

Art of the 20th Century

Dorothea Eimert

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The 20th century was a revolutionary period in art history. In the span of a few short years, Modernism exploded into being, disrupting centuries of classical figurative tradition to create something entirely new. This astoundingly thorough survey of art's modern era showcases all of the key artistic movements of the 20th century, from Fauvism to Pop Art, featuring illustrative examples of some of the most renowned works of the era along with illuminating companion essays by expert critics and art historians. A vivid window into the collective psyche of the modern world's great artists, Art of the 20th Century is a must-have for any fan of contemporary art.

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Dorothea Eimert

Art and Architecture of the 20th Century



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Henri Rousseau, *Self-Portrait*, 1890.
Oil on canvas, 146 × 113 cm. Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague.

Introduction

A New View of the World – Technology and the Natural Sciences Change the Mechanistic World View

In the 20th century, cultural revolutions and counter-revolutions followed one another in rapid succession, and with this, the boundaries and the possibilities of artistic expression were explored to the outer limits. The divergent kaleidoscope of languages in the visual arts developed with (and was challenged by) the resulting extreme confrontations; but the overarching, all-encompassing style, which had crystallised in other centuries, was still missing. A variety of turbulent political developments, economic and social changes, technical advancement, and scientific discoveries, the wars and political tensions, as well as the rapidly advancing industrialisation had, at the close of the 19th century, led to a significant change in the existing view of the world, and to an increasing degree, a transformation of the prevailing ethical constructs. The discoveries in the natural sciences, primarily in chemistry, physics, and medicine had a huge impact on practically every person by providing a higher quality of life.

Visual habits changed with the introduction of the car, radio, and telephone because of the new speeds and the manner of seeing things from great heights, from aircraft, hot air balloons, and from tall buildings.

Scientific research, and the discoveries which resulted, radically altered the way people conceptualised the world around them. In 1895, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered Röntgen rays, better known as X-rays, and suddenly, it was possible to see inside of a person. In 1900, Max Planck developed with quantum theory, which contradicted the very basis of traditional physics. In the same year, the world was shaken by the psychoanalytic interpretations of Sigmund Freud, giving further insight into a person's innermost feelings and motivations. Shortly thereafter, Hermann Minkowski developed the mathematical model to describe the space-time dimension, which in turn led his student, Albert Einstein, to develop his famous theory of general relativity.

Since around 1890, fundamental changes have occurred in the art of Western cultures. These developments were born from the desire for pure, unconditional vision. Over the years, it was no longer visual improvement of an object that was the goal of artistic expression, but rather the depiction of the 'second reality'. Therefore, that reality (which we cannot recognise and experience with the five senses alone) became the goal of artistic creation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, trends began to emerge that began to diverge from a naturalistic conception of reality and set out to explore beneath the mere superficial appearance of things. Regardless of the multitude of stylistic backgrounds in individual Western countries, everywhere, the new realisation that a work of art ought no longer to be made in the spirit of the old aesthetics of imitation, as if taken from nature, but rather rise from its own independent dimension of existence. A work of art is now autonomous.

The inner mission of the artist was no longer to portray or interpret, as in the previous centuries, for photography had perfected that aim. Invented and developed by two Frenchmen, Jacques Mandé Daguerre and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, between 1822 and 1838, photography increasingly competed with painting as a means to document events and to depict situations. However, it was also helpful to artists as an aid to a broadened vision.

Almost all modernist artistic movements received their momentum from the new visual relationship to the non-stationary object that had suddenly revealed itself to be a mobile and

fragmented. Despite the artistic developments of individual countries, all innovative artists were united in the common search for a new graphic style of movement, one which encompassed a sense of autonomous colour creation and an abstract language of independent forms. In 1905, the Fauves, the new wild ones, displayed their subversive explosions of colour at the Salon d'Automne in Paris.

Expressionism started in Germany in 1905 with the founding of the Dresden artist group, Die Brücke. In 1907, Paris dedicated an extensive exhibition to the works of Paul Cézanne. It was at this exhibit that Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso came into contact with the gray shades of Cubism, which rejected the perspective of the Renaissance, fragmented the visual world, and radically separated the world of painting from that of natural phenomenon. In 1911, the Cubists exhibited for the first time at the Paris Salon d'Automne. The same year in Paris, Robert Delaunay developed Orphism, which sought to give colours their autonomy. In Italy, Emilio Filippo Tommaso Marinetti founded Futurism, a vocal movement that infused the visual world with a net of dynamic energy. His first manifesto was published in February 1909 in Paris. The Futurist painters announced their first manifestos in 1910. In 1909, the Neue Künstlervereinigung (New Artists' Association) was formed in Munich. Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) would later emerge from this around the intellectual centre of Kandinsky and Marianne von Werefkin. In early 1912, a touring exhibit of Futurist painters began in Paris that would trigger a veritable avalanche of explosive painting genres in almost all Western-oriented countries.

The phenomenon of the unconscious became general knowledge through the writings of Sigmund Freud in the years around 1900 and subsequently by Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung. Like the former customs officer Henri Rousseau or Marc Chagall, painters depicted the visual kingdom of the soul and wrote fairy tale-like stories. Artists like Max Ernst, Francis Bacon, Salvador Dali, and René Magritte painted the heights and depths of the unconscious. In the case of James Ensor, personal fears played a role as well, compulsive delusions, hallucinations, and death fantasies. Eventually, James Ensor became the great mentor for the art of the 1980s with respect to the routine association with the hallucinatory and in the method of intuitive depiction and imagery. In general, the works of great painters have always been based on the experience of the human soul, as the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, Jan van Eyck, Francisco Goya, Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent van Gogh, or Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec underscore.

An additional topic which was of particular interest to art and science at the close of the 19th and the opening of the 20th centuries was the affect of invisible phenomenon in matter and in nature. Scientific discoveries fundamentally changed the view of space and matter. As a result of the evidence proving the existence of electromagnetic waves provided by Heinrich Rudolf Hertz in 1888 and the discovery of practical wireless telegraphic transmission in 1900, the layperson gained the impression that space was now full of imperceptible, oscillating waves. The assumption was that every piece of matter was radioactive and emits particles into the surrounding space.

Artists and writers reacted strongly to the new paradigms for seeing and communicating. *L'Evolution de la matière* by Gustave Le Bon was the decisive best-selling work in spreading these ideas. The French astronomer, Camille Flammarion, in his book, *L'Inconnu* called for science to study the 'mysterious phenomenon' such as telepathy, because reality does not correspond to the limits of our knowledge and observations. At that time, one associated occult phenomenon with scientific findings: x-rays with clairvoyance, telepathy with wireless telegraphy, and radioactivity with alchemy.



André Derain, *Le Séchage des voiles*, 1905.

Oil on canvas, 82 × 101 cm. I. A. Morosov collection, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Expression and Fragmentation

Matisse and the Wild Beasts in Paris: The Fauves and the Autonomy of Colour

‘For us colours became cartridges of dynamite. They should discharge light,’ said André Derain. As a reaction to the nuance-rich, atmospheric whirring of colour of the Impressionists, the Fauves discovered, along with their main representatives like André Derain, Henri Matisse and Maurice Vlaminck, that the painted image can go beyond reality. As an early attempt at liberation from the centuries-long tradition, it serves as an image of reality to be referred to or to be interpreted. For the first time in the history of art, a painting appeared on stage that was satisfied by and beholden only to itself. The goal was to reproduce the emotional experience of nature and situations solely by use of colour. ‘We went straight to the colour,’ said Derain. Bright, unmixed shades, squeezed directly out of the paint tube, made their way onto the canvas. The Fauves worked with an intensity which had been unheard of before then, and their ability to provoke was further enhanced by their widespread use of colour. At their first exhibit in 1905 at the Paris Salon d’Automne, this tremendous joy found in the sensuality of colours earned the artists the name Les Fauves (the Wild Beasts), intended as an epithet from the art critic, Louis de Vauxcelles.

Their leading figure, the strongest creative and independent artistic personality among them, was the former lawyer, Henri Matisse. With apparent matter-of-factness, he ignored tradition and the accepted norms the use of colour and about how a painting was supposed to be organised. He created a painting with simple, decorative paint surfaces, surrounding the viewer with a magical lightness. According to Matisse, one must start with ‘the courage to rediscover the purity of the method.’ Matisse thought of an art of equilibrium, an art of peace and purity without distracting representational qualities. He dreamed of an art that was its own being, a painting, not a copy, not decoration. In 1908, his essay, ‘Notes of a Painter’ became one of the most influential manifestos by an artist in the 20th century. In it he states:

I dream of an art of equilibrium, of purity, of tranquillity... of an art that is a sedative for everyone, a rest for the brain, something like a good easy chair in which one can rest from physical exertions.

From his hand arose a kind of paradise. Imperceptibly, the viewer is engulfed by the warmth of splendid colours and a sense of deep satisfaction. Matisse painted still-lives and interiors. He painted people in contemplation and in their own environment, individuals uninhibited in their natural surroundings. He never concerned himself with commercial or industrial subjects. His ever-enduring subject was nature, untouched by human hand.

An early example of this is *Harmony in Red* from the year 1908, which was acquired by the Russian merchant and collector, Sergei Shchukin, who acquainted the artists of his own country with it. We see a salon in red. The table and the wallpaper are in the same red. Even the large floral tendril pattern is red. So the table and the wall weave into one another and become one. Any possible perspective becomes blurred. A fine horizontal line timidly indicates the borders. Only on one table edge that is marked by the apron of the female figure does the eye find a perspective to hold onto. The view through the window, cut into the side, acts like a view onto a green poster. The fruits on the table do not show an orderly still life. Thrown together just as if they had fallen from a tree, they confidently decorate the table. With this painting, Matisse refers to his early work from the years 1896–1897 using the same subject in the representational perspective. The subject

also shows him to be familiar with historic masterpieces. The painting structure and the window view correspond to paintings that depict interiors of the Renaissance such as, for example, Diego Velázquez.



Henri Matisse, *Harmony in Red*, 1908.

Oil on canvas, 180 × 220 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.



Henri Matisse, *La Danse*, 1909–1910.
Oil on canvas, 260 × 391 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.



Henri Matisse, *Joie de vivre*, 1905–1906.
Oil on canvas, 175 × 241 cm. The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.

In *Harmony in Red*, it is already apparent that the simple and matter of fact juxtaposition of colour will become indicative of Matisse's style. This painting structure of surface next to surface without the suggestion of perspective influenced quite a number of artists in the 20th century. After acquiring the painting, *Harmony in Red*, Shchukin commissioned two paintings from Matisse for his house in Moscow themed 'Dance' and 'Music'. They were almost twice as big as their predecessor with a height of 2.6 metres and almost 4 metres wide. Matisse painted them from the late months of 1909 until the summer of 1910. In *Dance*, five oversized figures perform an ecstatic dance on a hill. The rhythm is denoted by how their arms and legs bend and curve. Their naked, red, glowing bodies dance in a circle on a blue and green background. At first, the paintings provoked dismay.

The arrangement of the painting was of an almost austere simplicity. The background had only two colours and five red bodies. It is indeed because of this lack of pretension that the painting exudes the grandeur of the moment, the charm and grace in ecstasy, the infinite quality of the universe in the scene being depicted. Even today, after nearly one hundred years, fascination and deep emotional impact still grip the viewer.

Dance was preceded by a large painting that Matisse had done during the winter of 1905–1906, namely, *Joie de vivre*. This was his only contribution to the 1906 Salon des Indépendants. Due to its dimensions and its bright colours, it caused anger and drew attention. Paul Signac, who at that time the vice president of the Indépendants, reacted with irritation and wrote a friend disparagingly and with disappointment about the artistic result:

Matisse, whose experiments I have until now liked, seems to have gone to the dogs. On a canvas with a width of about two and half meters, he surrounded a few odd figures with a line as thick as a thumb. Then he covered the whole thing with clear defined colours, which, as pure as they may be, appeared repulsive.

Sixteen nude figures, grouped themselves in a clearing, some lie, some stand, and others whirl in a dance. A smooth rhythm runs through the composition. The dancing flow of the lines through the figures and the surrounding nature envelopes the setting in a rhythmic equilibrium, permitting man and nature to become one. *Joie de vivre* is today one of the important early works of the artist. It is a great achievement.

Even late in life, Matisse kept his innovative freshness. 'What I create, what I form, has its purpose therein that I create it, that I form it, and if filled with the joy that I get from my work – my work?' Gotthard Jedlicka, who visited him near Nice, responded to Matisse:

The person playing in the purest fashion is the child, because it becomes wrapped up in its game. I also play with scissors as a child and also just like a child, I also do not ask what will result from the game that provides me with such precious hours.



Raoul Dufy, *Les Affiches à Trouville*, 1906. Oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm.
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Out of this would result the masterpieces of concentrated simplification, his later *Papiers découpés*. In their purity of form and their colour, they are unbelievably beautiful. 'To cut out coloured paper means to give colour shape. To cut directly into colour reminds me of the immediacy of a sculptor working with stone.' Although Matisse did not make sculptures, he modelled in plaster and clay. As a painter who created sculptures, he is, next to Pablo Picasso, one of the greatest of the century. The Chapel of the Rosary in Vence is the synthesis of his artistic work. It was almost entirely realised according to his designs. The murals of *The Passion of Christ*, *Mary with Child*, and *St Dominic* are among his masterpieces. With simple, abbreviated lines merely outlining the images, he illustrated his religious beliefs.

'We have a need for something that is truer than merely seeing; one must create the world of the power that one does not see' – this was the goal of Raoul Dufy. Dufy combined the ease of the Impressionists with the colourful splendour of the Fauves. In 1906, he painted *Les Affiches à Trouville*. The writing on the billboards, a waving flag, and strolling couples depict a cheerful, whirling atmosphere, conveying an essence of a moment. The strong, contradictory colour underscores the charming everyday scene. The paintings from the later part of his career act like decorations, as notations of reality; they exude grace and cheerfulness.

André Derain is one of the first Fauves. He justifiably became famous with his depictions of the Thames from 1905–1906. However, soon thereafter he followed the experiments of the Cubists like Braque and Picasso, but after 1912 took up a more classical style. He became a well-known scene painter for the stage and ballet.

After visiting the Van Gogh exhibit in 1901 at the Galerie Bernheim, Maurice de Vlaminck is said to have uttered the now famous remark: 'Van Gogh means more to me than father and mother.'

A wide, intense and thick application of paint distinguishes Vlaminck's paintings. He pressed the paints directly from the tube onto the canvas. His unconventional method of painting marks his signature dynamic whirlwind of colour like no other of the Fauves. The act of painting, as he expressed it, was comparable for him to the act of making love.

Henri Manguin from Paris, Albert Marquet from Bordeaux, Charles Camoin from Marseille, Jean Puy from the vicinity of Lyon, and the four artists from the Channel coast hovered around the three central personalities of Dufy, Derain, and Vlaminck for varying lengths of time throughout their careers. The four Channel coast artists were Georges Braque, Raoul Dufy, Emile-Othon Friesz and Louis Valtat, as well as the only non-Frenchman, the Dutchman Kees van Dongen.

Marquet's work distinguishes itself through its simplicity and reserve. He painted numerous views of Paris and the Seine, harbour scenes, seaside scenes with strolling people, and scenes of streets decorated with flags. The rivers with its ships, the water surface as a playground for light, and the view from a high vantage point, are the recurring themes of his work. This kaleidoscope of Fauvist virtuosity without the optical unity of a unified style is rooted in the varying backgrounds of the artists. The Symbolism of Gustave Moreau had served Matisse and Marquet as their primary guide. Vlaminck was inspired by pre-Expressionist magazine illustrations. Toulouse-Lautrec inspired Kees van Dongen, and the father of modernist art himself, Paul Cézanne, inspired Derain and Friesz. Yet the spacious, two-dimensional colour painting of Paul Gauguin also influenced them greatly. One should not forget the lasting influence of Japanese coloured woodcuts that had already caught the attention of Gauguin and Toulouse-Lautrec, as well as the aim for compositional simplification, as Manet had already produced in his paintings. Yet, even during the short-lived height of the Fauvism between 1905 and 1907, Braque was already moving in the direction of Cubism.

The colour theory of the Neo-Impressionist Signac, whose theories were espoused in his book, *Eugène Delacroix au Néoimpressionisme*, published in 1899, was of decisive importance for the development of the colour language of Fauvism. The movement to increase awareness of the new way of seeing also had its origins in medical-physiological findings regarding the human eye, specifically, that the eye, perpetually moving, sends inverted images to the retina which only become properly organised in the brain. Moreover, psychology emphasised that one's internal disposition has a great affect on the way that we perceive the physical world.



Maurice de Vlaminck, *Vue de la Seine*, 1905–1906.
Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 65.5 cm.
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.



Kees van Dongen, *Spring*, c. 1908.
Oil on canvas, 81 × 100.5 cm.
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

Primarily, the painting style of the Fauves was encouraged and influenced by the retrospectives of their role models held since 1901, which earned great attention. These three great painters, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin, who found new ways of visual expression, also acted as the forefathers of modernist art. The discovery of African sculpture also had a lasting influence. In 1904, Vlaminck brought back a large mask and two statuettes from his travels to the Ivory Coast. Derain was speechless when he saw the white mask, and Picasso and Matisse were also deeply moved.

In 1908, Henri Matisse founded the Académie Matisse. Among his students were the Swedish couple, Isaac Grünewald and Sigrid Hjerten-Grünewald, who later were associated with the Sturm in Berlin. Subsequently, they introduced Fauvism and Expressionism to their own country. The American, Max Weber, was also a student of Matisse and brought Fauvism and Cubism to New York. Among the Germans at the Académie Matisse were Oskar and Marg Moll, Rudolf Levy, Franz Nölken, Hans Purrmann and Friedrich Ahlers-Hestermann. Matisse closed his academy in 1911. Certainly not all artists were deeply moved by the liberating power, impetuosity and emotional painting of the Fauves. Pierre Bonnard, after all, remained an outlier of the movement, as did Maurice Denis and Edouard Vuillard. Early on, Denis recognised the importance of the Fauves, as one can discern from a letter written in 1905. ‘What we have here is a painting style that has been divorced from any coincidence. This painting style is pure painting... What is being done here is the primeval search for the absolute.’

Georges Rouault, who became known as a religious painter, remained something of an artistic loner for his whole life. Only for a short time did he feel that he was loosely associated with the

Fauves. His surprisingly heavy and expressive painting style varies significantly from the relaxed cheerfulness of the Fauves, with whom he jointly exhibited in 1905 at the Salon d'Automne. Rouault's manner of expression was greatly influenced by his experience as an apprentice with a stained glass maker at age 14. Broad, strong brush strokes, with dark colours are indicative of his paintings, both demarcating and conjoining like the stained glass windows of the Middle Ages, where the lead, for example, joins the individual pieces of coloured glass as 'construction scaffolding.' His Expressionism reached its first peak in the years 1905 and 1906. His main themes then were circus figures such as *Clown and Box Seats*. In later years portraits and religious subjects were the focus of his paintings.



André Derain, *Le Château (Cagnes)*, c. 1910.

Oil on canvas, 87 × 66 cm. Drawings department, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.



Albert Marquet, *Le Port de Honfleur*, c. 1911.

Oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm. Drawings department, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Paula Modersohn-Becker and Tranquillity in Worpswede

Fritz Mackensen, Otto Modersohn and Hans am Ende moved in 1889 to the small, undisturbed village of Worpswede bordering the Teufelsmoor north of Bremen. Modelling themselves after the French artists, Camille Corot, Théodor Rousseau and Charles-François Daubigny at the Barbizon school, they created a working and living community. As Otto Modersohn confided in his diary and in similar fashion to his fellow painters in southern Germany, at Dachau, the goal of the Worpswede artists was to put a deep poetic feeling for nature into the painting. Eventually, more young painters, tired of the big cities, joined the artists' community, such as Fritz Overbeck in 1893, Heinrich Vogeler in 1894 and finally Clara Westhoff and her future husband, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. An artist colony arose that in the course of time attracted different artists and that to this day welcomes artists of various genres.

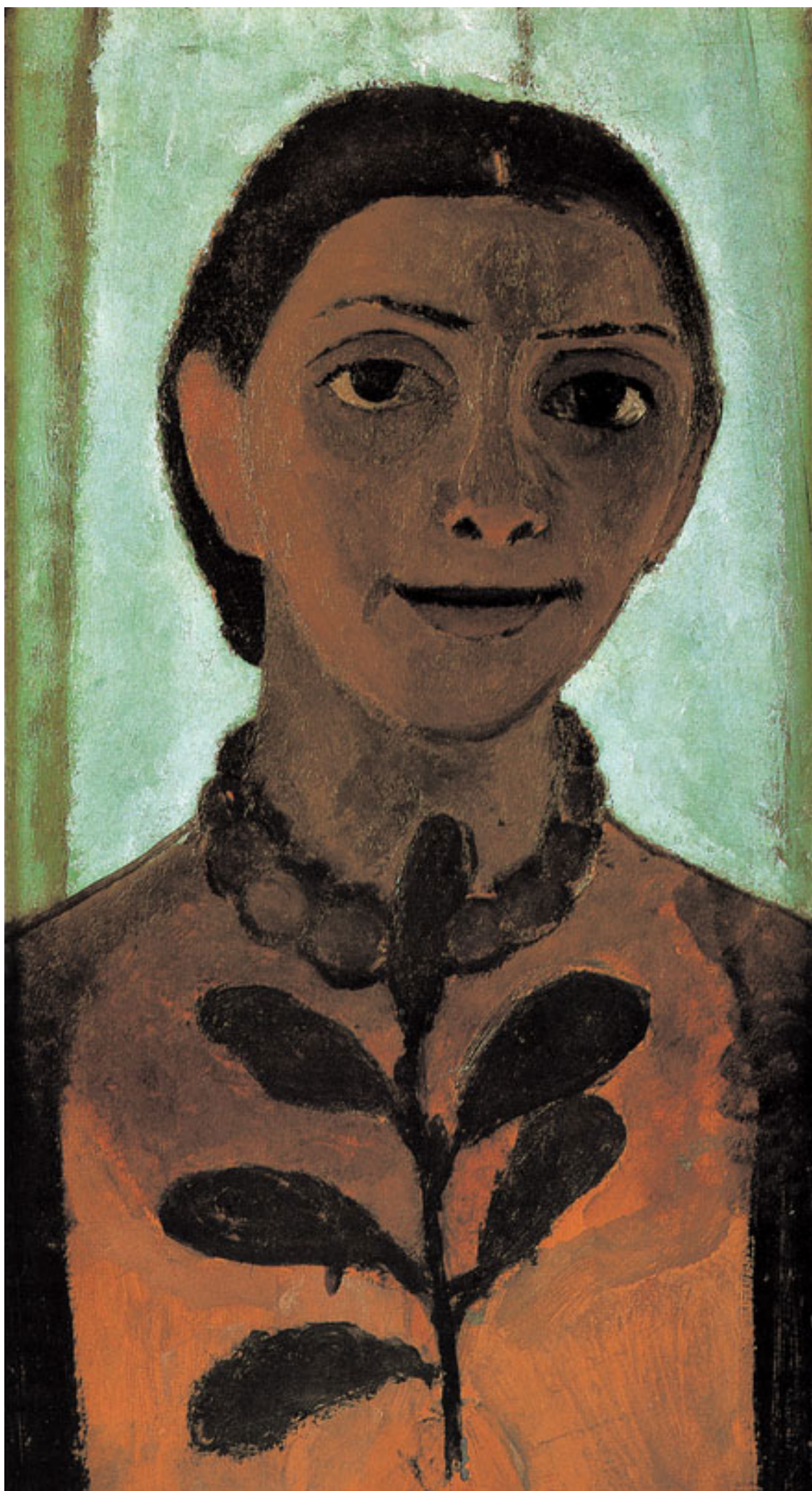
These painters, who had fled the traditionalism of the art academies, sought to paint the deep, intimate experience of nature. They sought to paint impressions of nature like the clear light and sunsets over the moor, or the fleeting clouds over the Teufelsmoor. The basic tendency in their painting style was towards the lyrical and restrained. They did not want to be critical. Rather, they sought in open nature to find transcendence, the ideal life. The painter, Paula Becker from Dresden, who had studied art in Bremen, London and Berlin, joined in 1898. At Worpswede she found many kindred spirits and her great love. In September 1900, she secretly got engaged to Otto Modersohn, who had lost his first wife shortly before. In the following year, the already famous painter, Otto Modersohn, married the young, unknown Paula Becker. Her first portraits and studies of the moor and birch forest landscape were influenced by Impressionism. They, however, already showed the signs of a reduced painting structure and the departure from the illusion of space.

The nature-inspired sensual expression of her colleagues at Worpswede did not satisfy Paula Modersohn-Becker. She recognised that the important ideas were only to be found in the artistic centre of Paris. She soon fled the limited possibilities of Worpswede. In 1900 she travelled to Paris where she was first exposed to the artistic avant-garde. She was intoxicated by the atmosphere and sensory impressions of Paris. The paintings of Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin impressed her immensely. At the Drouot auction house, she, together with Clara and Rainer Maria Rilke, was deeply influenced by the paintings and crafts from China and Japan. She wrote in her diary:

The great strangeness of these things got to me. Our art it seems to me is still too conventional. It poorly expresses those impulses that run through us. It seems to me that the ancient Japanese art is more at ease.

Modersohn-Becker was greatly inspired while viewing the art of antiquity during a visit to the Louvre in 1903. 'How large and easy they are to see,' she wrote regarding the Egyptian mummy portraits... 'forehead, mouth, eyes, nose, cheeks and chin – that is all. It sounds so simple and yet it is indeed so very, very much.'

Under the inspiration of the Egyptian mummy portraits, she began a series of self-portraits. Like the mummies, she represents herself with peculiarly large eyes and an enraptured, almost suggestive glance. Her studio is now decorated with a frieze of reproductions from these mummies, who look at the viewer and at the same time look with rapture into the distance.



Paula Modersohn-Becker, *Self-Portrait with a Camellia Branch*, 1907.

Oil on canvas, 61.5 × 30.5 cm. Folkwang Museum, Essen.

When she returned from Paris, the local farms and children of the village became her preferred models and she sought to simplify the portrait form. Colour, for her, was more important than the depiction. In her paintings, she attempted to embody the essential character of these people, who were marked by work, poverty and the rugged landscape. She modelled her farmers and children in the same paste-like paints, avoiding any smoothness in her colour, showing them with angular features, monumental, with austere expressions, but full of sensuality. In her paintings she reflected the view people had of themselves, their strength, their inner greatness and their dignity. In her paintings she was able to express great sensitivity and emotional depth. One example is the painting *Elderly Woman in the Poor House Garden*. Paula Modersohn-Becker painted the old woman as if in an icon, down to earth, grainy, broad shouldered, her heavy hands placed in her lap. Placing her between wild poppies, she crowns and honours her with the glow of a reserved, clay-like colour scheme.

In her paintings the motif of mother and child achieves a quality of love, tenderness, and intimacy. The sense of emotion appears unsentimental, austere, and sincere. She masterfully understood how to transfer the essential physical and emotional part of a person into the painting, freeing it from all the surrounding ornamentation. She sought simplicity of form. In her diary, she wrote, 'I would like to give the intoxicating, the complete, the exciting to colour – the power.' Unfortunately, Paula Modersohn-Becker's promising career was cut short when at the age of thirty-two, and only few days after the birth of her daughter, Mathilde, she died of an embolism. Despite the very short period of creative activity that was given her, she left behind a wide range of works: around 750 paintings and over 1000 sketches, diaries and letters. During her lifetime she just sold five paintings.

Rainer Maria Rilke described her unorthodox painting style as 'reckless and straight on.' At the beginning of November 1908 in Paris, he wrote a requiem for Paula in which it reads:

... And you did not say: it is I; no that is
So without curiosity was at the end your gaze
And thus without possessions, so of true grace
That it did not entice even you: holy...

In December 1908, a retrospective for Paula Modersohn-Becker was shown in Bremen. In early 1909 Paul Cassirer showed Paula's paintings next to those of van Gogh, Manet, Monet and Renoir in Berlin. In 1927 Ludwig Roselius, founder of the coffee trading company Kaffee-Handels-Aktien-Gesellschaft (HAG), established a museum in her honour on the Böttcherstrasse in Bremen, saying: 'Paula was a painter of the truth. Before her there was never a painter, who had painted the truth. The great painters of our time: Munch, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Cézanne and the others have striven for this truth.'

During the National Socialist era, her paintings were removed from the museums and shown at the 1937 exhibit of degenerate art. Today Paula Modersohn-Becker is considered to be a major pioneer of Expressionism.



Paula Modersohn-Becker, *Old Poorhouse Woman with a Glass Bottle*, 1907.

Oil on canvas, 96.3 × 80.2 cm. Böttcherstraße drawings collection, Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, Bremen.



Otto Dix, *Self-Portrait in Mars*, 1915.
Oil on canvas, 81 × 66 cm. Haus der Heimat, Freital.

Futurism: The Dynamisation of the Image

Among the artistic movements at the beginning of the 20th century, Italian Futurism was one of the most vocal. Manifestos and proclamations were the manner by which new artistic theses were formulated and discussed in public. Often, this led to riots and brawls. This loud aggressiveness lay in the social tradition of Italian art, which in the course of the 19th century had become sterile, academic and museum-like. It was against this mummified art that the militant anger of the Futurists was directed. The Futurist upheaval understood itself to be a modern movement, open to all the forces of life and encompassing all art genres.

The poet, Tommaso Marinetti, was the force behind this movement that seized the entire art world of the West. His first Futurist manifesto came out at the end of 1908. Therein, he formulated the tenets of this new way of thinking that influenced the intelligentsia of the time.

Time and space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute. Since we have already created the eternal, omnipresent speed... We declare that the glory of the world has been enriched by yet another beauty: the beauty of speed. A race car, whose body is decorated with pipes that are like snakes with explosive breath the roaring car, is more beautiful than the Nike of Samothrace.

This sweeping success, primarily in the French art world, made the headlines of the conservative Paris newspaper, *Figaro*, when the manifesto was made public in French on 20 February, 1909. Shortly thereafter it appeared in Russia on 8 March, 1909, and was translated into Russian in the Petersburg newspaper *Vetcher (Evening)*. The effect on primarily the literary avant-garde was significant. The transfer of the new intellectual trend into the visual arts happened later. However, the decisive breakthrough for the Futurist painters first happened when their travelling exhibit was opened in February 1912 at the Paris Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. They spared no expense with advertising. On the eve of the opening, the names of the five painters, Giacomo Balla, Carlo Carrà, Umberto Boccioni, Luigi Russolo and Gino Severini, lit up the night in neon lights. In March, the Futurists showed their art at the London Sackville Gallery. The success was even greater than in Paris. 'More than 350 critics showed up in one month and four days, and the gallery did not want to remove the paintings because of the great numbers of paying visitors', Marinetti wrote to his friend, Praletta.

In April and May 1912, the Futurist exhibition travelled to the Berlin gallery, *Der Sturm* (The Storm). Herwarth Walden offered a platform for the Futurists in the magazine of the same name. From Berlin, the exhibition travelled to Brussels, The Hague, Amsterdam, Cologne, and in a somewhat reduced format to other German cities, as well as Austria, Hungary and Switzerland. In France, Duchamp, Kupka, Léger, Delaunay and Mondrian were influenced by Futurist ideas. In England, Wyndham Lewis and Christopher Richard Wynn Nevinson subsequently founded Vorticism. In Hungary, Sándor Bortnyik, Béla Uitz and Gizella Dömötör took up Futurist ideas, and, in Poland, Formism thus became famous. From Paris, John Marin and Joseph Stella spread these principles to the 'New World'. In Germany, Futurism left indelible impressions with artists belonging to the *Blaue Reiter*, in the works of August Macke and the Rhenish Expressionists, with Otto Dix, George Grosz and Lyonel Feininger, and with artists in Berlin, who gathered around the *Sturm* and the *Novembergruppe* (November Group). The international influence of Futurism lasted only a few years, but it was so strong that it left an indelible impression upon the arts. The Futurists even exhibited in Japan.

Futurism reflects a dynamic picture of the world in a state of restlessness and of a process that is neither complete nor clear nor accessible. Its exponents regarded themselves as trailblazers of a new era, as social revolutionaries. They experimented boldly and extravagantly in all areas of the aesthetic media, in painting, sculpture and architecture, as well as music and theatre. Modern

life and existence, they believed, should be understood in all their manifestations, the visible and the invisible, the normal and the metaphysical. First and foremost, all living things and objects appearing to be static should be depicted, even their emotions and their relationships to one another.



George Grosz, *Metropolis*, 1916–1917.

Oil on canvas, 100 × 102 cm.

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.



Gino Severini, *Dynamic Hieroglyph at Tabarin Ball*, 1912.
Oil on canvas with sequins, 161.6 × 156.2 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Carlo Carrà, *Manifestazione Interventista*, 1914.

Tempera, pencil, sequins and pasted papers on cardboard, 38.5 × 30 cm. Mattioli collection, Milan.



Luigi Russolo, *Dynamism of a Car*, 1912–1913.

Oil on canvas, 106 × 140 cm. Gift of Sonja Delaunay, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Our bodies press into the sofas upon which we sit, and the sofas press into us, as the passing street car presses into the houses that in turn fall onto the street car and merge with it. Thereby, man is no longer at the centre, but rather merely a delicate being among many delicate beings. The Futurists touched upon the interrelatedness of all beings and felt strongly that the viewer should be included in the dynamism of a painting.

In order to permit the viewer to live at the centre of a painting, the painting must be a synthesis of that which one remembers and that what one sees. Even all non-living things reveal inertia and wildness, cheerfulness and sadness in their lines.

Making visible the invisible necessitated the transparency of all things. In the *Technical Manifesto* of 1910, the Futurist painters Balla, Carrà, Boccioni, Russolo and Severini expressed the following:

Who can still believe in the inscrutability of the body, when our increased and multifaceted sensibility allows us to imagine the dark revelations of mediumistic phenomenon? Why should we continue to work without taking into account our visual capabilities that are similar in their results to x-rays?

