the article by Bruce Miller that follows) are thoroughly consistent with Dix's *Neue Sachlichkeit* portraits of the mid-1920s.

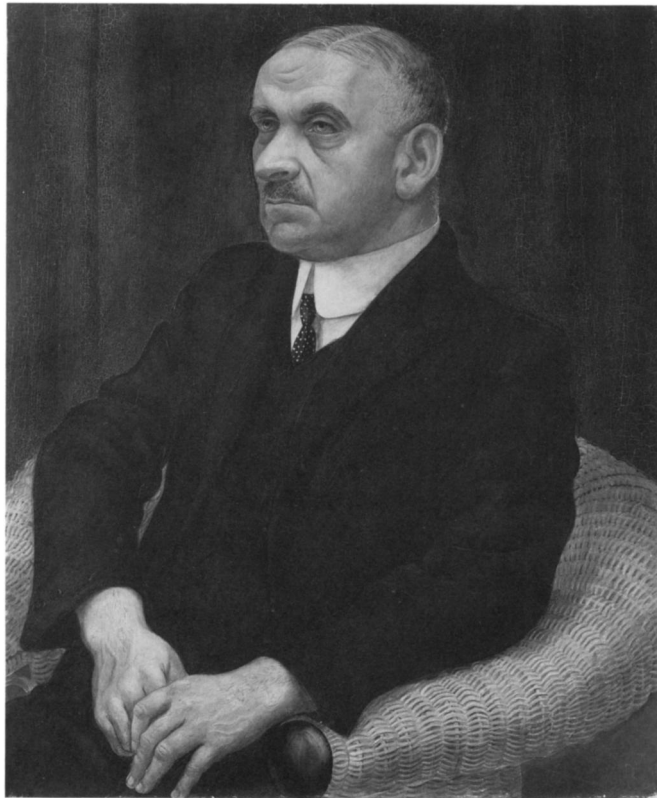
It can be established through several sources that Josef May was a grain merchant, born in Arnsberg, Westphalia, but living in Düsseldorf at the time the portrait was painted. According to archives in Düsseldorf, May was employed with the commodities firm of J. Grunberg, headquartered in that city.<sup>43</sup> During his youth, May had wanted to become an opera singer, but for practical reasons entered into an apprenticeship with a local branch of the Grunberg grain company in Arnsberg.<sup>44</sup> When Grunberg senior retired in 1924, May was promoted to head of the Düsseldorf branch, giving him effective control over the entire company. Documents of the Düsseldorf Amtsgericht indicate that May had taken up residence in that city by at least the summer of 1924.

May was also related by marriage to Hugo Simons (1892-1958), a lawyer from Düsseldorf who was friendly with Dix. In fact, Dix had painted Simons' portrait in 1925 (Figure 26). According to Simons' daughter, Ellyn Duschenes, her father then arranged for Dix to paint a portrait of his brother-in-law, Joseph May.<sup>45</sup> Simons' wife believes that that portrait was painted in Düsseldorf, and it is known that Dix made brief visits to that city during his Berlin period.<sup>46</sup>

325

Figure 26. *Portrait of Hugo Simons*.  
Tempera and oil on panel, 97.5 x 67.5  
cm., 1925. Otto Dix. Private collection,  
Montreal.





Dix painted May (Figure 27) with the same dry, dispassionate “objectivity” that characterizes his finest *Neue Sachlichkeit* portraits. The drooping, flaccid skin around May’s heavy-lidded eyes, his deep-furrowed brow, thinning hair, and stubby moustache are all rendered in extraordinarily meticulous detail. Equally laborious attention has been given to the depiction of the veins lying just beneath the skin of May’s hands, to the tiny bristle-like hairs on his forearms, and to the individual braids of his wicker chair. Razor-fine lines delineate May’s hands and face, making him appear frozen and static, as if chiseled in stone. The sinuous lines that establish the contours of May’s sleeves, on the other hand, are overly energetic; they twist and writhe like coiled springs, stubbornly refusing to let May rest comfortably or naturally in his chair. And May’s lilliputian tie seems oddly proportioned in relation to his large, imposing head and the wide collar that wraps tightly around his bullish neck. “There is not one portrait [by Dix],”



