

Expressionism in German Art: Works from The McMaster Museum of Art

Expressionism describes works of art that are emotional or expressive in style and/or content. This modern art movement can be traced to the late 1890s in Europe and is associated with the work of artists such as *Vincent van Gogh*, *Paul Gauguin*, *Edvard Munch* and *Henri Matisse*. These artists used strong, discordant colors, harsh lines and geometric shapes to convey psychological states and emotions. Drawing on imagination rather than observation and description, Expressionist artists challenged traditional approaches to representation.

In the early 1900s, a number of artists in Germany developed a similar interest in the potential for works of art to generate an emotional response in the viewer. Working outside of established art institutions, German Expressionists looked to non-European art and employed motifs from Africa, Oceania and Asia in their work. Other sources for their art included Medieval, Renaissance and Folk Art traditions in Germany. These diverse interests provided important models as artists experimented with new styles and subjects and revived older techniques such as the woodcut print.

Although not always opposed to the same ideas and practices, German Expressionists shared a spirit of rebellion. Some were critical of an increasingly crowded, urban and industrialized consumer society while others emphasized creativity and spirituality. Many artists used an expressionist style for works of political protest and commentary, particularly following the First World War. The ideas and forms of Expressionism have lived on in later decades within the movements Abstract Expressionism and Neo-Expressionism.

This online exhibition of Expressionist prints and sculpture explores two important subjects or genres: the human figure and the city landscape.

The Expressionist City

Max Beckmann (1884-1950)

***Cafémusik/Café Concert* 1918**

Drypoint, 1974.010.0001 A107 B111

In this drypoint, a jumble of figures and objects are compressed into a compact space, evoking the noise and hectic confusion of a crowded night club or café. Produced in the last year of World War I, following Beckmann's lengthy recuperation from the trauma of his experience as a medical orderly, the scene suggests a return to prewar diversions. Several figures are holding musical instruments and appear to be playing, however members of the audience are preoccupied by their own concerns and pay little attention to the musicians. The impact of the war is felt in the bandaged face that appears near the bottom and the physical suffering is reinforced by the distorted shapes of the other figures. The atmosphere of psychological despair is also conveyed by the anxious expressions on the two faces at the lower right and in the blank surface of the chair back. This shape resembles the emaciated head in *The Scream* (1893) by the Norwegian artist *Edvard Munch*, whose work was a source of inspiration to many Expressionists.

Known primarily as a Realist painter before World War I, *Beckmann* worked extensively in printmaking from 1915 to 1923. Throughout this period he frequently explored urban subjects such the theatre and cabaret, adapting a fragmented compositional structure from *Cubism*. The stacked figures and absence of three dimensional space in this work, combined with the murky texture of the drypoint

print, convey the ugliness and chaos of the final months of the war.

Der Zeichner in Gesellschaft (Rudolf Grossmann)/The Artist in Society (Rudolf Grossmann) 1922
Etching 1978.005.0001 A107 B111

In this etching, a man peers intently at a young woman seated in front of him while several closely grouped observers look on. The man holds a notebook and pencil, suggesting that he is in the process of sketching a portrait of the woman and is therefore the artist identified by name in the title. Other members of the group, perhaps also portraits of unknown individuals, look on with keen interest. Their poses and appearance suggest a gathering that features stimulating conversation. The presence of several women in the group highlights the expanding role of women as arts patrons and their increased participation in public life during this period. In addition to their contributions as artists, women were also significant collectors of Expressionist prints.

Rudolf Grossmann was an early twentieth century German painter, etcher and lithographer and a master of portraits, figure scenes, landscapes and cityscapes. Working in a figurative style, *Grossmann* published his first etchings and lithographs around 1905. His graphic work was commissioned by major publishers in both Germany and France.

In der Trambahn/In the Streetcar 1922
Etching, 1972.027.0001 A107 B111

Rendered by a thin line that defines her features, a woman sits impassive in the interior of a streetcar, her eyes closed against her surroundings. Seated next to her and also posed frontally is a man, perhaps the artist himself, whose face is obscured by bandages that also effectively cover his ears. The third figure appears in profile and holds his thumb to his lips, rendering him unable to speak. In the background, two figures are engaged in a violent confrontation, yet the trio seem unaware. Willfully turning away from the world outside the window of the streetcar, the trio literally sees, hears and speaks no evil. The black and white stripes that dominate this etching evoke an atmosphere of fear and suspicion that is reinforced by the static poses of the three figures seated in the foreground. Using multiple thin, controlled lines, Beckman conveys the tension of the period with cool detachment. Produced during a time of political instability and violent upheaval under the Weimar Republic, this etching exposes the ongoing trauma of life in post war Germany.

Bernhard Kretzschmar (1889-1972)
Im Fleischerladen/In the Butcher's Shop 1921
Etching, 1977.009.0001 A107 B114

In this etching, a line of customers waits to be served in a busy, well stocked butcher shop. A sign above the door proclaims: "No credit - I have found that it loses both my goods and my customers." Replete with details of dress, behavior and circumstance, this print is known as a genre scene because it depicts an image of everyday life. *Kretzschmar* was an accomplished genre artist whose detailed prints documented the lives and habits of the petit bourgeois in and around the city of Dresden. The artist's depictions are ironic rather than critical and reveal the artist's affection for his fellow citizens, in contrast to the work of contemporaries such as *George Grosz*.