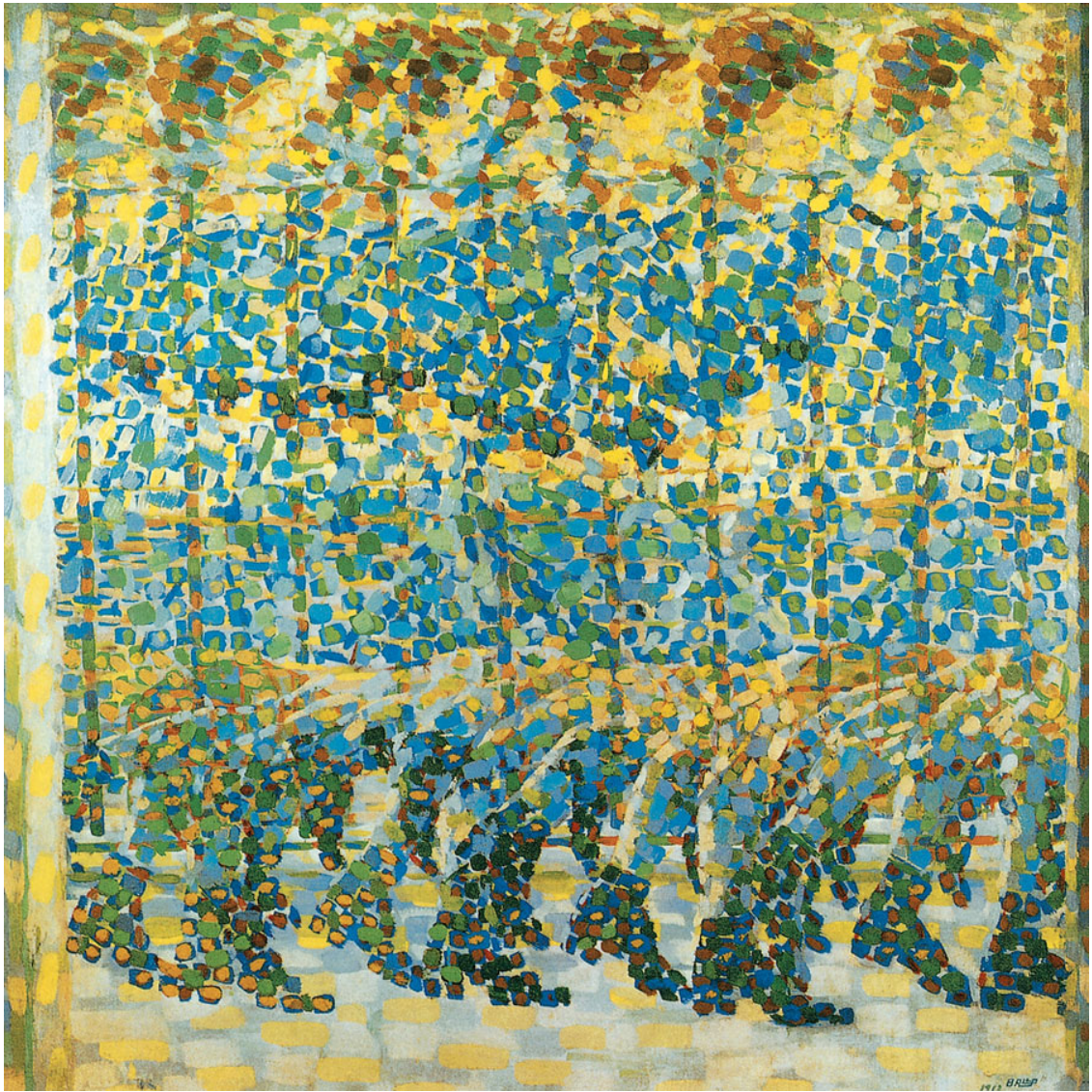
The newest scientific discoveries not only influenced the intelligentsia insofar as the discoveries appeared in somewhat simplified form in the daily press. In her paper, *Radium and Radioactivity*, Marie Curie, who in 1903 together with her husband, Pierre Curie and Antoine-Henri Becquerel, received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of radioactivity, wrote:

The discovery of the phenomenon of radioactivity adds another group to the great number of invisible rays that are now known, and we must recognise anew how limited our direct perception of the world around us is.

The Futurists were not alone in being caught up in the spirit of the times that distanced itself from the historic-mechanistic worldview due to the many new discoveries of numerous scientists and inventors. In 1907 the French philosopher, Henri Bergson published his paper, 'L'Evolution créatrice.' The Futurists emphatically referred to him. For Bergson, the term 'intuition' describes a condition of the correlation between the future and the past and of space and time. According to Bergson, by virtue of 'sympathetic' contact, which intuition produces between us all and everything living, we achieve an expansion of our consciousness permitting a correlating breakthrough. By this intuition with whose help one can, for example, put oneself in the place of an object in order to become one with its unique core being.

Umberto Boccioni referred to Marie Curie and Bergson as he wrote out his notes for a lecture in 1911: 'Not the visible must be painted, but rather that which up until now was considered to be invisible, namely, that what the clairvoyant painter sees.' The Futurist painters tried to realise the new view of the world artistically. All movements and states of mind, all noises and smells, everything moving and static, all life and all matter obligated Futurism to a universal dynamism. This was manifested in works of art by a whirling fragmentation or in the multiplication of images of an object, and indeed by means of disjointed perspective, through a change from distant and close-up views, through the expansion and shortening of time frames or by changing the density of action. The goal was to capture and present in a painting the visible and the invisible as a conglomerate of the past, present and future of an event, as it were in a time and space cluster.

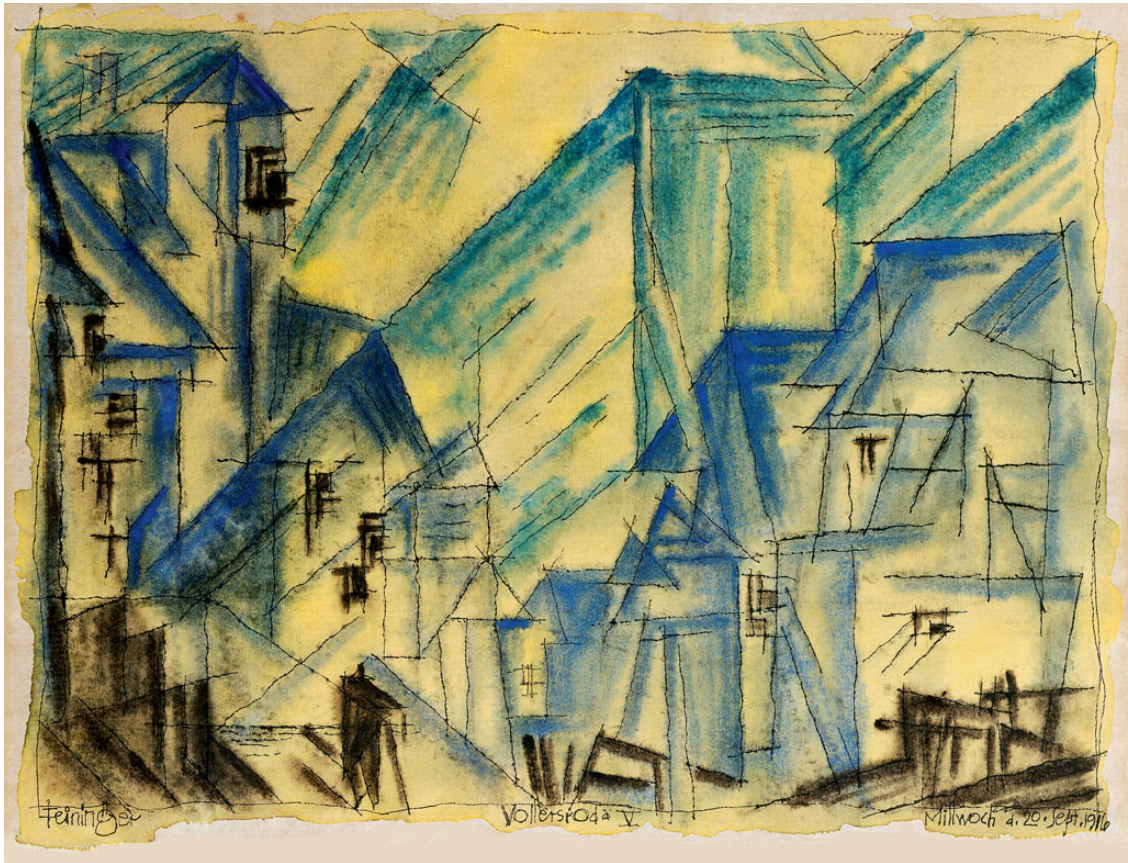
Movement can be depicted differently. It can be depicted either as an 'absolute movement' by means of power strokes that 'impact upon the mind of the viewer' or as zigs and zags – or as waves. The 'relative movement' represents sequential phases of movement and indeed in the manner of photos that have been copied over one another placed next to each other. Through the simultaneous and reciprocal immersing of all things and events into one motif, the fourth dimension of time is added to the three known spatial dimensions. A space and time cluster arises in the painting.



Giacomo Balla, *Little Girl Running above a Ball*, 1912.
Oil on canvas, 125 × 125 cm. Galleria d'Arte moderna, Milan.



Umberto Boccioni, *The Street Soaks into the House*, 1911.
Oil on canvas, 100 × 100.6 cm. Sprengel Museum, Hannover.



Lyonel Feininger, *Vollersroda V*, 1916. Watercolour on paper, 23 × 30 cm.
Gift of Günther and Carola Peill, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Expressionism and the Search for Contemporary Form

Expressionism is a multi-faceted European movement to which the French, Germans, Austrians, Russians and Americans made significant contributions. It is a movement that was motivated by the same spirit, distancing itself from the reproduction of nature, seeking new shores of expression in 'inner truth.' Its manifestation is a fusion of the most varied forms. International exhibitions, public art collections and museums, paintings depicted in books and magazines, and primarily study trips by the artists themselves were not insignificant in contributing to the common direction of the new movement.

Since the middle of the 19th century, Paris had been the epicentre of innovative artistic forces and was eagerly visited by artists from around the world as a capital of the arts. Congenial French nonconformists Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse and Vincent van Gogh (though only a temporary resident in France) strongly influenced the movement towards modernist art by their exhibitions. Some of these exhibitions attained epoch-making significance like the 1912 Internationale Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne and the Blaue Reiter exhibition the same year in Berlin, as well as in 1913 the Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon (First German Fall Salon) also in Berlin, and the Armory Show in New York, also that same year. In the years 1912 to 1914, an exhibition of the Italian Futurists also travelled the world.

In contrast to Fauvism, Expressionism developed in rich, multi-faceted directions and for many years influenced the European and American art world. Expressionism implied a lifestyle and did not limit itself to the visual arts. In addition to sculpture and painting, this liberal and unfettered way of interacting with artistic traditions also seized upon architecture, literature, film, music and theatre. Expressionism was more than an artistic movement. Between the turn of the century and World War I, Expressionism came to mean rebellion and the passionate stirring of the young elite. There were numerous cases of artists working in two genres: poets and painters like Ludwig Meidner, Oskar Kokoschka, Else Lasker-Schüler; sculptors and dramatists like Ernst Barlach; composers and painters like Arnold Schönberg. Expressionism was the artist's answer to a world of increasing regimentation, social tensions, cultural conflicts and psychological burdens. In the essay for *Der Blaue Reiter Almanac*, Franz Marc wrote:

In our epoch of great struggle for a new art, we as the 'Wild Beasts' do not struggle in an organised fashion against an old organised authority. The struggle seems uneven, but in matters of the intellect, numbers are not decisive, but rather the strength of the ideas. The most feared weapon of the 'Wild Beasts' is their new way of thinking, which kills better than steel and breaks, what was considered to be unbreakable.

The Expressionists arose against cold mechanism, against the stifling authoritarian mindset. They wanted to do away with artificiality and searched, as the Fauves did, for the origins of human existence. In 1904, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner experienced the magical attraction of the African and South Seas in the anthropology museum in Dresden. Not only was he fascinated by the masks and carved cult figures, but the rites and way of life associated with them fascinated him.

In contrast to the Fauves, who primarily made use of stylistic-decorative elements, the artists of the *Brücke* focused their interest on the spiritual aspects, the originality and archaic powers of expression. They called themselves the 'primitives of a new art.' The goal was to intensify expression to the greatest extent possible and to shatter the 'natural' order. Styles were shattered, overextended, split, and colours burned in veritable rivers, even more excitedly than with the Fauves. 'Empathy' became the catchword, which the art historian Wilhelm Worringer found to describe this language of expression reaching into the deepest emotions. Franz Marc expressed in

word and paint that ‘... pantheistic quality to empathise with the shivering and flowing of blood in nature, with the trees, with the animals, with the air.’



Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *After the Bath*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 87 × 95 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

The *Brücke* and its Milieu

In Dresden, architecture students Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff joined together to form an artists' association in 1905 under the name *Brücke*. It was their goal was to overcome the academic way of thinking and acting, to break traditions and ‘pull all the smouldering revolutionary forces over to our side,’ as Schmidt-Rottluff wrote to Emil Nolde. Soon, the painters Otto Mueller, Max Pechstein, and Cuno Amiet from Switzerland also joined. The basic requirement for membership was the ‘extension of the existing values with respect to the overall vision of the inner image.’ Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, the driving force behind the *Brücke*, described this in the *Brücke* platform:

With a belief in development, in a new generation of creators and connoisseurs, we call the entire youth together. [...] Everyone belongs to us, who directly and authentically expresses that what he is driven to create.

They wanted, as their name implies, to build a bridge to like-minded people. Erich Heckel was the organiser of the group. So, for a monthly rent of 10 marks, it was he who leased an empty butcher shop, which was used as a common studio in which the first joint exhibition took place. The Brücke artists undertook to do everything together in the same sense as the medieval guilds of cathedral builders. This went so far that during their early period of creativity, their works were difficult to differentiate one from another. They did everything together, they had the same models and learned new techniques together, primarily wood carving, etching and lithography. In the years 1906 to 1912 they published yearly portfolios for their members that have today become a rarity.

In the winter months, the painters met for a '15-minute cycle' where the nude model would change the pose every quarter of an hour. The resulting nude sketches were of great spontaneity but outside the guidelines of academia. From these studies, they developed the subject of the naked person in nature. From 1910 onwards, during the summer months, the painters went together to the Moritzburg lakes, Dangast or Nidden. There in open nature, in the light, air and sun, they felt unbound and free of the constraints of civilisation. They painted landscapes and nudes in the open air. Man and nature were depicted in open and direct colours, and the forms conveyed a cosmic unity. A strong and direct use of colour marked the paintings, as did an aboriginal stiffness of form, inspired by the 'primitive' cultures. The manner of painting is bold and impulsive. The style is spontaneous and emotional. Depictions of distance are solely produced by colour. The result is a special flattening of the colour.

Wood cuts fit especially well to this type of Brücke art. The coarsening of the forms and inherent expression due to the material qualities and the hardness and rigid surfaces suited the intentions for a heightening of expressive quality. As one can read in the diary they kept in common, they felt themselves to be 'aristocrats of the spirit.' The goal was not uniformity in the style of expression, but rather an ever more intensive search for the origins of the mystical secret of being 'that stands behind the occurrences and things in the environment', as Kirchner put it.

At first, Art Nouveau and Symbolism influenced the Brücke artists. An argument ensued with the ecstatically turbulent style of Edvard Munch and Paul Gauguin, as well as their subject of man and being. The painters only developed the striking and headstrong signature style of Brücke Expressionism, with its jagged directness, severity and linear simplicity, after they had become familiar with the works of Van Gogh and Cézanne. In honour of Paul Gauguin's stay in the South Seas, Emil Nolde and Max Pechstein left for their own journey to New Guinea and the islands of Palau in 1913 and 1914. Otto Mueller, who came to the Brücke in 1910, was in search of exotic beauty in his Gypsy portraits. With simple, large shapes and clear colours, they wanted 'the richness, the joy of life, they wanted to paint people in celebrations, their feelings for and with each other. To depict love as well as hate,' according to Kirchner.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Circus Horse Rider*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 120 × 100 cm. Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.

In 1911, Heckel, Kirchner, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff moved to Berlin. Each of the artists now went their own way. *Der Sturm*, the magazine and gallery, belonging to Herwarth Walden, became the place to turn to for the painters. Walden published Kirchner's woodcuts for the first time. Together with Erich Heckel, Kirchner took part in the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne. In 1913, Kirchner had his first exhibition at the Folkwang-Museum in Hagen. However, friction and differences of opinion inside the Brücke finally resulted in its dissolution, but the painters remained lifelong friends.

Before World War I, Berlin developed into the most important centre of culture in Europe alongside Paris, Dresden, and Munich. The prelude to this was the exhibition of Edvard Munch in 1892, which provoked waves of conservative anger. Exhibitions of other contemporaries followed.

Progressive art magazines began to appear. Hugo von Tschudi was appointed as director in 1896 to the Nationalgalerie and single-mindedly promoted modernist artists. Bruno Cassirer organised his first Cézanne exhibition in 1901. In 1904, the German Artists' Association was founded and the next year had its first exhibition of contemporary artists. From 1907 onwards, Fauvism, Expressionism and all the other modernist art movements were represented in a large number of Berlin galleries. The Neue Secession was formed in 1910, and one year later, the Erste juryfreie Kunstausstellung (the First Juryless Art Exhibit).

A visionary with a deft feeling for the future, Herwarth Walden gathered around himself the decisive creative forces in *Der Sturm*, the gallery he founded in the early part of 1912. From 1910 onwards, his magazine of the same name was published 'in order to give artists cast out by the critics and the public a place to create.' This magazine became the 'organ of struggle' of the new movements like Futurism, Expressionism, Cubism and Constructivism. Among the renowned artists and writers who were published in the fourteen volumes of the magazine were Hans Arp, Gottfried Benn, Franz Marc, August Stramm, Alfred Döblin, Fernand Léger, Max Pechstein, Kurt Schwitters, August Strindberg, Tristan Tzara, Guillaume Apollinaire, Umberto Boccioni, Robert Delaunay, Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Filippo Marinetti and Wilhelm Worringer.

The gallery *Der Sturm* debuted in March 1912 with the *Blaue Reiter* and with Oskar Kokoschka followed by the Italian Futurists. Herwarth Walden reserved the summer exhibition for Marc, Münter, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, and Werefkin, who had been turned down by the *Sonderbund* exhibition in Cologne. French graphic art by Herbin, Gauguin and Picasso, as well as the Fauves and the expressive Belgians followed. In *Der Sturm*, Walden declared, 'all the artists are exhibited of whom one will later say that they were the driving forces of their times', and this was a vision that was to be confirmed. The high point of Walden's exhibitions was to become the *Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon* (First German Fall Salon), a counterpart to the Parisian *Salon d'Automne*. The *Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon* gathered 366 works by 86 contemporary avant-garde artists from twelve countries, including among others, America, Russia and Spain. Walden, Marc, and Macke organised the *Herbstsalon* together with financial support from the collector and patron, Bernhard Koehler. The public often reacted with indignation to the opening of the *Herbstsalon*. 'Here, row upon row, the talentless are on exhibit.' Franz Marc and the others were called, 'a horde of paint-squirting loudmouths.' However, there were some positive exceptions among the critics. 'The opening day of the *Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon* can be considered to be an historic date. There is something overpowering in seeing everywhere around one the champions and representatives of the new principles at work.'

The pulsating, almost feverish city life, the intellectual and cultural intensity, and the social contrasts had their influence upon the painting style of the *Brücke* artists. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, no doubt most towering artistic personality of the *Brücke* group, was intoxicated by life in the city, and this was reflected in the characteristically nervous eccentricity of his personal style. His depictions of people and street scenes exuded the flair of the glamorous and intense urban life. The structure of his paintings became tighter, edgier, and the forms, more dynamic. The vital energy of the present penetrated the electrically charged surface of the painting with dandies, prostitutes and pedestrians flitting eerily on their way. The futuristic technique of lining people up as if in a street scene and thereby producing the impression of continuously locomotive people fascinated Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in the years 1912 to 1914. A relaxed brushstroke blurs the contours of the figures and shows movement by indicating direction. In the 1914 painting *Friedrichstrasse, Berlin* many growing figures are lined up as if moving behind one another, giving the impression that the people towards the back of the street are becoming younger and younger. The contours are blurred, and the figures are somewhat distorted. They seem to be transformed into a magical diagram of movement.

With the outbreak of the World War I, Kirchner volunteered as a driver for the artillery an experience which weakened his already frail physical and psychological state. In 1917, severely

ill, he moved to Davos, Switzerland and finally settled down in Frauenkirch. The mountain environment and the power and majesty of nature moved him to his core. Henceforth, this became his artistic world. In spite of recurring illness and depression, he created a wide-ranging body of work and participated in many exhibitions.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Street Scene (Friedrichstraße Berlin)*, 1914.
Oil on canvas, 125 × 91 cm. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

After the National Socialists came to power in Germany, 639 works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner were confiscated, of which 32 were shown at the 1937 Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibition in Munich. In the same year, the Detroit Institute of Arts showed the first Kirchner retrospective in America. On 15 May 1938, at the age of 58, he took his own life.

Erich Heckel's early works have a flat and clearly contoured painting style marked by a raw and aggressive manner. His particular preference was for woodcuts, and his late works are marked by a certain lyrical quality. During the 'Third Reich,' 729 of his works were confiscated from museums and public collections, of which thirteen were shown at the 1937 Entartete Kunst exhibition. An air raid in 1944 destroyed his studio in Berlin. A great number of his works, including almost all the print blocks, were destroyed. He returned to Hemmenhofen on Lake Constance in a state of resignation.

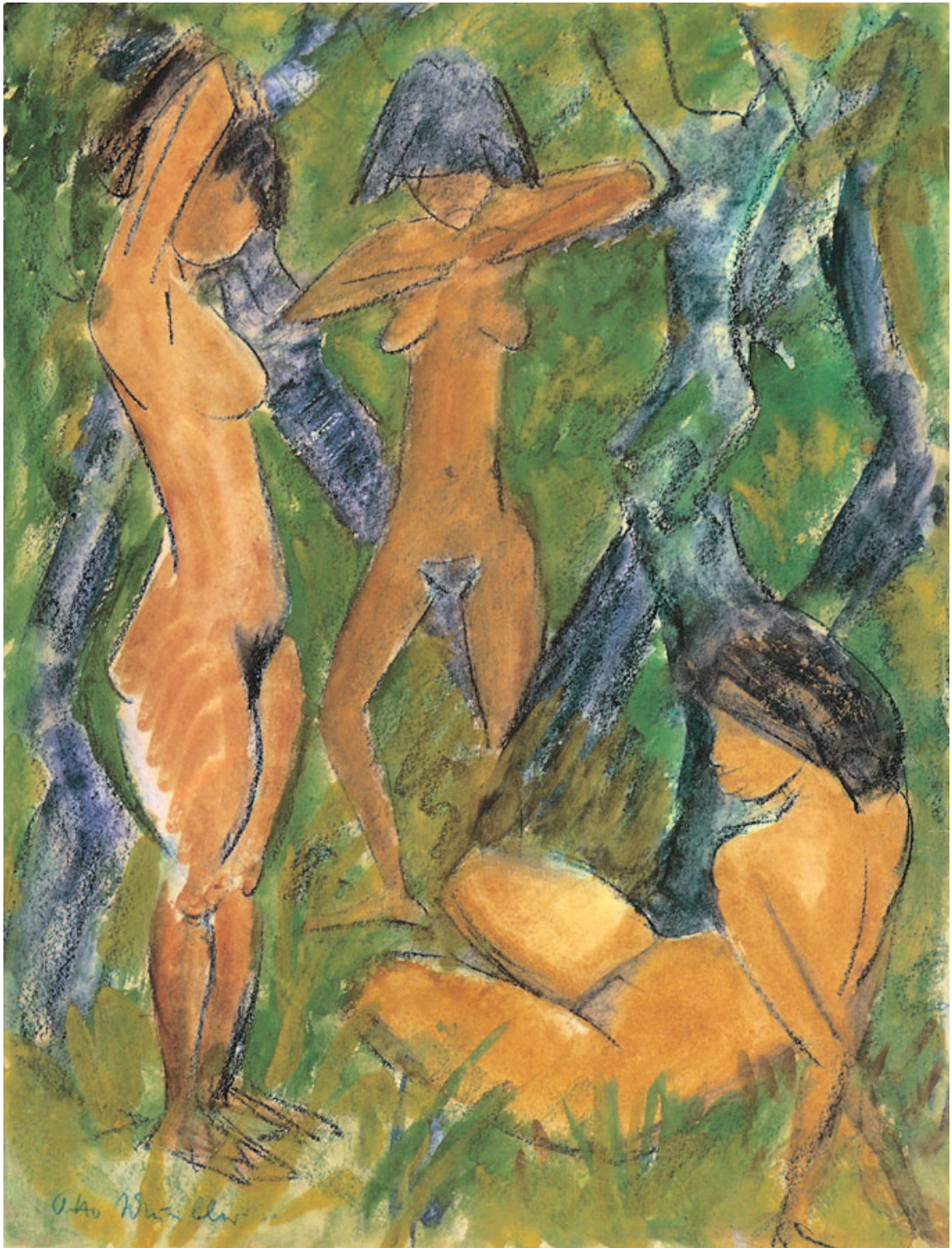
Karl Schmidt, who upon joining the artist group in 1905 called himself Schmidt-Rottluff, gave the Brücke its name. Today, his early works have become the very epitome of early Expressionism. He devoted himself to four main subjects: nudes, landscapes, portraits and still lifes. Among the Brücke members, he is, therefore, the widest ranging. In 1907 he met the art historians Rosa Schapire and Wilhelm Niemeyer, who throughout their lives worked on his behalf. He was represented at the Entartete Kunst exhibit with 25 paintings, two watercolours and 24 pages of illustrations. 608 works by Schmidt-Rottluff were confiscated from German museums in 1938. During the same year, the Nierendorf Gallery in New York showed his watercolours. Three years later, he was banned from painting. His studio was also completely destroyed in 1943 by bombing, so he moved to Rottluff near Chemnitz. In 1945 he also lost all his paintings that had been stored for safe keeping at two estates in Silesia.

Max Pechstein was the only Brücke artist to have a university education. He completed his studies at the Kunstgewerbeschule Dresden (School of Applied Arts in Dresden) as a master class student, winning the Saxon state prize, the so-called Rome Prize. He joined the Brücke in 1906 and worked together with his new friends in the wild during the summer and in the studio during the winter. During a stay in Nidden in 1911, he focused on the nude. In his memoirs, he wrote: 'So I continued my reflections upon capturing man and nature as one, more strongly and thoughtfully than at Moritzburg.'

New compositional experiments in the avant-garde art world of Berlin, such as the Orphism by Delaunay, Italian Futurism and French Cubism gradually began to come to his attention. Compositions from around 1912 to 1913 such as *Still Life with Putto and Arum Lily*, clearly show a withdraw from expressive colour and design they are replaced by Cubist and geometric elements that underscore the solid construction of the painting. In 1922, Max Pechstein became a member of the Prussian Academy of the Arts and just six years later he received the Prussian State Prize and became a member of the exhibition commission of the Prussian Academy of the Arts. In 1933 he was banned from working and exhibiting and was expelled from the Academy of the Arts in 1937. At the Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibit, the works of Max Pechstein were also shown and 326 of his works were removed from German museums. However, in 1951 he was named as an Honorary Senator of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts.



Erich Heckel, *Gläserner Tag*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 138 × 114 cm. Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.



Otto Mueller, *Three Nudes in the Forest*. Watercolour, 68 × 51.5 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.



Max Pechstein, *Still Life with Putto and Arum Lily*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 100.5 × 77 cm. Private collection.

Otto Mueller was a master of figure composition and his subjects centred on the world of Gypsies. As he wrote in 1919 on the occasion of an exhibition of Paul Cassirer in Berlin, 'The main goal of my efforts is with the greatest possible simplicity to express the emotions of man and landscape.' Otto Mueller was the romantic among the Brücke artists. His delicate, exotic gypsies were composed in a landscape left to nature as if in a paradise. He preferred a subdued colouring, mostly green or ochre. From 1924 to 1930 Mueller travelled repeatedly to Hungary, Bulgaria,

Romania and Yugoslavia to observe the fascinating world of the gypsies. Supposedly, his mother was the illegitimate child of a Bohemian maid and a Gypsy.

The flower paintings of Emil Nolde, either in watercolour or painting are enchantingly beautiful. He started with these subjects in 1909 saying, 'It was on the island of Als in the middle of summer. The colours of the flowers attracted me irresistibly, and, almost suddenly, I was painting. So my first garden paintings were created.'

As we read in his notes, *Mein Leben (My Life)*, 'It was a difficult struggle with the colour... In my painting, I always wanted the colours, through me as the painter, to work logically on the canvas as though nature herself created the image, as ore and crystallisations forms, as moss and algae grows, as under the rays of the sun a flower unwraps and must bloom.'

His subjects were of the great and overpowering aspects of nature. His idea of nature was closely related to his heartfelt ideas and emotions.

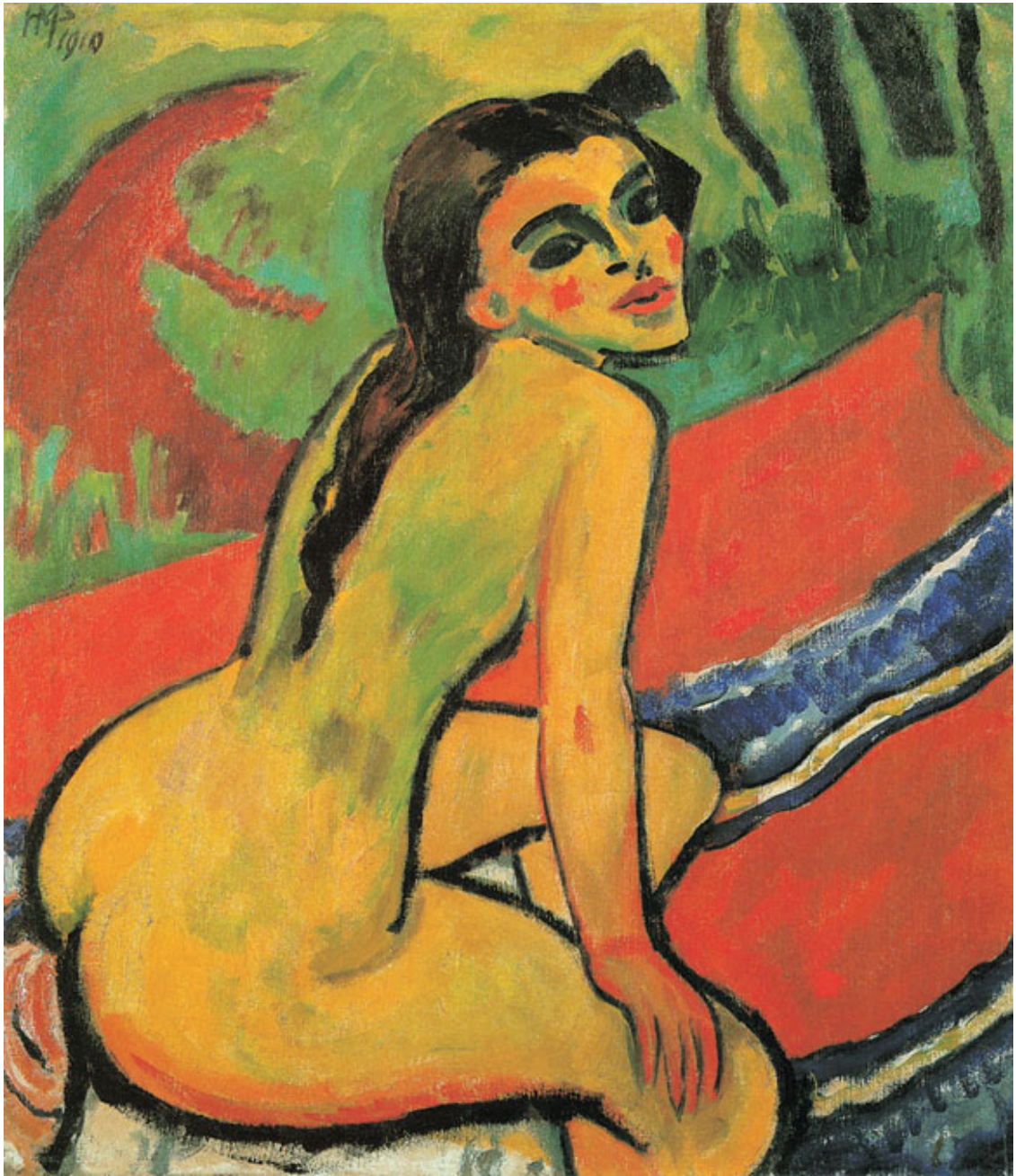
Everything primeval always bound my senses. The great raging sea is still in its original state, the wind, the sun, even the starry sky is also probably still the same as it was almost fifty thousand years ago.

Nolde's fixation with the primordial greatly influenced his use of colour, making it more concentrated and intense. His effort to paint his vision of the world through the strength and effect of pure paint evolved to a slow maturity. The first culmination of this came with his first flower and garden paintings from 1906 to 1908. Only in 1905 did he become acquainted with Van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet and the other French artists, as well as the art of primitive cultures. Seeing these was the key to unlocking his full potential as an artist. Now, Emil Hansen, born in Nolde, found his unique painting vocabulary that found its climax in the ecstatic rush of colours which burst forth with a barbaric fire and sensuality. Emil Nolde was one of the great innovators of watercolour.

The series of religious paintings done by Emil Nolde are some of the most moving examples of natural experience. In 1912 he painted the nine piece altar *The Life of Christ* and the triptych *Maria Aegyptica*. In his notes, he wrote, 'the colours are the material of the painter, the colours in their own lives, crying and laughing, luck and laughter, passionate and holy as love songs and the erotic, as song and choral music.' In these paintings an ecstatic religious experience and feeling breaks forth. The sublime, the holy, the saintly speak from these works. They were to have taken a central place in the religious section of the 1956 World Exposition in Brussels but the Catholic clergy protested.

