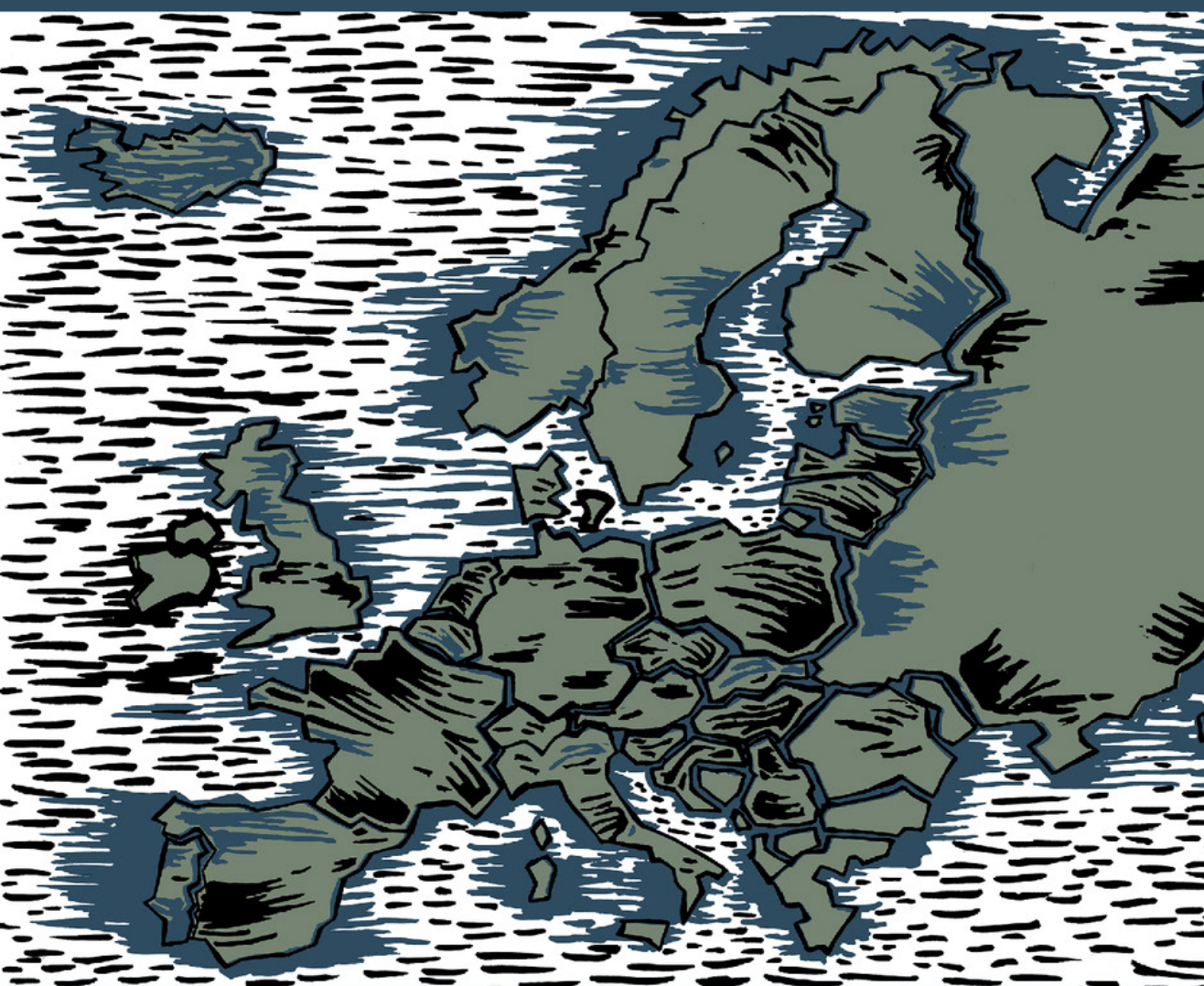
The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context



Edited by Isabel Wünsche

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO EXPRESSIONISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Routledge Companion to Expressionism in a Transnational Context is a challenging exploration of the transnational formation, dissemination, and transformation of expressionism outside of the German-speaking world, in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics and Scandinavia, Western and Southern Europe, North and Latin America, and South Africa, in the first half of the twentieth century.

Comprising a series of essays by an international group of scholars in the fields of art history and literary and cultural studies, the volume addresses the intellectual discussions and artistic developments arising in the context of the expressionist movement in the various art centers and cultural regions. The authors also examine the implications of expressionism in artistic practice and its influence on modern and contemporary cultural production.

Essential for an in-depth understanding and discussion of expressionism, this volume opens up new perspectives on developments in the visual arts of this period and challenges the traditional narratives that have predominantly focused on artistic styles and national movements.

Isabel Wünsche is a professor of art and art history at Jacobs University Bremen. She specializes in European modernism, the avant-garde movements, and abstract art. Her book publications include *Galka E. Scheyer & The Blue Four: Correspondence, 1924–1945* (Benteli, 2006), *Biocentrism and Modernism* (with Oliver A. I. Botar, Ashgate, 2011), *Meanings of Abstract Art: Between Nature and Theory* (with Paul Crowther, Routledge, 2012), *The Organic School of the Russian Avant-Garde* (Ashgate, 2015), *Marianne Werefkin and the Women Artists in Her Circle* (with Tanja Malycheva, Brill/Rodopi, 2016), and *Practices of Abstract Art: Between Anarchism and Appropriation* (with Wiebke Gronemeyer, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume is the result of intense studies, engaged discussions, and lively scholarly exchanges between colleagues in the course of a number of research projects and various workshops and conferences from 2013 to 2017. It all began with the workshop "Avantgarde-Netzwerke und Kulturaustausch zwischen Deutschland und seinen östlichen Nachbarn, 1910–1930" (Avant-Garde Networks and Cultural Exchange between Germany and its Eastern Neighbors, 1910–1930), at Jacobs University Bremen, in October 2013. The publication itself was conceived at the international workshop "Peripheral Expressionisms: Artistic Networks and Cultural Exchange between Germany and its Eastern Neighbors in the Context of the European Avant-Garde," at Jacobs University Bremen, in December 2015. Neither of these events nor this publication would have been possible without the generous funding of the Federal Office for Media and Culture (BKM) of Germany. I am grateful for the continuous support and particularly proud to be able to make these research findings accessible to a much wider audience, both academic and otherwise, in an English-language publication.

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in November 2014; the symposium "Collaborative Artist Networks in the Twentieth Century and Beyond" at Jacobs University Bremen, in July 2015; and the 3rd Comparative Avant-Garde & Modernisms Workshop "Avant-Garde Migrations," at the Institute of Art History, Nova University of Lisbon, in November 2015.

A two-month fellowship at the New Europe College, Institute of Advanced Study (NEC) in Bucharest, in spring 2016, generously funded through the "Europe next to Europe" (EntE) program, provided me with the opportunity to work out the conception of this book and discuss the scope of the project with colleagues from a variety of fields in the humanities and diverse national and cultural backgrounds. The vital intellectual environment of the NEC greatly enhanced this project. I am grateful to Anca Oroveanu and the research and administrative staff of the NEC for their generous support of this research and publication project. Special thanks go to Jacobs University for its institutional support of my long-term research; I wish to particularly thank Bianca Bergman, Claudia Janetzke, and Anke Schlenger for their administrative support of my work.