The rapid recession into three dimensional space, accomplished here by the abrupt inward thrust of the display case, is characteristic of the artist's work. The solid mass of the structure, along with the

space in front, draw attention to the two pregnant women who face each other across the counter. The women convey a general sense of prosperity that is reinforced by the presence of two children gazing intently at a pig's head in the foreground and by the abundance of meat in the shop.

Der Auktionator/The Auctioneer 1921

Drypoint, 1976.025.0001 A107 B114

The imposing figure of the auctioneer, formally attired in a dark suit and hat, dominates this drypoint of an auction in progress. In contrast to the professional and severe demeanor of the auctioneer, a figure on the left holds up a ladies undergarment for all to see. This inserts a note of humor and pathos into the genre scene, as apparently everything is to be sold off. The assembled audience is somber but attentive and alert to a bargain, and one man has raised his arm to catch the eye of the auctioneer. The architecture of the interior is freely drawn with an abundance of loose and imprecise lines to create shading and depth, suggesting a rough sketch that captures a fleeting moment in time. The gloomy interior, meager offerings and solemnity of the crowd suggests that the auction is being conducted under less than pleasant circumstances. Viewers may connect the scene to the economic difficulties of the period. In 1921, the year this print was produced, inflation was increasing daily as the value of the German mark plunged until by 1923 the currency had effectively collapsed.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938)

Sich überschlagende akrobatische Tänzerinnen/Acrobatic Dancers Cartwheeling 1913

Colour Woodcut, 1996.018.0001LB A107 B114

In this woodcut, Kirchner explores the world of popular urban entertainment found at the Circus or night club during this period. The acrobats are clearly women, however their features are generalized and their dress and poses suggest the plumage of exotic birds rather than explicit sexuality. The artist has flattened three dimensional space within the print, with recession indicated by the slight overlapping and stacking of figures.

Cabaret performances often featured acrobats, clowns and trapeze artists along with musical acts and live displays of native and so-called primitive cultures. These subjects interested Kirchner and his fellow artists of *Die Brücke*, a group founded in Dresden in 1905. Spectacles such as these provided a potent combination of exotic and primitive themes which are evocatively conveyed through the medium of the colour woodcut.

The woodcut print has a long history that dates back to the middle ages in Germany, a tradition that the artists of *Die Brücke* consciously referenced. Invoking the accomplishments of earlier German artists such as *Albrecht Dürer* (1471-1528), *Kirchner* and others revived the outdated medium. In contrast to the controlled line of a wood engraving, here the rough edges of colour reveal the impact of the gouge used to carve the design into the wood.

Hermann Max Pechstein (1881-1955)

Akrobaten III/Acrobats III 1912

Colour Woodcut, 1974.009.0001 A107 B109

Acrobats are also the subject of this colour woodcut by *Max Pechstein*, another member of *Die Brücke*, however the mood of this work is very different from Kirchner's *Acrobatic Dancers Cartwheeling*. The performers here appear in a less animated style and the background is also quite

static. On the left, the flat panels in the wings clearly indicate that this is a performance staged in a theatrical set that has been painted with scenes from an imaginary tropical world.

Three colors have been used in this woodcut, each requiring a separate print matrix. Large areas of the paper support have been left blank, creating a fourth colour in the composition. *Pechstein* began working in the woodcut medium along with *Kirchner* in 1907 and may have been inspired to pursue this subject through exposure to French precedents encountered on a trip to Paris in 1908.* From the mid nineteenth century many French artists had explored various types of urban entertainment as a facet of modern life in the growing metropolis.

* *Jill Lloyd, German Expressionism, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991); 87.*

George Grosz (1893-1959)

From the *Ecce Homo* series 1923

Plate I, *Passanten/Passers* by 1921

Colour lithograph

Grosz displays a penetrating wit and keen powers of observation in this lithograph, from *Ecce Homo**, of an urban metropolis in post World War I Germany. A jaunty, youthful sailor strides purposefully along behind the retreating figure of a man in a suit, while an older woman, her face blotchy and smudged, gazes mournfully at the viewer. Various miniature vignettes appear cartoon-like in the background, but each figure or group is set apart and conducts his or her business with little regard for their fellow citizens. Life in this city appears sordid and bleak, yet the inhabitants are oddly unconcerned.

Ecce Homo is a collection or portfolio of lithographs based on drawings and watercolors and was published in book form in 1922. The title carries a strong association with Christianity, however here homo refers more broadly to humanity as a whole. *Grosz* envisioned the project as a document that recorded his fellow citizens, a survey of contemporary behavior and public morality. Throughout this critical and satirical view of post war Berlin, humanity appears debased and corrupt.

