

MAX BECKMANN



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THE FORMATIVE YEARS

1915–1925

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Beckmann in fancy dress with Max Beckmann,
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PREFACE

Max Beckmann is truly a giant of modern German art, someone who stands outside of any single category. He was a visionary, a man who captured not only the times he lived in, but someone who could see the future—see what *could* happen and what *would* happen.

I still remember the first time I encountered a work by Beckmann as a teenager in a midtown gallery here in New York. It was a triptych and I instantly saw the power and the strength of this extraordinary artist. I went right out and purchased every book I could find on Beckmann because I was so curious and wanted to learn more about him. This coincided with my growing interest in German and Austrian art.

It has been my good fortune to acquire a number of works by the artist over the years. The first extraordinary Beckmann painting to enter my collection was *Galleria Umberto* (1925). This work is incredibly prophetic in that it contains imagery of things to come. We see an Italian flag sinking into the water as if it is drowning; we see a dismembered figure, suggesting the torture during the Fascist era; there is a crystal ball offering a glimpse into the future and bugle sounding a warning. Think about this for a moment. In 1925, Mussolini had been in power for just three years and it would be another 20 years, two full decades of chaos, before the Italian dictator would meet his ignoble demise. Yet the painting anticipates both the rise and the downfall of Fascism in Italy along with all the turmoil in between. It is a mesmerizing picture, with a bizarre, dreamlike quality that makes it unforgettable.

The highlight for me, though, was the opportunity to acquire, with a fellow collector, the incredible *Self-Portrait with Horn* (1938), which Beckmann painted while he was living in exile in Amsterdam. It's interesting to note that Beckmann left Germany in 1937 on the day after Hitler's radio address on what he called degenerate art. This painting, which had once been in the collection of the artist's friend Stephan Lackner, seems to sum up so much about the experience of refugees, torn from their homeland and forced to establish himself in a new, unfamiliar environment. The horn also announces a warning about the rise of Nazism and intolerance. Because of the clarity and power of this painting, we can still hear that warning today.

I have been pleased to support exhibitions of Beckmann's work over the years, whether at the temporary branch of The Museum of Modern Art in Queens (2003) or in a pairing with Otto Dix at the Neue Galerie (2005). The current exhibition explores the early years of Beckmann's career, from the time of his traumatic experiences during World War I through his success during the Weimar Republic, and finally to the period in which he was driven into exile. All have shown important facets of an individual who gathered the tumultuous events taking place around him and converted them into extraordinary works of art.

The curator for this exhibition is Olaf Peters, who has organized several critically acclaimed shows for the Neue Galerie, including "Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937" (2014) and "Berlin Metropolis: 1918–1933" (2015–16). He has been aided by Richard Pandiscio and Bill Loccisano, who designed the exhibition, and by my longtime associate Tom Zoufaly, who oversaw the installation. Together, they bring to light the gifts of an artist who seemed to sum up, and to transcend, the times he lived in. Museums and individuals in the United States and Europe generously provided key loans, helping to create a full representation of this singular artist. I trust our guests will enjoy experiencing Beckmann as much as I have since first encountering his work more than 50 years ago.

Ronald S. Lauder
President, Neue Galerie New York



FOREWORD

Max Beckmann is one of the outstanding painters of the twentieth century. By presenting a monographic exhibition of his work, the Neue Galerie New York is fulfilling a longstanding goal. The museum's extended collection includes central works by Beckmann, such as the major portfolio of prints *Die Hölle* (Hell, 1919) and the early political allegory *Galleria Umberto* (1925). These works represent the point of departure for this project. The basic thesis of the exhibition is that Beckmann, after the profoundly disturbing experience of World War I, managed to advance to a new pictorial conception. The painter both assimilated his experiences and connected to concurrent developments in art. Indeed, our exhibition offers an in-depth look and invites a close reading of key works of these formative years.

There have been several exhibitions on Beckmann in the last couple of years. Ours is different, however, in focusing on this particular time period and his artistic approach. For many of his contemporaries, Beckmann came to epitomize the latest evolution of representational painting. In 1925, when he was 41 years old, Beckmann emerged as the crucial figure in the exhibition "Die Neue Sachlichkeit: Deutsche Malerie nach dem Expressionismus" (New Objectivity: German Painting after Expressionism) in Mannheim, even though he would later distance himself from that term. This turning point marks the endpoint of our exhibition and explains its restriction to the years from 1915 to 1925.

The exhibition gathers together some of the masterpieces of Beckmann's art including the outstanding paintings *Fastnacht* (Carnival, 1920, Tate, London), *Der Traum* (The Dream, 1921, Saint Louis Art Museum), and *Die Barke* (The Bark, 1926, Private Collection). Our show offers the unique opportunity to experience these works together and to reflect on the genesis of Beckmann's mature style of painting.

A key step to Beckmann's transformation was his focus on religious topics in paintings around 1917-18. They are centrally important in this context and we are proud to display three key examples from major public collections. They reveal his stylistic development but also outline the painter's horizon of interpretation as he sought to portray his own era using the pictorial formulas of the Passion of Christ and other biblical themes.

Around 1920, Beckmann was intensely preoccupied by the social and political fault lines of the era. That is why his work of this phase was considered verism and associated with the leftist wing of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*—something that is often forgotten today. Beckmann himself spoke of his art in terms of "transcendental objectivity." The subjects of these works prepare the ground, in terms of both form and content, for Beckmann's later paintings.

The Neue Galerie exhibition and the catalogue are not just about the bolstering of his stature as an artist from 1915 to 1925, but also about the seminal energy he brought to his work at the time; the artist himself repeatedly returned to this phase over the course of his career. The self-referential aspect of Beckmann's work thus comes clearly into view. It is our aspiration to contribute to a deeper understanding of Beckmann's artistic productivity.

The exhibition was conceived and has been organized by Prof. Dr. Olaf Peters, who has taught art history in Halle an der Saale University since 2006 and is an esteemed Member of the Board of Trustees of the Neue Galerie. He also has organized the exhibitions "Otto Dix" (2010), and the trilogy "Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937" (2014), "Berlin Metropolis: 1918-1933" (2015-16), and "Before the Fall: German and Austrian Art of the 1930s" (2018) for the Neue Galerie. His thesis at the University of Bonn was a broad monograph on Beckmann, and he is one of the leading experts on the artist. Prof. Dr. Peters, together with his fellow authors Ms. Anna Maria Heckmann, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Müller,



Max Beckmann, his wife Quappi, and his dog Butschy in front of *Blind Man's Buff* with Perry Rathbone, director of the City Art Museum of St. Louis, 1948. University of Colorado Photolab Collection, no. 1975, Art Department, Max Beckmann Show. Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Prof. Dr. Dietrich Schubert, Dr. Elisa Tamaschke, and Dr. Christiane Zeiller, brings fresh perspectives to Beckmann's complex, sometimes difficult, and multilayered art. All of these contributors deserve our sincere thanks.

