

**Prophets of Disaster
Allegorical and Symbolical Art in Germany in the 1930s**

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Many artists and intellectuals were alarmed by the rising power of the National Socialist and the seizure of power by Adolf Hitler in January 1933. The gradual exclusion of modern art from official cultural life in Germany and the first defamation campaigns against the avant-garde as early as 1933 gave the first glimpse of the restrictive cultural politics of the National Socialists. An open artistic protest was no longer possible. Instead many artists of the Thirties tried to deal with the political circumstances and their personal situation in an introverted manner and highly coded style. They used stylistic pieces of Surrealism and the Italian "Pittura Metafisica", utilized tales as well as Christian and mythological themes or developed a rich pool of new or renewed iconographic motifs to express their position towards the totalitarian Nazi regime and their fear of a threatening war. In my talk, I will explain how artists like Karl Hofer, Rudolf Schlichter, Hans Grundig, Georges Grosz and Otto Dix dealt with political and cultural restrictions in their art often using an allegorical or symbolic language. Most of them, I argue, did not refer directly to the actual political circumstances but rather operated on a "diachronic" level to warn their audience against the danger of Nazi politics and its consequences.