While *Grosz* had contributed caricatures and illustrations to satirical magazines as a student, by 1915 his work became more politically focused. In collaboration with the brothers *Wieland Herzfeld* and *John Heartfield* of Malik-Verlag Press, *Grosz* produced political and what he termed 'educational' books with an increasingly anti-German stance. Many of the other lithographs in *Ecce Homo* were considered pornographic and when the book appeared, the artist and publishers were charged with obscenity.

* *Ecce Homo* or 'Behold the Man' was the phrase *Pilate* used to present *Christ* to the awaiting crowd who responded 'Crucify Him'. (*John 19:5*).

Plate XII, *Der Mensch ist gut/People are good* 1921

Colour lithograph

In ironic contrast to the merry title, here a trio of one dimensional, ghoulish-headed men share drinks at a table in a deserted interior. The eyes of one monstrous head gaze furtively away, while the other two heads, one hideously green and the other grotesque, appear to be engaged in conversation. The flat plane of the table, arrayed with cups, a bottle and knife, suggests the artist's interest in *Cubism* while the stark, looming walls in the deserted background space evoke the Metaphysical paintings of

Italian artist *Giorgio de Chirico*.

Grosz incorporated various stylistic elements in his work, borrowing freely and inventively from other artists and periods. His work was also shaped by an interest in graffiti, collage, photomontage and children's drawings along with pulp fiction and graphic novels. The breadth of stylistic influences is evident throughout *Ecce Homo*, resulting in a disparate group of images that mirrors the corruption, chaos and violence of Weimar Germany.

Plate XIV *Ach, knallige Welt, Du seliges Abnormitätenkabinett/Oh crazy world, you blessed freak show 1922*

Colour lithograph

In this lithograph, a bizarre cast of people and objects crowd an outdoor café, each figure outlined in harsh, black gestures. Labeled a freak show in the title, the layering of shapes and figures again suggests the artists's interest in collage, but here the link to Expressionism is more clearly visible. A shared preoccupation with the demi-monde and an evocative use of line and colour connects the artist to other German Expressionists. *Grosz*, however, was deeply opposed to the movement, particularly the aspect that explored spirituality and considered such pursuits an attempt to escape from reality.

Grosz's critique of post war German society is generally misanthropic but focuses specifically on several groups. Middle class values are openly mocked and the vestiges of pre war German society attacked in vicious and satirical caricatures produced by *Grosz* throughout this period. Soldiers are presented as maimed freaks rather than heroes, capitalists and war profiteers are gluttonous and society in general appears debauched.

#46

Franz Jung gewidmet/Dedicated to Franz Jung 1917

Lithograph, 1995.012.0004 A107 MD119

The composition of this lithograph suggests the process of photomontage, rendered here in a web of black and white lines. A series of fractured planes and random shapes are layered one top of another, and it is possible to discern objects such as a chair, a glass and a bottle along with the central male figure. While it is difficult to establish a precise narrative, this figure appears furtive and an air of secrecy and suspicion permeates the scene.

Franz Jung was an author and member, with *Grosz*, of the Berlin *Dada* group. Beginning in 1918, *Grosz* was an active member of the movement which originated in Zurich during World War I. Along with *Jung* and others, *Grosz* edited several *Dada* periodicals and participated in the 1st International Dada-Fair in Berlin in 1920. *Grosz* also illustrated several books written by *Jung* and collaborated on various other projects. Characterized by a strong anti-war philosophy, Dadaists rejected all art and civilization and advocated anarchy and absurdity as the only appropriate response to the war.

Emerging in Berlin near the end of the war, the movement took on more political overtones amid the turmoil and violence following the armistice and the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Karl Horst Hödicke (*1938)

Stadt Landschaft/City Landscape 1988*Oil on canvas*

The modern reality of a divided city is the subject of this oil painting by German Neo-Expressionist *Karl Hödicke*. The view is taken from a vantage point overlooking the Berlin Wall from West Berlin, with the towering concrete structures of East Berlin in the background. The loose and gestural application of paint mimics the graffiti-painted surface of the wall, a popular site for protests and political statements during the decades of the Cold War. Splotches of white and grey paint suggest the bright glare of street lights that illuminate the area at night and large black birds, perhaps crows, menace the otherwise deserted space. These birds, perched on lampposts and ledges or circling overhead, pass freely from east to west, an activity denied to humans at the time. The Berlin Wall was put in place in 1961 and built up over several years to separate the Soviet-occupied sector of Berlin from the rest of the city. East German citizens were not permitted to leave, although many attempted to escape either by climbing over or tunneling under the Wall. In 1989, one year after this painting was completed, travel restrictions between east and west were lifted and the Wall was gradually dismantled.

<http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/photographs/index.htm>

Men and Women**Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945)*****Weberzug/Weaver's March 1897****Etching*

This work is part of a series based on *The Weavers*, a play by Nobel prize winning author *Gerhard Hauptmann* (1862-1946), which dramatized the uprising of weavers from Silesia in 1844. The revolt was violently suppressed by the Prussian authorities and many of the participants were killed. *Kollwitz* started working on *Weberaufstand* not long after she began to experiment with etching in the early 1890s. Completed in 1898, she exhibited the series of three lithographs and three etchings at the annual Berlin art exhibition. The exhibition jury voted to award *Kollwitz* a medal for the series, however, due to the political nature of the works, the German Emperor Wilhelm II vetoed the award.