Figure 28. *Self-Portrait*. Oil on panel, 52 x 41 cm., 1498. Albrecht Dürer, German, 1471-1528. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 29. *The Merchant Georg Gisze*. Oil on panel, 96 x 84 cm., 1532. Hans Holbein the Younger, German, 1497/8-1543. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

observed Schmied, “that fails to suggest something obscurely horrific, even in details normally taken for granted, such as the sitter’s posture or the position of the hands . . . behind the civilized veneer Dix shows us the animal vitality of human nature.”<sup>47</sup>

Dix’s *Portrait of Josef May* is filled with subtle psychological tension. May stares toward our left, but at nothing in particular. His eyes seem uncoordinated: while the left looks upward, fixed and intent, the right looks lazily ahead. The tensions generated by May’s gaze are reinforced by the taut lines of his lips, clinched jaw, gnarled hands, wiry contours, and the obsessive rendering of details throughout the entire picture. As his lower lip pushes outward, the poisonous yellows of his skin clash with the greens of the background. By exaggerating the proportions of May’s overly large head and ears, as opposed to the compressed size of his torso, Dix made the sitter appear awkwardly squeezed into this airless compartment of clashing hues: garish greens, rust reds, dull blues, and mustard yellows.

Although Dix may have imitated the style of Renaissance portraits, the mood and “meaning” of his *Portrait of Josef May* are entirely different from that of Dürer’s *Self-Portrait* of 1498 (Figure 28) or Hans Holbein the Younger’s *Portrait of the Merchant Georg Grisze* of 1532 (Figure 29). Instead of staring blankly into space, Dürer engages us confidently in his portrait with a sure, direct gaze. He appears to command his environment, represented symbolically by the landscape in the upper right, as if proclaiming the Renaissance view that man exists at the center of a fixed, hierarchical universe, which he dominates by virtue of his superior intellect. In the Holbein portrait, Grisze is surrounded by symbols of wealth and knowledge, which function as extensions of human reason and attest to the artist’s faith in man’s ability to control and understand the world. May, on the other hand, is cut-off from contextual relationships. Clutched tightly by the tentacular arms of his chair like the prey of some predatory animal, May seems a Kafkaesque figure of modern alienation and anxiety, the victim of a world he can neither understand nor control.

Although “realistic,” Dix’s *Neue Sachlichkeit* style conveys an entirely different meaning from that of Dürer’s precise, linear draftsmanship and its implied “rationality.” It informs us of Dix’s revolt against the painterly tradition that dominated German art in the early twentieth century and its corresponding glorification of the individual. Instead, Dix’s cold, hard, meticulous realism, which often revels in hideous and grotesque details, seems to place physical facts above human concerns. By giving equal emphasis to all elements—i.e., treating both animate and inanimate elements

with the same relentless, machine-like objectivity, Dix's portraits suggest an absence of ordering and values, as if the product of a deliberately dispassionate, anti-aesthetic attitude. Moreover, Dix's *Neue Sachlichkeit* style implies a denial of sensuality and freedom, as if a metaphor for the repression of the individual by bourgeois values and authority. "The New Objectivity," observed Matthias Eberle, "mistrusted primal force as much as mechanical power."<sup>48</sup>