Publication of this comprehensive volume would not have been possible without the generous support of numerous individuals and institutions. Research was conducted at various museums, archives, and libraries all over Europe and beyond; I am grateful to the curators and staff of these institutions for their expertise and for making accessible their collections. For assistance with photographic material, image files, and copyright permissions, I wish to thank the staff of The National Art Galleries in Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Sofia, Copenhagen, Helsinki, and Reykjavik; the National Art Museums in Bucharest, Lisbon, Riga, Tallin, and Vilnius; the Museums of Modern Art in Ljubljana and Zagreb and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade; the East Slovak Gallery, Bratislava; the M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum, Kaunas; the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum; the Saviomuseet, Kirkenes; the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent; the Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; and the State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow; to mention just a few. I am grateful to the artists and their heirs, art historians, art dealers, and private collectors who have generously supported this publication. Every attempt has been made to obtain permission to reproduce copyrighted material. If proper acknowledgment has not been made, copyright holders are invited to inform the editor of the oversight.

I am particularly grateful to Kevin Pfeiffer, Lynn Matthews Anderson, and Michael Wetzel for their patient attention to editing and proofreading. A special thank-you goes to Wiebke Gronemeyer for her careful reading and copy-editing of the manuscript. Last but not least, I wish to thank Isabella Vitti for her interest in the subject matter and shepherding of its publication by Routledge, as well as for her helpful advice, responsive feedback, and generous support.

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Berlin, December 2017

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Werke aus der Berliner Sammlung von Prof. St. Karol Kubicki (Poznań, 2015) and *Transnationality, Internationalism and Nationhood: European Avant-Garde in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Leuven, 2013).

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Isabel Wünsche is a professor of art and art history at Jacobs University Bremen. She specializes in European modernism, the avant-garde movements, and abstract art. Her book publications include *Galka E. Scheyer & The Blue Four: Correspondence, 1924–1945* (Benteli, 2006), *Biocentrism and Modernism* (with Oliver A. I. Botar, Ashgate, 2011), *Meanings of Abstract Art: Between Nature and Theory* (with Paul Crowther, Routledge, 2012), *The Organic School of the Russian Avant-Garde* (Ashgate, 2015), *Marianne Werefkin and the Women Artists in Her Circle* (with Tanja Malycheva, Brill/Rodopi, 2016), and *Practices of Abstract Art: Between Anarchism and Appropriation* (with Wiebke Gronemeyer, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

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NOTES TO THE READER

Spelling, punctuation, and style in this volume are based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*, sixteenth edition, and the online dictionary Merriam-Webster Unabridged. Titles of artworks, exhibitions, books, catalogues, journals, and newspapers are italicized; titles of articles, manuscripts, and conferences appear in quotation marks; names of societies and institutions are presented in roman type and capitalized according to the usage of the country concerned. Generally speaking, for the transliteration of names of people and places, titles of artworks, publications, exhibitions, and other terms, we use the Library of Congress system; however, for people's names, we tend to use the form most commonly known to English speakers or the form commonly used by authors of a particular nationality. In cases where the name of an artist, intellectual, or writer has its own long-established spelling, it has been kept: for example, Marc Chagall, not Mark Shagal, and Wassily Kandinsky, not Vasily Kandinsky. Names are provided in full (first name, surname) at first mention; subsequent references to an individual within the same essay generally carry only the surname. For the leading protagonists, dates of birth and death are provided. Names of organizations, institutions, and the like are spelled out in full on first appearance; subsequent use is with the acronym.

In this volume, frequent reference is made to the German artists' groups Die Brücke (The Bridge; Dresden and Berlin, 1905–1913) and Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider; Munich, 1911–1914) as well as Herwarth Walden's Berlin-based magazine and art gallery *Der Sturm* (The Storm; 1912–1932). We use the German names throughout the essays, but include a gloss for the artists' groups on first mention in each essay. Similarly, foreign titles of artworks, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers and other artists' groups are glossed on first appearance; this applies to the main text as well as to the notes. Unless otherwise indicated, translations included are by the respective author.

EXPRESSIONIST NETWORKS, CULTURAL DEBATES, AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

A Conceptual Introduction

Isabel Wünsche

The artistic activities and cultural exchanges of the European avant-garde movements have been well researched, but the cultural energies set free by expressionist forces throughout Europe and beyond are less known and have never been comparatively discussed. This book looks at expressionism as a form of artistic practice and cultural encounter contextually situated within but geographically unbounded by European art and culture of the twentieth century; it investigates the forms of community and collective identity-making that have stimulated artistic practice and cultural communication in Europe and beyond. These "forms of community"—artists' networks and cultural exchanges—formed a basis for cultural interaction, artistic cooperation and competition, and intellectual exchange; their development was shaped by socio-economic factors, technological advances, and new media developments.

The book specifically focuses on the transnational formation, dissemination, and transformation of expressionism outside of the German-speaking world, in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics, Scandinavia, Western and Southern Europe, but also in North and Latin America, and South Africa, in the first half of the twentieth century. Given the changing political landscape of Europe during this period, we focus largely on the various geographical rather than political regions and centers of activity; this is both a methodological choice and a matter of content. The volume addresses an extensive number of regions, but is not all-inclusive. Written by scholars from the various regions schooled in the fields of art history and literary and cultural studies, the individual essays address the treatment of expressionism in their particular art centers and cultural regions and examine the implications for its application in artistic practice and influence on modern and contemporary cultural production. Thus, the volume provides the basis for a more transnational, intercultural approach to modernist art practices in twentieth-century Europe and beyond than has previously been available; it opens up new perspectives to discourses on developments in the visual arts of this period and challenges the traditional narratives that have predominantly focused on artistic styles and national movements.

The participating authors were in particular asked to address two points:

- Expressionism's significance in the various artistic and cultural contexts outside the German-speaking world
- Regional use of the term.

Examining expressionism as an artistic practice in the various centers and regions, three fundamental problems were then necessarily addressed:

a) a definition of its stylistic boundaries
b) determination of its time frame (periodization)
c) its differentiation from other concurrent modernist tendencies.

Rather than summarizing the individual contributions of each and every author here, I wish to address some of the major themes that shaped the reception and transformation of expressionism in Europe and beyond (Figure 0.1).

"French" Expressionism

Expressionist trends in the visual arts emerged as a reaction to the success and spread of impressionism across Europe and beyond. By the mid-1890s, impressionism had become the new establishment, and impressionist painting techniques, primarily concerned with the use of color and the impromptu play of light, had been taken up by British, German, Russian, Scandinavian, Spanish, and American artists.[1] The distinctive impressionist style of painting became an international signifier of modernity. The following generation, the so-called postimpressionists—Georges Seurat, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne—rejected the impressionists' focus on optical reality and chose to concentrate instead on the subjective vision of the artist. This attention to an evocation of feeling rather than a description of nature laid the groundwork for modern art—specifically expressionism. Thus, the term "expressionism" originally was applied to what was an anti-impressionist movement that put a premium on the expression of emotion by means of highly personal distortions of color, form, and space.[2]

According to Donald E. Gordon, the story of expressionism began at the École des Beaux Arts sometime between 1891 and 1898, in the studio of Gustave Moreau, who told his students that "the essential, if [not] the highest, goal of art is expression."[3] His most successful student, Henri Matisse, further refined his teacher's objective. In his 1908 *Notes d'un peintre* (Notes of a Painter), he summarized his objectives as follows:

> What I am after, above all, is expression . . . [which], for me, does not reside in passions glowing in a human face or manifested by violent movement. The entire arrangement of my picture is expressive: the place occupied by my figures, the empty space around them, the proportions, everything has its share. Composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter's command to express his feelings.[4]

Matisse's work is characterized by areas of brilliant and often unnatural color and flat, decorative patterns; one of the best-known examples today is his 1908 painting, *Red Room* (Harmony in Red; Plate 1). The large-scale canvas is scattered with arabesques and floral patterns; it has no conventional focal point and a strangely flattened perspective. The painting, which Matisse referred to as a "decorative panel," is a celebration of pattern and decoration; the rhythms of the foliage pattern on the tablecloth and wallpaper are echoed in the background through the window, uniting the warm red interior with the cooler exterior.