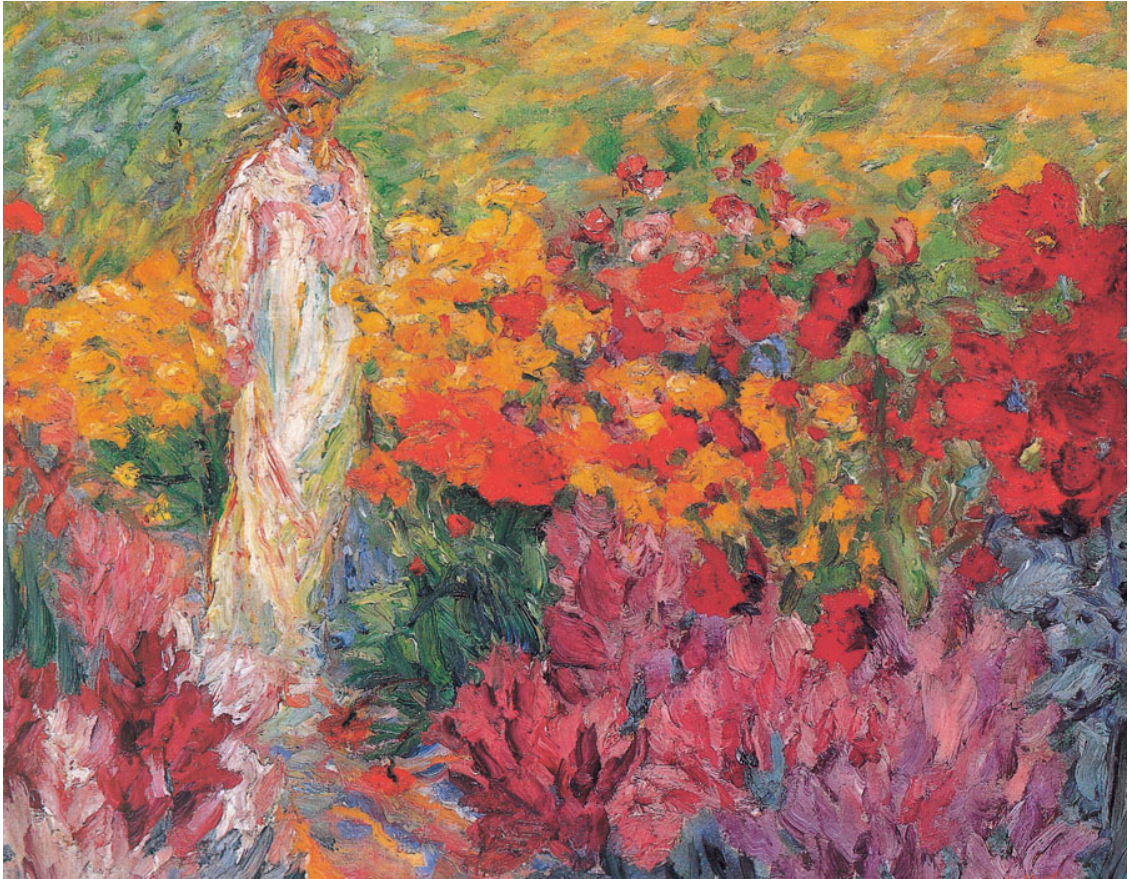


Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Summer*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 88 × 104 cm.
Sprengel collection, Kunstsammlung Hannover, Hannover.



Max Pechstein, *Seated young woman (Moritzburg)*, 1910.

Oil on canvas, 80 × 70 cm. Neue Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.



Emil Nolde, *Garden Full of Flowers*, 1908.
Oil on canvas, 63 × 78.5 cm. Osthaus Museum, Hagen.



Christian Rohlfs, *House in Soest*, 1916.
Tempera on canvas, 80 × 100 cm. Private collection.

Individuals

Christian Rohlfs is only marginally associated with the Brücke. He was linked to Emil Nolde by a lifelong friendship since 1905. Both artists were united by their love of nature. Both sought to capture their view of the world in pure colour. In 1901 Rohlfs was called to the Folkwang School in Hagen. Only in 1927, at the age of 78, did he travel south to Ascona. In the thin and relaxed atmosphere, he found his way to his own late painting style. The vigorous southern light fascinated him. He was entranced by the tropical plant life. The rush of colour that surrounded all the vegetation overpowered him, he, who had come out of the foggy north. 'Everything is colour, light and a thrill for the eyes, enchanting and delightful and constantly changing from hour to hour.' The material possibilities with regard to painting mediums always interested Christian Rohlfs, and he experimented with great curiosity. In the early years, he used a palette knife and applied the paint with wallops onto the canvas. With thin paint, he swabbed it up with a rag. He carefully chose the paper surfaces for his watercolours, as he incorporated them into his compositions. His watercolours display a flair for the immaterial. His entire body of work is closely based on nature.

From 1911–1912, the personal style of many painters became more turbulent and excited. In his late works, Lovis Corinth, usually a high-spirited Impressionist began to mirror the style of the Expressionists. At the same time, Paul Klee's personal style became marked by a rhythmic, mostly line-like or two-dimensional technique inspired by simultaneity and universal dynamism.

In his work, Klee translates technical-mechanical concepts into movement, as expressed by arrows, triangles, and repetition of shapes.

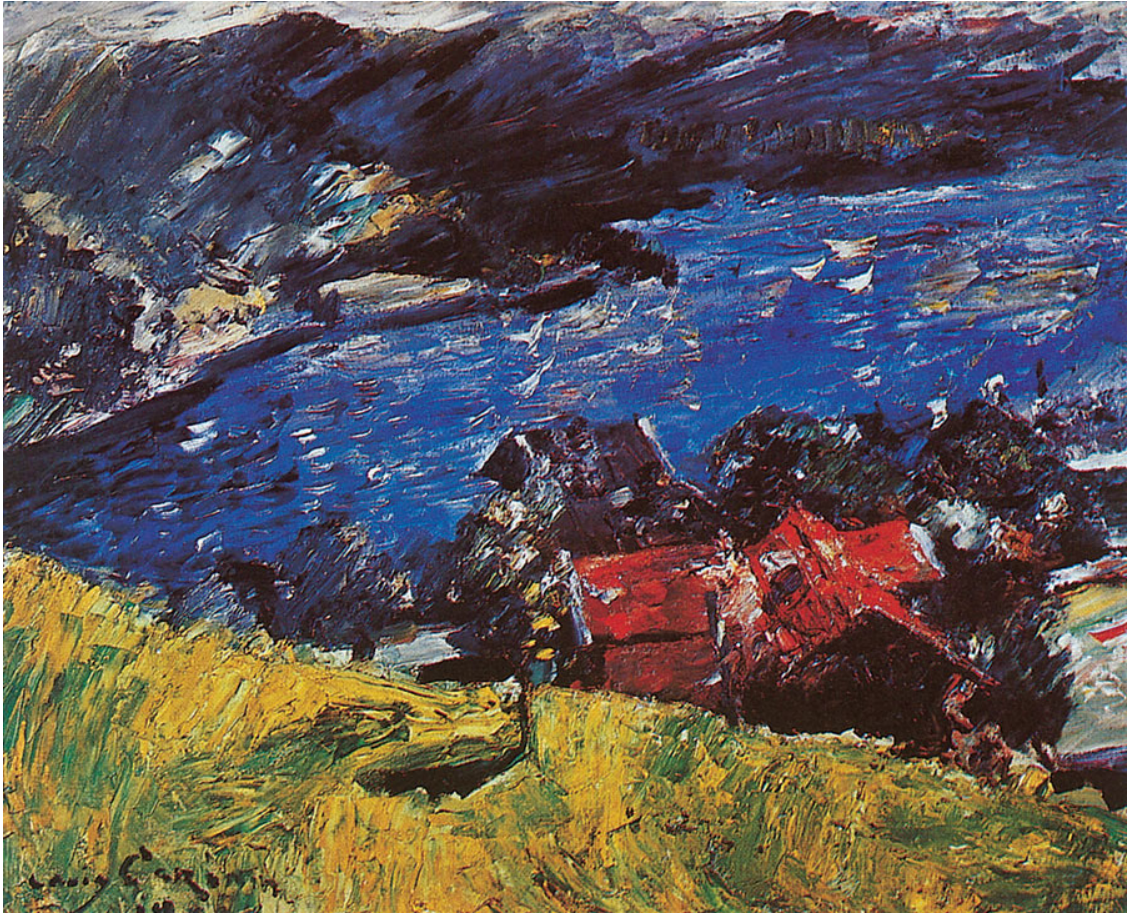
Under the leadership of Ludwig Meidner, the Pathetiker group was formed in the early part of 1912. Otto Gleichmann, Richard Janthur, Jakob Steinhardt and Erich Waske belonged to this group. The art historian Paul Vogt commented: 'Like the sound of a raging scream, their appearance required the strongest means possible to be heard in the Babylonian commotion of so many voices during that time.' Hardly any other early Expressionist work produced in the years between 1912 and 1914 exudes such a singular and all-encompassing momentum of shock and emotion as those of Ludwig Meidner. His *Apocalyptic Landscapes* are a substratum of concentrated energy. Bursting houses, writhing, breaking lines of streets and fleeing people define the chaotic landscape. Meidner described his condition at the time, as if seismographically measuring the disaster of the impending world war:

Painful impulses made me break everything that was straight and vertical.
To spread ruins, shreds and ash across all landscapes. How I always built ruins of
houses on my cliffs, woefully divided, and the lamenting call of the bare trees rose
up to the croaking skies above. As calling, warning voices the mountains floated
in the background, the comet laughed hoarsely and the aeroplanes sailed as if they
were hellish dragonflies in the yellow night time storm.

In the twenties, Meidner increasingly dedicated himself to his literary talents.

Among the main representatives of German Expressionism, Karl Hofer defines himself by the emphasis of formality and by a limited colour range. His unmistakable style was formed around 1919; his paintings marked by an angular roughness and a dry colour, tending to a classic constructive composition. He wrote in 1953 in his memoirs:

I possessed the Romantic; it was the Classic that I was looking for... I never
created a figure according to the random nature of appearance... The ecstasy of
Expressionism did not suite me... Man and the human were and will always be
the object of my art.



Lovis Corinth, *Walchensee*, 1921.
Oil on canvas, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.



Ludwig Meidner, *Apocalyptic City*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 81.3 × 115.5 cm.
LWL–Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster.

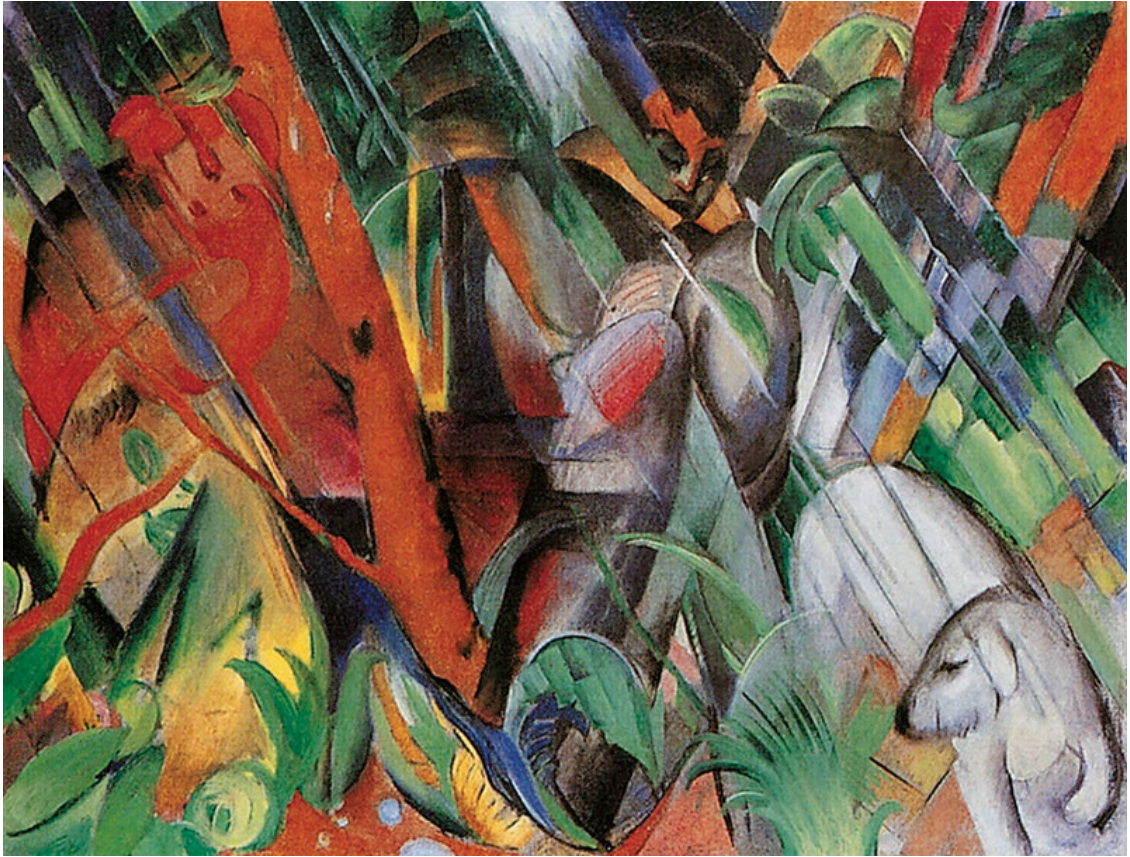


Karl Hofer, *Circus Artists*, c. 1921.

Oil on canvas, 148 × 118.5 cm. Folkwang Museum, Essen.



Paul Klee, *Villa R*, 1919.
Oil on cardboard, 26.5 × 22 cm. Kunstmuseum, Basel.



Franz Marc, *In Regen*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 81 × 105 cm. Städtische Galerie, Lenbachhaus, Munich.

The Milieu of the Blaue Reiter

Expressionism, which was at home in and around Munich and southern Germany, evolved out of artistic personalities with various temperaments. From a common intellectual viewpoint, they developed common goals. A cosmopolitan nature characterised the artists, who were of various nationalities. Munich was the German art metropolis at the turn of the century before 1912. Berlin developed into the centre of the new art as well. The city attracted painters and sculptors, and its museums attracted a large public. The groups of artists working in the city, and the pulsating artistic activity together with the famous Schwabing art festivals could stand the comparison to Paris. In addition to the academy and the school for fine arts, several private art schools had established themselves, for example the art school of Anton Azbé. Not having known each other previously, the two young Russians, Wassily Kandinsky and Alexej von Jawlensky, crossed paths there.

Kandinsky founded his own art group, Phalanx, and, in 1902, his own art school. In the meantime due to his rising reputation abroad, primarily in Paris, he soon belonged to the most well-known young painters of Munich. In the village-like seclusion of Murnau (with memories of Russian folk art) his paintings had a festive quality and exuded an expressive overabundance and as a result, the conservative Munich Secession denied him permission to exhibit. Consequently, in 1909, together with Jawlensky and his companion, Marianne von Werefkin, along with Adolf Erbslöh, Alexander Kanoldt, Alfred Kubin and Gabriele Münter, he founded the New Artists' Association. Their first exhibition took place in December 1909 at the Galerie Thannhauser, and a second followed in September 1910, in which Fauvist and early Cubist works were exhibited. This persuaded Franz Marc and August Macke to join. However, the judging for the third exhibition in

the autumn of 1911 became a scandal: Kandinsky's paintings had distanced themselves ever more from the objective, which Erbslöh and Kanoldt resisted. The New Artists' Association, which had attracted some attention and gained a place for itself in the art world, split up.

Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc founded the Blaue Reiter. They came up with the name, Kandinsky later reported, in the summerhouse in Sindelsdorf belonging to Franz Marc. 'We both loved blue, Marc – horses, I – the rider. So the name came by itself.' At first this name was just meant for the almanac, the 'organ of all new and true ideas of our day.' The almanac appeared in 1912 together with Kandinsky's publishing *About the Intellectual in Art*.

Most of the artists of the New Artists' Association spontaneously joined the editorial staff of the Blaue Reiter. Their memorable exhibition again took place in December 1911 at the Galerie Thannhauser. In addition, Heinrich Campendonk joined the group along with Robert Delaunay from Paris, who invited the two Russians, David and Vladimir Burliuk, as well as the composer, Arnold Schönberg. Even paintings by Henri Rousseau, the father of the Naïve painters, were on display, which one can explain by the preference of the young Munich artists for Bavarian folk art and verre églomisé pictures. Their second exhibition, showing watercolours, drawings and prints, was held at the Galerie Hanns Goltz in March 1912. Paul Klee also took part at this exhibition, and Lyonel Feininger first joined this exhibition in 1913. The core of the Blaue Reiter was, in addition to Kandinsky and Franz Marc, made up of the Russian Alexej von Jawlensky and his companion, the painter and Russian baroness, Marianne von Werefkin, Kandinsky's student and subsequent companion, Gabriele Münter, as well as August Macke and Heinrich Campendonk. Lyonel Feininger, Adolf Erbslöh, Alexander Kanoldt, the draughtsman Alfred Kubin, the French Cubist Henri Le Fauconnier, Karl Hofer and the composer Arnold Schönberg.

A collective style, as was the case with the Brücke, was impossible with artists of such varying artistic background and temperament. Everyone accepted the individual creative development and means of expression of the others. Their artistic point of departure was a formal and philosophical one. It was about transcendence. For Kandinsky and Franz Marc, art was on the same plane as religious outlook. Art was 'made out of inner necessity, coming forth from the emotional depths, and thus it was possible, to make the soul of the observer pulse.' The thinking was oriented along the pantheistic lines of coming to terms with nature and the overcoming of the material and objective with the aim of discovering one's own ego. They gave preference to colour harmony, to the dissection and analysis of forms, not to their fragmentation. Their basic philosophical orientation was to make out of the invisible and untouchable, out of pure and simple experiences, a visible and touchable reality, and this necessarily led to the nonrepresentational.

Franz Marc used the colour of the Fauves, the appreciation of objects from Cubism, and the dynamic elements of Futurism. He stressed what was already valid in the 19th century. In other words: detail, since as the expression has it, a part can mean more than the whole. His relationship with nature led to a new symbolic meaning for colours. In a bold move, he presented his depiction of his original concept of a living nature and the animal world. Wassily Kandinsky described his paintings, saying, 'Marc is neither a painter of animals nor a naturalist nor a Cubist. In his paintings, the animals are so tightly fused into the landscape that despite the strength of expression, they are at the same time only an organic part of the whole.'

Franz Marc repeatedly reflected on his actions and desires in his painting:

I am looking to heighten my perception for the organic rhythm of all things. I seek to feel empathy in a pantheistic manner with the trembling and flowing of blood in nature, in the trees, in the animals, and in the air. I am looking to produce a painting with new movements and with colours that mock our old easel paintings.



Franz Marc, *Fighting Shapes*, 1914.
Oil on canvas, 91 × 131.5 cm. Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.



Alexej von Jawlensky, Fairytale Princess with a Fan, 1912.

Oil on cardboard, 65.5 × 54 cm. Gift of Günther and Carola Peill, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

His painting, *In the Rain*, completed in 1912, shows the unity of all existence. The realism in the painting, the two squatting objects, the dog and the plants are partly unified and partly caught up in a network of iridescent rays of colour. It runs in a slanting manner like a carpet of colour over the canvas, sometimes in prism-like crystallisations. The viewer is presented a concrete representation of rain. This rain, however, is not a phenomenon that pours over the figures and nature; rather, it is an element that binds together and unites everything. In luminous colours, a strong red and a robust emerald green, Marc portrays the harmony of the ambience, and, now and again, white or violet shimmers through. Franz Marc dissolves the rigid organic form in dynamic surface movement. In

his paintings this often result in a kaleidoscopic play of colour in which the still representational object is submerged and subordinated to the colourful structure.

Franz Marc succeeded with his efforts to integrate everything living and growing, resulting in the development of ever-larger experiments with shapes. The visit to the Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon in Berlin made a strong impression on him. He reported: 'a significant preponderance [of] abstract shapes that only speak as shapes and almost without any representational overtones.' Then he went on to anticipate his later non-representational creations: 'All forms are memories.' In December 1913, he painted the works *Stables* and *Cattle*. Here and there, cattle-shaped animal parts emerge as if from a bone-laden path. From an almost stereotypically fashioned layout, Marc created figures and animals as though moulded out of his brush. The contrast between the static and moving shapes conveys a unique shifting and vibrating effect.

During his lifetime, Marc was in search of an adequate way to represent the organic rhythm in a painting that encompasses and pervades all of existence. During this period of intensive development he realised his first non-representational painting, *Fighting Forms*. These compositions suffice to show the interplay of the organic and the rhythms that encompass all existence. *Fighting Forms*, as the title suggests, portrays a conflict between two coloured objects. The luminous red form with bizarrely shaped appendages falls with full force upon a blue – black self-contained form. In the dualism of the colours – here the red expansive power, there the dark concentrated energy – dynamic tension is expressed. The publicist Franz Röthel in 1956 described it with appropriate expressiveness:

In the intoxicating colourfulness... it is like an ostentatious rattling of weapons. Threateningly, the large colour monsters crash into each other. Along the edges, winding curves size up the enemy. Flashing, fencing foil thrusts seemingly shine alight the sharp, melee of cutting forms.

Franz Marc became a soldier in World War I and was killed in action by 1916. Despite the short creative phase of his life, he bequeathed unto us the message of his vision contained in his wonderful paintings. It is an expressive message of the harmony of all existence and of unity with nature, urgently speaking to all living things. Franz Marc wrote to his wife from the war, 'It is precisely the pure art that has no purpose, but is simply a symbolic act of creation, proud in and of itself.' The Nazis had to remove his paintings from the Entartete Kunst exhibit, because the visitors stood in front of them too reverently.

Wassily Kandinsky seized upon this period of creativity with his whole personality and gave art an intellectual impetus with his research into the theoretical and methodological relationships between existence and art. His genius was to transform this period of creativity with new knowledge, thinking, and feeling. His worldview was shaped by German poetic Symbolism, by Stefan George, by the philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling and Henri Bergson, by theosophy and anthropology and insight into the natural sciences, as well as by the changed conceptions of space and time. He was interested in Indian meditation and in his library there were works on breathing techniques, occult healing, and colour therapy.

His tendency towards the intellectual in art and his search for infinite and cosmic energy became the rationale for him to overcome the representational and to embrace the non-representational. He found new and unexplored worlds of intellectual renewal – something no artist before him had dared to do. This path led him to the discovery of object-forms and, eventually, to image elements that, in encrypted form, convey intellectual meaning. In his later and more mature style, cosmic existence and its diversity become noticeable. With the aid of his intuition, he attempted to convey the thoughts and secrets of the cosmos in mystical, yet at the same time, rational paintings full of colour and drama.

His very first encounter with the avant-garde was in 1898, when he saw the painting *Haystacks* at an exhibition of Claude Monet. In his autobiography he reported:

I was struck dumb that this painting was missing an object, and then I noticed with surprise and bewilderment that not only is the painting gripping, but it makes an indelible impact. This was the unimagined and, up until then, hidden power of the paint palette that went beyond my dreams. Painting was given a magical power and splendour.

Since then, Kandinsky was on the search for the secret that was hidden between art and nature. His first non-representational watercolour is thought to have been created in 1910, but it was probably not created until 1913. This, however, does not do anything to negate Kandinsky's intellectual and methodological achievement. The first results of his non-representational painting were displays of lively and luminous colour. Lines criss-cross each other forcefully or fall down together in one direction. This apparent chaos obeyed the inherent order to visually capture the forces of the cosmos. In 1912 he exhibited at the Sturm in Berlin, and, in 1913, Herwarth Walden published a Kandinsky catalogue. After the outbreak of World War I, he moved to Switzerland and returned via Scandinavia to Moscow. There, he was assigned official posts and a professorship. However, in 1921 he returned to Germany and taught at the Bauhaus Weimar and later in Dessau. Together with Klee, Feininger and Jawlensky, he founded the Die Blauen Vier (The Blue Four) group, which lasted until it was disbanded in 1933. In 1933 Wassily Kandinsky left for Paris and in 1937 the Nazis confiscated his paintings.

In his writings *About the Intellectual in Art*, written in 1910 and published in 1912, he made public his findings regarding colours and shapes and their inherent values. Similar to a musical score, he sought to produce a score for painting.

Yellow is the typical earthly colour. Yellow cannot be driven very far into the depths. When cooled off with blue, it obtains a... sickly hue. In comparison with the frame of mind of a person, it could function as the colour equivalent of insanity.

The corresponding shape is the triangle. White acts 'as a great silence', black sounds 'as a dead nothing after the sun has been extinguished', gray is 'toneless and immovable', vermilion is 'as an evenly glowing passion.' He also assigns character and mood to shapes. Blue is the colour of the circle, and the circle represents perfection; the domed half circle represents peace. A horizontal line represents peace; pointing upwards it represents joy, and pointing downwards mourning. In the course of his life as a painter, he developed a vocabulary of symbols and colours. His paints become a script with rhythms and rules. 'Composition is a combination of coloured and graphic shapes,' said Kandinsky. There is no hierarchy of methods. The order within the composition is subject to the control of the intellect. However, the origin of the action would be an 'inner necessity.' In the later paintings, Kandinsky developed a language of small particles. Biomorphs, fantastic creatures float and interact in cosmic worlds. He formulated his visions with playful cheerfulness, which had a hint of the surreal.

His encounter with Henri Matisse led Alexej von Jawlensky to his compositions of big radiating spots of colour that he, unlike Matisse, surrounded with broad-brush strokes. Jawlensky radically renewed the use of the human image as a subject for painting in the first half of the 20th century. With imperturbable resolution, he took the image from the splendid vibrancy of Expressionism and transformed it into a constructivist abstraction. The impact of World War I, made his form of expression increasingly intellectual. This resulted in internalised, symbolic *Meditation* panels.

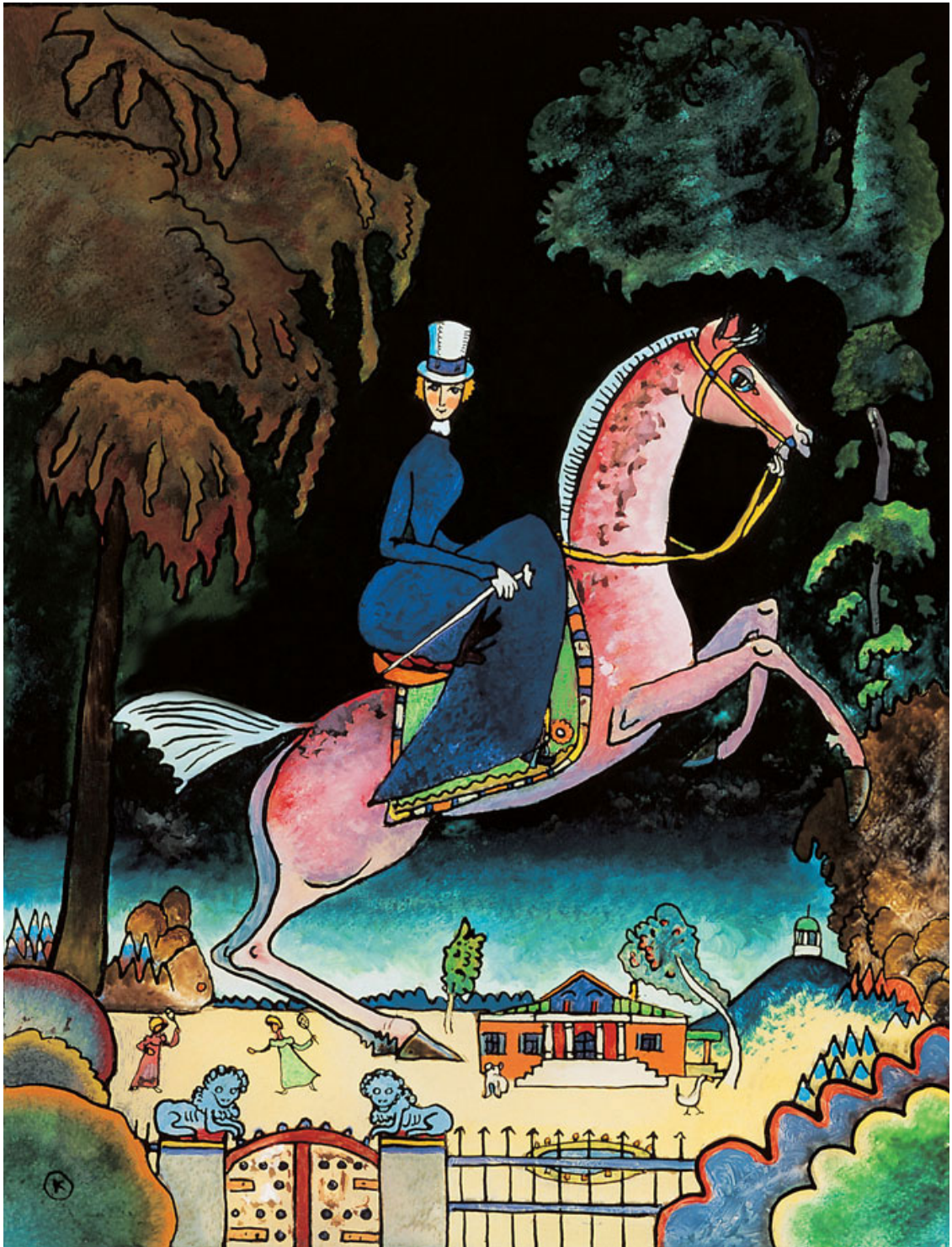
Even in her youth, Marianne von Werefkin was called the 'Russian Rembrandt.' Later in Munich, she became the intellectual centre of the Blaue Reiter. Painters like Paul Klee, Franz Marc, Jawlensky and Kandinsky valued her innovative spirit and her broad artistic view. For 30 years she

lived and worked together with Alexej von Jawlensky, encouraging his talent, first in St Petersburg and then in Munich. From 1907 she produced a great many paintings which serve as a testament to the great significance of her art at the beginning of the 20th century. *Circus (Before the Show)* from 1909–1910 is one of her masterpieces. The composition stylistically moves between Art Nouveau and Expressionism. On the one hand, the painting shows the influences of French painting, and, on the other side, a daring use of colour, and, in the use of the surfaces, a concept of abstract compositional structures. Long drawn surfaces in various colours and patterns divide the painting.

The work by Gabriele Münter shows lively, fresh colours and a powerful organisation of space. In the early Murnau years, she produced landscapes and still lifes.



Alexej von Jawlensky, *Portrait of the dancer Alexander Sakharov*, 1909.
Oil on cardboard, 69.5 × 66.5 cm. Städtische Galerie, Lenbachhaus, Munich.



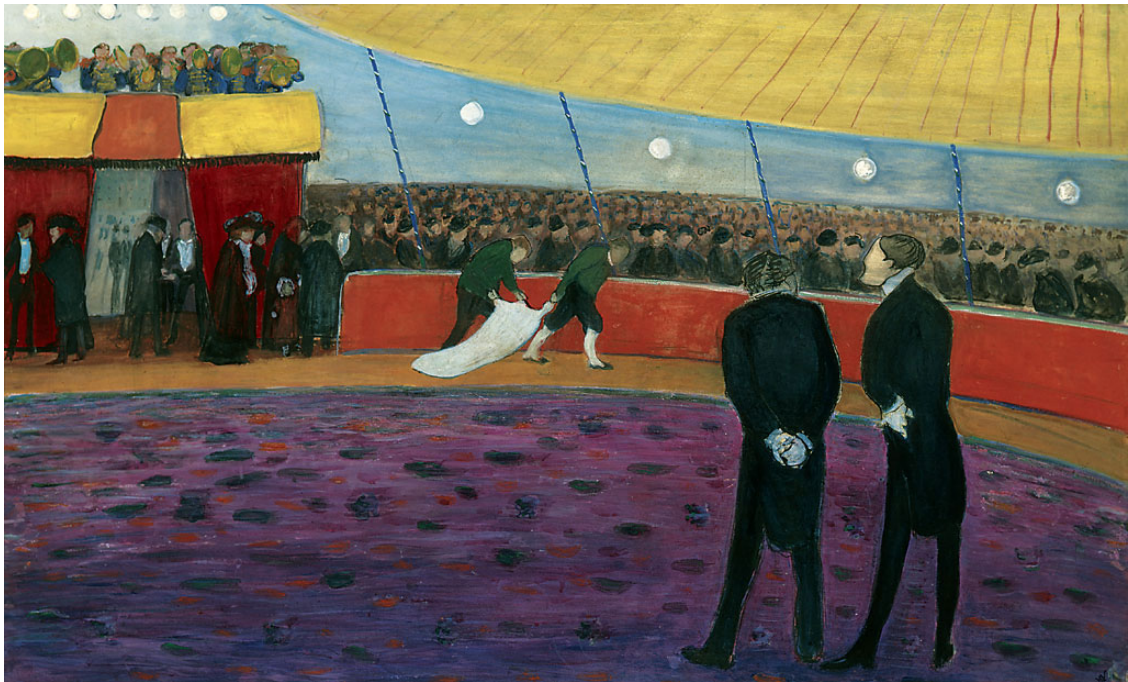
Wassily Kandinsky, *Amazon*, 1918.
Paint on glass, 32 × 25 cm. Russian Museum, St Petersburg.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VII*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 200 × 300 cm. Tretyakov State Gallery, Moscow.



Gabriele Münter, *Jawlensky and Werefkin*, 1908–09.
Oil on canvas, 32.7 × 44.5 cm. Städtische Galerie, Lenbachhaus, Munich.



Marianne von Werefkin, *Circus (Before the Show)*, c. 1910.
Gouache, 55 × 90 cm. Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren.

Expressionism in Austria

Until 1918, Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka defined the art scene in Vienna. There, all the political, social, and artistic trends of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian monarchy came together, and it is here that the uniquely Viennese Art Nouveau developed. It showed the influences of French Symbolism and the Munich Secession. It became ever more luxuriant, subtle, and psychologically exaggerated. Above all else, it was very reflected the eroticism present the insights of Sigmund Freud, who was, at the time, publishing the results of his psychoanalytical research.

