

BERLINO NEGLI ANNI VENTI

Rainer Metzger



TASCHEN

Taschen
BERLINO NEGLI ANNI '20 (I) #BASICART

Rainer Metzger

BA

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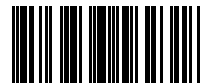
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Zeitgeist

I ruggenti anni Venti a Berlino

Era il decennio delle **audaci tele espressioniste**, della creatività in editoria, del Bauhaus e l'opera d'arte totale, dei pionieri della psicologia, dei cosiddetti **"drag balls"**, del cabaret, di *Metropolis*, e dell'astro nascente del cinema e del teatro **Marlene Dietrich**. Tra gli spasmi delle due guerre mondiali, la Berlino degli anni Venti visse una **primavera culturale** dove la parola d'ordine era **carpe diem**, un tripudio di arte, pensiero e creatività all'avanguardia.

Questo libro consentirà al lettore di immergersi nello **spirito libero dell'era di Weimar**. Passando in rassegna i principali risultati raggiunti in pittura, scultura, architettura, grafica, fotografia e cinema, scopriremo le **innovazioni, le idee e i sogni preziosi** che furono al centro di questa irripetibile finestra culturale. Conosceremo i jazz bar e le sale da ballo; i **kinos affollati** e la **moda delle flapper**; i progressi della tecnologia e dei trasporti; le torri della radio e tram e treni sferraglianti; gli edifici alti fino al cielo; i **capolavori del cinema**; e **una nuova tipologia di donna che fuma sigarette, porta i capelli corti e si guadagna da vivere da sé**.

Tra i lavori inclusi in questo vivace ritratto culturale figurano *I giornalisti* di Hannah Höch; *Hands on the Typewriter* di Lotte Jacobi; *Ritratto di Sylvia von Harden* di Otto Dix; il progetto per Alexanderplatz di Peter Behrens; e *L'angelo azzurro* di Josef von Sternberg, con Marlene Dietrich a interpretare l'artista di cabaret Lola Lola.

Lungo il percorso, avremo modo di esplorare le aspirazioni utopistiche e le più nefaste realtà economiche e politiche che nutrono **i capolavori escapisti, idealisti o reazionari dell'epoca**. Dietro le luci accecanti e i lustrini degli abiti da sera intravediamo tuttavia la strisciante inflazione, le tribolazioni degli operai e il fragilissimo consenso politico che avrebbero decretato la fine brutale di questa epoca dorata con l'ascesa del Nazionalsocialismo.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

L'autore:

Rainer Metzger ha studiato storia dell'arte, storia e germanistica a Monaco e Augusta. Ha conseguito il dottorato nel 1994 e ha lavorato come pubblicitista occupandosi di belle arti per il quotidiano viennese *Der Standard*. Ha scritto numerosi libri di arte, inclusi volumi su [Van Gogh](#) e [Chagall](#).

