

HUMOR AND QUIET RESISTANCE: THE GRAPHIC WORK OF WILHELM HÖPFNER

by

Kelsey McCarey Soya

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2018

ABSTRACT

HUMOR AND QUIET RESISTANCE: THE GRAPHIC WORK OF WILHELM HÖPFNER

by

Kelsey McCarey Soya

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018
Under the Supervision of Professor Sarah Schaefer

Humor and Quiet Resistance: The Graphic Work of Wilhelm Höpfner is an exhibition that was on display at the Emile Mathis II Art Gallery at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee November 15–December 20, 2018. The works consist of fine art prints produced Wilhelm Höpfner between 1921 and 1939 in Berlin and the smaller city of Magdeburg. The exhibition and this accompanying catalogue seek to introduce the reader to his work and to provide the cultural context for its interpretation. When discussing the artistic movements of Europe in the early twentieth century, there is a tendency to discuss them as discrete, contained phenomena, though the truth is anything but. Movements such as Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, New Objectivity, and Bauhaus Modernism overlap and inform one another, and this interplay is particularly evident in Höpfner's work as he negotiates these varying influences. Höpfner also uses his artwork as a means to explore and comment on the social and political climate in which he lived. While visually arresting, his work also serves as an important window on the convergence of artistic trends and Germany's sociopolitical climate during the Weimar Era and early years of the Third Reich.

© Copyright by Kelsey McCarey Soya, 2018
All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	v
Acknowledgments.....	viii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Lift of Wilhelm Höpfner.....	4
3. Early Explorations	13
4. Negotiating Modernism	18
5. On Stage and On Screen	20
6. Surreal Objectivity	27
7. Hidden in Plain Sight: The Animal Parables	33
8. Conclusions.....	37
Figures.....	39
Bibliography	63
Appendix: Exhibition Checklist.....	66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Humoreske</i> [<i>Humoresque</i>], 1921. Drypoint. 6 7/8 x 5 9/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 1)	39
Figure 2: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Maske und Sterne über den Gitterfenster</i> [<i>Mask and Star Above the Latticed Window</i>], 1922. Drypoint. 8 3/4 x 6 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 3)..	40
Figure 3: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Kangurpferd und Napoleonische Soldat</i> [<i>Kangaroo-Horse and Napoleonic Solider</i>], 1922. Drypoint. 12 3/4 x 9 13/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 4)	41
Figure 4: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Krocodil und Schiff</i> [<i>Crocodile and Ship</i>], 1924. Drypoint. 8 x 5/16 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 6).....	42
Figure 5: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Das belcherne Gast</i> [<i>The Tinny Guest</i>], 1924, Drypoint. 7 1/2 x 6 1/4 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 8).....	43
Figure 6: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Schneekristalle II</i> [<i>Snow Crystals II</i>], 1924. Drypoint. 4 9/16 x 5 15/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 7)	44
Figure 7: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Pulcinell und Pulcinella</i> [<i>Pulcinell and Pulcinella</i>], 1921. Drypoint. 5 x 5 7/8 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 2).....	45
Figure 8: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Clown und zwei Tauben mit Kreuz</i> [<i>Clown and Two Doves with Cross</i>], 1923. Drypoint. 6 15/16 x 10 1/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 9).....	46
Figure 9: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Das Kommt Davon</i> [<i>That's What Happens</i>], 1925, drypoint. 7 11/16 x 6 5/16 in. UW-Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman.	47
Figure 10: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Harold Lloyd I (Das Kino)</i> [<i>Harold Lloyd I (The Cinema)</i>], 1925. Drypoint. 8 x 6 5/16 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 11)	48

Figure 11: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Chaplin und die Leichenkutsche</i> [<i>Chaplin and the Herse Wagon</i>], 1929. Drypoint. 13 1/16 x 10 5/8 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 12)	49
Figure 12: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Dreigroschenoper 7</i> [<i>Threepenny Opera 7</i>], 1929. Drypoint. 13 x 10 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 13).....	50
Figure 13: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Die Clowns</i> [<i>The Clowns</i>], 1927. Drypoint and aquatint. 14 5/8 x 19 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 14)	51
Figure 14: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Die Alten Götter</i> [<i>The Old Gods</i>], 1927. Drypoint. 9 13/16 x 12 7/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 15)	52
Figure 15: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Rivalen</i> [<i>Rivals</i>], 1927. Drypoint. 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 16)	53
Figure 16: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Because I Love You</i> , 1927. Drypoint and aquatint. 11 3/4 x 15 9/16 inches UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 17)	54
Figure 17: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Der Beobachter</i> [<i>The Observer</i>], 1927. Drypoint. 11 13/16 x 15 11/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 18)	55
Figure 18: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Gier</i> [<i>Greed</i>], 1932. Drypoint. 11 9/16 x 14 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 19)	56
Figure 19: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Begrüßung</i> [<i>Greetings</i>], 1932. Drypoint. 12 1/16 x 15 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 20)	57
Figure 20: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Böse Beispiele verderben die Guten Sitten</i> [<i>Evil Examples Destroy Good Manners</i>], 1931. Drypoint and aquatint. 13 9/16 x 16 1/2 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 21).....	58
Figure 21: Wilhelm Höpfner, <i>Gelichter</i> [<i>Riff-raff</i>], 1934. Drypoint. 9 15/16 x 13 1/2 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 22)	59

Figure 22: Wilhelm Höpfner *Nachtparade* [*Night Parade*], 1939. Drypoint. 10 1/8 6 3/8 inches.
 UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 23) 60

Figure 23: Wilhelm Höpfner *Nachtparade* [*Night Parade*], 1939. Drypoint. 10 1/8 6 3/8 inches.
 UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 24) 61

Figure 24: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Nachtwächter* [*Night Watchmen*], 1938. Drypoint. 6 11/16 x 9 7/8
 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 25) 62

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition would not have been possible without the help of many others. I would like to thank my first and second readers, Professor Sarah Schaefer and Professor Katherine Wells, for their unending patience and understanding and Professor Tanya Tiffany for her constant encouragement. At the risk of forgetting someone important, I want to thank the rest of the faculty of the Department of Art History for lending their support and knowledge to me during this process and during my education that led up to it. I could not have done it without any of you. Thank you for allowing me to reproduce the artworks within the catalogue as well.

I would like to thank Michael Flanagan, the director at the Crossman Gallery at the UW-Whitewater for agreeing to lend pieces to the exhibition, and for his flexibility in doing so. He has also graciously agreed to allow me to publish images of the borrowed works within the catalogue.

Thanks to my parents, Audrey and Thomas McCarey, and to my husband, Greg Soya, for their support in the process, especially as I neared the finish line.

Finally, I want to extend a special thanks Jörg-Heiko Bruns for sharing his personal archive and his first-hand knowledge of Wilhelm Höpfner and his works. Without his valuable input and information, this exhibition would be but a shadow of what it is. Tausend Dank, Herr Bruns.

“The artist is a sensitive registrar of contemporary events, and art has a complex architecture [*Bau*]; its arch stretches from the monumental wall murals to panel painting, to political graphics, the picture book, the film poster; and though its role in education is gravely important, the liberation it brings through laughter is equally so.”¹

Wilhelm Höpfner (1899-1968) wrote these words for the catalogue of his first large retrospective show in 1959, which represented nearly forty years of art production. A German artist who began his work in the turbulent years following the First World War, his works are personal and full of observations of and reflections on the culture in which he lived. They serve as a catalogue for his thoughts, his observations, and as records of current events, though these things are often hidden at first glance. An ironic sense of humor and a taste for subtle satire can be found throughout his oeuvre. Höpfner worked in a large number of areas, including stage set design, massive murals, watercolor, drypoint etching, and aquatint, stretching himself to as many corners of the artistic architecture as possible. Those he could not reach, he admired.

The graphic work of Wilhelm Höpfner does not settle neatly into any of the well-known art movements of the interwar years in Europe,² though that does not mean he was not engaged with them. His education at the Royal Academy of Art in Berlin from 1918 to 1921 would have exposed him to German Impressionism and Expressionism, both of which were fairly mainstream by this point in time. However, Höpfner tended away from the individualized pathos of the Expressionist movement. The legacy of Impressionism can be seen in his numerous sketchbooks, in which he catalogued his extensive travels through drawing, and while these studies of idyllic landscapes remained part of his process, they were rarely the sole basis of a

¹ Wilhelm Höpfner, “Über Meine Arbeit” in *Wilhelm Höpfner: Aquarelle, Druckgrafik*, ed. Sigrid Hinz (Magdeburg, Germany: Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg and Verband bildender Künstler Deutschlands, Bezirk Magdeburg, 1959), 6. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

² Helga Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das fruehe graphische Werk, 1921-1940* (Munich: Galleria del Levante, 1980), 12.

finished work. Expressionism did leave its mark stylistically, which is especially evident when comparing his art with that of sculptor and graphic artist Käthe Kollwitz, with whom he was acquainted.

Höpfner leaned more toward the social commentary of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), a movement that arose in the 1920s and sought to portray the harsh realities of modern life, though without the graphic violence that some artists of the movement depicted. Instead, his images tend to have a dreamlike quality associated with Surrealism, which emerged around André Breton in the 1920s.³ Höpfner's work, however, has an outward focus, providing satirical commentary on the world around him, rather than reflecting the inner, hidden unconscious world that so fascinated Breton and his circle in Paris. In another curious twist, Breton published his *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924, an essay that is often seen as the inaugural event of the influential movement, but Höpfner's early dream-like scenes predate the manifesto by two or three years.

This is not entirely surprising; given the time he spent in Berlin, Höpfner is likely to have been familiar with the Dada movement. The Dada movement was an international one, first emerging in Zürich during the First World War. The artists involved created absurd, nonsensical works that reflected what they felt was the futile madness of the war. When the movement came to Berlin, it took on a more deliberately political bent, opposing the militaristic political culture of Germany that many felt had led to the war in the first place. Several Dada practitioners went on to found the Surrealist movement.

The Surrealists pulled a great deal of inspiration from the work of Sigmund Freud, whose

³ Ibid., 14.

highly influential book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, was published in 1900. Freudian theories of the hidden, unconscious mind fascinated the Surrealists, whose aim, in the beginning, was to use art and writing to access it. By the 1920s, Freud's ideas had gained a strong foothold in Europe. While there is no evidence to suggest Höpfner was in conversation with the Parisian Surrealists, both they and Höpfner were working in similar cultural environments with respect to ideas about dreams and the unconscious. Before World War I, avant-garde art movements in Europe had been very international, but the war cut German artists off from many of their former colleagues. This, combined with the devastating loss Germany suffered by the end of the war, created a very different environment; in Berlin, Höpfner was more isolated from other artists and movements than if he had been in Paris. The events that followed the end of World War I would prove to be highly formative on his personal philosophy, and this is reflected in his work of this period.

This exhibition focuses on the graphic work Höpfner produced between World War I and World War II. While it is true that Höpfner did not seem to subscribe to any one of them many “-isms” of the early twentieth century, that does not mean he was unaware of them or purposely spurned them. On the contrary, his work demonstrates an acute awareness of varied movements in both the art world and in popular German culture. He does not fit into any one movement because he was in conversation with so many of them. Instead, he uses subtle humor to poke fun at various aspects of pop culture, so-called “high” culture, and Germany’s political climate. His syntheses of styles and subject matter act as conversion points for many of Europe’s most prominent early twentieth-century art movements. His art gives us a window to that place and time and helps to underline the simultaneity of all the “-isms” that sprung up in the aftermath of the First World War. As his work matured and fascism took hold across Europe, though most

notably in Germany, this window becomes a view into one man's struggle with speaking out and keeping his head down. His subtle ironic humor becomes a form of quiet resistance in a troubled era.

This exhibition is divided into five loosely chronological groups, organized thematically and covering the period from the early 1920s to the late 30s. The prints are from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Art Collection and that of the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, and both institutions received their Höpfner works from the collection of Marvin and Janet Fishman, who were Milwaukee-area collectors of German Expressionist prints.

THE LIFE OF WILHELM HÖPFNER

Wilhelm Höpfner was born on May 17, 1899 in the city of Magdeburg, about ninety-five miles west of Berlin. Shortly thereafter, his family moved to Nuremberg, where he spent the first eight years of his life. His father, Ernst Höpfner, was a musician for the Nuremberg city theater.⁴ On one end of his street was the Albrecht Dürer House, the famous German Renaissance artist's sixteenth-century home and workshop. In the late nineteenth century, the house was opened as a museum dedicated to Dürer's life and work. Dürer is most well-known for being the first artist to capitalize on the potential of prints to have his work reach wider audiences. The son of a metalsmith, both Dürer's woodblock prints and engravings display a virtuosic level of detail. Historically, Germans have looked back on Dürer as an example of German artistic excellence. On the other end of Höpfner's street was the Staedtler pencil factory, an art supply manufacturer,

⁴ Ibid., 7.

and Höpfner later speculated that these two landmarks must have had an influence on him as a child.⁵

The artist's father, Ernst Höpfner, was undoubtedly another strong influence; the young Wilhelm spent many of his early years sitting in the orchestra pit with his father during rehearsals for operas, ballets, and dramas, sometimes even during performances. From this extreme angle, he would have only been able to see the upper half of the action on stage at best, which some scholars have suggested accounts for the flattened perspective found in some of his work.⁶ As a young man, Ernst Höpfner traveled through Germany and abroad, playing with small bands, orchestras, and even the circus. It is perhaps his father's stories and his experiences in the orchestra pit that Wilhelm Höpfner cultivated his love of stagecraft in all its forms. Even in these early years, he was drawing frequently,⁷ and it is easy to imagine him doing so in the pit while the orchestra rehearsed.

The family ultimately moved back to Magdeburg, where Höpfner began his formal artistic studies at the Kunstgewerbeschule, or Arts and Crafts School, in 1918. With the encouragement of his instructor, Richard Winkel, he transferred to the Royal Academy of Art in Berlin in October of that year.⁸ The year 1918 was pivotal in Germany, and perhaps nowhere more so than in Berlin. In November of that year, the famed November Revolution took place, which ended in the forced resignation of the Prussian monarchy and the establishment of the first German democracy, the Weimar Republic. The transition was far from smooth as several political parties vied for dominance, and Berlin was at the epicenter of much of the chaos. City-

⁵ Schierz, "Wilhelm Höpfner, Leben und Werk," n.p.