We are most grateful to the host of institutional and private lenders who made our exhibition possible, including Ms. Katie Ziglar, Ackland Art Museum; Mr. James Rondeau, The Art Institute of Chicago; Dr. Bernhard Maaz, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen Pinakothek der Moderne; Mr. Richard Armstrong, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Prof. Dr. Christoph Grunenberg, Kunsthalle Bremen; Dr. Johan Holten, Kunsthalle Mannheim; Dr. Dagmar Korbacher, Kupferstichkabinett Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Mr. Matthew Teitelbaum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston; Dr. Glenn D. Lowry, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Dr. Alexander Bastek, Museum Behnhaus Drägerhaus; Dr. Yilmaz Dziewior, Museum Ludwig; Ms. Josefa Simon; the Acacia Corporation; Dr. Christiane Zeiller; Ms. Mayen Beckmann; Dr. Gannit Ankori, Rose Art Museum; Dr. Min Jung Kim, Saint Louis Art Museum; Mr. Klaus Biesenbach and Dr. Joachim Jäger, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie; Dr. Maria Balshaw, CBE and Ms. Frances Morris, Tate Modern; Dr. Adam M. Levine, Toledo Museum of Art; and Ms. Alejandra Peña-Gutiérrez, Weisman Art Museum. We also offer our thanks to those lenders who wish to remain anonymous.

Every major loan exhibition needs the support of friends and trusted advisors. Among these for the Neue Galerie were Frances Beatty, Mayen Beckmann, Isabelle Harnoncourt, Lukas Minssen, Puppa Sayn Wittgenstein, and Wilfried Utermann. We offer them our gratitude.

I wish to thank Richard Pandiscio and Bill Loccisano of Pandiscio Green for their wonderful contributions to the design of our exhibition and of this catalogue. The tireless staff of the Neue Galerie deserves to be acknowledged as well, including Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Scott Gutterman, Director of Curatorial and Managing Editor of Publications Janis Staggs, Manager of Curatorial Liesbet Van Leemput, Chief Registrar and Director of Exhibitions Stacey Traunfeld, Associate Registrar Julie Jung, and Director of Communications Michelle Perlin.

And once again, we must express our deepest gratitude to Ronald S. Lauder, the co-founder of our museum, whose enthusiasm, vision, and generosity for the arts is boundless. He has been a collector of work by Max Beckmann for several decades. The Neue Galerie is his gift to the world, and bringing this museum to life is our great privilege.

Renée Price
Director, Neue Galerie New York

BECOMING BECKMANN

- TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECTIVITY
- FROM SECESSIONIST TO INDIVIDUALIST
- CREATIVE CREDO, 1918–20
- PLATES





Max Beckmann in his Berlin studio in front of *Sinking of the Titanic*, 1912. © Oliver Baker, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Deutsches Kunstarchiv, Nürnberg, NL Schmidt, Doris

TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECTIVITY

MAX BECKMANN'S MODERNITY

Olaf Peters



URNS AGAINST AVANT-GARDE

Max Beckmann adopted early on a position against the artistic avant-garde and did not shy away from public controversy when doing so. In 1912 he had a public dispute with Franz Marc of the *Blauer Reiter* (Blue Rider).¹ What artistic concept—which Beckmann was already associating with the term *Sachlichkeit* (objectivity) at this point—was the artist trying to realize in opposition to the avant-garde that was advancing toward abstraction? How did the painter define himself in relation to the latest developments in modern art? In the context of the famous so-called “Bremen Art Dispute” of 1911 led by Carl Vinnen,² Beckmann rashly dismissed Henri Matisse as one of the “untalented persons” and recommended instead painters of the late nineteenth century such as Wilhelm Leibl, Max Liebermann, and Adolf Menzel as “instructive artists”³ [Fig. 1]. Beckmann did so, however, without siding with Vinnen, a Worspeweder painter who adopted a conservative, *völkisch* (racist-populist) position.⁴ How did Beckmann integrate into his own creations artistic concepts that he had publicly rejected and then transform them into order to develop them? These questions will be addressed in what fol-

lows and in the other essays in this catalogue in order to explain the growing rift as well as the continuity that are manifest in his oeuvre. It distinguishes the early work from the work from 1915 onward and then also characterizes the later development after 1925. The decade between 1915 and 1925 mediates between two larger blocks of pictures and itself represents such a block, one that is without question a summit in German painting of the twentieth century.⁵

The famous controversy between Beckmann and Marc flared up already in 1912.⁶ In the journal *Pan*, Beckmann argued for "*Sachlichkeit*,"⁷ and polemicized against Fauvism, Primitivism, and Expressionism. Above all, Beckmann took aim at the increasingly clear trend to abandon the representational image: "What is feeble and overly aesthetic about this so-called new painting is its failure to distinguish between the idea of a wallpaper or poster and that of a 'picture.'"⁸ The fundamental artistic conflict between, on the one hand, his own Impressionist painting style, which was ill-suited to mastering the large, sometimes sublime subjects (Crucifixion, shipwreck, earthquake) he chose and, on the other, his dismissive reaction toward the contemporaneous trends of the avant-garde, made it necessary for the artist to thoroughly rethink his own position. The literary scholar and theorist of the avant-garde Peter Bürger rightly called him a "thinking artist," because he was trying to fathom the problems of painting not just in practice but also in theory.⁹

Beckmann had reached a dead end and had to reformulate his approach to painting¹⁰ if he wanted to assert himself in the continual battles of the artistic field.¹¹ Following his encounter with the latest European painting at the "Herbstsalon" (Autumn Salon) in Berlin in 1913¹², and the fundamental criticism of

Beckmann's earlier oeuvre as "geriatric"¹³, and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, which was like a catalyst for the fundamental stylistic transformation of his work.¹⁴ He had to react to this and tried to situate his own concept on the threshold between a planar, stylishly decorative and a spatial one, which he understood as a dichotomy. Influenced by Rembrandt van Rijn, Francisco Goya, and the early Paul Cézanne, he emphasized spatial depth in his art: "As for myself, I paint and try to develop my style exclusively in terms of deep space, something that in contrast to superficially decorative art penetrates as far as possible into the very core of nature and the spirit of things."¹⁵ That did not, however, keep Beckmann from productively reworking the so-called decorative art he loathed and integrating it into his visual cosmos, for example, by making use of the achievements of Cubism in pictorial autonomy.