The impact of a life of physical toil and hardship is evident in *Kollwitz's* sympathetic treatment of the participants in the revolt. Evocatively conveyed in the etching, the *Weaver's March* silently past the viewer to meet a grim fate. Some carry picks and shovels to be used as weapons, yet the strained and weary faces, slumping shoulders and vacant stares convey the hopelessness of their cause.

Brustbild einer Arbeiterfrau mit blauem Tuch/Bust of a Working-Class woman in a blue Shawl 1903*Lithograph, 1985.0004.0001| A107 B115*

Concentrating on the more affordable, and therefore democratic, media of drawing and printmaking, *Kollwitz* worked independently from other Expressionists. She is, however, considered a founding member of movement because she used an expressive style. Her first-hand experience with the poor and working class inhabitants of the slums of Berlin was an important source for much of her work in this early period. Relocating to Berlin following marriage to a doctor in 1891, the couple lived and

worked among the city's poorest citizens for several decades.

Kollwitz often explored Socialist themes in her work, an interest that is conveyed by the title of this lithograph rather than any specific content. While often utilizing violent and emotive imagery, in this print the mood is subdued and somber. Lit from the right, the woman's bowed head emerges from shadow, a hint of despair in her eyes. The face is modeled by a series of thin lines with dark, fluid gestures used to indicate the hair and other features. In the form of a portrait bust, a representation that typically includes the head, neck and sometimes shoulders of the subject, the identity of the woman remains anonymous.

Selbstbildnis im Profil/Self-Portrait in Profile 1927

Transfer lithograph, 1967.085.0001 A107 B115

As a transfer lithograph, a technique in which the initial print is transferred to another page by pressing the two together before the ink is dry, this lithograph retains a strong sense of the texture of the crayon on the paper support. The sweeping gestures suggest a charcoal drawing, rather than a print, and the importance of drawing for the development of the artist's ideas is clear. The self portrait, rendered universal and heroic by the larger than life-size format, becomes an exploration of the fragility of human life. This work was created during the latter period in her career, a time when *Kollwitz* was preoccupied with universal questions of life, death and human suffering. This interest has been linked to the loss of her son in World War I and also to the upheaval and suffering she witnessed in Germany in the 1920s and 30s. In this print, specific references to gender have been eliminated and what remains is an anxious and care-worn face, lined by years, that gazes off into an uncertain future.

Grabrelief (Ruht im Frieden seiner Hände)/Grave Relief (Rest in the Peace of His Hands) c.1935

Terracotta

In this terracotta relief, a child's face emerges from the soft folds of a protective cloak, a tiny clenched fist holding the garment in place. Just below it, two large adult hands envelop the sleeping child in a powerful embrace. The contrast in scale between these hands reinforces the implied helplessness of the child and the need for protection from harm. While evoking a parental desire to protect a child, the title also suggests an epitaph and the comfort of religious faith.

Known principally for her graphic work, *Kollwitz* also worked in sculpture throughout her artistic career. Inspired to take on the challenge of a new medium following a period of study in Paris and Italy, the artist produced models in clay or plaster. Only a few of these were cast in bronze during her lifetime. Part of a larger work created for the family tomb, this relief is similar in size and shape to a woodcut block used as a print matrix for woodcut prints. This type of sculpture was an important form in the work of *Ernst Barlach* as well, a mentor and source of inspiration to *Kollwitz*. Reduced to essentials, the relief conveys a generalized sense of grief and loss that appears prescient to contemporary viewers.

<http://www.dhm.de/museen/kollwitz/english/home.htm> A private museum in Berlin devoted to *Käthe Kollwitz*.

Otto Dix (1891-1969)

Leonie 1923

Colour Lithograph, 1995.037.0001LB A107 B119

The subject of this lithograph wears an elaborate hat and garish makeup, her rouged cheeks and mouth emphasizing the gaunt face and bulging eyes. Leonie appears mannish and unattractive in this life-size portrait, despite her feminine accessories, and her face conveys a chilling suggestion of the skeleton that lies beneath the prominent lips and teeth. Set against a black background with a greenish tint, the scarlet face and feathers appear in a jarring opposition of complementary colors that hints at depravity.

The dark background and elaborate attire suggest that *Leonie* may be a 'lady of the evening', a subject of intense interest to the artist. Prostitution and other aspects of the demi-monde fascinated *Dix* and he observed this world first hand when he lived for a time next to a brothel in Dresden following World War I. During this period, *Dix* became more focused on social commentary in his depictions of contemporary life. He experimented with *Dada*, collage and caricature before turning to *Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity)*. In this lithograph, *Dix* has rendered a likeness based on observation yet has also exaggerated certain features, adding a sense of the grotesque.