⁶ Ibid., n.p.

⁷ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 7.

⁸ Sigrid Hinz, "Wilhelm Höpfner," in *Wilhelm Höpfner: Aquarelle, Druckgrafik*, ed. Sigrid Hinz (Magdeburg, Germany: Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg and Verband bildender Künstler Deutschlands, Bezirk Magdeburg, 1959), 4.

wide strikes and riots often ended in violence, including the deaths of communist party leaders while they were in police custody.⁹

The founding of the Weimar Republic also saw the formation of several revolutionarily-minded artist groups in Berlin. The most prominent were the Novembergruppe (November Group, named for the November Revolution) and the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Workers' Council for Art). While these groups differed in the extremity of their leftist ideologies, they all held in common the belief that artists working together could affect social change. They demanded involvement in government projects and called for an overhaul of the art education system.¹⁰ Prints made up a large portion of their artistic work for their potential to reach a large audience. Given that Höpfner was in Berlin during these pivotal years, he would have been at least aware of them, although we do not know whether he counted himself among their numbers.

Upon his return to Magdeburg in 1921, Höpfner applied to join the artist collective with similar goals to the Arbeitsrat für Kunst called Die Kugel.¹¹ The collective included not only visual artists, but novelists, poets, and musicians as well. It was short-lived, lasting only into 1922, but during its short tenure, it published newsletters, organized exhibitions, and brought artists in from other cities for nights of music, poetry, and discussion. One member, Kurt Pinthus, a writer and critic, had spent his military service in Magdeburg, and connected the city to some of the more prominent avant-garde voices of the day, such as Max Herrmann-Neisse, Kurt Schwitters, Else Lasker-Schuler, and Adolf Behne.¹² Behne brought Bruno Taut to

⁹ Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918–2008: The Divided Nation, Third Ed.* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 25.

¹⁰ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 7.

¹¹ “Die Kugel” translates both as “the bullet” and “the ball,” and the word is used for both in German. It has a revolutionary connotation, but also a playful one.

¹² Herrmann-Neisse was an important expressionist poet, Kurt Schwitters a prominent German Dadaist who published the magazine *Merz*, and Elise Lasker-Schuler a poet and the first wife of Herwarth Walden, publisher of Expressionist magazine *Der Sturm*. Behne was an influential art critic.

Magdeburg, and Taut became the city's architectural director. It was during his tenure that Höpfner completed large murals for public buildings for the city.¹³ Two other founding members of Die Kugel, Bruno Beye and Katharina Heise, were involved with *Die Aktion*, a far-leftist fine arts magazine published in Berlin.

The 1922 spring exhibition by Die Kugel was one of Höpfner's earliest art exhibitions, and it earned him critical acclaim. In one local newspaper, *Volkstimme* (literally, "the people's voice"), art critic Ernst von Niebelschutz praised the young artist's "tiny, delicately drawn lines and finely colored pages," likening his work to that of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Hieronymus Bosch.¹⁴ Retreating to the sixteenth century for examples of northern European excellence was not an uncommon tactic for print artists in Germany during this period, and many went back even farther, looking to Dürer and the legacy of woodblock printing to evoke a particularly German strand of graphic excellence.

Höpfner's decision to use intaglio printing with metal plates is interesting, given the resurgence in popularity for woodcuts. His early plates, including those that might have been included in this 1922 exhibition, were almost entirely done in drypoint etching, using a metal stylus to scratch directly into the plate, resulting in delicate lines with a hazy edge when printed. They differed from acid-etched plates in this way and could only produce a limited number of quality prints because the lines are not incised as deeply as they would be with acid etching. Höpfner would often go in afterward with watercolor and paint the prints by hand, which is likely what the art critic is referring to in his review. Niebelschutz goes on to praise the haunting quality of Höpfner's work, likening the experience of viewing his artwork to peering through a

¹³ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 9.

¹⁴ Ernst von Niebelschutz, "Die Kugelausstellung," *Volkstimme* (Magdeburg, Germany), 1922.

“magical veil of the most genuine poetry.” Niebelschutz’s final praise and the closing of his exhibition review, states, “E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Poe, and Goethe are still waiting for their illustrator. Here he is.”¹⁵

Niebelschutz may have provided the connection that landed Höpfner a freelance job at the *Volkstimme* newspaper as a political cartoonist from 1922 to 1925. The *Volkstimme* was Magdeburg’s official newspaper for the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Democratic Socialist Party of Germany) or SPD, which was the Weimar Republic’s dominant political party. The cartoons he produced were often satirical social critiques. During his time there, he also worked on a project for an election campaign, turning a furniture truck into a “mobile agitation stage.” Information about this project is sparse, and on his curriculum vitae, Höpfner wrote that the SPD had entrusted him with its propaganda in Magdeburg. Whatever the details were, it serves as evidence that Höpfner was politically engaged. Between the newspaper and whatever work he was able to secure as an art teacher, Höpfner was able to make a career for himself as an artist in Magdeburg.

Politics were not everything for the young artist, however. He kept in touch with friends and colleagues around the country and kept track of the latest developments in Germany's art world. In 1924, Höpfner became acquainted with the Bauhaus. Regrettably, he was not able to attend the 1923 Bauhaus week in Weimar, but likely heard about it from one of his former classmates from the arts and crafts school in Magdeburg, Richard Oelze, who went to study painting at the Bauhaus just as Höpfner went to the Academy in Berlin.¹⁶ However it was that he

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hans-Joachim Krenzke. "Im Banne des Bauhauses: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Hopfners (II)," *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (Magdeburg, Germany), June 8, 1989. Krenzke notes in his article that this is largely speculative because Höpfner and Oelze suffered from a “sluggishness of writing.”

came to the Bauhaus's ideology, writing, and work, he was fascinated. For a period in 1924, his prints took on a new character, as Höpfner studied form, movement, and geometry. With titles such as *Mechanical Ballet III*, and the resemblance of these works to that of Oskar Schlemmer, it is difficult to deny a connection. Schlemmer came to the Bauhaus as its stagecraft instructor and later took over its foundational class on form, going on to be a profound influence on a generation of German artists.

Later in 1924, Höpfner began his love-affair with the cinema. After a life spent in the theater, it seems only natural that the cinema would also hold an appeal. The silent films of the 1920s were incredibly popular in Berlin, including those of Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, both of whom are featured Höpfner's prints in 1924 and 1925. Cinema was not the only new influence in the mid-1920s, however. In November or December of 1924, Höpfner travelled to Berlin to see an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec that had come from France. Given the state of relations between the two countries, bringing the artwork to Berlin would have been no easy feat, and having the opportunity to view it would have been incredibly exciting for the young artist. Also in this year, he discovered a new book series called *Junge Kunst [Young Art]*, which focused on contemporary artists in Germany that had broken from the high academic styles. The books published on Otto Dix and Alfred Kublin in this series became his guides.¹⁷ For example, Höpfner's print *Rivalen [Rivals]* of 1927 shows clear echoes of Dix in both style and subject matter, while his later prints of animals show lessons appropriated from Kublin.

The year 1926 saw Höpfner move back to Berlin to pursue a career as an artist more seriously. Living there put him in the middle of the wildly vibrant Weimar culture and its

¹⁷ Ibid.

nightlife. Cabarets, silent movies, art exhibitions, and countless art magazines would have been right at his fingertips. After the Reichstag moved to stabilize the Deutschmark in 1924, the economy began to recover, making such a move more feasible. Katharina Heise, another former member of Die Kugel, was also living in Berlin with her sister, Annemarie Heise, also an artist. Their studio was right next to that of Käthe Kollwitz, and it is likely through the Heise sisters that Höpfner came to know her.¹⁸ At the time, she was the head of the print department at the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, as well as its first female member. Perhaps through her acquaintance, Höpfner was able to show his work in the Academy's 1929 Spring Exhibition. Four prints, a cycle on Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* (a play about the troubles of fictional criminal "Mack the Knife" and his compatriots), were well-received there. The play struck a chord with Höpfner, and he would revisit the subject several times over his lifetime. While hovering around his prints during the exhibition, Höpfner made the acquaintance of Max Liebermann, the Academy's president, who spoke highly of Höpfner's work. It was also in 1929 that Wilhelm Höpfner met Johanna Willnow, who would later become his wife.¹⁹

Shortly before his wedding in 1933, Höpfner returned to Magdeburg to secure a home for the pair and find work to support them both. He tried to gain a foothold in the arts and crafts school there but ended up taking a position teaching drawing at a middle school.²⁰ While he may have abandoned the artistic styles of the Bauhaus, its philosophy stuck with him. His classroom was furnished with Bauhaus-designed furniture.²¹

Of course, 1933 had darker implications for the rest of Germany. With rise of the Nazi

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hans-Joachim Krenzke. " Auf der Liste der Entarteten: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Höpfners (III)," *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (Magdeburg, Germany), June 15, 1989.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 9.

party and their eventual take-over of the government, it became dangerous to express contrarian ideas. Höpfner ceased producing prints for most of that year, channeling his creative energies into illustrating children's books. He felt that children's books were a more effective way for him to communicate his ideas to a broader public; unfortunately, not one of the seven complete illustrated children's books was ever published. Fragments of other book ideas remain, and although it is unclear whether publishers were uninterested, or if he simply never submitted the drafts, they remained in his possession. It is possible that even with his political commentary veiled as children's stories, Höpfner feared retribution. The book drafts were packed away, and Höpfner returned to print production.

By 1934, his style had transitioned to something more narrative. For the next decade, Höpfner depicted mostly animals, almost never human figures, in his prints. His technique in these prints is impeccable, and the figures are naturalistically rendered. At times whimsical and at other times eerie, his prints in this period are thought to be veiled criticisms and jabs at the Nazi regime and those who supported it. Explicit criticism, of course, would be extremely dangerous, especially following 1937. In that year, the propaganda ministry released a blacklist of artists that were considered "degenerate," and Wilhelm Höpfner's name was on it.²² At least five of his works were confiscated from museums, presumably destroyed.²³

Despite having his name on the blacklist, he continued to exhibit with other Magdeburg artists through the Nazi era. Perhaps the change in style allowed him to keep producing, or perhaps Magdeburg simply was not as tightly controlled as larger cities like Berlin. Whatever the case, Höpfner continued teaching and creating art until 1943, late in the war, when he was

²² Krenzke. "Auf der Liste der Entarteten: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Hopfners (III)."

²³ There is no evidence to suggest his work was part of the famous *Entartete Kunst* exhibition.

drafted and sent to the Russian front at the age of forty-two. There is little documentation of Höpfner's time in the military. It is known that at some point, he was taken as a prisoner of war and stayed in a Russian camp until his release in July of 1945.

Immediately upon his return to Magdeburg, Höpfner resumed his work. He remained heavily involved in the artistic community of the city and served as a chairman of Magdeburg's regional chapter of the Verband bildender Künstler Deutschlands (Union for Artists in the German Democratic Republic) from 1952 to 1959. In 1959, he had his first large retrospective exhibition in Magdeburg, which traveled around to several other cities in the German Democratic Republic (also known as East Germany). The 1950s were a delicate time to be an artist in East Germany, when the government tried to dictate what kind of content they could create, but Höpfner negotiated the diplomatic waters well. As chairman, he advocated for artistic freedom within the structure of the socialist government.²⁴ In his 1959 retrospective catalogue, he reflected that his early works were executed without the support of the state, ideologically or materially. He praised the system in place, in which the state supported artists with state commissions while allowing them to fulfill these commissions as they see fit, thus giving artists the opportunity to "unfold their abilities accordingly."²⁵ Later catalogues do not include this portion of his statement, leading one to speculate that it was no longer necessary as government committees allowed artists their freedom more regularly.

In the 1960s, he was a founding member and chairman of the Magdeburger Grafikkreis im Kulturbund, an organization that promoted graphic arts and artists, including fine art prints, in Magdeburg. He worked with the puppet theater in Magdeburg to design puppets and sets for *The*

²⁴ Jorg-Heiko Bruns, in an interview with the author.

²⁵ Wilhelm Höpfner, "Über Meine Arbeit", 6.

Ascension of Galgetoni in 1966, and he continued to take part in important regional exhibitions, remaining active until his death in on March 14, 1968.²⁶

EARLY EXPLORATIONS

Some of Höpfner's earliest prints depict dreamlike landscapes, the sort of work that stirred art critic Ernst von Niebelschutz to compare him to Bosch and Bruegel the Elder in 1922.²⁷ *Humoreske* [*Humoresque*] (cat. 1)(Figure 1) of 1921 serves as a prime example of this early style. As a drypoint print, Höpfner created this work by scratching the metal stylus directly into the plate, a process that creates a microscopic burr on either side of the line. When printed, these burrs give the lines a soft, almost fuzzy or ethereal quality. The lines in the plate also tend to be shallower than they would be with acid etching, so the pressure applied during the printing process degrades both the lines and burrs after just a few editions. As a result, the print runs for drypoint etchings tend to be small. In many cases, including that of *Humoreske*, only one print is recorded in his monograph. It seems contradictory to the very nature of printing, which can allow for hundreds or thousands of prints, reaching as many people as possible, provided the plate or block is sturdy enough. Instead, Höpfner's early dreamlike images are created via a delicate printing method, often only once. The result is a labor-intensive, highly personal piece of work that was likely never intended to reach a larger audience.

If there is a message behind *Humoreske*, it is deliberately vague, but the title offers some clues. "Humoresque" is a genre of music from the Romantic period in Germany, typically a short

²⁶ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 15-18.

²⁷ Niebelschutz, "Die Kugelaustellung."

musical composition, lively and whimsical, meant to evoke a cheerful mood.²⁸ The image shows a figure sitting on a stool next to a river with a basic fishing rod, the line and baitless hook hanging over the water. The figure is dressed in what appears to be a clown's suit and a pointed hat. The suit is unbuttoned down the middle and the alleged clown slouches while staring despondently at the water. In the foreground, a clear goblet sits upon some kind of mat or tray and plays host to a fish. The foliage in the foreground bears more resemblance to Renaissance arabesques than natural flora. The river recedes into the background, leading the eye to a small boat in the distance. The towers of a city are connected to the opposite bank by a bridge with a prominent street lamp. What appears to be a lighthouse fills the top of the image with beams of light as the sun sinks, casting stylized cliffs in shadow.

