

BACHELOR PROGRAM OF CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

COVA 2220: 16TH -19TH CENTURY VISUAL ARTS

EXPRESSIONISM

- With the industrialization of cities, and, as railways began to cross the continent, greater movement within and across countries. Electricity was being installed and other new inventions such as the automobile, gramophone, radio transmission, moving pictures and powered flight were introduced. It was also a period of widespread political change, increased access to education, a breakdown of traditional social classes and the beginnings of women seeking greater independence, including the right to vote.
- At the start of the twentieth century, an artistic tendency swept through Europe, spurred on by resistance to bourgeois culture and a fervent search for rejuvenated creativity.
- A period within art that abandoned realistic and accurate representations of scenes and subjects in an attempt to capture the subjective perspective of the artists (Words that characterize Expressionist artists and Expressionist art are self, psyche, body, sexuality, nature and spirit)
- Seen as a modernist movement, Expressionism Art developed within Germany prior to World War One before spreading out across the world.
- Expressionist artists responded to: industrialization, urbanizations & world war 1
- They found inspiration in so-called “primitive” sources that included African art, as well as European medieval and folk art and others untrained in Western artistic traditions.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Strong brushstrokes: Expressionist artists embraced bolder strokes and geometric shapes.
- Stark forms: many Expressionist painters had backgrounds in printmaking and woodcuts. They applied the craft of these media to their painting, creating stark figures that at times toed the line of two-dimensionality.
- Subjectivity: Impressionism sought to reduce concrete objects to more elemental colors and shapes.
- Expressionism went further by layering on the artist's subjective perspective.
- Expressionist art focuses less on scenes as they exist in reality and more on how they exist in the mind of the artist.

EXPRESSIONISM

- **Key dates:** 1905-1920

Key regions: Germany, Austria, France

Key words: self, psyche, body, sexuality, nature, spirit, emotions, mysticism, distortion of reality, exaggeration, heightened use of color

FRENCH EXPRESSIONISM

- Vincent van Gogh <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmj3AEjilPg>

Painted the world around them not simply as it appeared to them, but from a deeply subjective, human experience.

They used expressive colours and styles of brushwork to depict emotions and experiences, moving away from realistic depictions of their subjects to how they felt and perceived them.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Vincent Van Gogh is one of the most well-known post-impressionist artists, whose works demonstrated a mastery of the use of colour. The quality of Van Gogh's paintings depicting street scenes, nature and portraits feature unequalled brushwork and impasto techniques, as seen in 'Starry Night' (1889).

VINCENT VAN GOGH



The Starry Night,
1889

VINCENT VAN GOGH



**Starry Night Over the Rhone,
1888**

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

German Expressionism art took inspiration from mysticism, the Middle Ages, primitive times and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose ideas were immensely popular a

Brücke was formed in Dresden in 1905 as a bohemian collective of expressionist artists opposing the bourgeois social order of Germany. The four founding members were Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl,, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff.

The artists attempted to escape the confines of modern middle-class life by exploring a heightened use of colour, a direct, simplified approach to form and free sexuality in their work.

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

German Expression can be identified by the following features:

- Focus on inner response to the world;
- Expression of the human condition;
- Extreme angles;
- Flattened forms;
- Garish or unnatural colours;
- Distorted views;
- Great use of print media, particularly woodcuts;
- Exposure of pain, suffering and immorality of World War I.

ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER

Was a German [expressionist painter](#) and [printmaker](#) and one of the founders of the artists group [Die Brücke](#) or "The Bridge" which that flourished in Dresden and Berlin before World War I.

Motivated by the same anxieties that gripped the movement as a whole - fears about humanity's place in the modern world, its lost feelings of spirituality and authenticity.

He revived the old art of woodblock printing, and saw himself in the German tradition, yet he rejected academic styles and was inspired by the modern city

Marzella, 1909-10



ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER

This woodcut print features a group of voluptuous nude female dancers on stage.

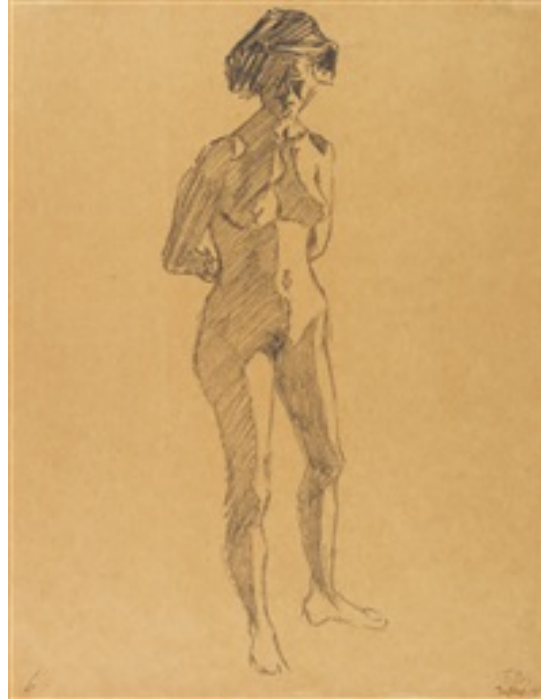
The large areas of light and dark create an ambiguous sense of spatial depth on a two dimensional surface. Kirchner renders a balance between the two extremes (light and dark, bold and delicate) to create a harmonious composition, allowing the eye to sweep across the picture plane.