Anna Grünebaum 1926

Oil glazes and tempera on gesso on wood panel, 1993.007.0001 A401D PR5B

This portrait of *Anna Grünebaum* was one of two portraits that *Otto Dix* completed as payment for legal services rendered by Anna's son, Dr. Hugo Simons. In the 1920s, *Dix* developed a significant reputation as a portraitist, however his sitters were not always pleased with the results because the artist made no attempt to make his subjects more attractive and also tended to exaggerate certain features. In this half length portrait, *Dix* has emphasized the face and eyes, producing a perceptive and sympathetic rendering. The vibrant likeness set against a neutral background establishes the strong character of the sitter, captured in a moment of quiet repose.

Dix revived his earlier interest in old master paintings in the 1920s, especially the German artists *Albrecht Dürer* (1471-1528), *Lucas Cranach* (1472-1553) and *Matthias Grünewald* (1480-1528). In addition to the style and subject matter explored by these earlier painters, *Dix* was also interested in replicating the high degree of finish found in their work. Typically working from sketches and more elaborate true to life cartoons, *Dix* developed a technique of layering transparent oil glazes over an opaque tempera-based underpainting to achieve the desired effect. The resulting painting radiates light from within. The elaborate frame is also noteworthy and was originally designed or selected by the artist to evoke a late medieval or Renaissance panel painting.

Otto Herbig (1889-1971)***Das Bad/The Bath 1921***

Lithograph, 1978.009.0001 A107 B106

In contrast to the jagged shapes and harsh lines created by the controlled cutting of a wood block, *Herbig* employed a more fluid drawn line of swirls and ovals for this lithograph. With a series of quick, rapid gestures on the lithographic stone, the artist has captured the essence of the two figures and their environment. Viewed from above, the bending shape of the woman has been crudely drawn with

a minimum of detail, her form echoed in the shape of the bathtub and in the figure of the child. This creates a sense of unity between the style and subject of the work and evokes the intimacy of the bond between mother and child.

Lovis Corinth (1858-1925)

Der Künstler und der Tod II/The Artist and The Death II 1916

Drypoint and soft ground etching

This etching is a self portrait of the artist, shown here peering out from behind a human skeleton that hangs suspended beside him. *Corinth* holds an empty notebook or sketch pad and has paused momentarily to gaze at the viewer. The head of the skeleton is turned slightly away and a ram's skull hangs on the wall above the artist's head, completing this portrait of the artist at work. The study of both human and animal skeletal structures and anatomy are an important part of an artist's preparation and a longstanding feature of artistic training and practice.

The presence of the skeleton and the reference to death in the title also connects the print to the tradition of *memento mori*, a reminder of the fleeting nature of human life and the inevitability of death. Works of art that explore this theme by including symbols of death such as the skeleton are known as *vanitas*. Beginning in 1896, *Corinth* celebrated his birthday by completing an annual self portrait. These paintings document the aging process and the passage of time in a process of honest and direct self scrutiny that was also continued in the artist's graphic works. The sense of the artist's own mortality is conveyed by the closeness of the skeleton which acts as a mirror image of the living man.

Mutter und Kind/Mother and Child 1911

Soft ground etching, 1968.044.0001 A101 B103

This etching depicts a tender moment between mother and child that is evocatively rendered by the technique of soft ground etching. Holding her firmly in place with an extended hand, the woman lightly touches the girl's head with her lips as the child looks out at the viewer. The clothing worn by the pair combined with the furniture suggests that the location for this intimate portrait is a bourgeois household.

While the pair are not named, the print may be a portrait of the artist's wife and daughter. *Corinth* began to explore the theme of motherhood following the birth of his first child in 1904 and completed several portraits of his family during this period. This particular etching was created during a year of intense production by the artist which ended in a severe health crisis. *Corinth* suffered a debilitating stroke in 1911 yet successfully returned to his artistic practice, although his personal style subsequently became more fluid and expressive.

Gerhart Hauptmann/Portrait of Gerhart Hauptmann 1917

Drypoint, 1965.003.0001 A107 B103

In this portrait of the German dramatist *Gerhart Hauptmann* (1862-1946), *Corinth* presents the author in a suit and tie, gazing out at the viewer while seated in an armchair. *Hauptmann* appears severe looking, his eyes and face the main focus of attention with the rest of the figure, particularly the hands, less clearly defined. *Corinth* included the author's name on either side of the figure in this small, book size print.

Corinth completed a commissioned oil portrait of *Hauptmann* in 1900 when the author's career was at

its height and his reputation as a modern dramatist and founder of German Naturalism had been well established. *Hauptmann's* most famous and influential play was *Die Weber*, a dramatization of the uprising of weavers from Silesia in 1844.

Käthe Kollwitz explored the historical events behind the drama in a series of prints completed in 1898. Attentive to historical accuracy and replete with realistic detail, the play is structurally innovative for its time, with no single hero or heroine in the large cast. *Hauptmann* was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1912.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938)

***Toilettmachende Mädchen/Girls at their Toilette* 1910**

Lithograph, 1977.014.0001 A107 B114

For this lithograph *Kirchner* has used solitary, sweeping lines to draw the figures on the lithographic stone with rapid gestures. The two women are faceless and angular, and set within a flattened and indeterminate space. The subject of the print is also ambiguous. In later years, particularly after his move to Berlin, *Kirchner* often focused a critical eye on the artificiality, rampant consumerism and anonymity of life in the city, in contrast to the idyllic existence he found in the countryside.

