

Paul Cadmus: The Male Nude

Justin Spring



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One of the most accomplished artists of the twentieth century, Paul Cadmus is best known for his provocative satires of American life. He first gained national recognition in 1934 when his bawdy painting "The Fleet's In!" was barred from a Public Works of Art exhibition in Washington, D.C. For more than six decades following, Cadmus led a career as a meticulous craftsman devoted to Renaissance-era traditions of figurative realism. But his drawings of the male nude, which always formed the heart of his work, were often overlooked. Here for the first time in one volume are seventy of Cadmus's most stunning tributes to the male form. Cadmus continued to produce these works up until his death at age ninety-four, and this volume includes many drawings that have never been seen before. The artist's most frequent model was his lifelong partner Jon Anderson, and the drawings offer up not just an elegant fluency and technical virtuosity but also a tender emotional resonance. Introducing each era of the artist's career is an illustrated essay by respected critic and writer Justin Spring, placing Cadmus in the context of the rich history of the male nude. Paul Cadmus reminds us-- poignantly, eloquently, humbly-- of the sincere beauty of the male form and of humanity itself with each masterful rendering. As Guy Davenport wrote in "The Drawings of Paul Cadmus," "His drawings of male nudes are of bodies, but of achieved, perfected bodies that serve as symbols, as in ancient Greece, of a perfect unity of spirit and flesh, mind and body. For Cadmus the body" is "the person."

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