Nude Dancers, 1909



FRITZ BLEYL

He is best known for his works on paper, in which he utilized expressive lines to depict nudes and landscapes.



[Stehender
Viertelstundenakt, 1905](#)



[Die Brücke, 1926](#)

ERICH HECKEL

As one of the four founding members of the influential [Die Brücke](#) group, Heckel was instrumental in putting [Expressionism](#) on the map of twentieth century modernism. He made his own reputation on a series of woodcuts and paintings of nudes, city scenes, landscapes and still lifes but, like so many of his contemporaries, he fell foul to the Nazi's detestation of all forms of modernism. As he matured, Heckel's jagged contours and luminous colors softened, as he turned more-and-more to landscapes and still lifes. But it is his earlier pieces that have exerted lasting influence and have become symbolic of the rise of German modernism.

ERICH HECKEL



Portrait of a Man, 1913

Non-naturalistic, clashing, colours



House in Dangast, 1908

KARL SCHMIDT-ROSSLUFF

Was one of the four founding members of the artistic group [Die Brücke](#)

Holding one hand to her heart and the other to her head - a gesture that traditionally signifies melancholy or despair - she seems to express the sadness of the wartime.

Woman with a Bag, 1915



AUSTRIAN EXPRESSIONISM

Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka are the two main figures of Austrian Expressionism. They were especially influenced by their predecessor Gustav Klimt.

Schiele and Kokoschka eschewed this moral hypocrisy and portrayed topics such as death, violence, longing, and sex.

EGON SCHIELE

Schiele for his raw, almost brutally honest portrayals of aloof yet desperate sexuality.

Egon Schiele, Two Girls (lovers).



OSKAR KOKOSCHKA

His disorienting compositions used bold brushstrokes and strong colors to confront the viewer. His freedom from stylistic constraint as well as his belief in the power of art to raise awareness of contemporary problems set a norm for the expressionist movement.

This illustrated book with eight photolithographs was originally commissioned as a fairy tale for his children.

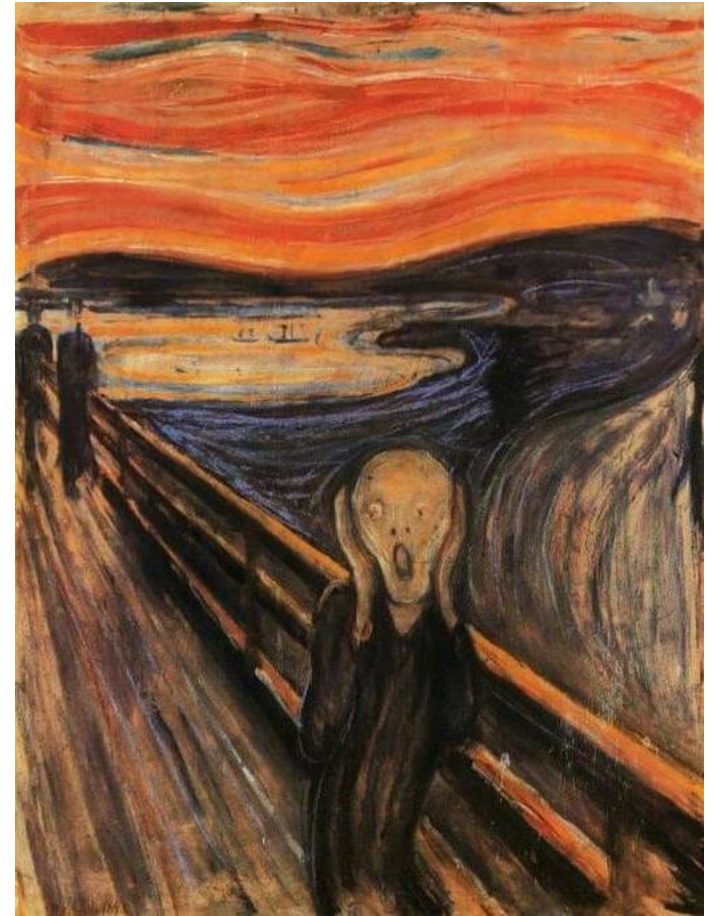


Selection from The Dreaming Boys, 1907-08

EDVARD MUNCH

Edvard Munch was making waves in Norway and all over Europe with his wild, intense expressions of the environment and his self and psyche

Edvard Munch, The Scream



EDVARD MUNCH

Edvard Munch, The Kiss.



WASSILY KANDINSKY

The painting illustrates a rider cloaked in blue, speeding through a greenish meadow. The painting's intentional abstractness had led many art theorists to project their own representations onto the figure, some seeing a child in the arms of the blue rider. Allowing viewers to participate in the representations of the art was a technique that Kandinsky would use to great fruition in his many later works, which became more and more abstract as his career wore on.

WASSILY KANDINSKY

The Blue Rider, 1903



FRANZ MARC

The symbol of the horse as a vehicle of breakthrough, in the emphasis on the spirituality of blue, and in the idea of spirituality battling materialism.

THE LARGE BLUE HORSES



VIDEO LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eb1h-VQbvK4>