

Otto Dix

Otto Dix was a German painter and graphic artist, best known for his portrait paintings and depictions of war.

Born in 1891 in Jena to a working-class family, he began an apprenticeship as a decorative painter in 1905. Subsequently, a scholarship enabled him to attend the School of Arts and Crafts in Dresden from 1910. During his studies, Dix engaged with the history of painting. Simultaneously, he created his first late Impressionist and Expressionist works. Moreover, even before World War I, he embraced the avant-garde and experimented with Cubist and Futurist forms.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the artist voluntarily enlisted for military service. The cruel impressions and experiences that Dix carried throughout the war were reflected in his works from then on.

After the war ended, Dix returned to Dresden and began studying at the Academy of Fine Arts. He also became a founding member of the Dresden "Sezession Gruppe 1919" and participated in group exhibitions throughout Germany. In the 1920s, he took part in the First International Dada Fair, moved to Düsseldorf, and married Martha Koch. In 1925, he relocated to Berlin, where he worked and reached the pinnacle of his avant-garde painting. In 1927, he obtained a professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, which abruptly ended in 1933 with the rise of the National Socialism in Germany.

Otto Dix was one of the first art professors to be dismissed due to the Nazi regime's policy of coordination. His art was considered "degenerate" and "un-German" by the new rulers, leading to the public exposure of some of his works in the propaganda exhibition "Degenerate Art" in Munich. To protect himself from further defamation campaigns, he moved to Schloss Randegg near Singen am Hohentwiel and three years later to Hemmenhofen near Lake Constance.

Towards the end of World War II, he was drafted into the Wehrmacht as part of the "Volkssturm" and became a prisoner of war in France.

However, upon learning of his identity, he was allowed to work as an artist in the internment camp.

During the post-war period, Dix shifted away from the Old Master glazing technique and returned to modern alla prima painting. The expressionist elements from the early stages of his career regained prominence in his works. Nevertheless, the artist increasingly became an outsider and did not find access to the prevailing styles that emerged in the two German post-war states. He firmly rejected a second opportunity for an academic teaching career when, in 1949, the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart, upon Willi Baumeister's suggestion, approached him for a vacancy.

The Numerous honors he was awarded with during his lifetime, including the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, serve as testament to his far-reaching influence and artistic brilliance, undeniably making him one of the greatest German artists of the 20th century. Otto Dix passed away on July 25, 1969, in Singen am Hohentwiel after a stroke.