

Otto Dix, *Flanders* (1934-36)

Abstract

The artist Otto Dix (1891-1969) was 23 years old when he volunteered for military service in 1914. He served first in the field artillery and later in a machine-gun unit. In the fall of 1915, he saw combat in Champagne. In 1916, he fought at the Battle of the Somme. One year later, he was sent to the Eastern Front. Among artists, Dix was virtually unmatched in the intensity of his commitment to depicting the horrors of war – or, subsequently, the numerous cruelties of modern society. Maimed veterans, prostitutes, and victims of sexual abuse, poverty, and crime are among his pictorial subjects. Dix worked on this large-format (78 x 98") painting from 1934 to 1936. By that point, the National Socialists had already dismissed him from his professorial position at the Dresden Art Academy, and he was living in Randegg bei Singen. The painting shows a field in Flanders where three devastating battles were fought. In contrast to war-time propaganda images, Dix's canvas introduces war in the form of a battlefield where corpses and mud predominate, the one rotting and merging into the other. With this nightmarish tableau, Dix commemorated the victims of one World War in the hopes of preventing another.

Source



Source: Otto Dix, *Flanders*, oil and tempera on canvas, 1934-36. Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

SMB/Nationalgalerie/Jörg P. Anders

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