



The Deaths of Henri Regnault

Marc Gotlieb

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This is the first book in English on Henri Regnault (1843–71), a forgotten star of the European fin-de-siècle. A brilliant maverick who once seemed to hold the future of French painting in his hands, Regnault enjoyed a meteoric rise that was cut short when he died at the age of twenty-seven in the Franco-Prussian War. The story of his glamorous career and patriotic death colored French commemorative culture for nearly forty years—until his memory was swept away by the vast losses of World War I. In *The Deaths of Henri Regnault*, Marc Gotlieb reintroduces this important artist while offering a new perspective on the ultimate decline of nineteenth-century salon painting.

Gotlieb traces Regnault's trajectory after he won the prestigious Grand Prix de Rome, a fellowship that provided four years of study in Italy. Arriving in Rome, however, Regnault suffered a profound crisis of originality that led him to flee the city in favor of Spain and Morocco. But the crisis also proved productive: from Rome, Madrid, Tangier, and Paris, Regnault enthralled audiences with a bold suite of strange, seductive, and violent Orientalist paintings inspired by his exotic journey—images that, Gotlieb argues, arose precisely from the crisis that had overtaken Regnault and that in key respects was shared by his more avant-garde counterparts.

Both an in-depth look at Regnault's violent art and a vibrant essay on historical memory, *The Deaths of Henri Regnault* lays bare a creative legend who helped shape the collective experience of a generation.

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