

Max Beckmann prints from the Museum of Modern Art

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MAX BECKMANN PRINTS

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A Disturbing Reality: The Prints of Max Beckmann © 1992
Wendy Weitman

Max Beckmann and the Weimar Era © 1992 James L. Fisher

Cover: *Group Portrait, Eden Bar*, trial proof. 1923
Woodcut. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Frontispiece: *Max Beckmann*. 1928

Exhibition Schedule:

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
Fort Worth, Texas
May 17—July 5, 1992

Center for the Fine Arts
Miami, Florida
September 19—November 1, 1992

The Toledo Museum of Art
Toledo, Ohio
March 14—May 2, 1993

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
San Francisco, California
August 26—November 7, 1993

Glenbow Museum
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
January 15—March 13, 1994

Williams College Museum of Art
Williamstown, Massachusetts
April 16—June 25, 1994

Oklahoma City Art Museum
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
September 17—November 20, 1994

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FOREWORD

Since the first decade of this century, Max Beckmann has intrigued artists and art historians with his provocative and enigmatic compositions. Beckmann's style, powerful in design and idea, defied simple classification. Beckmann commented on Weimar society in a manner similar to his contemporaries, including "Die Neue Sachlichkeit" artists, and used stylistic elements derived from Expressionism in his emotionally charged compositions filled with angular forms. However, Beckmann's goal was the creation of a highly personal vision relying on visual metaphors to convey his philosophical ideas regarding man and salvation.

In the more than 350 prints that he produced, Beckmann investigated man's relationship to both his fellow man and the more abstract concepts of life and humanity, including the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer regarding the alienation and isolation of man. Likewise, Beckmann responded to the turmoil of the Weimar era and explored the pictorial possibilities for elevating the viewer to a spiritual level that, from Beckmann's point of view, did not exist in war-torn contemporary German society.

This exhibition examines the graphic work of Beckmann from his earliest attempts at printmaking through his last work, focusing on the period between 1915 and 1923, when the bulk of his prints were completed. *Max Beckmann Prints From the Museum of Modern Art* is the result of a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. The fourth in a series, it follows *Surrealist Prints*, *Matisse Prints*, and *Dubuffet Prints*, each drawn from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Wendy Weitman, Associate Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art, and James L. Fisher, Curator and Assistant to the Director, Exhibitions, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, have co-organized the exhibition and contributed essays to this exhibition catalogue. Their insightful selection and analysis of the prints included in the exhibition and their constant enthusiasm for this project is greatly appreciated.

Riva Castleman, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books at The Museum of Modern Art, supported *Max Beckmann Prints* from its inception, as she eagerly did the three previous exhibitions in the series. We owe her, especially, our fullest appreciation. Other Museum of Modern Art staff members who participated in the organization of this exhibition are Susan Weiley, Editor; Eleni Cocordas, Associate Coordinator of Exhibitions; Henriette Schoch, Research Intern; Nancy T. Kranz, Manager of Promotion and Special Services, Department of Publications; John Martin, Lead Matter/Framer; Mikki Carpenter, Archivist; and Alexandria Mendelson, Registrar Assistant.

Many Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth staff members also deserve recognition for their contributions to this publication and exhibition: Rachael Blackburn Wright, Registrar; Tony Wright, Head, Design and Installation; Jim Colegrove, Computer Systems Manager; Linda Powell, Curator of Education; Laura Martinez, Librarian; Karen Richards Sachs, Special Projects; Bill LeSueur, Design and Installation; Andrea Karnes, Curatorial Assistant; and Katherine Smith, Secretary.

The Museum of Modern Art is one of the greatest repositories of twentieth-century art, and we again are grateful to the trustees of that institution and to the museum's director, Richard E. Oldenburg, for allowing these fascinating prints to be a part of this exhibition.

Marla Price, Director
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

A DISTURBING REALITY:
THE PRINTS OF MAX BECKMANN

by Wendy Weitman

Associate Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books,
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

My aim is always to get hold of the magic of reality
. . . to make the invisible visible through reality. It
may sound paradoxical, but it is, in fact, reality
which forms the mystery of our existence.¹

Ironically, near the end of the same 1938 lecture in which the German painter Max Beckmann stated this artistic goal, he protested against artists who comment on their own work.² Yet these words concisely crystallize the theme of much of his art. Beckmann's aim, "to make the invisible visible through reality," suggests that the significance of his work transcends his realistic subject matter, requiring a deeper reading of the subjects that populate his art. Speaking through these subjects, Beckmann addressed the "invisible" issues that preoccupied him throughout the tumultuous decades of the first half of the twentieth century: the inherent tension between men and women, the brutality of humanity, the alienation of the individual, and his underlying concept that life itself is a tragicomic theater.

An interpretation of Beckmann's imagery is particularly rewarding when one focuses on his prolific graphic output. In keeping with a longstanding tradition in printmaking, Beckmann issued many of his most important prints in portfolios. With its numerous individual components, the portfolio encourages an artist to work in a narrative format.³ Beckmann's use of allegorical narrative is most apparent in these landmark graphic series.

Max Beckmann was born in Leipzig in 1884, the son of a miller. After attending art school in Weimar and an extended stay in Paris, he settled in Berlin in 1904. Under the influence of the leading Berlin Secessionists—



Figure 1. *Samson and Delilah*. 1911
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

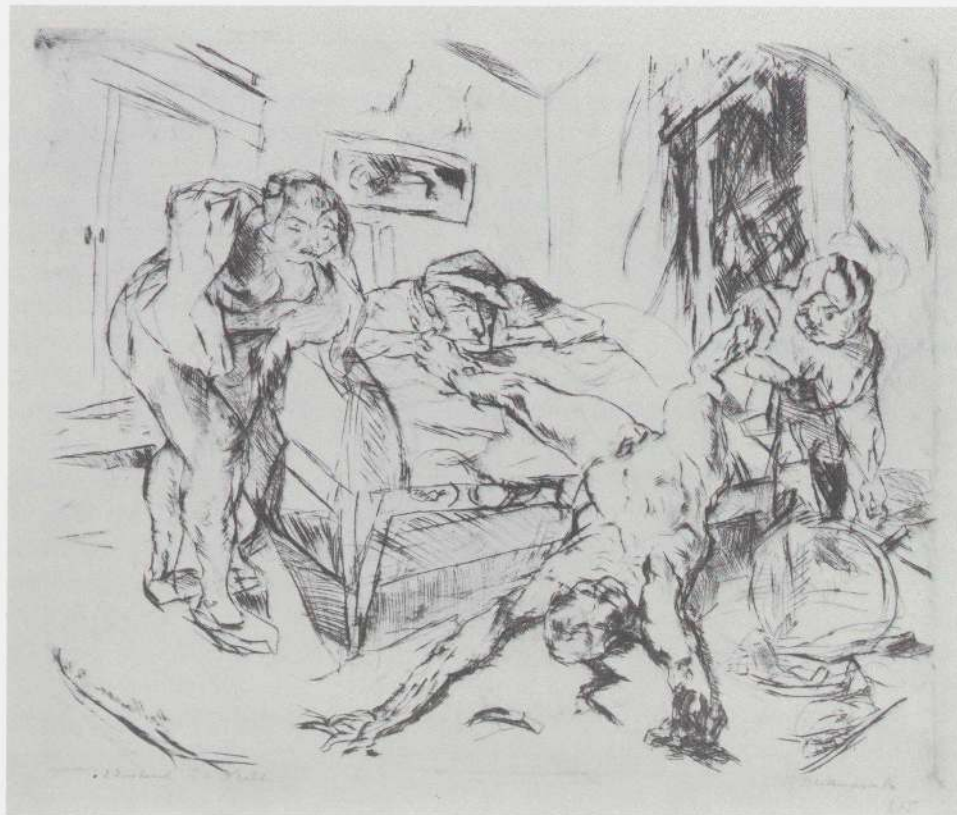


Figure 2. *Night*, second state. 1916
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Lovis Corinth, Max Liebermann, and Max Slevogt—Beckmann painted large-scale, theatrical scenes in an Impressionist style.⁴ Early successes encouraged the ambitious young artist to tackle even more dramatic subjects. Religious and mythological themes predominated in these works.

Among those attracted to Beckmann's work were important German publishers; however, his first published prints—a series of nine lithographs illustrating *The Return of Eurydice, Three Cantos* by Johannes Guthmann (H. 7—16)—were commissioned in 1909 by his dealer, Paul Cassirer, who owned the most influential gallery in Berlin. Beckmann followed this classical story with a biblical narrative, *Six Lithographs to the New Testament*, 1911 (H. 18—23), a series that marked the beginning of his twelve-year period of intense involvement with printmaking. Although still a novice in the medium, and working in a style similar to that of Liebermann and Corinth, in these prints Beckmann demonstrated a clear understanding of the draftsman-like qualities and the range of tonality possible in lithography.

A subtle undercurrent is present in these early religious works. In *Christ and the Sinner*, 1911 (plate 2), and such other biblical pieces as *David and Bathsheba*, 1911 (H. 27), and *Samson and Delilah*, 1911 (fig. 1), Beckmann depicted scenes of confrontation between male and female. He drew Christ protecting the prostitute from stoning, and Delilah plotting the demise of Samson. In the later religious image *Adam and Eve* (plate 42), instead of a vision of Eden as paradise he pictured an embarrassed couple averting their eyes and covering their shame. Male and female are separated by the oversized, wolf-like serpent. Instead of an apple Eve offers her breast to Adam.

His preoccupation with what he saw as the problematic relationship between men and women is first cloaked in the guise of mythology and the Bible, and later in portrayals of his everyday surroundings. In the early 1910s Beckmann turned for source material to contemporary life in Berlin. Sexual tension pervades many of these secular images. In 1909 he remarked:

Sketched a scene from the Friedrichstrasse, which I noticed yesterday on the way home. . . Men walking and turning around to look at a couple of prostitutes. The women likewise turn around to look at the men. . . I would like to include something of the thrill and magnetism which draws the sexes together, especially when I am in the street, something that constantly fills me with admiration for the magnificence of nature.⁵

Several brothel scenes appear after 1912, as well as angst-ridden images of amorous encounters: a horrific bordello murder in *Night*, 1916 (fig. 2), imaginary spying eyes in *Lovers II*, 1918 (plate 40), and an ominous intruder in *Seduction*, 1923 (plate 39). This theme will reappear throughout his career, ebbing and flowing with his changing style and personal circumstances.

World War I was the watershed event in Beckmann's life, and its effect on his art cannot be underestimated. Like many Berlin intellectuals in the years before the war, Beckmann anticipated the impending hostilities with naive excitement.⁶ He felt that a war could provide scenes of grandeur and great human drama appropriate for his monumental painting style.⁷ He volunteered for the army medical corps in 1914 and saw the war's devastation firsthand in the field hospitals and infirmaries. By 1915 his attitude about the war had changed, and at the end of that year he suffered a nervous collapse and was discharged from military service.

Beckmann sketched constantly during these months, recording his immediate experiences. In letters to his wife, Minna, he wrote of his nightmares and fears about the end of the world: "Since I have been under fire I live through every shot again and have the wildest visions. The sketches for plates which I want to etch accumulate like victories in Galicia."⁸ Drawing gave him a sense of security amid the chaos, but these prints and drawings were different: the vitality of his figures was replaced by Mannerist distortion and his coherent space gave way to drastically foreshortened perspective.

This change in style was accompanied by a change in medium, from lithography to drypoint.⁹ He eliminated the elegant brushstroke and painterly bravura of his prewar works. The angularity of the strokes possible in the very linear and direct drypoint technique offered Beckmann the harsh, jarring effects he now preferred.¹⁰ The new medium and the modest scale of the prints of the war years and immediately after indicate his desire for a more economical aesthetic means. Without the aid of preliminary drawings, he worked the plates with great energy, using short, staccato strokes and abrupt changes of direction. He became so comfortable with the medium that he was able to make compositional changes on a plate without pulling a proof to guide his work. Having a printing press in his studio allowed Beckmann to rework plates until he was satisfied enough to send them to the publisher to be editioned.¹¹

Weeping Woman of 1914 (plate 4) depicts Beckmann's mother-in-law, Minna Tube-Römpler, after hearing of her son's death at the front, and is Beckmann's first masterpiece in drypoint. With her strong frontal pose and intensity of expression, the elderly woman is imbued with great dignity in her sorrow. His control over the drypoint needle is evidenced in the variation in the width of the lines and the quickly drawn, long, parallel strokes and cross-hatches of her hat.

Beckmann first explored the theme of the brutality of humanity in excruciating scenes in war hospitals. He illustrated the horror of war with a sense of detached reportage in *The Large Operation* of 1914 and *Morgue* of 1915 (plates 7, 8). In the earlier print the viewer's eye is first drawn to the central triangle of three heads, each looking in a different direction. The slanted space and a foreshortened nude create the impression that the viewer is above, looking down on the quick-paced activity in the operating theater. A similar spatial treatment and sense of gruesome reality prevails in *Morgue*. The spidery line of the drypoint heightens the eerie feeling. By alluding to Mantegna's famed *Dead Christ* in the central corpse, and

suggesting a deposition scene in the three figures at right, Beckmann draws an analogy between war and the sacrifice of man.

Beckmann turned again to the composition set forth in *Morgue* seven years later, after he had discovered another medium, the woodcut. Although he made only nineteen woodcuts in his career—the first not until 1920—they form a consistently compelling and powerful group. In *Morgue* of 1922 (plate 9), Beckmann exploited the crudeness and expressionist potential of the medium, generalizing the forms and creating a streamlined version of the earlier drypoint. Larger in scale than the drypoint and reversed, the woodcut has an even shallower spatial construction, heightened by a black border. The effect is stark and confrontational. The animal-like features of the left figure's face contribute to the ghastly effect of this vision of death.

In the years immediately following the war, Beckmann produced his greatest concentration of prints. Two major portfolios were issued in 1919. The pioneering Munich-based publishing house Marées Gesellschaft, founded by the acclaimed art historian Julius Meier-Graefe and publisher Reinhard Piper,¹² issued the portfolio *Faces*, a selection of nineteen drypoints completed during the previous five years. Beginning and ending with a self-portrait, as was Beckmann's custom in his portfolios, *Faces* has no central theme but includes images of landscape, religion, café society, and war.¹³

In contrast, the other portfolio of 1919, *Hell* (plates 17–27), a suite of eleven lithographs, was Beckmann's most overtly and specifically political work ever. In 1938 he wrote:

I would like to emphasize that I have never been politically active in any way. I have only tried to realize my conception of the world as intensely as possible. Painting is a very difficult thing. It absorbs the whole man, body and soul—thus I have passed blindly many things which belong to real and political life.¹⁴

Although Beckmann neither joined any political organizations nor spoke out publicly on any of the catastrophic world events he witnessed, he nonetheless communicated his feelings about the times he lived in through his art, often discreetly but, in this case, quite openly.

Beckmann learned to realize the narrative potential of the portfolio format from some of the great printmakers of art history. In a comment to Piper in July 1919, Beckmann spoke of a print that he owned by the eighteenth-century British artist William Hogarth:

To me this engraving seems beautiful. Things like this make me happy. Brueghel, Hogarth, and Goya, all three have that metaphysical objectivity which is also my goal.¹⁵

This reference to three artists renowned for their exploitation of printmaking as a vehicle for social and political commentary is quite telling at this time. Brueghel created some of the earliest and sharpest prints of social protest; Hogarth and Goya produced their most historic prints in graphic cycles, in satiric picture stories or gruesome scenes of war.¹⁶

The year of *Hell's* publication, 1919, was a pivotal one in German history. With the end of World War I came the fall of the German monarchy. The civil war known as the November Revolution had erupted in late 1918, and rioting continued through the winter as the various factions struggled for power. Berlin, the capital, was at the center of the political upheaval. Although since returning from the war Beckmann had been living in Frankfurt, apart from his family, his wife and son were in Berlin and he closely followed the events there. An extended visit in the spring of 1919 may have served as the inspiration for the prints he began in May.

Beckmann conceived *Hell* as an allegorical work, as a theatrical journey through the misery that was postwar Berlin.¹⁷ Printed in handwritten text on the cover of the portfolio under Beckmann's *Self-Portrait* (plate 17) is this inscription:

We ask the honored public to come a few steps
closer and guarantee that you will not be bored for
ten or so minutes. Those who are unsatisfied will
get their money back.

The artist's head protrudes through a ticket window, soliciting visitors to the "picture story" about to unfold. Tightly framed in a double rectangle, Beckmann's face and hands are the focus of the composition. The space is unclear and the scribbled lines create a nervous, agitated portrait of concern. The draftsmanship in this print is possible only with lithography, in which an artist draws with a crayon directly on a stone—or, in this case, on translucent paper and then transfers the image to a stone. The vigorous drawing style throughout this portfolio evidences the freedom of the medium.

On one level the journey reflects specific events in Berlin's history: *The Street* and *The Martyrdom* (plates 19, 20) are depictions of the murders in January 1919 of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, leaders of the left-wing Spartacus League. In these prints, as in the earlier World War I images, Beckmann assigned crucifix-like poses to the political figures, presenting them as martyrs. *The Last Ones* (plate 26) also represents a specific political event, identified by the German art historian Alexander Dückers from contemporary journalistic photographs as a scene from the November Revolution.¹⁸ On a more universal level, however, all three prints harshly illustrate man's inhumanity to man. *The Last Ones* depicts people blindly firing guns into the street, suggesting the self-destructiveness of mankind's aggressive nature.

While the three images mentioned above began as illustrations of contemporary events, others in the portfolio are completely visionary. The first print, *The Way Home* (plate 18), established many of the characteristics

common to each work in the series: a cramped and illogical space, a zigzag compositional structure, and a loose, expressionistic stroke—a stylistic departure from the wartime drypoints. In a nocturnal street scene the artist approaches an injured war veteran for directions. Hands and faces again predominate as Beckmann contrasts his own hands with the stump of the veteran. Other ironic contrasts abound: a street lamp against the veteran's blind eye and the prostitutes' jaunty pose in front of the men on crutches in the background. As he does in other prints in the series, in *The Way Home* Beckmann aggressively breaks through the constraining rectilinear format, in this case using his shoulder, the street lamp behind him, and the dog's tongue to confuse the spatial renderings.

In *Hunger* (plate 21), another of the imaginary scenes, he seats himself along with his son, his mother-in-law, and a family friend around a meager table, alluding to the famine in postwar Germany. As Dückers pointed out, the mysterious sculpture in the background represents John the Baptist preaching atonement. In this context, that sculpture may allude to the atrocities committed during the war, or more generally to sins against mankind.¹⁹ Beckmann furthers the analogy by picturing his family at prayer, suggesting the famine of the soul as well.

The Ideologists (plate 22) is the third invented scene with identifiable figures.²⁰ Here a tightly cramped room is filled with hands and faces posed in a variety of expressive positions, the claustrophobic effect accentuated by crouching figures filling the corners. The density of the interlocking lines makes it difficult to distinguish the individual people. As in *The Last Ones* (plate 26), everyone in the room (except the seated woman in the foreground) appears either blinded or with closed eyes—a common Beckmann symbol for isolation or ignorance. Beckmann is mocking this roomful of Berlin's cultural literati, whom he portrays as pretentious and powerless people, unable to see the futility of their situation. The ironic title emphasizes this idea. His own profile, with hand covering mouth, appears beneath the podium of an impassioned speaker. By drawing himself in shadow, he may be implying ambivalence at being associated with this crowd.

Beckmann only occasionally based his prints on previous paintings. *Night* (plate 23), the most famous image in *Hell*, is an example.²¹ The harrowing scene is generally considered to be Beckmann's quintessential statement about the violence and decadence surrounding the riots of 1918, the founding of the Weimar Republic, and its bloody aftermath. On a more abstract level, however, both this print and its painted precursor were his expressions of outrage at the cruelty he believed was inherent in mankind. *Night* is another interior scene crowded with figures. The closed window heightens the sense of isolation from the outside world; and a maze of diagonal, outstretched limbs constructs the jagged composition. The low-ceilinged room further constricts and intensifies the scene. An overturned candle paired with a burning one, objects found repeatedly in Beckmann's work, symbolize the impermanence of human existence, a concept that survived from fifteenth-century *vanitas* still lifes. The female with legs spread apart and hands tied to a post recalls the pose in *The Martyrdom*

(plate 20), as does that of the man hanged at left. Both have religious references as Beckmann, in his images of ruthless violence, continues to imply the crucifixion and the sacrifice of humanity.

In contrast, *Malepartus* and *The Patriotic Song* (plates 24, 25) portray scenes of apparent merriment. *Malepartus*, Latin for "bad seed," was the name of a Frankfurt nightclub, an anomaly in this story of Berlin. Beckmann again used compositional elements to enhance the emotional content of the work. The limbs of the dancing couples, the necks of musical instruments, and the network of architectural structures create a chaotic spatial effect that magnifies the perception of frenetic delusion. In *The Patriotic Song* spatial irrationality suggests emotional irrationality. The neck of the violin strangely disappears under the shawl of the woman at right, and her hand is detached from her arm. Hands and blind faces are again used to comment on the obliviousness of the vainglorious patriots.²² Both these prints depict scenes of self-deception—of frivolous amusement employed as insulation against the suffering.

The artist again includes himself, this time with his mother-in-law and son, in *The Family* (plate 27), the last print in the portfolio. The faces and hands of the adults respond to a helmeted child who proudly displays two grenades. The child represents the future of mankind; the cross formed by the window frame and the allusion to the Holy Family suggest the need for prayer. Beckmann ends this journey in hell with a tone of foreboding and anxiety.

As Reinhard Piper's firm had just published *Faces*, for the *Hell* portfolio Beckmann turned to his other ardent supporter, I. B. Neumann.²³ The large-scale format of the prints in *Hell* indicate the importance Beckmann placed on the series. The lithographs were made from transfer drawings, seven of which still exist. Neumann exhibited the portfolio when it was completed in his Berlin gallery. Although it received generally positive critical reviews, not one of the edition was sold.

Three years later, in 1922, Neumann published the series of lithographs that Beckmann considered the "moral sequel" to *Hell*. The artist described this metaphorical outing in the title of this portfolio, *Trip to Berlin 1922*, and on the cover he depicted himself full-length and dressed for travel, pointing at a kiosk listing the titles of the ten works within (plate 46). Beckmann had visited Berlin that year amid another of the grand city's political crises: a crippling railway strike that engendered strong anti-government sentiment.

The lithographs of *Trip to Berlin 1922* (H. 212—222) stress the social problems in postwar Berlin, alternating between images of the bourgeoisie and depictions of the working class.²⁴ *The Disillusioned II* (plate 48) presents an interior with disenchanting leftist intellectuals, identified as such by the book on Karl Marx and newspapers bearing the partial names of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.²⁵ In contrast, *The Beggars* (plate 49) portrays a street scene of impoverished war injured. Divergent visions of leisure activities predominate in the elegant world of *The Theater Lobby* and the unpretentious scene in *Tavern* (plates 50, 51). As a companion to the opening *Self-Portrait in the Hotel* (H. 213), the closing image of the portfolio

is *The Chimney Sweep* (plate 47), in which a working-class figure sits on top of the city, unfettered by life below.