World War I, in which Beckmann volunteered as a medical orderly, prompted the painter to find a new form of objective perception and representation. Initially, Beckmann proudly reported to his wife, Minna Beckmann-Tube, on his daily experiences in the war.¹⁶ He soon abandoned that. The experience of combat radicalized modern artists in their manner of aesthetic expression and techniques in both form and content, and so too Beckmann.¹⁷ That meant a break with his early painted work; Beckmann only achieved a unique artistic style because of the war. The process of transforming and breaking away from his early monumental Impressionist paintings can indeed be followed in a sometimes-oppressive way in his paintings, his drawings, and his letters from the field.¹⁸ It is not so much the personal existential threat—Beckmann was hardly at great risk in his activities as a medical orderly—as it was the experience of horror in the face of death and mutilation that

1. Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait (Laughing)*, 1910, oil on canvas. Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. Photo: akg-images



2. Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait as Medical Orderly*, 1915, oil on canvas. Kunst- und Museumsverein im Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal. Photo: Antje Zeis-Loi, Medienzentrum Wuppertal



3. Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait with Red Scarf*, 1917, oil on canvas. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Photo: © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

provoked an almost obligatory artistic reinvention. The artist experienced “horrible things” and drew because it seemed to offer protection from “death and danger,” as he reported to his wife in an oft-cited letter from October 3, 1914.¹⁹ Seeing the wartime drawings and prints, one senses that he was trying to keep the horrors he had observed and captured at a distance and used his sketches to try to ward off misfortune. Beckmann transposed the pain and violence of the war into Christian iconography of the Passion: “I saw some remarkable things. In the semidarkness of the shelter, half-naked, blood-covered men that were having white bandages applied. Grand and painful in expression. New visions of scourgings of Christ. Then a first lieutenant was brought in who had just received a bad chest wound. A handsome face, already very pallid, with reddish hair and a grayish pink skin tone. He was absolutely calm and very feeble.”²⁰

His enthusiasm over being able to render what he had witnessed in a manner that was artistically adequate still seems strange, but nightmares would soon haunt the painter. The drawn and etched self-portraits made between 1915 and 1917 clearly reveal the artist’s nervous strain, compounded by the separation from his family that soon followed. During the period in Frankfurt am Main thereafter, Beckmann found acceptance, stability, and support from his friends Fridel and Ugi Battenberg, and it marks a sharp turning point in his life and work.²¹ The existential crisis could not be overcome immediately and reverberated for a long time. It can be seen during the war in his *Selbstbildnis beim Zeichnen* (Self-Portrait while Drawing) [see ill. on p. 116].²² His *Selbstbildnis als Krankenpfleger* (Self-Portrait as Medical Orderly) [Fig. 2], in which he is almost too awake, with his eyes widening in panic, belongs here as well. This small-format painting demonstrates that he is

on the way to a new form of perception, and it stands at the breaking point of a stylistic transformation. One can sense in it the reorientation, a turn to objectivity, that Beckmann himself described as a turning point: “For the first time it becomes evident what I had meanwhile gone through in the war.”²³ The diagnostic gaze depicted in this painting gives way in 1917 to a resigned gaze turned inward in *Selbstbildnis mit rotem Schal* (Self-Portrait with Red Scarf) [Fig. 3]. Beckmann introduces an existential symbol in the form of a scarf painted in an alarming red.²⁴ Our exhibition begins with the paintings of this phase.

This is the period when Beckmann’s ambitious attempt to grapple with the confusion and fault lines of the epoch in the traditional interpretive schema of Christian iconography failed, and yet he continued to refer to it. This has been well documented by scholars using the example of the large *Auferstehung* (Resurrection) of 1916–18.²⁵ He broke off work on this powerful and monumental painting and left it unfinished, and then rolled it out again in the 1940s, in the middle of World War II. Ultimately, Beckmann abandoned the canvas for good.²⁶ Beckmann’s significant paintings of the late 1910s and early 1920s continue to synthesize Christian iconography and contemporaneous reality. *Die Nacht* (The Night) [Fig. 4], an early major work of the postwar period, is such an aesthetic concentration. It depicts the brutal massacre of an entire family,²⁷ It is a Triumph of Death for its time, the negation of life in a cramped, angular attic room, and can be read as an iconographic quotation of the famous *Triumph of Death* in Pisa, a fresco from Trecento on the Camposanto.²⁸ Beckmann’s painting marks a rupture in civilization; it reveals the questioning and breakdown of the traditional bourgeois order after World War I in the face of defeat and revolution. He continued to see himself as

a modern painter who was at once conscious of the tradition and an eminent contemporary. Beckmann includes his family in *The Night*, even though they were living apart at the time, and he traces the separation to external causes. The people depicted are victims of a quotidian civil war whose boundless brutality threatens to hollow out civil society, to make life a daily martyrdom, and destroys one's own family.²⁹ Contemporary history and biography cannot be separated from each other.

TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECTIVITY AS "VIOLENT VERISM"

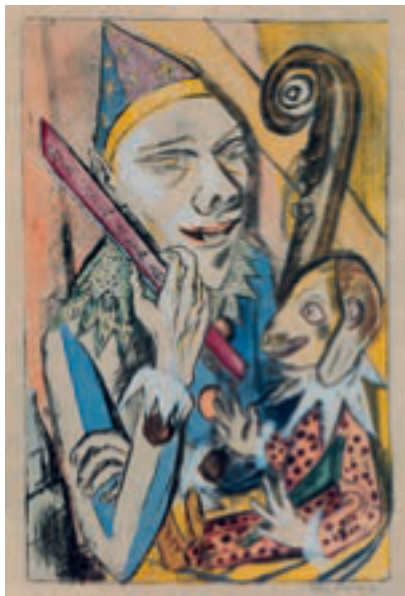
In 1918 with an eye to his concept of art, Beckmann coined the seemingly paradoxical term "transcendental objectivity." With this phrase he attempted to summarize the new development in his painting.³⁰ Stylistically, he was creating an amalgamation of Expressionism, Cubism, and late medieval art. But the term goes beyond that to consider the representation of his own time that

4. Max Beckmann, *The Night*, 1918–19, oil on canvas. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen / Walter Klein / Art Resource, NY



sought to be objective and realistic together with a metaphysical claim to the interpretation of the world. Beckmann would subscribe to the latter all of his life. Around 1918–20, he tried to achieve that through an interpretive return to the national art tradition of early German and Netherlandish art, which Jürgen Müller address elsewhere in this catalogue. Beckmann experienced the crucial Northern influences that would be so important for his later reception and his understanding of himself as an artist in the nationalistically stoked climate of World War I. They are referenced in a letter he wrote to his wife, Minna, on April 17, 1915, in which he reported on a trip to Brussels:

I saw wonderful Brueghels, some remarkable Rogier van der Weyden, who among the Belgian primitives appeals to me most of all. But certainly a wonderful portrait by Cranach made the most intense impression on me. A man with slanted eyes, beard and wearing fur seen against a bare wall, and some unknown German primitives, who seemed remarkable to me in their almost brutal, raw sincerity, their robust, almost peasantlike strength. These paintings once again inspired me immensely and confirmed me in my convictions. I felt myself to be near to all of them and felt at home while in enemy country.³¹



5. Max Beckmann, *Pierrot and Mask*, 1920, colored lithograph. Private Collection

Beckmann could make an intellectual connection that offered him a place of refuge.

