

Ernst Barlach, *Der Schwebende* (1927)

Abstract

Der Schwebende (The Floating One), also known as *Schwebender Engel* (Floating Angel) and the *Güstrower Ehrenmal* (the Güstrow Memorial), was a bronze sculpture created in 1927 by Ernst Barlach for the Cathedral in Güstrow, a town south of Rostock where he lived and had a studio. The sculpture memorialized the fallen in World War I, and Barlach was himself a war veteran. His angel grieved the deaths that the war caused, rather than celebrating the heroism of battle, and Barlach supposedly modeled the angel's face on that of his friend and fellow artist Käthe Kollwitz, who herself grieved the loss of one of her sons in the war.

The Nazis declared Barlach's work to be an example of "degenerate art," because of its explicitly antiheroic and implicitly antiwar message, and officials removed *The Floating One* from the Güstrow Cathedral in 1937. Four years later, in 1941, the sculpture was melted down in a drive to repurpose metal objects for the war effort. A copy of the original sculpture now hangs in the cathedral.

Source



Source: Ernst Barlach, *Der Schwebende* (copy, 1952). Photo: Matthias Bethke. Wikimedia commons

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