Gustav Klimt is the main representative of this imposing, sumptuous Art Nouveau. Even when he began to incorporate Expressionist decorative elements into his visual language, there was no denying his origins. Though he depicted the human subjects of his paintings with a greater emphasis on their traits, he still surrounded them in a splendidly ornamented background of mosaic-like spatial decoration. Klimt was the darling of Viennese society. The figures are encapsulated in a veil made of ornaments that seem to be taken from Egyptian or Byzantine mosaics and are just as extensive and splendidly colourful in gold, silver or black. In contrast to this, he depicted the head and the face in a dainty manner exuding tenderness and emotional ecstasy.

Egon Schiele, who was nearly twenty years younger, did not have much time to make his mark on the world. By 1918, he was dead at the age of 28. Nevertheless, he left an astonishingly impressive body of work. Daringly, he very quickly achieved a unique and unmistakeable visual language that was harsh and ascetic, bizarre, and rough. He deliberately presented deformations of the body and psyche, as well as the emotional suffering and depression among primarily the lower social classes. His works have a touch of death and melancholy. The erotic ecstasy in his

works provoked public outrage. He was imprisoned for four weeks in 1912, ‘for the production of pornographic images.’ In the same year, he was invited to the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne.

In Vienna, Oskar Kokoschka, inspired by Sigmund Freud, began a series of psychological portraits. With x-ray-like vision, he analysed the eternal conflict between the genders. Kokoschka created existential portraits of people without pretension or masks. He was a portrait painter with a high degree of emotional sensitivity and the ability to reveal through the visual image. Kokoschka’s hallucinatory and visionary gift allowed him to plumb the state of the psyche and to enter the soul of his subjects. He himself once aptly described himself as a ‘psychological can opener.’ One example of this is the portrait of the psychiatrist Auguste Forel done in 1910. In the same year, Kokoschka moved to Berlin and for a short time found a new home with Herwarth Walden, who repeatedly displayed his work. The Viennese critics in 1911 described his portraits as follows:

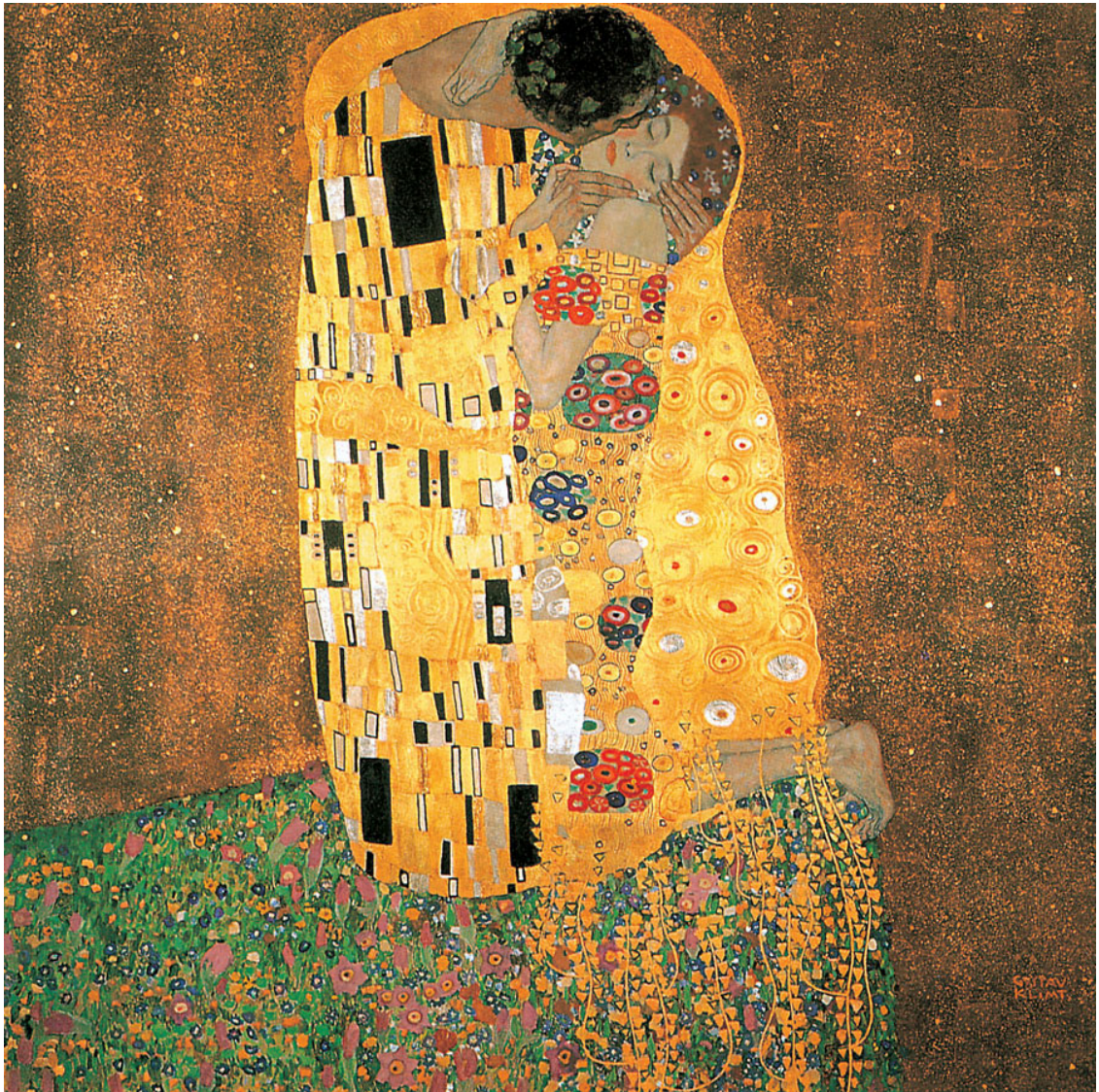
He paints faces of people who wilt in the bad office air... Possibly, this is a left-wing depiction... nothing more than the hopeless expression of a painful soul in the state of decay... He brews his colours together out of poisonous putrefaction... they shimmer bile yellow, fever green, frost blue... ointment-like he smears them and leaves them scratchy and encrusted, scarred and crusty... Depravity is the lure of these paintings. They have, of course, meaning as a manifesto of an era of decay, but seen artistically, they are a massacre of colour.

The vibrant city of Berlin, where he stayed several times until the outbreak of the war, dynamised Oskar Kokoschka’s painting style more and more. A striking example is from *The Hurricane* of 1914, which shows the artist himself with his lover, Alma Maria Mahler. A nearly ornamental brushwork captures the situation in a flowing movement.

Kokoschka was, like many artists of the classic modernist school, not only a painter but also a writer. He spent the years between 1917 to 1923 in Dresden, where he had followed the actress Käthe Richter from Berlin. During this time, when he taught at the Dresden academy, he did many portraits of scholars, literati and actors. His style had now become markedly calmer. He chose colours that were strong and luminous. He applied them in broad strokes, often with a palette knife. Colour became almost autonomous. They were applied in thick coats upon the canvas. Colour became a material. During the Dresden period, he completed the portrait called *The Persian*. It shows the publisher and art dealer Wolfgang Gurlitt. He applied coloured dot next to coloured dot with a palette knife. Luminous red is the main accent, whose effect is velvety soft, and the paste-like colour formation has a carpet-like effect. The depiction conveys authority, peace and ease. After 1924, Kokoschka travelled around Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. This resulted in a series of landscapes and cityscapes like those of Prague, Lyon, London, and Constantinople. Far beyond an Impressionistic depiction, he captured the play of light, the moment, the essential nature of things and the creation of a certain dynamism. His work in its entirety remains connected to the visible and the representational.



Egon Schiele, *The Embrace (Couple II, Man and Woman)*, 1917.
Oil on canvas, 98 × 169 cm. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.



Gustav Klimt, *The Kiss*, 1907–1908.
Oil, gilt and silver plating on canvas, 180 × 180 cm.
Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.



Oskar Kokoschka, *The Wind's Fiancée*, 1914.
Oil on canvas, 181 × 221 cm. Kunstmuseum, Basel.

August Macke and Rhenish Expressionism

Curious, the young generation seeks to see and experience everything that is new. In many cities, people gathered in Secessionist societies. Thus, the exchange of information among artists increased, as well as their acceptance in society. In the open-minded Rhineland, there was contact with the most important centres of art. The connections to France and Paris were closer there than elsewhere. That lent the art of this region an especially French feeling. Expressionism was more moderate here. The jagged splintering of shapes or the ecstasy of colour appeared only seldom among the Rhinelanders and only in moderated form. The Rhenish painters were more likely to be oriented towards Fauvism and Cubism, but, above all else, towards the Orphism of Robert Delaunay. The young August Macke from Bonn was a driving force and a towering personality. He was in close contact with the Blaue Reiter and took part in organising the Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon in 1913 in Berlin. Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Orphism and the Blaue Reiter all gave the artists living in the Rhineland impressions that, taken all together, developed into Rhenish Expressionism with its special lyrical tinge.

The crucial cultural event occurred in the summer of 1912 in Cologne, where the International Exhibition of the Sonderbund West German Friends of Art and Artists at Cologne had a total of 634 paintings, sculptures and hand drawings on display. For the first time ever at this world exhibition, all the leading and driving forces of modernist art from Impressionism to Picasso were brought together. The most important artists from our view today, the trailblazers of modernist art such as

Van Gogh, Munch, Cézanne and Gauguin were given dedicated exhibition halls. The effect was international, definitive, sweeping, and an impetus for the famous Amory Show, which was held in the early part of 1913 in New York. At this event, more than 1500 exhibits were shown, a third of them being European.

The effect of the famous Sonderbund exhibition of 1912 in Cologne (which for many of the artists was a revelation) was also felt immediately among the young Rhinelanders. A touring exhibit of Italian Futurists during October of 1912 in Cologne reinforced this. This exhibit had previously been seen with Herwarth Walden in Berlin and was now being taken by August Macke to the Rhineland. From the knowledge gained from the exhibited avant-garde, the art of the young Rhineland painters developed further. After the World War I, they came together in the Junges Rheinland (Young Rhineland).

For the first time in July 1913, the artistic avant-garde of the West put on a combined exhibit in the art salon of the Cohen Bookstore. Wilhelm Worringer, who taught at the University of Cologne, had an academically open-minded view of Expressionism and Modernist art. August Macke, along with sixteen other young artists, took part in one of the first joint exhibitions titled Rhenish Expressionists. These included Ernst Moritz Engert, Franz M. Jansen, Joseph Kölschbach, August Macke's cousin Helmuth Macke, Carlo Mense, Heinrich Nauen, Paul Adolf Seehaus, Hans Thuar, Heinrich Campendonk, Franz Henseler and Max Ernst, who in his early paintings was, without doubt, an Expressionist before he became famous as Dada Max and the founder of Surrealism. However, the exhibition was not able to contribute to the long-term cooperation between the participating artists, as the next year World War I destroyed all international relations, and August Macke died in France in the first days of the war.

For the first time at this exhibition of the Rhenish Expressionists, trends that had been observed earlier in Berlin and Munich were also seen in the Rhineland. This was because a generation of artists was emerging with ideas from the European renewal, namely, Early Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, and Orphism, melding these into a unified and overarching way of painting that they wanted to develop further from the old into a new continuing unity. The rather carefully worded statement concerning this Rhenish art was formulated by the Cologne art critic, painter and writer, Rudi Mense: The common goal of these artists was 'to capture the secretive and rather mysterious language of things and to hold the inner light of the world, its melodious meaning and its ringing existence and to approximate this in a painting.' Max Ernst reported later: 'We were joined by a thirst for life, poetry, freedom, the pursuit of the absolute, for knowledge.'



Heinrich Campendonk, *In the Forest*, c. 1919.

Oil on canvas, 83.8 × 99 cm. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

August Macke belonged to the German painters who, shortly after 1910, struggled not only theoretically, but also from the artistic point of view, with the artistic trends of their day. Macke recognised that ‘All these things, Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism and abstract painting are just terms for the change that we want our artistic thinking to make and is making.’ This he intuitively understood and was the basis for his further development. They were Impressionism, specifically George Seurat and the linear rhythm; the colour panes of Robert Delaunay and movement through colour; as well as Futurism, of which he thought: ‘Contemporary painting can avoid this idea even less than Picasso.’

In the autumn of 1912, Macke, together with Franz Marc, visited Robert Delaunay in Paris, who then in January together with Apollinaire came to Bonn for a return visit. In March 1913, Delaunay exhibited a larger number of his works in Cologne. Macke was impressed most of all by *Fenêtres*.

Already in Paris, I had the feeling that I had before me some very significant things. ... My heart opens up when I see the houses and the Eiffel Tower through these windows with sunlight shining through them... I almost always think about this. The reflecting windowpanes through which on a sunny day one can see the city and the Eiffel Tower.

Simultaneity was the magic word of the movement then. Man and his surroundings were the main subjects for Macke's paintings. In particular, it is the youthful elegance of women, who in the world of his paintings are composed of rhythm, movement, and reflections. He used variations of the doubling principle associated with the Futurists Balla and Russolo in his scenes. He also

used Boccioni's technique for visualising the invisible and Ardengo Soffici's method of depicting acoustic components with dots.

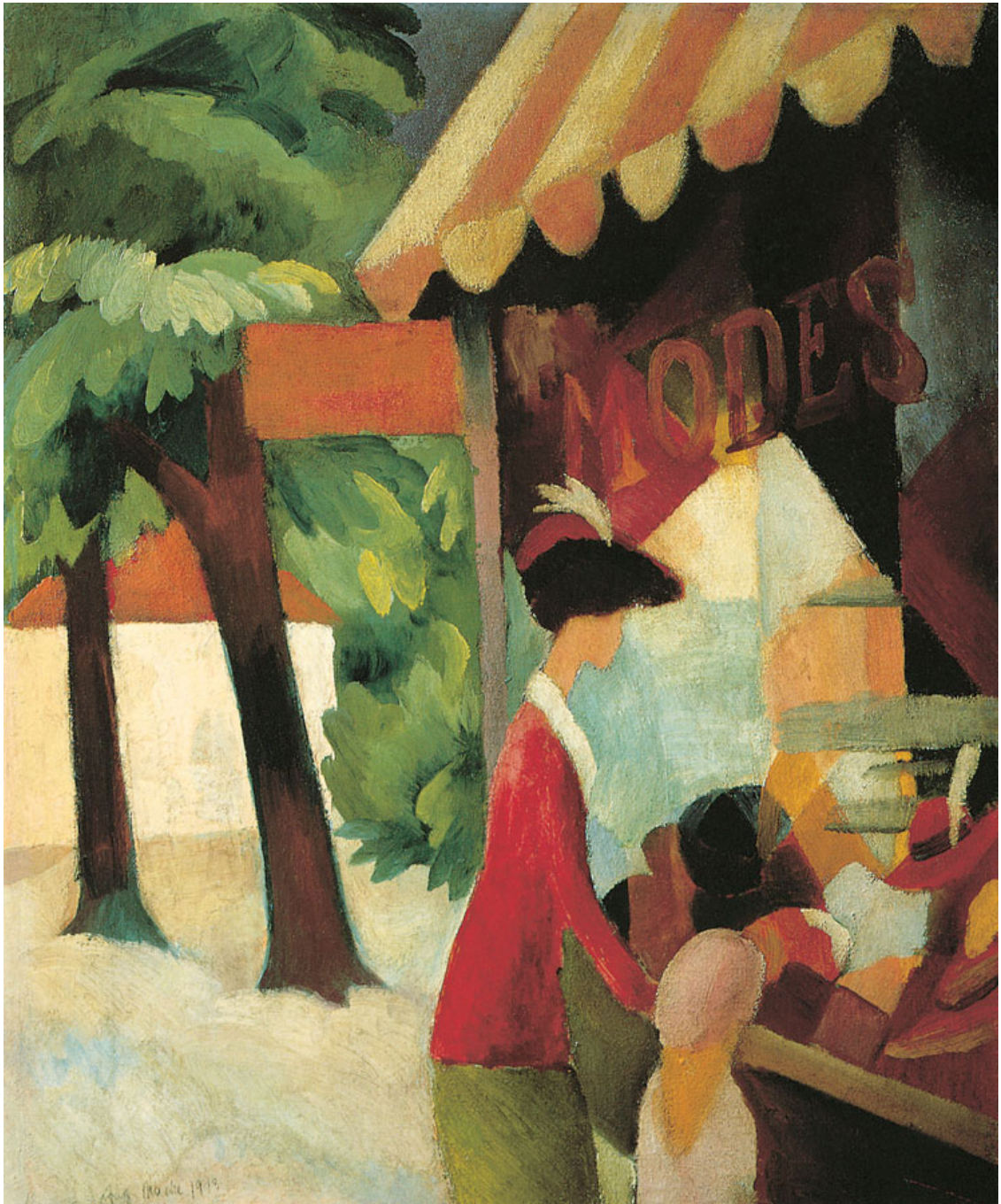
Heinrich Campendonk was a friend of August Macke and Franz Marc. His landscape depictions during his most creative period culminate in spatial and temporal simultaneity of varying impressions and sequences into a characterisation of landscape and action. Animals and vegetation, buildings and objects stand in close relationship to one another and are connected and pervaded by an atmospheric network rendered visible. Everything is combined and is not defined by either shape or colour. Coloured bands of oscillation pass through and enliven the painting surface. Similar to Franz Marc, Campendonk also frees colour from the dependency of the visible and assigns to it values of its own.

Paul Adolf Seehaus who was Macke's only student, also belonged to the circle of artists. He had a natural rhythm, and he felt himself obliged to the organic world, to the countryside and the architecture placed in it.

'It is all about the contrast,' he wrote in an essay shortly before his death in 1919, 'not about what has been seen, but rather what has been experienced – it is out of this that the painter must express himself. Only in this way can he feel the rhythm of things, only in this way can he make seen to people, only in this way will he become a praiseworthy prophet.'

His biographer K. F. Ertel commented: 'It is as if felt the pulse of nature, both turbulent and calm.'

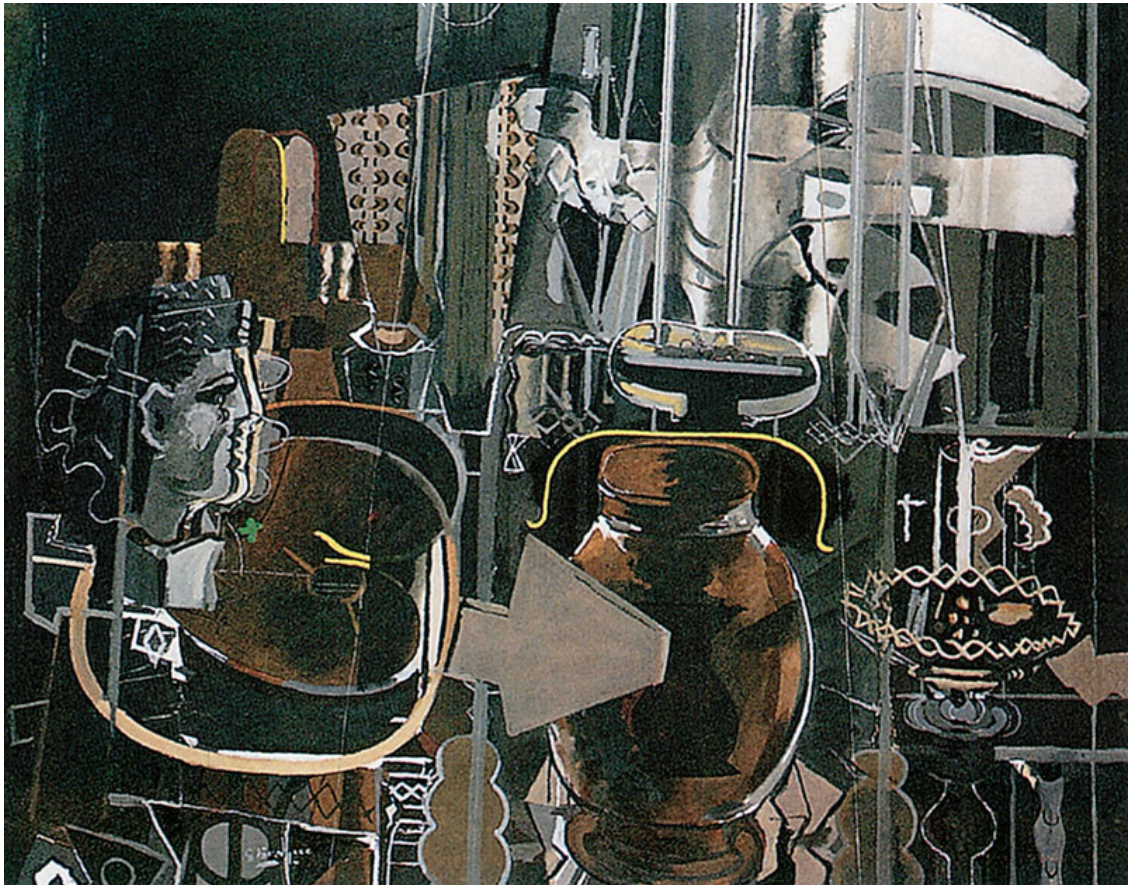
It was the desire of Wilhelm Morgner to express himself entirely free of nature by only using colour and brush strokes to indicate direction. In 1912 he painted *Ornamental Compositions* in several variations. They are constructed in groups of combined shapes. Morgner makes use of harmoniously curved lines. These indicate direction and suggest movement. 'The manner in which the lines are given is supposed to be the ongoing waving of my ego, like an echo that is created by some instrument and then continues the same wave in the air, as the instrument has given it,' Morgner wrote in 1911.



August Macke, *In Front of the Hat Shop*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 54 × 44 cm. Private collection.



Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)*, 1907.
Oil on canvas, 243.9 × 233.7 cm. Acquired through the
Lillie P. Bliss Bequest, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Georges Braque, *Workshop II*, 1949. Oil on canvas, 131 × 163 cm.
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

Cubism, Materiality, and Collage

The Analysis of Shape

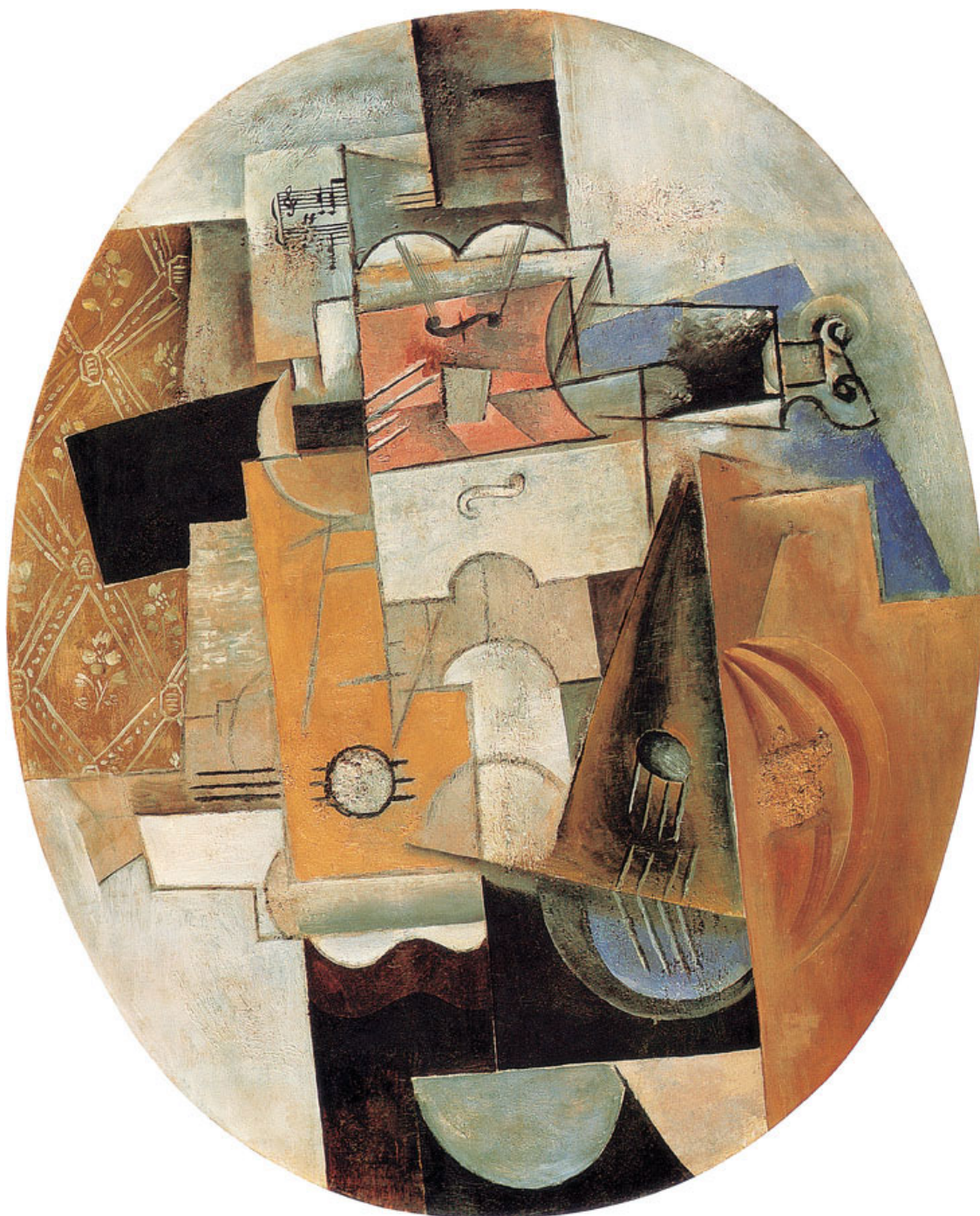
In 1907 one painting signalled the prelude to a change in painting: *Les Femmes d'Alger*. When Pablo Picasso first exhibited this bordello scene with five female figures, even the collector Sergei Shchukin and his friend Georges Braque considered the painting to be 'a loss for French painting.' However, the significance of this new view of reality soon became clear to Braque. For the first time Picasso crafted a clear and rational lens without any aesthetic allusions. Continuing with the analysis of shape by Cézanne, Picasso fragmented the forms into cubes. It was the task of the viewer to put this puzzle of various spatial views together into a whole. The colour was muted. This was also new. However, most of all the novelty lay in the independence of the painting from the preconditions given by nature. At the same time, this was the artist's answer to the changed preconditions of science regarding space and time. Cézanne's demand that in nature one should seek out the sphere, the cone and the cylinder was the basis for his compositional ideas. At the 1909 exhibition of the Indépendents, the critic Louis de Vauxcelles spoke of cubes. Cubism was born.

Cubism underwent many evolutionary steps. The friends Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso said later: 'We did not have the intention of creating Cubism. Moreover, we just wanted to express that which moved us... It almost seemed as if we were two mountain climbers who were hanging from a single rope.' In the years 1909 to 1912, they brought art the independence from everything real without being completely abstract. This phase is called Analytical Cubism. In particular, they now painted figures and still lifes. They no longer painted an object viewed from one point, but layered these in order to capture the view from all sides. They analyzed the object and brought it to the canvas as a fragmented picture. Shape and space melted into one another in one structure of enmeshed, intersected and dissected surfaces. Instead of volume, one constructed surfaces. The situation captured in the painting became far more indefinite. Some surfaces became transparent, weightless or suddenly transformed themselves into a book or an instrument. With regard to colours, one limited oneself to a brown-gray-blue colour scale. They no longer painted in open nature, but in the studio, where the arsenal for their subjects was already at hand. Later, they no longer arranged their still lifes; rather, they created them out of the imagination, adding numbers and word fragments to the compositions.

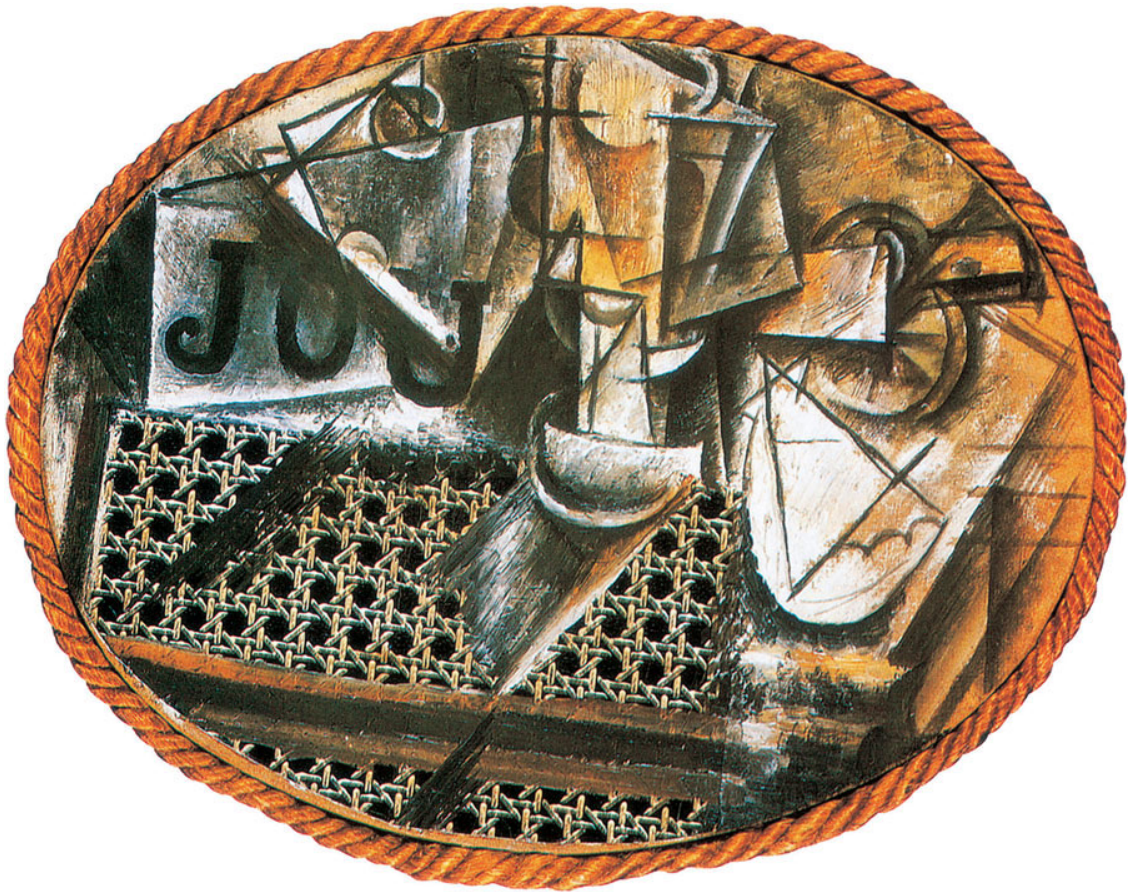
In Synthetic Cubism, now accompanied by Juan Gris, they both achieved their artistic goals. It was no longer about taking the objects apart. Now, one created new objects with new materials. One recognised new qualities for works of art, using the most varied materials, even items that were to be thrown away. The collage was made into a painting.



Juan Gris, *Still Life (Violin and Ink Pot)*, 1913.
Oil on canvas, 89.5 × 60.5 cm.
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.



Pablo Picasso, *Musical Instruments*, 1913.
Oil, plaster and saw dust on oil cloth, 98 × 80 cm.
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.



Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912.
Oil on oilcloth and rope, 29 × 37 cm. Musée National Picasso, Paris.

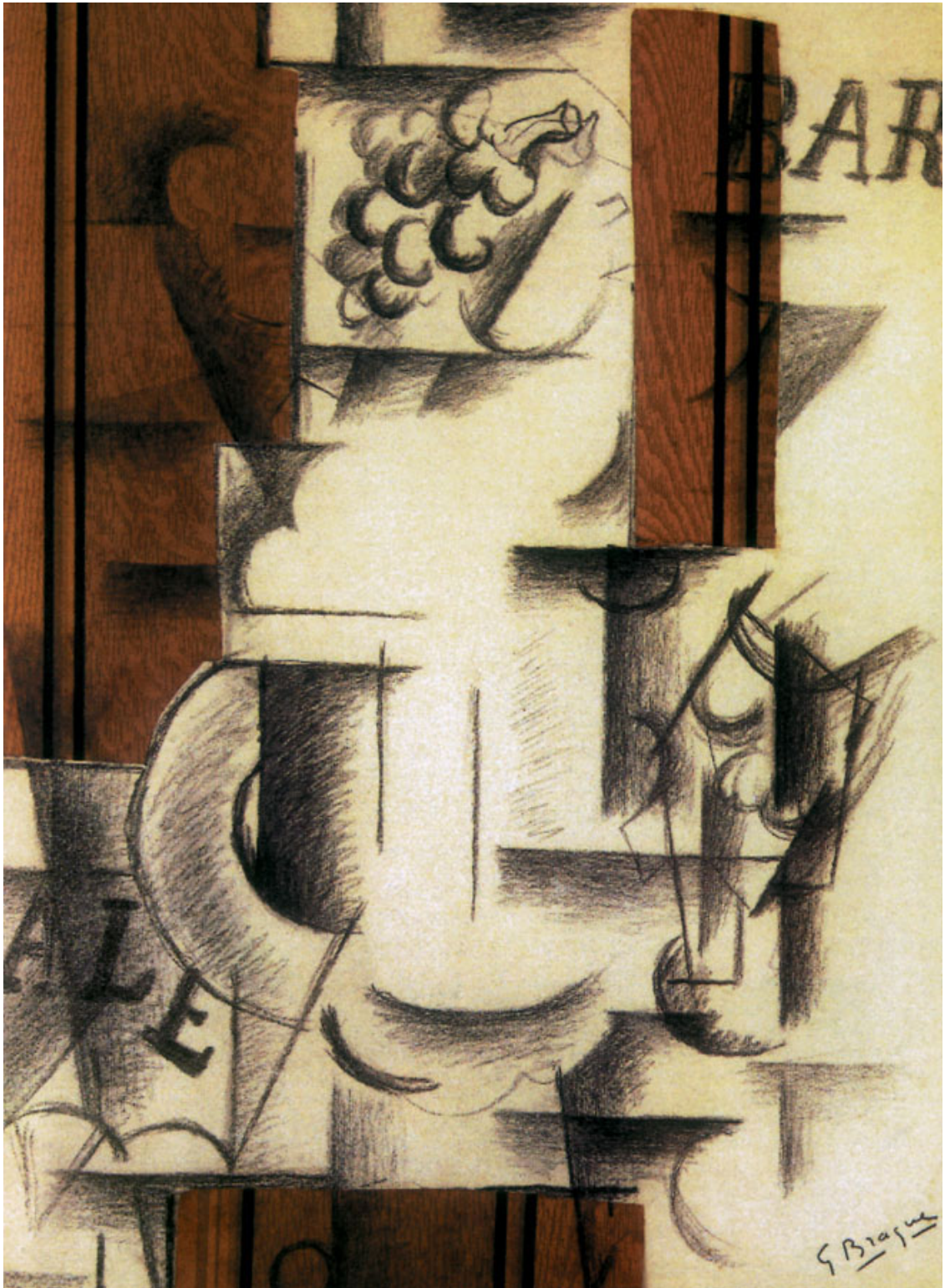
Picasso and Braque Discover 'Popular' Painting

Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso created a new type of painting: the daily world in the form of real materials. For this, they used fabrics, wax cloth, wallpaper scraps and newspaper shreds. Daily materials became the objects of high art. The so-called *papiers collés* were created. The interest of Picasso in the tactile and in materials found its first visual climax in May 1912 with *Still Life with Chair Caning*. Picasso used materials in an unorthodox manner. The printed pattern on the wax cloth conveyed the illusion of a cane chair pipe network. It was not about either painted or real caning. The pasted on paper pretends to be something else than it is. The surrounding rope is a concrete object. Shortly thereafter, Braque found a roll of wallpaper with an oak pattern. He cut pieces out and integrated them into a drawing. These endeavours eventually led to pure surface textures contrasted against one another and thus forming the whole painting.

