

Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture: On the Threshold of German Modernism

Marsha Morton



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Max Klinger and Wilhelmine Culture: On the Threshold of German Modernism Marsha Morton The Wilhelmine Empire's opening decades (1870s - 1880s) were crucial transitional years in the development of German modernism, both politically and culturally. Here Marsha Morton argues that no artist represented the shift from tradition to unsettling innovation more compellingly than Max Klinger. The author examines Klinger's early prints and drawings within the context of intellectual and material transformations in Wilhelmine society through an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses Darwinism, ethnography, dreams and hypnosis, the literary Romantic grotesque, criminology, and the urban experience. His work, in advance of Expressionism, revealed the psychological and biological underpinnings of modern rational man whose drives and passions undermined bourgeois constructions of material progress, social stability, and class status at a time when Germans were engaged in defining themselves following unification. This book is the first full-length study of Klinger in English and the first to consistently address his art using methodologies adopted from cultural history. With an emphasis on the popular illustrated media, Morton draws upon information from reviews and early books on the artist, writings by Klinger and his colleagues, and unpublished archival sources. The book is intended for an academic readership interested in European art history, social science, literature, and cultural studies.

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