

Tamara de Lempicka: The Artist, The Woman, The Legend

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Sensuous Style:The outrageous Tamara de Lempicka dazzled with her beauty, extravagant wardrobe, fondness for jewels, and—most of all—her unmistakable art.

Lempicka: The Artist, The Woman, The Legend, edited by Suzanne Tise-Isoré, and translated from the French by Barbara Mellow (Editions Flammarion, 8 x 12, 125 color and b/w photographs and illustrations, 144 pages, hardcover, \$39.95, 978-2-0803-0549-7), presents the art deco work of one of the 1920s' most intriguing artists, along with the story of her jet set life. Lempicka was born in Poland and emigrated to Paris, where she first made a name for herself as a portrait painter, taking commissions from the city's aristocrats and showing in solo exhibitions. At the onset of World War II, Lempicka moved with her husband, Baron Raoul Kuffner de Diozegh, to New York and her provocative neo-cubism paintings of the female form were replaced by images depicting religious and cultural figures.

The book's three sections include essays that focus on three main aspects of Lempicka's life: her art, her life, and her reputation at a socialite. An interview with her granddaughter is included in which she says people used to stop them on the street and ask for the elegant older woman's autograph: "I was amazed when this happened, and kind of honored, and I asked them, 'Who do you think this is?' And they'd say, 'Well, we don't know who this is, but she must be somebody.'"

Pieces pictured in the book include her famous paintings, "The Musician" and "Young Lady With Gloves," which depicts a demure golden-haired girl, with her face shaded by a large hat. The abstract lines and prodigious flounces of her dress, display Lempicka's distinctive style.

A fitting collection for a monumental figure.

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