Matisse's radical approach to painting attracted much attention; between 1908 and 1911, his studio, Académie Matisse, drew young artists from all over Europe, including the Germans Marg and Oskar Moll, Mathilde Vollmoeller, and Gretchen Wohlwill; the Swedish artists

Figure 0.1 Map of Europe. Courtesy of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook.

Isaac Grünewald, Sigrid Hjerten, and Carl Palme; the Norwegians Per Krohg, Jean Heiberg, and Henrik Sørenson; Jon Stefanson, from Iceland; the Hungarians József Brummer, Géza Bornemisza, and Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba; the Russians Olga Meerson and Marie Vassilieff; and American artists Max Weber, Alfred Maurer, and Morgan Russell.[5]

The early use of the term "expressionism" in the art-historical discourse, specifically in England and Scandinavia, did not refer to German art but rather French postimpressionism and fauvism. The Czech art historian Antonín Matějček, the English critic Alan Clutton Brock, and the Swedish theoretician Carl David Moselius all used the term "expressionism" around 1910 to refer to postimpressionist and fauvist painting rather than German art.[6] The British art critic Roger Fry initially favored the term "expressionists" rather than "postimpressionists" for his 1910 exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* at the Grafton Galleries in London because, as he maintained, "expressive design seemed the quality most evident" in the modern French paintings he selected.[7]

In Germany, the term was first used in connection with the opening of the twenty-second exhibition of the Berliner Secession (Berlin Secession) in April 1911. In the preface to the catalogue, young painters from Paris, among them Georges Braque, Andre Derain, Kees van Dongen, Pablo Picasso, and Maurice de Vlaminck, are referred to as "Expressionisten" (expressionists).[8] Paul Ferdinand Schmidt subsequently published an article, "Die Expressionisten" (The

Expressionists), in the January 1912 issue of Herwarth Walden's magazine *Der Sturm*, in which he discussed the work of the French postimpressionists (Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh), the Nabis (Bonnard, Denis, Vuillard), Edvard Munch and Ferdinand Hodler, and young German artists such as Max Pechstein and Emil Nolde. In the article, he speaks of "expressive art" (*Ausdruckskunst*) and of "finding a great synthesis,"[9] thus foreshadowing a change in concept and meaning.

Thus, before the First World War, the expressionist discourse meandered among a variety of theories and conflicting concepts; the multivalent character of the term accommodated various artistic ideas and aesthetic questions, but also politics and national identities. This broad, general concept of expressionism is also evident in the 1912 Sonderbund exhibition, in Cologne, which presented to the public the latest trends in painting from France, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, Holland, Norway, and also the Russian artists based in Munich. In the introduction to the catalogue, Richard Reiche, the organizer, wrote that "atmospheric naturalism and impressionism" had been superseded by a new movement—"expressionism [which] strives for a simplification and intensification of form of expression, a new rhythm and color, a decorative and monumental configuration."[10] In this example, then, "expressionism" becomes a synonym for "modern" European art, embracing all postimpressionist tendencies.

In much the same manner, the Berlin art dealer Herwarth Walden used the expressionist label to showcase a broad range of modern art at the first exhibition of his newly founded gallery, Der Sturm, in March 1912: *Der Blaue Reiter/Franz Flaum/Oskar Kokoschka/Expressionisten*. Walden counted among his "expressionists" French artists such as Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay, Andre Derain, Othon Friesz, and Maurice de Vlaminck, whose works had been shown in the Berlin Secession the previous year. His fourth exhibition, *Deutsche Expressionisten: Zurückgestellte Bilder des Sonderbundes Köln* (German Expressionists: Deferred Pictures from the Sonderbund Cologne), was devoted to the artists of Der Blaue Reiter, but the fifth Sturm exhibition, *Französische Expressionisten* (French Expressionists), once again featured fauvist painters such as Derain, de Vlaminck, and Friesz.[11] Walden's famous 1913 *Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon* (First German Autumn Salon) presented works of the international avant-garde.[12] In 1915, he exhibited *Schwedische Expressionisten* (Swedish Expressionists) and, in 1918, *Russische Expressionisten* (Russian Expressionists).[13] Thus, before the First World War, expressionism had become something of a catch-all term for any kind of "radical" international modernism.

The "Germanization" of Expressionism

Herwarth Walden, one of the most successful promoters of the expressionist movement, stressed the spiritual background and metaphysical content of this new art movement. To him, expressionism was not just a new artistic style but the manifestation of a new *Weltanschauung* or philosophy of life, one that emphasized "perception of the senses" over concepts.[14] Inspired by Wassily Kandinsky's ideas of the spiritual roots of abstract art[15] and Wilhelm Worringer's psychological theory of visual style,[16] Walden viewed the expressionist art work as one of "inner necessity" and an expression of the artist's inner self.[17] In his effort to distance the new art from the superficiality of the impressionists, he noted that the expressionists "have renounced the [mere] imitation of external impressions" and rediscovered "the essence of art."[18]

The ethnic conception of expressionism as a specifically German contribution to European modernism evolved around 1914; the art critic Paul Fechter, in his book *Der Expressionismus* (Expressionism; Figure 0.2), characterized it as "a protest against impressionist naturalism" and "a calling to mind of the old sense and spiritual meaning of creativity in general."[19] Distinguishing

between "extensive expressionism" as exemplified by the figurative art of Max Pechstein (Plate 2) and "intensive expressionism" as exemplified by the cosmological, abstract paintings of Wassily Kandinsky (Plate 7), Fechter emphasized that both directions rejected the rationalist, materialist tradition of the Renaissance in favor of the communal, metaphysical sensibility of the Gothic.[20] For him, the significance of expressionism lay in the insight that "the essential meaning of art always consists in expressing in a concentrated, direct way—the only possible way—the emotion arising from human existence on earth."[21] Relating this "metaphysical urge" to the nature of the German people[22]—a notion inspired by Wilhelm Worringer's 1910 book *Die Formproblem der Gotik* (Form Problems of the Gothic)—Fechter sought to establish expressionism as a distinctly German national artistic phenomenon, positioning it in direct opposition to French impressionism and French art in general.[23] Expressionism became synonymous with the German aesthetic concept of *Ausdruckskunst*—the idea that expression could denote feeling or emotion. Thus, expressionism became a national and specifically German artistic phenomenon during the First World War and was eventually presented as the German contribution to modern art in general and the avant-garde in particular (Figure 0.3).