The prints in *Trip to Berlin 1922* bear less of the anger and frustration that Beckmann displayed in *Hell*, and the compositions are less distorted and expressionistic. As in its predecessor, however, each image is framed by a rectangular border that both compresses the space and creates a voyeuristic, window-like effect. The viewer is invited to accompany the artist on his allegorical tour of the city and witness its discordant facets firsthand.

Actually it's stupid to love mankind, nothing but a heap of egoism (and we are a part of it too). But I love it anyway. I love its meanness, its banality, its dullness, its cheap contentment, and its oh-so-rare heroism. But in spite of this, every single person is a unique event, as if he had just fallen from a star.²⁶

Beckmann's love of humanity, despite his belief in its intrinsic weaknesses, inspired his art. Beginning in 1912 he concentrated on the portrayal of ordinary people interacting in urban settings. A reserved and laconic person, Beckmann loved the cafés of Berlin, where he felt comfortable sitting alone and observing the crowd. One of his first café scenes is the 1911 lithograph *Admiralscafé* (plate 10). In this early work his sketchy drawing style reinforces the sense of bustling energy. In the drypoint *Café (In Foreground Two Old Women)* of 1916 (plate 11) he offers a closer view. In both prints two women in elaborate hats sit at café tables surrounded by other customers. In the later work, however, Beckmann focuses on the individuals' faces, emphasizing that they are not looking at one another. The incisive line of the drypoint adds a further critical edge as he distorts and attenuates their forms.

The society pictures, known as *die Gesellschaftsbilder*, are often as disturbing as the images of war. In *Happy New Year 1917* (plate 12) Beckmann portrays six people toasting and blowing noisemakers to ring in the New Year. Once again, however, none of the figures communicates with any other. Each of the horns points in a different direction, confusing the spatial construction and underscoring each character's isolation.²⁷ The power of this print lies in the tension between the appearance of gaiety and the malaise of the participants. Beckmann used these pictures to criticize the superficiality of postwar German life, but also to underscore the loneliness and alienation of the individual in society. His compassion for the individual, for the "unique event," is reflected in the detached and lonely expressions of his presumably diverted figures, and distinguishes Beckmann's work from a mere satiric critique of his times.

The following year Beckmann completed several of his most accomplished drypoints, including two companion cabaret scenes, *The Yawners* and *Café Music* (plates 13, 14). Yawning has been depicted as a manifestation of melancholy or laziness in works by Brueghel and other

Northern Gothic artists with whose work Beckmann was probably familiar.²⁸ Reflecting his own state of mind at the time, he includes himself in *The Yawners*, the uppermost figure in this vision of ennui. Six faces, all with eyes closed and mouths agape, crowd into this cramped vertical space. Intensifying the hermetic feeling, the outer figures face into the center and plants and furniture fill every corner. Heads and hands unify the composition.

Beckmann again depicts himself in *Café Music*, now blindfolded in the lower foreground and separated from the rest of the audience. In this densely populated scene of somber-faced figures no interaction occurs—there is no human contact. Although similar in format to *The Yawners*, that work's parallel strokes and crosshatching are replaced in this print by Munch-like undulating curves that create an allover effect of swirling movement in the shallow, vertical space.

The climax of the cabaret theme appears in 1923—the most prolific year of Beckmann's graphic career—in works such as *Tamerlan* and *Group Portrait, Eden Bar* (plate 38, cover). His mood has lightened with increased distance from the war and this change is reflected here. *Tamerlan* is a maze of exotic figures and surface patterns.²⁹ Zigzags, stripes, and circles enliven an animated scene of foreign entertainers as Beckmann and his companion sit stoically at a table in the foreground.

In contrast, the bar in Berlin's Hotel Eden was a meeting place for the sophisticated artistic and literary crowd. The imposing woodcut *Group Portrait, Eden Bar*, one of Beckmann's largest prints, presents a close-up, cropped view—a detail of the cabaret life seen in *Tamerlan* and *Café Music*. The three figures are typically uncommunicative; but the women dominate, looming in the foreground as the male retires in shadow. The strong black-and-white contrast of the woodcut magnifies their monumentality. A snapshot effect is achieved in part by decapitating the background musicians, and endows the scene with a sense of momentary stillness. This bold, frozen image persuasively evokes the shallowness Beckmann perceived in the Berlin of the 1920s and the alienation of the individual in this aggressive urban environment.

When Beckmann turned his eye, and his burin, to the café in the early 1910s, he also began observing another pastime, the carnival. His lasting fascination with circuses and carnivals stemmed from his preoccupation with disguise—with actors, costumes, the Comedia dell'Arte, and all the activities of the fairground. Several works discussed above, including *Café Music*, *Group Portrait, Eden Bar*, and *Malepartus* emphasize the dichotomy between the stage and the audience. In *Martyrdom* and *Night*, Beckmann creates a stage-like setting for the portrayals of grisly violence. The British art historian Sarah O'Brien-Twohig notes that Beckmann originally intended to title the *Hell* series "World Theater," and the portfolio bears the words "grand spectacle in ten pictures" on the cover (plate 17).³⁰ To Beckmann the carnival was a place that obscured the distinctions between illusion and truth, encouraging a search for a deeper reality. Prints and drawings such as *Carnival Stall* (H. 38) of 1912 and *Circus* (H. 61) of 1913 first illustrate this interest; this theme reaches its full artistic development in the early 1920s with the portfolio *Annual Fair*.



Figure 3. *The Barker (Self-Portrait)* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921. Drypoint Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



Figure 4. *The Tight Rope Walkers* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921. Drypoint Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Beckmann's prints of the early 1920s rarely relate to a specific time or place. As the political situation in Germany stabilized, he no longer commented upon individual events or settings. The life-theater images offer instead opportunities for broader psychological comment. This imaginary visit to the fair begins with the customary self-portrait. In *The Barker (Self-Portrait)* (fig. 3), as in the *Self-Portrait* from *Hell*, Beckmann represents himself as director, calling the public to a performance entitled "Circus Beckmann," as indicated on the sign partially obscured behind him.³¹ Throughout the portfolio he appears as a choreographer of and participant in these theatrical analogies.

The plates alternate between group scenes and portraits of the entertainers, creating a rhythm in the portfolio. In *The Tall Man* (plate 34) the viewer is part of the performance, on stage looking out at the audience, where the artist and his friends are laughing and gawking at the "freak show."³² The dense composition is made up of attenuated verticals and diagonals, echoing the title character, and is further cramped by the architectural elements at the left and right of the stage. An abundance of patterns adds excitement to the elaborate arrangement.

In *The Negro* (plate 35) the viewer is placed uncomfortably close to the show. The despondent black man stands impassively with arms crossed. His frontal pose contrasts with the sharp profile of the announcer and the woman in the background.³³ Beckmann abruptly flattens the composition with the curtain backdrop yet includes a typical "window" to see out of the condensed space. In both these prints the tension between the spectator and the performer—between the observer and the observed—suggests the metaphor of life as a strained and awkward spectacle in which the outsider plays a dangerous and uncomfortable role.

Beckmann figures prominently again in *The Tight Rope Walkers* (fig. 4), precariously poised with his wife high above the city. Enshrouded in his costume, he highlights the risk of the balancing act and alludes to man's blind and similarly perilous journey through life. His wife, in contrast, is in a commanding posture, recalling, albeit more subtly, the role of the woman in *Samson and Delilah* and several of the works discussed earlier. Images of a powerful woman appear again in this portfolio: in the stolid, rifle-clutching female of *Shooting Gallery* (plate 33) and the seductive exotic performer of *Snake Lady* (plate 36).³⁴

Beckmann's fondness for decorative patterning culminates in *The Tight Rope Walkers*, compositionally one of the most successful prints in the portfolio. Circles and diagonals intersect amid a profusion of abstract designs: the stripes of the artist's balancing pole and his wife's costume, the spokes of the ferris wheel, the crisscross of the safety net, and the diamond patterns of his stockings. Beckmann's attention to patterning is evidenced throughout *Annual Fair*. Compositional sophistication, combined with subtle allegorical references to reality as performance, distinguish it as one of the artist's most stylistically and conceptually resolved portfolios.

Beckmann repeatedly pictures himself as director and actor in these metaphorical portrayals of carnivals and cabarets. In fact, he made over

eighty individual self-portrait paintings, drawings, and prints—more than any artist since Rembrandt—depicting himself in a variety of moods and styles.

As we still do not know what this Self really is, this Ego in which you and I in our various ways are expressed, we must peer deeper and deeper into its discovery. For the Self is the great veiled mystery of the world. . . . And for this reason I am immersed in the phenomenon of the Individual, the so-called whole Individual, and I try in every way to explain and present it.³⁵

A 1911 lithograph (plate 1) shows Beckmann as an intense young man, brooding and romantic. In this dramatic frontal pose, drawn in an impressionistic style, the head is lit from below and appears to emerge out of the dark background. The suit and tie indicate the formality of the bourgeoisie of the time.

Many of the self-portraits of the late 1910s explore the theme of the individual's alienation in society. In an extraordinarily beautiful example, *Self-Portrait with Stylus* of 1917 (plate 29), Beckmann uses long, parallel strokes to create a loosely sketched three-quarter view of himself. The *pentimenti* of his right hand and double image of his head contribute a fresh and ethereal feeling.³⁶ Posed as an artist at work, yet still dressed in high collar and jacket, he seems, in the turn of his head and placement of his hands, to be interrupted, caught off guard. His expression is distracted and distanced as he stares off blankly.

The artist's alienation from his family is poignantly portrayed in *Family Scene (Beckmann Family)*, 1918 (H. 127). In this work Beckmann is alone in the background with closed eyes, separate from the triangle of his mother-in-law, wife, and child. The expressions on all of the faces exude a melancholy and feeling of estrangement that typifies his work during these years. In *Queen Bar (Self-Portrait)*, 1920 (plate 31), Beckmann pictures himself in a nightclub, turning with a glazed look to face the viewer. Encircled by a crowd of revelers, his large head is completely out of scale with the rest of the figures, creating a sense of claustrophobia and of being alone in the crowd.

In the masterful *Self-Portrait in Bowler Hat*, 1921 (plate 30), Beckmann presents himself as a successful, middle-class man, starkly frontal and holding his ubiquitous cigarette. Yet the poignant expression lends a mystery to the image as his penetrating gaze engages the viewer. It alludes to a reality deeper than surface appearances. His face is tightly framed by the cat on the left, the vase on the right, and the imposing hat above, sharpening the focus.³⁷ The heavily worked cross-hatching and velvety burr of the drypoint create a richness in tone that displays his virtuosity as printmaker by this time.

The following year, 1922, Beckmann completed his only self-portrait in woodcut (plate 32). The bold, self-confident pose with chin up and black,

piercing eyes is composed of forceful, jagged lines gouged into the block. Although he completed relatively few woodcuts, his full grasp of the medium's expressionistic potential is evidenced here in the eyes and nose of the face. Abrupt cropping—even the edge of his ear and head are cut off at right—adds additional harshness to this aggressive and striking image.

Beckmann repeatedly revealed this new assuredness in painted self-portraits of the late 1920s. He was at the height of his success; in 1925 he divorced and remarried and received a prestigious teaching appointment in Frankfurt. Painting became paramount again for Beckmann in the mid-1920s, and he made prints only sporadically thereafter. His approach to printmaking was conservative and traditional; he was not an experimenter with the medium. All of his prints are black-and-white and linear in style; he never tried to achieve tonal areas through aquatint or lithography.³⁸ As a brighter palette and more volumetric forms began to predominate in Beckmann's paintings of the late 1920s, it is not surprising that he turned away from printmaking.³⁹

In 1937, four years after losing his teaching appointment due to Nazi pressure, Beckmann emigrated to Amsterdam. There he was commissioned to illustrate Stephan Lackner's *Der Mensch ist kein Haustier* (H. 323—329), a story about an exiled princess, and in one plate portrayed himself as a romantic revolutionary, alluding to his own expatriate status.

Beckmann's last printed self-portrait opens his final portfolio, *Day and Dream*, 1946 (H. 357—371; plates 44, 45). The suite of fifteen lithographs reprises the career of the mature, sixty-year old artist through his typical themes—biblical, circus, café, mythological, and sexual—and includes his confident self-portrait in artist's garb.

In 1947, after ten years as an émigré in Holland, Beckmann and his wife moved to St. Louis, where he accepted a teaching position at the art school of Washington University. With the help of supporters such as I. B. Neumann, Curt Valentin, and many others, his reputation in America was well established. A consummate printmaker in the historic German graphic tradition, Beckmann died in New York City in 1950. He had never returned to his homeland after escaping its wrath in 1937.

The historic 1925 exhibition "Die Neue Sachlichkeit" ("New Objectivity") recognized and gave name to a group of German artists who were active between the wars.⁴⁰ This group included Beckmann as well as his contemporaries Otto Dix and George Grosz, although there is little evidence that he had any direct contact with them. Both Dix and Grosz were prolific printmakers who worked primarily in a harshly satirical, realist style, and dealt with issues of German life during World War I and its aftermath. Beckmann's work of the late 1910s and early 1920s most closely approached the concept of the "New Objectivity". Yet the multiplicity of meanings revealed by his work distinguishes Beckmann from these peers. Rather than simply depicting his surroundings he used contemporary scenes as tools in his exploration of life's universal themes. The power of these allegories is what makes his images of war and cafés, of the Bible and the circus, so memorable and, indeed, timeless.

NOTES

The abbreviation "H." refers to James Hofmaier, *Max Beckmann: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints*. Bern: Gallery Kornfeld, 1990

1. Max Beckmann, *On My Painting* (New York: Buchholz Gallery, Curt Valentin, 1941), p. 4. This was translated from a 1938 lecture Beckmann delivered at Burlington Galleries, London.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

3. The printed portfolios anticipated Beckmann's approach in the painted triptychs of his late work.

4. For further information on the Berlin Secession see Peter Paret, *The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1980).

5. Max Beckmann, *Leben in Berlin: Tagebücher 1908—1909, 1912—1913*, ed. by Hans Kinkel (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1966, 1983). Cited in Carla Schulz-Hoffmann and Judith C. Weiss, eds., *Max Beckmann: Retrospective* (St. Louis and Munich: The Saint Louis Art Museum and Prestel-Verlag, 1984), p. 96.

6. For a further discussion of the attitudes toward the war among members of the Berlin intelligentsia see Barbara Buenger, "Max Beckmann's Ideologues: Some Forgotten Faces," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 71, no. 3 (September 1989), pp. 453—79.

7. Beckmann, *Leben in Berlin*, p. 22.

8. Letter of May 14, 1915, in *Max Beckmann: Briefe im Kriege*, collected by Minna Beckmann-Tube (Berlin, 1916; second ed. Munich, 1955). Translated in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 450.

9. From 1915 to 1917 Beckmann completed only three paintings, preferring to focus on prints. More than two-thirds of Beckmann's 373 prints were completed between 1915 and 1923.

10. A drypoint is made by scratching into a metal plate with a sharp instrument. Ink is then rolled onto the plate, sinking into the crevices created. The surface of the plate is wiped clean. When plate and paper are run through a press only the lines drawn with the sharp tool, which have retained the ink, will print.

11. Beckmann's use of his own press also explains why there are so many variants of his prints.

12. The publisher Marées Gesellschaft, a division of R. Piper & Co., was founded in 1917 to promote research on the nineteenth-century artist Hans van Marées and other artists that Meier-Graffe and Piper felt merited study. Expanding their mandate, they also published books on philosophy and literature, as well as original prints and portfolios by Carl Hofer, Lovis Corinth, and other German contemporaries of Beckmann.

13. It was a common marketing practice in Europe, and particularly in Germany, to issue print portfolios by a single artist as well as by groups.

14. Beckmann, *On My Painting*, p. 3.

15. Quoted in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 101.

16. For more on Hogarth's influence on Beckmann see Sarah O'Brien-Twohig, "Beckmann and the City," Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, pp. 91—110.

17. Beckmann did a print in 1911 entitled *Hell* (H. 26), which is a more literal depiction of the biblical Hades.

18. Alexander Dückers, *Max Beckmann: Die Hölle 1919* (Berlin: Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1983), p. 108.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

20. I. B. Neumann was involved in numerous cultural activities and often had evening gatherings of the Berlin intelligentsia. Beckmann had a superb visual memory and may be recreating one of these events. For a detailed discussion of this print and the characters in it see Buenger, "Max Beckmann's Ideologues."

21. *The Night*, 1918—19, is in the collection of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

22. The profile of the figure in the center foreground recalls that of the orator in *The Ideologues*.

23. Israel Ber Neumann opened his first art gallery in Berlin in 1910. He met Beckmann in 1911 and began a lifelong dedication to his work, acting as dealer, publisher, and friend. He emigrated to New York in 1923 in the hopes of promoting Beckmann and other modern German artists in the United States. He changed his name to J. B. Neumann, according to Peter Selz, to avoid any anti-Semitic prejudice. He donated several works to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the credit lines in the checklist of this exhibition are worded as he specified, "Gift of J. B. Neumann."

24. Beckmann illustrated with six lithographs a book of poems, *Stadtmacht*, 1920. It focused on the condition of the lower classes in Frankfurt.

25. The figures are identified by Buenger as Paul Cassirer on the right; his wife; music historian Leo Kastenberger on the left; and painter Max Slevogt in the center. See Buenger, "The Ideologues."

26. Beckmann, "Creative Credo," p. 108.

27. At least two of the figures allude to the war: the injured man with an eye patch, and the man in military uniform on the right. It has been suggested by Hofmaier that the setting for this print is the Hotel Löw, a private infirmary for military officers. See James Hofmaier, *Max Beckmann: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints*, 2 vols. (Bern: Gallery Kornfeld, 1990), p. 292.

28. Dückers, pp. 72—73.

29. Hofmaier points out that Tamerlan was a Mongolian ruler (1336—1425) who conquered parts of Iran, Turkey, and the Russian Caucasus. After the Russian revolution, there was a large population of Russian émigrés in Berlin. See Hofmaier, *Catalogue Raisonné*, p. 704.

30. Sarah O'Brien-Twohig, "Beckmann and the City," in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 101.

31. During this period he often uses word fragments as clues to a work's allegorical significance. Two other prints in this portfolio, *The Tall Man* (plate 34) and *The Negro* (plate 35), also include such fragments.

32. Beckmann appears at the lower left of the audience wearing a hat. Reinhard Piper is the smiling figure at lower right, and Hofmaier proposes that the bearded announcer on stage is Neumann. See Hofmaier, *Catalogue Raisonné*, p. 507.

33. It has been pointed out by Dückers that the format of *The Negro* is the same as that of *Christ and Pilate* (plate 45) from the 1946 portfolio *Day and Dream*, suggesting that the black man is a metaphor for Christ. See Dückers, "Portfolios," *German Expressionist Prints and Drawings: The Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), p. 106.

34. In *Kasbek*, 1923 (H. 281), Beckmann depicts two entertainers on a stage, a blindfolded male behind a provocatively posed female. Named after a Berlin nightclub owned by Russian émigrés, this print again uses the metaphor of cabaret or comedy theater to underscore the potency of women in male/female interactions.

35. Max Beckmann, *On My Painting*, p. 11.

36. This multiple outline is also used in *Evening (Self-Portrait with the Battenbergs)*, 1916 (plate 28).

37. Beckmann burnished out the background of an earlier state to accentuate his face further.

38. For a major commission during his exile in Amsterdam, Beckmann illustrated the *Apokalypse* (H. 330—356) with twenty-seven black-and-white lithographs, sixteen of which he painted with watercolor.

39. Although he is best known for his tight figural compositions, which characterize the majority of his prints, he painted a surprising number of landscapes and still lifes as well. That there are so few prints on these themes suggests he felt that these genres did not translate well into the graphic mediums. In fact, his most well-known landscape prints, such as *Landscape with Balloon*, 1918 (plate 15) and *Large Bridge*, 1922 (H. 243), reproduce the compositions of earlier paintings.

40. G. F. Hartlaub organized this exhibition at the Städtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim. The title of the exhibition engendered the name of this loosely defined movement.

MAX BECKMANN AND THE WEIMAR ERA

by James L. Fisher

Curator and Assistant to the Director, Exhibitions
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

The will to transcendence is the sole possible solution, but hardly for the state. Not necessary anyway, since every form of government merely offers the stuff of conflicts which each individual personality must solve anew again and again for himself. There is no universal solution, only individual salvation.

Max Beckmann
Berlin, September 1936

Max Beckmann's notation in the margin of his copy of *In the Shadow of Tomorrow: A Diagnosis of the Cultural Sufferings of Our Time*, by Johan Huizinga (Leipzig, 1936), conveys emphatically the reader's concern with the role of the artist in society. Having lived through a tumultuous time in the history of Germany and Europe—the horrors of World War I; the fluctuating economic and political forces of the Weimar Republic; and the rise to power of the Nazi party—the artist/philosopher Beckmann inculcated his art with an inspired, universally symbolic, yet highly personal iconography that characterized his work from the late 1920s until his death in 1950. His now familiar symbolism, stimulated in part by painful experiences in the war, evolved primarily as a result of Beckmann's fierce intellect and knowledge of the philosophical teachings of such writers as Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer and his overwhelming belief that man's existential relationship with life would guide an individual to personal and spiritual salvation.

During the Weimar Republic, a time when experimentation in the arts took on a very public role despite a politically conservative opposition, Beckmann allied himself with traditional modernist aesthetic thought. He

focused on the internal issues of life rather than on the outward, materialistic, or technological. While the Bauhaus sought to secularize art, making it totally utilitarian, and the art of the second generation of Expressionists became politicized, Beckmann pursued an intellectual idealism investigating the relationship of the artist to society. This relationship, as explained by Beckmann, assumed a religious, almost mystical, aura:

What we're missing is a new cultural center, a new center of faith. . . . What we are after is an elegant mastery of the metaphysical, so as to live a stalwart, clear, undisciplined romanticism of our own profoundly unreal existence.²

Beckmann sought truth about existence through art, and offered his paintings and prints as existential and metaphysical, as well as enigmatic, examples of life.

As early as 1909, Beckmann considered his work to be distinct from major art trends, in particular Expressionism, the prevailing modernist art form in Germany in the first years of the twentieth century.³ Beckmann, who in prewar years favored the style practiced by the German Impressionist painters Liebermann and Corinth, found Expressionism superficial and decorative, lacking in an understanding of the fundamental laws of painting, especially space and objectivity.⁴ More important, according to Beckmann, was an art which directly examined life:

My heart beats more for a raw average, vulgar art, which doesn't live between sleepy fairytale moods and poetry but rather concedes a direct entrance to the fearful, commonplace, splendid and the average grotesque banality in life. An art which can always be present in the reality of our lives.⁵

Indeed, Beckmann chose to depict the reality of contemporary life using religious and mythological painting motifs reminiscent of Renaissance and Baroque masters.⁶ The drama of these scenes foreshadows the pathos-filled mythological paintings of the mature Beckmann and also suggest the "transcendent objectivity" which later infuses Beckmann's work. This objectivity, also referred to by Beckmann as a "transcendent idea,"⁷ echoed the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose seminal text *Parerga and Paralipomena* Beckmann first read in 1906. Schopenhauer proposed that the world existed only as an idea, while true reality resided in the individual. The ultimate purpose of each individual, who is fated to experience purification through the trials of living, is to suffer a "transcendent fatalism" which leads to death and ultimately salvation.⁸ According to Nietzsche, a follower of Schopenhauer, the endless cycle of life, death, and regeneration was a part of life's reality. And reality, as defined by the existence of the world, could only be validated through aesthetics.⁹ For Beckmann, who began reading Nietzsche in 1903, tragedies such as the earthquake in Messina or the sinking of the Titanic,

both subjects of early paintings, represented the suffering of the individual; these compositions became for him metaphysical mirrors reflecting man's mortality.