A founding member of the Dresden-based *Die Brücke*, *Kirchner* and the other members organized group exhibitions and published a newsletter explaining their artistic goals in the form of a manifesto. In addition to these practical benefits, establishing a group of artists with similar interests and goals offered mutual support and encouragement. The founders also set up a category for members who were not artists, and these supporters received an annual report and a portfolio of graphics. Strategies such as these helped to disseminate their work to a receptive audience. Beginning in 1911, members of the group also published their work in *Der Sturm*, the leading avant-garde periodical in Berlin.

<http://www.kirchnerverein.ch/> Site of *Kirchner* Museum in Davos, Switzerland.

Max Beckmann

***Selbstbildnis/Self-Portrait* 1922**

Woodcut, 1970.001.0001 A107 B102

Beckmann completed numerous self portraits and worked extensively in graphics, however this is one of the few woodcuts created by the artist. In this print, the head and shoulders appear in a slight three quarter profile, outlined by a thin, solid line rendered in black. Shorter, deep lines suggest the grooves of a mature face that is full of resolve and possesses a strong character. The eye sockets are dark, empty pools that draw the viewer's attention and the artist has also included details of dress at the neck. The shirt and tie help to express, with minimal means, the seriousness and professionalism of the subject.

The strong personality and individualism evident in this print were important concerns for the artist throughout his career. Exposed to the horror of the war through his experience as a medical orderly, in his work *Beckmann* emphasized the power of individuality as a positive force to resist evil. In his optimistic view of humankind, *Beckmann* was very different from fellow artists like George Grosz. Known for his Romantic depictions of biblical and literary scenes before the war, during the 1920s *Beckmann* was regarded as forerunner of *New Objectivity* (Neue Sachlichkeit) and a decade later he incorporated abstract elements in his paintings.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/beckmann/>

Hermann Max Pechstein (1881-1955)

***Eibedul* 1917**

Woodcut 1970.010.0001 A107 B109

This woodcut is a portrait of a man that *Pechstein* met during his visit to Palau in Micronesia. Lit from the left, the face is evocatively carved by a series of broad, flat planes and angular shapes. The strength of Eibedul's personality is conveyed in the strong gaze, jutting beard and full lips, but the figure is also endowed with an exotic appeal. *Pechstein* has portrayed *Eibedul* within a setting of tropical vegetation that suggests an equivalence between nature and so called primitive peoples. In the journal account of his voyage to the South Seas, *Pechstein* names *Eibedul* as a man who helped him move some items during his stay there in 1914. The journal also contains a full figure sketch of a man that resembles Eibedul, perhaps forming the basis for this portrait that was completed several years after the meeting. The artist's perception of the culture he encountered is also evident in the journal. Inspired by the example of *Paul Gauguin's* travels to Tahiti and written accounts of exotic voyages to the South Pacific as well as his own experience of Palau artifacts in the Dresden Ethnographic Museum, *Pechstein* traveled to the German colony in search of an unspoiled, primitive society. Although European culture was by this point well established in the area, in his journal *Pechstein* records an idealized view of an exotic paradise of communal living, mutual assistance and an absence of capitalist tendencies.*

* Jill Lloyd, *German Expressionism*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991); 205.

Erich Heckel (1883-1970)

***Zwei Männer am Tisch/Two Men at the Table* 1913**

Woodcut, 1985.003.0001 A107 B113

Two men face each other across a table while a nude Christ figure reclines in the background. The figure on the left leans forward menacingly toward his companion, who appears hesitant and withdrawn as he points a finger at the knife on the table. The room is dark and ominous, with flat planes of solid black used for the figures and objects in the room.

Heckel has taken a scene from *The Idiot*, a novel by *Fyodor Dostoevsky*, completed in 1868, as the basis for this woodcut print. The scene is a pivotal moment during which the villain of the novel, Parfion Rogozhin, confesses his jealousy toward his companion, the hero Prince Myshkin. The men later discuss a painting that hangs above a doorway in Rogozhin's apartment, a copy of *Hans Holbein's* Christ in the Tomb (1521). Replete with characters who demonstrate irrational, obsessive and self-destructive behavior, *Dostoevsky's* novels and his interest in human psychology and the subconscious were important models for *Heckel* and other members of *Die Brücke*.

http://www.artchive.com/artchive/H/holbein/christ_entombed.jpg.html

Max Klinger (1857-1920)

Ein Handschuh Opus VII/A Glove Opus VI 1880*Etching*

In this etching, a man on skates reaches down precariously to retrieve a glove and loses his hat in the process. The setting is an outdoor skating rink, and the romantic encounter suggests the ritual of courtship and pursuit. The other figures in the scene include a trio of skaters and a solitary woman and their presence casts doubt on the origin of the glove. Was it dropped intentionally, and by whom? The rich tonal values of the trees in the background set against the white surface of the ice and the details of clothing and architecture further embellish the scene.

