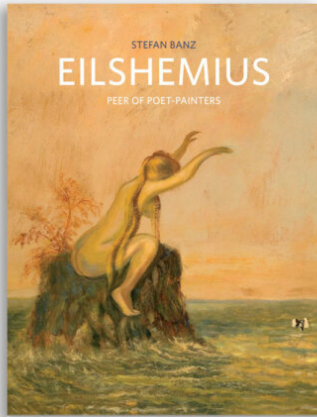


LOUIS MICHEL EILSHEMIUS

PEER OF POET-PAINTERS



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RETROSPECTIVE MONOGRAPH

Louis Michel Eilshemius (1864–1941) was practically unknown to the general public until Marcel Duchamp discovered him in the famous first exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists at the Grand Central Palace in New York in 1917. Duchamp and Katherine S. Dreier organized his first solo exhibitions in a public institution at the now legendary Société Anonyme in New York in 1920 and 1924. Eilshemius's name was suddenly on everyone's lips: some of the most prominent art critics of the time wrote about him, and some of America's most influential collectors began to take an interest in his work. Eilshemius himself, exhausted and frustrated by his years of failure, and having grown increasingly eccentric (and perhaps also somewhat confused by the sudden change in the reception of his art), gave up painting in 1921. His works, on the other hand, received ever-greater recognition and were exhibited in the most reputable galleries of New York; between 1932 and his death in 1941 there were more than 30 exhibitions of his work.

Although today many museums in the United States and collectors of international renown possess works by Eilshemius, the artist has faded into ever-greater obscurity, especially since the advent of Pop and Minimal art. Eilshemius perfectly exemplifies—in an age of mass-oriented biennials and art fairs—the idea of the individualist who resolutely goes his own way; this is one of the reasons that his work today appears more contemporary than ever.

This book brings together works from over 70 institutions and private collections, providing the reader with a profound insight into the oeuvre of this unusual artist. In an expansive essay, Stefan Banz examines for the first time the questions of whether and to what extent Eilshemius influenced Duchamp's artistic thinking.

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