Over and over again in the literature, writers refer to Höpfner's subtle sense of humor, wit, and irony.²⁹ Here, we have a scene named for a light-hearted musical style, and having grown up in an orchestra pit, Höpfner would have been well aware of its meaning. Contrarily, the apparent clown looks lethargic, half-dressed, and entirely uninterested in entertaining the viewer. The title is ironic—there is nothing light-hearted about this scene. Our figure is hungry and tired and seems an apt metaphor for the state of Germany in 1921 as it tried to recover from the First World War and the subsequent internal chaos. Whether Höpfner had any such meaning in mind is impossible to know, of course, but the print lends itself to such an interpretation.

Another enigmatic, surreal work by Höpfner from this early stage is *Maske und Sterne über den Gitterfenster* [*Mask and Star Above the Latticed Window*] of 1922 (cat 3)(Figure 2).

²⁸ "humoresque, n.". OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89404?rskey=kpVE5k&result=1> (accessed September 19, 2018).

²⁹ Reinhard Opitz, "Ein Lebenswerk voller Witz und Ironie ist zu besichtigen," *Volkstimme* (Magdeburg, Germany), May 17, 1999.

The eponymous mask dominates the image: an abstract, ovular face with half-lidded eyes like crescent moons on their sides. The mask sports a feathery mustache over a frowning mouth and long, trailing beard. It wears a boxy black hat with a six-pointed star on the center of the front side. Dark, wild hair frames the mask. Other stars populate the background, along with swirling lines, flowers, and abstract shapes. The window is in the lower third of the composition, set into the wall of the platform above which the mask floats. Behind the vertical lines that form the lattice, there is a bird-like shadow. With the six-pointed star in place, it is a safe conclusion that the mask is meant to resemble an Orthodox Jewish man's headwear and facial hair, but the meaning is evasive. The mask's frown and dark under-eye circles create a tired, unhappy expression. The right eye looks almost as though it's been blackened with bruising. Without the title written along the bottom of the page, it would be difficult to know that the face is even a mask. Is the mask figurative, or literal? Some of the stars in the background resemble crucifixes, and the lines imply a swirling dizzying movement. Do the flowers mean anything? What of the bird between the window? Whatever Höpfner had in mind when he created this work, of which three prints exist, he did not leave any more concrete clues.

The print could be indicative of the rising tension and prejudice between the Christian and Jewish populations of Germany. Already in this period, there were people promoting the idea that the Jewish people were somehow responsible for all of the country's woes through some vast international conspiracy. The anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* was founded in 1923 by Julius Streicher in Nuremberg, and it served as the primary vehicle of anti-Jewish propaganda in Germany through the end of World War II, but it was by no means the beginning of anti-Semitic sentiments. Toward the end of the First World War, when it was clear that Germany was going to lose the war, army leaders began to circulate the myth that Germany had

been victorious until it was “stabbed in the back,” betrayed by Jews and Bolsheviks within the country, calling them “an enemy within.”³⁰ By the summer of 1919, this idea had already gained considerable currency,³¹ but even this would not have been possible without significant anti-Semitism already present within Germany and throughout the rest of Europe.

Another of these seemingly nonsensical scenes reveals that Höpfner paid close attention to current events. *Kangurpferd und Napoleonische Soldat* [*Kangaroo-Horse and Napoleonic Soldier*] (cat. 4)(Figure 3) looks, at a glance, like a collection of random thoughts given visual form, but the key to deciphering it lies in the upper right corner. There, a circle with a darkened edge with lines emanating from it is likely a depiction of a solar eclipse, for in the year Höpfner created this print, 1922, photographs of a solar eclipse proved Einstein’s theory of relativity. Part of this theory stipulated that during a solar eclipse, the stars in the sky would appear to be in different places because light itself would bend around the eclipsed sun. There had been several attempts to prove this through photography in 1921 and 1922, but scientists were unable to obtain decisive proof until the 1922 eclipse in Australia.

The most obvious reference tying the scene to Australia is the kangaroo-horse, the naming of which may be Höpfner’s way of poking fun at his own uncertainty over what a kangaroo actually looks like. The Napoleonic soldier is likely a reference to the nineteenth-century expedition Napoleon funded to document Australia. Tropical islands and a ship in the background reinforce this likelihood. The other figures in the piece may be Höpfner’s attempt to depict the aboriginal and colonial communities of the continent. The upper figure shows a man with a dark torso and a white face, bow in hand with a feather in his hair. It is unlikely that

³⁰ Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008*, 21.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

Höpfner would have had a visual reference of Australia's original inhabitants but images of Native Americans were abundant, if inaccurate. The white man below him sports a long beard and bald head and seems to be missing an eye. This could be Höpfner's attempt at caricaturing a criminal, referencing Australia's history as a penal colony. As a whole, the image documents a moment in which our understanding of the universe was profoundly altered.

Some of the scenes, though, defy detailed interpretation. The print *Krokodil und Schiff* [*Crocodile and Ship*] (cat. 6)(Figure 4) of 1924 has fewer signifiers than the previous three prints. Three pyramidal shapes and the crocodile on the banks of some body of water suggest Egypt, but the old-fashioned ship with sails and mast points to a time in the past. Like in *Humoreske*, the plant life here morphs into odd, abstract forms, and there is a silhouetted suggestion of a city on one side.

There are a few possible reasons that Egypt would be on Höpfner's mind. It was in the early 1920s that European archaeologists were digging in Egypt, and early in 1923, the tomb of "King Tut" was discovered. In the same year, the *Bust of Nefertiti* was unveiled in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin. Plagued with a strong sense of wanderlust that is evidenced by his extensive travels throughout his lifetime, the exhibitions of Egyptian artifacts no doubt stirred the young artist's imagination and desire to go see the country for himself. Ships, especially like the one pictured, are often associated with exploration, due to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European explorers' use of them.

Höpfner's early work demonstrates that he was absolutely engaged with current events, and especially kept up with new archeological and scientific discoveries. At the same time, there is nothing in his work that implies a sense of intellectual superiority. Most subjects are treated with a dose of satirical humor. It is probably this quality in his work that earned him a place as a

satirical cartoonist for the newspaper *Volkstimme*, and it continues to be a defining aspect of his work throughout his career.

NEGOTIATING MODERNISM

Höpfner may have been forging his own path in terms of style, but that does not mean he did not explore the contemporary art trends in Germany. As mentioned above, he went through a period in 1924 in which his work bears the obvious influence of the Bauhaus, in particular, that of Oskar Schlemmer. Schlemmer was an instructor at the Bauhaus, and his experimental avant-garde theater workshop was emblematic of the Bauhaus's philosophy of uniting fine art, craft, and architecture to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art. His most well-known work, *Triadic Ballet*, was executed during his time there in the early 1920s. The costumes for this stage production reflected his personal painting style with bodies made up of voluminous geometric forms, abstracted to the point of resembling mannequins or automatons.

Höpfner's experimentation with the Bauhaus style is easy to see in the print *Das Blecherne Gast* [*The Tinny Guest*] (cat. 8)(Figure 5) from 1924. In the center, a human figure composed of mostly of semi-circles, ovals, and triangles poses as though dancing within a cube-like space. The wall in the back has a frieze of inverted triangles, recalling more traditional decorative styles. The wall to the viewer's left bears a downward-pointing arrow in stark black, which directs the eye to a shadow cast by the partial wall on the right, also rendered in a rich, dark black (a characteristic that is particularly difficult to accomplish in drypoint) To the right of the dancer on the rear wall, there is a white square with a sphere over a semi-circle, resembling the composition of a traditional portrait. The wall continues to the right, past the partial wall and out of the dancer's space, decorated in sections of different geometric patterns.

On the left side of the composition, there is narrow space and another figure, partially hidden behind the wall. This figure is also composed of geometric pieces but includes a large eye in the center of its face. One tubular arm is raised overhead, and the sphere-like hand resembles a fist. The one visible leg is a sharply pointed inverted triangle that echoes the shape of the arrow. With the whole figure in shadow and partially hidden, Höpfner creates a sinister mood.

The forms in *Das Blecherne Gast* show the clear influence of Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet*, especially when considering the space Höpfner has constructed as a stage with wings on either side. If there is any doubt, another of Höpfner's pieces from this period in the same style is aptly named *Mechanical Ballet*. Given his love for theater, it would not have been unusual for Höpfner to have seen the ballet in person. The total integration of set design, music, and movement would certainly have appealed to the artist.

When Höpfner finished playing with Schlemmer's forms as he found them, he began applying these strict geometries to his own ideas. In two prints, *Schneekristalle I* [*Snow Crystals I*] and *Schneekristalle II* [*Snow Crystals II*] (cat. 7)(Figure 6), he explores these shapes as they are found in nature. With a mix of simple prisms and more complex snowflakes, Höpfner creates a balanced composition. The row of triangles that made up the frieze in *Das Blecherne Gast* makes a reappearance here, each filled with various patterns.

Though he eventually returned to his own, more naturalistic style, the lessons of the Bauhaus stuck with Höpfner. During the course of his experiments, his work gained a richer sense of movement and balance. The philosophy of integrating fine art, crafts, and architecture became essential to his approach to art, as is evident in the opening quote of this catalog. When he refers to art's complex architecture, the German word he uses is "Bau."

ON STAGE AND ON SCREEN

Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* brought Höpfner inspiration, and later in life, his cycles on Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* brought him critical recognition from prominent figures in the art community. Growing up in orchestra pits doubtlessly left Wilhelm Höpfner with a lifelong affinity for the theater, which he expressed in his art throughout his career. His stage-like settings and the flattened perspective of his early work have been ascribed to the skewed vantage point of the orchestra pit.³² However, his interests were not limited to so-called “high” art and avant-garde theater. He also spent a good deal of time at the cinema, dedicating several print cycles to Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd. Living in Berlin in the late 1920s, he would have had easy access to all kinds of entertainment from film and theater to cabaret and circuses. His equal treatment of all subjects would suggest that he did not see a difference between the “high” and “low” forms of entertainment. However, his work does not merely illustrate or reproduce a scene from what he's seen. He interprets scenes and characters from theater and film, then mixes them together into new scenes. The compositions offer commentary on the social and political currents of the day, delivered subtly and with his usual dry sense of humor.

The earliest performance-related print in the exhibition is *Pulcinell und Pulcinella* [*Pulcinell and Pulcinella*] (cat. 2)(Figure 7) of 1921. While Kliemann groups this print in as part of Höpfner's gradual trend toward abstraction and surreal imagery,³³ the geometric faces and thick lines are likely a direct reference to the work of Pablo Picasso. In 1920, the composer

³² Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, 13.

Stravinsky premiered his ballet, *Pulcinella*, at the Paris Opera House, for which Picasso designed the sets and costumes. The ballet itself is based upon an older tradition of Neapolitan puppet theater, where the masked character Pulcinella gets into all sorts of mischief, only to have everything work out accidentally in his favor.

Höpfner's take on the subject splits the character into two: male and female, though the original character of Pulcinella is male. With that in mind, it makes it highly unlikely that this is an illustration of any scene in the ballet. Rather, Höpfner is using the characters as a jumping off point for his own artistic experiments. Between the male and female figures, a large beast with prominent, abstract breasts perches on a tree branch. The bodies of all three seem twisted and flattened in space, as though seen from multiple sides at once, which is one of the hallmarks of Picasso's innovations and what became known as Cubism. The inability to reconcile everything to one point of view creates a jarring sense of anxiety and tension between the sexes in the otherwise simple image. Given the rise of the women's emancipation movement in Germany during the Weimar era, such tensions might have been felt acutely.

Höpfner continued to use theater, cinema, and other forms of entertainment as points of departure for social commentary or self-expression through his career. *Clown und zwei Tauben mit Kreuz* [*Clown and Two Doves with Cross*] (cat. 9)(Figure 8) is a print that at first glance defies any specific sort of reading, but the framing curtains and shell-shaped lamps along the bottom border mark it as a stage. The composition truly evokes our sense of the surreal—a clown in the center stretches out streamer-like arms to touch abstract geometric constructions on either side. The construction on our right has a stylized wing on the top, and the two constructions are connected with an arc that resembles a rainbow. Above the rainbow, two doves hover with a cross.

Doves and crosses, of course, have a long history as Christian symbols. A single dove often represents the holy spirit, but here, I propose a different reading. In conjunction with the rainbow, the doves could point to the story of Noah and the ark. At the end, Noah knows it is safe to disembark because one of his doves has brought him an olive leaf from dry land, and when they finally leave the ark, God creates a rainbow as a symbol of his promise to never destroy the whole earth again. If this is the case, the cross likely refers to its traditional symbol of Christ's sacrifice to redeem humanity and make them worthy of such a promise. Without knowing for certain, one might speculate that Höpfner created this print after seeing a play on the subject, or perhaps a puppet show, given the clown's ragdoll appearance. In a modern interpretation of the story, a clown could easily stand in for the folly of mankind, a subject that appears frequently in Höpfner's oeuvre.

Höpfner does not always rely on the clown to play the fool. A boxer plays the part in *Das Kommt Davon* (cat. 10)(Figure 9) of 1925, a German idiom that means "that's what you get," or "that's what happens," referring to a situation where someone ought to have known better. The stylized boxer wears a vacant expression, gloved hands represented by spheres. He has fallen to his knees while a callous audience looks on, his defeat indicated by a downward arrow pointing at the back of his neck. In the background, a woman in a top hat looks over her shoulder. She is likely a performer with her fashionably cropped hair, darkly lined eyes, and a circle of blush on her cheek. A circle of white surrounds her like a spotlight, and the word "YES" illuminates the upper edge of the frame.