Beckmann's fascination with the redemptive aspects of tragedy undoubtedly originated with the writings of these two philosophers. Perhaps through his understanding of Existentialism, Beckmann anticipated that the logical consequence of the spiritual chaos of early twentieth-century Germany was war. Beckmann wrote in 1909 that it "would not be at all bad for our rather demoralized culture, if our instincts and drives would all once more be captivated by some interest."¹⁰ Beckmann's comment was a reaction not only to the logic of his philosophical beliefs, but also to the simmering world policies of Wilhelm II's government.

The Wilhelmian government which came into power after the removal of Bismarck as the German Chancellor in 1890, established an informal autocracy dominated by an entrenched ruling class. Like Bismarck, Wilhelm II selected his ministers from his peers. This anachronistic system favoring the elite, however, created a fragile balance of power. Although administrative government positions were steadily filled from the middle-classes, the elite, primarily landowners, still retained control of the government because of their large land-holdings. A correlation existed between ownership of property and parliamentary electorate votes: the more land one owned, the greater the number of electorate votes he influenced.¹¹ As German states became more urban, the wealthy landowners, many of whom belonged to conservative parties, held onto their political influence due to unequal distribution of voting rights. This was particularly problematic in Prussia, the largest and most populous of the German states, where the majority of the population owned little or no property and subsequently had no influence in the political arena. Such imbalances in power fueled left-wing socialist ideology favoring the resolution of class differences through revolution.

The existence of several political parties based on philosophies ranging from the extremely conservative to the extremely liberal overburdened a fractured German governing system. By the turn of the century, six primary political organizations existed in Germany: Conservatives, Free-Conservatives, National Liberals, Center, Progressive Party, and the Social Democrats. The Conservatives and Free Conservatives represented members of the Prussian ruling class who supported the idea of monarchy and invested in agriculture and industry. The National Liberals drew their ranks from "big business," while the Center represented the Roman Catholic Church. People who believed in a parliamentary democracy tended to belong to the Progressive Party, while the industrial working class was represented by the Social Democrats.¹²

German Socialism, a political force since the 1860s, reached its nadir as the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Formed in the 1870s from smaller radical groups, the SPD espoused the teachings of Marx and demanded comprehensive social reform. As cities became more industrialized, the SPD flourished, garnering the largest representation in parliament of any political party by 1912. The SPD, however, was split between revolutionary and reformer factions, the former believing that the German Empire should be overthrown and the latter favoring making changes within the existing government framework. The anti-

Empire beliefs of the SPD aroused the suspicions and ultimately the strong opposition of the middle and upper classes who populated the right-wing parties. The conservative agenda of the right preached nationalism and imperialism, supported the development of the armed forces, and, among the most extreme groups, practiced anti-Semitism.

Although ethnic and religious discrimination existed in politics, social discrimination did not proliferate in business. From the 1890s on, exports boomed and industries rapidly expanded, contributing to a steady growth in the German economy. The ready availability of capital through the government bank and taxation which favored business contributed directly to advances in industry. Consequently, cities expanded to house a rapidly increasing urban work force: between 1890 and 1914 the population tripled, due in part to better and more affordable health care.

Despite the growth of the economy, problems of unity still plagued Germany. Many Germans viewed the Socialist party, which had made great inroads in politics following the election in 1912, as an internal threat to a national identity. The powerful German army, whose influence in national policy-making the Socialists wished to diffuse, most strongly opposed the SPD. Wilhelm II, initially indifferent toward the Socialists, believed it imperative to strengthen the armed forces. In part because of the Socialists' unpopular stance toward the army, Wilhelm II eventually discredited the Socialist movement, comparing their teachings to anarchy.¹³

The government also experienced financial difficulties. Even though the general economy flourished between 1890 and 1914—national income increased by 45 percent—the wealth allocated to government programs did not meet the rising expenditures for those programs.¹⁴ In particular, social services and the build-up of the armed forces had become costly. The government's primary sources of income—customs revenues, excise and stamp duties—proved inadequate, forcing the government to borrow money. This borrowing resulted in a tripling of the national debt between 1890 and 1904.¹⁵ Internal crises, combined with a strained foreign policy, set the stage for World War I. Four issues eventually fused to ignite the war:

Germany's world policy, affecting mainly the British Empire; her bid for continental hegemony, directed against France and Russia; her commitment to uphold, by war if necessary, the threatened Habsburg Monarchy; and her stake in the Ottoman Empire with its challenge to Russia.¹⁶

During the summer of 1914, World War I began.

Germany's entry into war profoundly affected the previously quarreling factions within its society. Both Conservatives and Socialists accepted the fray with great enthusiasm, exhibiting strong feelings of nationalism. Artists, many with Socialist sympathies, adopted a patriotic stance and enlisted in the army.¹⁷ Karl Schmidt-Rottluff served in a press unit with the novelist Arnold Zweig, while Erich Heckel worked as a medical orderly in Flanders. The actor/theater director Erwin Piscator and his contemporary, the Expressionist poet Ernst

Toller, both served on the Western Front. Max Slevogt, Lovis Corinth, and Max Liebermann, the German Impressionists, all immediately joined in the euphoria, with Slevogt using contacts within the government to be assigned as a war artist. Franz Marc, George Grosz, and Otto Dix volunteered for combat duty. The dealer Paul Cassirer became a dispatch rider in August 1914, and in September of the same year, Max Beckmann volunteered as a medical orderly in East Prussia. While the clamor of battle held an unquestionable appeal in the beginning, the realities of war soon displaced heroic ideals: Slevogt returned home after two weeks, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner suffered a nervous breakdown, and Franz Marc and August Macke died in battle. Piscator developed an intense hatred of militarism and Toller evolved into a militant pacifist, after suffering a physical breakdown.

Beckmann's war experience reflects the profound impact the conflagration had on many people, and provides insight into the changes that occurred in his art after 1917. Undoubtedly Beckmann, like other artists, initially viewed the war as a source of aesthetic inspiration. Karl Scheffler, editor of *Kunst und Künstler*, gleefully anticipated art that would result from battle when he wrote that artists "will be overwhelmed by the abundance of visions, by the terrible beauty of the war and by the thrilling pictorial richness of a landscape ravaged by war."¹⁸ Beckmann, who completed about 150 drawings documenting the war between 1914 and 1915, wrote to his wife in May 1915, "I am quite pleased that there is a war."¹⁹

Beckmann first volunteered as a medical orderly in September 1914 at the East Prussian Front, but was serving in the medical corp in Belgium by December of that year. In late March 1915, Beckmann transferred to Wervicq and was stationed at the front; by September he had moved to Strasbourg. While the war obviously provided Beckmann with visual images for his art, it also served as an existential experience that brought to life for him the writings of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. In October 1914 Beckmann wrote about a "wonderfully sublime clamor of battle" that he desired to capture on canvas: "I walked outside through bands of wounded . . . and I heard this peculiar, terrible sublime music. It is as if the gates to eternity had been torn open."²⁰

Presumably fearless and completely fascinated by the process and product of war, Beckmann carefully observed his ghostly environment, which was filled with "unreal cities like lunar mountains" and ringing with a "peculiar sound" caused by gunfire and sounding to Beckmann, like a "pig being slaughtered."²¹ Beckmann memorized the cacophony of war as he wrote in April 1915:

I want to process all of this internally, so that later I can freely make things that are almost timeless: those black features peering out of the grave and the silent dead who approach me are dark greetings from eternity, and as such I want to paint them later.²²

Beckmann's enthusiasm for war was short-lived; his progressive exposure to war's horror adversely affected him after only a few months, causing him great emotional suffering. Transferred to Frankfurt in the fall of 1915 for health

reasons, Beckmann remained there until his formal discharge in 1917. War's catastrophic impact on mankind haunted Beckmann, yet he retained an existential view of war, even as he faced personal emotional crises. Before his discharge, the war elicited a philosophic response from Beckmann:

What is important . . . is that I enter into the spirit of this thing, which is in itself a manifestation of life, like disease, love or lust. And just as I pursue . . . fear, disease, and lust, love and hate to their extreme limits, I am now trying to do exactly that with the war. All is life, wonderfully varied and abundantly inventive. Everywhere I find deep lines of beauty in the suffering and endurance of this terrible destiny.²³

By 1916, Beckmann and other artists and writers exchanged their idealistic views of the fighting with realistic and often pessimistic outlooks. Paul Cassirer, who since August 1914 had published the patriotic periodical *Kriegszeit*, to which Beckmann had provided illustrations, initiated a new publication "which would reinforce the people's awareness of the implications of the war and appeal to their yearnings for peace."²⁴ Titled *Der Bilderman*, the periodical's verse and illustrations dealt with the suffering of the masses and the destruction of mankind by war. Although the ethical message of the publication might not have been recognized by the general public, whose view of the war was for the most part nationalistic, the intent of *Der Bilderman* was to stimulate a spiritual awakening. In a manner similar to Beckmann's existential commentaries on the beauty discovered through suffering, the editor of *Der Bilderman* wrote of a spiritual cleansing:

Despite the horror of the times, our spirit has remained faithful to the old gods; in the midst of war we want to use our eyes as we used them before the war, even take pleasure as we once did. The strain of war has taught us to look horror calmly in the face, but it has also reawakened our longing for higher and purer things.²⁵

In mid-1917, a strong pacifist movement had emerged in Germany, supported by Expressionist artists and writers who had initially been swept up in the nationalist fervor. Within the majority Socialist political party, serious questions had arisen regarding the war aims of the government. One anti-war faction of the Socialist Party broke away from the SPD in April 1917 and formed the Independent Socialist Party (USPD). The USPD opposed war but had no success in halting it. The Spartacists, a far-left group associated with the Socialist Party whose members absolutely opposed war, carried the pacifist issue even further by disavowing any need for a national defense. This group, characterized by "the purity and fanaticism of their doctrinal internationalism"²⁶ was constantly persecuted by German conservatives who by now fervently practiced nationalism. The armistice signaling the end of the war was signed

November 11, 1918, but it did not bring about peace.

By November 1918, conditions for revolution had ripened. Throughout Germany, Socialist-backed soldiers' and workers' councils deposed government authorities and took control of political power. Disillusioned with the government's inability to resolve the war crisis and the impending loss of the war, factory workers and soldiers rebelled, forming the councils. Many artists and writers joined these loosely formed groups, including Bertolt Brecht, Erwin Piscator, Friedrich Wolf, and Heinrich Vogeler. Likewise, artists sympathetic to the workers organized related artists' councils, like the Novembergruppe and the Arbeitsrat für Kunst.²⁷

In October 1918, the Imperial Navy's sailors went on strike; they were soon followed by factory workers who instigated demonstrations throughout Germany. On November 9 in Berlin, revolution overwhelmed the German capital:

. . . processions of factory workers, some armed, streaming from the suburbs into central Berlin, where they were joined by soldiers on foot and in armored cars and took possession of the public buildings, on which they planted large red flags.²⁸

Amazingly, no followers of Wilhelm II defended the German capital, and thus no bloodshed occurred.

Although Socialists had gained control of the capital, the warring factions within the SPD ultimately forced a confrontation among the majority members of the Socialist Party and the more radical Spartacists, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Disagreements between the Spartacists and the more conservative Socialists prompted the Spartacists and other smaller left-wing groups to break from the SPD in December and organize the German Communist Party. One month later, in January 1919, a revolutionary committee headed by Liebknecht issued a declaration calling for the overthrow of the existing Socialist government, and armed Spartacists impulsively commandeered government buildings. In response to this action, the leaders of the SPD recruited the German Freikorps, a group of volunteers including many former army officers who had fought in World War I. This assemblage of "patriots, idealists, adventurers and mercenaries"²⁹ believed in nationalist politics and readily accepted the call to arms by the SPD leaders. This odd-couple relationship brought about the eventual arrest and brutal murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Fighting occurred again in Berlin in March and in Munich in April, but the Freikorps once more utilized brute force and squashed the uprisings. This combination of political opposition and military aggression came to characterize the Socialist-dominated Weimar Republic, the regime that replaced the government of Wilhelm II.³⁰

The Weimar Republic, lasting from 1919 until 1933, adopted a small and weakened Germany. As a result of the death of soldiers and the loss of colonies, the German population dropped about 10 percent. The economy had been devastated by the destruction of industry and loss of large reserves of natural resources:

Two million dead, millions of widows, orphans and wounded: the economy prostrate after four years of war—underfed children lying in paper shirts in their beds white through hunger and undernourishment, now joined by millions of more or less brutalised soldiers, flooding in from the front lines, asking for bread and work. And, into the bargain, a government in debt beyond its assets and with its currency failing. The men who were to pick up the reins of government faced a tremendous, thankless task.³¹

The situation in Germany was difficult, yet it did not dissuade an almost cathartic resurgence of the German people.

The war transfigured many Germans, including Beckmann and other artists and writers. Beckmann, for example, developed an altruistic outlook and identified his art as a metaphysical manifestation of the vitality of life:

We must all share in all of the suffering that is coming. We must sacrifice our hearts and our nerves to poor, deceived humanity's horrible screams of pain. Especially now we must get as close to the people as possible. That is the only thing which can motivate our quite superficial and selfish existence. That we give to people an image of their fate, and that one can do only if one loves them.³²

Beckmann's words impart religious overtones marked by the pure faith and steadfast conviction which now filled his art. The imagery developed by Beckmann embodied his fascination with the opposing worlds of the materialistic and the spiritual. While he at one point painted actual religious scenes (e.g. *Deposition*, 1917, The Museum of Modern Art; *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1917, The Saint Louis Art Museum), Beckmann preferred to rely on contemporary life to perpetuate his spiritual world. In the streets and market places, bars and hotels frequented and then depicted by Beckmann, modern myths and fables are situated.

Beckmann's figures, dressed in contemporary garb yet with the physical presence of Greek or Nordic gods, become guides beyond the frailties of the real world to a deeper understanding of the unconscious, the world where creative genius resides. The figures in Beckmann's compositions symbolize the transcendent self, "a redemptive metaphor and therefore a metaphysical compensation for the modern self."³³ Possessed of a creative genius, the transcendent self "rises above the confines of strictly aesthetic expression into a deeper arena of truth, precisely in the sense of art as myth."³⁴ Beckmann created a private world where the individual, by discovering a sense of self, would achieve salvation.

The enigmatic figurative compositions by Beckmann—"Alice-in-Wonderland" mirrors through which the transcendent self pursues salvation—rely

on a variety of symbols devised by the artist between 1916 and 1924. Beckmann himself often assumes the role of a carnival "barker," sometimes appearing on the fringe and sometimes in the middle of the action. As the "barker," or master of ceremonies, Beckmann seems on the one hand to introduce the story, while on the other hand to direct it.

Mirrors, candles, fish, exotic birds, and dwarfs populate Beckmann's paintings and prints, representing the obvious and the mysterious. Mirrors, for example, suggest the dual nature of man by transforming reality. Candles, as sources of light, are like mirrors, *vanitas* symbols suggesting life or death. A fish may refer to Christ or, with its phallic form, relate to the generative aspect of life. Veils, masks, and blindfolds, often used by Beckmann, suggest an altered meaning, an alter-ego, or an inability to see the obvious.

The symbols in Beckmann's work provoke an examination of self. The viewer, like the painter, is encouraged to be introspective and as a result become self-reliant. Ideally, the artist and his audience should be guided by a "new and ultimate religion of mankind,"³⁵ to a state of humanity representing the "final deification of man."³⁶ The process alluded to by Beckmann involves an internalization of ideas, a looking inward, which assists in the discovery of the meaning of "the great veiled mystery of the world."³⁷ Like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, Freud and Jung, Beckmann desired to remove the mask from "reality," and study the spiritual or unconscious side of life. Beckmann described his goals thusly:

What I want to show in my work is the idea that hides itself behind so-called reality. I am seeking the bridge which leads from the visible to the invisible, like the famous cabalist who once said: "If you wish to get hold of the invisible you must penetrate as deeply as possible into the visible."³⁸

Beckmann's fascination with looking inward related to psychological and philosophical studies focusing on the individual by such Germans as Freud, Jung, and Schopenhauer. Yet following World War I, new trends in German culture appeared, marked by a collectivist attitude and reflecting a passivist approach to politics.³⁹

By the early 1920s, the dominant avant-garde movements of the prewar years—including Cubism, Futurism, and the Expressionism of *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke*—had lost momentum, superceded by forms of image-making motivated by old and new ideas. German Dada had evolved as early as 1916 in response to the manipulation of language by such Italian Futurists as Marinetti. Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck, reactionaries who contributed to the radical publication *Die Aktion*, were joined by the writer Franz Jung, the publisher John Heartfield, and George Grosz and Raoul Hausmann in support of Dadaist activities. The group's work in Germany climaxed in 1920 with the opening of the Berlin Dada Fair, which included works by Grosz, Hausmann, Hannah Hoch, Max Ernst, and Ben Hecht.⁴⁰

As the Dada movement in Germany waned, a form of realism highly critical of postwar society gained recognition. This new realism in art

promulgated a social consciousness by matter-of-factly depicting subject matter. A sober art form, the new realism or "new naturalism" (as it was referred to in 1922 in the Berlin art magazine *Das Kunstblatt*)⁴¹ criticized society through objective portrayals of the problems resulting from World War I. G. F. Hartlaub, the director of the Städtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim, formally recognized this movement in a 1925 exhibition that he called, "Die Neue Sachlichkeit," or the "New Objectivity." Bringing together such artists as George Grosz, Otto Dix, and Max Beckmann, the exhibition of more than one hundred paintings represented varied reactions to the war and the unstable, revolutionary political environment that ensued.

Beckmann, who never identified himself with any organized artistic or political group, was probably included in the Mannheim exhibition because of his emphasis on physicality and space and because of his figurative subject matter. George Grosz and Otto Dix, on the other hand, directly attacked humanity in their compositions that portrayed the decay and decadence of contemporary society. Compared to the visionary Beckmann, who concerned himself with the spiritual, Grosz can be viewed as a moralist who disavowed any discussions regarding the metaphysical in art.⁴² He depicted humanity as he saw it: greedy and dishonest, sick and selfish. According to Grosz, man could only be examined as a part of a greater entity:

I am trying in my so-called works of art to construct something with a completely realistic foundation. Man is no longer an individual to be examined in subtle psychological terms, but a collective, almost mechanical concept. Individual destiny no longer matters.⁴³

Dix likewise filled his visual world with figures spawned by a society adversely affected by war. Wounded and dying soldiers, wild-eyed prostitutes, crippled veterans, and profiteers represented the collective problems of a failing society.

"Die Neue Sachlichkeit," while initially loosely affiliating such artists as Beckmann, Grosz, and Dix under the heading of a socially conscious art, later became a generic qualifying term that described a new realism and sobriety in German literature, architecture, and design. Utilitarian efficiency and a fusion of art and technology was promoted during the Weimar Republic by the Bauhaus school, which existed only as long as the new Republic. The Bauhaus, at first headed by Walter Gropius, reformed art education and contributed to the creation of a mechanized art form based on objectivity and formalism. The collective nature of the Bauhaus teaching methods, and its emphasis on architecture, design, and technology, paralleled the evolution of the industrial world with its growing working class, and the evolution of urban planning, which provided modern and efficient housing for the masses.

It is not surprising that Beckmann, Grosz, and Dix had little or no contact with the Bauhaus, whose calculated utilitarian aims, while related to Socialist ideals in its effort to "create a new guild of craftsmen without class distinctions,"⁴⁴ did not allow for the stamp of the individual. Beckmann, with his penchant for existential philosophies, believed that art would guide the

transcendent self to salvation. In his Bauhaus manifesto, Gropius speaks of a future for the masses, to whom individual identity would be subordinated:

Let us together desire, conceive and create the new building of the future, which will combine everything—architecture *and* sculpture *and* painting—in a *single form* which will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith.⁴⁵

Isolation or individualism clearly had no place in Bauhaus philosophy, however, these characteristics did belong to German literature during the Weimar Republic.

The variety of literature written between 1919 and 1933 is vast, yet one theme linking writers was a “German inwardness” that focused on the individual, an idea consuming Beckmann during the 1920s. Hermann Hesse and Stefan George wrote novels about escape and solitude, while Thomas Mann created stories marked by tension and conflict. Martin Heidegger, Gottfried Benn, and Ernst Jünger “perpetuated the Nietzschean ideal of lone intellectual heroism . . . distinguished by complete separateness, independence and daring.”⁴⁶ Likewise, Rainer Maria Rilke preoccupied himself with “the autonomous, self-contained personality of the dedicated artist.”⁴⁷

Another characteristic of literature at this time was a philosophical dualism marked by a social consciousness in which spiritual ideas were contrasted with the rational. Calling to mind Nietzschean philosophy, writers often constructed mutually exclusive realms in which their characters existed. The “pristine ideal” and the “faulted worldly”⁴⁸ accurately describe two realms that battled within the fictional world of the writer’s imagination and also in the real world of the writer. In a similar manner, Beckmann created visual compositions depicting a tangible, fragmented world, a careful examination of which revealed references to a spiritual world. Many German intellectuals, however, sensed a hopelessness that accompanied both the war and the tumultuous, revolutionary years that followed.

Much of this sentiment revealed itself in war literature. Stories about World War I, sometimes condemning and sometimes glorifying it, began to appear regularly during the mid-1920s. Visual artists, including Beckmann, Grosz, and Dix, had produced war imagery as early as 1919, quickly transcribing their war sketches into finished compositions. The stories that subsequently appeared initially made no political statement, focusing instead on the fate of the individuals inhabiting the stories. The war novel, in particular, provided the reader with the ultimate emotive, existential experience, as it dealt with the individual’s relationship not only to society but also to a higher, spiritual force.

One of the most important writers of war novels, Arnold Zweig created allegories of self-discovery. In *Ein Fleck im Auge* (1926), for example, Zweig’s hero, through an injury to his eye, exchanges his external vision for an internal sight, allowing him to reexamine his conservative political ideology and doubt the preachings of nationalists.⁴⁹

Other writers made political statements—whether direct or not—which challenged the morality of war. Ludwig Renn, in his novel *Krieg* (1929), soberly and unemotionally described the war from the point of view of an unranked soldier. Having based much of the narrative on his own war-time diaries and notes, Renn dispelled the idea of the war as being heroic.⁵⁰ In his novel *Im Westen Nichts Neues* (1929) Erich Maria Remarque carried the objectivity of “Sachlichkeit” well into the realm of literature. The book, which became a best-seller soon after publication, was attacked by right-wing critics even though the author made no specific political statements. What he did do, to the chagrin of German nationalists, was to juxtapose “a remembered world of youthful innocence and natural beauty with the horror and devastation of the war,”⁵¹ effectively dismissing the German nationalist belief in the heroism of war.