In the course of this "Germanization" of expressionism, the Norwegian painter Edward Munch (1863–1944), renowned for his evocative works depicting life and death, love and terror, and intense feelings of isolation, melancholy, and anxiety, emerged as an important source of inspiration (Figure 0.4).[24] With his 1892 exhibition in Berlin, Munch challenged existing aesthetic standards and was subsequently heralded as a prophet and spiritual guide.[25] Munch's focus

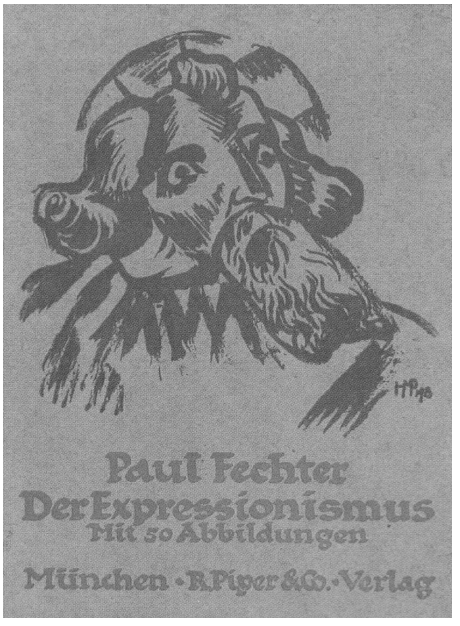

Figure 0.2 Cover of Paul Fechter, *Der Expressionismus* [Expressionism] (Munich: Piper, 1914) with cover illustration by Max Pechstein. © 2017 Pechstein Hamburg/Tökendorf

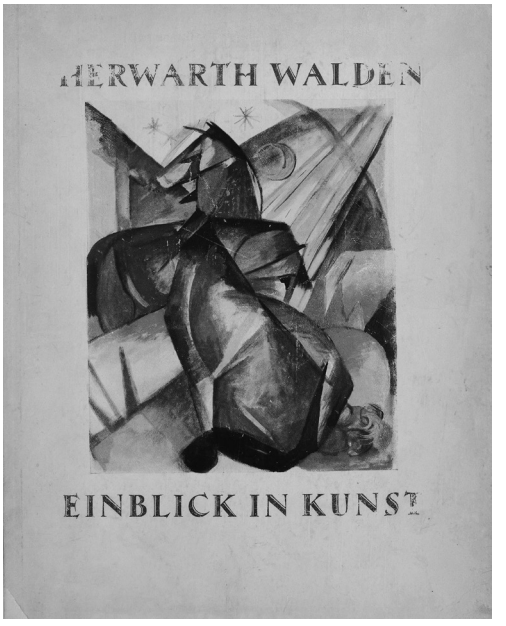

Figure 0.3 Cover of Herwarth Walden, *Einblick in Kunst* [Insight into Art], 3rd–5th ed. (Berlin: Verlag Der Sturm, 1924) with cover illustration by Franz Marc

on emotions aroused by external stimuli or internal experiences, his tendency to simplify and exaggerate, and his distortion of form and emphasis on the expressive power of color perfectly embodied the concept of the "expressive art." In 1907, the Brücke artists invited him to participate in their exhibition in Dresden; upon his arrival in Germany in 1908, they adopted him as the "*Übervater ihrer Rebellion*" (godfather of their rebellion).[26] Writing to Munch in 1913, Blaue Reiter artist August Macke enthusiastically reported: "We 'Young Ones' have inscribed your name on our shield."[27] Munch's status as a precursor of the avant-garde was confirmed in 1912 with a comprehensive presentation of thirty-two works in a special gallery at the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne, where he was featured on equal terms with Cézanne, Gauguin, and van Gogh. At a time when nationalist sentiments and *völkische* ideas were beginning to shape German art and art theory, Munch's "Nordic" expressionism provided a counter-model to Matisse and the fauves and was used to draw a clear distinction between the nature of Romanic culture and Germanic culture.[28]

Early interest in Munch also shaped artistic developments in other European countries: The encounter with Munch's work, around 1905, influenced the painterly style of the members of the Czech Osma group—Emil Filla, Bohumil Kubišta, and Antonín Procházka; in Britain before the First World War, critics and art historians saw Munch as a pathfinder for the expressionist generation, associating the movement with qualities such as "brutal" or "barbaric."

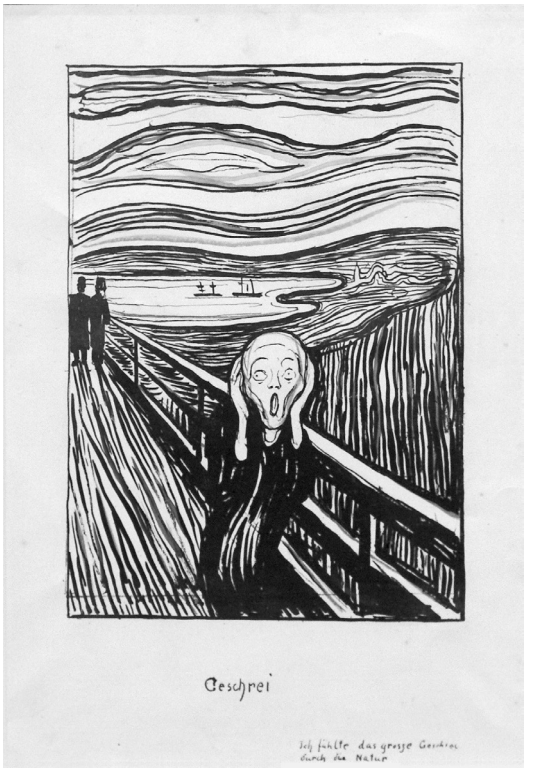

Figure 0.4 Edvard Munch, *Geschrei/Skriget* (The Scream), 1895, lithography, 49.4 × 37.3 cm, Sammlung Gundersen, Oslo

Die Brücke: A Revolt Against Academic Tradition and Social Conventions

The earliest expressionist group in Germany, Die Brücke (The Bridge, 1905–1913), was founded in Dresden, in June 1905, by the four architectural students Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and Fritz Bleyl. Looking for the right appellation to convey the sense of a utopian new social order based on creative spontaneity and emotional expression, they invoked a passage from Friedrich Nietzsche's 1883 book *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra): "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal."[29] Die Brücke was above all a revolt against academic tradition and social conventions.[30] Brücke artists rejected impressionism and naturalism in favor of a primitivizing aesthetic that fused inspiration derived from the works of Munch, van Gogh, and the fauves with influences from Gothic art and African and Oceanic sculpture (Figure 0.5). Determined to liberate themselves from the repressive values of the Wilhelmine culture, they rejected the distinction between the high and low arts and experimented with a variety of media. Concentrating on emotional power and the raw expression of feeling, they sought to achieve a constructive, instinctive blending of art and life that initially even involved a communal way of living and creating art, sharing a studio and the models they hired, creating joint drawings, and drawing and painting together in the lake district near Dresden and at the Baltic coast.

Figure 0.5 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, exhibition poster *KG Brücke* (Artists' Group Brücke), September 1910, woodcut, 83 × 61 cm, Galerie Ernst Arnold, Dresden

By 1911, almost all of the Brücke artists had moved to Berlin, where they drew inspiration from their new urban experiences and the social and emotional tensions of the bustling life in the German capital. The previous year, the jury of the Berlin Secession had famously refused to accept for entry to its annual exhibition the work of twenty-seven painters, among them several Brücke artists. The result was the establishment of a rival association, the so-called Neue Secession (New Secession, 1910–1914), which went on to closely collaborate with the artists of both Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter.[31] The New Secession organized seven well-received shows in Berlin and a number of touring exhibitions and played a significant role in paving the way for the acceptance of expressionism in Berlin and in Germany; it also established contact with and showed works by artists from the Czech Republic, France, and Scandinavia. The association was among the first to present a comprehensive overview of recent developments in the international art scene, predating with its fourth exhibition, in the winter of 1911, the Sonderbund exhibition and the *Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon*.[32] Already by 1912, however, the individual outlooks and artistic styles of the various Brücke members had begun to outweigh the strength of their communal beliefs; further conflicts over leadership and group interests led to the group's dissolution in May 1913.