In his “*Bekennnis*” (Confession) from 1918, he complemented this national turn with side-swipes at Impressionism, abstraction in the works of the successors to the Blauer Reiter, and late Expressionism, which he regarded as increasingly flat.³² By associating the medieval Gothic, which was considered authenti-

cally German, with Expressionism—which by then had acquired German connotations—and aiming this synthesis against the abstract, expressive tendencies of the avant garde, Beckmann’s “transcendental objectivity” satisfied the concept of a “German art” that both artists and art critics demanded at the time.³³

Stylistically, Beckmann was abreast with his times with his reception of Cubism and Expressionism, while seemingly paradoxically, he rejected Expressionism and abstraction in equal measure and transcended them while moving toward the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. This artistic process was crucial for his future. For Beckmann, engaging with Cubism proved to be necessary to break free of one of the core conceptual problems of his art before World War I.³⁴ In the view of the liberal critic Max Osborn, this was a “lack of an internal framework” and the absence of a “solid construction of the whole” of the composition. This made the drifting apart of Beckmann’s large-format, Impressionist history paintings of the time inevitable.³⁵ Osborn thus anticipated the critic Carl Einstein’s fundamental criticism of Impressionism, who later claimed that Impressionism had overcome—indeed, even dissolved and broke down—history painting of the nineteenth century by discovering and thematizing light.³⁶

In this view, the problems with Beckmann’s prewar painting resulted, on the one hand, from the painter attempting to cling to the grand subject of history while using modern premises of Impressionist painting that were paradoxical in that context. On the other hand, this contrasted with the new drawing-like quality in Beckmann’s painting.³⁷ Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub succinctly remarked of this development “that the ‘painter’ becomes a ‘draftsman’; the broadly flowing substance of the paint solidifies into a linear frame.”³⁸ Beckmann was



able to use this to resolve his artistic dilemma for a time and was accepted into a tradition that was perceived as decidedly German [Fig. 5]. In Paul Westheim's *Kunstblatt*, one of the leading art journals of the Weimar Republic, the Frankfurt-based journalist and Beckmann collector Heinrich Simon remarked unequivocally in 1919: "This unnatural art, that is to say, art that has not clung to the pleasing but instead advanced to the spiritual, this ugly art, i.e., truth-seeking, raw and violent art, i.e., courageous art that does not shrink from the most difficult problems, is and will always be the true German art. [...] Beckmann is a German painter in that sense."³⁹ Years later, when Beckmann was encountering the first hostilities from the National Socialists, he asked his art dealer Günther Franke to emphasize precisely this fact to the National Socialists to protect him from future attacks.⁴⁰ This turned

out to be an illusion, and Beckmann became a prominent victim of National Socialism's anti-modernist art policy after 1933.

That Beckmann unsparingly confronted reality in his art after World War I was perceived as "German" and at the same time contemporary. Updating the link to the Christian tradition in a stylistic idiom with national connotations of early German or Netherlandish painting was in Beckmann's case a way of making the wide-ranging dubiousness of the present his theme. By appropriating and even mocking the tradition, Beckmann was emphatically culminating the turn away from the Christian religion and faith that he had described to his Munich publisher Reinhard Piper. The painter had explained it to him already in July 1919 in Frankfurt am Main: "A new mystical feeling will form. Humility before God is over. My

6. Street battle during the Revolution in Berlin, 1919

7. Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait with Champagne Glass*, 1919, oil on canvas. Städel Museum Frankfurt. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Städel Museum Frankfurt / Art Resource, NY



religion is arrogance before God, defiance of God. Defiance that he has created us so that we cannot love one another. In my paintings I accused God of everything he has done wrong.⁴¹ This is a harbinger of the late work of Beckmann, who will systematically build up these suggestions of a new mystical feeling that he shared with many of his contemporaries and had been systematically building up in his metaphysically grounded works since the late 1920s. The “swindle” of the world of the Greek gods, about which the artist also complained to Piper, and a number of Beckmann’s other pictorial and intellectual sources were syncretistically adapted, creatively instrumentalized, dynamically synthesized, and amalgamated in his painted work. But that is a later development, beginning around 1930.

First, bitter mockery became Beckmann’s means for articulating his outrage. Its iconography is rooted in Christian culture, against which it turns and whose loss of meaning it reveals by means of inversion. The art critic Paul Westheim observed at the time: “It could be said that today, if not the Christian faith as a whole, at least its mythology and dogma, its

physical relationships and spiritual fixations have lost their meaning.”⁴² Beckmann makes that clear using the artistic idiom of the Christian faith. The painter appears to have lost his faith in general and yet continues to express a metaphysical need: Beckmann’s goal was a “metaphysics of representationalism. [...] In my *The Night*, too, the metaphysical should make one forget the representational. It should be overcome by the metaphysical. One should only see the beauty the way a funeral march is also beautiful.”⁴³ That must be seen as a direct consequence of the experiences of World War I and the civil-war-like phase of the formation of the Weimar Republic, which had an almost violent effect on Beckmann’s work [Fig. 6].

The contemporaneous art critic Wilhelm Hausenstein tried to express Beckmann’s effort, which he saw as a rigorously metaphysical element, in the following words:

*The interlocking of immoderation and construction is obviously, all too obviously, a German virtue—a German necessity. At this interlocking, however, a next step was taken and is still being taken. A violent verism occurred—an excessive, penetrating, tormenting perception of things, a naturalism without equal. And another next step was taken: the transformation of things into chimeras. This metamorphosis, too, is only logical. It corresponds to the constructive sense of the imaginary. Verism has suddenly turned into the metaphysical. That is what produces the chimerical quality of German Gothic that gives this Gothic its particular note; is what produces the chimerical quality of Beckmann’s art.*⁴⁴

Beckmann had honored his program of transcendental objectivity, but his paintings and prints did often depict the world as a bleak

"chimera" [Fig. 7; p. 49].⁴⁵ His contemporaries regarded the paintings of the years from 1917 to around 1925 as "incredibly sober and cold, of an unrelenting alertness and sharpness, that replaces lyric pathos with an almost cynical objectivity."⁴⁶ His work clearly articulated to his contemporaries that they were placed in a void, that they were transcendently homeless (Georg Lukács).⁴⁷ They were thus articulating a widespread feeling of the time. It was founded on the comprehensive critique of metaphysics of the nineteenth century,⁴⁸ and in Beckmann's case had developed during the war, but at the same time he was fighting it. The "new church" he projected in his creative "*Bekentnis*" (Confession) became a church of

nihilism, despite his intention to the contrary [Fig. 8]. "That is my crazy hope which I can't give up, which in spite of everything is stronger in me than ever before. And someday I want to make buildings along with my pictures. To build a tower in which humanity can shriek out its rage and despair and all its poor hopes and joys and wild yearning. A new church. Perhaps this age may help me."⁴⁹ The program he formulated and pursued in his paintings failed in terms of its subject matter insofar as it was not able to produce a new sense of community. He remarked to the publisher Reinhard Piper on January 9, 1917: "I am managing gradually to express myself more substantially and that provides me with stability and calm in

8. Max Beckmann, *Resurrection*, 1916–18 (unfinished), oil and charcoal on canvas. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Photo: © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart



this great madness in which we are now living more than before."⁵⁰ In May of that year he wrote to Piper again: "Yes, the war. Hopefully, you are still doing fine, by the way. In that respect. The only thing that is still possible is art and for me painting. In these times when all concepts are turned upside down you can only live in this mixture of somnambulism and dreadful awareness unless you want to be just as dull as an animal."⁵¹

