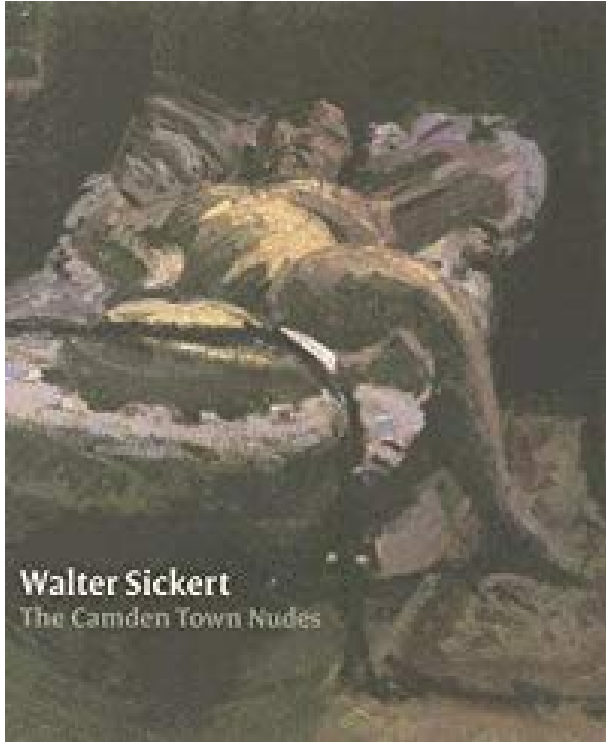


Walter Sickert: The Camden Town Nudes



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This is the first publication devoted to Walter Sickert's remarkable group of paintings of female nudes produced in and around Camden Town between 1905 and 1912 and now considered to be among his most important and provocative works. Sickert challenged conventional idealized treatments of the nude by setting his female models in the murky interiors of cheap lodging houses, laid out on iron bedsteads, and painted with an uncompromising realism. His shabby interiors were unmistakable to contemporary viewers as the dark realms of London's poorest working classes and his nudes played unflinchingly to middle class fears of such "dens of iniquity," known as the notorious haunts of prostitutes, slum landlords, and petty criminals. But Sickert also stimulated middle-class fascination with such subjects, his keyhole vantage points implicating the viewer as a voyeuristic spectator. These concerns reached their most profound expression in his so-called "Camden Town Murder" paintings in which a clothed male figure is featured in the scene alongside the nude female. None of the authors accepts the arguments of Patricia Cornwell in *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper, Case Closed* (2002) that Walter Sickert was Jack the Ripper; this is a more considered approach to the same material. *Walter Sickert: Camden Town Nudes* examines in detail more than fifteen of his most important canvases together with related drawings in order to chart his development of the subject during the period.