



Slapstick Modernism: Chaplin to Kerouac to Iggy Pop

William Solomon

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Slapstick comedy landed like a pie in the face of twentieth-century culture. Pratfalls and nyuk-nyuks percolated alongside literary modernism throughout the 1920s and 1930s before slapstick found explosive expression in postwar literature, experimental film, and popular music. William Solomon charts the origins and evolution of what he calls slapstick modernism --a merging of artistic experimentation with the socially disruptive lunacy made by the likes of Charlie Chaplin. Romping through texts, films, and theory, Solomon embarks on a harum-scarum intellectual odyssey from high modernism to the late modernism of the Beats and Burroughs before a head-on crash into the raw power of punk rock. Throughout, he shows the links between the experimental writers and silent screen performers of the early century, and explores the potent cultural undertaking that drew inspiration from anarchical comedy after World War Two.

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