The most popular novels of the Weimar Republic were written not by such writers as Remarque, Renn, or Zweig, however, but by people whose books have since faded into literary obscurity. Selling several hundred thousand copies each, the novels of such authors as Ina Seidel and Rudolf Binding centered around mystical or religion-inspired individuals in search of God and truth.⁵² Spirituality and purity of soul were hallmarks of these authors. Although for the most part apolitical, the idealism and heroic endeavors of the main characters in these novels undoubtedly appealed to Germans with nationalist sentiments.

During the Weimar Republic, such writers as Zweig and Remarque, Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse, represented pacifist ideals espoused by the left-wing intelligentsia in Germany. On the other hand, many writers clearly perpetuated right-wing political ideals. Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger, and Moeller van den Bruck, among others, belonged to a group of German nationalists, who believed in the heroism of war. Further, these people promoted the concept of “Dolchstoßlegende” or the “stab-in-the-back theory,” which eventually contributed to the success of right-wing politicians in the Weimar government. This theory, disavowing the Treaty of Versailles and Germany’s defeat in World War I, suggested that Germany had been forced into war by foreign imperialist nations attempting to disarm and eventually destroy the German Empire.

Filled with militaristic and nationalistic ideals, the novels of the right, not unlike more liberal books, promulgated the philosophies of Nietzsche; however, the nationalist authors did not relate individual salvation to the ultimate salvation of mankind. As noted by Wilhelm J. Schwartz in his text *War and the Mind of Germany*, “Jünger and the other neo-Nietzscheans advocated renunciation of personal privileges in favor of ethnocentric ideals.”⁵³ And these ethnocentric ideals promoted racial identity and thus racial prejudices.

The ideas put forth by these authors became more widely accepted as the Weimar Republic suffered economic and political upheavals. In the late 1920s, the economy appeared to be recovering. Inflation was brought under control by 1925 as the modernization of important industries enabled German businesses to compete internationally once more. Growing foreign investment in German industry also bolstered production. Yet the Weimar Republic continued to struggle, in part because of the simmering nationalist ideology left over from World War I, and in part due to the ruling Socialist Party’s inability

to effectively govern the country. The SPD, whose majority members had always favored parliamentary rule, compromised more frequently with the political right as liberal SPD members unsuccessfully lobbied for greater social reforms.⁵⁴

The political right-wing also suffered from in-fighting among their more conservative and radical members. Militant nationalists, for example, opposed the conservatives by wishing to disband parliament.⁵⁵ They promoted ideas about purity of race, preaching, in particular, anti-Semitism. The right also grew critical of the avant-garde in German art and literature, fearing that the German *Geist*, or nationalist spirit, was being diffused.

The Weimar Republic suffered its most serious setbacks in 1929, not because of political battling, but because of a downturn in the economy:

The first real cracks began to appear in the none too solid cement holding the stabilized Republic together. Once again there was a complex upheaval . . . first a decline in German industrial production and a corresponding drop in tax revenue then a falling-off in foreign investment to one-half that of the previous year, finally in October the Wall Street crash, which led to a calling-in of American loans and thereby to a credit crisis in Germany itself.⁵⁶

Amidst the ensuing chaos, the Weimar Republic collapsed. During the next three years, the SPD rapidly lost seats in parliament, and ultimately, control of the government. An undercurrent of conservatism took hold and attacks on modernist and avant-garde cultural programs began.

As early as 1929, radical right-wing organizations criticized cultural activities that they believed negated traditional Romantic German idealism epitomized by the writings of Goethe and the music of Beethoven and Wagner. The Nazi activist Alfred Rosenberg, for example, founded the Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur (Militant League for German Culture), which discredited the music, art, and literature of the liberal avant-garde.⁵⁷ Public funding dwindled for cultural institutions such as opera and cooperative building projects as conservatives gained greater control over government. The National Socialist press began ridiculing writers, musicians, and artists, including Beckmann, for their anti-German modernist art. Hitler and his followers, who gained majority representation in parliament by 1932, viewed modern art forms as anti-nationalist influences that destroyed "German self-esteem and national morale."⁵⁸ Further, the anti-Semitic Nazis associated the modernist culture of the Weimar Republic with Judaism, and therefore considered the goals of modernism to be impure. And in 1933, with the election of Hitler as chancellor, the Nazi agenda against all that was Jewish and avant-garde was securely in place. The right-wing author Friedrich Hussong, in his book *Kurfürstendamm*, published soon after Hitler's rise to power, praised the defeat of modernism:

A miracle has taken place. They are no longer here.
. . . They claimed they were the German *Geist*,

German culture, the German present and future. They represented Germany to the world, they spoke in its name. . . . Whoever served them was sure to succeed. He appeared on their stages, wrote in their journals, was advertised all over the world; his commodity was recommended whether it was cheese or relativity, powder or *Zeittheater*, patent medicines or human rights, democracy or bolshevism, propaganda for abortion or against the legal system, rotten Negro music or dancing in the nude. In brief, there was never a more shameless dictatorship than that of the democratic intelligentsia and the *Zivilisationsliteraten*.⁵⁹

The Nazi leadership dismissed Beckmann in 1933 from a teaching position at the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, which he had held since 1925, as the purge of artists, writers, and musicians began. Creative individuals who had been critical of nationalist ideals lost their German citizenship, forcing many to emigrate. Among those leaving Germany after 1933 were George Grosz, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Ernst Toller, Bertolt Brecht, and Arnold Zweig. Beckmann emigrated to Amsterdam in 1937, one week before the opening of "Entartete Kunst" ("Degenerate Art"), the now-infamous Nazi-organized exhibition intended to denigrate and defame modern art, in which he was represented by ten paintings.⁶⁰ Beckmann's career in Germany, along with those of such artists as Max Pechstein, Otto Dix, George Grosz, and Ludwig Meidner, abruptly ended following the opening of "Degenerate Art."

Beckmann, in a letter to his friend, Stephan Lackner, commented on the institution of politics in 1938:

Politics is a subaltern matter whose manifestation changes continually with the whims of the masses, just as coquettes manage to react according to the needs of the male and to transform and mask themselves. Which means—nothing essential.⁶¹

Although Beckmann never considered himself to be active in politics, his art sometimes dealt with politically charged subject matter. In his 1938 essay "On My Painting," Beckmann admitted the presence of a political reality that sometimes intersected his spiritual world: "Both are manifestations of life which may sometimes coincide, but are very different in principle."⁶²

The difference in principle for Beckmann between the world of the spirit and the world of politics undoubtedly resided in his Nietzschean philosophy, which had influenced his image-making since the 1920s. Beckmann's belief in the transcendent self and its spiritual rewards set him apart from, yet allowed him to thrive in, the diverse cultural milieu of the Weimar Republic. His enigmatic art, filled with a highly personal iconography evoking existential ideas, offered a form of escape from the decadence and later decay of a crumbling German society. Like his philosophical mentors Schopenhauer and

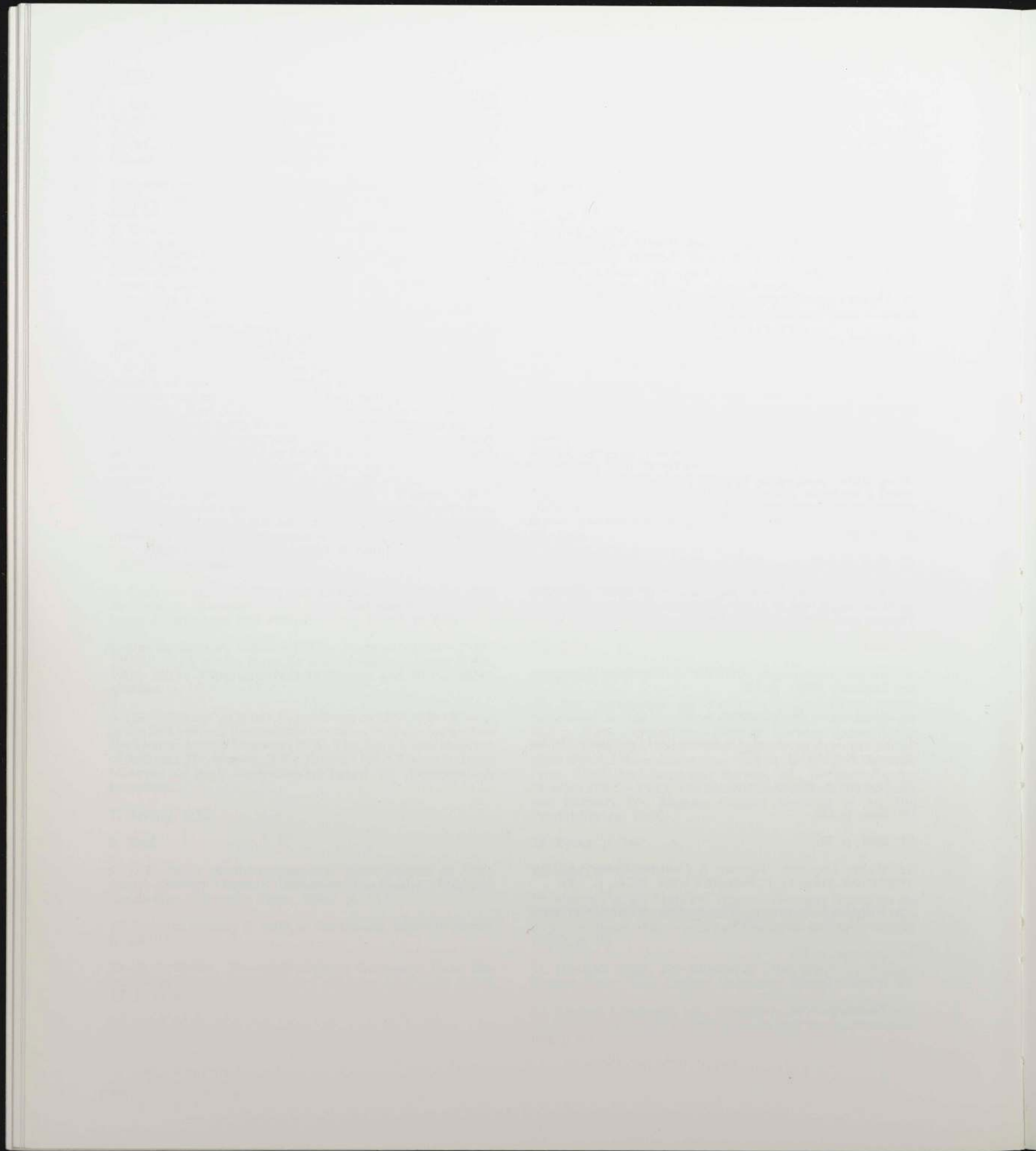
Nietzsche, Beckmann recognized the regenerative nature of man, and anticipated the continuation of life's cycle, as indicated by his comments to Lackner in 1945:

The world is rather kaput, but the spectres climb out of their caves and pretend to again become normal and customary humans who ask each other's pardon instead of eating one another or sucking each other's blood. The entertaining folly of war evaporates, distinguished boredom sits down again on the dignified old overstuffed chairs.⁶³

NOTES

1. Hans Belting, Max Beckmann: *Tradition as Problem in Modern Art*, by Peter Wortsman (New York: Timken Publisher, Inc., 1989), p. 51. Originally published as *Max Beckmann: Tradition als Problem in der Kunst der Moderne* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1984).
2. Max Beckmann, "Der Künstler im Staat," *Europäische Revue* 8 (1927), 288ff. Cited in Belting, p. 113.
3. Expressionism totally rejected academic aesthetic standards, not only in painting but also in music. Harmony was displaced by dissonance as artists relied on emotions to tap their creativity. Two artist groups in particular gave credence to Expressionism. *Die Brücke*, organized in 1905 by Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and *Der Blaue Reiter*, founded in 1911 by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, promoted art which relied on uniquely personal visual perceptions that resulted in highly emotional, brilliantly-hued images.
In Berlin, where Beckmann had moved in 1905, Expressionism infused not only painting and the graphic arts, but literature and music as well, and had, perhaps, its strongest following. Kurt Hiller founded *Der neue Club* in Berlin in 1909, while Herwath Walden began publishing the journal *Der Sturm* the following year. In 1911, *Die Aktion*, a weekly publication, was started by Franz Pfemfert. These endeavors provided outlets for the visions of such artists and writers as Oskar Kokoschka, Max Pechstein, Georg Heym, Alfred Lichtenstein, and Ernst Stadler. Walden subsequently opened a gallery called *Der Sturm* and showcased the progressive art of not only Expressionism, but also other modern European movements such as Cubism and Futurism. Likewise, Paul Cassirer and I. B. Neumann established important galleries.
4. Carla Schulz-Hoffmann and Judith C. Weiss, eds., *Max Beckmann: Retrospective* (St. Louis and Munich: The Saint Louis Art Museum and Prestel-Verlag, 1984), p. 446.
5. Max Beckmann, *Leben in Berlin: Tagebuch 1908—1909, 1912—1913*, ed. by Hans Kinkel (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1966, 1983). Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 18.
6. The "religious" or symbolic paintings created by Beckmann in the first years of the twentieth century include *Scene from the Destruction of Messina* (1909, The Saint Louis Museum of Art) and *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1912, The Saint Louis Museum of Art), compositions based on contemporary tragedies.
7. Belting, p. 52.
8. *Ibid.*
9. J. P. Stern, *Re-interpretations: Seven Studies in Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 157.
10. Letter of January 9, 1909, in Beckmann, *Leben in Berlin*, p. 22.
11. A. J. Ryder, *Twentieth-Century Germany: From Bismarck to Brandt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 4.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
17. See John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety 1917—1933* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1978) p. 23. Some artists and writers were not overcome by patriotic feelings to go to war and opted, instead, to delay entry into the army by attending medical school (e.g. Bertolt Brecht, Andre Breton, and Louis Aragon). Other artists chose clerical positions which kept them from battle (e.g. Paul Éluard, Kurt Schwitters, and George Lukács).
18. Karl Scheffler, "Chronik," *Kunst und Künstler* 13 (October 1914), 115ff., 149ff. Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 71.
19. Letter of May 11, 1915, in *Max Beckmann: Briefe im Krieg*, collected by Minna Beckmann-Tube (Berlin, 1916; second ed. Munich, 1955). Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 71.
20. Letter of October 11, 1914, in *Beckmann: Briefe*, p. 74.
21. Letter of April 28, 1915, in *Beckmann: Briefe*, p. 75.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Letter of May 24, 1915, in *Beckmann: Briefe*, p. 71.
24. Peter Paret, *The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 240.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Ryder, p. 170.
27. For discussions on the artist organizations which originated at this time see the following: Ida Katherine Rigby, *War—Revolution—Weimar. German Expressionist Prints, Drawings, Posters and Periodicals from the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation* (San Diego: San Diego University Press, 1983) and Stephanie Barron, ed., *German Expressionism 1915—1925. The Second Generation* (Los Angeles and Munich: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Prestel-Verlag, 1988).
28. Ryder, p. 189.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
30. Martin Patrick Anthony Travers, *German Novels on the First World War and Their Ideological Implications, 1918—1933* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982), p. 18.
31. Hannah Voigt, *The Burden of Guilt*, trans. by Herbert Strauss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 27.
32. Kasimir Edschmid, ed., *Schöpferische Konfession* (Berlin, 1920). Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 80.

33. Belting, p.80.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Beckmann, "Der Künstler im Staat," p. 114.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
37. Belting, p. 53.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 117. Reproduced transcript of a 1938 lecture, *On My Painting*, delivered by Beckmann at Burlington Galleries, London.
39. Michael Hamburger, *A Proliferation of Prophets* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 3.
40. Willett, p. 53.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
42. George Grosz, "My New Pictures," *Das Kunstblatt* 5 (Weimar 1921), pp. 11—14. Cited in Victor Miesel, ed., *Voices of German Expressionism* (Englewood New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970) p. 186. Grosz wrote, "I am trying to give an absolutely realistic picture of the world. I want every man to understand me—without that profundity fashionable these days, without those depths which demand a veritable driving outfit stuffed with cabalistic and metaphysical hocus-pocus. . . my work should be interpreted as training, as a hard workout, without any vision into eternity."
43. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
44. Walter Gropius, *Manifesto of the Bauhaus* (Weimar, April 1919). Cited in Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p. 202.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Michael Hamburger, *After the Second Flood* (Manchester, England, 1986), p. 18.
47. Hamburger, *Proliferation*, p. 68.
48. Valerie D. Greenberg, *Literature and Sensibilities in the Weimar Era* (1982), p. 278.
49. Travers, p. 49.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
52. Walter Laqueur, *Weimar: A Cultural History 1918—1933* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), p. 139.
53. Wilhelm J. Schwartz, *War and the Mind of Germany* (Berlin: Herbert Lang, 1975), p. 7.
54. Laqueur, p. 37.
55. Travers, p. 12.
56. Willett, p. 178.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
59. Laqueur, p. 81.
60. See especially Stephanie Barron, ed., *"Degenerate Art": The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991).
61. Letter from Max Beckmann to Stephan Lackner dated January 19, 1938. Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 146.
62. Belting, p. 117.
63. Letter from Max Beckmann to Stephan Lackner dated August 27, 1945. Cited in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Retrospective*, p. 155.



SELECTED ILLUSTRATIONS

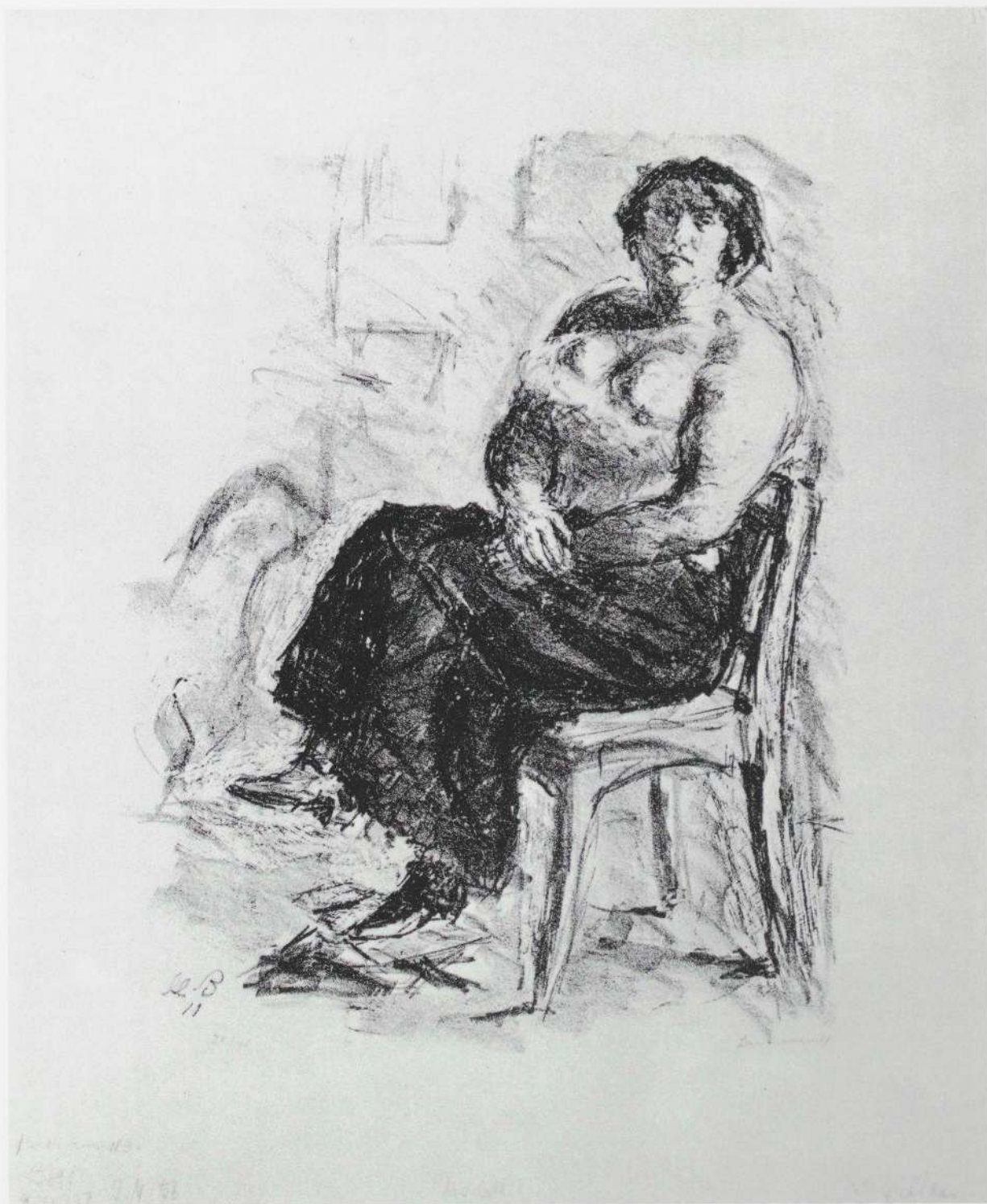
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



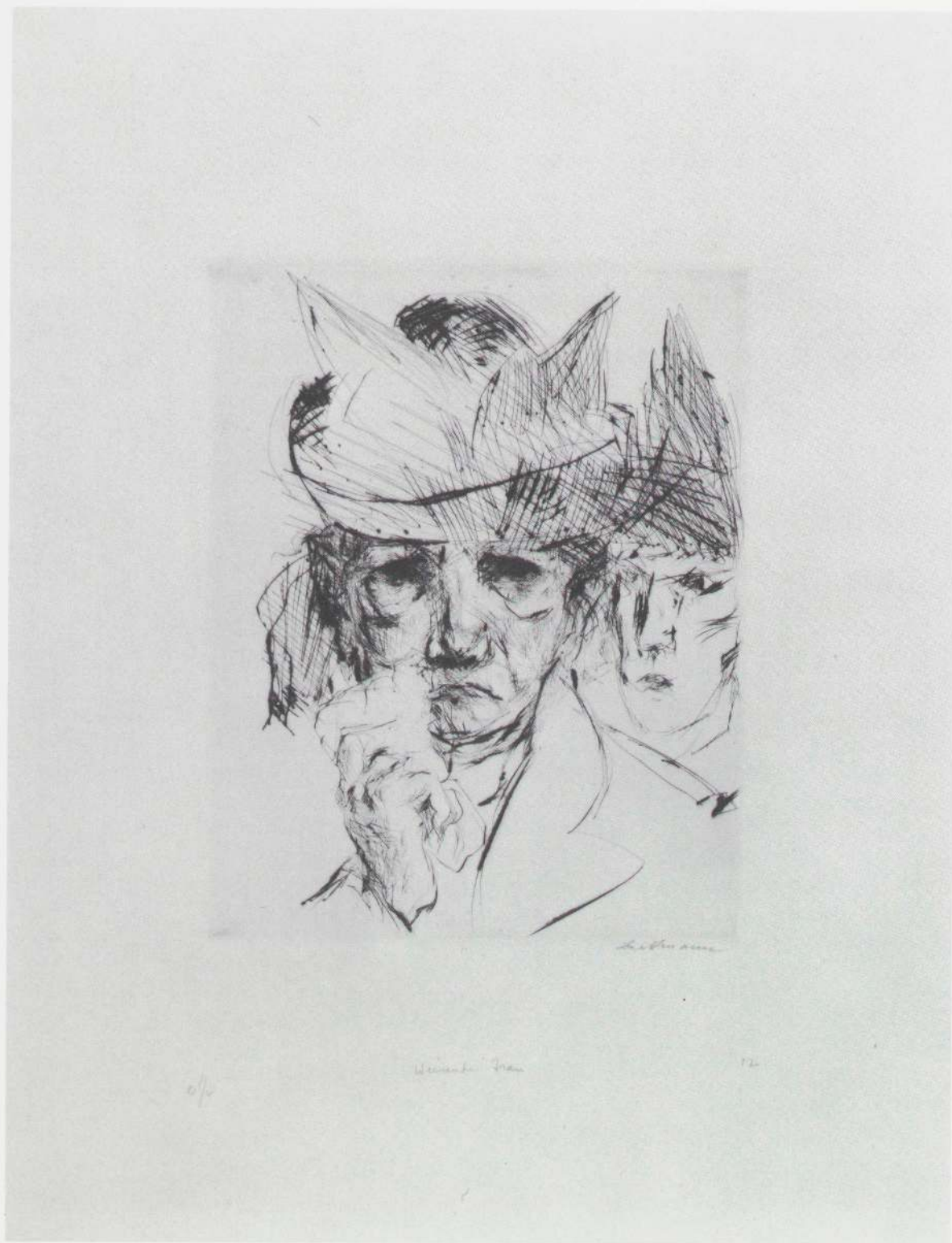
1. *Self-Portrait*, trial proof. 1911
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



