

Adolph Menzel, “Three Fallen Soldiers in a Barn” and “Two Fallen Soldiers” (1866)

Abstract

Adolph Menzel traveled to Bohemia two weeks after the Battle of Königgrätz to sketch scenes he observed in person. Because of his very short stature, Menzel had not been able to enlist, but he wanted to see the reality of the war for himself, as he wrote to a friend. On July 19, he arrived in Königshof, near Königgrätz (Chlum) and visited the battlefield, a field hospital, and a barn that served as a makeshift mortuary. These two sketches show dead soldiers in that barn, their bodies emaciated and stripped down to their undershirts. Menzel’s note at bottom right reads: “mortuary at Königshof, 21 July 1866.” During this visit, Menzel made three watercolor drawings whose existence remained unknown during the artist’s lifetime.

Source





Source: Image 1: Adolph Menzel, “Drei gefallene Soldaten in einer Scheune” [“Three Fallen Soldiers in a Barn”]. Pencil and watercolor (1866). Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (SZ Menzel N 1741). Photo: Volker-H. Schneider. bpk-Bildagentur, Image-No. 00027094. Image 2: Adolph Menzel, “Zwei gefallene Soldaten,” “Two Fallen Soldiers.” Pencil and watercolor (1866). Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (SZ Menzel N 1740). Photo: Jörg P. Anders. bpk Bildagentur, Image-No. 00048021.

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