The artist described the goal of his painting: "to confine [reality], to beat it down and to strangle it."⁵² External reality is forced into an abstract formal framework on the canvas, thus literally subjecting it to the reality of the painting. Beckmann urgently expressed this in his "Confession," or "Creative Credo," which was written during the final phase of the war but not published until two years later. Because it is so important, we reproduce it in full in this catalogue (see pp. 48–50). He writes there regarding the production of the picture: "I don't cry. I hate tears, they are a sign of slavery. I keep my mind on my business—on a leg, on an arm, on the penetration of the surface thanks to the wonderful effects of foreshortening, on the partitioning of space, on the relationship of straight and curved lines. [...] Most important for me is volume, trapped in height and width; volume on the plane, depth without losing the awareness of the plane, the architecture of the picture."⁵³

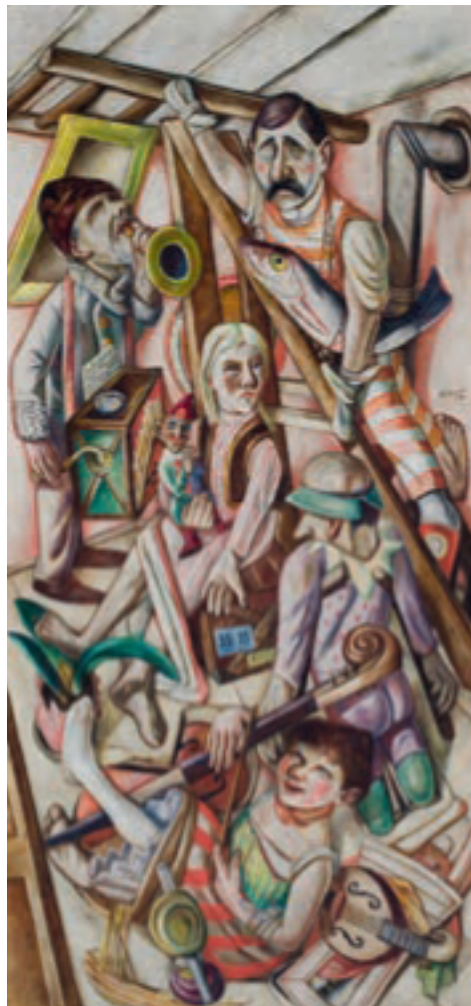
The passage powerfully demonstrates Beckmann's existential despair in the face of devastating historical events. The painter imposed on himself a stoic, almost fatalistic stance that was intended to immunize him against such historical events. He fled into the picture, where he could and did do violence to the external reality that could not be controlled. There he could impose his aesthetic, form-controlling, Old Master, and Cubist sty-

listic principles. This passage confirms the sharp observation of Alfred Neumeyer, which still deserves to be underscored, that the paintings of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*—to which Beckmann's work of this period certainly belonged, in the form of critical verism⁵⁴—had lost an "awareness of reality," despite its ostentatiously displayed "cult of the object."⁵⁵ It is therefore incorrect when referring to paintings from around 1920 to speak of space in the classical sense of the optically consistent organization of three-dimensionality. A space in the literal sense is shown: for example, you can see the planks of a floor, the walls, and the boards of a wooden ceiling. But this space, which appears to be organized according to one-point perspective, soon proves to be an illusion that is in the process of disassociating. Paintings of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* do not offer a naturalistic depiction of visible reality; rather, they transfer reality into the painted image. In doing so, they break it up by unsettling traditional ways of seeing by means of perspectival rifts and leaps or overly sharp, unreal depictions—for example, views from up close and from afar that are equally sharp—and so it does lose an awareness of reality in Neumeyer's sense. The "continuous surface cohesiveness"⁵⁶ of the paintings that Beckmann produced as if by force conflicts with a traditional perspectival rendering of the pictorial space to which he had been largely indebted, despite several exceptions, before the war. Beckmann's unconventional and productive synthesis of the art of the Old Masters and that of Cubism is manifested here.

Beckmann addressed these connections in a letter to Reinhard Piper of February 8, 1918, with a clearly anti-Expressionist thrust. He was reflecting on the aforementioned crisis of Expressionism, which would soon be replaced by Dadaism and the verism of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*: "It is truly interesting for

me to be here just now, because Frankfurt is a bastion of Expressionism. Nevertheless, I have succeeded here of all places to persuade a large number of people with my paintings, which unfortunately you do not know yet, that the Expressionist concern was indeed just a decoratively literary one, which has nothing to do with a vital sense of art. Now I can prove to you with my paintings and prints that one can be new without doing Expressionism or Impressionism. New based on the old law of art: roundness in the plane."⁵⁷

One of the most powerful effects of Beckmann's paintings from the early Weimar Republic doubtless results, in addition to the aspect of "roundness," from his coloring. If one closely examines the paintings made of a reduced palette of shades of red, yellow, green, gray, and a little blue and violet, one often senses a gleaming and glowing, despite a certain frigidness that the paintings can exude. They are in essence grisaille paintings with very few color values scattered across the canvas as if in a patchwork quilt. Black, gray, and white sometimes play a strong role as contrast, and a painting such as *Christus und die Sünderin* (Christ and the Sinner) of 1917 [Plate 22] radiates a coldness that is only increased by the few color tones that flare up. The impression is quite different in the case of *Der Traum* (The Dream) of 1921 [Fig. 9; Plate 72], in which the figures and objects are fused as if cast in molten lava, without conveying the impression of glazing. Beckmann produces a disturbing effect with his coloration. Looking back in 1928, the critic Hausenstein rightly connected it with the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages: "In the early paintings Beckmann's color touches on the style of medieval miniatures (and, by the way, not just the color): this Beckmann was doing what is called 'illuminating.'"⁵⁸ In the upper part of the painting in particular, where



9. Max Beckmann, *The Dream*, 1921, oil on canvas. Saint Louis Art Museum, Bequest Morton D. May

the walls of the room that serve as background for the action, an almost pathological note of suffering enters the work. Surrounded by a feverish aura, all of the people and objects glow pink here. Any touch or movement must cause them unbelievable pain. Like hardly any other picture by this painter, *The Dream* possesses a quality of the ignited, the vulnerable, which interprets existence as torment. It occurs again in compressed form and is referred back to itself in the captivating and dismaying *Selbstbildnis vor rotem Vorhang* (Self-Portrait in front of Red Curtain) of 1923 [see Plate 91].

