

# LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

## KUNST



# LE CLAIRE KUNST SEIT 1982

JEANNE MAMMEN

1890 - Berlin - 1976

*Box Office Queue (Vor der Theaterkasse)*

Pen, ink and watercolour over pencil. Circa 1932.

Signed upper right: *J. Mammen.*

390 x 345 mm

PROVENANCE: Private collection, North Germany – Galerie Brockstedt, Hamburg – Private collection, South Germany

LITERATURE: Marga Döpping and Lothar Klünner, *Jeanne Mammen 1890-1976, Monographie und Werkverzeichnis*, Cologne 1997, A 429, p. 277 – *Simplicissimus* 32 (November 1932), Berlin, p. 381, repr. (inscribed *Ersatz*) - *Jeanne Mammen – Die Beobachterin*, exh. cat., Berlinische Galerie – Museum für Moderne Kunst, Berlin 2017, Kap. III, no. 105, repr., Werkliste p. 245

EXHIBITION: Galerie Brockstedt, *Jeanne Mammen Aquarelle. Paris, Brüssel vor 1915, Berlin 20er Jahre*, Hamburg, April - May 1971 - *Jeanne Mammen – Die Beobachterin*, exh. cat., Berlinische Galerie – Museum für Moderne Kunst, Berlin 2017, Kap. III, no. 105

*The delicate, gossamer-fine watercolours you publish in journals and satirical magazines far outshine the undisciplined scrawls of nearly all your colleagues – and for this, you are owed a small declaration of love. Your figures are vivid and clear-cut, graceful yet austere. They are tangible flesh-and-blood beings that leap out from the sheet. In the delicatessen shop whose doors are unlocked by your masters weekly and monthly you are just about the only delicacy.<sup>1</sup>*

Jeanne Mammen is best known as an acute observer and chronicler of Berlin life. She enjoyed a comfortable childhood, going on to study painting in Paris, Brussels and Rome. However, a change in her family's fortunes left her without financial resources and she was forced to earn her own living. In the mid-1920s, demand for her depictions of contemporary life grew. She began to receive commissions from magazines and many of her drawings were published as illustrations. This brought her a degree of financial security. By 1927 her work was widely recognized. She joined the ranks of artists like George Grosz (1893-1959) and Karl Arnold (1883-1953), producing a growing output of work for leading vehicles of social criticism like *Uhu* and *Ulk*, and the important satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*.<sup>2</sup> All three enjoyed wide readership among the liberal-minded bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia.

Mammen had a long and productive career but her artistic reputation ultimately rests on the work she produced in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. This large body of watercolours, drawings and

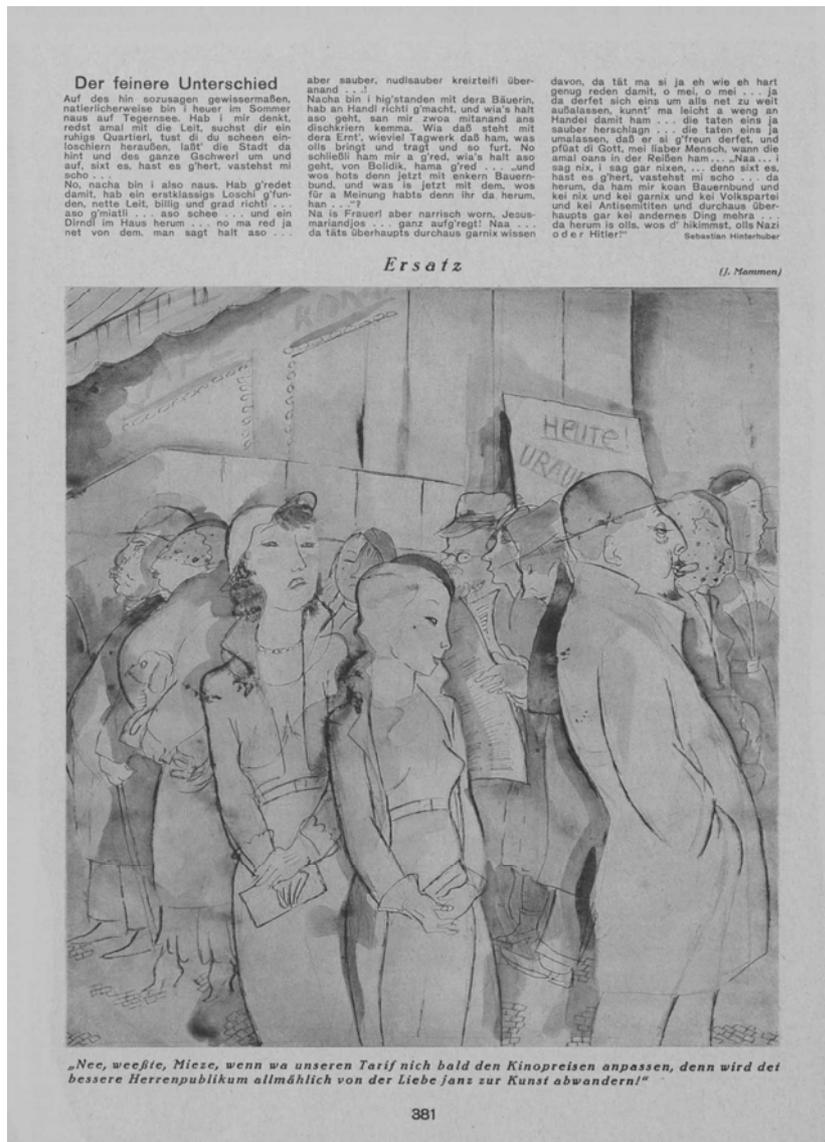
---

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Tucholsky quoted by Lothar Klünner in 'Jeanne Mammen und die Berliner Zwanziger Jahre', in *Jeanne Mammen. Aquarelle – Paris, Brüssel vor 1915, Berlin 20er Jahre*, exhib. cat., April-May 1971, Galerie Brockstedt, Hamburg, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Simplicissimus* was a German satirical magazine published weekly from 1896 to 1944. It targeted the political and social system of the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm II as well as bourgeois values, the clergy, the legal profession and the military. In the magazine's early years it mainly published illustrations of literary texts, later widening its focus to include political caricature – the genre on which its reputation rests.

paintings links her name unforgettably with the urban culture of the 1920s and early 1930s. Her depictions of Berlin life were sharply critical but also showed empathy with her figures. She captured the distinctive gestures and features of a whole range of types rapidly and succinctly, drawing on her acute observational skills.<sup>3</sup>

This sheet is the original drawing for an illustration which appeared in *Simplicissimus* [Fig. 1] in November 1932. The depiction of the theatregoers queuing for a ticket for the opening night of a new performance is more than a mere sketch – it is a finely observed portrayal of contemporary life in Berlin in the Golden Twenties.



<sup>3</sup> Klara Drenker-Nagels, *Die zwanziger und frühen Dreißiger Jahre*, in *Jeanne Mammen 1890-1976 – Monographie und Werkverzeichnis*, p. 40 ff.

LE CLAIRE  
KUNST SEIT 1982

Fig. 1: *Simplicissimus* 32 (November 1932), p. 381