

Akim Monet Fine Arts, LLC



George GROSZ (1893 - 1959)

Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven

Reed, and pen and ink
23 1/4 x 18 1/8 in (59,2 x 46,1 cm)

1941

Annotated „Hello Central give me Heaven" bottom right and „to Ben Hecht 1001 Afternoon" bottom left. Inscribed „p. 224" top left and numbered 244 top right and 46 bottom right
Stamped on the reverse "GEORGE GROSZ NACHLASS" and numbered 4-51-4

PROVENANCE

The Estate of George Grosz

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LITERATURE

Ben Hecht, illustrated by George Grosz, "1001 Afternoons in New York," Viking Press New York, 1941, Illustration for the chapter "Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven" p. 224

Ben Hecht, „1001 Nachmittage in New York." Insel Taschenbuch 1323, Insel Verlag Frankfurt am Main und Leipzig. Illustration for the chapter „Hallo Zentrale, verbinden Sie mich mit dem Himmel" p. 252

AUTHENTICATION

This work will be included in the forthcoming catalogue raisonné of works on paper by George Grosz in preparation by Ralph Jentsch, managing director of the George Grosz Estate

EXHIBITED

Disruptive selection, Fall 2019, Popcorn Gallery Akim Monet Fine Arts, Los Angeles

FRAMING

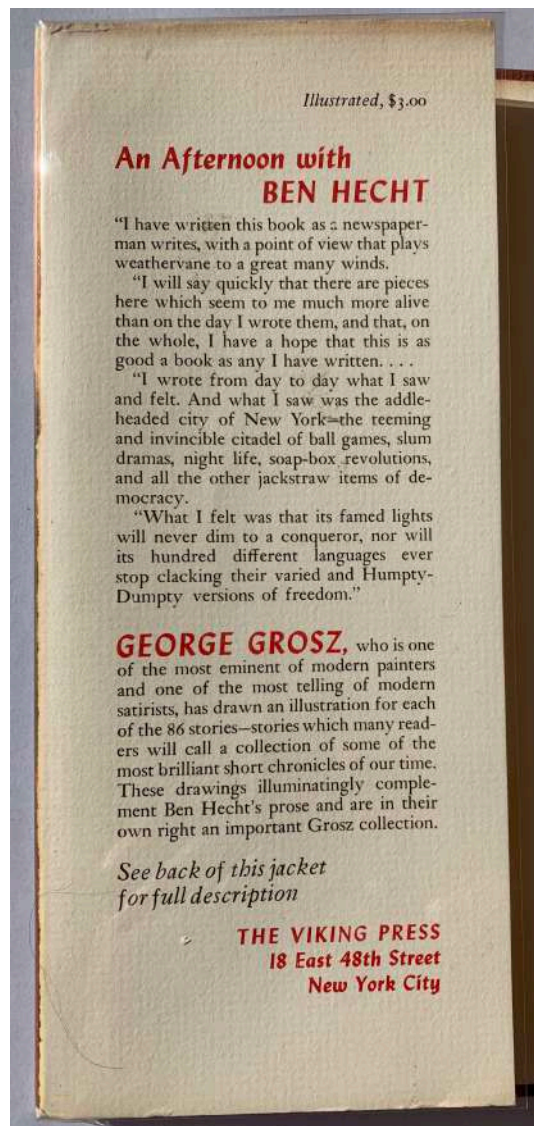
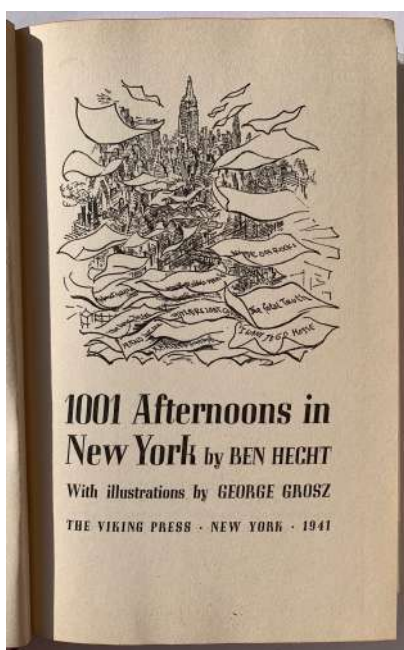
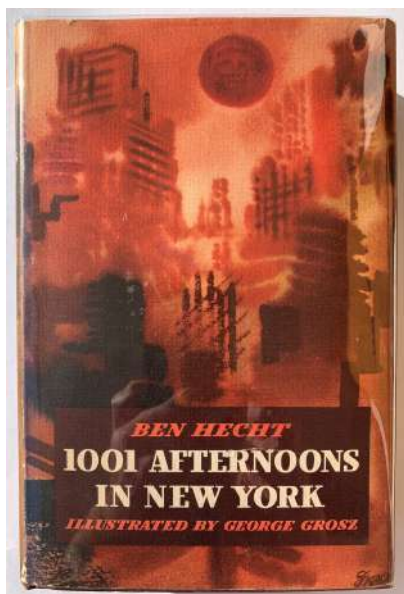