Die Brücke initially functioned more like a brotherhood; its artistic relationships were built on personal contacts and held together by a shared utopian outlook and artistic sense rather than a theory of art. The group's most important publication, the *Programm der Künstlergruppe Brücke* (Brücke Manifesto, 1906), was brief and not widely circulated.[33] However, their striving for a renewal of art and the provocative nature of their works—the brilliant, clashing colors and jagged brushstrokes of their paintings, the rough patterns and stark contrast of their prints as well as their penetrating psychological portraits, the vital eroticism of their nudes, and the claustrophobic and tension-filled depictions of city life—contributed to the success of Die Brücke's reception in and beyond Germany and their acceptance as true "wild ones" or fauves and heirs to the tradition of Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse, and Munch.

Close relationships to Czech artists such as Bohumil Kubišta and Willi Nowak were established in 1911, and while the art of Die Brücke remained relatively unknown in Denmark and Sweden before the Second World War, Finish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela joined the group in 1907, and the Norwegian painter Axel Revold was also briefly a member. There was also an early "passive member" (patron) in England, Edith Buckley from Crawley, Sussex, who was a friend of Emil Nolde's wife, Ada Nolde. In the Netherlands, works by Brücke artist Karl Schmidt-Rottluff were included in the second exhibition of the Moderne Kunstkring (Modern Art Circle) in Amsterdam in fall 1912, and the later Dutch artists' group De Ploeg (The Plow), founded in Groningen in 1918, was influenced by the art of Die Brücke. The artists' colony in Nida, on the Curonian spit, became a favorite summer resort of Brücke artists such as Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff in the 1910s; the summers spent there and the exchanges with local artists formed the basis for the work of German artists and writers in Kaunas during the German occupancy in the First World War. In the interwar period, the art of Die Brücke became a model for Lithuanian artists; teachers at the Kaunas School of Art introduced it to their students, among them Antanas Samuolis and Antanas Gudaitis, as one of the highest achievements of modern art.

In Finland, where society was heavily influenced by the dichotomy of a Swedish-speaking upper class vs. a Finnish-speaking lower class, the primitivism of Brücke expressionism offered an appealing national alternative, both socially and aesthetically, to the dominance of (Swedish) high culture. In South Africa, settler expressionist Irma Stern, who herself had studied art in Berlin, where she befriended Pechstein and joined expressionist circles and later the Novembergruppe, positioned herself as an "authentic" African artist and *connoisseuse* of "primitive" cultures; after

her return to South Africa in 1920, she paved the way for other expressionist artists, among them Maggie Laubser, Pranas Domšaitis, and Maurice van Essche.

Der Blaue Reiter: From Spiritual Renewal to Abstract Painting

In contrast to Die Brücke, Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider, 1911–1914), founded in Munich, in 1911, by Russian emigre artists, including Wassily Kandinsky, Alexei Jawlensky, and Marianne Werefkin, as well as native German artists, including Franz Marc, August Macke, and Gabriele Münter, became the driving force of a major international network of modernist artists across Europe and beyond.[34] The group, inspired by theosophy and the occult, awaited the advent of an "epoch of the great spiritual" and promoted a subjective-intuitive approach to art. The spiritual aspects of their artistic program were strongly influenced by Kandinsky and Marc and included various forms of representation designed to evoke nonvisual phenomena and sensations; these were linked to the concepts of primitivism, abstraction, and expressionism.

In 1912, the group published one of the most influential art publications in twentieth-century art, the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter* (Figure 0.6).[35] Edited by Kandinsky and Marc, it set forth many of the basic philosophical tenets of expressionism and provided reproductions of artifacts from a variety of cultures, including African and Oceanic sculpture, native American and Pre-Columbian art, Chinese and Japanese painting, medieval sculpture, Renaissance woodcuts, Bavarian glass painting, Russian folk art, children's drawings, and contemporary art; it also included articles on theatre and music. The two Munich exhibitions organized by the group, in 1911 and 1912, were international in scope and included works by the French artists Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay, Pablo Picasso, and Henri Rousseau; the Russian painters Mikhail Larionov and Kazimir Malevich; and many Brücke artists. The group dissolved at the outbreak of the First World War, with the departure of the Russian artists from Germany and the conscription of Marc and Macke, who were killed in combat in 1916.

The art and ideas of the Blaue Reiter artists generated great interest and were widely disseminated for two reasons: 1) Munich, an important art center at the time, attracted artists from all over Europe; 2) the international makeup of the group and its members' cosmopolitan outlook fostered an active international network, one that disseminated its ideas and publications and exhibited its artworks throughout Europe. The encounter with the Blaue Reiter was essential for artists such as Ado Vabbe (Estonia), Chavdar Mutafov (Bulgaria), and Albert Bloch (USA), all of whom studied in Munich in the early 1910s; the group facilitated their discovery of modern art and knowledge of a new way of painting that went beyond representation—ideas they took with them back to their home countries.

The impact of Kandinsky's ideas was far-reaching in Europe at the time and beyond. His treatise *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (On the Spiritual in Art) was widely discussed; the first full English version appeared in April 1914 and was reviewed by Edward Wadsworth in the Vorticist publication *Blast* in July 1914.[36] Three of Kandinsky's most important essays, "Über die Formfrage" (On the Problem of Form, 1912), "Über Kunstverstehen" (On Understanding Art, 1912), and "Malerei als reine Kunst" (Painting as Pure Art, 1918), were widely reproduced in exhibition catalogues and art magazines throughout Europe.[37] His writings were particularly well received in the Netherlands, where Jacoba van Heemskerck, Janus de Winter, and Louis Saalborn shared his interest in theosophy and the spiritual dimension of art; the Dutch artists Erich Wichman and Theo van Doesburg thoroughly analyzed his works and texts and published their own thoughts on them.[38] In Italy, Enrico Prampolini reciprocated with his own essay, "La Pittura pura" (Pure Painting), which appeared as "A Response to Kandinsky" in *L'artista moderno* (The Modern Artist) in January 1915.[39] The Serbian artist Mihailo S. Petrov

Figure 0.6 Wassily Kandinsky, cover of the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter* (Munich: Piper, 1912)

translated Kandinsky's text "Malerei als reine Kunst" and published it in the Serbian journal *Mucao/Misao* (Thought) in 1922, characterizing Kandinsky in the preface as "the famous father of *absolute painting*, well known through his texts."[40] Similarly, Lubomir Micić promoted Kandinsky as the beginning of the new art in Europe and regarded him as the first abstract and spiritual artist.[41] Kandinsky's art and ideas also shaped the development of early abstraction in North America, where Manierre Dawson, Konrad Cramer, and Abraham Walkowitz began to experiment with abstraction in the early 1910s. From the 1920s to the 1940s, American interest in the Blaue Reiter was spurred by the activities of Katherine Dreier and the Société Anonyme, Galka Scheyer, and Hilla Rebay.[42]

Austrian Expressionism: Agitated Lines and Psychological Portraits

The influence of the Vienna expressionists, whose most prominent representatives were Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele (Figures 0.7 and 0.8), was less widespread than that of the artists in Berlin or Munich and largely limited to central Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In contrast to their German colleagues, Kokoschka and Schiele retained noticeable vestiges of academic realism in their work and were strongly engaged with symbolism, particularly the work of Gustav Klimt.[43] They retained the use of decorative devices associated with art nouveau, but as a means of subjective representation. Concentrating above all on portraiture and the nude, they developed highly personal, emotive styles based on expressive draftsmanship and provocative, even sexually charged, body language. Their work, a challenge to the complacency of Viennese culture, was viewed by many as scandalous, but their daring sensibilities and dedication to the decorative also brought them an enthusiastic following and wealthy patronage.