This etching is the second in a series of ten prints that *Klinger* embarked on in 1878 and published as *Opus VI* in 1881. The prints were based on a series or cycle of drawings that the artist exhibited in Berlin in 1878 as *Fantasies on a lost glove: dedicated to the lady who lost it (Phantasien über einen verlorenen Handschuh: der Verliererin gewidmet)*. The artist called his graphic series cycles and used the term *opus* to suggest an association with music and German Romantic literature, artistic forms in which the main themes recur in cyclical patterns. The series follows a complex dream narrative in which the male figure, identified as the artist, becomes obsessed with the glove and its owner. In subsequent prints, the glove appears in highly imaginative scenarios, however the setting of this etching has been identified as a specific place, a skating rink that opened in Berlin in 1876.* Venues such as this one were important public spaces for leisure in which class and gender barriers were blurred.

* *Christiana Hertel: Irony, Dream and Kitsch: Max Klinger's Paraphrase of the Finding of a Glove and German Expressionism, (Art Bulletin 74 (1): Mar 1992); 92.*

See <http://art-bin.com/art/klingertexts/klinger1.html> for complete cycle of prints in the Glove series by Max Klinger.

Ernst Barlach (1870-1938)**Russische Bettlerin Mit Schale/Russian Beggar Woman With Bowl 1906***Porcelain*

The small scale and shiny glazed surface connects this porcelain sculpture in the round to the tradition of decorative ceramics. The strength and power of the figure, however, lend substance and weight to the work and suggest a strong artistic vision. This sculpture was one of a number of works *Barlach* completed following a trip to Russia in 1906.

Leaning slightly back, the woman exposes her substantial girth in a series of rounded volumes and curves that are echoed in the shape of the empty bowl in her hand. Although the artist has emphasized the woman's Slavic features, the work is not a portrait of a specific person but a more generalized view of a human in need. The artist has accomplished this through a slight stylization of the features. The barefoot woman elicits sympathy as the viewer is forced to recognize the universal importance of the basic material needs of food, shelter and warmth.

Wilhelm Lehmbruck (1881-1919)**Stürmender Mann/Storming Male Figure 1914-1915***Cast stone, hand painted*

This small-scale freestanding sculpture in the round bears the rough marks and indentations of the hand of the artist in the uneven surfaces of the cast stone. The stylized nude male figure, anchored to the earth on powerful, elongated legs, reaches upward toward the heavens and gestures with clenched fists in anguish and pain. Reaching back in an active and open pose, the arms flail in frustration above the figure's small head, a feature that appears out of proportion to the rest of the body. Hand painted a dark brown, the colour and size of the sculpture suggest the tradition of a bronze statuette. Completed during the first years of the war, this sculpture is thought to be a reaction against the horror of the war, experienced first hand by the artist who worked as a medic. Prior to the outbreak of war, *Lehmbruck* had achieved substantial success as a sculptor and was noted for his use of the human figure rather than abstract shapes to represent universal emotions and ideas. Many of his successful Expressionist sculptures focused on the female body, however the artist shifted his focus to the male figure during the war. In this sculpture, *Lehmbruck* masterfully exploits the symbolic value of the human figure to express, on an intimate and intensely personal scale, a sense of helplessness and rage in the midst of the conflict.

<http://lehmbruck.cynapsis.com/sammlung/index.php?part=en>

List of Terms

The *Workers Council for Art* or '*Art Soviet*' (*Arbeitsrat für Kunst*) was a group of architects, painters, sculptors and writers in the field of art, who were based in Berlin from 1918 to 1921. It developed as a response to the Workers and Soldiers Councils and was dedicated to the goal of bringing the current developments and tendencies in architecture and art to a broader population. The Arbeitsrat worked closely with the *Novembergruppe* and the *Deutscher Werkbund*.

Avant-Garde literally means 'advanced guard', a term used to describe innovation within a field, especially the arts.

Cartoon is a full scale preparatory drawing for a painting.

Cubism is an early 20th century art movement that rejected depictions based on observation of nature in favor of compositions comprised of shapes and forms.

Collage is a technique in which various materials are combined on a flat surface, often using glue.

Dada is an early 20th century art movement informed by a nihilist philosophy. Arising out of the chaos and disillusionment of World War I, *Dada* artists rejected all previous art and the civilization which produced it, preferring an art of the absurd.

Die Brücke (The Bridge) was a German Expressionist group formed in Dresden 1905. The name is thought to refer to the idea that art work would form a bridge between art and modern life, between the past, present and future creativity. The concept has been linked to German writer *Friedrich Nietzsche*, an important literary mentor for the group. Members of the group sought to produce art that was relevant to modern life; honest, direct, emotionally charged and spiritually engaged.

Dry point is an intaglio printmaking technique in which the metal shavings, called burr, that result from incising or carving the design into the plate are left in place when ink is applied. When printed, this process results in soft, velvety shading but yields fewer prints as the burr is fragile and easily worn down.