2. *Christ and the Sinner* from the portfolio *Six Lithographs to the New Testament*. 1911
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



3. *Model*. 1911
Lithograph. Gift of Samuel A. Berger



4. *Weeping Woman*. 1914
Drypoint. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller



5. *Fallen Soldiers*. 1914
Lithograph. Given anonymously (by exchange)



6. *Assault*. 1916
Drypoint. Purchase



7. *The Large Operation* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1914
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



8. *Morgue*, third state. 1915
Drypoint. Purchase



9. *Morgue*. 1922
Woodcut. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (by exchange)



10. *Admiralscafé*. 1911, dated 1912
Lithograph. Gift of Samuel A. Berger



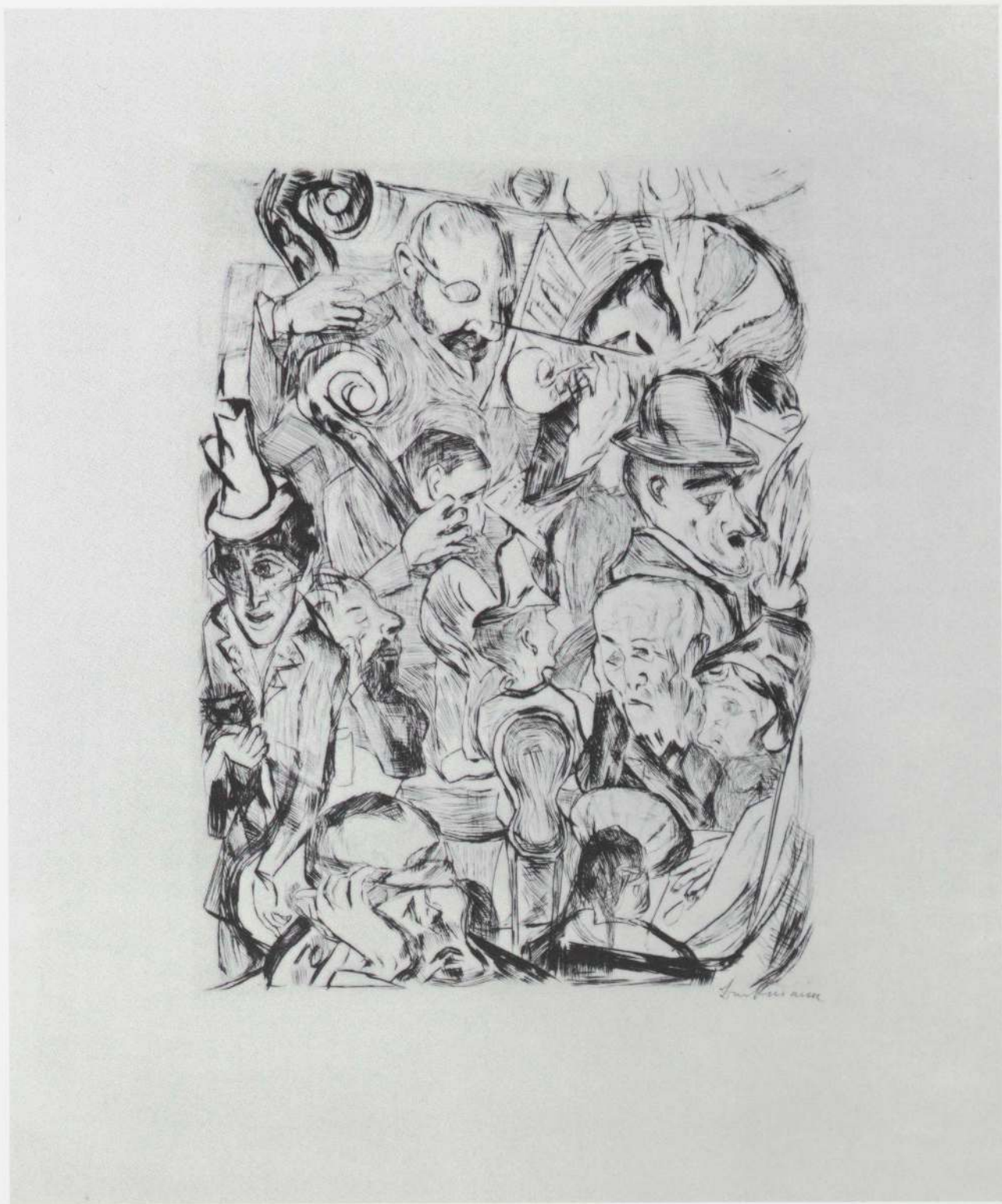
11. *Café (In Foreground Two Old Women)*. 1916
Drypoint. Gift of Samuel A. Berger



12. *Happy New Year 1917*, second state, from the portfolio *Faces*. 1917
Drypoint with ink additions. Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld



13. *The Yawners* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



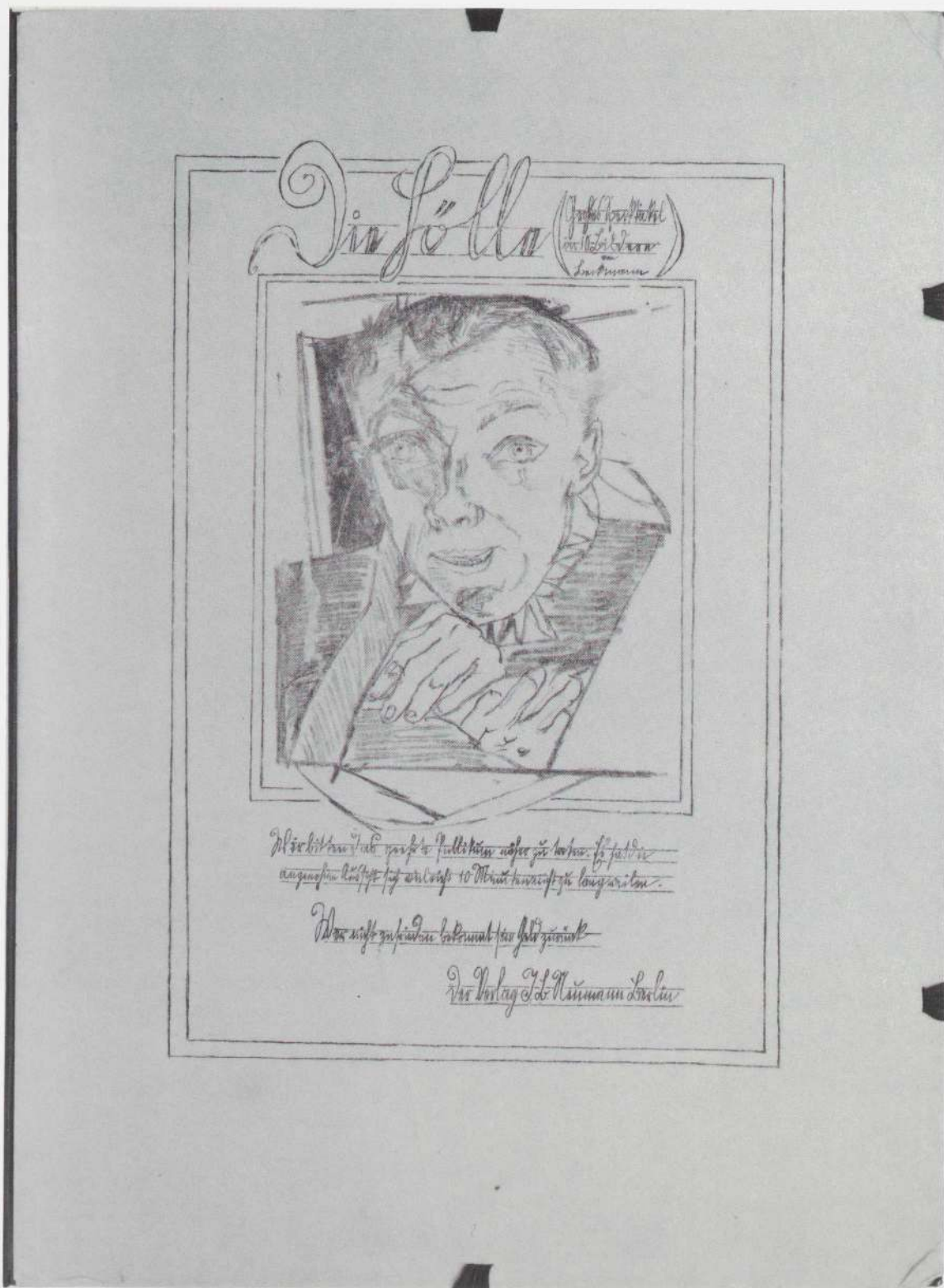
14. *Café Music* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



15. *Landscape with Balloon* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



16. *City View with "Eiserner Steg"*. 1923
Drypoint. A. Conger Goodyear Fund (by exchange)



17. *Self-Portrait*, second state, from the portfolio *Hell*. 1918—19
Lithograph on portfolio cover. Purchase



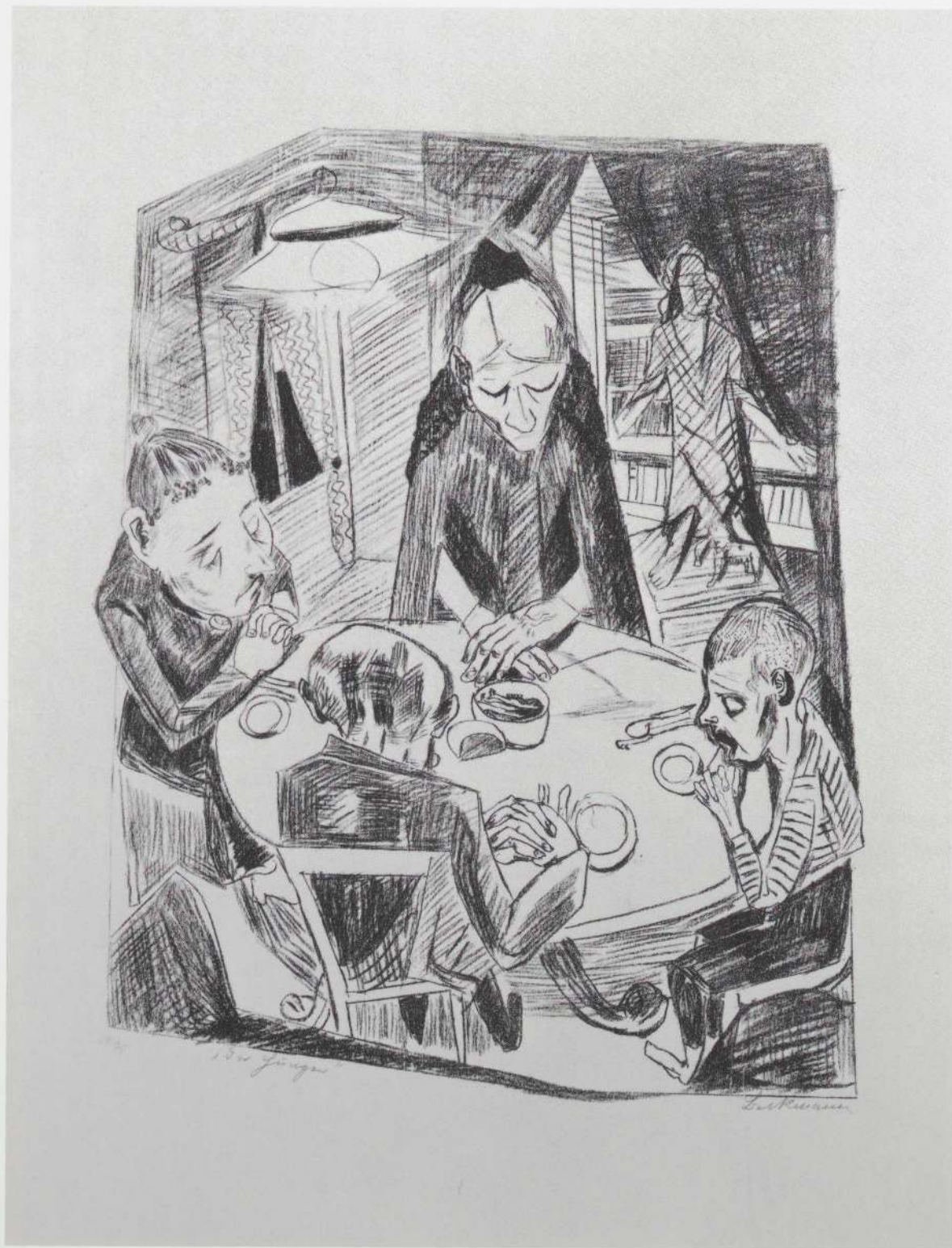
18. *The Way Home from the portfolio Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



19. *The Street* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



20. *The Martyrdom* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



21. *Hunger* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



22. *The Ideologists* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



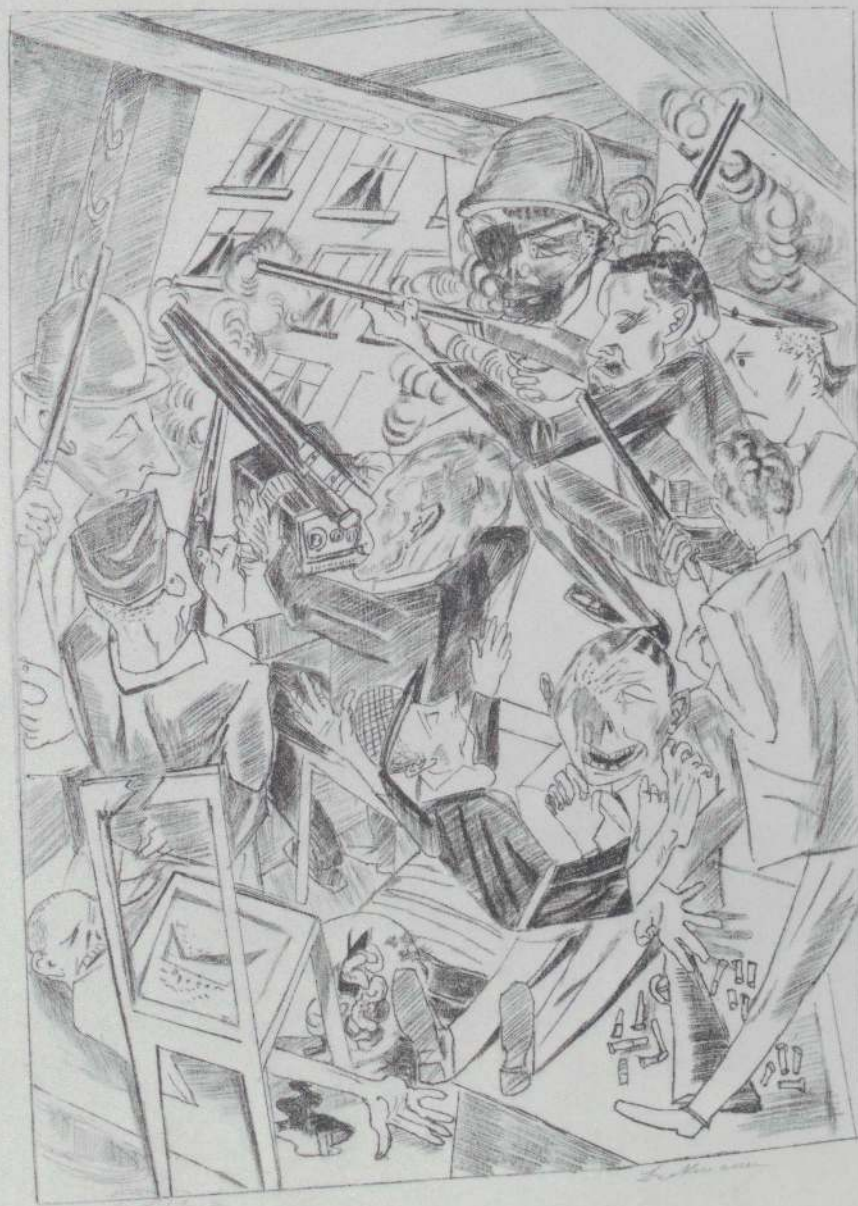
23. *Night* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



24. *Malepartus* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



25. *The Patriotic Song* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



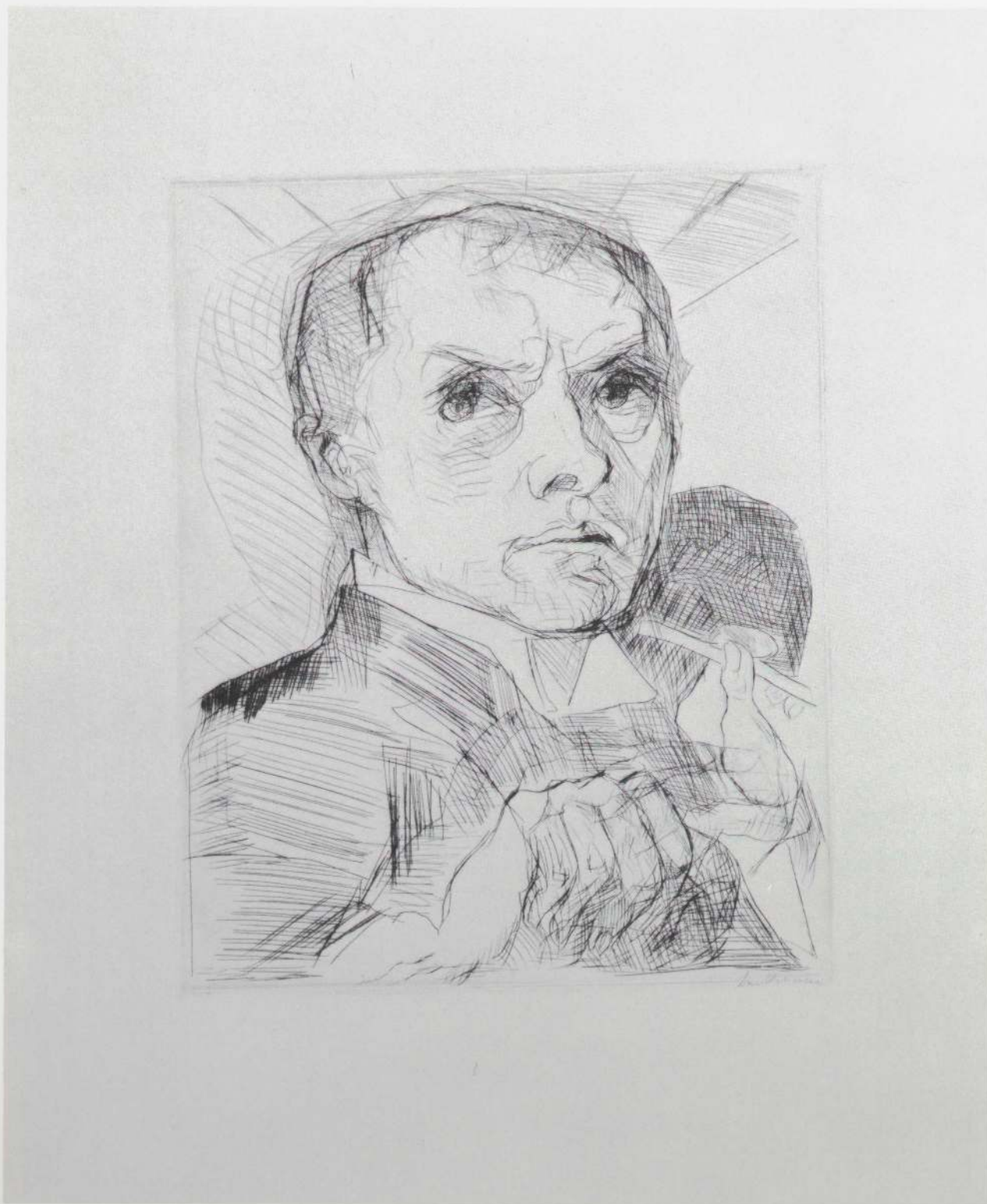
26. *The Last Ones* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



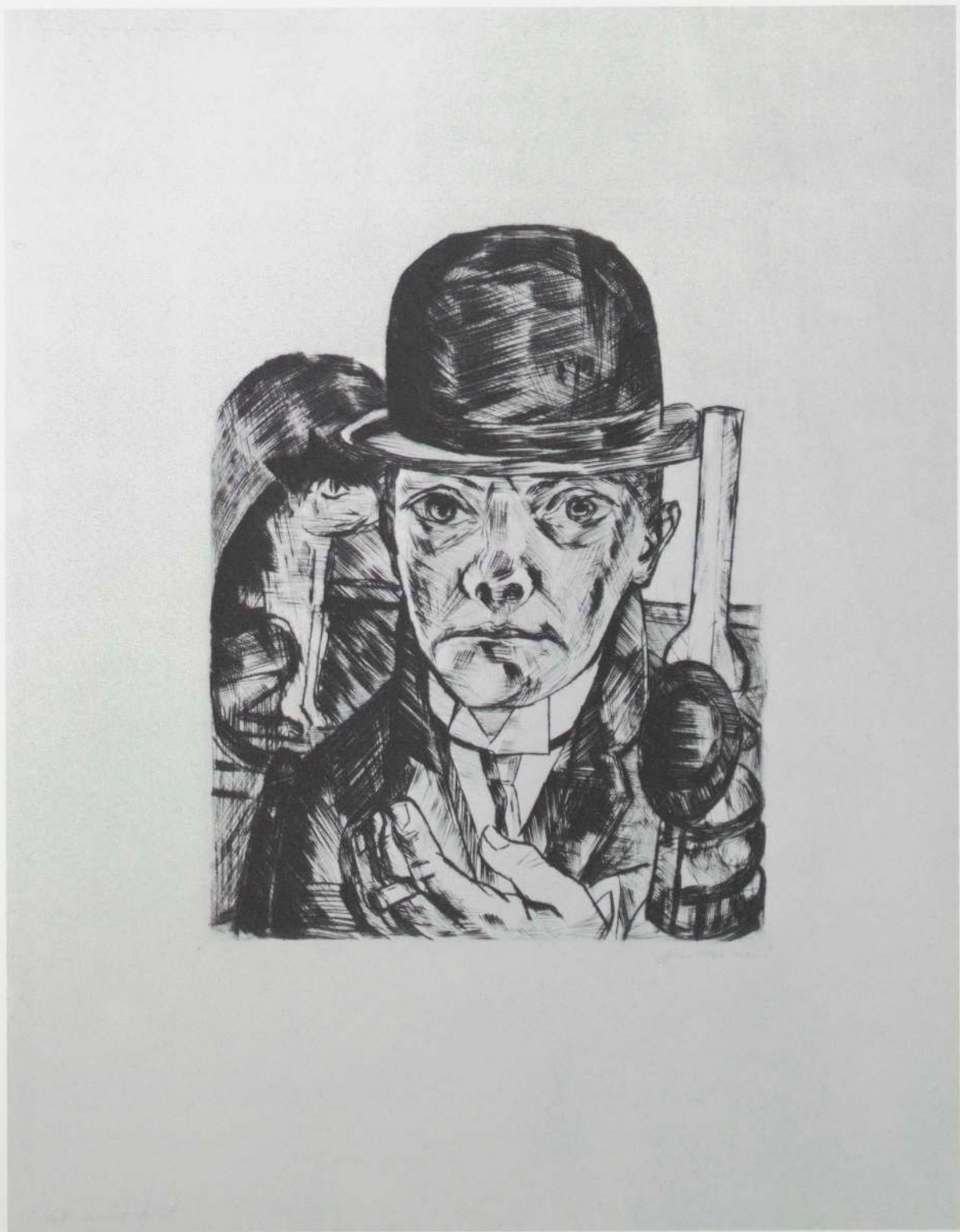
27. *The Family* from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph. Larry Aldrich Fund