Schiele's life and career were unfortunately cut short, but Kokoschka went on to have a long and successful international career.

The influence of Viennese expressionism was most prevalent in Budapest, where the Viennese Neukunstgruppe, which included Robin Christian Andersen, Anton Faistauer, Paris Gütersloh, Oskar Kokoschka, Anton Kolig, Egon Schiele, and Arnold Schönberg, first exhibited its works in the Művészház (House of Artists) in January 1912.[44] Critics immediately drew parallels between the work of the young artists from Vienna and the members of the Hungarian group The Eight, also known as Keresők (The Seekers). The portraits of Róbert Berény and Lajos Tihanyi show similarities to those of Kokoschka in terms of their psychological characterization, often caricature-like distortions, the typically deformed hands, and their loose brushwork.

In 1910, Kokoschka moved to Germany, where he held his first solo exhibition in Paul Cassirer's gallery in Berlin. His expressionist portraits greatly impressed Herwarth Walden, who decided to publish the young artist's controversial expressionist drama *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (Murderer, the Hope of Women) in the first issue of his new magazine *Der Sturm*.[45] Kokoschka joined the staff of *Der Sturm*, which quickly became the most significant mouthpiece for expressionism in both literature and the visual arts; he executed numerous illustrations for the magazine and exhibited in Sturm exhibitions in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands.


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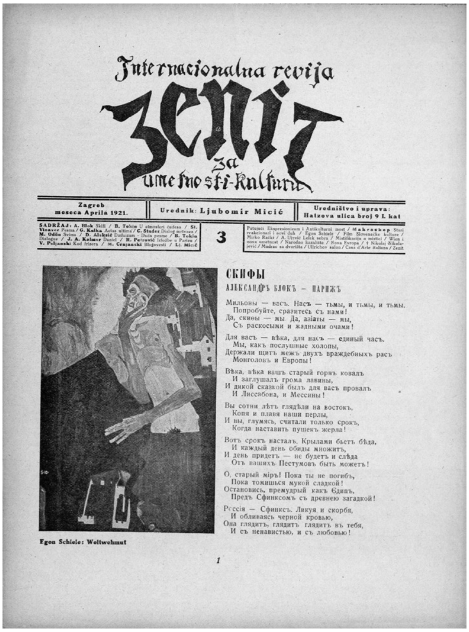
Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen
Von Oskar Kokoschka
Zeichnung von Oskar Kokoschka zu dem Drama
Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen

Figure 0.7 Oskar Kokoschka, *Zeichnung zu dem Drama* Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen (Drawing for the Drama *Murderer, the Hope of Women*), cover illustration of *Der Sturm* 1, no. 20, July 14, 1910. © Fondation Oskar Kokoschka/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018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СКИФЫ
АЛЕКСАНДРЪ БЛОКЪ – ПАРИЖЪ
Мильоны — васъ. Насъ — тьмы, и тьмы, и тьмы.
Попробуйте, сразитесь съ нами!
Да, скиөы — мы. Да, азіаты — мы,
Съ раскосыми и жадными очами!
Для васъ — вѣка, для насъ — единый часъ.
Мы, какъ послушные холопы,
Держали щитъ межъ двухъ враждебныхъ расъ
Монголовъ и Европы!
Egon Schiele: Weltwehmut

Figure 0.8 Egon Schiele, *Weltwehmut* (World-Melancholy), cover illustration of *Zenit* 3 (April 1921)

After the First World War, Kokoschka, now a well-known portraitist and landscape painter, moved to Dresden, where he held a professorship at the Art Academy from 1919 until 1926. One of his students was the Icelandic painter Finnur Jónsson; the inspiration he derived from his teacher can be found in the thick and bold brushstrokes evident in many of his oil paintings as well as in his portraits and collages.[46] Kokoschka remained involved with Der Sturm throughout the 1920s, but fled to the Czech Republic in 1934 and then the United Kingdom, in 1938, when the Nazis came to power and his works were branded "degenerate" and then confiscated.

Herwarth Walden und Der Sturm: The Networks of the Avant-Garde

It is no secret that Berlin gallerist and publisher Herwarth Walden (1878–1941) played a crucial role in the dissemination of expressionism throughout Europe; his name appears in almost every chapter of this anthology.[47] His magazine, *Der Sturm*, was modeled on the Italian literary magazine *La Voce* (The Voice, 1908–1916). It began as a weekly and then ran as a monthly, starting in 1914, and from 1924 to 1932 it appeared quarterly. The magazine begat the like-named Berlin gallery, which Walden opened in 1912 with an exhibition of the fauves and Der Blaue Reiter, followed by the introduction of the Italian futurists, cubists, and orphists in Germany. Der Sturm, the gallery, soon became the focus of Berlin's modern art scene and remained so for more than a decade.

Walden not only maintained strong personal contacts with the Florence-based circle of painters and writers associated with *La Voce*, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and other Italian futurists, but also with Dutch artists and collectors, among them Jacoba van Heemskerck and Marie Tak van Poortvliet. During the First World War, Walden, through his second wife, the Swedish Nell Walden, became active in Scandinavia. After the war, he expanded Der Sturm into an even larger cultural enterprise, organizing *Sturmabende*—evening lectures and discussions on modern art—and Die Sturmbühne, an expressionist theatre, as well as publishing books, postcards, and portfolios by artists such as Marc Chagall and Oskar Kokoschka (Figure 0.9).

Before the war, Walden had featured the works of Der Blaue Reiter and Die Brücke, the French fauves and cubists, and the Italian futurists, but during the interwar period, he opened up to new avant-garde trends, particularly constructivism. From 1919 to 1926, he closely collaborated with another Berlin-based organization, the Internationale Vereinigung der Expressionisten, Futuristen und Kubisten (International Association of Expressionists, Futurists, and Cubists) and included works by artists such as Henryk Berlewi, László Moholy-Nagy, László Péri and Hans Mattis-Teutsch in his exhibitions. He was in touch with the Yugoslav avant-garde, serving on the editorial board of the Zagreb-based magazine *Tank*, contributing an article on expressionism in music to its first issue in 1927, and hosting an exhibition of the Slovenian avant-garde in his gallery in 1929, accompanied by a special issue of *Der Sturm* on "Junge slovenische Kunst" (Young Slovenian Art).[48] Despite Walden's efforts, the gallery declined in importance after the war and closed in 1924, leaving the magazine to carry on as a quarterly until 1932. By then, Walden had organized more than 200 exhibitions in his premises in Berlin as well as numerous touring exhibitions in Germany and also in other major European cities, such as Prague, Budapest, Brussels, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Rome, Zurich, London, Stockholm, Christiana, as well as in New York and Tokyo.

