

year law student with hazel eyes in a cherubic face.

He mounted the stairs to Lena's room and knocked. Alexei and Boris advanced as a shield. "Lena?" Rubens opened the door and entered. The room reeked of urine and feces. Lena turned, lifting the sheets. He saw her skeletal thinness. "Lena — I've come to help." She made a fist and cursed. "Please, Lena."

"Devils!" She thrashed on the bed. The stench of her unwashed body rose. "Out!" Rubens descended the stairs, filled the necessary forms, called the police and ambulance. At last the police arrived, and Lena was subdued. She lay spent, breathless.

"See?" her eyes fixed Rubens with icy rage. "See what you did?"

"Lena, I called many times. I came to help. I will go with you in the ambulance."

"No." She turned her head. "Don't look. Go. I never want to see you again." In her eyes was shame. Rubens decided to forgo the ambulance ride and walked south. Snow fell in a haze and lay on his lashes. With treatment her voices would leave. Lena had wanted to be a lawyer. Rubens' *zaide* had wanted a shoe store. Rubens wanted to cure patients. But life was a burden of hope and despair. Absently, he looked up. He was at Queen and Shaw Street, close to the worn brick wall. The old domes were gone. A tiny park remained with snowy benches. One man sat still and alone. Rubens flagged a taxi, eyed his schedule and called the ward.

Good, they had a bed. In a week or two he would call and visit her.

Ronald Ruskin

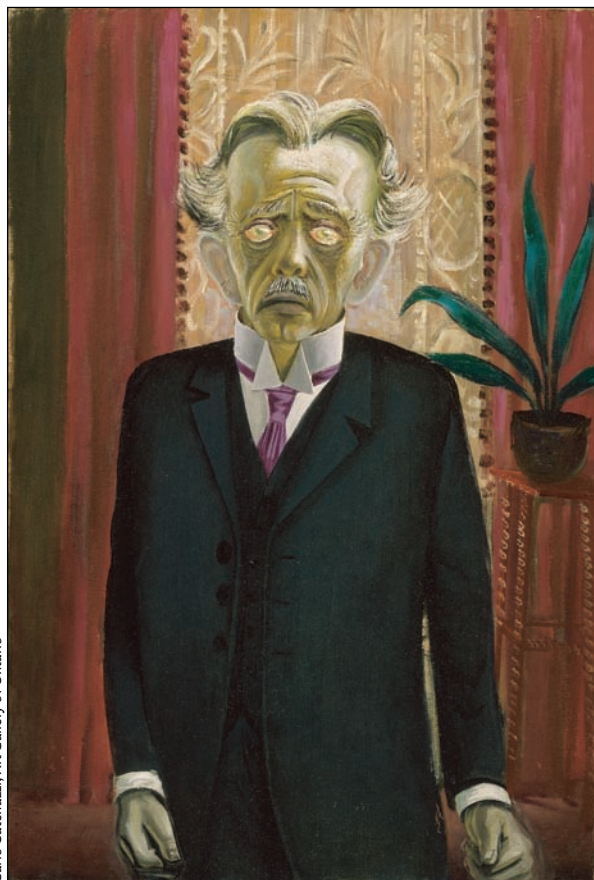
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DOI:10.1503/cmaj.060184

Lifeworks

Those eyes



Carlo Catenazzi, Art Gallery of Ontario

The morbidly inclined Otto Dix (1891–1969), when preparing to create a series of etchings depicting the horrors on the German front during World War I, “spent hours in the pathological department of a local hospital, pouring over and drawing the mutilated remains of corpses, human organs and entrails.”¹ With a penchant for grotesquerie reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch, he was viewed by some as “a pornographer of violence.” For his part, Dix described art as a form of “exorcism.” One wonders whether demons would be conjured up rather than cast out by the subject of this painting, a specialist in “nervous diseases” who offered hypnosis therapy in his sanatorium in Dresden and was a patron of avant-garde artists. Getting the full effect of this painting requires confronting the original, now housed at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The piercing, bloodshot eyes bulge with heavy, gleaming impasto, achieving a most disconcerting effect. Note the anxiety of the clenched fist; the tense, oblique stance; the rigid collar, like a restraining device; and the oddly naive quality of the flat application of paint. Except for those eyes. — Anne Marie Todkill, *CMAJ*

Otto Dix, *Portrait of Dr. Heinrich Stadelmann*, 1922. Oil on canvas, 90.8 cm x 61.0 cm. AGO, Toronto. Anonymous gift, 1969, donated by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, 1988.

REFERENCE

1. Whitford F. The revolutionary reactionary. In: *Otto Dix, 1891–1969*. London: Tate Gallery; 1992.