
Accompanying a museum exhibition by the same name, held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Sept. 12- Dec. 5, 2010) and the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and Fondation Corboud, Cologne (April 30- Aug. 1, 2010), this publication provides the first in-depth English-language study of the landscape paintings of Max Liebermann (1847-1935), Lovis Corinth (1858-1925), and Max Slevogt (1868-1932), Germany’s three greatest “Impressionist” painters, who were dubbed the “triumvirate of German Impressionism” by the Berlin publisher, dealer, and gallery owner Paul Cassirer (1871-1926).

Considered a French style because it was believed to have originated in France during the 1870s and 1880s, Impressionism initially was greeted with hostility in Germany, where traditionalists influenced by nationalistic and chauvinistic sentiments opposed all foreign influences, particularly those that were French, since Germany had been at war with France during the Franco-Prussian War. Lieberman, Corinth, and Slevogt, none of whom began their careers as aspiring landscape artists and all of whom were academically trained (unlike many of their French counterparts) appeased hostile and disdainful audiences, while they inspired a flowering of the style in Germany during the late 1890s and early twentieth century. This book features ninety-two of their Impressionist masterpieces as well as sets forth current scholarship on their art works and German Impressionism.

The exhibition’s organizers Aurisch (Associate Curator, European Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) and Czymmek (Senior Curator, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne) as well as other contributors examine the three artists’ approaches to landscape painting, and the relationship of German Impressionism to French Impressionism, the Barbizon School, and the Dutch landscape traditions. They also explore the development of German landscape painting in the nineteenth century and the history of German Impressionism. Separate essays on each artist and his landscape works introduce the paintings featured in the art exhibition and the catalog section of this book. Attempting in part to answer the question what makes the landscapes of Lieberman, Corinth, and Slevogt part of the aesthetic traditions of Impressionism and German Impressionism, the expert essayists largely succeed.

Although endnotes and a scholarly bibliography are present, a much needed list of works shown in the exhibition and a detailed chronology is not provided. This well researched and nicely presented publication, including more than 150 color reproductions of many works that have never been seen before by American museum visitors, will be of interest to general readers, students, scholars, museum professionals, and others. It is highly recommended for large public, academic, and special library collections.

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