A FORCED PICTORIAL ORDER TO OVERCOME CONTINGENCY

In his brilliant analysis of the 1921 painting *The Dream*, the Heidelberg art historian Wilhelm Fraenger worked out perspectives on Beckmann's painting of this period that can be generalized.⁵⁹ He writes, for example, that the relief character of the painting that is repeatedly visibly interrupted is supported by the overall pale coloration of the picture. It grants wide space to the formal aspect, to the drawing, and one senses "a very sharp, especially and painfully sharp, fixation of the object by means of form."⁶⁰ The canvas confronts the viewer in this way as a self-contained tectonic framework. It is unshakeable, even though everything has become jumbled up, and so the relationship of form and content seems problematic. Fraenger pointed to this antagonistic structure and recognized it as the painting's true set of problems: "If we try to define Beckmann's idea of form in terms of his ethical character, we observe an earnest striving for pictorial clarity and regularity, for discipline and rule and verse meter. This ordering tendency of the sense of form runs strictly counter to Beckmann's will to express himself. Because he aims straight for ugliness, arbitrariness, and violence, disfiguring and deforming, in a word: for the anarchy of the grotesque that explodes all norms."⁶¹

Fraenger sees in Beckmann's work an irresolvable conflict between a constructive, objective will to order and a subjective will to express himself. The work produces an ambivalent sensation of order and compulsion, of norm and arbitrariness. In Fraenger's view, the artist painted to combat solipsistic isolation and the individualistic-atomist structure of life today. He ordered, tamed, and disciplined the disorder of life. He was painting the world as it should be,⁶² even when it meant doing violence to it. Fraenger is getting at the afore-

mentioned central matter that the painter was trying to record and control via his art—the chaos of his time. The painter's will to form, modeled on the early German masters, was to capture and order a senseless world and an almost unbearable randomness.⁶³ In late 1922, Beckmann emphasized to his publisher Reinhard Piper the role of the early German artists: "It is very nice that you are publishing something about the early German painters. Right now, especially, it is a matter of struggling to keep from falling back into an archaizing time, but only, with an awareness of our own insane and yet strong time, become lovingly conscious of our ancestors. And the proper selection under the proper light can contribute a great deal to that."⁶⁴

Seemingly paradoxically, the attempt to create order could culminate in an impression of the mechanically determined and of "fatality." Hausenstein expresses that view: "Beckmann possesses more and in a stronger way than any other painter today (or any day) the sense of the mechanical quality of our age." And he goes on to speak of transitions from the human into the technical, of the organic into the mechanical, and of the soulful into the material-constructive, and then continues: "Beckmann is the protagonist of such insightful perception. That accounts for the mechanical connection and machine-like functioning of his paintings, especially of the terrible period from 1920 to 1925: from *Fastnacht* (Carnival) [Plate 67] to *Galleria Umberto* [Plate 101] (which should really be called arcade)."⁶⁵ We are able to show both paintings in our exhibition and hence present major works that impressively mark the timespan emphasized by his contemporaries.

Carnival a very personal painting for the artist and stands at the beginning of the sometimes-eccentric vertical formats that

Beckmann will later select for major works and the individual panels of the triptychs of 1932–33.⁶⁶ In the center we see Fridel Battenberg. Beckmann was able to stay at her home at the beginning of his Frankfurt period. She is standing precisely on the central axis of the painting with her legs casually crossed. She is flanked not by her husband, Ugi, but by Beckmann's Berlin-based art-dealer Jsrael Ber Neumann.⁶⁷ A figure in a grotesque animal mask is lying curled up on the floor: it is generally thought to be Beckmann himself, whose masked mouth outlined in red touches Fridel Battenberg's red shoes, whose color takes up the eye and hue of the mask. This eye is directed frontally at the viewer, but artificially; Fridel, by contrast, gazes with her blue eyes into a vague distance; and Neumann appears to be looking at Fridel but scarcely reaches her. The entire scene takes place in a cramped space overfilled with objects and beings (candles, mirror, gramophone, horn, champagne bucket, dog, and cat). Beckmann skillfully harmonizes the forms and colors. Directions are indicated and adopted, and yet it all plays out within the narrow, vertical, rectangle of the painting without really crossing the edge of the painting. It suggests comparison with late medieval carved altarpieces, as if their compression of figures has been transferred to canvas. The indications of the space and its volumes being partially splintered and faceted reflect Beckmann's grappling with Cubism, whose lack of color is, however, ostentatiously outdone in this comparatively colorful painting. The theme of carnival justifies the garish and grotesque qualities of this overture "of the terrible period from 1920 to 1925" (Wilhelm Hausenstein). Beckmann's *The Dream* of the following year, 1921, transports this into the immediate present day of Berlin, which Beckmann visited at the beginning of the Weimar Republic and addressed in the *Berliner Reise* (Trip to Berlin) series of prints

[see p. 158].⁶⁸ In the painting, the costumed cripples and a blind hurdy-gurdy man evoke the misery of the postwar era.

Das Trapez (The Trapeze) [Plate 73] of 1923 takes up one central theme in Beckmann's art—alongside the café, the dancehall, and the variety theater:⁶⁹ the iconography of carnies and the circus.⁷⁰ Beckmann compresses the seven artists into a tight space: they interlock, touch, and sometimes hold one another, and yet they also move past one another in a strangely disconnected way. The lowest figure, with his legs in an extreme split, almost appears to have been trampled down. The female figure at lower left combines eroticism with compulsion in that her nipple is visible, while her closed eyes and slender red mouth suggest a certain forbearance. Moving relatively freely, by contrast, the large female figure on the right and the young man in a striped leotard, who looks like a mixture of Beckmann and his son, Peter, move comparatively freely. The man in the white leotard stuck under the ceiling holding an iron chain in his mouth completes the scene and corresponds, like one part of a bracket, to the figure pressed to the floor.

Hard black contours frame the colors, and Beckmann has created a wonderful chord of lemony green, reddish pink, and indigo. The ropes holding the trapeze bar make the figures look like a heap of marionettes that have been carelessly tossed aside but take on a certain life of their own, even as they appear rigid and transfixed. Their large, dark eyes underscore that interpretation in an almost melancholy way. Only the crouching figure on the right, whom Beckmann has given another mask—this one fiery red and fleshy—stands apart somewhat. He is facing out of the structure, while one white-gloved hand seems to be raised at the edge of the painting, as if to

10. Max Beckmann,
*Portrait of Fridel
Battenberg*, 1920, oil
on canvas. Sprengel
Museum Hannover.
Photo: bpk Bildagentur
/ Sprengel Museum
Hannover / Michael
Herling / Aline Gwose /
Art Resource, NY

cross this aesthetic boundary into the viewer's space, tentatively at first. It is left uncertain whether he will ever straighten up.

Beckmann was trying to articulate here the position he had already outlined in an exemplary way during the final phase of World War I. On the occasion of the exhibition of prints organized in Berlin by Neumann in 1917, the author wrote in the foreword to the catalogue: "Be the child of one's time. Naturalism against one's own self. Objectivity of the inner vision."⁷¹ The term "objectivity" (*Sachlichkeit*) is used here to mean the phenomenon of establishing distance. The writer Stefan George