28. *Evening (Self-Portrait with the Battenbergs)* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1916
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



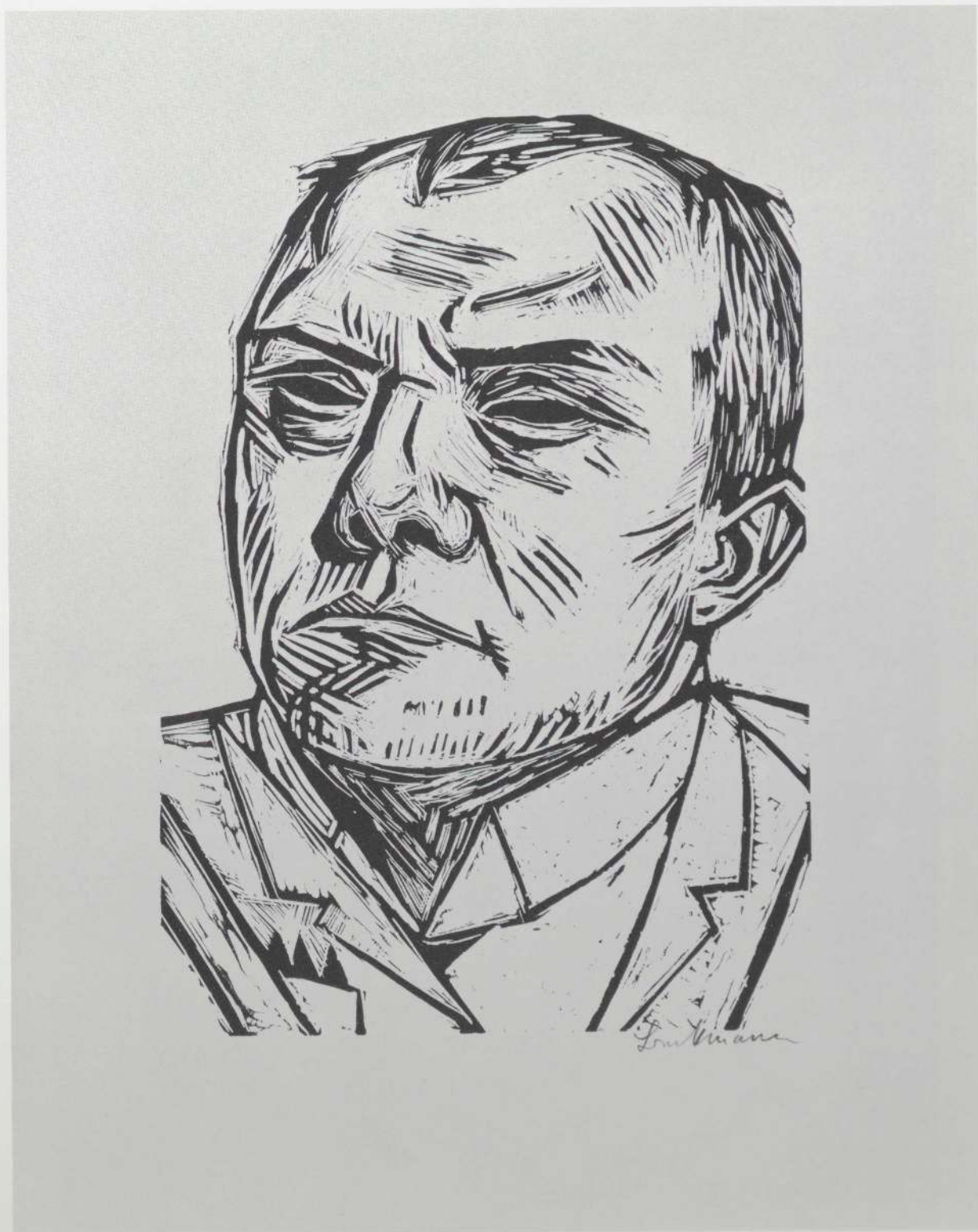
29. *Self-Portrait with Stylus* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1917
Drypoint. Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.



30. *Self-Portrait in Bowler Hat*. 1921
Drypoint. Gift of Edward M. M. Warburg



31. *Queen Bar (Self-Portrait)*, trial proof. 1920
Drypoint. Gift of Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon



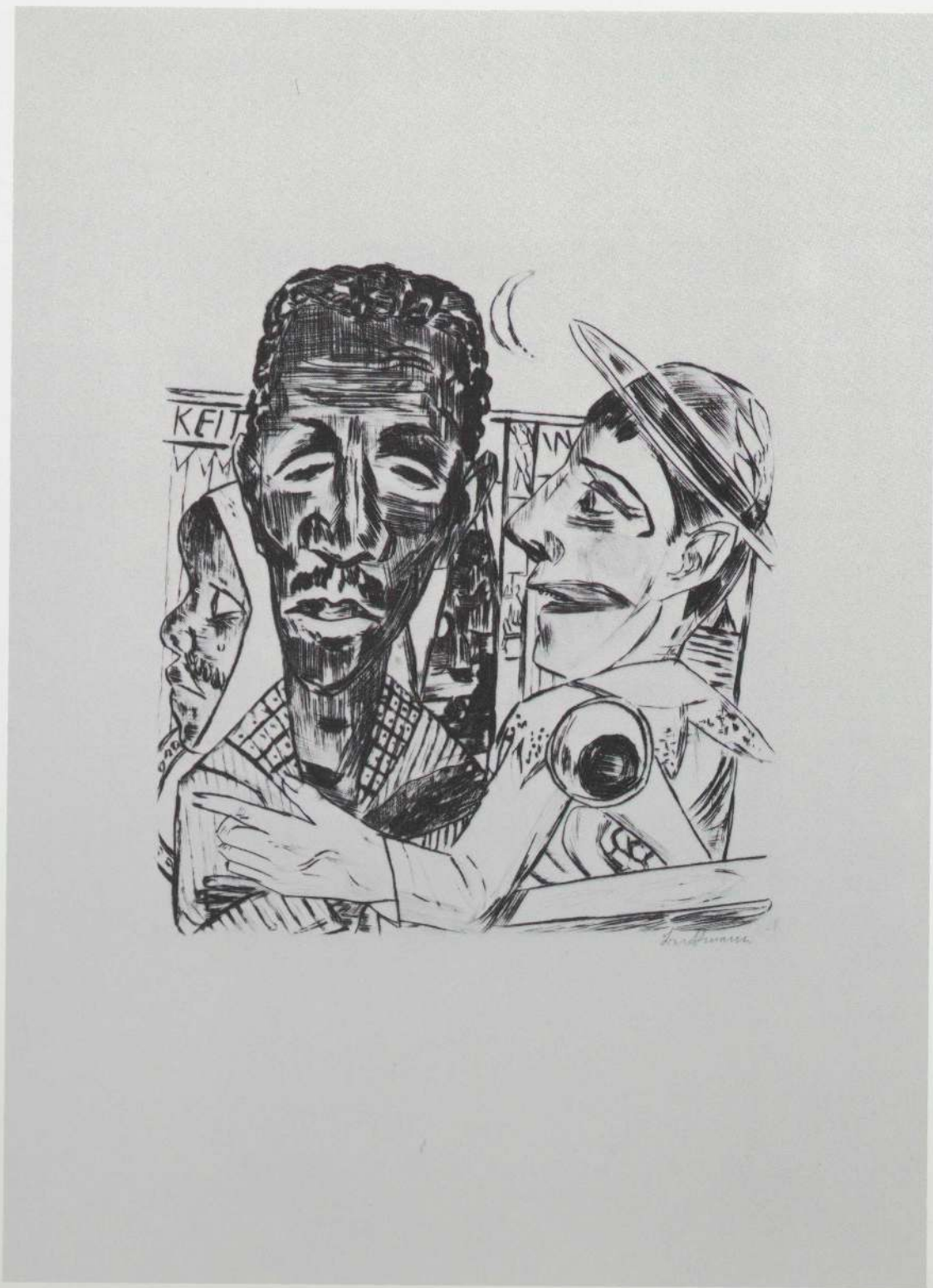
32. *Self-Portrait*. 1922
Woodcut. Given anonymously



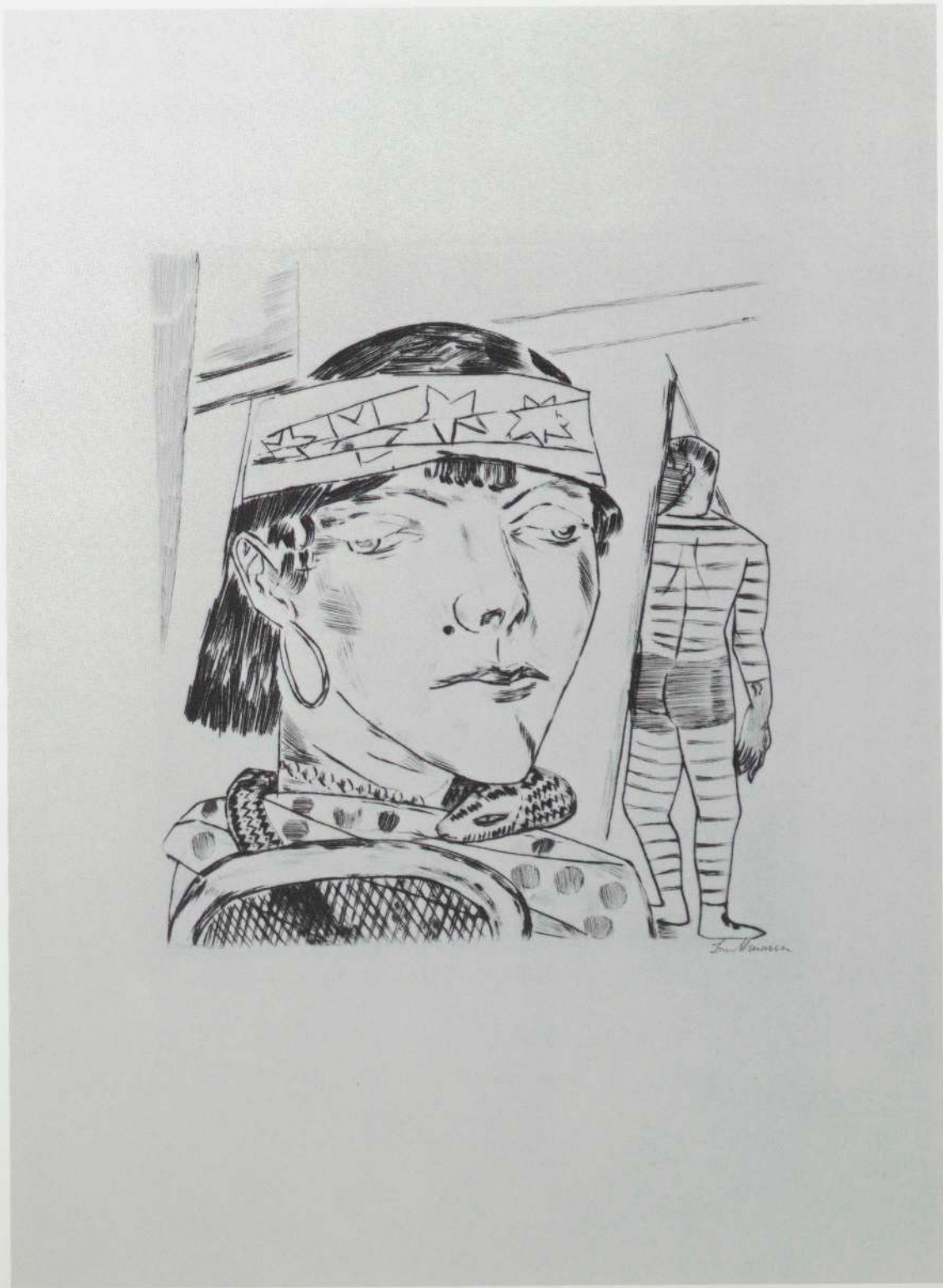
33. *Shooting Gallery* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



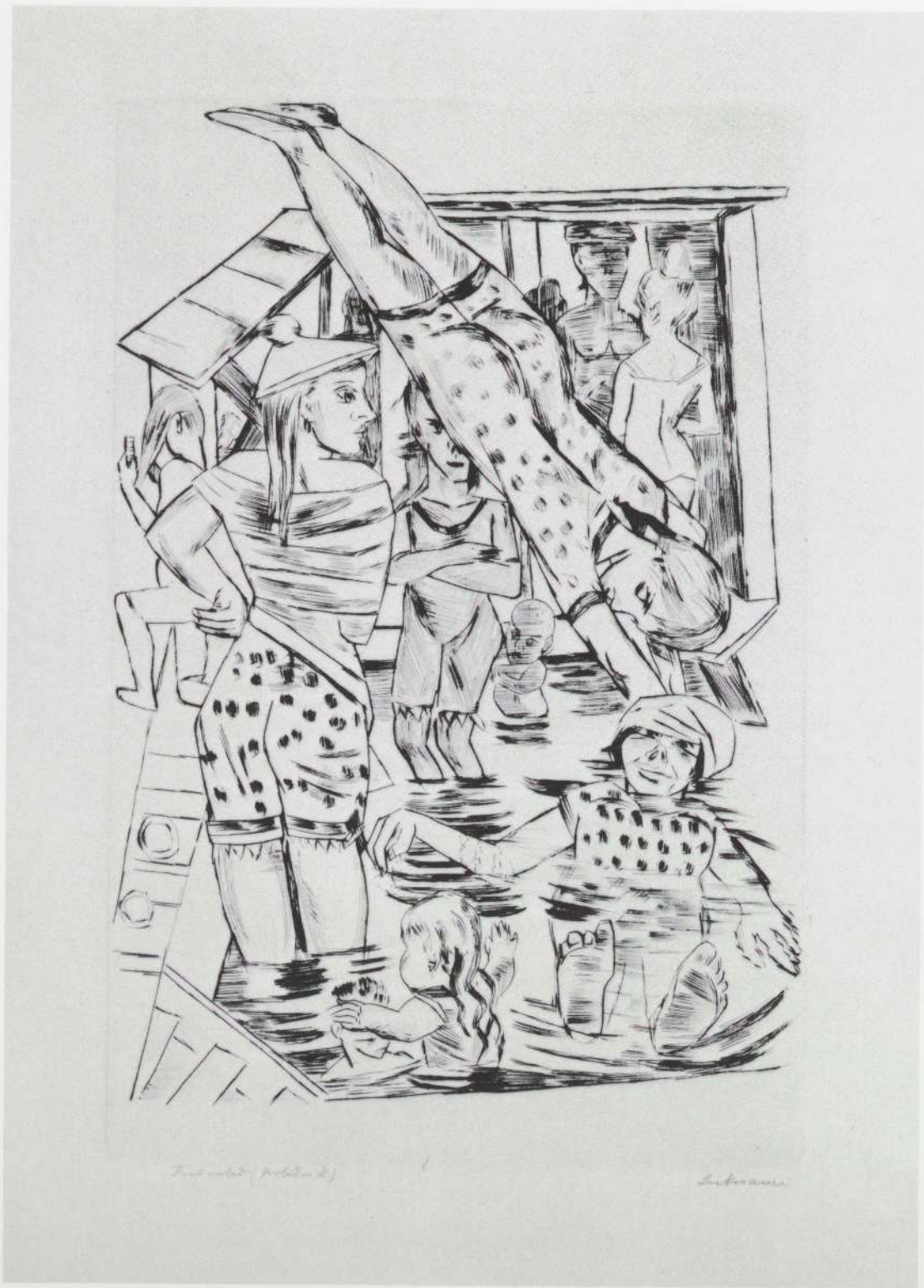
34. *The Tall Man* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



35. *The Negro* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



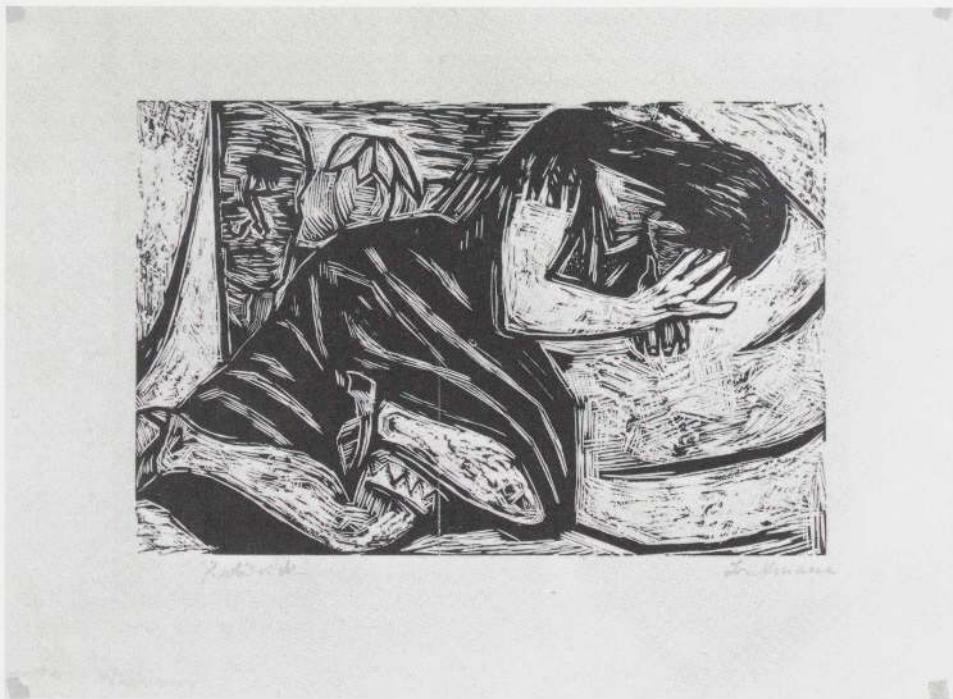
36. *Snake Lady* from the portfolio *Annual Fair*. 1921
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



37. *Women's Bath*, trial proof. 1922
Drypoint. Gift of J. B. Neumann



38. *Tamerlan*. 1923
Drypoint. Larry Aldrich Fund



39. *Seduction*, trial proof. 1923
Woodcut. Gift of Samuel A. Berger



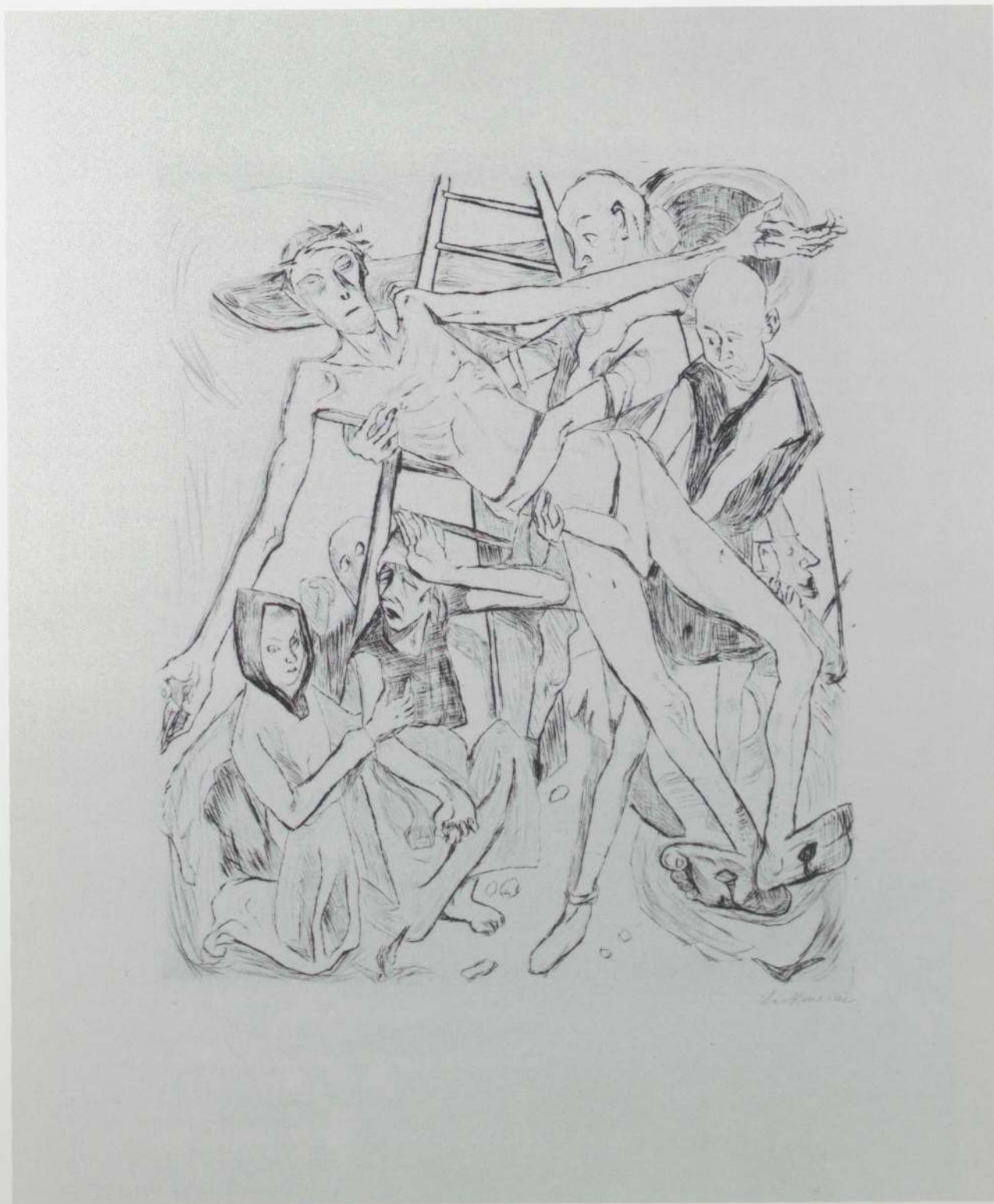
40. *Lovers II* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