Braque and Picasso understood their studio to be a place of craftsmanship. Using everyday materials, they experimented with extending art to the ordinary. Primarily in 1912 and 1913, this was done with paper. In order to develop their idea of a 'popular iconography' they used cardboard, paper of many shades and patterns, sand, combs, sawdust, metal shavings, ripolin varnish, sheet metal stencils, razor blades, and craft tools. Apollinaire and André Salmon compared the efforts of Braque and Picasso in regard to the readily comprehensible simplicity with the efforts of the poet François de Malherbe in his studies of the slang spoken by the dockers in order to enrich his own language.

The *papiers collés* were preceded by paper sculptures, first by Braque and later by Picasso. Already by 1911, Braque had created his first paper sculpture. These first paper sculptures by Braque reminded Picasso of the construction scaffolding of the Wright brothers' double decker aircraft

Pablo Picasso became the genius among the artists of the 20th century. Like no other artist, he made important contributions and innovations to nearly all of the artistic movements of the 20th century. He journeyed to unexplored shores and again and again produced surprising new masterpieces.



Georges Braque, *Compote Dish, Bottle and Glass*, 1912.
Charcoal drawing and pasted papers, 62 × 46 cm. Private collection.



Félix Édouard Vallotton, *Street Corner in Paris*, 1895.
Gouache and oil on cardboard, 35.9 × 29.5 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The Merit of Material

From classical times until the end of the 18th century, an artwork was evaluated according to its content. The material out of which the artwork was made played a subordinate role. One proceeded from the premise that an idea in its most complete and ideal state is immaterial. To a great extent, material had to be subordinate to the artistic form. Materials were placed in the hierarchical order that was determined by how little they would impinge upon the purity of the

artistic premise. Only in the 20th century did the aesthetics relating to materials take hold. Material justice now became one of the criteria for a good work of art. Materials rose in esteem. Out of this also developed the independence of the materials. Materials slowly became an independent medium of art.

Edgar Degas was a forerunner for the appreciation of so-called 'poor' materials. At the 1881 Paris Impressionist exhibition of the Salon des Indépendents, he displayed *The Small Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, which he had completed in 1879–80. The flesh-coloured wax figure with a ponytail made of real red hair, and clothed in real clothes, a flax bodice, a white full-length dress and ballroom shoes, shocked the art world. In contrast to those critics who were reminded of the 'young monster' of a display at a fair, and specimen preparations for a zoological and physiological museum exhibit, the critic and poet Joris-Karl Huysmans vehemently defended Degas.

All the ideas the public has about sculpture, about cold, lifeless, white apparitions, about these memorable and stereotypical works that have been repeated over the centuries will be toppled. The fact is that Degas has knocked over the traditions of sculpture, just as he has for a long time now shaken the conventions of painting... This statuette is the only really modern attempt that I am aware of in sculpture with her living flesh shaped throughout by working muscles.

A similar view can be taken from the letter Vincent van Gogh wrote at the end of February or beginning of March 1883 to his friend, van Rappard: 'Tomorrow, I will get some interesting things from this rubbish dump.' He would dream of the collection of discarded buckets, kettles, baskets, oil cans and wire, and this winter he would really have something to work with.

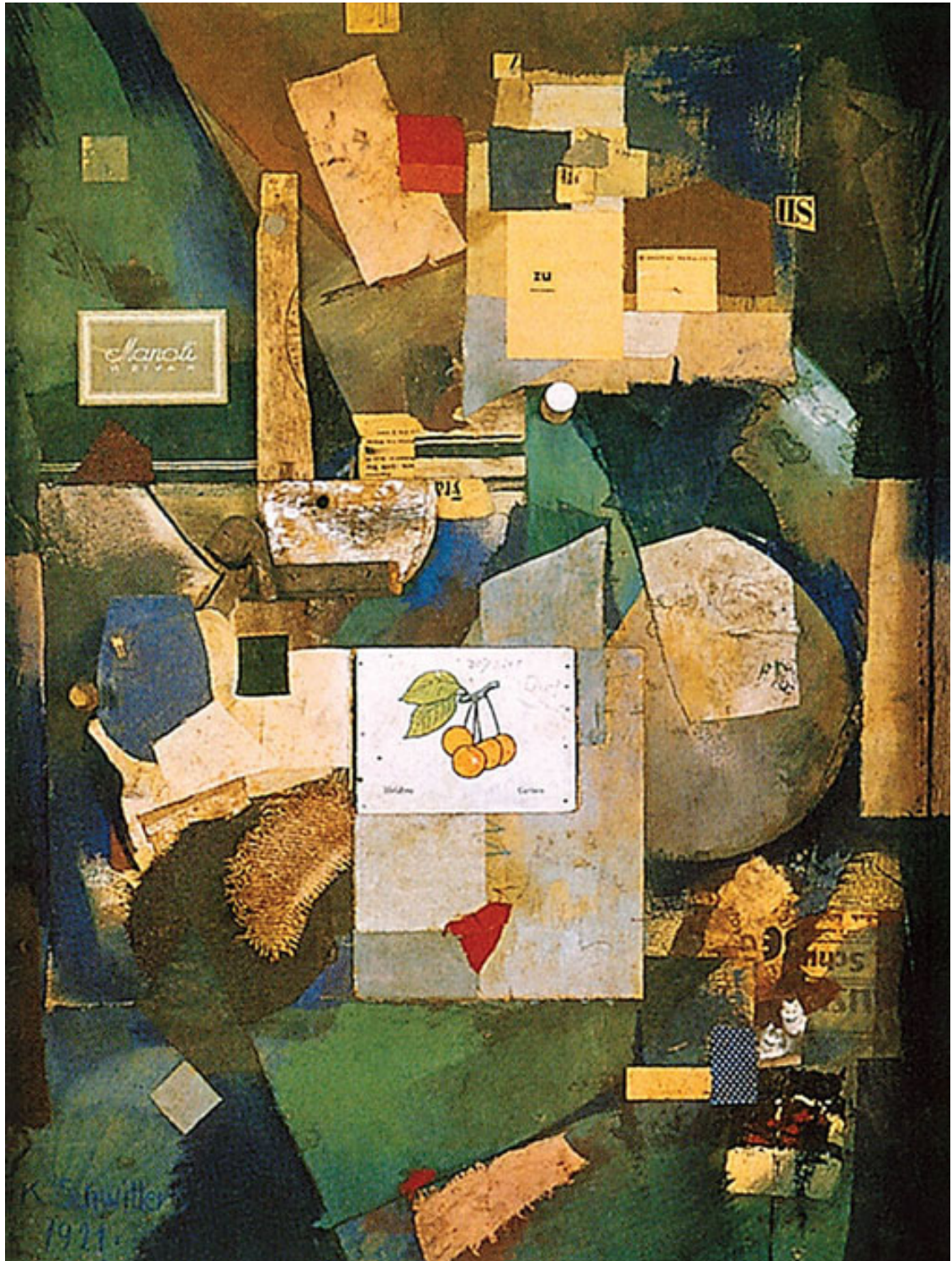
In 1890, Maurice Denis reflected on the materiality and immaterialness of colour, space and technology: 'A painting is essentially a tarpaulin surface covered by colours in a certain order.' An example of this was Felix Vallotton with one of the many examples from 1897, *Les Passants (scène de rue)*. The support for the painting is a reddish brown cardboard box with fine fibre inserts. Its colourfulness and graphic structure stand at several important places in the painting with broad surfaces unpainted and untreated. The beauty of the material has been brought forth.

In the later works of Paul Cézanne, large parts of the canvas also remain untouched. The level of sensitivity regarding the material quality of the painting support is reflected in the way this is used. Pablo Picasso gave the colours their independence in his Blue and Pink Periods. The *papiers collés* were a logical consequence of this.

The subjects and techniques of anthropology influenced the development of modernist art. The avant-garde pioneers systematically acquired new sources of inspiration and the categorical separation between art, folk art, and anti-art was lifted. Theodor Adorno specifically warned against limiting the insights of the modernist movement to similarities with older art. Only through the deliberate artistic use of techniques and material would the work become more than mere handicraft. It was only when Braque and Picasso first pasted pieces of paper in the *papiers collés* that the intellectual spark surpassed the effect and dexterity of the previous shapes.



Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer Aged 14*, 1865–1881, restored between 1921 and 1931. Painted bronze, muslin and silk ribbon in its hair, 98 × 35.2 × 24.5 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbild 32A (The Cherry Picture)*, 1921.
Combination, 91.8 × 70.5 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The Collage

Two-dimensional paper assumed the role of the three-dimensional means of expression in the *papiers collés*. The traditional picture frame perspective was dissolved in space. Depending on colour, pattern, or material, the paper surface appeared in the foreground or in the background. The

painting developed into a special flat relief. Picasso experimented at first with paper scraps that he had constructed into guitar box sculptures.

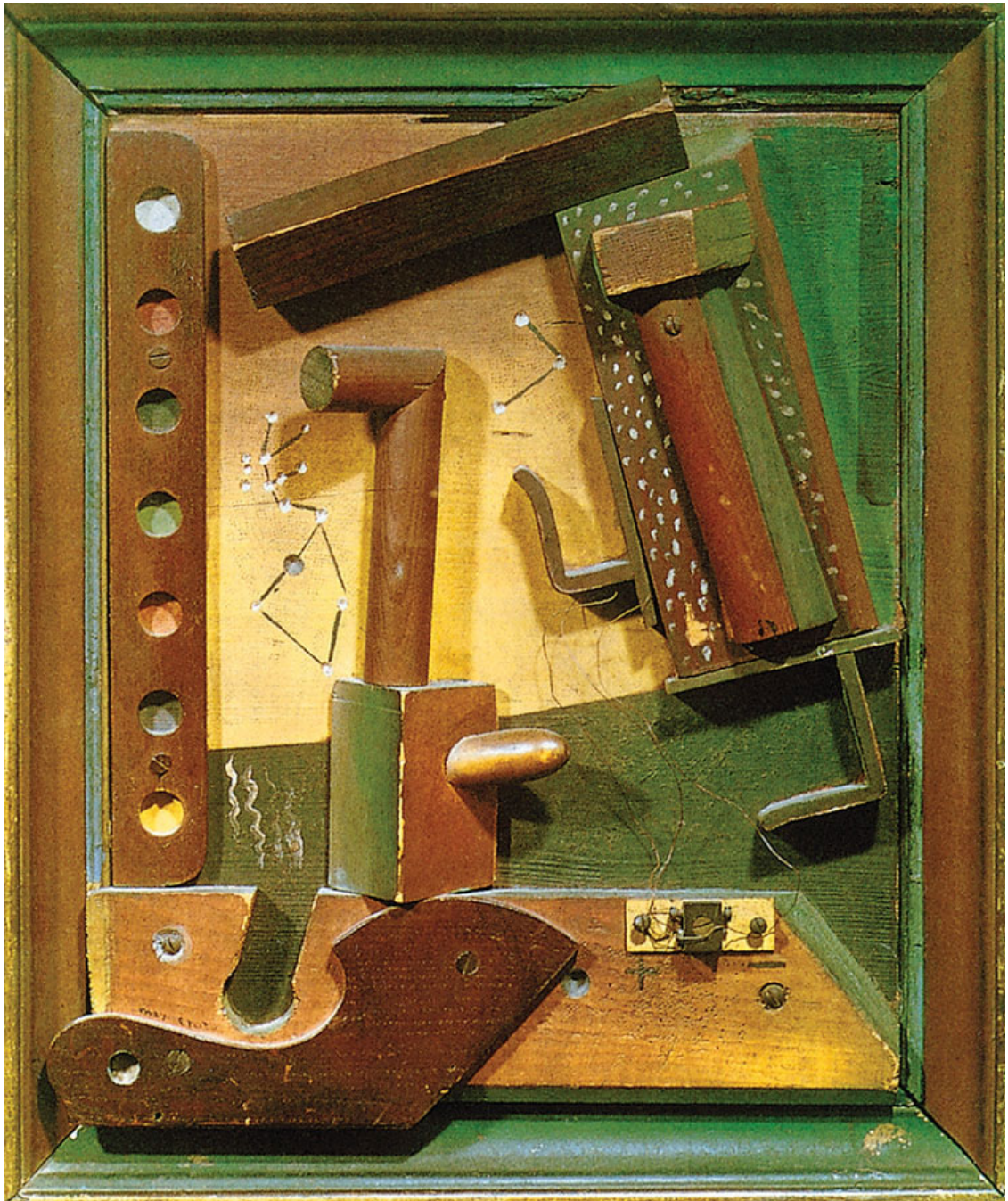
Futurism incorporated the flat surface of the *papiers collés*, the rhythmic repetitions, and the associated dynamic spatial structure. Futurism created a dynamic relief of the world in a state of unrest. The processes did not develop sequentially, but rather in a state of simultaneity of the past, present, and future.

Carlo Carrà pasted the prototype of a two-dimensional Futurist paper collage using paper and newspaper cut-outs. The *Manifestazione Interventista* appeared on 1 August 1914, shortly before the outbreak of World War I, in the newspaper *Lacerba* in Paris. From the central point, printed strips of paper rotate outwards from the painting in all directions with incredible force. For the Futurists, the collage became, for the first time, a document of the period, consisting of scraps of news, advertising and musical scores. As if liberated, words and letters rolled out making sounds and noises, juggling and tumbling with an overflow of simultaneous information into the painting. The Futurist collage for the most part uses the typography of printed paper.

A short time later, Dadaism further developed the Futurist text and sound painting. Printed fragments of paper were now put together in new contexts of meaning; looked at separately, the images and symbols could illuminate radically different meanings. In reciprocal interaction, even unrelated levels of reality obtain a surprisingly deep significance.

In the works of Kurt Schwitters, the collage became the leading focus. He did not aspire to a synthesis of the arts in the sense of Kandinsky. Instead, he wanted, much more resolutely than either the Futurists or the Dadaists, to put everything in interplay of time and wipe away the boundaries. For him, art meant the integration of everything, including technology. The natural result of this view of life was the collage, which brought together all the arts of all manifestations. In his Merz-paintings and Merz-objects, Schwitters utilised materials and papers of all types and origins.

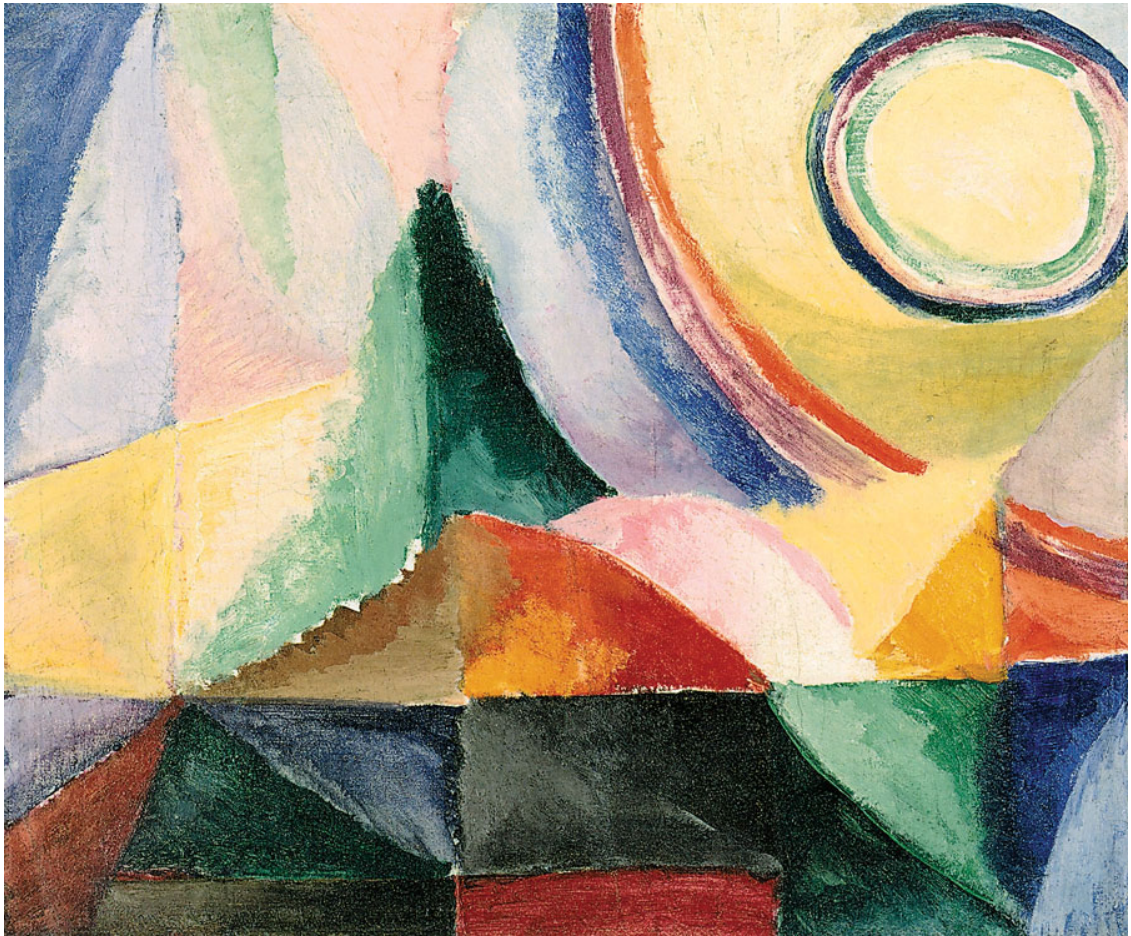
In the works of Max Ernst, collage played an essential role. Using already existing visual material, he opened up possibilities that completely changed the original meaning of the image elements. By 1919, Max Ernst began to expand the aesthetic background of the *papiers collés*. For him, collage was also 'negation as a possible method of resistance against the overflow of images and their boundless blending.' While staying at the home of the well-known Swiss criminal defence lawyer, Vladimir Rosenbaum and his wife, Aline Valangin, whose houses in Zurich and Comologno became the refuge for many of émigrés Ernst scandalised many by cutting up pages from the old books in his library to make collages out of them. For the art of the 20th century, the collage as a way of thinking opened unknown paths and unexpected possibilities.



Max Ernst, *Frucht einer langen Erfahrung (Fruit of Long Experience)*, 1919.
Relief in painted wood and metal, 45.7 × 38 cm. Private collection, Genoa.

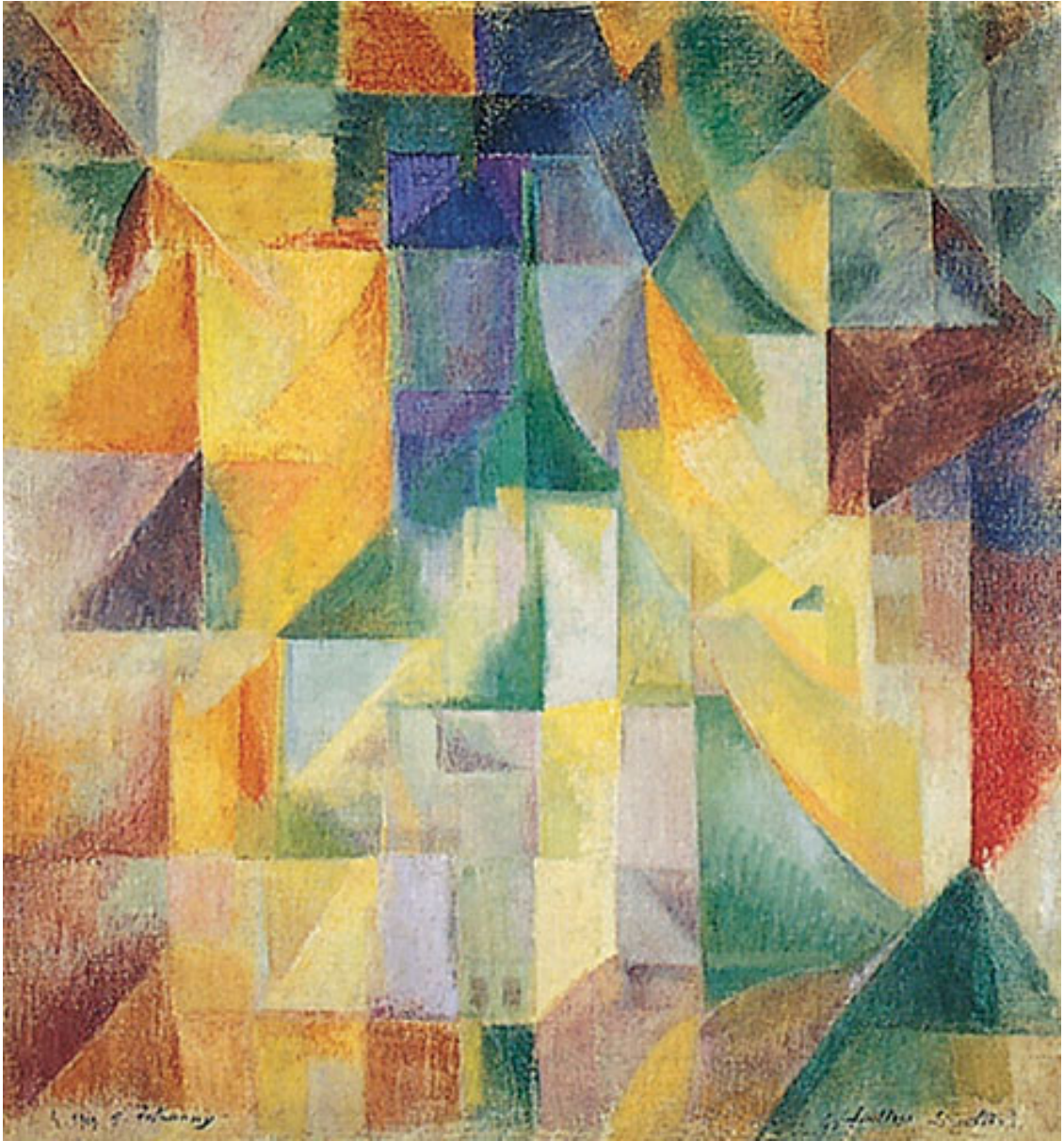


Albert Gleizes, *Brooklyn Bridge*, 1915.
Oil on cardboard, 148.1 × 120.4 cm. Private collection.



Sonja Delaunay, *Simultaneous Contrasts*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 46 × 55 cm. Gift of Sonja and Charles Delaunay, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.



Robert Delaunay, *Windows*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 92 × 86 cm. Morton G. Neumann collection, Chicago.

Even in Cubist Circles: Simultaneity

In 1913, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire dedicated his work *Les Peintures cubistes* to Cubism thereby helping Cubism attain world renown. Painters like Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes made impressive contributions to the Cubist language of shapes. In 1912 one of the most famous paintings of the 20th century was created: *Nude Descending A Staircase*. The painter was Marcel Duchamp. Aided by the Cubist vocabulary of shapes and his familiarity with the photos depicting movement made by Etienne Jules Marey, he painted a picture that moved the world. Five moments of the movement of one person, descending a spiral staircase, are captured in time-lapsed sequence, showing all the reciprocal movements triggered by her walking. Duchamp made time the fourth dimension in the painting. Though this nude triggered a scandal at the famous 1913 Armory Show in New York, but some recognised the innovative character of this new work: ‘the light at the end

of the tunnel' – simultaneity in four dimensions. Duchamp, brother of the painter Jacques Villon, the sculptor Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and the painter Suzanne Duchamp, was anything but a consistent worker. His restless spirit quickly led him to art experiments that shocked people. In New York, he became friends with Francis Picabia, with whom he became responsible for Dada.

Simultaneity is the lyric expression of the modern view of life and signifies the rapidity and the simultaneousness of all existence and action. Simultaneity for the Futurists was the 'lyrical exultation, the artistic visualisation' of velocity. It is the result 'of those great causes of universal dynamism.' Simultaneity was also the focus of Robert and Sonja Delaunay. However, they both interpreted the term simultaneity in a completely different manner. When Guillaume Apollinaire credited both the Delaunays with the term, the Futurist Boccioni accused them of plagiarism. Boccioni was not prepared to cede this key term to others.

The Delaunays did not use this term for dynamism. They did not refer to the *élan vital* as Bergson did, but rather to Chevreul's theory of the law of simultaneous contrast. This theory, dating to 1839, and which had already played a role with the Impressionists, related colours and the relationship of coloured objects to one another. This work was republished in 1890. Sonja Delaunay, in the *Simultaneous Contrasts*, dared to jump directly into the abstract. Her painting was already a formal reference system of colour rhythms at a time when her husband Robert, as well as Klee, Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Picasso were still slowly making way towards detaching themselves from objects.

Robert Delaunay founded Orphism. On account of the orchestration of colour, Guillaume Apollinaire named the Delaunays' painting style after Orpheus, the singer of Greek mythology. The origins of his painting style are derived from Impressionism, Analytical Cubism, and from Cézanne. The new landmark of Paris, the Eiffel Tower, built in 1898, fascinated Delaunay. Its elegant design became the subject of *The Window* series. He painted it again and again, in new variations and refractions, in light and bright colour harmonies based on the colour values of light separated by a prism. He painted the dizzying views of the tower, the delicate construction, the fantastic view that he always saw and yet always saw anew with new perspectives.

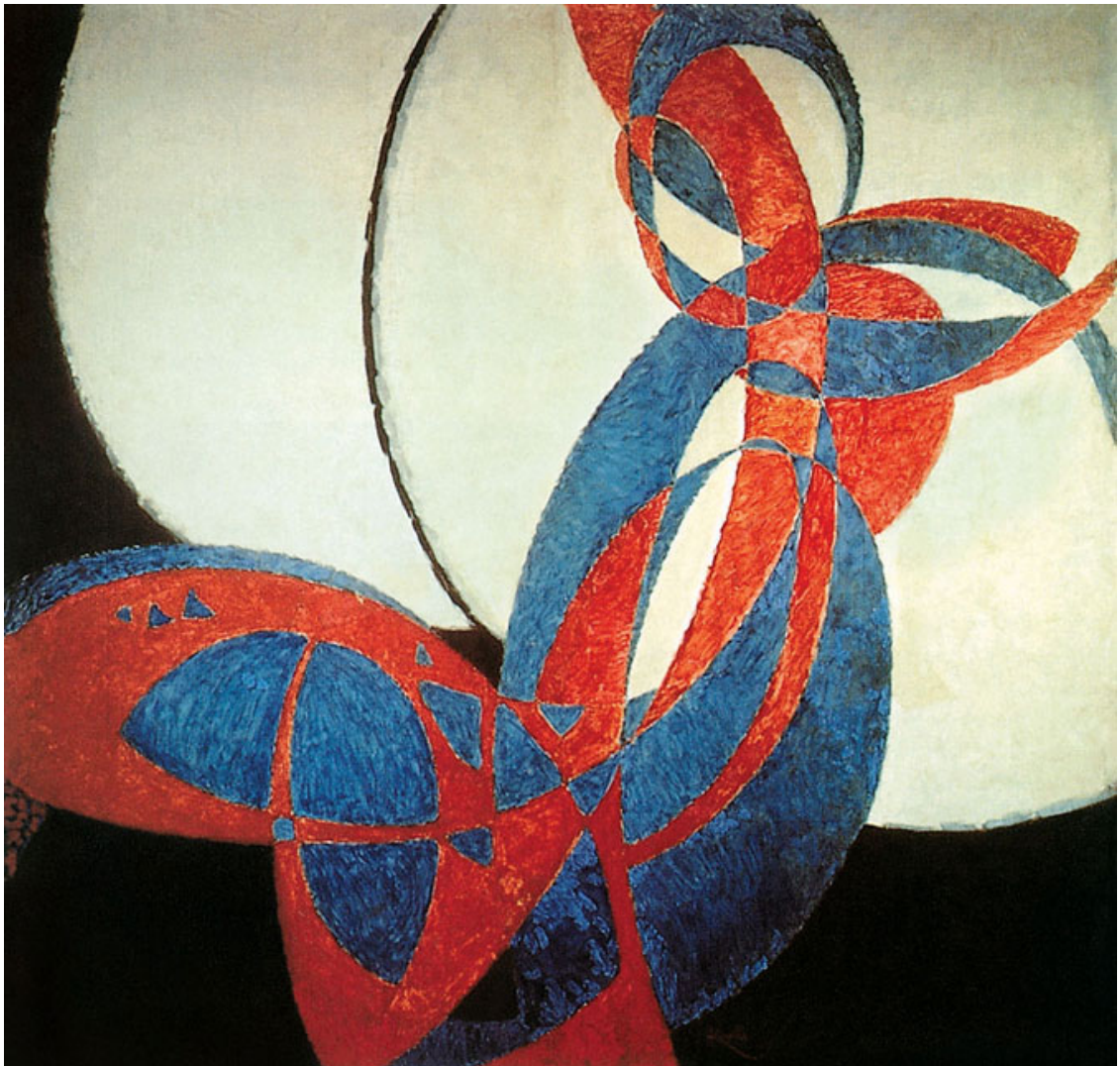
From his examination of Cubism and Orphism, the French-Czech painter Frantisek Kupka already early on arrived at colour rhythms completely free of objects. Living in Paris since 1895, he taught religion and served as a spiritualist medium. From 1911 to 1912, he painted *Fuge in Two Colours*. On a white surface, rhythms in red, green, blue and black move concentrically. He was a pioneer of abstract art, but he did not achieve much fame with his *Diagrammes* and *Arabesques tournoyantes*. He understood his paintings as philosophical architecture.

Marc Chagall also experimented with the simultaneity of time and place. He is considered to be one of the most significant artistic personalities of the first half of the 20th century. His narrative, expressive style had a calming effect on European and Russian painting and had a stimulating effect on the Surrealists in Paris. André Breton noted that 'through Chagall alone, the metaphor entered triumphantly into modern painting.' Metaphor was the basis for Chagall's painting. Alternating between dream and reality, Chagall linked his memories of Russia with the present and the prophetic. His visual language depicts the real in a fairy tale-like surrounding. Figures move in the weightlessness of the unreal. Behind the often riddle-like compositions of this master storyteller hides an artist who has seen and experienced the highs and lows of human existence.



Marcel Duchamp, *Nude descending a Staircase*, No. 2, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 147.5 × 89.2 cm. Louise and Walter Arensberg collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.



František Kupka, *Apathetic – Escape in Two Colours*, 1912.

Oil on canvas, 211 × 220 cm. Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague.



Marc Chagall, *On the Street*, 1914–1918.
Oil on canvas, 141 × 197 cm. Tretyakov State Gallery, Moscow.



Mikhail Larionov, *Rayonism*, 1912–1913.
Oil on canvas, 52.5 × 78.5 cm. Baschkirski Museum, Ufa.

Abstractions

The Russian Avant-Garde

Exchange between East and West

The Russian avant-garde is one of the most surprising intellectual and creative movements in the art of the 20th century. Within a very short time, an immensely concentrated burst of the most varied creative innovations emanated from Moscow and Leningrad. In the 18th century, Russia had opened itself up to the West, primarily to France and Germany and the lively exchange in the intellectual and artistic spheres between the East and West during the first two decades of the 20th century unleashed an innovative and mutually enriching art scene of the highest calibre. The new discoveries in the spheres of physics, technology, medicine, and psychology, were the basis of this scientific-artistic questioning. The eastern and western avant-gardes were a closely woven conglomerate of reciprocal inspiration. One cannot imagine the non-representational art of the west without the trail blazing of a Frantisek, Kupka, or Wassily Kandinsky. De Stijl cannot be imagined without Suprematism and eastern Constructivism. Many of the *émigrés*, who were successful in the west, had their roots in the east like the Romanian Constantin Brancusi, or the Russian Marc Chagall.

The Russians were primarily drawn to France and Germany. Wassily Kandinsky, like Alexej von Jawlensky, and Marianne von Werefkin, had already had travelled to Munich in 1896 and he often returned to Russia. Léon Bakst, Marc Chagall, Antoine Pevsner, and El Lissitzky lived and worked in the years 1910 and 1914 in either France or Germany. Archipenko and Survage went to Paris in 1908, as did Zadkine and Lipchitz a year later. After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, they brought their experience back to their Russian homeland. Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Gontcharova went in the opposite direction and immigrated to Paris in 1917.

From around 1905 until the 1920s, Russian art, driven by creative and intellectual energy, developed in an unusually multifaceted manner. This period was opened by Impressionism and Symbolism at the beginning of the century. Neo-Primitivism, Cubo-Futurism and Abstract Expressionism, Rayonism, Suprematism and Constructivism followed this all the way to Analytic Art. With respect to painting, the most outstanding representatives of this multifaceted, yet very intense, period are Natalia Gontcharova, Wassily Kandinsky, Mikhail Larionov, Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Matyuchin, and El Lissitzky.