The fragmentary nature of the composition likely reflects the exhibitionary format of early cinema. Early films were shown in fifty-foot segments, usually only a few minutes long, and it was not initially possible to make an entire evening's entertainment from one film. Film

exhibitors would instead take up one slot in a longer vaudeville program and fill a half-hour act with about a dozen clips. Boxing was one of the more common subjects, due to the amount of action that could be packed into a few short minutes. With that in mind, it is likely that this print records the experience of going to see a vaudeville or variety show, though by 1924, feature-length narrative films were also common.³⁴

Two stars of such films, Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin, made multiple appearances in Höpfner's work. *Harold Lloyd I*, alternatively named *Das Kino [The Cinema]* (cat. 11)(Figure 10) features a montage of figures that are difficult to make sense of at first. Three heads float above a low, long building; two smaller, and one larger in a three-quarter view. The latter is a portrait of Harold Lloyd and takes up most of the upper right corner. The smaller heads are caricatured images of an old soldier and a bald man, who is in profile, turned to the right with an expression of awe. On the left side of the image, another bald man strides through an arched doorway, while in the front and center, a similarly large, barrel-chested bald man takes an exaggerated step toward the picture plane. An arrow comes from the archway, following this figure out. It points directly at a small heart that is visible on his sweater, as though the shape is a result of his time inside the building. The bald man in the background hunches forward and swings his arms with a balled fist, as though in a sour mood. The figure exiting the building, however, seems relaxed. The foreground shows a woman grasping at her hair at the sides of her face, a pantomime of despair or worry that was common in the silent film era.

It is a safe assumption, given the title, that the building represents a movie theater. The montage of figures, such as the woman, the soldier, and Harry Lloyd, could easily represent the different things one might see in a film. The bald figure we see repeated throughout the

³⁴ Joseph H. North, "The early development of the motion picture (1887-1909)" (PhD diss., Cornell University 1973).

composition goes through different emotions as he enters the building, watches, and leaves. As he enters, he is visibly frustrated with a darkened brow, leaning forward as though charging ahead. Within the dark of the theater, indicated by vertical lines, he watches the moving screen with amazement. As he leaves, he walks upright, and the leg extended so far forward could indicate a bounciness or lightness of step. The arrow coming from the theater points at the heart on his chest, indicating its importance to the narrative. The print as a whole seems to attribute a transformative power to the cinema. Whether film could be considered an art form was a matter of debate in the 1920s, and Höpfner makes his position clear in this print. This may have been, in part, due to the years spent with the artist collective Die Kugel, and one of its original members, Kurt Pinthus. Before his time with Die Kugel, Pinthus wrote *Kinobuch (Cinema Book)* in 1914, which expressed his fascination with the medium of film and all its optical possibilities. Aside from that, *Kinobuch* gave film the push it needed to be considered worthy of literary criticism and the Salon-going art world. Höpfner fell into this school of thought and if this print is any indication, he believed ardently in the power of film to move emotions as well as any other art form.

Charlie Chaplin may well be the most iconic star from the early days of film, and Höpfner paid homage to him in print as well. Working in his usual manner, he does not merely reproduce scenes from films. Rather, he takes Chaplin's signature character, the Tramp, and places him in new situations. The Tramp, with his tattered dark clothes, bowler hat, and cane, acts as a symbol for humanity's "tragicomic struggle" with the undesirable circumstances they find themselves in.³⁵ It is little wonder that Chaplin's character resonated with Germans during

³⁵ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 22.

the Weimar years, given the poor economic conditions and nigh-constant political turbulence. The Tramp struggled, true, but he also never gave up.

In this exhibition, *Chaplin und die Leichenkutsche* (cat. 12)(Figure 11) of 1929 represents Hopfner's work with the character. The title translates to "Chaplin and the Hearse," specific to an animal-drawn carriage. In this case, the donkey or mule that is presumably pulling the carriage is in the lower left corner. Chaplin sits on a rock on the right with cypress trees in the background, which are traditionally planted in or leading up to cemeteries. Further back on the left, light lines trace out the architecture of a crypt or small chapel, while in the center of the background, an angel appears. Höpfner renders the angelic figure so delicately that it is difficult to discern whether it is an apparition or a piece of graveyard statuary. Elements from the scene have appeared in Chaplin's film; angels appear in a dream sequence in *The Kid* (1921), and in the short film *His Musical Career* (1914), Chaplin delivers a piano on a donkey-drawn cart. The scene as depicted, however, never appeared in any Chaplin film.

As Helga Kliemann argues, the cinematic and theatrical subjects gave Höpfner the opportunity to explore idea of the expression of dreams and alternate realities. She writes:

The great fascination with cinema... was, for Hopfner, in the possibility of presenting the non-simultaneous simultaneously, and to make the invisible, or the dream, as visible as the reality around us. The implementation of these cinematic possibilities to the surface of the paper with graphic means, which in turn demonstrates the principle collage, allowed Hopfner to lend his great interest in the expression of dreams... Höpfner, in his Chaplin prints, creates something beyond merely the story accompanying illustration, beyond new visions, which is somewhere between dream, memory, fantasy, and reality.³⁶

Höpfner was captivated with cinema for its storytelling possibilities and the tricks it could play on the viewer's eye. On the other hand, Höpfner's interest in dramatic storytelling goes well beyond the medium of film, as we have seen.

³⁶ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 26. Kliemann interprets Höpfner's work largely through a surrealist lens, though it is unlikely that Höpfner ever met with the surrealist group in Paris.

It is in his cycles on Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* that we can best apply Kliemann's reading. *Dreigroschenoper 7 [Threepenny Opera 7]* (cat. 13)(Figure 12) is the final print of Höpfner's 1929 cycle on the subject, four of which were shown in the 1929 Autumn Exhibition of the Academy of Art in Berlin. It shows Mackie Messer, a notorious criminal and the main protagonist of the show, singing while chained to a ladder. A man and a woman hold the ladder on either side, but it is ambiguous whether they're moving him toward the noose hanging to the left or away. A line of singing men recedes into the background on the left, probably members of Messer's gang. Another figure, the chief of police, wears an old Prussian-style police uniform and stands in the background, cape blowing in the wind.

Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* was as controversial as it was popular. Opera was associated with the upper-class leisure, and its stories were to be of ancient heroism and sacrifice, and *Threepenny Opera* is anything but. It frames its main character Mackie Messer, or "Mack the Knife" as the hero, a womanizing conman and alleged murderer. The composer of the music for the production, Kurt Weill, wrote of his intentions to shatter the framework of opera and bring it into the twentieth century by giving the art form such a lowly subject.³⁷ The play is also usually interpreted as a criticism of the capitalist system, and therefore as advocating for socialism. Given Höpfner's demonstrably left-leaning political views, it is little surprise he enjoyed the play.

Höpfner's affinity for cinema and theater fits well within his love for artistic expression in all its forms, but performance seems to hold a special place in his art. By combining his graphic work with the themes he encountered in such performances, he is able to reframe those

³⁷ Kurt Weill, "On the Composition of the Dreigroschenoper," (1929), trans. Ulrich Weisstein in *Opera: A Penguin Anthology*, ed. Stephen Brook (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 472.

themes and create new scenarios, drawing connections that may not have been immediately obvious in the original work. Presenting such scenes as simultaneous also creates a dreamlike atmosphere that he may have drawn upon for his more surreal works.

SURREAL OBJECTIVITY

When he was not reimagining scenes of theater and cinema, Höpfner spent his artistic energy creating truly bizarre and sometimes unsettling images. It is in these prints that the artist seems to find his own voice, characterized by some scholars as a combination of Surrealism and New Objectivity. Some of the images read as social critiques, while others point to a more personal struggle. The prints in this section show Höpfner combining lessons from artists such as Otto Dix and Alfred Kubin to create some of his most enigmatic works completed in the late 1920s and early 30s. By this point, Höpfner has embraced the process of aquatint, allowing him to create large, dark swathes in his composition without the laborious hatching necessary in drypoint to create a similar effect. The tonal qualities of aquatint allow for subtle shading and lend the images their dreamlike quality.

Earliest among these images is *Die Clowns* [*The Clowns*] (cat. 14)(Figure 13) of 1927. It features a pair of clown faces, stuck together at the back of the head. They face opposite directions, each with a mirthful expression on its painted face. They share a single, tiny coned hat that perches precariously between them. The conjoined heads float against a pitch-black background achieved through the aquatint method. Along the bottom of the picture plane, an emaciated donkey lays on the ground, which morphs into a melted face off to the right. The cheerful expressions and many chins of the clowns provide a stark contrast to the donkey and

strange, distorted facial features of the foreground. The smiles are grotesque, too wide, toothless, and the same pitch black as the background.

As seen in other prints, Höpfner sometimes uses clowns to indicate foolishness. Their obliviousness to the objects in the foreground supports this reading. While the inflation of the early 1920s was devastating to the vast majority of Germany, there were a few groups positioned to benefit, even profit, from the hyperinflation, and they came out of the crisis wealthier than ever.³⁸ The clowns in this image represent the well-fed wealthy class, oblivious to or deliberately ignoring the problems of the less fortunate donkey and melted face of the foreground. Extreme disparities in wealth and high levels of poverty were a major factor in Germany's political unrest, and many scholars cite it as the key factor in the Nazis' rise to power. Those with the ability to help the less fortunate, either with money or influence, chose not to, and Höpfner makes his feelings on the subject perfectly clear in this image.

Another print from 1927, *Die Alten Götter* [*The Old Gods*] (cat. 15)(Figure 14), comments on the rapid modernization seen during this period. The image features a collection of figures symbolic of ancient civilizations. On the far left, a statue in the style of a bathing Venus from ancient Rome stands headless and armless in a typical contrapposto. Her feet disappear into the long grass, but the tall vase and discarded clothing that help support the statue are visible behind her. Next to her is a colossal soldier in Corinthian armor. The soldier rests his chin in one hand as he leans upon the top of a massive ionic column that rests in grass. In front of the truncated column, a sphinx, which is present in the visual culture of multiple ancient

³⁸ Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008*, 30.

civilizations, sits in profile, a Doric temple facade in the distance. The mood of the image is dejected, expressed by both of the full figures in slouching postures.

The print speaks to what was perceived as the foundations of European history at a time when technology was evolving at an unprecedented rate and modernization touched all aspects of society. From changing gender roles to new ideas about art, old ideas were being left by the wayside. Ancient Greece and Rome played prominent roles in academic art education, plaster casts of statues often providing students with their first figure studies. Mythology was still considered one of the loftiest artistic subjects in academic circles. Attitudes began to shift in the late nineteenth century, particularly in Paris, and by the 1920s, many institutions were rethinking the way they taught art and what constituted appropriate subjects for modern artists (the Bauhaus school was a prime example). Höpfner's print seems to express sympathy for the traditions left behind, though his opinion on the matter is ambiguous. His fondness for the new art schools is well documented, especially where the Bauhaus is concerned. On the other hand, he did attend a traditional art academy and looked up to artists who taught there, such as Käthe Kollwitz. It suggests that he did not view the issue in black and white, but perhaps felt a sense of loss or nostalgia for the old way of doing things.

Höpfner did not limit himself to broader social issues in his art, though he certainly engaged with them. Occasionally, his work serves as method to work through his personal struggles and private emotions. *Rivalen [Rivals]* (cat. 16)(Figure 15) of 1927 engages with the issue of prostitution in Berlin, featuring a woman whose dress is pulled down to expose her breasts.³⁹ On either side, two men vie for her attention, one behind, and one in front of her, too

³⁹ Prostitution was a prominent issue in Berlin at the turn of the century, and even more so after the World War I left Germany economically devastated. Prostitutes art featured in the work of many artists of the time.

large to fit into the picture plane. He is intimidating, which is underlined by the woman's terrified expression. Hans-Joachim Krenzke attributes this print to Höpfner's own tumultuous emotions over his love for a woman who was already spoken for.⁴⁰ In the print, he draws heavily on Otto Dix's more violent drawing style and visceral themes, which is somewhat out of character for Höpfner's art, so it is tempting to attribute it to emotional turmoil.

Another possible indicator is a print from the same year, *Because I Love You* (cat. 17)(Figure 16), titled in English. In it, a woman's face in profile turns upward from the bottom of the picture frame. Her eyes are closed, hair curled prettily to frame her face. The hair continues up the left edge of the image, imitating smoke or flames. On the right, there is a grotesque caricature of a black man, or perhaps a white man in blackface, with his mouth open as if speaking or singing. In the background, a gnarled hand hovers and a set of sinister eyes look out at the viewer. It is likely that this print represents Shakespeare's *Othello*, just after the death of Desdemona. It is Iago that stares out from the background, as it was Iago who drove Othello to kill Desdemona out of jealousy. When Othello asks why Iago would tell him of her alleged infidelity, he answers, "Because I love you." It is certainly possible that Höpfner was working through his own feelings of jealousy with these two prints and other, similar works from the period.

By 1932, Höpfner seems to have moved beyond these feelings, returning to his more socially-minded artwork. *Der Beobachter [The Observer]* (cat. 18)(Figure 17), for instance, features a bewildered man in a suit jacket amid shadowy shapes and figures. On the right, the headless, one-armed figure of a naked woman, perhaps an allusion to Venus, looms over the

⁴⁰ Hans-Joachim Krenzke, "Im Banne des Bauhauses: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Hopfners (II)," *Magdeburger Musenchronik*, June 8, 1989.

scene. Another figure, on the right, remains cloaked in shadow, its face composed only of eyes and a frowning mouth. A gnarled hand reaches through a hole in the shadowy background, and a small black dog chases a bird or a fly through the background. Of this print, Kliemann writes, “the artist identifies with the observer, who is skeptical of reality, watches and follows the development of the political reality.”⁴¹ This is certainly a plausible reading of the image, even if the picture itself is vague.

It was in 1932 that the Weimar Republic truly began to collapse in on itself. Bickering members of parliament were unable to reach any significant compromises, which resulted in the Chancellor repeatedly dissolving the Reichstag and calling for new elections. It was in one of these elections that the Nazi party won 37.8% of the popular vote. A large portion of the votes were cast in protest over the crumbling state of the republic, and though the party lost many of those votes a few months later, they retained their majority. These events all took place against a backdrop of violence in the streets between the Nazi Party’s SA and SS forces and the rebel groups backed by the communist party.⁴² To call it a tumultuous period would be an understatement. At this point in time, as Kliemann notes, making direct critical commentary on Germany’s political situation would have been extremely dangerous.