Walden's enterprising spirit and his innovative marketing strategies served as a model for artists on the European periphery. Inspired by Walden's magazine and gallery, the editors of the Transylvanian journal *Das Ziel* (The Goal) established their own exhibition venue, Redoute Hall, which opened with a solo show of expressionist works by Hans Eder in May 1919.

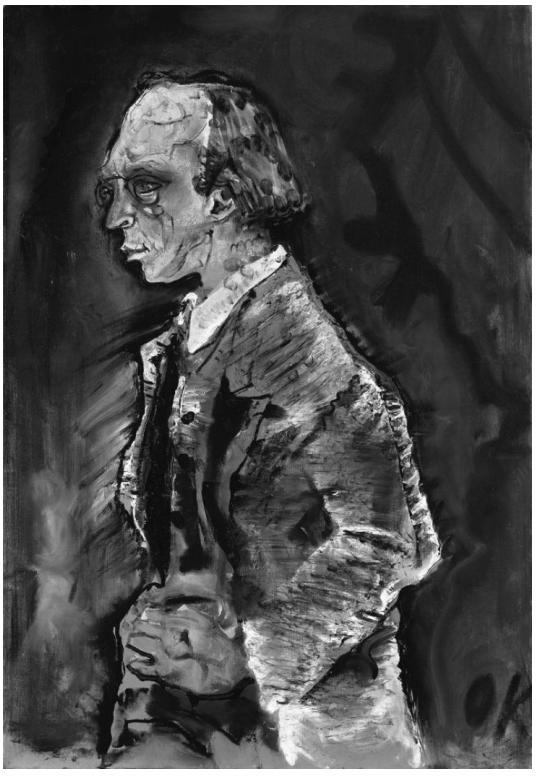

Figure 0.9 Oskar Kokoschka, *Bildnis Herwarth Walden* (Portrait Herwarth Walden), 1910, oil on canvas, 100 × 69.3 cm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. © Fondation Oskar Kokoschka/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018

Walden's activities also served as a model for the efforts of the Bulgarian writer and publisher Geo Milev.[49] During his stay in Berlin (1918–1919), he joined Walden's circle and acquired a large library of publications on modernist art; after his return to Bulgaria, Milev published, first, the magazine *Vezni* (Scales, 1919–1922), with an associated *Vezni* library series, and then *Plamak* (Flame, 1923–1925). Milev was unable to establish his own gallery, but he did organize an expressionist exhibition of sixty works, mostly graphic prints by Chagall, Kandinsky, Kokoschka, Marc, and Munch, that he displayed in his apartment in Sofia from December 1921 to January 1922. Milev also served as an outlet for *Der Sturm* in the Balkans; Walden sent him *Sturm* postcards to distribute with his own magazine. In Yugoslavia, Lubomir Micic's magazine *Zenit*, established in Zagreb in 1921, mirrored in both appearance and editorial concept *Der Sturm*, which could be found in some of Zagreb's bookshops and in the Süd-Ost bookstore in Belgrade.[50] *Zenit* started out as an expressionist magazine, publishing texts by Ivan Goll and other expressionist poets along with works by Vilko Gecan and Egon Schiele. Following the Sturm model, Micić also founded a gallery of new art, in 1922, and began to organize exhibitions on avant-garde art.

Avant-garde magazines played a significant role in the transnational artistic dialogue and international cultural exchange in the prewar and interwar years. *Der Sturm* was a central node in a wide network of such publications that readily channeled the exchange of ideas and flow of information; it was closely connected with *La Voce* in Florence and *NOI* and *ATYS* in Rome

Figure 0.10 Back cover of the journal *MA* (Today) 8, no. 1 (1922)

as well as *MA* in Budapest/Vienna, *Zenit* in Zagreb/Belgrade, and *Vezni* and *Plamak* in Sofia. The political activist magazine *Die Aktion* closely collaborated with the Poznań-based *Zdroj*. As the back cover of the 1922 issue of *MA* shows (Figure 0.10), the journal's network also included *2x2* in Vienna, *La Vie des Lettres et des Arts* and *L'Ésprit Nouveau* in Paris, *De Stijl* in Weimar, *Ça Ira* in Brussels, *Zenit* in Zagreb, and *UT* in Novi Sad. Translations of literary works, generally short stories, poems and dramaturgy, and critical reviews, but also reproductions of artworks and photographs of exhibitions, provided important sources of information and served as a primary means of communication for the propagation of modernist design aesthetics.

The Medium of Printmaking and the Revival of the Woodcut

The spread of expressionism across Europe and beyond is closely connected with the revival of printmaking and the graphic arts, which provided an effective medium for emotional expressiveness and artistic experimentation.[51] Printmaking offered a less expensive, more immediate way of capturing raw expression than painting. In their efforts to renew German art, Brücke artists turned to a medium they considered truly German: the woodcut. The block-printing technique offered them a way to recover a German tradition and to register a thread of continuity with their late Gothic and Renaissance heritage and artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Martin Schongauer, and Matthias Grünewald.[52] They not only printed their 1906 program and the 1913 chronicle by means of woodcut,[53] but also used the technique to print membership cards, exhibition posters, and invitations; to reproduce paintings for

illustrations in catalogues; and to produce print portfolios for their associated members. The stark contrasts of the xylographic image, as for example in Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's woodcut print *Mit Schilf werfende Badende* (Bathers Throwing Reed; Figure 0.11), helped to evoke an emotional response in the viewer and convey an intense engagement with life. Likewise, the artists of the Blaue Reiter, particularly Franz Marc in his woodcut *Wildpferde* (Wild Horses; Figure 0.12), explored the flattened perspective and reductive aspects of the art form on their path toward abstraction. This focus on immediacy and spirituality can also be observed in the woodcuts of Jacoba van Heemskerck, which were frequently reproduced by Walden in his magazine (Figure 0.13).

In the 1920s, prints by Brücke artists, particularly the work of Kirchner, inspired members of the Dutch group De Ploeg to explore a number of graphic techniques, including both etching and woodcutting, thus giving a new boost to the graphic arts in the Netherlands. Brücke expressionism also had a strong impact on Lithuanian printmaking, particularly the work of Adomas Galdikas and his students Viktoras Petravičius, Vytautas Jurkūnas, and Marcė Katiliūtė. A friendship with Schmidt-Rottluff led the South African artist Maggie Laubser, who lived in Berlin from 1922 to 1924, to briefly engage with the woodcut technique, a medium that was highly unusual in South African art at the time. It accommodated her interest in primitivism and corresponded well to her painting style, characterized by flatness and the use of bright areas of color outlined in black, and upon her return to South Africa, she was able to connect the expressionist woodcut technique to African carvings.

