

ubu

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LEFT vs. RIGHT

Expressionist Propaganda Posters of the Early Weimar Era

March 22 – May 18, 2002

Ubu Gallery will exhibit a unique collection of rare lithographic posters produced in Germany during the tumultuous period of the early Weimar Republic in the exhibition, *Left vs. Right: Expressionist Propaganda Posters of the Early Weimar Era*. In the chaotic period immediately following World War One, the struggle for the soul of the German people between the radical Communists on the left and the strident anti-Bolshevists on the right manifested itself in a classic battle of slogans and images plastered on the walls of German cities. Generally expressionist in style, these propaganda posters are hard-hitting, often brutal, political documents, most created for the hard-fought and pivotal 1919 campaign for the National Assembly. Some were designed simply to restore order to the streets or to get out the vote; others were stridently jingoistic and nationalist. A third group blatantly appealed for revolution.

The similarities of style and metaphor in the posters for both left and right –purposely crude, dark and expressionistic– are striking, as are the issues addressed like hunger, unemployment, exploitation, love of family and country. The posters vivify a time of disorder, resentment, fear and humiliation.

Unfortunately for the sophisticated artists involved in their creation, the naive German worker either didn't understand or was insulted by the more avant-garde poster designs. Although these artists carried an immensely strong anti-bourgeois attitude that carried over from the earliest expressionist days before the War, the public quickly concluded that these propagandists were condescending at best; at worst, they were charlatans. In the end, realist images were both more accepted and more effective.

Included in the collection to be exhibited are two works each by Max Pechstein, Cesar Klein, "O.K." (presumed by some to be Oskar Kokoschka) and Heinz Fuchs, as well as single works by Alexander M. Cay, Rudi Feld, Oskar W. H. Hadank, Paul Helwig-Strehl, Willy Jaeckel, Konopacki, Stephan Krotowski, Hans Langenborg, Wilhelm Pleunnecke, Johannes Safis, Walter Schnackenberg, Erioh Wohlfahrt, Hans Zehetmayr and Valentin Zietara.