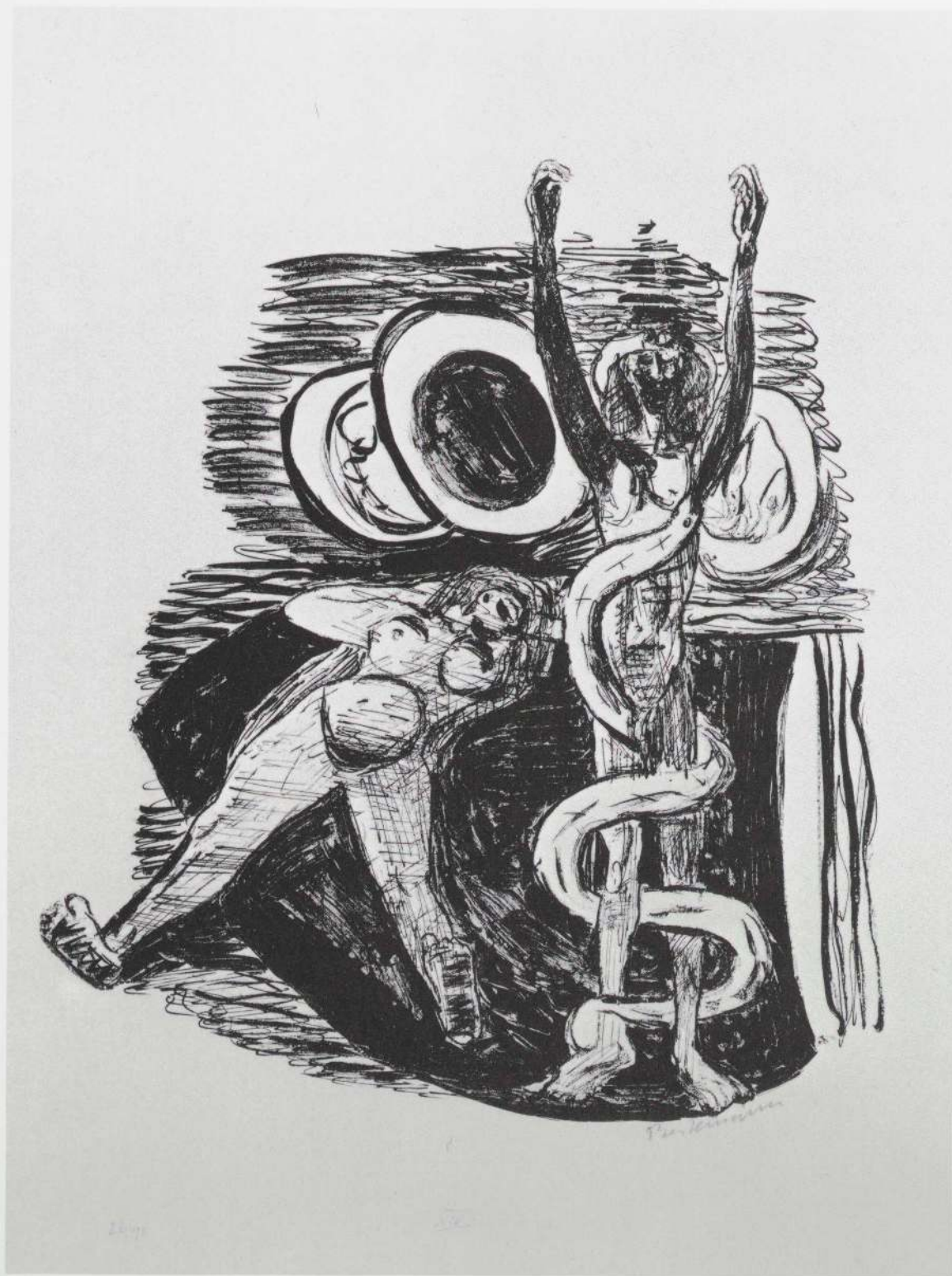
41. *Embrace*, trial proof. 1922
Drypoint. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund (by exchange)



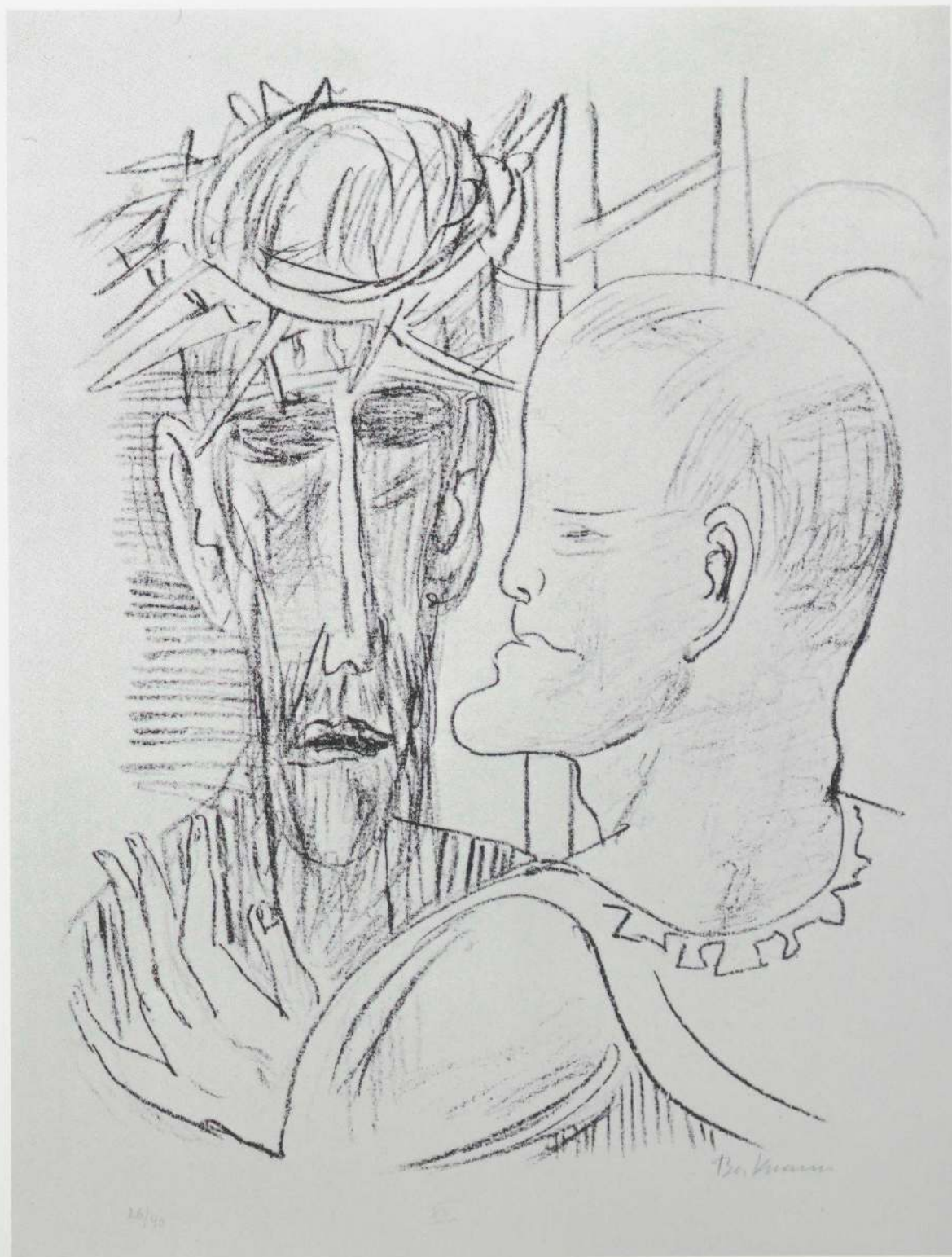
42. *Adam and Eve*. 1917
Drypoint. Larry Aldrich Fund



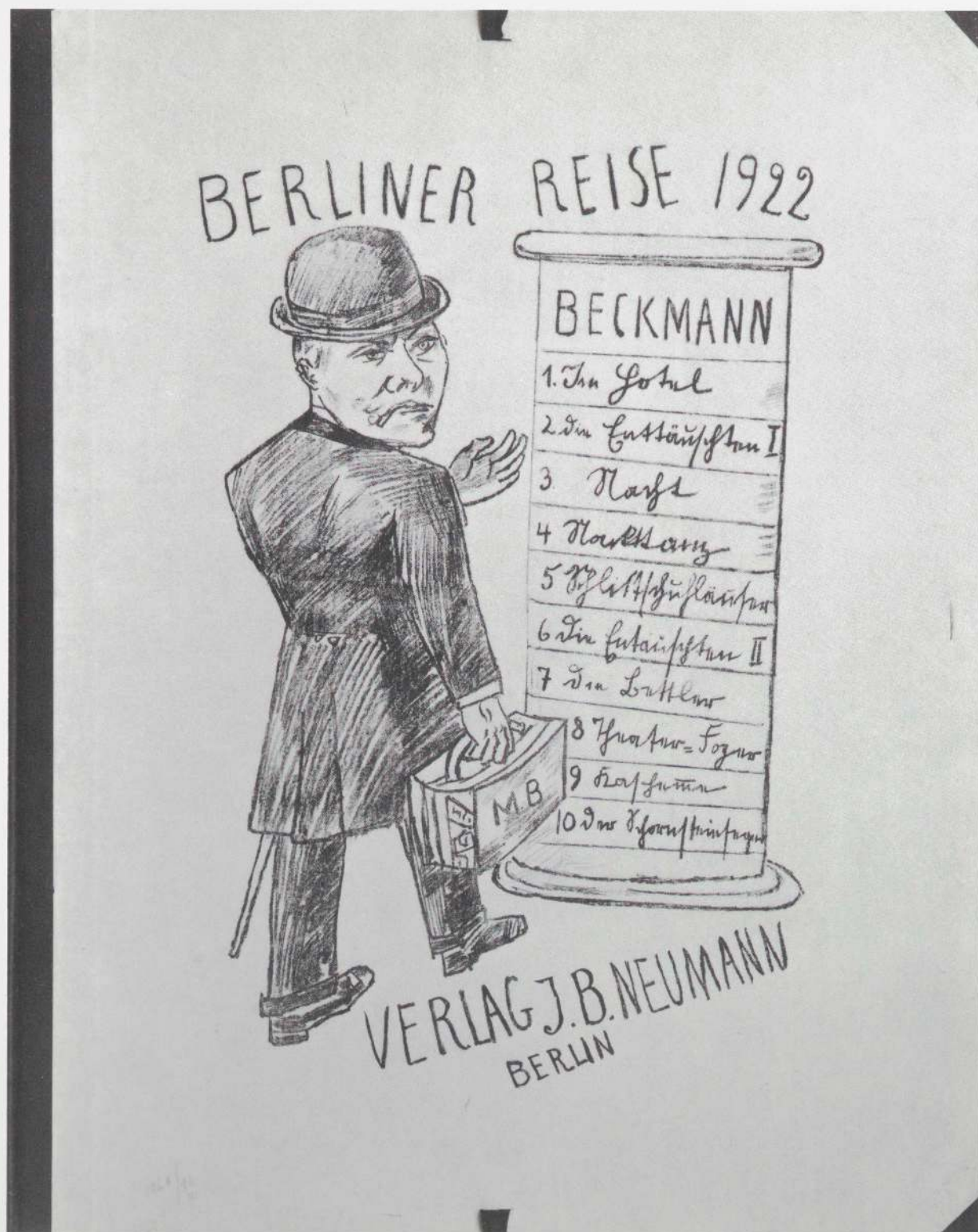
43. *Descent from the Cross* from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint. Gift of Mrs. Bertha M. Slattery



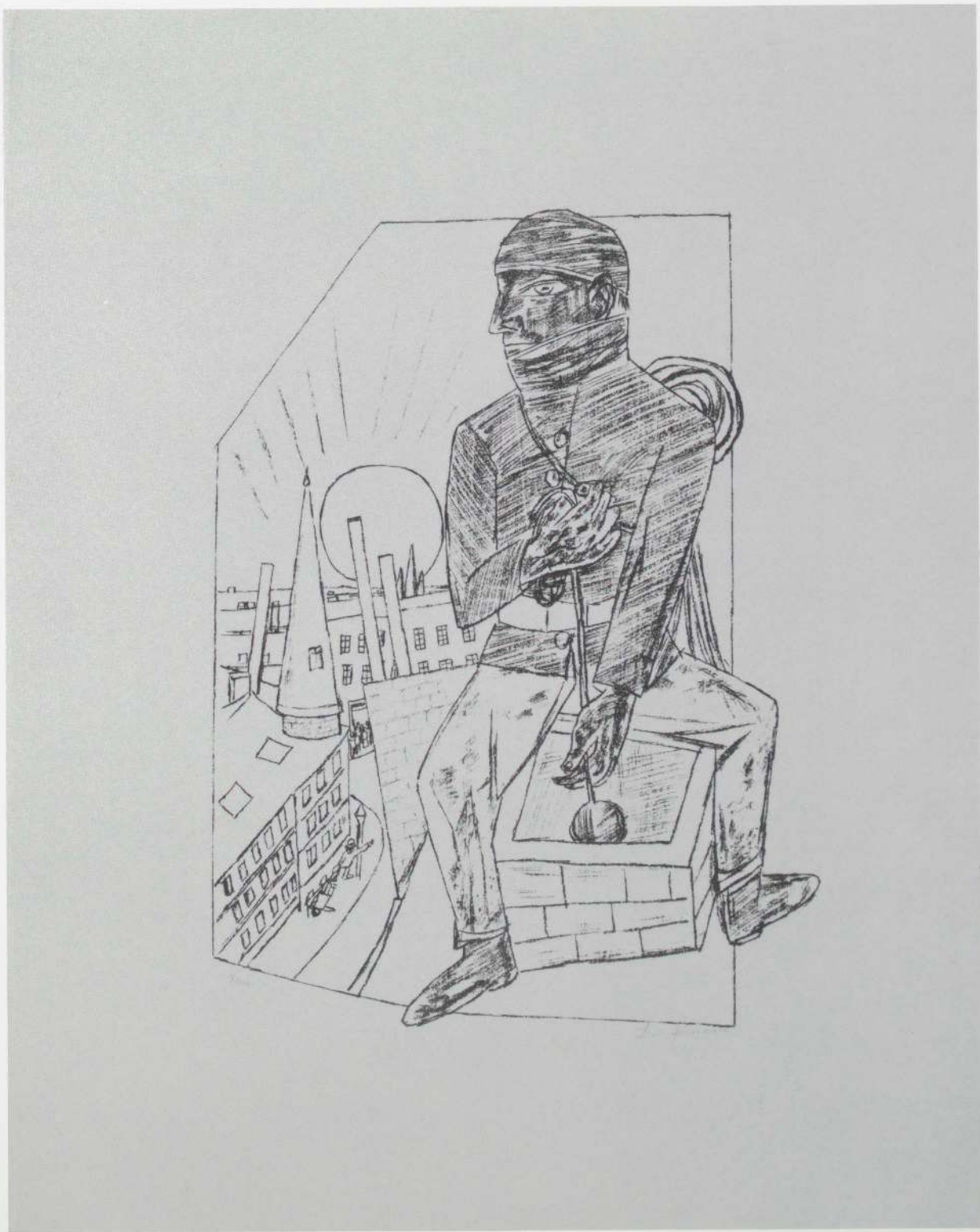
44. *The Fall of Man* from the portfolio *Day and Dream*. 1946
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



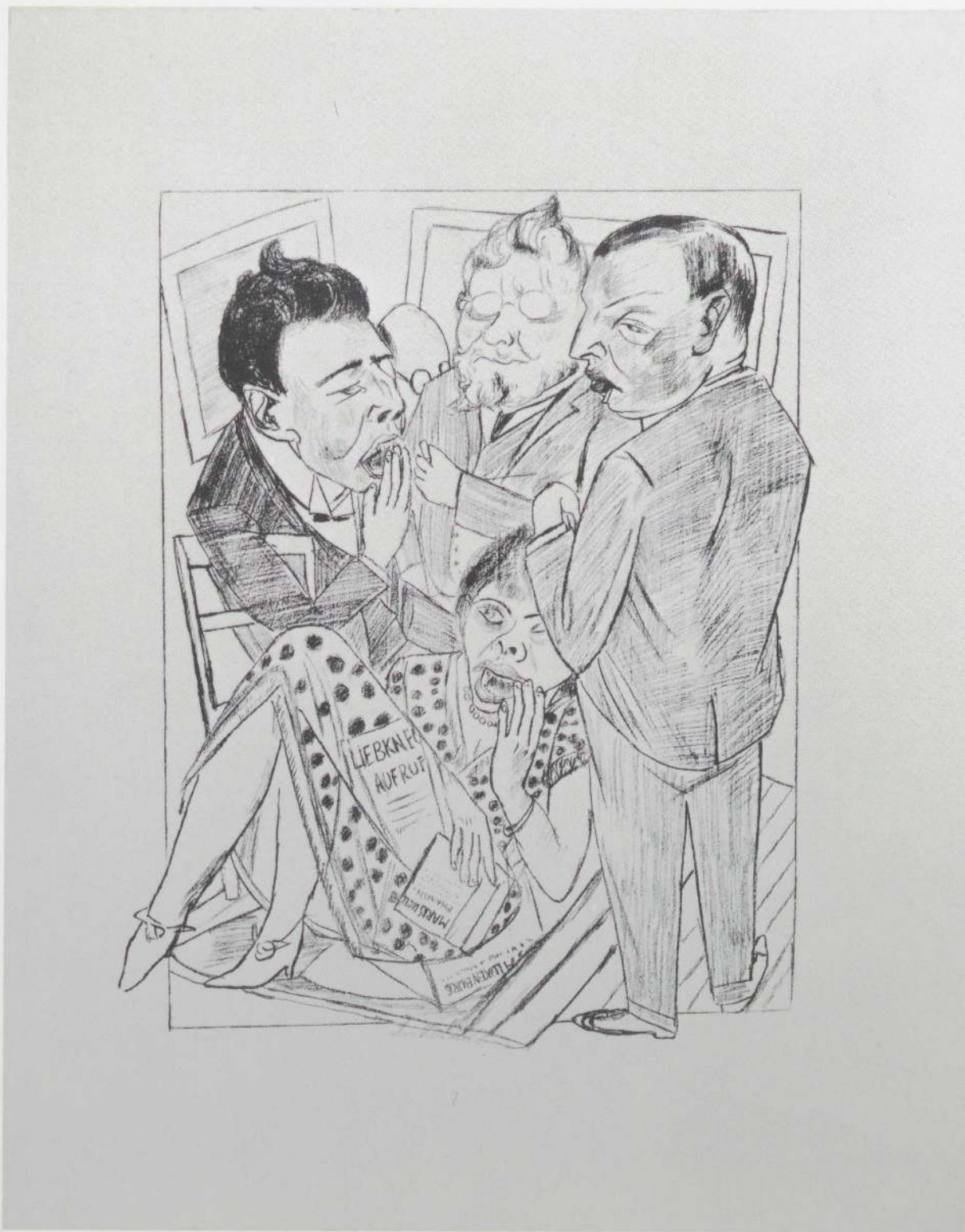
45. *Christ and Pilate* from the portfolio *Day and Dream*. 1946
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



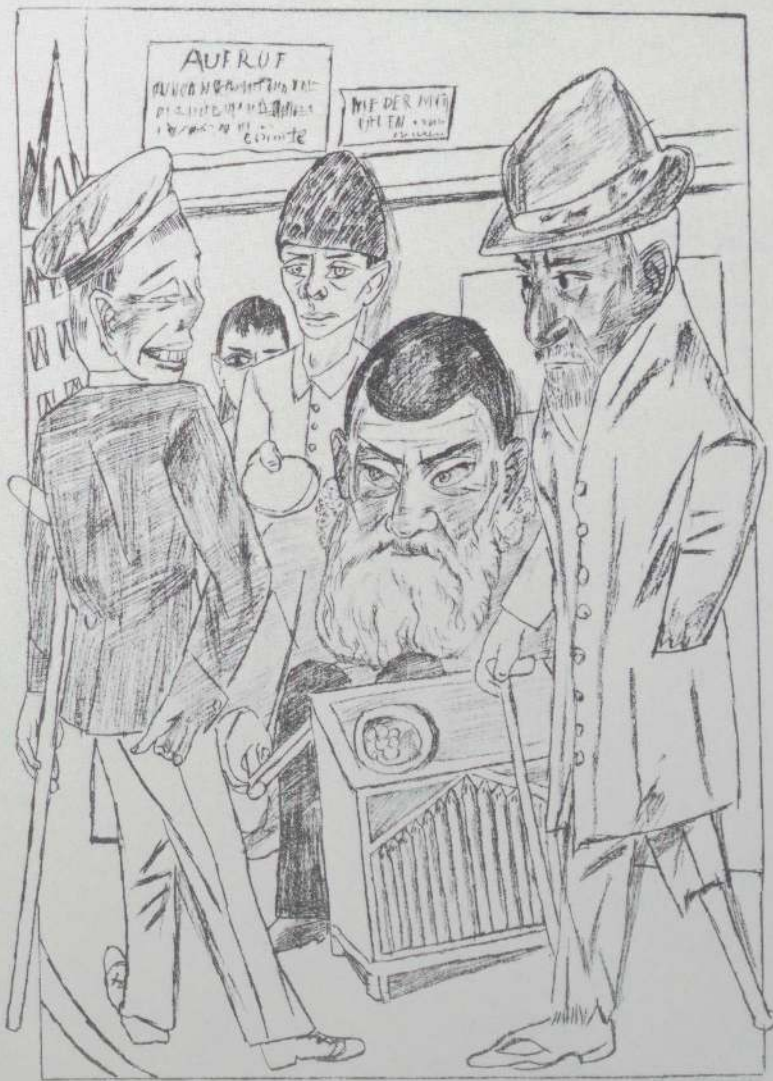
46. *Self-Portrait with Suitcase* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922
Lithograph on portfolio cover. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



