

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

527 West 29th Street New York NY 10001

Tel 212-925-6190 Fax 212-334-9139

info@davidnolangallery.com

www.davidnolangallery.com

The New York Times

Art in Review

Published: October 15, 2009

GEORGE GROSZ

'The Years in America: 1933-1958'

David Nolan

527 West 29th Street, Chelsea

Through Oct. 31

George Grosz will always be remembered as a gleefully vitriolic satirist of bourgeois complacency and political corruption during the years of the Weimar Republic. Yet for more than half his artistic life he lived in the United States, returning to Berlin just a few months before he died.

This fascinating, sad show and its large, excellently produced accompanying book reveal much about why his American sojourn has been overlooked: the exhibition presents an artist who, in the absence of immediate targets for his rage and indignation, lost his way.

The most compelling works are surrealistic meditations on war and devastation in Europe. An oil painting titled "Cain or Hitler in Hell" (1944) shows Hitler sitting in a dark, fiery landscape with a pile of little skeletons at his feet. Mopping his sweating brow, he seems oddly sympathetic, as though Grosz were projecting his own sense of loss and grief onto him. "The Grey Man Dances" (1949), in which a crazed, scarecrowlike figure does a jig with a ruined cityscape in the background, suggests infuriated creative impotence.

In the United States, Grosz taught at the Art Students League, produced book and magazine illustrations, and summered on Cape Cod with his wife and children. Drawings of nude women among the dunes are saccharine but touching. On the other hand, Dada-style collages from 1957 representing monstrously distorted people suggest that he never entirely lost his scabrous sense of humor. **KEN JOHNSON**