Dix was clearly interested in more than the imitation of nature. In a sense, it is misleading to label his style "realistic" because of the way he intentionally exaggerated and distorted form. Although not illusionistic, Dix's portraits are characterized by a profound *psychological* realism. His sitters often stand or sit uncomfortably, their bodies sometimes twisted, contorted, and squeezed into tight, constricted spaces. Illogically shifting viewpoints generate disconcerting spatial tensions. Yet, in spite of their discomfort, Dix's sitters seem frozen in static poses and constrained by the artist's hard, unyielding outlines, as if trapped in a hostile world that remains indifferent to human suffering. Moreover, the colors, gestures, and poses that Dix selected for his models often convey symbolic meaning. "Photography," Dix observed,

*can only record a moment, and that only superficially, but it cannot delineate specific, individual form, something that depends upon the imaginative power and intuition of the painter. A hundred photographs of a person would only result in a hundred different momentary aspects, but never capture the phenomenon as a whole.*<sup>49</sup>

In his *Neue Sachlichkeit* portraits, Dix examined his contemporaries with brutal honesty, often exposing their inner ugliness, as well as the demoralizing, corrupting effect of their environment on the human spirit. He intensifies our psychological experience of each individual sitter, revealing through his portraits the tragedy, the confusion, and the horror of a particular time and place. In his attempt to investigate the moral climate of his age by studying the individual, Dix's portraits invite comparison with the novels of Thomas Mann and the photographs of August Sander. Like playwright Bertolt Brecht, Dix used satire and irony to expose human weakness and to condemn the false values of the era. Like novelists Alfred Döblin and Franz Kafka, Dix explored the anxiety and alienation that permeated postwar society. In their own unique and powerful way, Dix's *Neue Sachlichkeit* portraits refer to the absurdity of the human condition in a world in which value systems have collapsed, in which man feels alone and abandoned.



Although severely damaged by the world economic collapse of 1929, the Weimar Republic staggered on until 1933, when Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists seized control of the Reichstag and suspended the German constitution. From that moment on, both Dix and May became targets of Nazi persecution.

In 1933, Dix was abruptly dismissed from his position as professor of art at the Dresden Academy, where he had been employed since 1927. The following year, he was declared a "degenerate" artist and forbidden to either teach or exhibit.<sup>50</sup> Two hundred and sixty of his works were removed from museums and galleries; many of them were burned.<sup>51</sup> Dix then went into semi-seclusion in the Alps of Southern Germany, but remained under the watchful eye of the Gestapo. After the war, he adopted an Expressionist style, joined the art faculty of the Düsseldorf Academy, and continued to paint until shortly before his death in 1969.

As a Jew, Josef May fled with his family to Holland in 1933, as did the Simons family. In 1938, Josef May died of a heart attack while traveling on a train from Rotterdam to the Hague.<sup>52</sup> Simons then arranged for May's family to emigrate to the United States. A short time later, Simons made his way to Montreal. After the war, the May family gave Dix's *Portrait of Josef May* to Simons in gratitude for helping them escape from Europe, and the painting remained in Montreal until acquired by the Cleveland Museum.

William H. Robinson  
*Curatorial Assistant, Modern Art*

The author wishes to thank the following people and institutions for their assistance with this article:

Ellyn Duschenes, for offering information about Josef May and Hugo Simons; The Landeshauptstadt and Amtsgericht of Düsseldorf for providing photocopies of documents concerning Josef May; Hannelore Osborne for her careful transcriptions and translations of some difficult, hand-written German texts; Edward B. Henning and Harvey Buchanan for their patient reading and criticisms of the text; Georgina Gy. Toth and the staff of the Ingalls Library of The Cleveland Museum of Art for their research assistance.

Many others must be thanked for answering inquires about Dix and for providing often difficult to locate photographs: The Otto Dix Archiv, Schaffhausen, Switzerland; Florian Karsch of the Galerie Nierendorf, Berlin; Viola Roehr-V. Alvensleben of the Galerie Alvenslever, Munich; the Galerie Valentien, Stuttgart; the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne; La Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre Dame de Strasbourg; the Wechel-Ausstellungen des Basler Kunstvereins, Basel; the Sprengel Museums, Hannover; the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden; the Haus der Heimat, Freital.