Höpfner continued to work in this veiled commentary with *Gier* [*Greed*] (cat. 19)(Figure 18) of the same year. At center, the contrapposto figure of Venus, now familiar in his work, stands, but everything above her waist is obscured in a cloud of scribbled lines, as though she has begun to unravel. A man’s suit sits with crossed legs in a chair to the left, though only his feet are visible. The head is absent, and three disembodied hands hover in its vicinity, gesturing

⁴¹ Kliemann, *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*, 30.

⁴² Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008*, 51-53.

toward the Venus figure. In the background, we see a discarded pair of suspenders, a man's shoe, and a bare cot. The German title, *Gier*, has connotations of craving and lust. This, combined with the imagery, paints a critical picture of relations between men and women, though exactly what is being said and who is at fault is left deliberately vague. The results of the situation are clear, leaving both sexes coming apart at the seams.

A variation on the Venus figure makes its final appearance in another of Höpfner foreboding images from 1932, *Begrüßung* [*Greetings*] (cat. 20)(Figure 19) and it marks a transition between the prints containing human figures and those with only animals. Our Venus stands at center, covered with a piece of cloth that seems to float just above her shoulders, following her figure down one side to merge with the drapery over her legs. Between her waist and thighs, her skin looks like pitted marble, while her chest looks smooth. Overall, she looks cobbled together. Off to the right, a pair of massive penguins approach, following a striped pattern on the ground, perhaps a rug or a crosswalk. The leading penguin carries a flower in its beak and looks toward the statue's feet, where other flowers have been placed. On the statue's other side, a smaller penguin stands in her shadow, wings spread slightly and neck extended so it stands at its full height. In the background, a suited man looms, face obscured in shadow. A shadow stands some distance behind him, but whether it is his own or the figure of another person is difficult to say.

The cobbled-together appearance of the statue could be a reference to the Nazi construction of Germany and what it meant to be German. The party's rhetoric was purposely vague, allowing it to appeal to a diverse audience, promising a return to a mythical grandiose past.⁴³ The image underlines the constructed nature of Nazi German identity with its disparate

⁴³ Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008*, 44.

parts and the great shroud obscuring the fact that it is ultimately headless. Yet, the penguins, perhaps a stand-in for everyday people, come to pay tribute, overseen by the figure in the background. Höpfner has used this silhouette as a shorthand for the old Prussian military men, which would fit in this interpretation. Whatever Höpfner's intended meaning may have been, it is well-hidden, appropriate for the time period in which the Nazi party was gaining in strength and dissident opinions were dangerous to hold, much less express.

Höpfner's strange stylistic synthesis lent itself well to veiled commentary. Whereas the New Objectivity movement purported to present the world in its gruesome reality, stripped bare of pretense and social niceties, its audience was limited to those who could stomach the sometimes-violent imagery. The Surrealists, on the other end of the spectrum, were mostly looking inward, hoping to find the keys to understanding humanity buried deep in their own minds. In combining the two into what might be called "surreal objectivity," Höpfner veils his observations of the world around him in dreamlike imagery, forcing the viewer to analyze his pictures in the same way they might try to interpret a dream to find its meaning. This subtler form of commentary allowed him to keep producing this sort of print longer, but eventually, this too felt too risky for the artist.

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: THE ANIMAL PARABLES

It is little wonder that Höpfner transitioned exclusively to animal parables after 1933, when the Nazi party seized control of Parliament in the January elections. The tradition had strong German roots extending all the way back to Aesop, so on its surface, it appeared to fall within traditional guidelines of what German art should be.

However, the animal parables did not make their first appearance after the election of the Nazi party in 1933. A few years earlier, in 1931, he created the print *Böse Beispiele verderben die Guten Sitten* [*Evil Examples Destroy Morality*] (cat. 21)(Figure 20). While the title conveys the moral lesson succinctly, the image itself is extremely vague. The setting is an icy outcropping over the ocean with a dark sky in the background. In the foreground, a pair of penguins waddle by, the smaller of the pair stretching its neck up toward the other's face, perhaps a parent with its young. Behind them, a leopard seal rests on an ice shelf, head turned to look over its shoulder toward a much larger walrus that is emerging from the water. The seal's narrowed eyes give the impression of a glare, while the walrus's round, vacant eyes are difficult to read. The penguins, for their part, don't seem to be concerned about the deadly predator behind them. While walruses usually prey on clams and other smaller invertebrates, they have been known to prey on seals as well when other food sources are scarce.⁴⁴ Is the viewer meant to understand predatory animals as evil? The wolf and the fox provide historical examples in European literature, but polar animals show up considerably less often, if at all, so it is difficult to pin down an exact precedent. Höpfner leaves the entire scene open to interpretation.

Höpfner took a break from printmaking for all of 1933, perhaps uneasy about putting his work out into the world. Instead, he began writing children's books, as mentioned in the introduction, and most of them dealt with animal characters, rather than humans. While he eventually abandoned that project, he stuck with the decision to work only in traditional scenes of animals, burying any criticisms or dissident opinions deep beneath the surface.

⁴⁴ L.F. Lowry and F.H. Fay, "Seal eating by walruses in the Bering and Chukchi Seas," in *Polar Biology* 3, no. 1 (March 1984), 11-18, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00265562>.

When he began making prints again in 1934, *Gelichter* [*Riff-raff*] (cat. 22)(Figure 21) was one of the first he completed. Three snakes and a lizard that stands on its hind legs gather around a lantern, which supplies all the light within the image. Two of the snakes have their mouths open, as though ready to strike. One aims its ire at the lantern, and the second seems to be aiming for the first. The third snake and the lizard look on and watch. Again, it is difficult to assign an exact meaning to the image. From the title, the viewer might gather that the assembled creatures are of poor moral character, but who they represent remains a mystery.

Gelichter gains some meaning when compared to print from a later date, 1939. In *Die Bestrafte Otter* [*The Punished Adder*] (cat. 23)(Figure 22), a snake has impaled itself on piece of wood or scrap metal that makes up a small barricade. A group of frogs scamper about below, accompanied by a mouse, watching to see if this will be its end. One frog carries some kind of lance or a torch that seems to be smoking at the tip. At the far left, one last frog grips the adder's tail on the other side of the barricade, perhaps the reason it has speared itself. The adder's mouth is open, fangs bared, as though it has just been lunging for its prey, and in the distance, the sticks and scraps that make up the barricade resemble swords pointing toward the sky. At its most basic, the image demonstrates that the smaller, weaker members of society can defeat those that would do them harm by working together, but again, who the animals represent is left up to viewer interpretation.

Also from 1939, *Nachtparade* [*Night Parade*] (cat. 24)(Figure 23) appears more whimsical, at least at first glance. A row of fluffy white dandelions provides an analogue to street lamps while two lizards on hind legs look up toward the dandelions and the sky. Behind them, a caterpillar follows along. Three insects buzz through the dark night sky overhead. Upon closer inspection, the image becomes more sinister. The markings on the caterpillar's head look like a

skull, and the mean spiked leaves of the dandelion flowers loom menacingly over the parade attendees. The lizards, though, seem oblivious to any potential danger. Given the proliferation of military parades in 1939, it is not difficult to draw an analogue between this image and contemporary events. That and the preceding year saw the Nazi regime beginning to annex neighboring territories, and those victories had to be celebrated to show the strength of the new Germany. This image captures that celebratory air, but also the menacing overtones within that celebration.

Nachtwächter [*Night Watchmen*] (cat. 25)(Figure 24) of 1938 also captures the environment of living in Germany in the late 1930s. It shows a cityscape, largely composed of medieval buildings that lean together in clusters at odd angles. The streets are deserted, save for three massive insects that patrol them. They dwarf the city, easily four or five stories tall each, to judge by the size of the doors on the buildings. Höpfner focuses on the more frightening details of each: the small, chitinous spikes on their exoskeletons, the blank eyes, and the large mandibles. One, a stag beetle, carries a large baton. The sharply angled buildings almost seem to cower from them. The insects, the eponymous night watchmen, have total dominion over the city.

While vague, these images give us an interesting view into how one artist negotiated the need to express himself with the political climate of the Third Reich. Höpfner was one of many artists that chose to self-censor and keep his head down, an action referred to as “inner emigration,” a counterpoint to the literal emigration undergone by many artists, authors, and intellectuals.⁴⁵ It is difficult to fault Höpfner for this decision, given his placement on the list of degenerate artists in 1937. While his work was not exhibited in the famed *Entartete Kunst*

⁴⁵ Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008*, 63.

exhibition, he was placed on the Propaganda Ministry's blacklist. This did not prevent him from taking part in local exhibitions or, as we have seen, from producing art, but it did mean that he needed to be more careful about what he produced.

After World War II ended, Höpfner lived out the rest of his life in the city of Magdeburg. He remained active in the artistic community there, exhibiting with the local circle of print artists (*Grafikkreis*), and even served as the chair for the regional artists' association. His work traveled in exhibitions around the German Democratic Republic and even to places like Latvia and Milan. His work is relatively well-known within Germany, so why is it so unheard of in the United States?

One of the reasons is the isolation of the GDR from capitalist countries. At the time of his death in 1968, very little cultural exchange crossed the Iron Curtain. Marvin and Janet Fishman, the donors of the prints in this exhibition, likely purchased them at the Galleria del Levante in Milan.⁴⁶ This means that around ninety-six of his works had been in a private collection until 2000 or so, unavailable for study. Among the collection are the prints pictured here, many of which are one-offs, and a few watercolor paintings, largely dated to the interwar years. Most of his work remained in private collections until his estate was gifted to the Winckelmann Museum in Stendal by his widow, Joanna Höpfner, in 1988.⁴⁷

Höpfner's prints are enigmatic, partially for their careful, detailed execution, and partially because they are so difficult to pin to any established philosophy or school of art. The prints he

⁴⁶ Much of the collection is represented in an exhibition catalogue from 1980.

⁴⁷ Jörg-Heiko Bruns. "Dem 'Morgenstern des Zeichenstifts' war ein befreiendes Lachen Wirkung genug." *Volkstimme* (Magdeburg, Germany), 1999.

created between the two World Wars are a microcosm of Berlin's culture during the period. In his attempts to make sense of the world around him through his art, we can see the different strands of the very complex tapestry that made up his cultural landscape coming together.

FIGURES



Figure 1: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Humoreske* [*Humoresque*], 1921. Drypoint.
6 7/8 x 5 9/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 1)

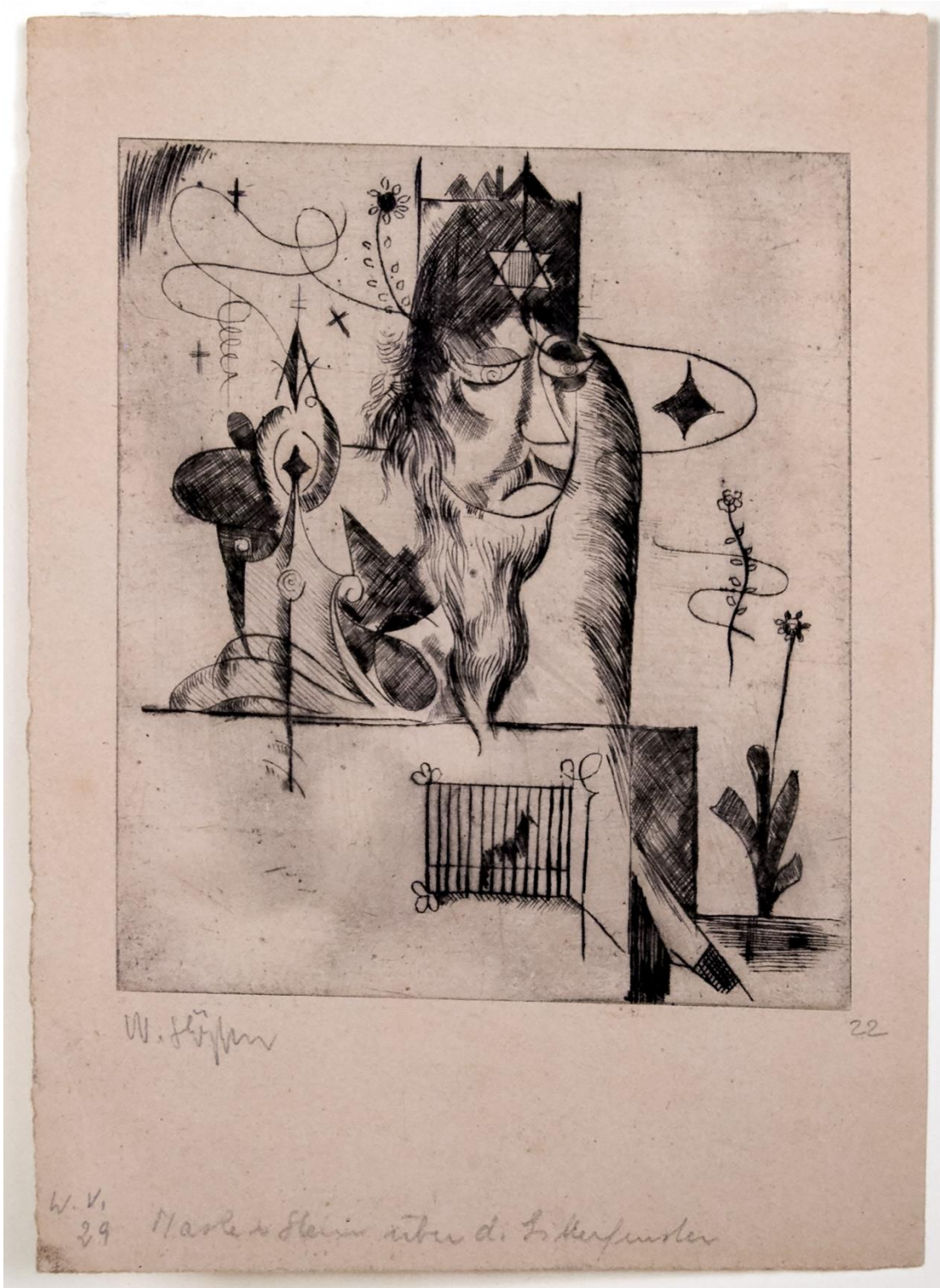


Figure 2: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Maske und Sterne über den Gitterfenster* [Mask and Star Above the Latticed Window], 1922. Drypoint. 8 3/4 x 6 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 3)