The "Berliner Leiste" designates a frame type that originated between 1830 and 1880.

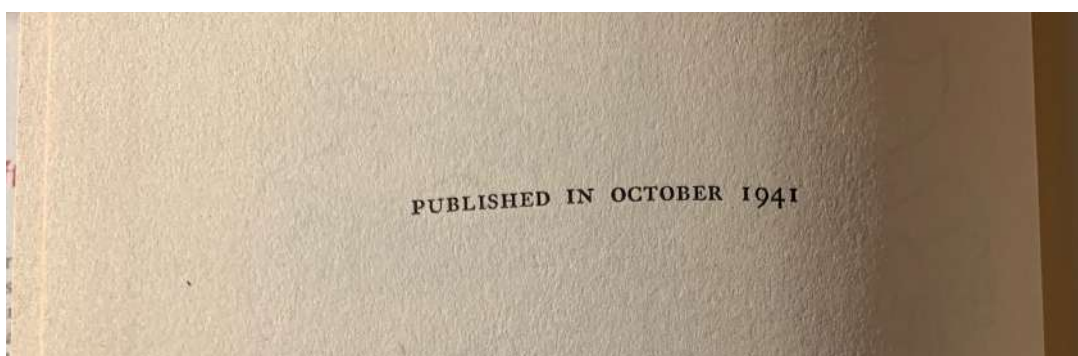
It is a classic Biedermeier frame, which has a lot of charm due to its simple, elegant profile and is also suitable for modern graphics and painting.

The picture frames are silver plated and coated with shellac. As a silver profile, the "Berliner Leiste" is extremely effective.

The edge is often painted in ocher – or sometimes left natural.



Ben Hecht, illustrated by George Grosz, "1001 Afternoons in New York," Viking Press New York, 1941





Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven

It was my original intention to do some considerable prying into the matter—the matter being the telephone number CIRCLE 6-6483. But I began to feel there has been too much prying into the meaning of God and vastly too much investigation of His existence. He has become almost a name for the Missing Persons Bureau. What profit is there in tracking

down another of His false addresses? Therefore I will leave the business to city editors and other atheists.

As the matter now stands Circle 6-6483 is God's phone number. If you call this number any hour of the day or night a somber female voice will answer. And if you say to this voice: "I understand you have a message for me," it will reply that it has, and a very important one. It will then recite a brief passage from the Bible and give you the message. Not give, but rather reveal it—for the voice is slow and hieratic.

You will learn that certain personal calamities are in store for you because of some sin you are contemplating. There is no admonition to forgo your Satanic ways; merely a sad, gentle promise of disaster.

I have interviewed a number of persons who have called Circle 6-6483 and received a message. Quite a few of them were disturbed. They explained that, of course, nobody but a nut would sit all day and night answering phone calls and giving out messages to total strangers. Yet how did this voice know they were about to commit a sin? One young lady had telephoned on the eve of a rendezvous and as a result had locked herself in her room, disconnected the phone, cold-creamed her face, and gone to bed early and alone.