1. CMA 85.40 *Portrait of Josef May*, mixed media on plywood, 84 x 68.3 cm., 1926. Otto Dix, German, 1891-1969. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund. Ex collections: Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, Montreal, Canada; Ellyn Duschenes, Montreal, Canada; Hugo Simons, Montreal, Canada; Josef May and family, Düsseldorf.

Publications: Fritz Löffler, *Otto Dix, 1891-1969: Oeuvre der Gemälde* (Recklinghausen, Federal Republic of Germany, 1981), listed under "1926": as no. 13.

Exhibitions: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1986: *The Year in Review for 1985* (cat., *CMA Bulletin*, 73 [February 1986]), no. 97, repr. p. 56.

2. The term *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* was coined by Gustav Hartlaub, formerly Director of the Mannheim Art Gallery, when he circulated a letter in 1923 announcing his intention of organizing an exhibition under this title. See Fritz Schmalenbach, "The Term *Neue Sachlichkeit*," *Art Bulletin*, 22 (1940), 161-65.

3. Wieland Schmied, "Neue Sachlichkeit and the German Realism of the Twenties," in *Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism of the Twenties* (London, 1978), p. 25.

4. The history of the exhibitions and the destruction of so-called "degenerate" art has been documented by Franz Roh, "Entartete" Kunst: *Kunstbarbarei im Dritten Reich* (Hannover, 1962).

5. Fritz Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York, 1982), pp. 11-12.

6. Brigid S. Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit, 1918-1925* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1977), p. 14

7. Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel, From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front* (London, 1929), p. 9.

8. Carl Zuckmayer, *A Part of Myself*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1966), p. 148. Emphasis mine.

9. Quoted in Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (London, 1968), p. 24.

10. Matthias Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, trans. John Gabriel (New Haven, CT, 1985), p. 5.

11. Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge, A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920's* (New York, 1972), p. 139.

12. Quoted in Gay, *Weimar Culture*, p. 121.

13. Because Hartlaub had difficulty securing loans, the exhibition was not held until 1925.

14. Gustav Hartlaub to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., July 8, 1929, as quoted by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., in "Otto Dix," *Arts*, 17 (February 1931), 237. Emphasis mine.

15. Schmalenbach, "Term *Neue Sachlichkeit*," pp. 163-64.

16. Gay, *Weimar Culture*, p. 122.

17. Franz Roh, *German Art in the 20th Century*, with additions by Juliane Roh, trans. Catherine Hutter (Greenwich, CT, 1968), pp. 112-17. I have slightly appended and edited Roh's list here.