Figure 3: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Kängurupferd und Napoleonische Soldat* [*Kangaroo-Horse and Napoleonic Solider*], 1922. Drypoint. 12 3/4 x 9 13/16 inches.
UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 4)



Figure 4: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Krocodil und Schiff* [Crocodile and Ship], 1924. Drypoint. 8 x 5/16 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 6)

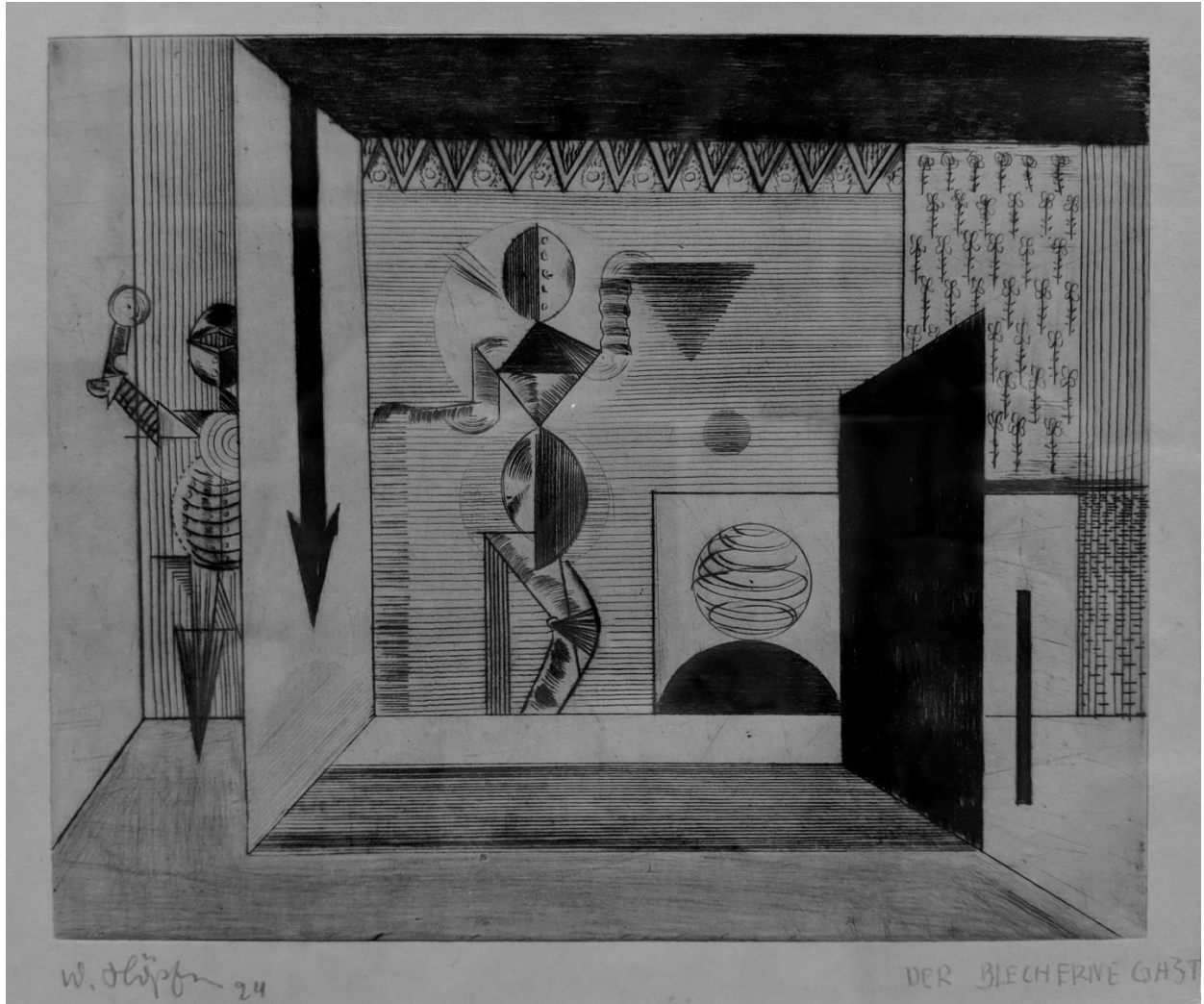


Figure 5: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Das belcherne Gast* [*The Tinny Guest*], 1924, Drypoint. 7 1/2 x 6 1/4 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 8)

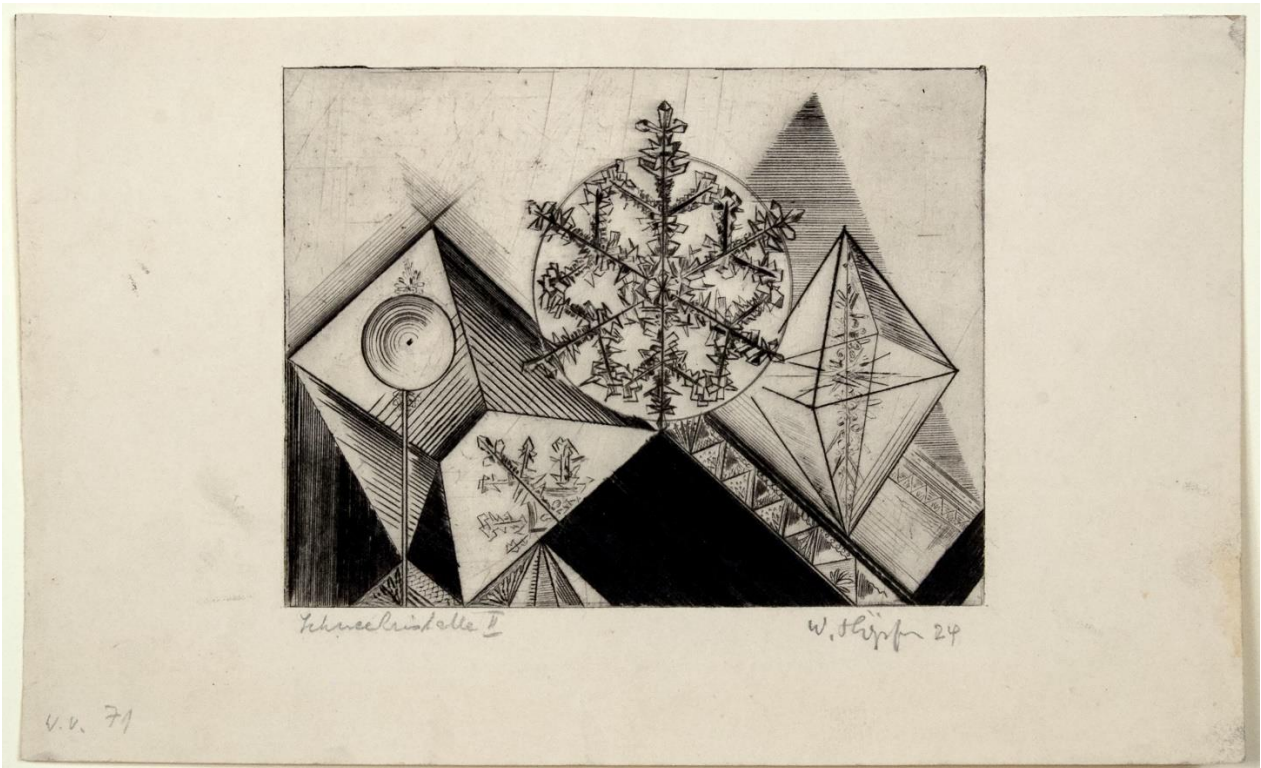


Figure 6: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Schneekristalle II* [*Snow Crystals II*], 1924. Drypoint. 4 9/16 x 5 15/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 7)



Figure 7: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Pulcinell und Pulcinella* [*Pulcinell and Pulcinella*], 1921.

Drypoint. 5 x 5 7/8 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 2)



Figure 8: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Clown und zwei Tauben mit Kreuz* [*Clown and Two Doves with Cross*], 1923. Drypoint. 6 15/16 x 10 1/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 9)



Figure 9: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Das Kommt Davon* [*That's What Happens*], 1925, drypoint. 7 11/16 x 6 5/16 in. UW-Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman.



Figure 10: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Harold Lloyd I (Das Kino)* [*Harold Lloyd I (The Cinema)*], 1925. Drypoint. 8 x 6 5/16 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 11)



Figure 11: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Chaplin und die Leichenkutsche* [Chaplin and the Hearse Wagon], 1929. Drypoint. 13 1/16 x 10 5/8 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 12)



Figure 12: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Dreigroschenoper 7* [*Threepenny Opera 7*], 1929. Drypoint. 13 x 10 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 13)



Figure 13: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Die Clowns* [*The Clowns*], 1927. Drypoint and aquatint. 14 5/8 x 19 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 14)

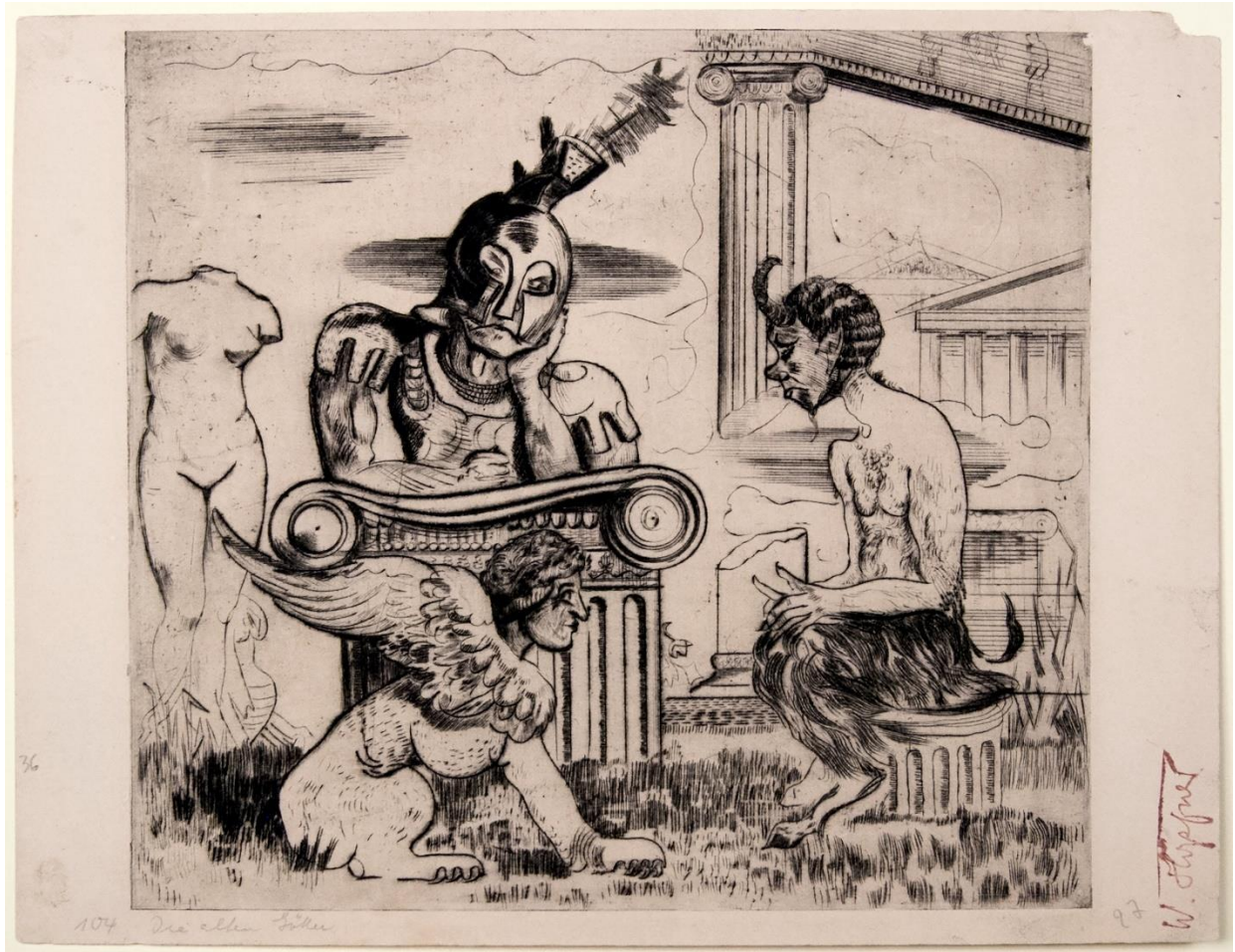


Figure 14: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Die Alten Götter* [*The Old Gods*], 1927. Drypoint. 9 13/16 x 12 7/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 15)



Figure 15: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Rivalen* [Rivals], 1927. Drypoint. 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 16)

