



Cubism and War

The Crystal in the Flame

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ISBN	9788434313651
Publisher	Poligrafa
Binding	Hardback
Size	292 mm x 236 mm
Pages	192 Pages
Illustrations	179 color, b&w
Price	£39.99

- A book dedicated to the group of Parisian-based artists, chief among them Pablo Picasso, who refused to accept that recording the First World War or producing propaganda was their duty

• *Cubism and War* explores the work of artists who attempted to keep the Parisian Cubist movement of 1911-1914 alive during the First World War. This little community of artists had been moved by the expanded possibilities that had opened up in painting and sculpture at the beginning of the twentieth century, and they refused to accept that recording the war or producing propaganda was their duty. By refusing to forget the excitement of 1911-14, they kept faith in their independence as individuals as this war of machines threatened to rob every front-line soldier of his humanity, drawing even foreigners in France towards a state of 'total war'. The vast majority of fit young Frenchmen were mobilised, so the artists left behind in Paris were either foreign or too old or unfit for combat. Pablo Picasso, then called the inventor of Cubism, remained a leading figure, alongside his fellow Spaniards Juan Gris and María Blanchard, the Mexican Diego Rivera, the Italian Gino Severini, and the Lithuanian sculptor Jacques Lipchitz. One feature of this book is the diversity of the work produced by these artists, each working as individuals. Another, however, especially from 1917, is the move made by most of them towards a more structured, architectural Cubism, which could be taken as reparative against the destructive forces that seemed to have taken over the whole world.