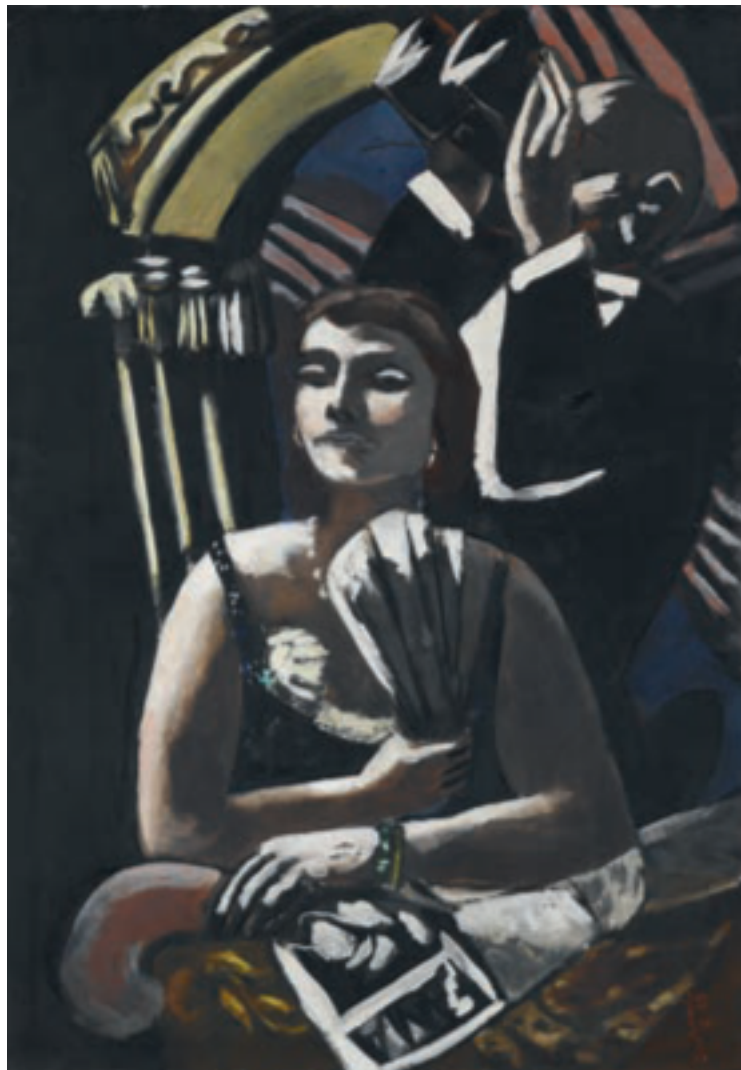


expressed himself similarly when describing his living in Switzerland and his critical distance from the wartime actions in the sentences: "A fine objectivity! And I cry out to all of you: whether it ends badly or well: the most difficult thing comes ONLY AFTERWARD!!"⁷² Beckmann decisively adopted a position opposite to utopian, nonobjective Expressionism;⁷³ he did not, however, cling to a negative polemic and attitude but rather, under the influence of the war and the stylistic hodgepodge of early German art, Expressionism, Cubo-Futurism, and Dadaism in the form of a veristic *Neue Sachlichkeit*, created a genuine style and prevailed with it.⁷⁴ *The Night*, *Carnival*, *The Dream*, and *The Trapeze* emphatically honored this program and left behind the religious themes of 1917. Beckmann became "contemporary," and in that sense also modern, precisely because he had recourse to the past and thus in a certain way dovetailed the contemporary with the timeless. Beckmann is a painter of modern life with all its tragedy and violence.

NEW OBJECTIVITY AND BEYOND

One controversial question is whether Beckmann should be categorized as a proponent of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*—a style of the era that can, admittedly, scarcely be defined.⁷⁵ The director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim at the time, Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, used the term "Die Neue Sachlichkeit" for this movement as early as 1923. In his now-famous brochure in the runup to the exhibition of that name in 1925, Hartlaub explained his goal of providing a survey of the artistic production of the past ten years, which he said had explicitly dedicated itself to a "positively tangible reality" and whose approach had been "neither Impressionistically dissolved nor Expressionistically abstract."⁷⁶ That precisely defines Beckmann's formulation of the artistic problem as described above, though without identifying it. Under a title that would lend the

movement its name—"Die Neue Sachlichkeit: Deutsche Malerei seit dem Expressionismus" (The New Objectivity: German Painting since Expressionism)—this epochal exhibition was held from June 14 to September 18, 1925, in Mannheim and was shown in several German cities thereafter.⁷⁷ According to the catalogue, five paintings by Beckmann were exhibited when the exhibition opened. They were: *Christus und die Sünderin* (Christ and the Sinner) [Plate 22] and *Strasse mit Luftballon* (Landscape with Balloon) [Plate 18], both of 1917, *Doppelbildnis* (a double portrait of Käthe and Walter Carl) of 1918, *Bildnis mit alter Dame/Frau Tube* (Portrait with an Old Lady/Mrs. Tube) of 1919, and finally the 1923 *Doppelporträt Zwei Frauen* (a double portrait of Marie Swarzenski and Carla Netter). The artist was thus represented in this programmatic exhibition with crucial works after his significant stylistic change around 1915–17. Despite the information in the exhibition catalogue, however, there were more works than the five named above, which ultimately made Beckmann figure as a significant proponent of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. No fewer than nine paintings arrived in mid-July, by way of Beckmann's Frankfurt gallery Zinglers Kabinett from a presentation at the Hamburger Kunstverein, and were shown at the exhibition in Mannheim. The delivery note, dated July 17, 1925, has been preserved in the archives of the Kunsthalle Mannheim and lists such important works as the 1920 *Porträt Frau Battenberg* [Fig. 10], *Bar in Baden-Baden* of 1923, and the 1924 painting *Am Lido* [Plate 102], based on impressions from an Italian journey. With a total of fourteen paintings on view, Beckmann was one of the most important artists in this significant exhibition venue of the modern era; in Dresden, one of the venues where this traveling exhibition was shown next, he was represented by fifteen paintings. Against this backdrop, it makes no sense to



remove Beckmann from the context of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Including him should, of course, not diminish his artistic independence either. He was a protagonist and hence one outstanding figure among many.

In 1928, on the occasion of a presentation of Beckmann's paintings at the Munich gallery of the dealer Günther Franke, Hausenstein pointed to the difficulty of categorizing his work and demanded: "Let us refrain from placing Beckmann in a contemporary category! He is

11. Max Beckmann, *The Loge*, 1928, oil on canvas. Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Photo: © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

no 'Expressionist'; nor does he have anything to do with the galvanic arts with which the 'Neue Sachlichkeit' is trying to conjure the corpses of our epoch back to an artificial life in artificial clarity, to a sterilized life in germ-free atmospheres."⁷⁸ The critic was, however, following here the painter's own attempt to distance himself,⁷⁹ making himself the latter's mouthpiece, but this is untenable from today's perspective. In the first half of the 1920s, Beckmann was one proponent of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, perhaps even the main one. His work is associated with an emphatically representational painting that polemically distinguished itself from Expressionism and yet was still related to it.

For Hartlaub, Beckmann was the "greatest living artist," and in 1928 he became the first museum director in Germany to organize a survey of his works.⁸⁰ The Kunsthalle came close to acquiring Beckmann's 1918-19 magnum opus *The Night*. Hartlaub's predecessor Fritz Wichert had brought the painting to the museum for viewing. It appeared, however, that the acquisition could not get past the committee responsible, however, so it was never even presented to it. The Kunsthalle did purchase *Christ and the Sinner* and *Portrait with an Old Lady/Mrs. Tube*. The museum's director tied his hopes for a future artistic evolution in Germany to Beckmann personally. Hartlaub expected a productive synthesis from him. It was supposed to overcome from the outset the "two-wing" separation of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* he had himself made in 1922, which remains problematic today: "perhaps tomorrow or the day after the two currents will be unified and a broad riverbed created in the process. We await a future, redeemed Max Beckmann"⁸¹ [Fig. 11].