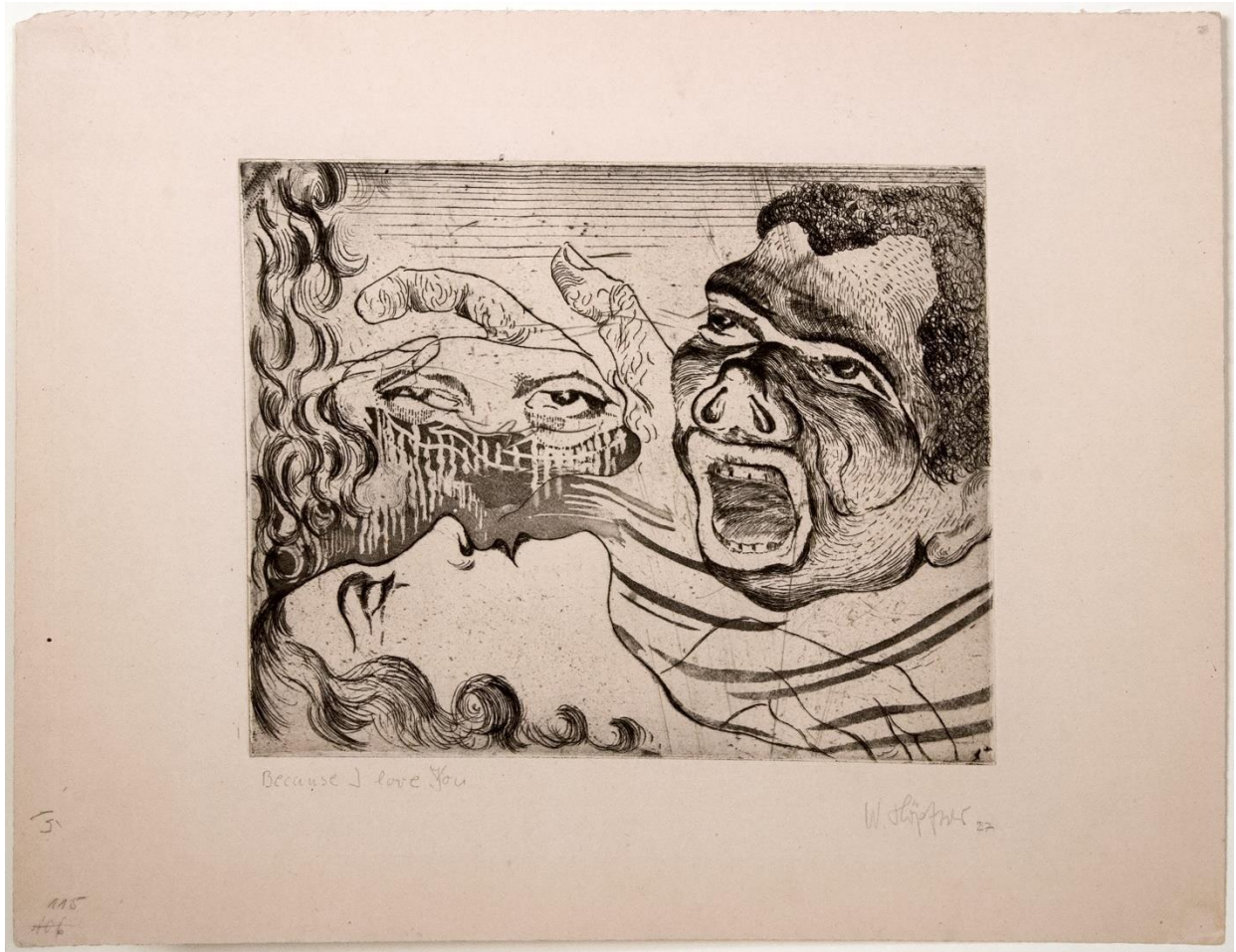


Figure 16: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Because I Love You*, 1927. Drypoint and aquatint. 11 3/4 x 15 9/16 inches UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 17)



Figure 17: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Der Beobachter* [*The Observer*], 1927. Drypoint. 11 13/16 x 15 11/16 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 18)



Figure 18: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Gier* [*Greed*], 1932. Drypoint. 11 9/16 x 14 1/4 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 19)

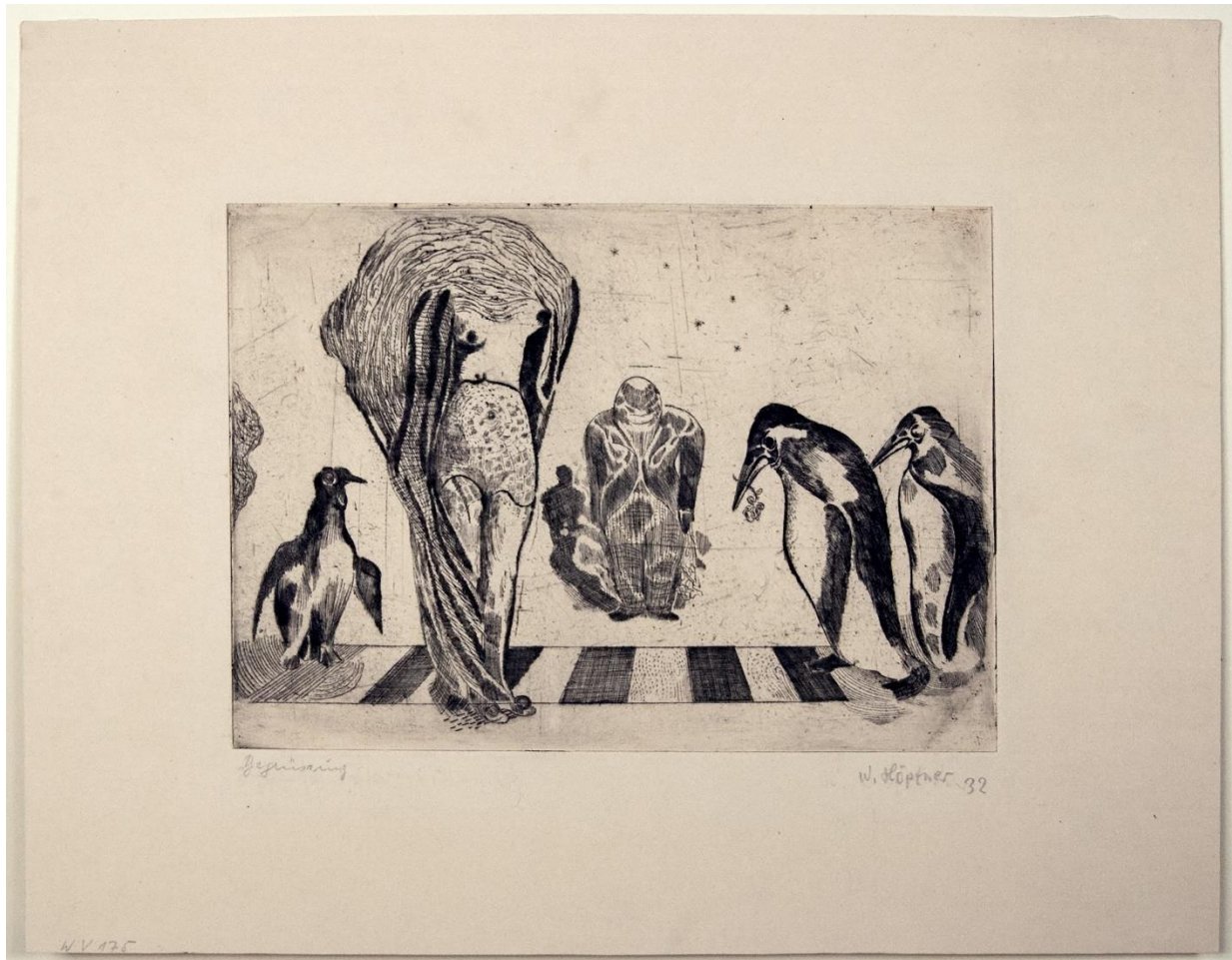


Figure 19: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Begrüßung* [Greetings], 1932. Drypoint. 12 1/16 x 15 inches.
UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 20)



Figure 20: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Böse Beispiele verderben die Guten Sitten* [Evil Examples Destroy Good Manners], 1931. Drypoint and aquatint. 13 9/16 x 16 1/2 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 21)

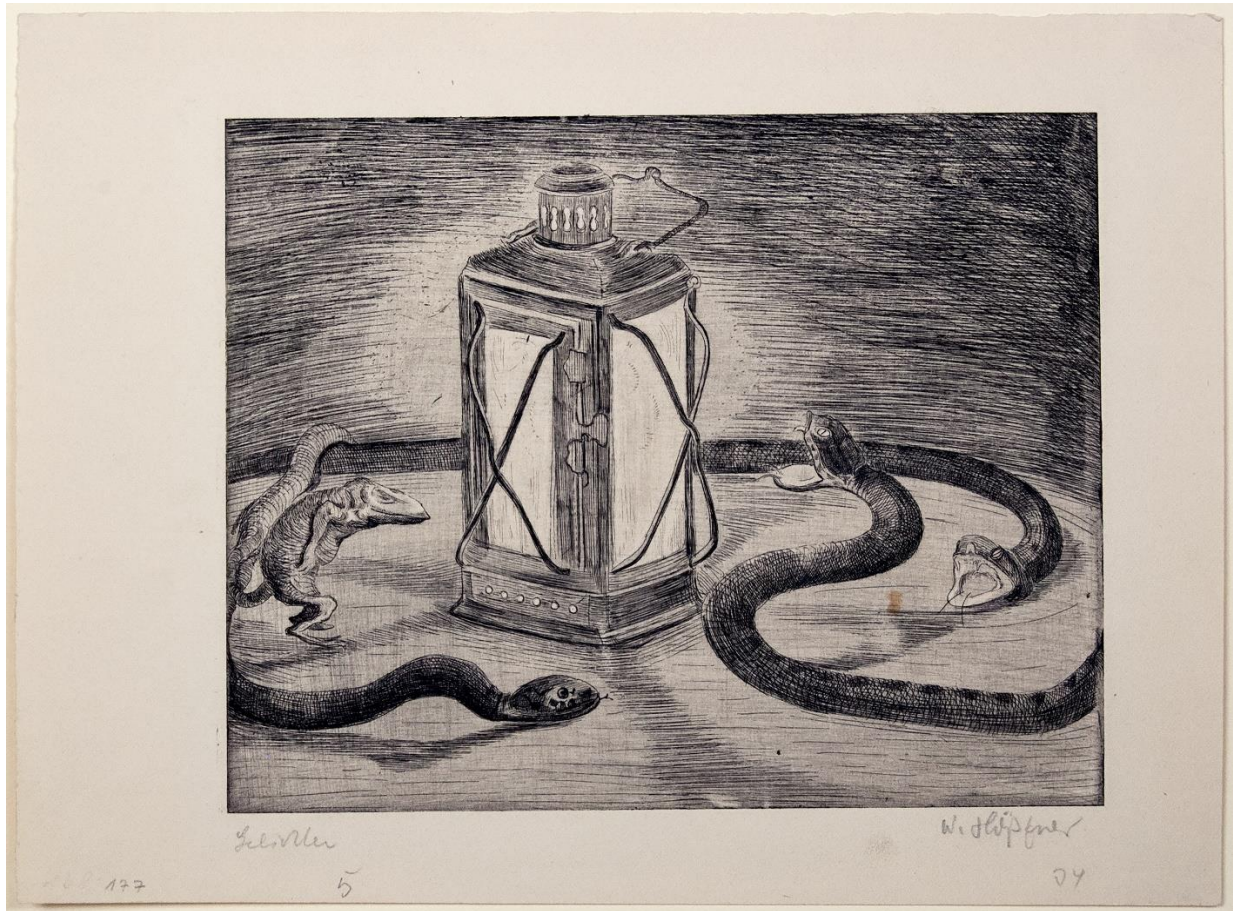


Figure 21: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Gelichter [Riff-raff]*, 1934. Drypoint. 9 15/16 x 13 1/2 inches.
UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 22)

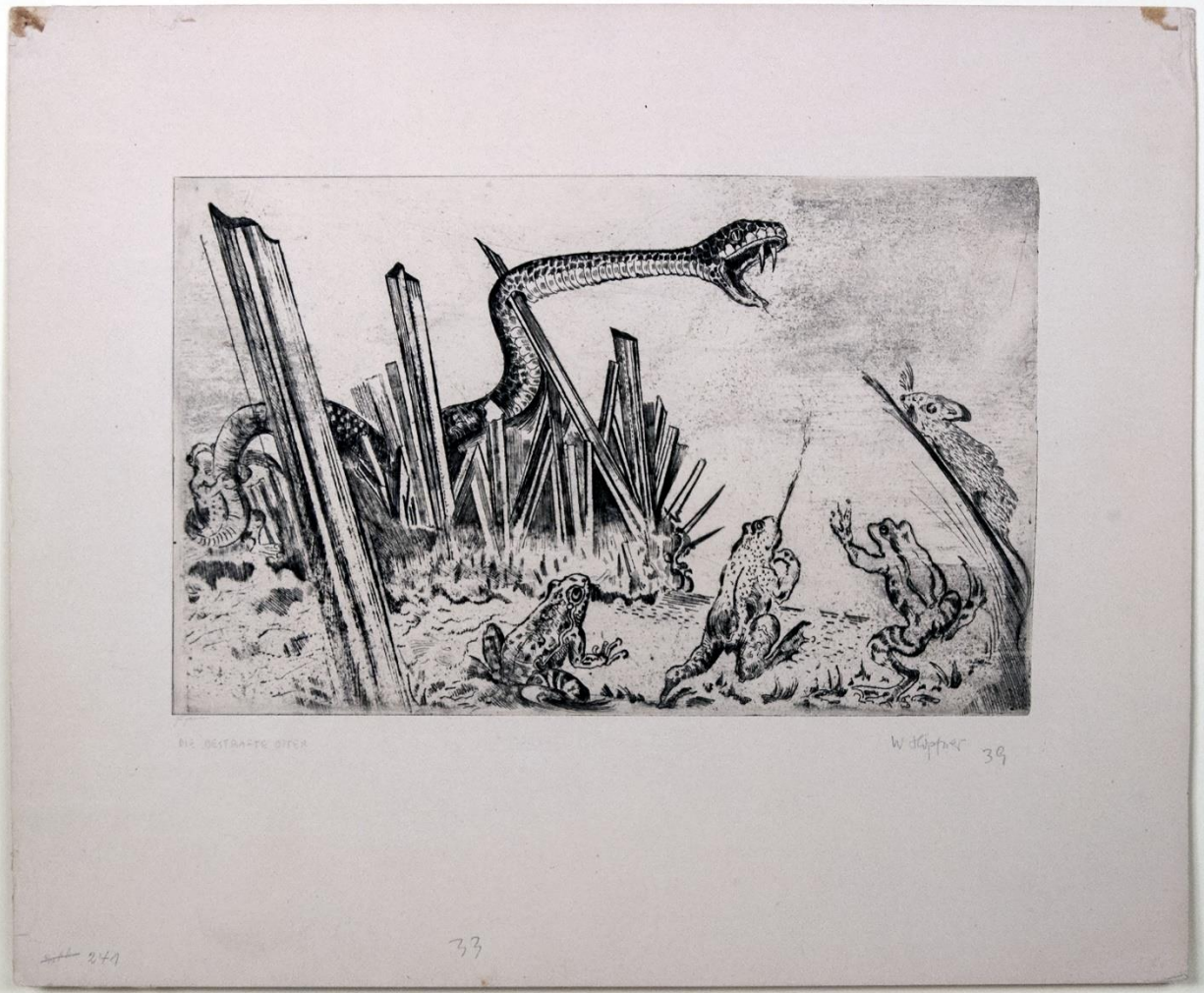


Figure 22: Wilhelm Höpfner *Nachtparade* [*Night Parade*], 1939. Drypoint. 10 1/8 6 3/8 inches. UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 23)

