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Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) was the most original British painter of his era. This catalogue celebrates the achievements of an artist who continued to explore and develop over five decades." "By 1914, aged only twenty-two, Spencer had completed a series of important religious works set in the Thameside village of his childhood. He experienced the First World War as a loss of Eden, yet his art was opened to complexities unguessed at in his Cookham innocence. An essay by Patrick Wright focuses on Spencer in the 1920s, uncovering a new cultural milieu and pointing to hidden themes in the murals he painted for Burchclere Chapel. Timothy Hyman charts Spencer's work as a process of autobiographical revelation, tracing his transition from the monumental Christian idealism of Giotto to his confrontation with raw reality and sexual fantasy in the crisis years of the 1930s. Both essays locate Spencer alongside his contemporaries, such as Otto Dix, Max Beckmann and Diego Rivera. Reproducing a large selection of his finest works, including several that are little known, this book offers fresh perspectives based on current research and presents a ground-breaking survey of the artist.