

GOTHIC ART AND GERMAN MODERNISM:
MAX BECKMANN AND "TRANSZENDENTE OBJEKTIVITÄT"

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ABSTRACT

The present study suggests that the German Expressionist artist Max Beckmann historicized and individualized in his painting *The Descent from the Cross* the religious Passion theme, as compared to Nithard's *Isenheim Altarpiece*, in favor of the potential viewer's capability to emphasize not primarily in regards to Christ but in regards to the surrounding figures in terms of their human-ness.

In his painting, as well as in his art statement *Creative Credo*, Beckmann connects Nietzsche's Vitalism with the Gothic period, linking the tradition of the past to the present. He also utilities the objectivity of religion, its constitutions and well established symbols deriving from Gothic artifacts, and secularized them in order to charge humanity with its dullness and callous emotional response to art and postwar life in Germany.