Field of Craters near Dontrien, Illuminated by Rocket Flares (Trichterfeld bei Dontrien, von Leuchtkugeln erhellt)

Primary Maker
Otto Dix

Date
1924

Medium
Aquatint on laid B.S.B. Commercial Bütten paper

Dimensions
Plate: 7-1/2 x 10 in. (19.1 x 25.4 cm) Sheet: 14-1/8 x 18-7/8 in. (36 x 47.9 cm)

Credit Line
Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection

Object number
1984.48

Type
Prints

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Otto Dix made a strong impact on German society in both artistic and political circles with his print portfolio of 50 intaglio prints titled <i>The War (Der Krieg)</i>, which is recognized as his central achievement in printmaking. Begun in 1923, five years after the end of World War I, and published the following year, this series is the summation of Dix’s military experiences in the war, and with it he abandoned his prewar Expressionism. In the early 1920s, Dix developed a hyperrealist, verist style that established him as a leading practitioner of German Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity). Demonstrating full command of this style in the <i>War</i> series, Dix employed etching, drypoint, and aquatint techniques (used alone or in combination on each metal plate) to depict the total nature of war, from the battlefields to the city brothels. His images clinically dissect war’s physical devastation and human desecration and rely on distortion and caricature—as well as the corrosive acidic processes used in intaglio printmaking—to evoke the brutal experiences of both the soldiers at the front and those left at home in devastated cities. There are no heroic action scenes, only pictures of everyday survival by combatants and civilians. A realist above all else, Dix himself considered <i>The
War an objective depiction of his wartime experiences in the German army. Yet there are thematic links to famous war print cycles of the past, and one of Dix’s designs was even inspired by an etching in Francisco de Goya’s (1746-1828) celebrated early 19th-century print cycle Disasters of War.  

<b>Resources:</b>  