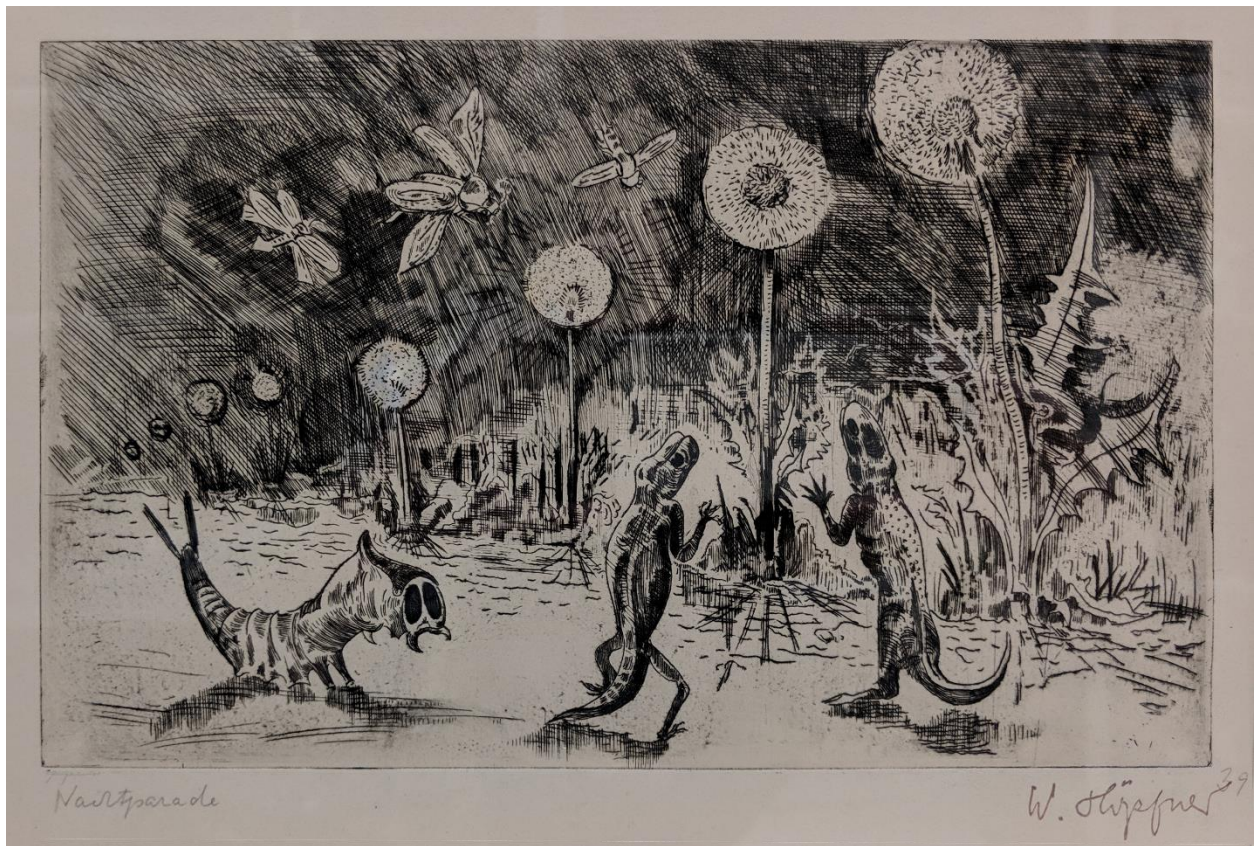


Figure 23: Wilhelm Höpfner *Nachtparade* [*Night Parade*], 1939. Drypoint. 10 1/8 6 3/8 inches.
UW-Whitewater Art Collection. (Catalogue 24)



Figure 24: Wilhelm Höpfner, *Nachtwächter* [Night Watchmen], 1938. Drypoint. 6 11/16 x 9 7/8 inches. UWM Art Collection. (Catalogue 25)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Bullock, Marcus Paul, Michael William Jennings. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *The Threepenny Opera*. Translated by Desmond Vesey and Eric Bentley. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964.
- Bruns Jörg-Heiko. "Dem 'Morgenstern des Zeichenstifts' war ein befreiendes Lachen Wirkung genug." *Magdeburger Volksstimme* (Magdeburg, Germany), May 22, 1999.
- Carley, Michael Ann. *Wilhelm Höpfner: Graphic Work from the Weimar Era, from the collection of Marvin and Janet Fishman*. Milwaukee, WI: Cardinal Stritch University, 1999.
- Chénieux-Gendron, Jacqueline. *Surrealism*. Translated by Vivian Folkenflik. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Clinefelter, Joan L. *Artists for the Reich: Culture and Race from Weimar to Nazi Germany*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2005. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=278918>.
- Der Neue Weg* (Magdeburg, Germany). "Mit dem Theater stets verbunden: 'Galerie in der Kammer' mit Werken von W. Höpfner – Interessenten können Blätter erwerben." September 24, 1975.
- Figura, Starr, and Peter Jelavich. *German Expressionism: The Graphic Impulse*. New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2011.
- Fulbrook, Mary. *A History of Germany, 1918-2008: The Divided Nation*. Third edition. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

- Griech-Poelle, Beth A. *Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust: Language, Rhetoric and the Traditions of Hatred*. Perspectives on the Holocaust. London, UK ; New York, NY, USA: Bloomsbury Academic, an Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017.
- Höpfner, Wilhelm and Renate Hagedorn. *Wilhelm Höpfner, 1899-1968: Druckgrafik und Aquarelle*. Edited by Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg. Magdeburg, Germany: Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg, 1969.
- Höpfner, Wilhelm and Sigrid Hinz. *Wilhelm Höpfner: Aquarelle, Druckgrafik*. Edited by Sigrid Hinz. Magdeburg, Germany: Kulturhistorisches Museum Magdeburg and Verband bildender Künstler Deutschlands, Bezirk Magdeburg, 1959.
- Johannsen, Christa. "Das Gewissen und die Affen: Zu einer Radierung Wilhelm Hoepfners in der Ausstellung '20 Jahre bildene Kunst im Bezirk Magdeburg.'" *Volksstimme* (Magdeburg, Germany), 1973.
- Kaiser, Fritz and William C. Bunce. *Degenerate Art: Guide through the Exhibition Degenerate Art*. The Exhibition was Collected by the National Chamber of Propaganda, Bureau of Culture; Responsible for the Contents: Fritz Kaiser; Publisher: Publishing House for Cultural and Economic Publicity, Berlin. Translated by William C. Bunce. Redding, Conn.: The Silver Fox Press, 1972.
- Kliemann, Helga. *Wilhelm Höpfner: das frühe graphische Werk, 1921-1940*. Munich: Galleria del Levante, 1980.
- Kort, Pamela. *Comic Grotesque: Wit and Mockery in German Art, 1870-1940*. Munich; New York: Prestel, 2004.
- Krenzke, Hans-Joachim. "Auf der Liste der Entarteten: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Höpfners (III)," *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (Magdeburg, Germany), June 15, 1989.

- Krenzke, Hans-Joachim. "Im Banne des Bauhauses: Zum 90. Geburtstag Wilhelm Hopfners (II)," *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (Magdeburg, Germany), June 8, 1989.
- Kunze, Max, Heinz Shierz, Jörg Sperling, and Johanna Höpfner. *Wilhelm Höpfner, 1899-1968: Druckgrafik Und Aquarelle: Gesamtverzeichnis*. Edited by Max Kunze. Stendal, Germany: Winckelmann-Gesellschaft, 1980.
- Liberaldemokratische Zeitung* (Halle, Germany). "Galerie in der Kammer: Erroefnung mit Arbeiten von Wilhelm Hoepfner/Ständige Einrichtung." August 18, 1975.
- North, Joseph H. "The Early Development of the Motion Picture (1887-1909) by Joseph H. North." Thesis–Cornell University; New York: Arno Press, 1973.
- Reichspropagandaleitung, der NSAPD. *Entartete "Kunst."* Redding, Conn.: Silver Fox Press, 1972.
- Reisenfeld, Robin, Reinhold Heller, Richard A. Born, Stephanie D'Alessandro, Detroit Institute of Arts, David Alfred Smart Gallery, Instituto De Artes De Detroit, and Dia. *The German Print Portfolio, 1890-1930: Serials for a Private Sphere*. London: New York: Philip Wilson in Association with the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art ; Distributed by Rizzoli, 1992.
- White, Eric Walter. *Stravinsky, the Composer and His Works*. Second edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- White, Michael. *Generation Dada: The Berlin Avant-Garde and the First World War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

APPENDIX: EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Wilhelm Höpfner works

1. *Humoreske* [*Humoresque*], 1921.
Drypoint
Image size: 6 1/2 x 5 1/8 in
Sheet size: 6 7/8 x 5 9/16 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
2. *Pulcinell und Pulcinella* [*Pulcinell and Pulcinella*], 1921.
Drypoint
Image size: 5 x 6 7/8 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
3. *Maske und Sterne über den Gitterfenster* [*Mask and Star Above the Latticed Window*], 1922.
Drypoint
Image size: 6 x 5 1/4 in
Sheet size: 8 3/4 x 6 1/4 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
4. *Kangurpferd und Napoleonische Soldat* [*Kangaroo-Horse and Napoleonic Soldier*], 1922.
Drypoint
Image size: 6 7/16 x 5 3/16 in
Sheet size: 12 3/4 x 9 13/16 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
5. *Zoologe* [*Zoologist*], 1923.
Drypoint and watercolor
Image size: 6 3/16 x 4 13/16 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
6. *Krokodil und Schiff* [*Crocodile and Ship*], 1923.
Drypoint
Image size: 8 x 7 5/16 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
7. *Schneekristalle II* [*Snowcrystals II*], 1924.
Drypoint
Image size: 4 9/16 x 5 15/16 in

Sheet size: 6 5/8 x 10 2/8 in

UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

8. *Der blecherne Gast* [*The Tinny Guest*], 1924.

Drypoint

Image size: 7 1/2 x 6 1/4 in

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

9. *Clown und zwei Tauben mit Kreuz* [*Clown and Two Doves with Cross*], 1923.

Drypoint

Image size: 5 5/8 x 6 5/8 in

Sheet size: 6 15/16 x 10 1/16 in

UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

10. *Das Kommt Davon* [*That's What Happens*], 1925.

Drypoint

Image size: 7 11/16 x 6 5/16 in

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

11. *Harold Lloyd (Das Kino)* [*Harold Lloyd (The Cinema)*], 1925

Drypoint

Image size: 8 x 6 5/16 in

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

12. *Chaplin und die Leichenkutsche* [*Chaplin and the Hearse Wagon*], 1929.

Drypoint

Image size: 13 1/16 x 10 5/8 in

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

13. *Dreigroschenoper 7* [*Threepenny Opera 7*], 1929.

Drypoint and aquatint

Image size: 13 x 10 in

University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

14. *Die Clowns* [*The Clowns*], 1927.

Drypoint and aquatint

Image size: 7 7/8 x 9 9/16 in

Sheet size: 14 5/8 x 19 1/4 in

UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

15. *Die alten Götter* [*The Old Gods*], 1927.
Drypoint
Image size: 9 3/16 x 9 7/8 in
Sheet size: 9 13/16 x 12 7/16 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
16. *Rivalen* [*Rivals*], 1927.
Drypoint
Image size: 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
17. *Because I Love You*, 1927.
Drypoint and aquatint
Image size: 7 9/16 x 9 11/16
Sheet size: 11 3/4 x 18 9/16
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
18. *Der Beobachter* [*The Observer*], 1932.
Drypoint
Image size: 9 9/16 x 11 7/16 in
Sheet size: 11 3/4 x 15 9/16 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
19. *Gier* [*Greed*], 1932.
Drypoint
Image size: 5 11/16 x 7 13/16 in
Sheet size: 11 9/16 x 14 1/4 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
20. *Begrüßung* [*Greetings*], 1932.
Drypoint
Image size: 7 x 9 9/16 in
Sheet size: 12 1/16 x 15 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
21. *Böse Beispiele verderben die Guten Sitten* [*Evil Examples destroy Good Morality*], 1931.
Drypoint and aquatint
Image size: 9 13/16 x 9 13/16 in
Sheet size: 13 9/16 x 16 1/2 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

22. *Gelichter [Riffraff]*, 1934.
Drypoint
Image size: 7 3/4 x 9 3/4 in
Sheet size: 9 15/16 x 13 1/2 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
23. *Die Bestrafte Otter [The Punished Adder]*, 1939.
Drypoint and aquatint
Image size: 7 7/16 x 12 in
Sheet size: 13 1/2 x 16 1/2 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
24. *Nachtparade [Night Parade]*, 1939
Drypoint
Image size: 10 1/8 x 6 3/8 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
25. *Nachtwächter [Night Watchmen]*, 1938.
Drypoint
Image size: 6 11/16 x 9 7/8 in
Sheet size: 13 9/16 x 16 1/2 in
UWM Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman
26. *Fliegen [Flies]*, 1939.
Drypoint
Image size: 8 x 6 in
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater Art Collection, Gift of Marvin and Janet Fishman

Ephemera

27. *Junge Kunst Vol. 41, Otto Dix*, 1924.
Author: Willi Wolfradt
Publisher: Klinkhardt & Biermann
Private collection
28. *Junge Kunst Vol. 44, Alfred Kubin*, 1924.
Author: Paul Ferdinand Schmidt
Publisher: Klinkhardt & Biermann
Private collection

29. *Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: Gemälde und Zeichnungen*, 1924.

[*Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: Paintings and Drawings*]

Galerie Matthiesen, Berlin.

Exhibition catalogue

Private collection

30. Order form for the *Junge Kunst* series, found *inside Junge Kunst Vol. 44*, Alfred Kubin,
ca. 1924

Private collection