18. Strong ties also existed between early *Neue Sachlichkeit* Verism and Berlin Dada: certain artists, such as Grosz and Schlichter, are considered members of both movements. The subject of the relationship between Verism and Dada, however, is beyond the purview of this discussion.
19. Since Hartlaub first proposed his two-part division of *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*, historians have identified at least three other sub-groups within the movement: (1) the *Rousseau Schule* or the naive realists of Hannover (Greta Overbeck, Ernst Thoma, Grethe Jurgens, Hans Meitens); (2) the *Gruppe progressiver Künstler* of Cologne (Heinrich Hoerle, Franz Wilhelm Seiwert, Otto Freundlich); and (3) the "utopian realism" of Oskar Schlemmer (Weimar, Dessau Bauhaus). For a discussion of these subgroups see: Schmied, "New Sachlichkeit and German Realism," pp. 9-10; Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, pp. 61-76; and Roh, *German Art in the 20th Century*, pp. 112-17.
20. Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 60.
21. George Grosz, *George Grosz, An Autobiography*, trans. Nora Hodges (New York, 1983), p. 122.
22. Barton has cited Grosz's *Lustmord in der Ackerstrasse* of 1923 and Schlichter's *Das Ende and Lyncher* of ca. 1919-20 as examples of the use of the *Lustmord* theme by these artists. See Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 21.
23. Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 35.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.
25. One exception is Max Beckmann, whose paintings are more concerned with investigating the moral bankruptcy of the modern age than with supporting any specific political ideology.
26. Quoted in John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety, 1917-1933* (New York, 1978), p. 85.
27. Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, pp. 80-81.
28. At some point, the panel on which these two works were painted—one on the front and the other on the back—was cut or divided, and the two works are now in different collections: Strasbourg and Cleveland. For CMA 32.179 A *Bridal Pair*, panel (fir), 64.7 x 39.5 cm. Anonymous South German Master, Upper Rhine region, ca. 1470. Delia E. and L. E. Holden Funds. See *European Paintings Before 1500*, The Cleveland Museum of Art Catalogue of Paintings, pt. 1 (Cleveland, 1974), no. 12, pp. 34-36.
29. Quoted in Linda F. McGreevy, *The Life and Works of Otto Dix: German Critical Realist* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1987), p. 69.
30. Quoted in Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 58.
31. Fritz Löffler's catalogue raisonné, *Otto Dix, 1891-1969: Oeuvre Der Gemälde* (Recklinghausen, 1981), was used as the basic source for this statistic. The exact number of portraits is difficult to determine because it is not always clear whether a painting represents a portrait of a specific individual. For example, Dix painted numerous images of his children, some of which can clearly be called "portraits," while others are simply genre images of babies and children.
32. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, pp. 28-29; Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 58.
33. Barton, *Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, pp. 27, 57-58.
34. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 58. McGreevy has dated this trip to 1924 (*The Life and Works of Otto Dix*, p. 64), and Barton (*Otto Dix and Die neue Sachlichkeit*, p. 28) mentions visits to Italy in 1923-24. Yet, Dix's style (as discussed in the following paragraph) did not begin to change until 1924, and it was not until 1925 that he began using the tempera and oil technique. See the following article in this issue of the *Bulletin*, by Bruce Miller, for details about this change in Dix's technique and its sources.
35. Quoted in Jean-Paul Crespell, *Chagall*, trans. Benita Eisler (New York, 1970), p. 154.
36. McGreevy, *The Life and Works of Otto Dix*, p. 69; and Lothar von Fischer, *Otto Dix: Ein Malerleben in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1981), pp. 59-63.
37. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 73. For further discussion of this portrait see von Fischer, *Otto Dix: Ein Malerleben in Deutschland*, pp. 71-74.
38. Quoted in Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, pp. 74-75.
39. McGreevy, *The Life and Works of Otto Dix*, p. 71.
40. Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, p. 50.
41. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 74. On the other hand, Löffler notes that Sylvia von Harden loved her portrait (*ibid.*). Eberle reports that it is not known if the Flechthelm portrait was commissioned (*World War I and the Weimar Artists*, p. 50).
42. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 56.
43. Photocopies of archival documents relating to Josef May were obtained from the Amtsgericht of Düsseldorf.
44. I am most grateful to Ellyn Duschenes, the daughter of Hugo Simons, for providing information about Josef May and the Simons family.
45. Ellyn Duschenes to the author, June 10, 1986. May was married to the sister of Simons first wife.
46. Telephone conversation with Duschenes, September 11, 1987.
47. Schmied, "Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism," p. 29.
48. Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, p. 15.
49. Quoted in Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, p. 46.
50. The Nazis had three levels of proscription for artists: *Lehrverbot*, *Austellungsverbot*, and *Mahlverbot*. Only the first two were applied to Dix, meaning he was forbidden to either teach or exhibit, but was allowed to continue painting for private patrons. See McGreevy, *The Life and Works of Otto Dix*, p. 35.
51. Löffler, *Otto Dix: Life and Work*, p. 96; and McGreevy, *The Life and Works of Otto Dix*, pp. 87-88.
52. Duschenes to the author, June 10, 1986.