

Franz Marc

Religion, Art and Modern Europe

By Liana Marie Sive

Maria was an artist whose purposes sometimes converged with Franz's and sometimes required room of their own. Their relationship gives this book its central question: how did artistic freedom become possible, and what did its exercise require of other people? A collector's advance could protect the painter's choice of pictures. A collaborator could prepare a text for print and then oppose its publication. Each freedom involved people whose agreement could not be assumed. Across these relationships, the biography follows the passage from a conviction to the work, resources, and recognition needed to act upon it. Religious belief, economic arrangements, political institutions, and the making of pictures enter the same history. Its subject is the freedom people could secure, contest, and use, together with the consequences for those whose own purposes that freedom affected.

The composition resembles a kaleidoscope: familiar elements form different patterns as the angle of attention changes. *Yellow Cow*, painted in 1911, returns under three questions. Chapter 8 follows the terms of its sale in 1915; Chapter 12 returns to its color and preparatory studies; Chapter 24 follows the sale into a later edition of the letters. These are different moments in the life of one painting. The correspondence of 1915 illuminates its later history without supplying motives for every earlier decision.

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