



## Max Beckmann

*Susanne Bieber, Barbara Buenger, Charles Haxthausen, Jill Lloyd, Nina Peter, Ortrud Westheider, Anette Kruszynski, Robert Storr*

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Max Beckmann was among the greatest painters of the 20th century, yet no retrospective of his work has been mounted in the art capitals of New York, London, and Paris in over 30 years. Perhaps the lapse of attention has to do with the importance of abstraction in 20th-century art, and Beckmann's work is always figurative, simultaneously muscular and enigmatic and has enormous and unsettling power. Beckmann began his career as a naturalist and Symbolist in the period before World War I. After the war he developed a unique pictorial style that mixed expressionist color and gesture, mythological and mystical allegory, and the harsh new objectivity of his portrayal of modern life throughout the Nazi reign of terror. A prolific artist in painting, drawing, and printmaking--as well as a powerful sculptor--Beckmann created mysterious images and dense tableaux of unparalleled intensity and complexity during an odyssey that took him from his native Germany to Paris, Amsterdam, St. Louis, and New York. A new examination of Beckmann's role and reputation during the first half of the 20th century has been eagerly awaited. Making use of new scholarship and previously unavailable research materials, this book sheds light on Beckmann's work and his influence on and interactions with the artists of his day. Essays include discussions of Beckmann's Frankfurt cityscapes, his pictures from Italy, his triptychs, his group portraits, and his relationship with cultural politics in the 1920s and 1930s; texts and interviews by artists Leon Golub and Ellsworth Kelly; curator Robert Storr on "The Beckmann Effect"; and artist William Kentridge on Beckmann's Death. This sumptuous volume is published on the occasion of the retrospective exhibition mounted jointly by the Tate Modern, Centre Georges Pompidou, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. It is the first comprehensive exhibition of Beckmann's work to be seen in the United States since 1984, and the first in New York since 1964.

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