I know some psychiatrists who will smile at this whole business and be ready with a complete and perhaps authentic diagnosis not only of the voice but of all those who call it up. And unquestionably the skeptics who are forever chasing God out of His hiding places will have at this voice, track it down, and frighten it away. If I were Mayor La Guardia I would do my best to prevent this. I would put a cordon of police, pious ones, around the block the voice inhabits and meet all iconoclasts with a night stick. His Honor would only

be emulating the attitude of the most profound Greek thinkers toward the Voice of Delphi.

I myself have made the call to Circle 6-6483. In none of the churches I have attended did I ever feel so close to the presence of Mystery as during our conversation. The message I received was of an extremely personal nature and left me thoughtful. I was surprised at the insight the voice had revealed into my secret world. I hadn't even given my name.

Yet this seemed logical enough on second thought. God usually dispenses with such social matters as names and addresses. As for the insight into my secret world, that is also not difficult to understand. It does not take a particularly bright God to know that we are all sinners and that our sins are as identical as our noses. And if He spoke this time in a female voice with a slight Scandinavian accent, I recall that He has communicated in much more eccentric ways in our history.

It may be that Circle 6-6483 is the beginning of a new sect or cult. If so, I can see a remarkable future for it, provided Mayor La Guardia does his bit. For in these days when the appointed representatives of God in our town are so suspect, when the mysteries of Heaven have become so clouded with drives for money and all manner of secular ruses for egging the half pious out of the movie palaces into the churches, how arresting is a voice of God that is no more concrete than a telephone number. And how penetrant and effective is such a voice that speaks out of nowhere and addresses itself without theological to-do to our wayward souls. Such a voice, did it have a large enough switchboard, could serve millions. It could restore to us our fear of damnation more than a multitude of sermons.

Politicians who are too busy to enter the tabernacles, public-opinion-molders who fear the derision of their disciples if they are found playing religious hocus-pocus on the Sabbath, the notable and the anonymous who have been weaned from their faiths by the cynicisms of our time—all these would find a curious profit and enlargement from the voice.

I recommend it also to Charles Lindbergh and Madam Lindbergh and Senator Wheeler and to those other more dubious characters who are their associates and who have heard no voice but that of Wilhelmstrasse for much too long a time.

Gather round the telephone booths, ye faithful, nickel in hand, and make your calls before it is too late. For God is never more than a transient in our midst and evangelizing these days brings more impious cops than worshipers to any altar.

1001 Afternoons in New York

BY BEN HECHT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE GROSZ

It has been many years since Ben Hecht, one of the most versatile and ingenious of reporters, last hunched his shoulders over a city-room typewriter. He has been walking the fabulous heights of Broadway and Hollywood, and probably he would never have returned if the newspaper *PM* had not tempted him with an offer no true reporter could resist. New York was to be his assignment, and he was to write anything he pleased. The result has been a column of anecdote and adventure, personalities and politics, wit and satire, that harks back to the rich days of American journalism when William Bolitho was writing for the *World* and Carl Sandburg was turning out editorials for the *Chicago Daily News*.

The reader will find here a meeting with Sherwood Anderson before he sailed off to his death; a breath-taking picture of the Nazi as the persecuted Jew of the future; a raffish portrait of Gene Fowler; Harpo Marx in an unexpected role; the strange tale of the Russian engineer who was put through Columbia University by a Bowery panhandler. From the pages of this book emerges the form of our modern Babel and of the crazy, indomitable people who inhabit it.

1001 Afternoons in New York is a grab-bag of surprises and excitements. It will remind many who open it of its elder brother, *1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, which was a sensation of twenty years ago and a bestseller for the decade thereafter.

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Detail

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George GROSZ (1893 - 1959)

"George Grosz gave a fantastic testimony of Berlin life during a terrible period, divided between fascism and communism. He was active in the communist party but had an anarchist's fascination for the characters of underground life. Military figures, prostitutes and violence abound, and fascinate the viewer [...] this meant he instinctively rooted his art in the common people. It also explains, I think, why caricature and graphic design in magazines and newspapers held such an appeal for him."

Quote of Mario Vargas Llosa
'You nourish yourself with everything you hate', George Grosz, in TATE ETC. Magazine (Spring 2007)