#BasicArt #logosedizioni

Jeanne Mammen
Revue Girls, 1928/29



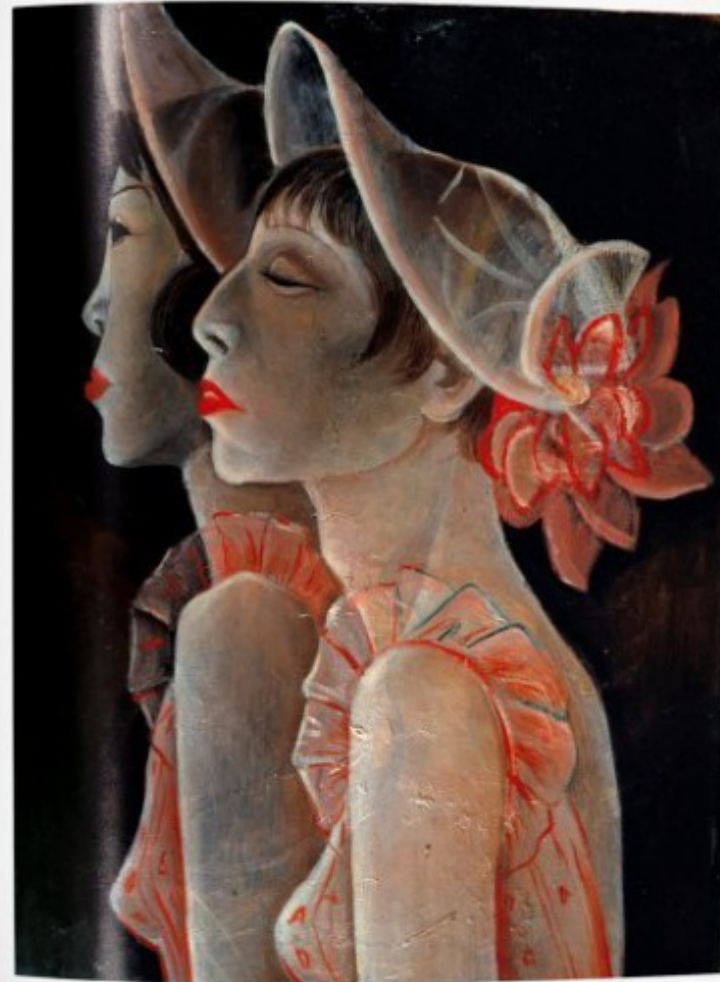
b. 1900 in Berlin
d. 1966 in Berlin

Although Jeanne Mammen is considered a solitary artistic figure, her works were nevertheless an almost daily presence in Berlin in the late 1920s. Her drawings and watercolours appeared regularly in the magazines and satirical journals of the liberal intelligentsia, such as *Simplicissimus*, *Jugend*, *Lustige Blätter*, *Ull und Ulla*. Mammen delivered nothing less than a portrait of her times. In the eyes of Kurt Tscholsky, her works transcended by far the "undisciplined scrawling" of so many of her colleagues. In 1929 the prominent publicist made "a little declaration of love" to her in the highly regarded liberal-left weekly journal *Die Weltbühne*. "Your figures," he wrote, "are clear cut with a clean feel, they are gracious yet austere, and they literally jump at you out of the paper."

It was Mammen's *wifery* studies that earned her this compliment. Born in Berlin into a prosperous, cosmopolitan family, Jeanne Mammen grew up in Paris, where she studied painting, and spent further years in Brussels and Rome prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Returning to her native city, she painted and drew the raw reality of the 1920s-Golden Twenties - but without infusing her art with the politically propagandist tone of a George Grosz or an Otto Dix. Social criticism emerges in her work in her portrayal of human interaction, which she reproduces in a sober and narrative fashion. Scenes from the world of entertainment on offer in the big city are captured with the same acuity as petty-bourgeois couples seeking to escape their daily tribulations for a few hours in a bar or on park benches in Berlin's Tiergarten at night. Mammen portrays high society between shadow and ostentation as well as the sensual, same-sex attraction of women and scenes from the flourishing subculture of the day. The state of society as a whole can be read above all in her representations of faces: almost never cheerful, they are dominated by a masklike expression of boredom, slipping into hopelessness and resignation.

The portrait of two young women, titled *Revue Girls*, also reflects an existential forlornness and introspection. In a position in which they seem to echo each other, the second slightly offset behind the first, the two women each possess a striking, individual profile. Against the darkness of a stage context, however, with their white make-up and glowing red lips and their eyebrows plucked to thin lines, identically dressed with saucy chic in tulle and a fashionable hat, they lose their individuality. Equally unapproachable in their pose, the transparent poise of their bodies is bound together by a salmon-pink hue that overrules all and indicates their illumination by theatre spotlights. It is true that Mammen does not show us a great number of dancers, but her double portrait captures the essence of contemporary revue: the sensual body was required to function on stage in a modern manner, like a machine, following precise, synchronised movements. In the strictly rhythmical choreography of these popular performances, femininity became a piece of apparatus. The drill this required - "gracious yet austere," as Jeanne Mammen shows it here - left behind a pallid emptiness. BB

Revue Girls, 1928/29
Oil on cardboard, 44 x 47 cm
125/16 x 187/16 in.
Berlin, *Reiztische Galerie*,
Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst,
Fotografie und Architektur



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