Symbolism is one of the most important aspects of the spiritual longing at the turn of the century. It is a logical development of Russian culture, not of a decadent atmosphere as in some western countries. Russian Symbolism strove to integrate beauty as a life-giving force into daily life. This was accompanied by a feverish search for the purpose of life after ethical ideals in the background of the impending collapse of old Russia. In contrast to the West, the expressiveness of Russian Symbolism extended until around 1910.

The most brilliant of the Symbolists was Mikhail Vrubel. He created highly psychological portraits, linking the finest lyrical moments with expressive emotions and tragic loneliness. His worldview was imbued with a strange duality. He venerated Goethe and natural philosophy, and internalised the theories of Kant, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

The Russian merchants and collectors, Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, were the first to promote the new art movements. Shchukin had already opened his collection of contemporary art to

the public in Moscow in 1914. What significance this collection of the French avant-garde had for the specific development of Russian art before the revolutions can be judged by what the painter, David Burliuk, one of the future Cubo-Futurists, said, as he wrote to a friend in St Petersburg:

In Moscow, we often looked at the French collections of both S. I. Shchukin and I. A. Morozov. If I had not, I would not have dared to start. We have been at home now for three days. All the old stuff has been thrown into the rubbish heap, and, oh, it is hard and uplifting to start again from the beginning.

A unique ensemble of paintings by Paul Gauguin, placed close together like a frieze in the manner of an Old Russian iconostasis, was on display in the Shchukin's dining room. Located in the centre was the painting *Obsterie (Fruit Harvest)* from the last Tahiti period. Natalia Gontcharova, deeply impressed, responded to Paul Gauguin with her four-piece composition *Fruit Harvest*. She painted an equally exotic depiction of daily life, however, one with Russian folkloric motifs, lifting the simple, daily life of the Russian peasant to her Tahiti, into her paradise-like state.

Never before had the artistic relations between Russia and France been so intense. The legendary The Golden Fleece exhibition of 1908, named after the journal of the same name, reflected this. On display were 282 paintings, two thirds of which were from Paris. For the first time, many Russian artists saw Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Renoir, Pissarro and the Nabis with Bonnard, Denis, Vuillard, Sérusier, and the Pointillists. What impressed the Russians the most were the Fauves like Derain, Marquet, Matisse and van Dongen. The impact of this exhibit on the evolving Russian avant-garde cannot be overestimated.

As a result, two distinct groups arose. In St Petersburg, the Union of Youth, and in Moscow, Jack of Diamonds led by Larionov and Gontcharova. Their place was taken in 1911 by the group Donkey's Tail, with whom Tatlin and Malevich exhibited, and, in 1913, by the group, Target. For the prerevolutionary Moscow art scene, the activities of Larionov and his wife, Gontcharova, were of crucial importance. Before World War I, both took part in a number of exhibits abroad, for example, in 1912 with the Blaue Reiter in Munich and at the Erste Deutsche Herbstsalon in Berlin. Larionov travelled a further time in 1914 to Paris in order to work there with Diaghilev at his ballet. Together with Gontcharova, he exhibited in Paris, and wrote the foreword to the catalogue.

Italian Futurism also contributed important ideas to the Russian intellectual life. The short-lived Cubo-Futurism group, which in addition to Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Gontcharova, Aleksandra Ekster, David Burliuk, Lyubov Popova and Kazimir Malevich belonged, united Futurist ideas on painting with those of the Russian Neo-Primitivists. Out of this developed the almost object-free Rayonism style. In Saint Petersburg, the Futurists met with Matyuchin and Elena Guro. In addition, the brothers Burliuk, Vasily Kamensky, Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Olga Rozanova also took part.



Natalia Gontcharova, *The Harvest*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 92 × 99 cm.
The Omsk M. A. Vrubel Museum of Fine Arts, Omsk.



Mikhail Vrubel, *Fallen Demon*, 1901.

Watercolour, gouache on paper, sketch for 1902's painting, 21 × 30 cm.

Drawings department, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Rayonism

From 1912 to 1913, the Russian avant-garde developed a strong sense of personal identity of its own and looked increasingly to the strengths and values of its own national origins. Larionov together with Gontcharova created Rayonism, an early variant of abstract art. They, thereby, sought primarily to differentiate themselves from Italian Futurism. In the *Manifesto of Rayonism*, written in 1912 and published in 1913, they expressly praised nationalism.

Rayonism combined contemporary European trends. It fused Cubism and Futurism in so far as it fragmented and energised the painting surface. It fused Orphism in so far as it realised the dynamic quality of the light by means of colour contrasts. For Mikhail Larionov, Rayonism (Rayon = beam) meant the dissolution of the painting subject. He referred to the scientific research regarding the materiality of light. This he visualised in his paintings through a bundle of rays and refractions through a prism. A depiction referring to an object had hardly any meaning for him. His concern was only about depicting the phenomenon of radiating energy that attaches to all things. He treated shape and colour as autonomous elements. In the *Manifesto of Rayonism*, Larionov speaks about '... the rays of things that the artist subjects to his expressive desire. The painting appears as such not of space and time; it spews out sensations that let us sense the fourth dimension.'

The *Manifesto of Rayonism* became instructive for Suprematism to the degree as Malevich states:

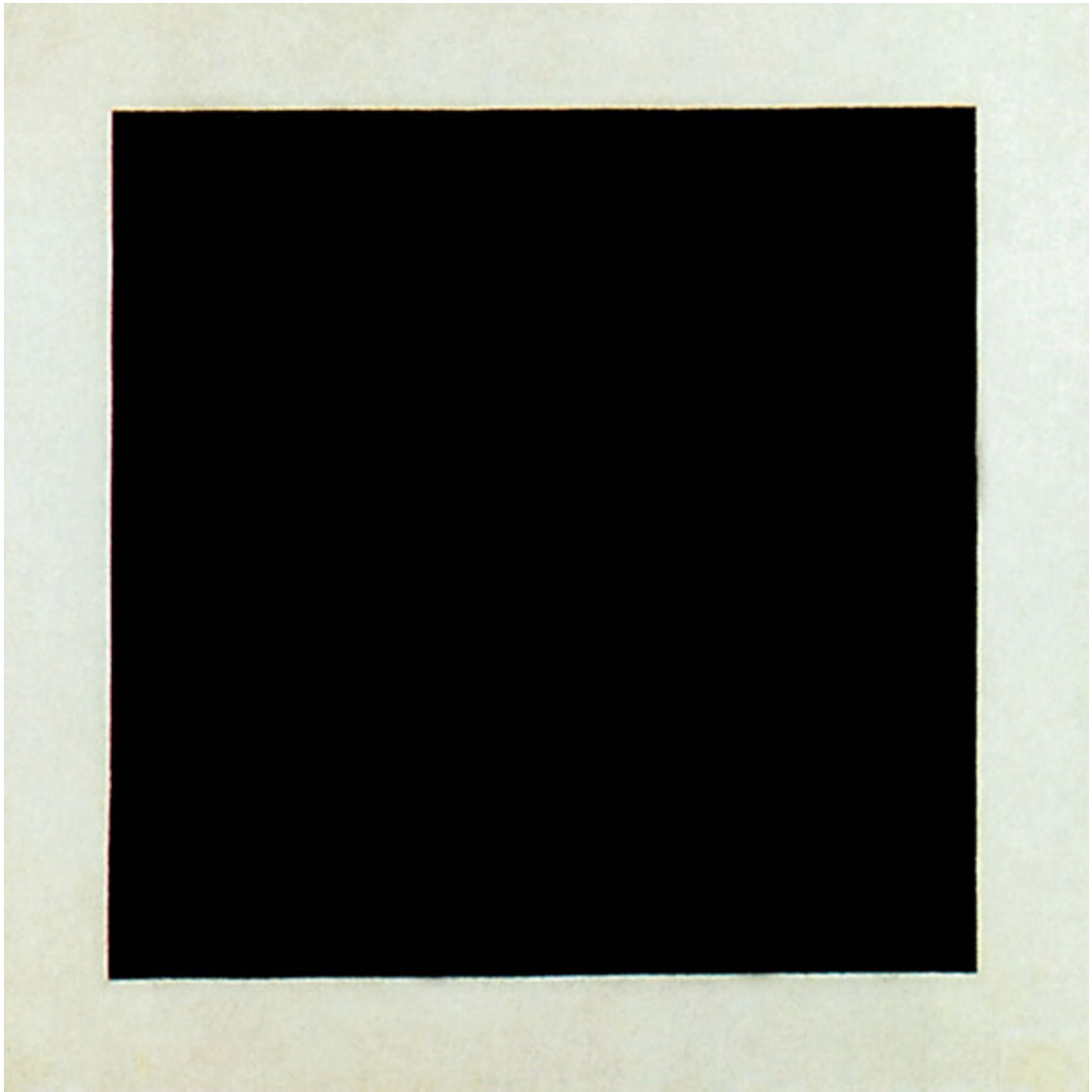
Long live our Rayonistic painting style, which is independent of shapes belonging to reality and develops accordingly to artistic laws. It concerns itself

with spatial forms that result from the reflection of intersecting rays of various objects, and it rests upon shapes that are determined by the artist himself.

Following his trip to London in 1906, where the watercolours of William Turner had impressed him, Mikhail Larionov had become obsessed with the idea of a non-figurative painting. Now with Rayonism, he had been able to realise his vision.



Mikhail Matyuchin, *Moving into Space*, 1919.
Oil on canvas, 124 × 168 cm. Russian Museum, St Petersburg.



Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square on White Background*, dated of 1913, achieved after 1920. Oil on canvas, 106.2 × 106.5 cm. Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

Matyushin and Malevich

The painter and musician, Mikhail Vasilyevich Matyushin, assumed among the Russian avant-garde a leading and, for the younger generation, an influential position. He was a professional musician. In the years between 1903 and 1905 he had experimented in the area of quartertone music. He was a painter and an intellectual. In addition, he was interested in science and philosophy. In the correspondence between Kazimir Severinovich Malevich and Matyushin, it becomes apparent that it was Matyushin, who for a considerable period of time conveyed the developments in philosophical theories such as the teachings of Berdyaev, Fyodorov, or Bergson, as well as mystical theories of the Middle Ages and ancient Indian philosophy to Malevich. Both artists were bound by a lifelong friendship. Of the two, Matyushin was closer to nature, he felt as though elements of painting should be analogous to those found in nature and beings found in the organic world. Matyushin undertook exercises to increase his perception in order to intuitively understand and anticipate the hidden and supernatural. He espoused visualising with the back of one's head, the temples and the soles of one's feet.

In 1913 Malevich and Matyushin jointly produced the opera *Victory over the Sun*. This became a milestone in the development of art in the 20th century. Malevich designed the costumes and the set. The poet, Kroutchenykh, wrote the libretto and Velemir Khlebnikov wrote the prologue. Matyuchin's futuristically oriented composition, which incorporated dissonances, unexpected interval jumps, aircraft noises, cannons, and machines, inspired Malevich to develop Suprematism. This opera was the first attempt at a total show, a precursor of later innovation. This caused a scandal and left, as Matyushin reported, a deep impression. The words had a deep inner power, 'of such power and so frightening were the sets and the futuristic people with such power as one had not seen the likes before.' On the curtains between the acts, Malevich had painted his first *Black Square*.

From 1912 and 1913, Malevich's works become increasingly abstract. Cézanne's goal to geometrize everything led him more and more to abstract shapes that organise space in three dimensions. Malevich had succeeded in producing a convincing synthesis of Cubism and Futurism in these paintings. He succeeded in the fracturing and energising of the world of shapes and, furthermore, like Matisse, in the emancipation of colour.

Fernand Léger succeeded in arriving at a similar form of expression at the same time in Paris. This was just at the time when in 1912 the vehement dispute over priorities between the Cubists and the Futurists broke out. Léger and Malevich solved this problem in their own way. Indeed, they rather built their paintings, as it were, out of elements shaped like pipes of such volume that they fit one in the other and in this manner create a strong dynamic effect. To the colour they mixed metallic elements, thereby, stressing the mechanical.

In subsequent years, Malevich came ever closer to the higher level of consciousness of 'pure painting.' This was certainly encouraged by the theories of Nikolai Berdyaev, who had been teaching in Moscow since 1917 and had founded a Religious Philosophical Academy. His spiritual teachings regarding the relativity and equilibrium of man and the cosmos convinced Malevich that he could create perfect supermatistic shapes that float in themselves.



Fernand Léger, *Composition*, 1918. Oil on canvas, 146 × 114 cm.
Drawings department, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Pure Painting: Suprematism

Kazimir Severinovich Malevich is the leading figure of abstract art. He was a founder of Suprematism and paved the way for Constructivism (which he rejected). He derived his theories mainly from French and German Expressionism, Cubism and Futurism. At the last Futurist Zero-Ten in St Petersburg during the December of 1915, he exhibited his work *Black Square on a White*

Surface, which he himself described as an ‘... icon of the new art.’ Referring to the ‘beautiful corner’ in traditional orthodox homes, he hung his *Black Square* as if it were an icon high in the corner. Malevich explained:

When in the desperate attempt in 1913 to liberate art from the weight of things, I exhibited a painting that was nothing more than a black square on a white surface. [...] It was not an empty square that I exhibited, but rather much more the perception of abstractness. The square = perception, and the white space = the emptiness behind the square.

The *Black Square on a White Surface* became the icon of modernist art, a key work of abstract art. It has no other meaning than itself. It has no meaning. It is.

Malevich coined the term Suprematism which means the same as ‘totality without a subject’ or ‘new realistic painting.’ Malevich published the *Manifesto of Suprematism* in 1915. In it he formulated visions that threw overboard all previous ideas about art. He ranked the perception of abstractness above that of shape. A square, a circle, a triangle or a cross on a neutral surface is ‘by its nature no longer an imposing painting.’ His geometric elements were restricted to the greatest simplicity and permitted no relation to reality. He, thereby, had already formulated important concepts at the turn of the century that would become fundamental for the concept art of the 1970s, American Minimalist art and many contemporary artists. The brothers Antoine Pevsner and Naum Gabo also spoke out in favour of a new sculpture of the ‘abstract’ in their 1920 manifesto, which they named *Realistic Manifesto*.

In Suprematism it is not about the shape but rather about sensory impressions. It points the way towards endlessness. In his writing titled *From Cézanne to Suprematism*, Malevich wrote:

The effort is not directed towards conveying the entirety of the object, but rather the opposite. The pulverisation and dissection of the object into its basic elements is essential in creating contrasts in the painting. The object was understood from its intuitive side.

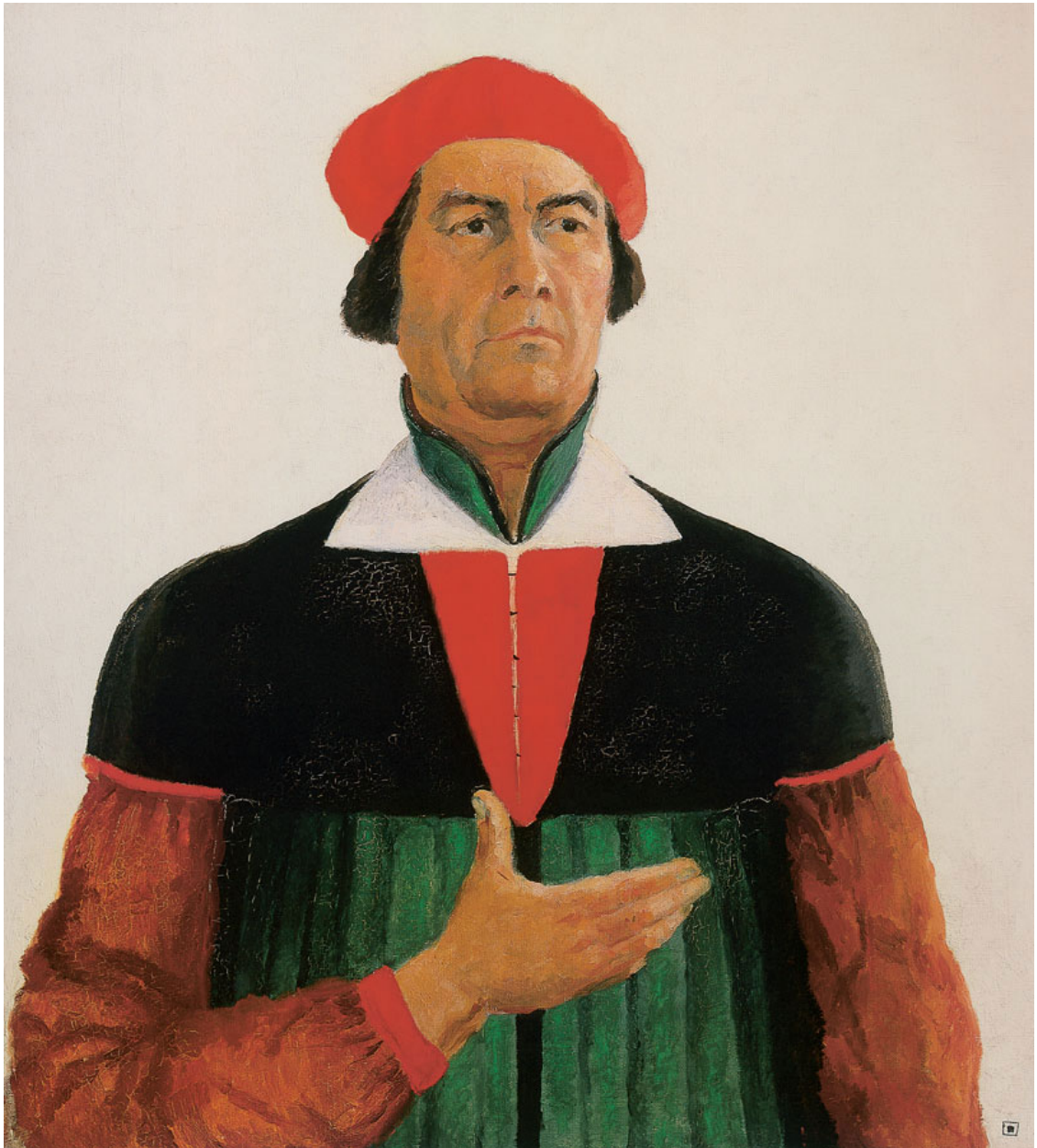
One should also point to his vision that he expressed in his paper ‘Suprematism’ in 1920. This was, namely, the possibility of interplanetary flight and of earth satellites that would permit man to conquer space.

After the 1917 October Revolution, Malevich taught at the State Art School in Moscow. From 1919 onwards he took part in the creation of the modern teaching institute in Vitebsk. However, in 1921 the official attacks on his art began. Malevich was dismissed from all his official duties; however, he was allowed to travel to the West. He first went to Poland in March 1927 where, he was triumphantly received, and an exhibition was organised. At the end of March, he travelled further onto Berlin and later to the Bauhaus. Here, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Hannes Meyer, László Moholy-Nagy and Kandinsky received him with great delight and respect. They had published his works under the title *The Abstract World*.

With wise foresight, he left all of the works he had brought with him with the architect, Hugo Häring. These were first rediscovered in 1951 and acquired by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, save those that had been purchased by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for the Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition.

One of the important later paintings is his *Self-Portrait* from 1933 with the posture and in the clothing of a reformer. The hand gesture points to the missing square – a challenge to the Stalinist regime. When Malevich died in 1935, the State Russian Museum obtained the largest part of his studio. From then until 1962, no work of Malevich would be exhibited in the USSR. Even at the 1932 Moscow and Leningrad exhibition of 15 Jahre Sowjetkunst (15 Years of Soviet Art), his works had been placed in an isolated room and presented as that of a ‘revolutionary artist.’

The USSR had secreted away whole avant-garde collections, including those of Malevich, into the cellars. Upon the death of Lenin in 1924 at the latest, the avant-garde had lost its momentum. In 1934 under the Stalin dictatorship, Socialist Realism was extolled. Artists who did not fall into line were persecuted, arrested or deported. At the end of the 1950s, under Khrushchev and after Stalin's death in 1953, a second Russian avant-garde secretly arose, the Soz-Art (Sots Art) a combination of Pop Art and Socialist Realism. Sots Art criticised the excess of ideology in the Soviet Union and the excess consumption in the West. Among the first generation of Sots Art artists were Erik Bulatov and Ilya Kabakov.



Kazimir Malevich, *Self-Portrait*, 1933.

Oil on canvas, 73 × 66 cm. Russian Museum, St Petersburg.



Vladimir Tatlin, *Nude*, 1910–1914.

Oil on canvas, 104.5 × 130.5 cm. Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

Constructivism

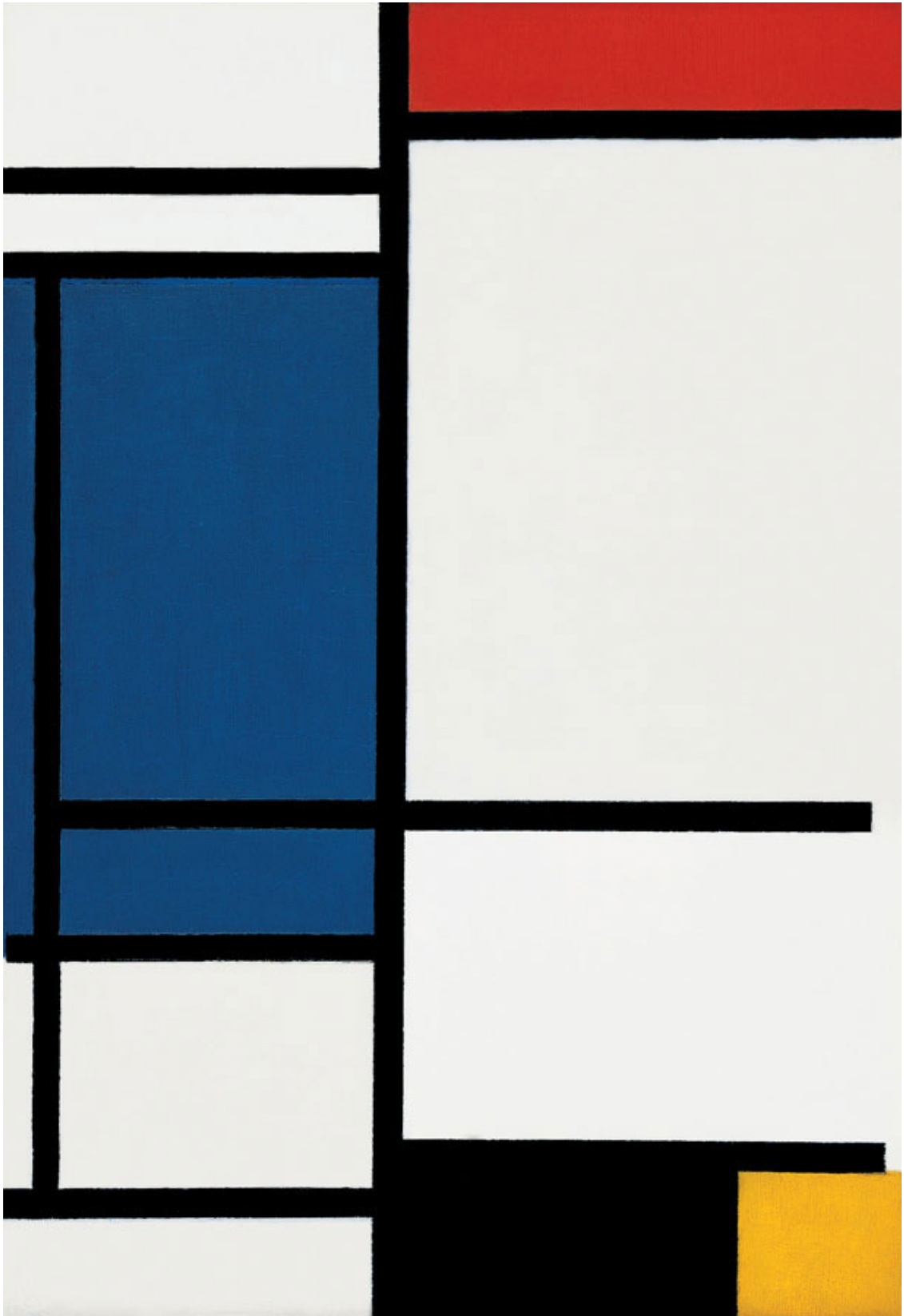
Constructivism radiated a strong influence over the entire art world. Its roots are found in pre-revolutionary Russia. It used technology and the natural sciences, as well as let the newest innovations in engineering and industry steer its direction. ‘Art is dead – long live the industrial art of Tatlin’, was the slogan referring to the Constructivist works of this inspired inventor, Vladimir Tatlin. In his early years, Tatlin had begun as a painter, and so, like other Russian artists, he had absorbed the innovations of French painting. His paintings from after 1910 show influences that can be traced to the works found in the Shchukin collection. Tatlin’s *Female Nude* of 1913 shows references to the *Sitting Female Nude* of 1908–1909. In the course of his artistic development, Tatlin departed from the pictorially illustrated three-dimensionality of Cubo-Futurism. In 1913 he began by continuing with the spatial collages of Picasso with his three-dimensional ‘constructions’ made out of glass, wood, and metal. He invented the three-dimensional flying objects, the Letatlin (letat = to fly + Tatlin). One can, therefore, consider him to have laid the path for the later Action Art.

In Constructivism, pure reason and objectivity were the guiding principles. Tatlin became the antipode of all previous avant-garde movements; he became a fitting expression for the new and the world ruled by technology and the natural sciences. Tatlin tore down the barriers between the individual genres of art, between that which Art Nouveau had tried to do and Futurism had only done theoretically. Technology and utility became the absolute priority. Former followers

of Suprematism like Ivan Kliun, Lyubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova were drawn to this production art form, which was conceptualised as a synthesis of the arts.

El Lissitzky, who was the director of the faculty of architecture at the State Higher Artistic and Technical Studios (VKhUTEMAS) in Moscow, was conscious of the effect of technology. In 1919 he created the first Constructivist works. He called them Prouns, derived from the Russian Pro Unovis = for a rejuvenation of art. 'I created the Proun as a transfer station from painting to architecture. [...] It depends upon the organisation of the space by the line, plane, volume, and on their relationships and proportions.' The structure of painting, according to El Lissitzky, should be executed according to architectural laws. The shapes should be sketched out and then transferred to the canvas. Alexander Rodchenko coined the term Constructivism as the Constructivists were forming themselves into an artist group in 1921.

A short time later, Lenin announced the New Economic Policy, which only permitted art as a means of mass indoctrination. This compelled the Constructivists to retreat officially into the applied arts. Under these circumstances, Lissitzky was nevertheless able to organise exhibitions inside and outside the Soviet Union and in this way make Constructivist painters like Aleksandr Drevin, Lyubov Popova, Yury Annenkov and Alexander Rodchenko known. The first of these exhibitions took place in December 1922 at the Galerie van Diemen in Berlin. The more than 600 works of Constructivist art were met with euphoria, in particular because similar Constructivist tendencies had already developed in Poland, Hungary and Germany. In Hungary, Alexander Bortnyik, Lajos Kassák, László Péri and László Moholy-Nagy developed Constructivist painting ideas. In Germany, Karl Peter Röhl, Walter Dexel, Werner Graeff, Erich Buchholz, Carl Buchheister, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart and also, from time to time, Willi Baumeister, were engaged in this. Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling transferred Constructivist concepts into abstract film. In 1924 Henryk Berlew, Henryk Stażewski and Władisław Strzemiński founded the Constructivist group BLOK in Poland. The Italian, Luigi Veronesi, as well as the Belgians, Victor Servranckx and Félix de Boeck, took Lissitzky as their example.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition in Red, Blue, Black, Yellow and Grey*, 1921.
Oil on canvas, 76 × 52.4 cm.
Gift of John L. Senior, Jr., The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

De Stijl: The Uniformity of the Painting Surface

De Stijl, the Dutch counterpart to Russian Constructivism, was also oriented towards the universal and infinite. However, it was based on the theory of the Dutch theosopher, van Schoenmaeker, concerning the mathematical structure of the universe and did not have any technological visions, as did Constructivism. De Stijl, as did Russian Constructivism, entered into a dialogue with the universe, but not with technological visions as did the Russians. Rather, it did this with a philosophical-anthroposophical orientation. There are:

Two basic opposing forces that have created our earth and all earthly shapes. They are the earth's horizontal line of energy around the sun and the vertical movement of the earth rays having their origins in the centre of the sun.

Schoenmaeker's teachings became the basis of the art and aesthetics of De Stijl, of which the leading mind was Piet Mondrian. He became acquainted with Synthetic Cubism in Paris and was extremely impressed with the logic of its principles. A short time later in 1913, Mondrian sketched paintings that consisted mostly of horizontal and vertical lines. Apollinaire coined the name Abstract Cubism for this, and this was the basis for De Stijl.

During World War I, Mondrian returned home and found like-minded people there: the painter Bart van der Leek, Theo van Doesburg, Vilmos Huszár from Hungary, the Belgian painter and sculptor Georges Vantongerloo, the architects J. J. P. Oud, R. van't Hoff and Jan Wils, as well as the poet Antonie Kok. They founded the artist group, De Stijl and, at the same time in 1917, published the first issue of their magazine by the same name that ran until 1931. Later in 1925, César Domela and Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart joined the group. The most significant architect of the movement was Gerit Thomas Rietveld, who revolutionised architecture and design under the De Stijl banner. The first De Stijl manifesto appeared in November 1918:

‘There is an old and a new time consciousness. The old one is centred on the individual; the new one is centred on the universal.’ Van Doesburg explained in 1923: Our ‘art is neither proletarian nor bourgeois; moreover it is gathering forces that as far as it is concerned influence the entire cultural spectrum.’

Mondrian limited the forms used in his paintings to simple geometric shapes like the straight line and the rectangle. Using the primary colours blue, yellow and red together with the ‘non-colours’ black, white and gray, he divided the painting surface in an uneven system of grids. With these limited formal means he wanted to create an asymmetrical equilibrium that did away with the traditional rigid and static symmetric system. The Neue Bauen (New Building) of the 1920s used these ideas, as did typography and commercial art. Some of the new ideas of De Stijl were implemented by Bauhaus. The De Stijl group broke apart in 1925. Theo van Doesburg immediately thereafter in Paris founded the Abstraction-Création group that became a refuge for more many emigrants from Germany and Eastern Europe.

Piet Mondrian was fascinated by Cubism, primarily by the drawings, when he saw it in 1911 for the first time in Paris. The black lines that were the basic element of Cubism overwhelmed Mondrian, and by 1912, he put it over the painting surface like a grille. This had the effect of the lead rods of a church window. The famous series *Trees* was created. He painted the tree again and again in progressively more abstract fashion until he had arrived at a concise form that was a sort of symbol for a tree. His studies led him in 1915 to paintings that consisted only of a pattern of vertical and horizontal lines. The amazing new thing about this was the even distribution of the symbols on the painting surface. A recognisable centre had disappeared. Now, he could draw an abstract net across the canvas, and, if he wanted, out of this series of lines, he could have the familiar

resurface. The uniformity in a painting had been discovered; its complete autonomy. He sought its static strength. He found the solution for the first time in 1918 with a pure screen painting.

At the beginning of the 1920s, he composed a series of masterworks. With their large red, blue, or yellow surfaces, they radiate a suggestive power of a rising, an expansion, and of dynamism in a black lattice net. Besides these, he composed works in whose centre there is a white emptiness and thereby achieves a suggestive radiating power. In the late 1930s, the all-encompassing screen paintings became prominent once again and with them the experiments with controlled coincidence. In New York, he found another item to help him with his sketches. This was adhesive tape. With this new helpful item, it became possible for him to work more quickly and to execute the random distribution of the directed shifts and regroupings more quickly. He could now avoid corrective and time-consuming repainting.



Max Bill, *Infinite Torsion (Curva infinita)*, 1953–1956. Bronze, 125 × 125 × 80 cm. Openluchtmuseum voor Beeldhouwkunst Middelheim, Antwerp.

The Bauhaus

Rapid technical and economic growth around 1900 resulted in the creation of trade associations in many countries which, in architecture and the crafts, sought greater equality of form.

In the Bauhaus, the goals of the trades associations saw their further advancement. The medieval concept of a synthesis of the arts was re-emerging. The architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus in 1919 in Weimar. Craftsmen under the direction of renowned artists, who were called 'masters', tested out fundamental ideas of shape, colour, material and their interaction. The Bauhaus wanted to put itself at the service of the industrial world and strove for the unity of all craft and artistic disciplines. Painting, sculpture, trades and applied arts were inseparable elements in the art of construction. The artist was to step out of his ghetto and work together with tradesmen and industry. Walter Gropius was successful in engaging artists with the Bauhaus who had already made a name for themselves. The aura of these individuals is the basis even today for the reputation of this school. Among the first were Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, who taught in the workshops for stained glass making and mural painting. In the printing shop was Lyonel Feininger; Gerhard Marcks was in the pottery shop; and Georg Muche was in the weaving mill. Oskar Schlemmer was responsible for both wood and stone sculpture. From 1923 onwards, he was also responsible for the Bauhaus stage, following the departure of Lothar Schreyer. Johannes Itten, László Moholy-Nagy and, finally, Josef Albers taught the introductory and basic courses.

A restructuring took place after the Bauhaus moved in 1926 from Weimar to Dessau. No longer did the basic principles of Johannes Itten, stressing the sensual perception of colour and quality of materials have pride of place, but rather that of basic design. Dynamic strengths and functions of materials were tested.

In the course of their research, the Bauhaus members published diverse essays, including Josef Albers on the non-utilitarian design theory. One verified the utility of modern materials, as well as their functional and aesthetic uses. These experiments were geared towards series production, which was advantageous for industry. Albers wrote:

In an economically oriented time, the chief concern is economical design that is determined by the factors of function and material. Before conceiving the function stands the study of the material.

Independent, constructive thinking is required, and beyond this, the testing of uncommon materials like straw, paper, cellophane, wallpaper, corrugated board, newspaper, wire mesh, labels, razor blades... 'Thinking is the cheapest form of wear and tear,' was the slogan. Every element had to be of equal value. Spatial thinking, new perspectives, precise observation, a most refined sense of structure, material, and for surfaces were innovations that lived on in many art genres even after World War II.