Engraving is an intaglio process in which the design is incised or scratched into a hard surface. This surface or print matrix is often a metal such as copper. The engraver uses a tool called a burin. Engraving can also refer to the print made from such a plate.

Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) was a term used by the Nazis as early as the 1920s to attack art which did not conform to the political agenda of the Nationalist Socialist Worker's Party. The term was applied to foreign as well as domestic production of avant-garde works of art because, according to the Nazis, they showed evidence of moral decay. Works in museum collections were removed, confiscated and sold off, and in 1937 an exhibition of 650 objects taken from museums around the country were exhibited in Munich in an exhibition entitled *Entartete Kunst*.

<http://fcit.usf.edu/HOLOCAUST/arts/artDegen.htm>

Etching is a type of engraving in which the metal plate (the print matrix) is covered in a layer of wax, resin or varnish. The design is scratched or cut into the resin coating with an etching needle to expose the plate underneath. The plate is then immersed into an acid solution which eats away at the exposed parts of the plate. Ink is applied and then the plate is printed.

Gesso is plaster mixed with a binding material and is used to prepare a surface for painting.

Intaglio is a type or category of printmaking, along with relief and planographic. In *intaglio*, the design is incised or scratched into the surface, either manually (dry point, engraving) or chemically (etching). When applied, ink is taken up in the incised line.

Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) refers to the German variant of Art Nouveau, a late 19th century European style characterized by curvilinear and organic forms in a rejection against industrialization and machine production.

Lithography is a planographic method of printing. The print matrix is a flat surface, originally stone but now more commonly a metal plate on which a drawing is made with a greasy crayon or tusche. Water is then applied to the surface, followed by ink. Because water and oil do not mix, water is repelled from the greasy surface. When the ink is applied it does not adhere to the wet surface but only the parts where the crayon has been drawn. The plate is then covered with a sheet of paper and pressure is applied to produce an image. For colour lithography, separate drawings are made on the plate for each colour ink.

Medium refers to the material in which an artist works.

Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) is a style of art that takes its name from an attitude of objectivity prevalent in post World War I Germany. Artists turned away from subjective interpretations of nature to focus on depictions of objects based on observation. Cool detachment combined with satirical social

realism and an unsparing view of the cruelty and senselessness of the war were characteristic of the movement.

Neo-Expressionism is an art movement that emerged in the 1970s. *Neo-Expressionist* artists shared a renewed interest in Expressionism.

The November Group (Novembergruppe) was a group of German expressionist artists and architects that was formed in December 1918 and named after the November revolution of 1918. The Novembergruppe was aiming to unite different artistic aspects like painting, sculpture, architecture and city planning. The goal of the group was to have a greater say in such issues as the organisation of art schools and art academies.

Pittura Metafisica (Metaphysical Painting) is an early 20th century style of art, closely related to *Surrealism*, in which objects and places transcend their physical appearance, suggesting an underlying reality that is potentially sinister.

Photomontage is a composition created by combining photographs or parts of photographs.

Planographic is a type or category of printmaking, along with relief and intaglio. The design is neither incised nor gouged, but sits on the surface of the print matrix.

Porcelain is a type of earthenware made from kaolin, a fine, soft white clay that is translucent or semi-translucent. It is produced by the decomposition of feldspar or other clays.

Print Matrix is the surface or support from which a print is pulled.

Realism is an art movement that originated in the mid 19th century and is characterized by representations of everyday life depicted in a realistic, accurate, style based on observation.

Relief is a type or category of printmaking, along with intaglio and planographic. In *relief*, the design is printed from a raised surface. It can also refer to a mode of sculpture in which figures or shapes project outward or inward from a back ground.

Romanticism is a 19th century art movement in which feeling and imagination were given precedence over reason and thought.

Sezession (Secession) is the name used by groups of artists, beginning in Vienna in 1897, who broke away from the officially sanctioned art of the academies.

Soft ground etching is a variation of the etching process in which the artist draws the design on a piece of paper that has been placed over the soft wax on the prepared plate.

Symbolism is a late 19th c. art movement that sought to represent emotional and psychological states through the use of symbols rather than imitation of nature.

Tempera is a painting medium made of pigment, egg yolk and glue.

Underpainting is a preliminary painting that is subsequently covered by the final painting.

Woodcut is a relief method of printmaking in which the design is carved into a block of wood (the print matrix) by removing the excess wood with a gouge. Ink is applied to the surface and then printed, either by hand or in a press.

Weimar Republic is the name historians have given to the republic established to govern Germany following the abolition of the German Monarchy in 1919. The name is taken from the city of Weimar where the national assembly met to establish a new constitution based on the ideas of a liberal democracy. The Weimar Republic was characterized by intense civil unrest but lasted until Hitler came to power in 1933.

The *German Work Federation (Deutscher Werkbund)* is a German association of architects, designers and industrialists, which was founded in 1907 in Munich at the instigation of Hermann Muthesius. The Werkbund was dedicated to the goal of bringing the quality of technical culture into the establishment of mass production. It existed through 1934, then re-established after WW II in 1950.

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