47. *The Chimney Sweep* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



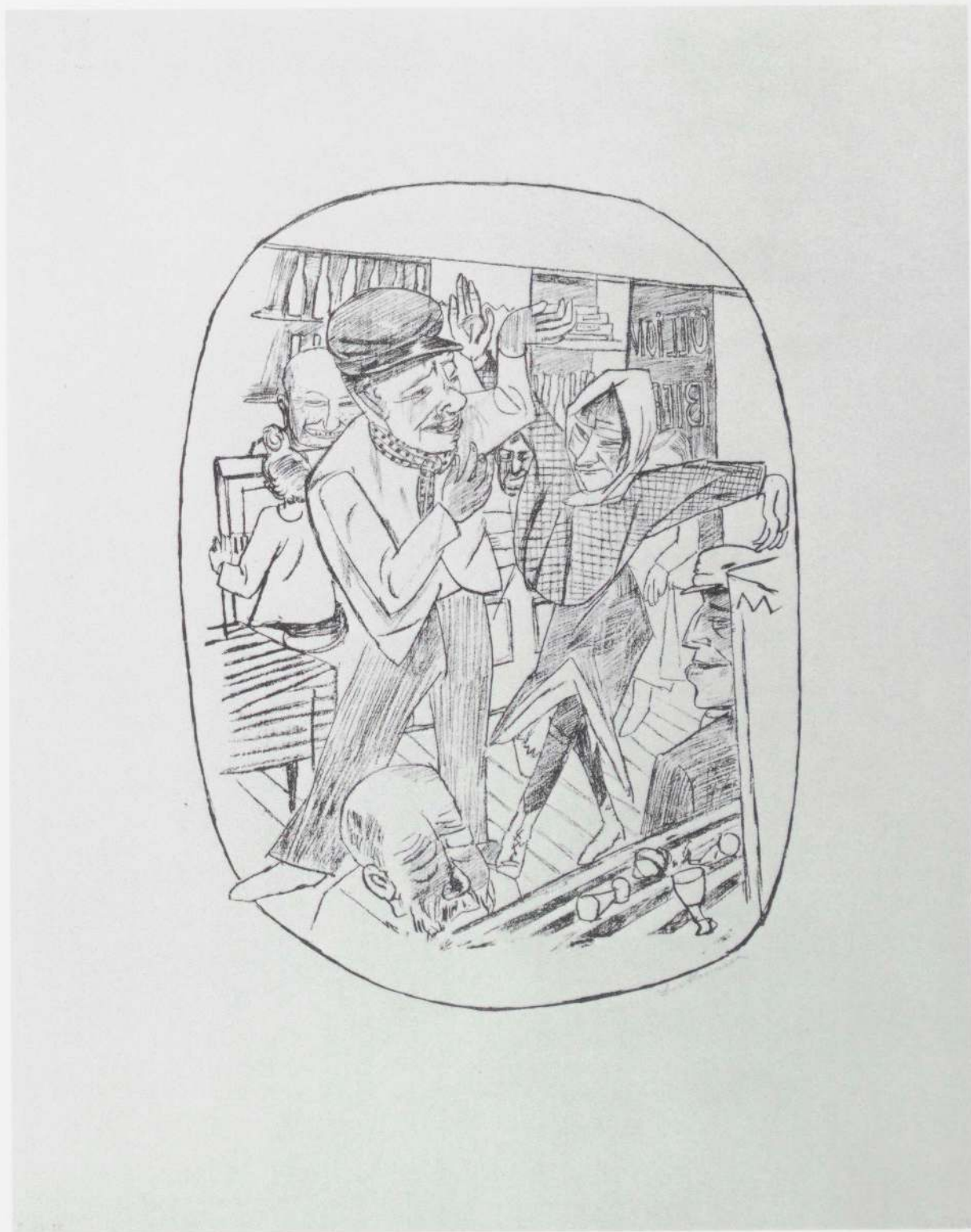
48. *The Disillusioned II* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922.
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



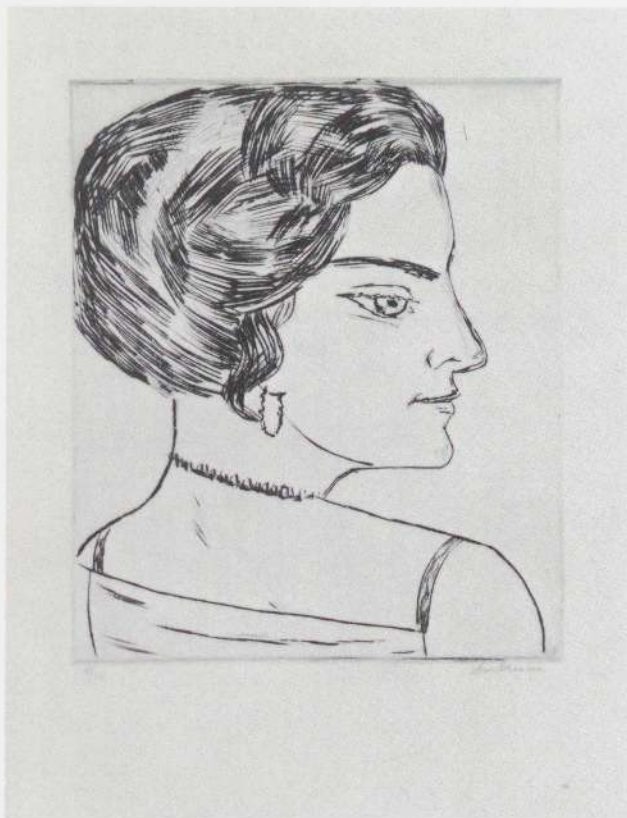
49. *The Beggars* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922.
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



50. *The Theater Lobby* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922.
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



51. *Tavern* from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922*. 1922.
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



52. *Naila in Profile* (Portrait of "Frau H.M.")
1923. Drypoint. Gift of J. B. Neumann



53. *Minette*. 1922
Drypoint. Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld



54. *Woman with Candle*. 1920
Woodcut. Gift of J. B. Neumann



55. *Portrait of Reinhard Piper*. 1921
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



56. *I. B. Neumann and Martha Stern*. 1922
Lithograph. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

All works are from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Dates listed refer to the year of execution. Dimensions are given in inches and centimeters, height preceding width, for composition or plate sizes. The abbreviation "H." refers to James Hofmaier, *Max Beckmann: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints*, Bern: Gallery Kornfeld, 1990. If works are illustrated in this catalogue, figure or plate numbers are listed.

The Departure of Orpheus from His Mother, second version, from *The Return of Eurydice, Three Cantos* by Johannes Guthmann. 1909, dated 1911
Lithograph
7 3/4 x 6 3/4" (19.6 x 17.2 cm). H.10.II.b
Gift of J. B. Neumann

Christ and the Sinner from the portfolio *Six Lithographs to the New Testament*. 1911
Lithograph
10 1/8 x 9 3/8" (25.7 x 23.7 cm). H.20.A.c.(2)
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 2)

Throwing Dice Before the Cross from the portfolio *Six Lithographs to the New Testament*. 1911
Lithograph
11 5/8 x 9 1/2" (29.6 x 24.2 cm). H.23.A.c.(2)
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Self-Portrait, trial proof. 1911
Lithograph
9 7/8 x 7 3/8" (25.1 x 18.7 cm). H.25.A.a
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund (Plate 1)

Samson and Delilah. 1911
Lithograph
9 3/8 x 11 7/8" (23.8 x 30.2 cm). H.28.II
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Admiralscafē. 1911, dated 1912
Lithograph
10 3/8 x 12 1/8" (26.3 x 30.7 cm). H.34.II.B
Gift of Samuel A. Berger. (plate 10)

Model. 1911
Lithograph
13 5/16 x 10 1/2" (33.8 x 26.6 cm). H.35.B
Gift of Samuel A. Berger. (plate 3)

Weeping Woman. 1914
Drypoint
9 13/16 x 7 7/16" (24.3 x 19.0 cm). H.72.III.B.c
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. (plate 4)

Fallen Soldiers. 1914
Lithograph
11 9/16 x 10 1/2" (29.4 x 26.6 cm). H.73.II
Given anonymously (by exchange). (plate 5)

Self-Portrait, trial proof. 1914
Drypoint
9 1/8 x 7" (23.2 x 17.7 cm). H.74.A
Gift of Paul J. Sachs

Declaration of War, first state. 1914
Drypoint
7 13/16 x 9 3/4" (19.8 x 24.8 cm). H.78.I
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Large Operation from the portfolio *Faces*. 1914
Drypoint
11 3/4 x 17 1/2" (29.9 x 45.5 cm). H.81.VI.B.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 7)

Morgue, third state. 1915
Drypoint
10 1/8 x 14 1/8" (25.7 x 35.7 cm). H.83.III
Purchase. (plate 8)

Two Auto Officers from the portfolio *Faces*. 1915
Drypoint
4 3/4 x 7" (12.0 x 17.8 cm). H.84.B.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Society 1915. 1915

Drypoint

10 1/4 x 12 1/2" (25.9 x 31.8 cm). H.86.III.B

Purchase

Evening (Self-Portrait with the Battenbergs) from the portfolio *Faces.* 1916

Drypoint

9 7/16 x 7" (23.9 x 17.8 cm). H.90.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 28)

Assault. 1916

Drypoint

6 7/8 x 10 1/8" (17.5 x 25.7 cm). H.92.VI.B

Purchase. (plate 6)

Café (In Foreground Two Old Women). 1916

Drypoint

6 7/8 x 9 1/16" (17.3 x 23.1 cm). H.97.V.B.a

Gift of Samuel A. Berger. (plate 11)

Self-Portrait, Hand to Cheek, first state. 1916

Drypoint

7 x 4 1/2" (17.8 x 11.5 cm). H.100.I

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Cartwright

Self-Portrait with Stylus from the portfolio *Faces.* 1917

Drypoint

11 3/4 x 9 3/8" (29.8 x 23.8 cm). H.105.II.B.b

Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (plate 29)

Happy New Year 1917, second state, from the portfolio *Faces.* 1917

Drypoint with ink additions

9 1/4 x 11 3/4" (23.5 x 29.7 cm). H.108.II

Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld. (plate 12)

Adam and Eve. 1917

Drypoint

9 3/16 x 6 15/16" (23.7 x 17.6 cm). H.110.III.B.a

Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 42)

Frontal Self-Portrait with House Gable in Background. 1918

Drypoint

12 x 10 1/16" (30.6 x 25.7 cm). H.125.II.B.a

Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

Lovers II from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

8 5/8 x 10 1/8" (21.8 x 15.7 cm). H.126.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 40)

Family Scene (Beckmann Family) from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

12 1/16 x 10 1/4" (30.6 x 26.0 cm). H.127.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Main River Landscape from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

9 7/8 x 11 3/4" (25.1 x 29.8 cm). H.128.IV.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Yawners from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

12 1/8 x 10 1/4" (30.8 x 26.0 cm). H.129.IV.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 13)

Café Music from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

12 1/4 x 9 1/8" (31.1 x 23.1 cm). H.130.III.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 14)

Descent from the Cross from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

12 1/16 x 10 1/16" (30.7 x 25.8 cm). H.131.II.B.b

Gift of Mrs. Bertha M. Slattery. (plate 43)

Resurrection from the portfolio *Faces.* 1918

Drypoint

9 5/8 x 13 1/8" (24.5 x 33.4 cm). H.132.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Spring from the portfolio *Faces*. 1918
Drypoint
11 3/4 x 7 13/16" (29.9 x 19.8 cm). H.133.II.B.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Landscape with Balloon from the portfolio *Faces*.
1918
Drypoint
9 1/8 x 11 5/8" (23.3 x 29.5 cm). H.134.II.A.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 15)

Self-Portrait, second state, from the portfolio *Hell*.
1918-19
Lithograph on portfolio cover
24 15/16 x 16 7/16" (63.4 x 41.7 cm). H.139.II
Purchase. (plate 17)

The Way Home from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
29 1/4 x 19 1/8" (74.3 x 48.5 cm). H.140.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 18)

The Street from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
26 1/2 x 21" (67.4 x 53.3 cm). H.141.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 19)

The Martyrdom from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
21 9/16 x 29 1/2" (54.7 x 74.9 cm). H.142.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 20)

Hunger from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
24 3/4 x 19 5/8" (62.8 x 49.9 cm). H.143.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 21)

The Ideologists from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
28 3/16 x 19 3/4" (71.7 x 50.2 cm). H.144.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 22)

Night from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
21 7/8 x 27 5/8" (55.6 x 70.2 cm). H.145.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 23)

Malepartus from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
27 3/16 x 16 11/16" (69.1 x 42.5 cm). H.146.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 24)

The Patriotic Song from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
30 5/8 x 20 1/2" (77.8 x 52.0 cm). H.147.II.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 25)

The Last Ones from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
26 1/4 x 18 13/16" (66.6 x 47.8 cm). H.148.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 26)

The Family from the portfolio *Hell*. 1919
Lithograph
29 7/8 x 18 3/8" (76.0 x 46.7 cm). H.149.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 27)

Woman with Candle. 1920
Woodcut
11 13/16 x 5 15/16" (30.1 x 15.0 cm). H.171.III.B.c
Gift of J. B. Neumann. (plate 54)

Queen Bar (Self-Portrait), trial proof. 1920
Drypoint
12 9/16 x 9 3/4" (31.8 x 24.8 cm). H.176.A
Gift of Mrs. Gertrud A. Mellon. (plate 31)

Self-Portrait in Bowler Hat. 1921
Drypoint
12 3/4 x 9 3/4" (32.3 x 24.8 cm). H.180.IV.B
Gift of Edward M. M. Warburg. (plate 30)

Portrait of Reinhard Piper. 1921

Lithograph

23 1/4 x 16 3/8" (59.1 x 41.7 cm). H.183.B.d

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 55)

The Barker (Self-Portrait) from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

13 1/4 x 10 1/8" (33.6 x 25.8 cm). H.191.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Dressing Room from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

8 1/8 x 5 11/16" (20.6 x 14.5 cm). H.192.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Behind the Scenes from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

8 1/4 x 12 1/16" (21.0 x 30.6 cm). H.193.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Shooting Gallery from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

12 9/16 x 9 7/8" (32.0 x 25.1 cm). H.194.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 33)

The Tall Man from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

12 1/16 x 8 1/4" (30.6 x 20.9 cm). H.195.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 34)

The Negro from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

11 7/16 x 10 1/4" (29.0 x 26.0 cm). H.196.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 35)

Merry-Go-Round from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

11 7/16 x 10 1/8" (29.0 x 25.7 cm). H.197.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Tight Rope Walkers from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

10 3/16 x 10" (25.9 x 25.4 cm). H.198.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Negro Dance from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

10 3/16 x 10" (25.9 x 25.4 cm). H.199.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Snake Lady from the portfolio *Annual Fair.* 1921

Drypoint

11 7/16 x 10 1/16" (29.0 x 25.6 cm). H.200.II.B.b

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 36)

I. B. Neumann and Martha Stern. 1922

Lithograph

17 x 19 1/4" (43.2 x 48.9 cm). H.209.II

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 56)

Self-Portrait with Suitcase from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922.* 1922

Lithograph on portfolio cover

21 3/16 x 13 15/16" (53.8 x 35.4 cm). H.212

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 46)

Self-Portrait in the Hotel from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922.* 1922

Lithograph

17 3/4 x 12 3/8" (45.1 x 31.4 cm). H.213.B

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Disillusioned I from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922.* 1922

Lithograph

19 1/4 x 14 5/8" (48.9 x 37.2 cm). H.214.B

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Night from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin 1922.* 1922

Lithograph

17 7/8 x 13 15/16" (45.4 x 35.5 cm). H.215.B

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Striptease from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin* 1922.
1922
Lithograph
18 11/16 x 14 5/8" (47.4 x 37.1 cm). H.216.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Ice Skater from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin* 1922.
1922
Lithograph
19 1/2 x 14 3/8" (49.5 x 36.5 cm). H.217.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

The Disillusioned II from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin*
1922. 1922
Lithograph
18 13/16 x 14 3/4" (47.8 x 37.4 cm). H.218.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 48)

The Beggars from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin* 1922.
1922
Lithograph
18 3/8 x 13 1/8" (46.7 x 33.4 cm). H.219.II.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 49)

The Theater Lobby from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin*
1922. 1922
Lithograph
19 1/2 x 15 11/16" (49.5 x 39.8 cm). H.220.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 50)

Tavern from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin* 1922. 1922
Lithograph
17 3/4 x 13 1/4" (45.1 x 33.7 cm). H.221.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 51)

The Chimney Sweep from the portfolio *Trip to Berlin*
1922. 1922
Lithograph
17 3/4 x 13 1/8" (45.1 x 33.4 cm). H.222.B
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 47)

Self-Portrait. 1922
Woodcut
8 11/16 x 6 1/16" (22.1 x 15.5 cm). H.226.III.B.a
Given anonymously. (plate 32)

Women's Bath, trial proof. 1922
Drypoint
17 1/4 x 11 1/4" (43.9 x 28.5 cm). H.234.II.A
Gift of J. B. Neumann. (plate 37)

Embrace, trial proof. 1922
Drypoint
16 3/4 x 10 1/8" (42.6 x 25.7 cm). H.236.IV.A
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund (by exchange).
(plate 41)

Minette. 1922
Drypoint
9 3/4 x 7 5/8" (24.7 x 19.3 cm). H.238.VI.B.a
Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld. (plate 53)

Morgue. 1922
Woodcut
14 3/4 x 18 11/16" (37.5 x 47.5 cm). H.252.II.B
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (by exchange).
(plate 9)

Seduction, trial proof. 1923
Woodcut
6 1/4 x 9 9/16" (15.9 x 24.3 cm). H.257.II
Gift of Samuel A. Berger. (plate 39)

At the Hotel (The Dollar). 1923
Drypoint
11 11/16 x 7 13/16" (29.7 x 19.8 cm). H.260.B.a
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

Naila in Profile (Portrait of "Frau H. M."). 1923
Drypoint
9 9/16 x 8" (24.3 x 20.3 cm). H.276.B
Gift of J. B. Neumann. (plate 52)

Group Portrait, Eden Bar, trial proof. 1923
Woodcut
19 1/2 x 19 5/8" (49.5 x 49.8 cm). H.277.II.A
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (cover)

Kasbek. 1923
Drypoint
19 7/16 x 8 3/8" (49.4 x 21.3 cm). H.281.B.b
Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld

Tamerlan. 1923
Drypoint
15 1/2 x 7 7/8" (39.3 x 19.9 cm). H.284.B
Larry Aldrich Fund. (plate 38)

City View with "Eiserner Steg." 1923
Drypoint
8 1/2 x 10 3/4" (21.7 x 27.3 cm). H.287.B
A. Conger Goodyear Fund (by exchange). (plate 16)

Portrait of Fritz P./Self-Portrait with Beard. 1923
Drypoint
10 7/8 x 8 5/8" (27.6 x 21.9 cm). H.288.B
A. Conger Goodyear Fund (by exchange)

The Fall of Man from the portfolio *Day and Dream*.
1946
Lithograph
11 13/16 x 10 5/16" (30.0 x 26.2 cm). H.370.B.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 44)

Christ and Pilate from the portfolio *Day and Dream*.
1946
Lithograph
13 5/8 x 10 7/8" (34.6 x 27.7 cm). H.371.B.b
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. (plate 45)

BIOGRAPHICAL CHRONOLOGY

The following biographical information was selected for its relevance to Beckmann's printmaking career. For a complete biography see Schmidt, Doris, in Schulz-Hoffmann and Weiss, *Max Beckmann: Retrospective*. St. Louis and Munich: The St. Louis Art Museum and Prestel-Verlag, 1984.

1884

Born in Leipzig on February 12.

1900

Enrolls at the Grossherzogliche Kunstschule in Weimar.

1903

Makes first trip to Paris and is excited by the work of Cézanne.

1904

Settles in Berlin.

1906

Receives the prize of honor from the German Künstlerbund, which includes scholarship to Villa Romana in Florence. Exhibits at the Berlin Secession, is elected to the Board in 1910, and withdraws in 1913. Marries Minna Tube.

1907

Exhibits in museums in Weimar and Düsseldorf, and at Paul Cassirer's gallery in Berlin.

1908

Birth of his only child, Peter Beckmann.

1909

Completes first series of lithographs, illustrations for *The Return of Eurydice* by Johannes Guthmann, published by Cassirer.

1910

I. B. Neumann, who will become one of his most important supporters, opens gallery in Berlin.

1911

Meets Neumann, who publishes *Six Lithographs for the New Testament*. Beckmann begins working actively in lithography.

1912

Meets the Munich publisher Reinhard Piper.

1913

Retrospective at Cassirer's gallery. Hans Kaiser writes the first monograph on Beckmann, published by Cassirer. Works primarily in drypoint until 1919.

1914

Volunteers for the medical corps in the German army.

1915

Discharged from the army for health reasons. Settles in Frankfurt. Minna Beckmann-Tube moves to Elberfeld to pursue an opera career.

1916

Briefe im Kriege, collection of his war letters edited by Minna Beckmann-Tube, published by Bruno Cassirer.

1917

First one-man Beckmann exhibition at Neumann's gallery; includes 110 prints.

1918

Die Fürstin by Kasimir Edschmid, including six drypoints, published by Gustav Kiepenheuer, Weimar. Writes essay on art, "Creative Credo," which appears in the *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* in 1920.

1919

Faces, portfolio of nineteen drypoints, published by Marées Gesellschaft, R. Piper & Co. *Hell*, portfolio of ten lithographs, published by Neumann.

1921

Stadtnacht, book with seven lithographs illustrating poems by Lili von Braunbehrens, published by Piper. *Annual Fair*, portfolio of ten drypoints, published by Marées Gesellschaft.

1922

Trip to Berlin 1922, portfolio of ten lithographs, published by Neumann.

1923

I. B. Neumann moves to New York.

1924

Writes the comedy *Ebbi* and illustrates it with six drypoints; published by Johannespresse, Vienna. Piper publishes Beckmann monograph written by Curt Glaser, Julius Meier-Graefe, Wilhelm Fraenger, and Wilhelm Hausenstein.

1925

Divorces Minna Beckmann-Tube. Marries Mathilde von Kaulbach. Appointed professor at Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt. Participates in "Die Neue Sachlichkeit" ("New Objectivity") exhibition at the Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim.

1926

First one-man exhibition in the United States, at Neumann's New Art Circle Gallery, New York.

1928

Receives the Honorary Prize of the Reich for German Art. Retrospective at Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim.

1929-32

Spends most of each year in Paris.

1931

First one-man exhibition in Paris, at Galerie de la Renaissance. Included in exhibition "German Painting and Sculpture" at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The National Socialist and Fascist press attack Beckmann's painting.

1933

Discharged from his teaching position in Frankfurt. Beckmann room at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin closed because of increasing political pressure. Moves to Berlin.

1935

Meets Curt Valentin, the German art dealer who will open New York gallery and become Beckmann's primary dealer in America.

1937

Over 590 works by Beckmann confiscated from German museums, including paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints. Included in the Nazi-sponsored "Degenerate Art" exhibition in Munich.

Emigrates to Amsterdam. *Der Mensch ist kein Haustier* by Stephan Lackner, with seven lithographs, published by Editions Cosmopolites, Paris.

1938

Delivers lecture "On My Painting" at opening of "Exhibition of 20th Century German Art" at the New Burlington Galleries, London.

1940-47

Lives and works in Amsterdam.

1943

Apocalypse, portfolio of twenty-seven lithographs, published by Bauersche Giesserei, Frankfurt.

1946

Day and Dream, portfolio of fifteen lithographs, published by Curt Valentin, New York.

1947

In summer moves to the United States. Accepts teaching position at School of Fine Art, Washington University, St. Louis.

1948

Retrospective at the City Art Museum of St. Louis.

1949

Moves to New York and accepts teaching position at Brooklyn Museum Art School. Monograph by Benno Reifenberg and Wilhelm Hausenstein published by Piper.

1950

Awarded Honorary Doctorate at Washington University, St. Louis. Dies December 27.

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