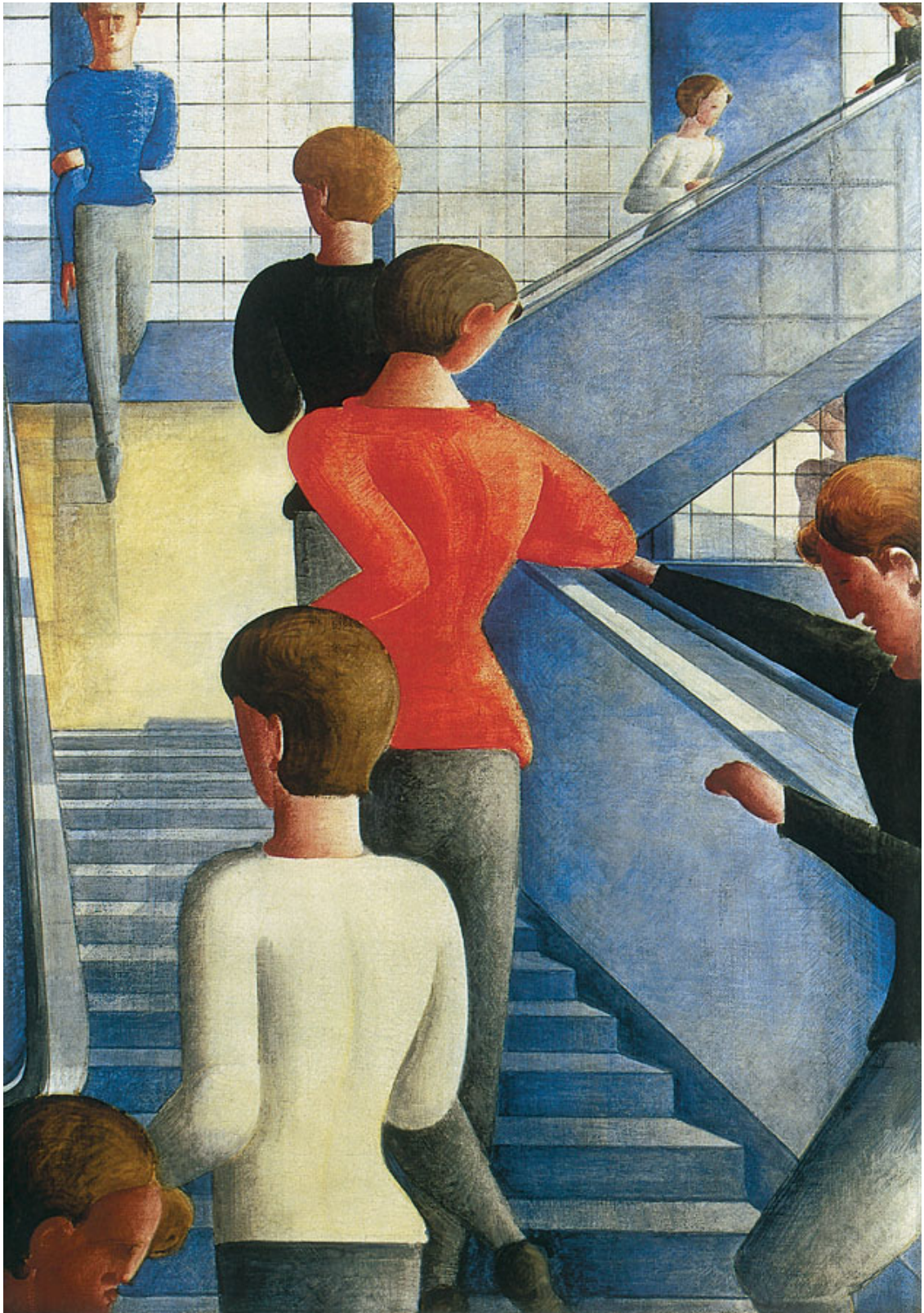
The Nazis closed the Bauhaus in 1933. After World War II, an attempt was made at the School of Design in Ulm to continue the Bauhaus traditions. Max Bill, who served at this institution for several years as the rector, had already taught at the Bauhaus from 1927 to 1929. In 1931, he joined Abstraction-Création, and, in 1944, he assumed a teaching position at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich. His sculptures – with the impressive 'naturally pure' river, the endless ribbons and the rolling spaces – gave the impression of having sprung from the 'pure' flow of a paper web, just as Albers had taught at the Bauhaus.

The Hungarian Alexander Bortnyik opened a private studio for applied graphic arts in 1928 that became known as the Budapest Bauhaus. After fleeing the Nazi regime, Moholy-Nagy, Mies van der Rohe, Albers and Feininger founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago. In the 1950s and 1960s, their ideas influenced the Colour Field and Hard Edge painting styles in America.

In his art, Josef Albers made the reduction of shape and colour vivid with his squares. The square, as the purest of shapes, illustrates the aesthetic power of simplification. Shape in the form of a square recedes into the extreme background. The superimposition of colour layers leads to ever-new transparencies and to ever new and fascinating colour dialogues. Albers chose the nested square form so that the colour quality would appear 'free floating' and 'clearly limited' in relation to the neighbouring colours and develop a life of its own. In 1950, he began the long series *Homage to the Square* as a painting, as a silk-screen print or as a tapestry.

The longer we look at Albers' paintings, the less visible the squares become, and the more visible alone the colour becomes. Albers' homage to the square is entirely an homage to colour.

With the constant repetition of one and the same shape, Josef Albers provided a fundamental contribution to the theme of the 'series'. Albers is, thereby, a pioneer of Concrete Art with their varieties ranging from Op Art and Kinetic Art, as well as Colour Field Painting and its variations.



Oskar Schlemmer, *Stairway of the Bauhaus*, 1932.
Oil on canvas, 162.3 × 114.3 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Lyonel Feininger, *Gelmeroda IX*, 1926.
Oil on canvas, 108 × 80 cm. Folkwang Museum, Essen.

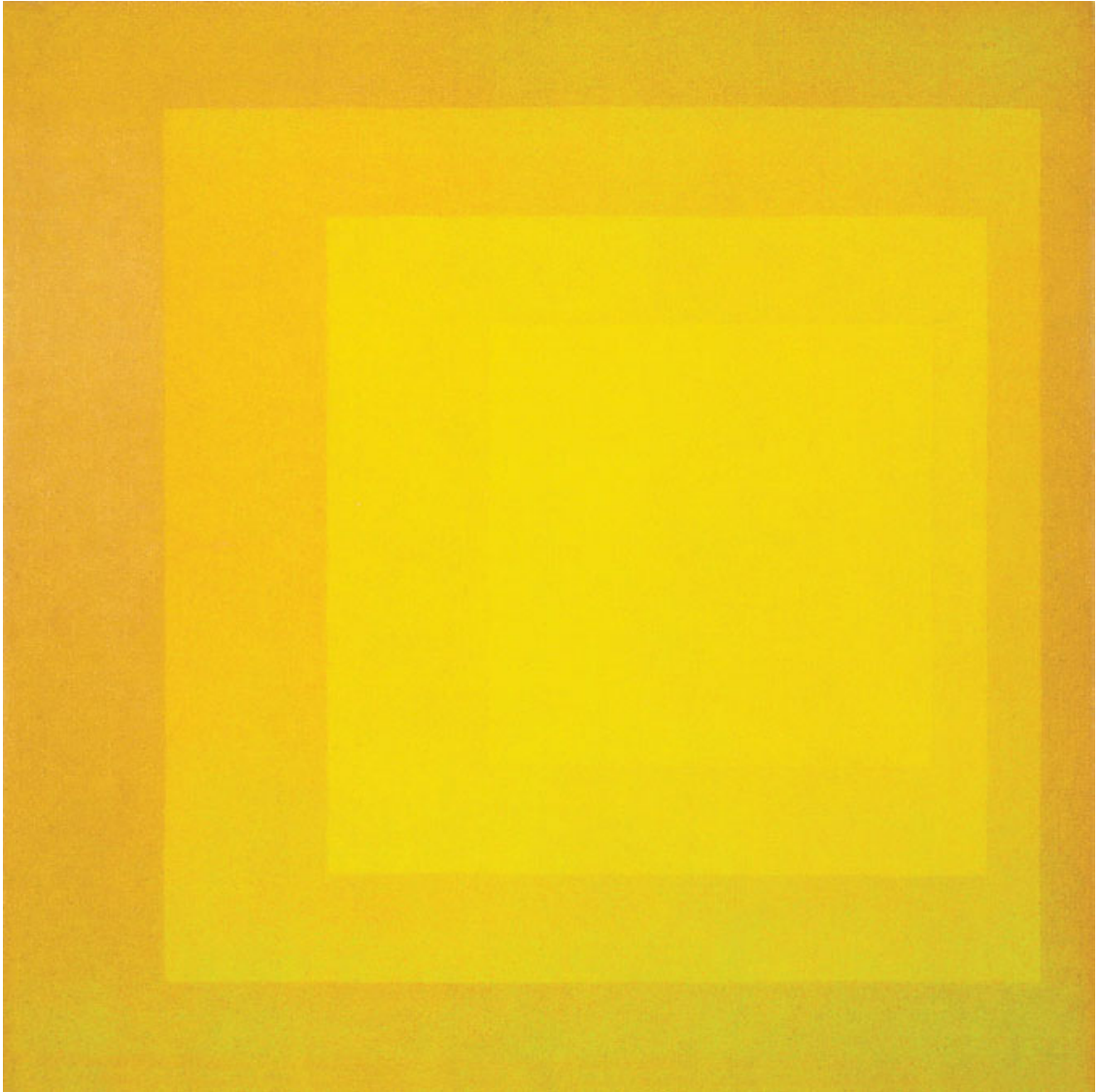
In 1921, the Hungarian and former lawyer, László Moholy-Nagy met El Lissitzky in Düsseldorf. He painted his first Constructivist painting, and, in the book he published in 1922 in Vienna, *Book of New Artists*, he declared his position with respect to the new art. His work at the Bauhaus from 1923 to 1928 was remarkably far-reaching. Moholy-Nagy liked to experiment and looked for new methods in new areas. So it was with coloured light, similar to Man Ray, in photograms and photomontages. And just like the brothers Gabo and Pevsner, he experimented with kinetic space modules.

Oskar Schlemmer sought the synthesis of all the arts. In the area of set design for the theatre, he could develop his ideas of harmony as a reflection of the human soul. The figure of man ought to be the measure of all things on stage as on the canvas. The preoccupation with dance and the theatre allowed him to imagine a new conception of space: space is no longer just expansion, but rather, space becomes functional; it becomes space for living. In his paintings, Schlemmer realises the imaginary space that extends itself to metaphysical concepts. The figures become distillate forms of graphic-spatial perceptions of mankind. It is a free arrangement of shapes. In the interaction of their relative sizes, they suggest a dynamic and unending spatial depth. 'With a clear imagination... cautiously and carefully,' he feels his way along his paintings. 'It is the thrill at the success, at the beautiful confluence of will and imagination.'

Lyonel Feininger's formulations of shapes and architectures pulsate with inner movement. Space, time, and motion can be captured in silhouette. Shape and space are depicted as being splintered in his early works, yet clear and precise. His compositions are filled with powerful momentum, the lines are bent and bent in angular fashion, and surfaces seem to waver within themselves, energised by a secret power. People stand as if embedded in a secret force field; the objects and the architecture interact with one another. The environment and the atmosphere, the vibrations and oscillations become noticeable; their silhouettes beat with inner movement. Their movements, those in the present, past, and those being contemplated seem as if they were implanted into the outlined shapes. Feininger wrote:

I try to formulate a perspective for the objects that is entirely new and wholly my own. I would like to place myself into the painting and from there observe the landscape, the objects that are painted in it.

During the time he worked at the Bauhaus, Feininger's imagery became more anxious. He moved towards clear, prismatic structures, to bright, diaphanous colour planes. His transparent vision of architectural objects creates an almost immaterial world full of wide spaces and unreality. Glass-like fields of colour are superimposed and implanted into one another. Bundles of light coat the scene in the painting with crystal light. Feininger returned to America in 1937.



Josef Albers, *Tribute to the Square*, 1964.
Oil on cardboard, 78 × 78 cm. Tate Gallery, London.



Hannah Höch, *Cutting Dada with a Kitchen Knife through the German Culture of the Paunch at the Time of the Last Weimar Republic*, 1919.

Collage, 114 × 89.9 cm. Neue Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

One Turn of the Screw Tighter During World War I

Dada and Its Surroundings

The war radically changed the art scene in the vibrant cities of Europe. The international links that had brought forth artistic masterpieces, primarily between France, Italy, Germany and Russia, were abruptly torn apart. Many artists were conscripted into active service; some 'enthusiastically rushed to the colours'; talented, influential, and gifted ones like Franz Marc, August Macke, Wilhelm Morgner, Umberto Boccioni fell in the war. Some suffered lasting psychological wounds like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Wieland Herzfelde, or they returned to their homelands, like Wassily Kandinsky or the brothers David and Vladimir Burliuk.

The intellectual elite that had stayed at home and those who had come back from the war sobered, sought new ways to express their experiences and insights. Some believed the most effective way to do something against the war was to publish a magazine. In Berlin, *Neue Jugend* (New Youth) appeared, since the existing magazines were either pre-censored or were politically neutral. Among the contributors were Hugo Ball, Franz Jung, Martin Buber, Theodor Däubler, Walter Benjamin, Else Lasker-Schüler, and Salomo Friedländer-Mynona, as well as the painters George Grosz, Ludwig Meidner and Heinrich Maria Davringhausen. Herzfelde organised poetry readings against the war in Berlin and other cities. The magazine *Die freie Straße* (*The Free Street*), published in 1916 in Berlin, by the poet Franz Jung and the painter Raoul Hausmann, followed a similar path.

In 1917, Richard Hülsenbeck came to Berlin from the Zurich Dada movement and, in this 'prepared' environment, was 'stage-managing' the Berlin Dada movement by February 1918. The Dada movement was joined in Berlin by George Grosz, Hannah Höch, Johannes Baader, Raoul Hausmann, the brothers Herzfelde/Heartfield, Yefim Golishev from Russia, and the poets Carl Einstein and Walter Mehring. George Grosz described the situation:

As Dadaists, we held 'meetings' for which we charged a few marks admission and where we did nothing else but tell people the truth, which means, in other words, insult them. ... The meetings quickly sold out and were full of people angering and amusing themselves... We derided simply everything. Nothing was sacred to us. We spit on everything, and that was Dada. It was neither mysticism nor Communism nor anarchism... We were, however, the complete and pure nihilism, and our symbol was the nothing, the vacuum, the hole.

Dada shocked the world between the years 1916 and 1922. As the Dadaist Hans Richter put it, Dada was 'not an art movement in the normal sense. It was a storm that broke over the art scene of the time, as the war upon the peoples.' They consciously staged anti-art events. According to Max Ernst, it was the 'outbreak of anger and zest for life' at the same time. The indignation about the monstrous genocides during World War I was great and equally at the 'civilisation that had brought it about.' Dada was an international uprising.

'Our demonstrations, provocations and opposition were just the means,' said Hans Richter, 'to enrage the square petty bourgeois and through rage to bring them to a shameful awakening. What really moved us was not so much the noise, or the contradiction, but rather the very simple elementary question, where to?'

In Zurich, in neutral Switzerland, at the start of 1916, Hugo Ball founded the Cabaret Voltaire out of which the Dada movement arose. The Romanian painter Marcel Janco, as well as Hans Arp,

Tristan Tzara and Richard Hülsenbeck joined Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. The word Dada was found coincidentally by picking through the Le Petit Larousse dictionary with a knife. The most dynamic of all the Dadaists was Tristan Tzara:

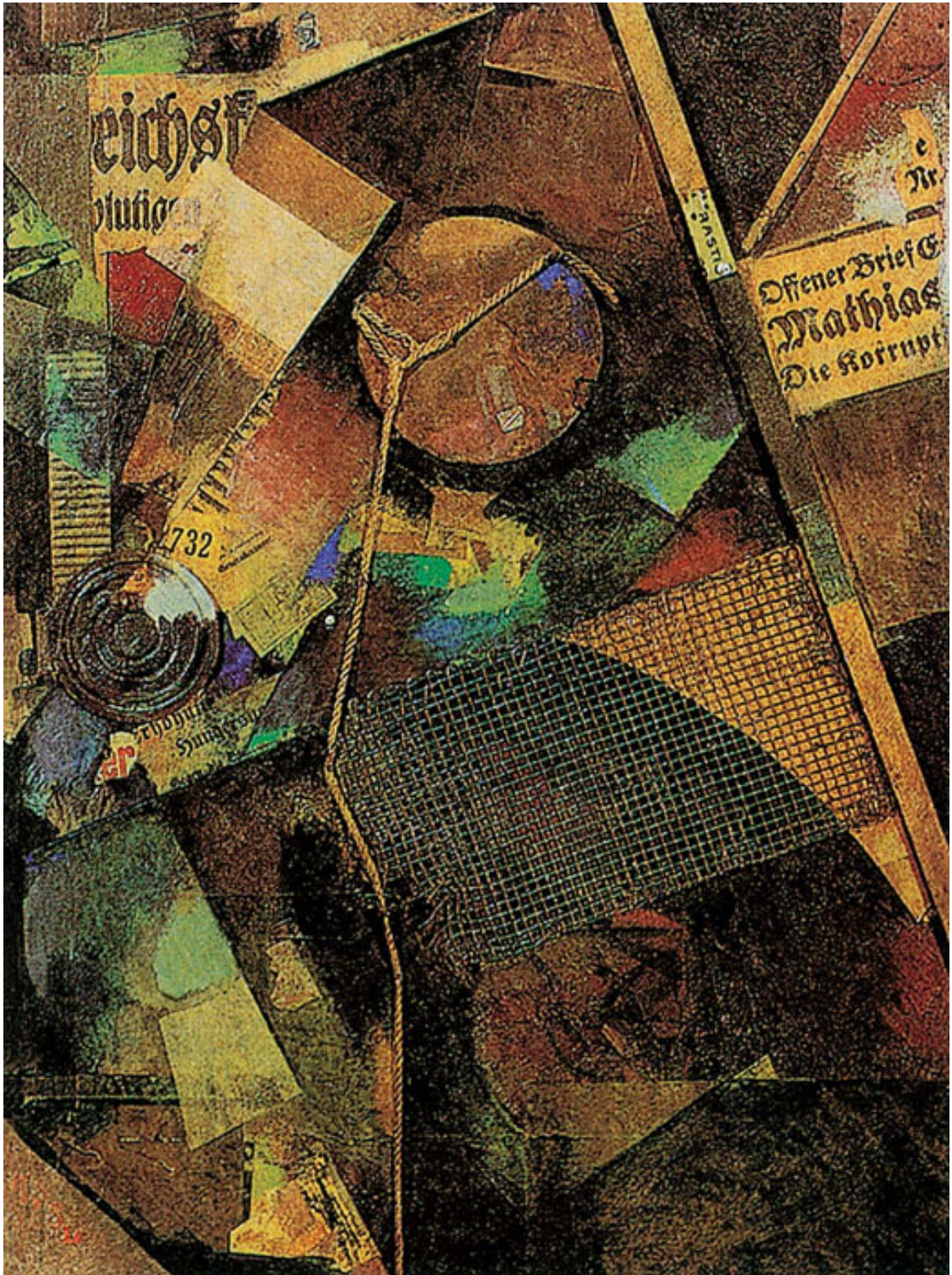
Always in movement... what would Dada be without Tzara's poems, without his manifestos, not to mention the quarells, which he did masterfully evoke? He declaimed... interrupted his presentations with ringing, whistling, drum beating, shouting, sobbing, and with cowbells. Slamming the table or empty boxes gave voice to the wild demands for a new language in a new form.

The numbness was finally beaten out of the audience to the point that a veritable frenzy of participation exploded.

In his writings on psychoanalysis, Carl Jung defined the coincidence as 'order outside of causality.' The purpose of this 'confused rush' of everything by means of simultaneous poetry, asynchronous theatrical performance, and typography was to realise the principle of coincidence as a new stimulant.

Dada took ideas primarily from Futurism and established anti-art. Dada expressed itself in consciously chaotic manifestos and with *bruitist* poems that were also performed simultaneously in improvised theatrical presentations. Dada utilised slips of paper, leaflets, and posters, consciously mixing their typography. They discovered the collage as a suitable means of expression. Since Dada, collage has been an autonomous art medium. Dada was adapted in New York by Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia. The Alfred Stieglitz gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue became their base of operations.

Kurt Schwitters established Dada in Hanover and created his own distinctive image. Schwitters presented his Merz-paintings. He remained faithful to Dadaism and collage for his entire life. He built and created his collages out of 'estranged' materials. 'I called my new creations made from, as a rule, any material Merz, clippings from an advertisement of the Commerzbank. Later the term Merz was extended to my poetry and in the end to all my related activities. Now, I call myself Merz.' The Parisian Dada movement was almost exclusively made up of writers; few artists were found in their numbers. In 1920 Hans Arp, Max Ernst, and Johannes Baargeld joined together in Cologne. In Berlin, Dada took on more of a political hue.



Kurt Schwitters, *Merzbild 25A*, 1920.

Miscellaneous materials, collage on cardboard, 104.5 × 79 cm.

Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.



Otto Dix, *The War (Artillery)*, 1914.
Oil on cardboard, 98 × 69 cm. Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf.

Explosive Visual Language

Some painters also expressed themselves in an explosive and chaotic manner. Now the inner world of the imagination and the horrific experiences were visually exorcised with enthusiasm and emphasis. This occurred as a conscious reaction, as a sort of accusation, laced with irony and despair. Contemporary issues were treated with the greatest drama and dynamic tension, and brought together in a critically explosive mixture.

The works of Otto Dix and George Grosz from the years 1914 to 1918 bubbled over with chaotic dynamism and omnipresent stimulation. They are examples of an immense discharge of energy, anger, and inner tension. In the painting *The War* from 1914, Otto Dix vented his aggression with a vehement use of the brush.

In 1914, George Grosz was called up for active duty and discharged in 1916 because of illness. However, in 1917 he was once again called to military service. As Grosz explained:

The breather was a fruitful time in my life, both realistically and romantically. My favourite colours were deep red and blackish blue. I felt the earth upon which I stood shake, and this shaking became visible in my paintings and watercolours.

In his autobiography, published in 1955, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, he states: 'Then, my art was a kind of valve – a valve from which the pent up hot steam was let out.' In 1916–1917, Grosz painted *The Funeral (Dedication to Oskar Panizza)*. 'On a black coffin, death rides through the milling masses of human faces and grimaces, crying shrilly and calling in vain.' (Grosz). His view of the big city life was apocalyptic. 'There is something cosmic about it, perhaps something meteor-like... Metro railway cars rush, as if a thunderstorm trembling, lightening fast they enter and are gone,' so his works were described by his friend, the poet Theodor Däubler.

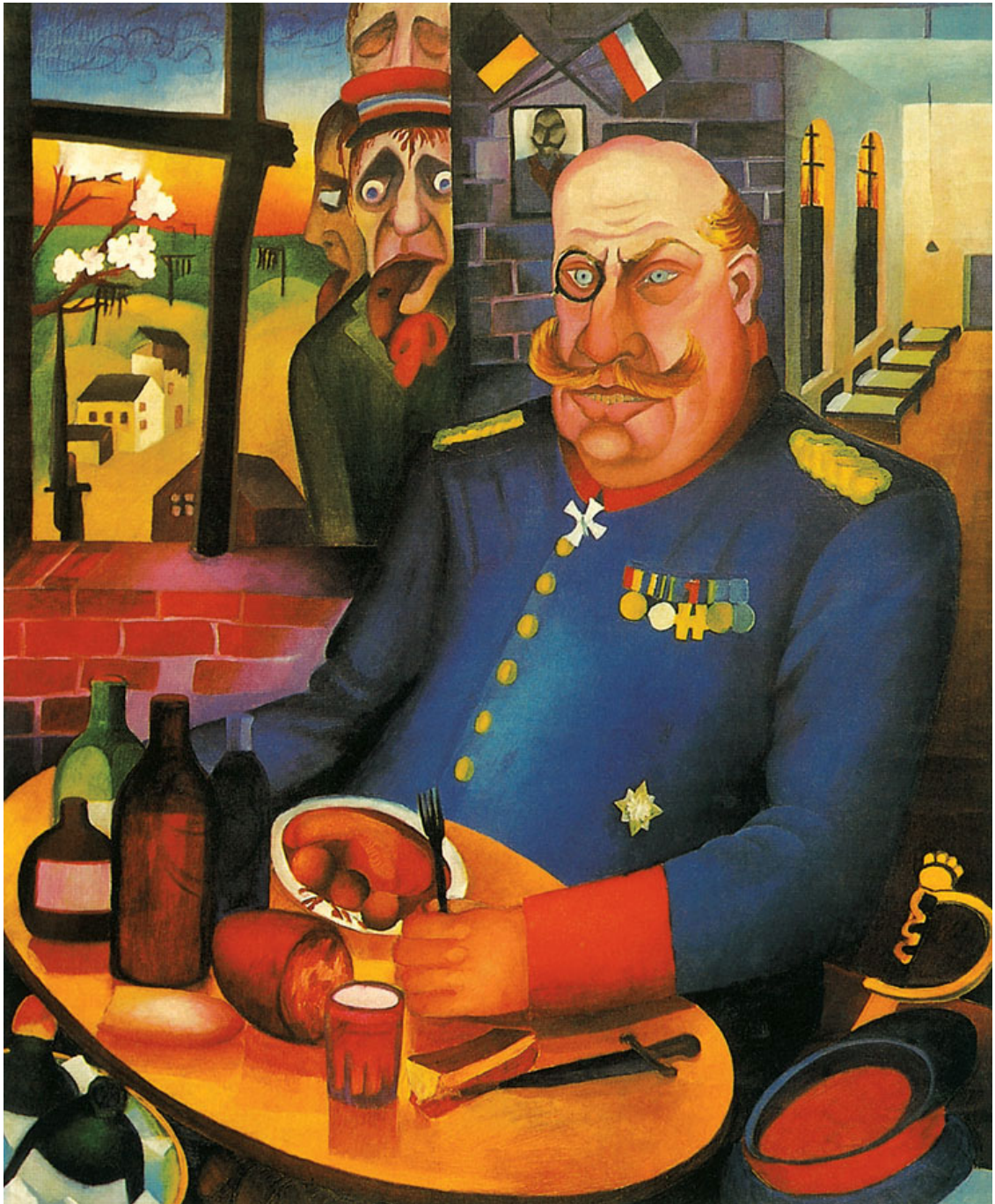


George Grosz, *Dedication to Oskar Panizza*, 1917–1918.
Oil on canvas, 140 × 110 cm. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.



George Grosz, *Republican Automaton*, 1920.

Watercolour, ink and Indian ink on cardboard, 60 × 47.3 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Heinrich Maria Davringhausen, *The General*, 1917.
Oil on canvas, 130 × 105 cm. Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn.

Veristic Tendencies

Germany, a Winter's Tale, named after Heinrich Heine's work, was painted by George Grosz after his return from military service in 1918. At that time, Grosz was of the opinion that art that did not put itself at the disposal of the political struggle was meaningless.

'My art,' so he wrote in his memoirs, 'should be a rifle and a sabre... In the middle, I placed the everlasting German, fat and frightened at a slightly wobbly little table with a cigar and a morning paper. Beneath, I depicted the three pillars of society: church, school, military. The man held desperately to the knife and fork; the world shook around him; a sailor, as a symbol of the revolution, and a prostitute completed my view of the times back then.'

A few months before in 1917, his friend, Heinrich Maria Davringhausen had completed perhaps the most significant antimilitarist painting of his time, *The General*. With smoothly styled cinematic cruelty, Davringhausen depicted the catastrophic state of the war. He eagerly depicted the details with exacting precision. The glowing colourful splendour underscored the heated atmosphere bursting with tension. A collage-like simultaneity of places and conditions organise the divergent scenes into a unified context. Using simultaneity to convey a message goes back to the Futurists; the infantilism is drawn from the sources of the 'primitives'. It is a completely new way of defining an image. It is consciously alienated from the aesthetical preconceptions and, thereby, it is impossible to ignore its contemporary references.



Giorgio de Chirico, *The Worrying Muse*, 1916.
Oil on canvas, 97 × 66 cm. Gianni Mattioli collection, Milan.

Surreal and Magical: Between the World Wars

Pittura Metafisica

In order for a work of art to be truly eternal, it must transcend the boundaries of humanity. Good common sense and logical thinking do not apply. The artist must bring forth a truly deep work from the most remote depths of his being. There, no rushing rivers, no birdsong, and no rustling leaves can reach.

The Italian, Giorgio de Chirico, put down these thoughts in 1914. It was at this time that he began to discover the world of painting called Pittura Metafisica. The path that led him here took from 1911 to 1919, and, from 1917, Carlo Carrà followed it as well. They met in January 1917 at a military hospital at Ferrara. They had already heard of one another. Carrà was among the leading Futurists, and de Chirico had been counted by Apollinaire among the most astonishing painters of the younger generation. The poet Alberto Savinio, the brother of de Chirico, was at the same hospital in Ferrara. He wrote a sort of fantasy literature that was close to Kafka and Kubin. They named their new artistic style, Pittura Metafisica. A short time later, Giorgio Morandi joined them.

These three representatives of this artistic style, which, next to Futurism, was the most significant Italian contribution to art in the first half of the 20th century, referenced the tradition of the great Italian masters. They did not want to create a new form of painting, but rather create a new vantage point for seeing things. The tangible world of experience had been changed under new conditions. These artists needed to redefine the basic laws of the classical: a spatially expansive perspective, as was customary in the Renaissance and Baroque; architecture as a backdrop, as it is to be found in the works of Giotto or Piero della Francesca; an austere language of shapes that praises the great, the exalted, and the everlasting. These young Italians were transferring these precepts to a new age, an age whose spirit and atmosphere stood in complete contrast to those of the classical era.

Giorgio de Chirico had studied at the Munich Academy of Art, where he had become acquainted with Max Klinger. The art of Bröcklin and the philosophy of Nietzsche impressed him. In his younger years, he began to paint a sort of 'unconscious' paintings in which the elements in a painting were brought together in unusual combinations. He lived in Paris from 1911 to 1915. In 1925 he returned there. He brought the aspect of the unconscious and counter-reality into Pittura Metafisica after 1916. This exercised a lasting influence upon the Surrealists.

The goal of Pittura Metafisica was, according to de Chirico, 'to construct a new metaphysical psychology through painting.' In 1919 he wrote down his thoughts:

Almost everything has two aspects: There is the normal aspect that we almost always see. Then, there is the ghostly, metaphysical one that rare individuals might see in moments of clairvoyance and metaphysical abstraction. A work of art must speak poetically about something that is far away from the figures and objects, as well as what its material shapes conceals them from us.

An oppressive silence prevails in the paintings of de Chirico. Empty squares, streets without people – there are no living beings, no vegetation, only decoration. The figures appear artificial and unreal, as do the architectural elements; a faceless anonymity reigns in the paintings. The figures and architectural elements are artificially extended in height or length and have enormous shadows. The monumentality of the decorations appears to extend into the infinite. All elements are bound into an overdrawn and overextended central perspective, into a reference system that seems to be

directed by an unseen force secretly at work. It is a metaphysical painting style bordering on the unconscious, where the outsized becomes real, what in daily life is not possible becomes possible.

It is the peace and the nonsensical beauty of the painting that appears metaphysical to me. And to me, the things that appear to be metaphysical are those that through the clarity of colour and exactness of measurement are the opposite of incoherence and vagueness... One must imagine everything in the world to be a riddle. (de Chirico)

Surrealism

Surrealism, like Futurism and Dada, was a lifestyle. In addition to Constructivism and expressive painting, it has influenced the art of the western world to this day. Surrealism made use of the experiences of the others in the spheres of unsettling dream reality and the unconscious. At first, it was the writers Paul Éluard and André Breton, who, having joined together in 1921 in order to enrich their art, sought to stage dreams, visions, uncontrolled associations and experiences of intoxication. It was known that in the 19th century, writers like Stéphane Mallarmé used drugs to broaden their senses in order to open up new dimensions for their writing.

André Breton was originally a neurologist. Therefore, in 1922 he visited Sigmund Freud in Vienna in order to familiarise himself with Freudian psychoanalysis and dream interpretation. In 1924 he published the manifesto, *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*. In it he states:

Surrealism is a purely psychological automatism through which one verbally, in written form or by other means, seeks to express the true process of thinking. A dictation of thought, without any of the controlling influences of reason and outside considerations such as ethics or aesthetics... Surrealism rests upon the belief in a higher reality of certain forms of associations that have until today been neglected and upon the omnipotence of the dream and non-utilitarian thought play.

Breton described the first attempts at automatic writing – sentences and words that arose without any control from the subconscious. Primarily, young writers like René Crevel, Robert Desnos, Benjamin Péret and Louis Aragon concerned themselves with ‘psychological automatism’ and with the free associations of thoughts and words. The result was: ‘an astounding eloquence, great feeling, a great wealth of images.’

In *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*, which appeared in 1928 in Paris, he wrote about catalysts that were helpful in approaching invisible phenomenon. It is essential to observe the inference points of the positive and magical world with a divining rod. He went on to describe the collages of Max Ernst as energetically active objects in which past associations may pose problems in the new interaction with one another. In his collages, Max Ernst undertook an experiment by taking individual objects, cut outs of old woodprints for example, and placing them in a new reference system. The cut out had broken with the old context. The parts were now integrated into new reference points.

In an unreal manner, but still on the level of the real... he could observe how these beings stood across from one another with a hostile attitude and were frightened by the company in which they found themselves. ‘Is it then so astonishing,’ Breton asked further, ‘that the horror which overtakes things would seep into us, would also overwhelm us, when we fall into an Ernst-like dream...’

And Max Ernst defined his collages as follows:

The collage technique is the systematic exploitation of the random or artificially induced meeting of two or more alien realities at an apparently inopportune level – and poetry is the spark that arks over when these realities approach each other.