Then in 1928 it seemed to Hartlaub "as if the long, arduous climb has only now ended, as if

the high route is only now really beginning."⁸² For him, the painter was the "protagonist of the epoch," whose oeuvre reflected Germany's evolution after World War I. The art historian saw in Beckmann's paintings from 1924–25 onward a new, unfamiliar composure and asked: "Does this relative assuagement of Beckmann's latest art reflect a recovery of our age, a purification, stabilization of our entire being after so much boundless destruction?"⁸³ Our exhibition attempts to make precisely this artistic process and this expectation of the time clearly understandable. In the early 1920s Beckmann was working out a position as a painter that he gradually changed and rewrote. But it remained the prerequisite for a late work that, while probably never revealing a "redeemed Beckmann" (Gustav F. Hartlaub), continues to draw attention, to seem topical, and to challenge our seeing and understanding in a productive way.

Translated from the German by Steven Lindberg

Acknowledgments

This exhibition and publication have been a labor of love. In 2010 I had the pleasure of organizing a monographic exhibition on Otto Dix for the Neue Galerie, which was to be supplemented by a similar exhibition on Max Beckmann. I thank Ronald S. Lauder, Renée Price, and the Neue Galerie team for their enduring trust and support.

The concept for the exhibition and my arguments in the essays and work descriptions had their foundation in my extensive and detailed monograph *Vom schwarzen Seiltänzer: Max Beckmann zwischen Weimarer Republik und Exil* (Berlin: Reimer, 2005), and have been taken up, updated, and reexamined here.

- 1 On this fundamental Marc-Beckmann controversy, see Dietrich Schubert, "Die Beckmann-Marc-Kontroverse von 1912: 'Sachlichkeit' versus 'Innerer Klang,'" in *Expressionismus und Kulturkrise*, ed. Bernd Hüppauf (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1983), 207–44; Christoph Engels, *Auf der Suche nach einer "deutschen Kunst": Max Beckmann in der Wilhelminischen Kunstkritik* (Weimar: VDG, 1997), 142–54; and Cathrin Klingsöhr-Leroy, "Controversial Positions: Franz Marc and Max Beckmann," trans. Michael Wolfson, in *Max Beckmann and Berlin*, ed. Thomas Köhler and Stefanie Heckmann, exh. cat. Berlinische Galerie (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2015), 76–83.
- 2 Cf. *Ein Protest deutscher Künstler, mit Einleitung von Carl Vinnen* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1911).
- 3 Max Beckmann, "Response to *In Battle for Art: The Answer to the 'Protest of German Artists'*," in Beckmann, *Self-Portrait in Words: Collected Writings and Statements, 1903–1950*, ed. Barbara Copeland Buenger, trans. Barbara Copeland Buenger and Reinhold Heller with David Britt (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 110–12, esp. 112. Buenger's essential collection of translation and commentaries on Beckmann's texts has recently been completed in German: Petra Kipphoff, *Max Beckmann: Der Maler als Schreiber* (Springe: zu Klampen, 2021).
- 4 On the controversy in general, see *Van Gogh: Fields; the Field with Poppies and the Artists' Dispute*, ed. Wulf Herzogenrath and Dorothee Hansen, exh. cat. Kunsthalle Bremen (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2002).
- 5 On this phase of his work in general, see Carla Schulz-Hoffmann, *Max Beckmann: Der Maler* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1991), 31–64; Reinhard Spieler, *Max Beckmann, 1884–1950: The Path to Myth*, trans. Charity Scott Stokes (Cologne: Taschen, 1994), 25–73; Olaf Peters, *Vom schwarzen Seiltänzer: Max Beckmann zwischen Weimarer Republik und Exil* (Berlin: Reimer, 2005), 21–75; Uwe M. Schneede, *Max Beckmann: Der Maler seiner Zeit* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), 47–106; and, most recently, Dietrich Schubert, *Max Beckmann: Vom Vietzker Strand zur Departure; Die Kristallation seiner Werturteile und seine bildnerische Praxis 1904–1936* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2021), 63–169; and Christian Lenz, *Max Beckmann* (Münster: Rhema, 2022), 47–121.
- 6 See Schubert, "Die Beckmann-Marc-Kontroverse von 1912" (see note 1); Engels, *Auf der Suche nach einer "deutschen Kunst"* (see note 1); *Max Beckmann: Die frühen Bilder*, exh. cat. (Bielefeld: Kunsthalle; Frankfurt am Main: Städelsches Kunstinstitut, 1982); and Karen Lang, "Max Beckmann's Inconceivable Modernism," in *Of "Truths Impossible to Put in Words": Max Beckmann Contextualized*, ed. Rose-Carol Washton Long and Maria Makela (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 81–101, esp. 91–7.
- 7 As early as 1906, the art critic Willy Pastor had already certified an almost "perverse objectivity" in view of his Impressionist-naturalist engagement with sociocritical themes. See Engels, *Auf der Suche nach einer "deutschen Kunst"* (see note 1), 97.
- 8 Max Beckmann, "Thoughts on Timely and Untimely Art," in Beckmann, *Self-Portrait in Words* (see note 3), 113–17, esp. 116.
- 9 See Peter Bürger, "'Transzendente Sachlichkeit': Das künstlerische Programm von Max Beckmann, wie es in seinen Schriften zum Ausdruck kommt," *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, no. 237 (October 12, 2013): 29.
- 10 On the immanent opposition—that is, the one formulated from the foundation of the avant-garde outward—versus a formalist modernism that was gaining broad acceptance, see the ambitious, sometimes somewhat simplistic overview in Bernard Smith, *Modernism's History: A Study in Twentieth-Century Art and Ideas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), which rightly questions the one-sided model of evolution of twentieth-century art developed on the paradigm of French modernism. For details, see also Olaf Peters, "The Struggle for Artistic Modernity: Max Beckmann in the Crisis Year of 1913," trans. Steven Lindberg, in Köhler and Heckmann, *Max Beckmann and Berlin* (see note 1), 84–92.
- 11 I borrow this term from Pierre Bourdieu. See esp. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), and, as an exemplary, unfinished study, Pierre Bourdieu, *Manet: A Symbolic Revolution*, ed. Pascale Casanova et al., trans. Peter Collier and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).
- 12 On the exhibition, see *Stationen der Moderne: Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen der Moderne in Deutschland*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1988), 130–53, and Peter Selz, "Der 'Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon,' Berlin 1913," in *Die Kunst der Ausstellung: Eine Dokumentation dreissig exemplarischer Kunstausstellungen dieses Jahrhunderts*, ed. Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1991), 56–63.
- 13 "The paintings that Beckmann is showing this time seem almost geriatric." See Adolf Behne, "Die erste Ausstellung der Freien Sezession," *Die Gegenwart* 85, no. 17 (April 25, 1914): 261–64, esp. 263, quoted in Engels, *Auf der Suche nach einer "deutschen Kunst"* (see note 1), 178.
- 14 On this process, see also the profound essay by Jay A. Clarke, "Space as Metaphor: Beckmann and the Conflicts of Secessionist Style in Berlin," in Washton Long and Makela, *Of "Truths Impossible to Put in Words"* (see note 6), 49–80.