For Max Ernst, collage was the ‘alchemy of visual imagination and the wonder of the total reordering of beings and objects.’ Similar to Duchamp’s readymades, objects in Ernst collages lose their original identity through systematic arrangement.

Max Ernst was not an artist of unconscious actions. He knew the mechanisms of dreams and the unconscious and consciously played with them. He inserted historical references, artistic cross-references and psychological hints into a painting using tangible materials or other newly found techniques. He left room for chance. The results were ambiguous.



Max Ernst, *Au Rendez-vous des Amis*, 1922.
Oil on canvas, 130 × 195 cm. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.



Max Ernst, *The Virgin Chastises the Infant Jesus Before Three Witnesses: André Breton, Paul Éluard and the Artist*, 1926.

Oil on canvas, 196 × 130 cm. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Max Ernst was in military service until 1918. 'Max Ernst died on 1 August 1914. He returned to life on the 11 November 1918, back to life as a young man who wanted to become a magician and the myth of his time.' He started with Dada in Cologne. At the Hans Goltz gallery in Munich, he came across a copy of the Italian magazine *Valori Plastici*. In this brownish printing, the works of Carlo Carrà and Giorgio de Chirico were depicted. These metaphysical cityscapes and the absurd, random perspectives, which the Cubists had just abandoned, fascinated him and led him in 1919 to create the portfolio *Fiat Modes*. He dedicated it to de Chirico. Mannequins or human beings that look like mannequins play the part. Lettering, using Dadaistic wordplay, increases the confusion. Max Ernst joined the incompatible together, just as one finds it in his later collages.

The Rendezvous of Friends serves as a platform painting for the forming Surrealist group. Painted in December 1922, it shows (as one can read on the scroll on the bottom right corner of the painting): 1 René Crevel, 2 Philippe Soulpault, 3 Arp, 4 Max Ernst, 5 Max Morise, 6 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, 7 Raphael, 8 Théodore Fraenkel, 9 Paul Éluard, 10 Jean Paulhan, 11 Benjamin Péret, 12 Louis Aragon, 13 André Breton, 14 Baargeld, 15 Giorgio de Chirico, 16 Gala Éluard and 17 Robert Desnos. Tzara and Picabia from the Dada era are missing. Instead, he inserted the already deceased ancestors of Surrealism into the painting. Ernst put himself in the lap of Dostoyevsky, whose literary works had anticipated the new developments in psychology.

Along with the portraits Breton and Éluard, in 1926 Max Ernst composed a further painting, *Die Jungfrau Maria verhaut den Menschensohn vor drei Zeugen, A. B., P. E. und den Maler* (The Virgin Mary Skanks the Baby Jesus in front of Three Witnesses, A.B, P. E. and the Painter). When he first exhibited the work at the Parisian Salon des Indépendents, it drew a great deal of attention and soon thereafter created a scandal at the Secession exhibition at the Cologne Kunsterverein. He was accused of blasphemy. The archbishop of Cologne had the painting removed. Catholic notables, including his own father, condemned the painting. Max Ernst himself was amused by it. Years before in 1920, at the first Dada event in Cologne with Hans Arp, Theodor Baargeld, and Max Ernst, there had already been some controversy. This started from the fact that the entrance to the exhibition was through the lavatory at the Winter brewery. Philipp Ernst, a hobby painter and teacher for the deaf, had once painted his son, Ernst, as the baby Jesus in a painting. Now that Max Ernst had become familiar with the writings of Sigmund Freud, he ascribed an Oedipal aspect to his painting. The boy's member finds itself on the mother's lap. With his right hand, the boy reaches for a pleat that suggests a vagina. Such incestuous behaviour ought to be punished. This was passionately discussed among Max Ernst's circle of friends. Viewing the scene through the window in the background are three voyeurs, Max Ernst himself and his friends, the French poet André Breton, and Paul Éluard, the gods of Surrealism.

Paying homage to psychological automatism, the Surrealist manifesto included a guide to automatic writing. Max Ernst wanted to reply to the writers with the 'automatic painting' of equal standing. He wanted give wings to his own meditative and hallucinatory powers. He randomly put sheets of paper on some floorboards, did rubbings of the wood with a soft pencil and was astounded by their darkness and delicate semidarkness. He was surprised by the sudden intensification of his visions when contemplating the rubbings. In the same manner, he experimented with a whole range of materials. *Frottage* was born. The first 34 pencil frottages, titled *Histoire Naturelle*, appeared in 1926.

The frottage technique revealed itself to be the equivalent to automatic writing. Max Ernst remarked that with the frottage technique, all the conscious influences such as reason and taste were switched off. Moreover, the active participation of the author, in this case the artist, was reduced to a minimum. The sketches were the result of suggestions and transmutations that spontaneously reveal themselves, corresponding to hypnotic visions. The character of the materials in question, for example wood, is lost. In 1925, Max Ernst began experiments with using the frottage technique in painting. With a variant technique, *grattage*, Max Ernst produced paintings full of threatening

monsters, gloomy woods and sleeping cities in the moonlight. In 1935 he created the series *Airplane Devouring Gardens* and, in 1936, *Jungles*. Between 1939 and 1945, he created important works like *Europe after the Rain*, *The Eye of Silence*, and the series *Microbes*. However, in 1939 he was interned as a German citizen in France at the camp Les Milles. He was able to immigrate to New York. There, he again created sculptural works. He returned to France in 1953, and, at the Biennale in Venice, he won the Grand Prize for painting. For this he was expelled from the Surrealist movement.

Max Ernst was one of the most exciting painters of his time. Dieter Wyss wrote in 1950:

Like no other painter before him, he illuminated the backdrop of human life... It would not be exaggerated to place him in the same row with the greats of painting like Hieronymus Bosch, Matthias Grünewald, and El Greco. He penetrated the riddle-like worlds of the creative and unconscious.

The Spaniard, Salvador Dali, mined the repertoire for his paintings from his readings of psychiatric and psychoanalytical literature. According to Bréton, he gave Surrealism 'a wonderful weapon, his critical-paranoid method as a morning gift.' Dali almost neurotically asserted sexuality in his paintings. He depicted monstrosities with a cold and precise exactitude. His themes were the sadistic, the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, the exaggerated and scenes of horrific fantasy. It is not clear what was intuition and what was calculated speculation with an eye towards to fashionable society. His countryman, Joan Miró, introduced him in 1928 to the circle of Parisian Surrealists. Influenced by his reading of *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud, after 1930 he developed his 'paranoid-critical activities.'

My method consists of spontaneously explaining the irrational ideas that grow out of mad associations by delivering a critical interpretation of the phenomenon. Sceptical clairvoyance assumes the role of a photographic developer.



Salvador Dalí, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, 1946.
Oil on canvas, 89.5 × 119.5 cm. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels.



René Magritte, *Temps menaçant*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 54 × 73 cm.
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

The Belgian, René Magritte did not look for his subjects in the unconscious. In his paintings, he depicted unreal situations involving objects and phenomenon. These assume the identity of the other. In this manner, a subject can become transparent. Bodies can dissolve in air. Proportions can be distorted, a cloud can be inside a doorframe, and a birdcage can become a part of the human body. Everything is interchangeable. The paintings of de Chirico inspired his first Surrealistic works. He lent the elements of his paintings the characteristics of a faithful copy. They are painted in a chilly distanced fashion. They are set in a scene and enter into absurd dialogues, as for instance, why should a statue not bleed? A window pane not be landscape and so on?

Yves Tanguy created dream landscapes, whose scenes seem unreal and monotonous. Things are strewn about as if following choreographic directions. With loud colours, he shows their contours and vividness in realistic terms. Their long shadows give the illusion of a silent cosmos. He creates a subjective world in his art, manifested by a feeling of emptiness, loneliness, and endlessness. Werner Schmalenbach reacted to the 1942 painting *Absent Lady* saying, 'It is as if the relics of a long ago epoch on earth, the ossified remains of a long extinct life form, had survived in an eternity, empty and free of all human existence.'

Joan Miró, came to Paris in 1919 and became acquainted with Picasso, signing the 1924 Surrealist Manifesto. He worked together with Max Ernst on stage decorations for the ballet. He was strongly influenced by the paintings of Paul Klee.

Miró said, '[T]he poets that Masson introduced me to were of greater interest to me than the painters whom I met in Paris. I lost myself in them for nights on end... The result of this reading was that step-by-step I began to distance myself from Realism until after 1925, when I almost exclusively painted hallucinations. Hunger was a great source of hallucinations. For a long time

I tried to sit there and look at the empty walls of my studio as I attempted to exorcise these faces onto paper and canvas.

Starting with automatic drawings, Miró developed a hieroglyphic style. His figuration displays its mastery in the abstract unintentional and in the interplay of the coincidental. At the beginning of the 1920s, he painted metamorphoses of objects, deformed them, and placed them in unusual relationships to one another. Space became a flat, two-dimensional painting surface in which all objects lived in harmony next to one another. In the middle of the 1920s, he invented a type of visual alphabet of emotions with his spontaneous splashes, stains, and flourishes. A painting style was created that had a compact expressive power and a balanced lyrical equilibrium between the symbols.

The American, Arshile Gorky, introduced Surrealist elements into the informal world of objects. He led the way to the psychological automatism of Action Painting among the young generation of American artists. Via Surrealism, the Frenchman, Henri Michaux, found his way to doing his drawings while in a state of intoxication.

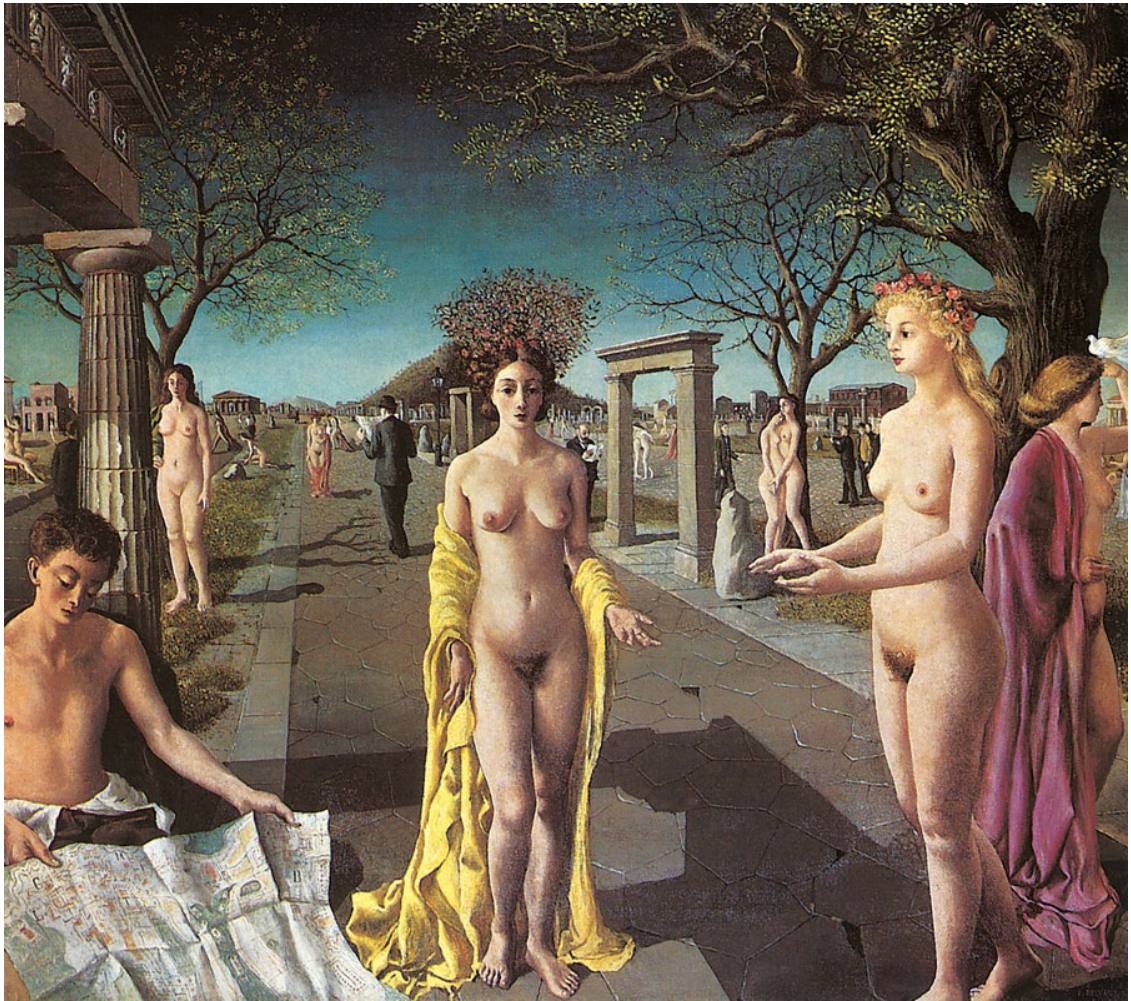
Pierre Roy from France, Paul Delvaux from Belgium, and the Oscar Dominguez from Spain also developed a Surrealistic painting style. Among the Parisian Surrealists who exhibited together in 1925–1926 were, in addition to Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, André Masson, and Pablo Picasso. There was also Hans Arp, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, and Francis Picabia, who had, like Max Ernst, originally been Dada artists. Robert Sebastian Matta and Wilfredo Lam, from Chile and Cuba, respectively, were for some time close to Surrealism. Richard Oelze created landscapes with amorphic structures and utilised a technique that was similar to frottage. Among the younger generation, one notes *Fantastic Painting* in the works by Hans Bellmer.



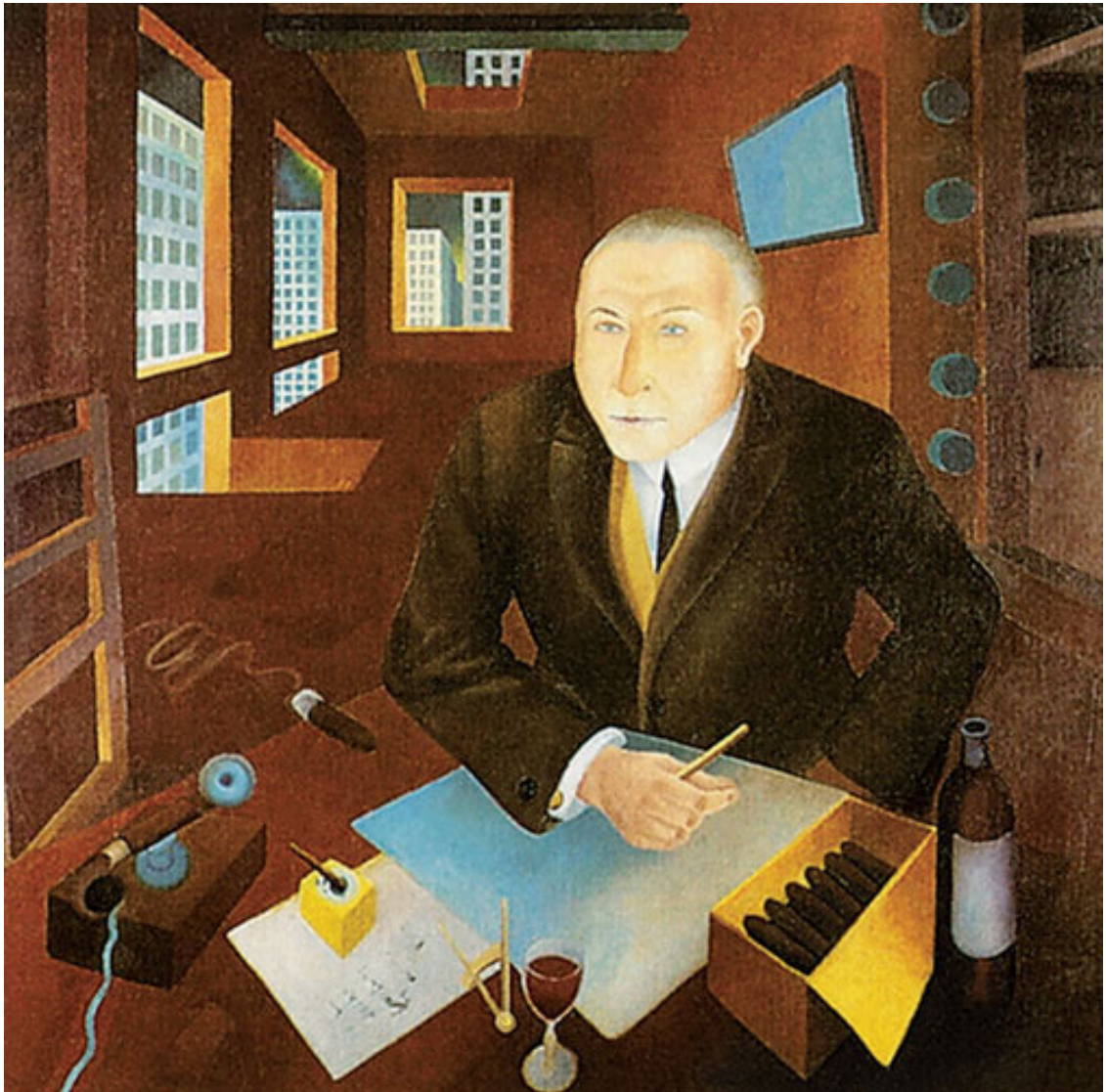
Yves Tanguy, *Absent Woman*, 1942. Oil on canvas,
115 × 89.5 cm. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.



Joan Miró, *Portrait of a Spanish Dancer*, 1921.
Oil on canvas, 65 × 56 cm. Musée National Picasso, Paris.



Paul Delvaux, *Entry into Town*, 1940.
Oil on canvas, 170 × 190 cm. Private collection.



Heinrich Maria Davringhausen, *The Writer*, 1920–1921.
Oil on canvas, 120 × 120 cm. Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf.

Magical Realism and the New Objectivity

World War I radically changed Europe politically and socially, and revolutionised the general mood in Germany. In many large cities, councils of workers and soldiers were created. A state of near civil war prevailed. The writer, Eduard Trautner, described the situation during 1919 in Munich in the magazine, *The Way*:

Recently, the rapid course of events has increased the political violence. Terror has appeared. Armed people are at every corner, barbed wire and firing lines are in the streets, and mass arrests of people who are, or appear to be, political opponents are taking place.

Specific questions of daily life, in particular, social problems came to the fore. 'We want to change the world. We all want justice,' wrote the poet René Schickele. 'Radical' became a magic word that was synonymous with truth, sincerity, and public spirit. The cultural conditions in Bavaria during the Soviet Republic of 1918–1919 differed from those in the rest of Germany only in as much as Prime Minister Kurt Eisner was in agreement with the artists. In contrast with Berlin, for example, the majority of the artists stood in unison with the cultural policies of those in power. After the Soviet Republic was put down in May 1919, all the members of the Aktionsausschusses revolutionärer Künstler München (Action Committee of the Revolutionary

Artists of Munich) were arrested, including the painters, Georg Schrimpf and Hans Richter, as well as the writer, Oskar Maria Graf.

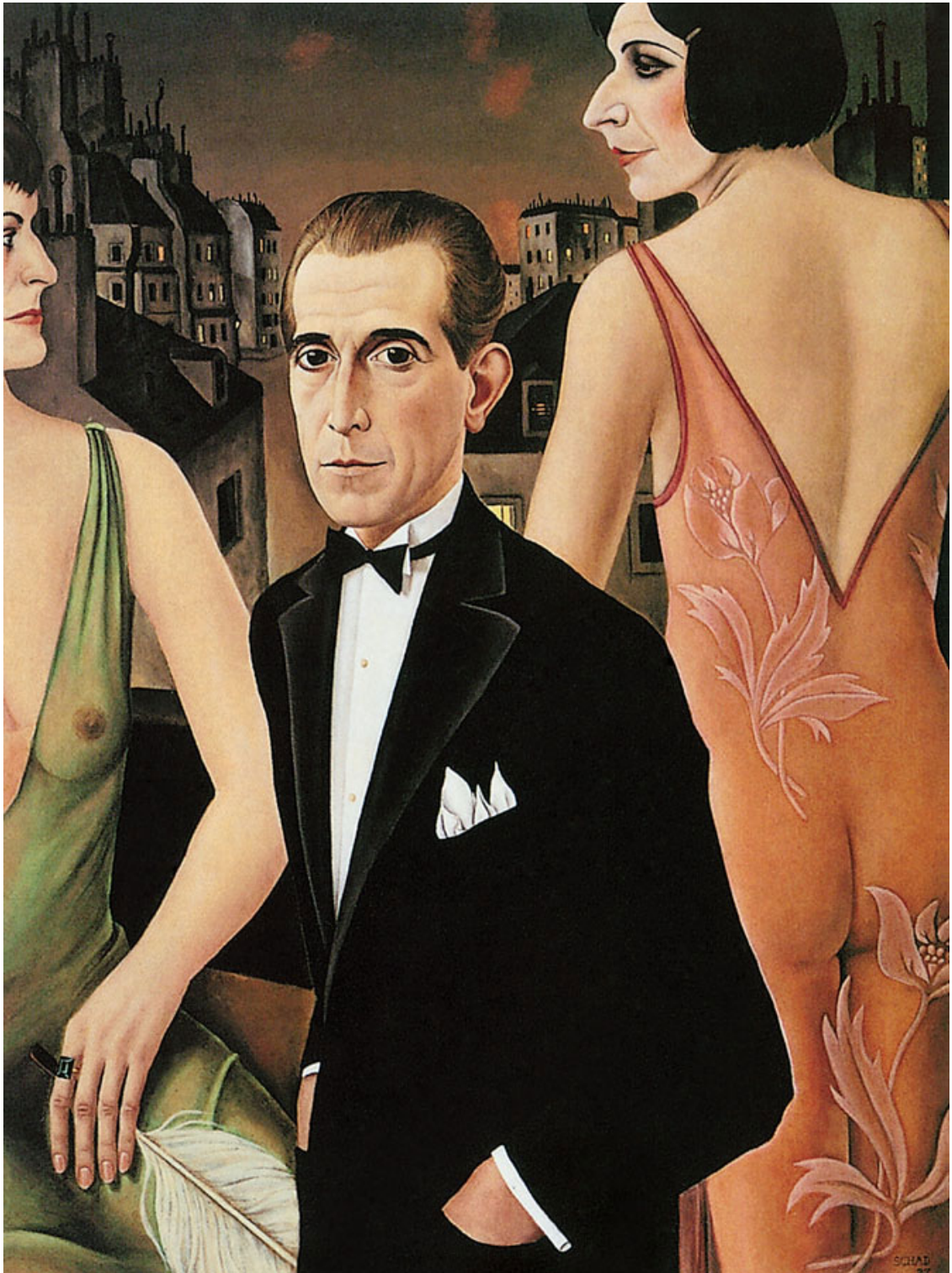
In Berlin, as in Munich, also centre of the Revolution that was soon to fail, 120 artists met together at the end of 1918. They called themselves the Novembergruppe. The leaders of the group were among others César Klein, Max Pechstein, Moritz Melzer, and Georg Tappert. In their circular letter they wrote: 'The future of art and the seriousness of the present situation force us of revolutionary spirit (Cubists, Futurists, Expressionists) into agreement and close alliance.' Among the participants of the meetings and exhibitions were such renowned artists as Rudolf Bauer, the sculptor Rudolf Belling, Otto Freundlich, Richard Janthur and the architect, Erich Mendelsohn. Artists of the most varied artistic and ideological viewpoints joined. For example, from the Sturm, Walter Dexel, Oskar Fischer, Johannes Molzahn, Otto Möller, and Fritz Stuckenberg joined. Enrico Prampolini represented the Futurists in the Novembergruppe. The Dadaists Hans Arp, George Grosz, Hannah Höch, and Raoul Hausmann sympathised with the Novembergruppe. Kurt Schwitters exhibited jointly with them. Even artists who taught from 1919 onwards at the Bauhaus in Weimar are mentioned as participants during the time the Novembergruppe existed. These were Paul Klee, Walter Gropius, Johannes Itten, Georg Muche, Oskar Schlemmer, Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky and László Moholy-Nagy.

Towards the end of 1918, a whole row of artist groups had arisen: in Dresden, the Gruppe 1919; in Hamburg, the Hallische Künstlergruppe (Halle Artist Group) and the group Kräfte (Powers); in Magdeburg the Vereinigung für neue Kunst und Literatur (Association for New Art and Literature) and Die Kugel (The Sphere); in Düsseldorf, Das Junge Rheinland (the Young Rhineland); and in Karlsruhe, the Gruppe Rih (Rih Group). The art scene was a living mixture of artistic styles belonging to the object-oriented and abstract Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism.

In the April 1920 issue of *Der Ararat*, Leopold Zahn drew attention to the fact that the Futurist Carlo Carrà was competing with Poussin for the sternest composition in their painting. In addition, Giorgio de Chirico was proudly declaring: '*pictor classicus sum.*' The influence of the new Pittura Metafisica was great among the German artists. As has already been mentioned, Max Ernst created his series *Fiat Modes*; George Grosz painted his machine people set in an architectural wasteland around 1920 in the *Diabolospieler*. Even Georg Schrimpf, Gottfried Brockmann, Oskar Schlemmer,

and many others could not deny this influence. Even Alexander Kanoldt, who worked in seclusion had, by 1914, already arrived at a similar style. Heinrich Maria Davringhausen had done so in 1917; George Schrimpf in 1918 – all three done so independently of one another. In *Pittura Metafisica*, they did not discover anything new, but rather something similar.

The painters Georg Schrimpf, Alexander Kanoldt, Carlo Mense, and Heinrich Maria Davringhausen were the only painters in Munich to consistently follow the new Magical Realism and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) styles. These four artists were regarded as the *Münchener Gruppe der Neuen Sachlichkeit*. Already by the beginning of 1919, the gallery owner, Hans Goltz, had assumed the role of sole representative for this new style, just as he was also already representing George Grosz and Paul Klee.



Christian Schad, *Count Saint Genois d'Anneaucourt*, 1927.

Oil on panel, 103 × 80.5 cm. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Far removed from Futurism and Expressionism, a new interpretation of reality was being heralded by the young artists. These artists rediscovered visible reality that had been pushed into the background during the years of research and experiments. The need for order and security grew after the chaos of war and the threats to freedom and human existence. Everywhere, a new Realism came to the fore. For decades it had seemed that since the start of the modernist art at the end of the

19th century, Realism in art was a closed chapter of the Romantic, landscape, and portrait painters. Only after the political and social collapse did the search begin anew for the real, the objective in a contemporary style.

Heinrich Maria Davringhausen is counted as one of the trailblazers of Magical Realism and New Objectivity. In the Berlin and Munich of the 1920s, he was considered to be among the most shining artistic personalities. He was an elegant bohemian with great charisma and a pioneer of a new world of images. The critics found his 'blasphemous impudence of spirit' but at the same time also found that he had a 'love for craftsman-like perfection.' In 1920 he made use of a hard, clear style. Everything progressive and outdated is frozen in a stasis, as in the painting, *The Black Marketeer*. Davringhausen depicted the architectural environment, onto which the profiteer is placed, like a tiger getting ready to jump, with a quick and fleeting perspective. As if drawn with a ruler, it represses any personal style. In this painting, even more intensively than in the previous works, space and perspective perform an interpretive function. The 'spatial psychology' appearing again and again with Davringhausen is consciously used in symbolic form here. This was already recognised in 1925 by the author Franz Roh, somewhat later by Erwin Panofsky and recently by the art historian, Christoph Vögele. All the authors point to the parallels found in styles since the Gothic. From now on, the rather hurried perspective and the window view become the favourite vehicle in the works of Davringhausen to engage in psychoanalysis through a clear spatial location and conveying meaning through perspective. The view from the office of *The Black Marketeer* is one of smooth and cold high-rises. The windowless openings let the exterior space appear to be everywhere.

Through these 'holes,' *The Black Marketeer* seems, like a spider, to be able to reach out and grab loot. However, he is also in danger of crashing down: The openings open themselves into dangerous shafts that lead into endless depths.
(Vögele)

Already by 1933, he had fled together with his Jewish wife from the Nazis. A large number of his paintings, all told around 222, were lost, burned, or were wantonly destroyed during the war. Twenty paintings were confiscated for being 'degenerate.'

In the summer of 1925, the director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim, Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub, brought together 124 paintings from thirty-two artists for the legendary exhibition titled *Neue Sachlichkeit*. This exhibition visited several other German cities as well. It was a preliminary assessment of a realist trend that sought to again find the 'autonomy of the material world.' Shortly before, the art critic, Franz Roh, had coined the term Magical Realism. Although both terms, *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Magical Realism, are common today, they are not identical in their nuances.

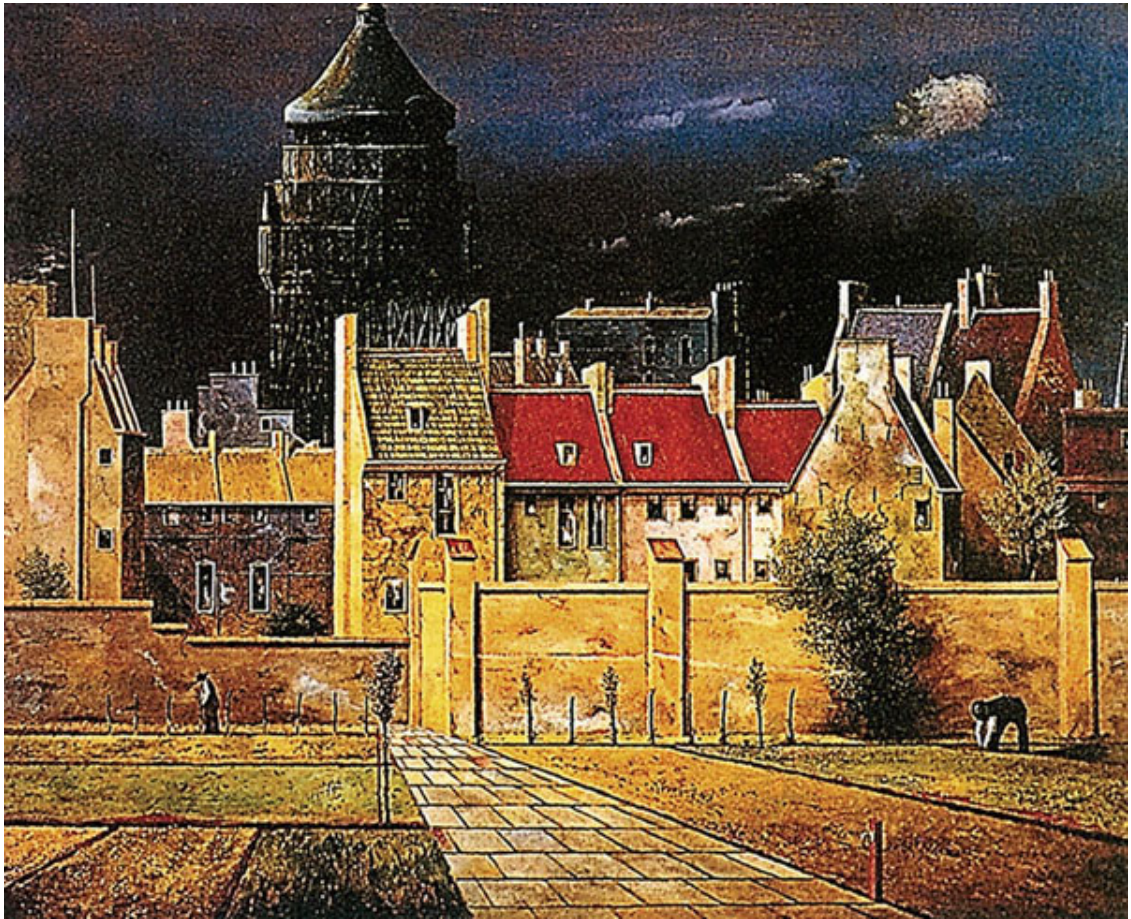
The *Neue Sachlichkeit* had many centres in Germany. The most developed form, as was already mentioned, were found in Munich, Berlin, and Dresden with George Grosz, Otto Dix, Fritz Lenk, Hannah Höch, Christian Schad, August Wilhelm Dressler, Karl Hubbuch, Rudolf Schlichter, and Gustav Wunderwald. Schad painted people exclusively. He painted their bodies from a great distance. He painted their bodies under their simple garments, their loneliness, their isolation and their fear. The Cologne artist, Anton Räderscheidt, realised similar themes.

The wealth of motifs was not limited to sublime themes. The world of daily life also became part of the painting. Examples of this are the street corners, austere rows of houses, the railway crossing in the works of by Karl Zerbe; frozen landscapes like those of Adolf Erbslöh; still lifes like those of Georg Scholz, Alexander Kanoldt, or Richard Seewald. Franz Radziwill often draped his landscapes with an eerily seeming empty atmosphere. Carl Grossberg painted the momentousness of machines. Karl Völker painted industrial facilities and their cold utility. Artists painted themselves, friends or relatives, the sick or a pair of lovers. The common characteristic of these paintings is the soberness of their depiction. They are completely without sentimentality.

Their simple, unpretentious subjects and the absence of any timidity when facing ugliness mark them. The painting structure appears statically entrenched and is all too often sterile and glassy, as well as lacking in any gestures or traces of the painting process.



Karl Zerbe, *Lunar Landscape*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 80 × 61 cm.
Gift of Josef Zilcken, Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren.



Franz Radziwill, *Water Tower in Bremen*, 1931.
Oil on canvas, 80 × 99.5 cm. Private collection.

Otto Dix had taught at the Dresden Art Academy since 1927. The socially critical drawings of Käthe Kollwitz had already prepared the ground for a Social Realism. Here, a school of 'proletarian-revolutionary art' had established itself. Among its followers were Hans and Lea Grundig, Otto Griebel, Wilhelm Lachnit, Otto Nagel, Kurt Querner, Oskar Nerlinger and Conrad Felixmüller. 'They belonged to the Communist Association of Revolutionary Artists founded in 1928 in Berlin and in 1929 in Dresden. When it was banned in 1933, it is said to have had over 500 members in all parts of Germany.' (Horst Richter)

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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