Figure 0.11 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Mit Schilf werfende Badende* (Bathers Throwing Reeds), 1909, color woodcut in black, green, and orange, 19.9 × 28.7 cm (5th Portfolio of the Brücke, 1910)

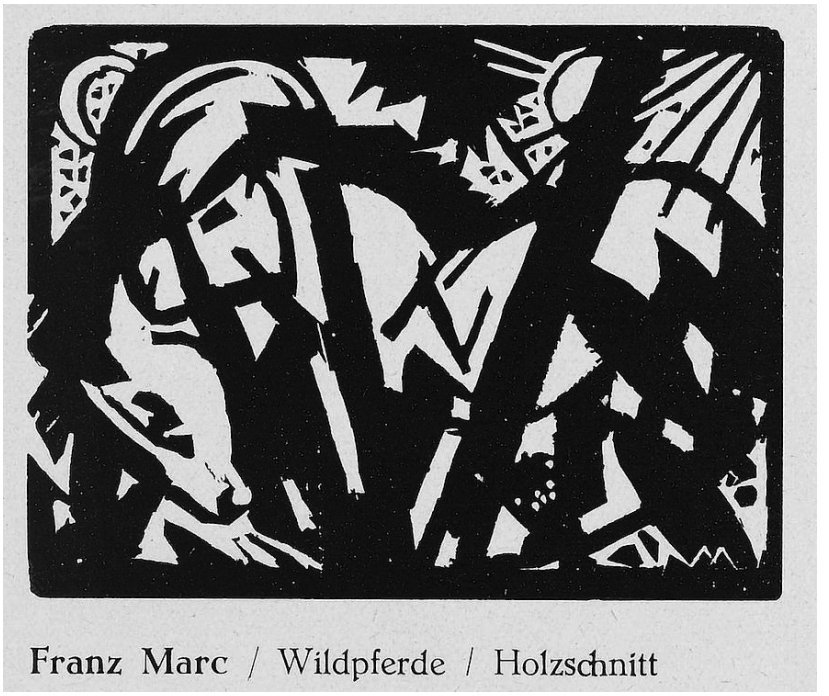

Figure 0.12 Franz Marc, *Wildpferde* (Wild Horses), 1912, woodcut, illustration in Herwarth Walden, *Einblick in Kunst* [Insight into Art], 3rd to 5th ed. (Berlin: Verlag Der Sturm, 1924), 47

In Sweden, the revival and use of the woodcut technique was promoted by Föreningen Original-Träsnitt, the Swedish Society of Original Wood Engravers, whose members, among them Anna Sahlström, Pär Siegård, and Harriet Sundström, shared an interest in primitivist expression. Like the Brücke artists, they were inspired by the rough contours and simplistic shapes of medieval woodcuts and eighteenth and nineteen-century broadsheets, but were also influenced by Japanese Ukiyo-e woodcuts and various kinds of popular Swedish prints.[54] Rejecting a realistic depiction and the illusion of three-dimensional space, they began to use combinations of distinct contour lines and plain surfaces. The Finnish artist Ina Behrsen, too, embraced such primitivist associations and produced a cycle of black-and-white woodcuts in the 1930s consisting of images of women, couples, and families that poignantly highlighted the theme of fertility. For Behrsen, the use of the black-and-white woodcut in the expressionist tradition provided a means by which to negotiate her identity at the interface of various cultures, languages, nationalities, and nationalisms in the interwar period.[55] For the indigenous Sámi artist John Savio, in the far northern regions of Scandinavia, printmaking was an opportunity to unite the traditional Sámi handicraft of *duodji* with his interest in depicting the northern landscape and the life of Sámi people. In his woodcuts, he portrays the coastal and mountain sceneries, the interplay between humans and nature, but also powerful emotions such as anger, frustration, jealousy, and loneliness (Plate 17). Savio's art thus merges characteristics of both expressionist woodcut technique and Sámi cultural heritage.[56]

The British writers and artists Wyndham Lewis and Edward Wadsworth, who published the Vorticist magazine *Blast* (1914–1915; Figure 0.14), the most important avant-garde medium for the reception of expressionism in Britain, were both great admirers of the expressionist

woodcut. Wadsworth engaged in this technique during a year he spent in Munich and was strongly influenced by the work of Kandinsky and Marc. A number of his woodcuts were shown at the Twenty-One Gallery in 1914 along with an exhibition of modern German prints.

Italian expressionism manifested itself largely in the graphic arts, particularly the woodcut. The periodical *L'Eroica*, founded in 1911, became the official organ of the newly founded Corporazione degli Xilografi (Guild of Xylographers), which showcased Italian woodcut printmaking in Germany and Sweden (Plate 22). In Spain, the first and only exhibition of expressionist art, *Exposició del gravat alemany contemporani* (Exhibition of Contemporary German Engravings), held at the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc, in Barcelona, in the spring of 1926, was a show of engravings, including works by Dix, Grosz, Heckel, Kirchner, Kokoschka, Kollwitz, Nolde, and Schmidt-Rottluff. Expressionism in Bulgaria developed above all in the graphic arts, where the use of the woodcut technique in modern printmaking was closely connected with religious imagery and the historical production of *schtampa*—religious engravings—and prints from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus, the graphic work of Vasil Zahariev, Pencho Georgiev, Sirak Skitnik, and Max Metzger is characterized by a hybridization of expressionist trends with symbolist influences and traditional imagery from early Bulgarian religious engravings and printed books.[57]

As with the art magazines, printmaking served as an important means of communication and artistic exchange. Through the circulation of prints, postcards, and images in the magazines, almanacs, and books, artists in the peripheral art centers could keep in touch with other modernist artists and stay informed about new movements and the latest developments in the visual arts.

Figure 0.13 Jacoba van Heemskerck, *Holzschnitt/ Vom Stock gedruckt* (Woodcut, printed from the woodblock), cover illustration of *Der Sturm* 7, no. 4, July 15, 1916

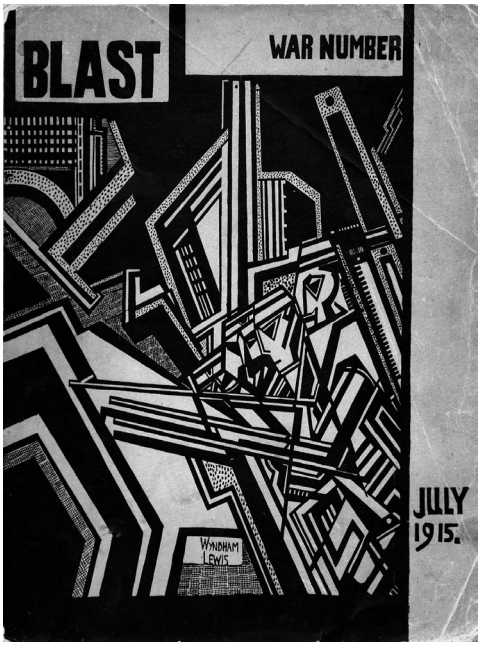

Figure 0.14 Wyndham Lewis, cover of *Blast 2 (War Number)*, July 1915, woodcut

Postcards were presented in exhibitions and used for magazine illustrations; the postcards of *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm* were among the most widely circulated images of the avant-garde.

From Capturing War Experiences to a Socially Engaged Form of Art

Expressionism was particularly effective in expressing the apocalyptic war experiences that affected artists in all regions of the continent and for coming to terms with the traumatic experiences of the First World War, in particular destruction, human suffering, and death; hunger, poverty, and despair. Many expressionist artists greeted the outbreak of war in 1914 and immediately volunteered for military service, believing the war to be the apocalyptic event that would cleanse the world of self-satisfied materialism and overcome the old order, but most were eventually disillusioned by the gruesome reality of the fighting, destruction, and misery that went on far longer than most had anticipated, destroying millions of lives and devastating most regions in Europe. The expressionist visual language, with its focus on distortion and contrasts of light and darkness, proved to be most adequate for capturing the emotional intensity of such misery and devastation. Thus, the original expressionist spirit of vitalism and optimism gave way to images of apocalypse, universal suffering, and redemption, among them Otto Dix's portfolio *Der Krieg* (War, 1924; Figure 0.15), Käthe Kollwitz's anti-war prints and drawings, and Ludwig Meidner's apocalyptic landscapes. This shift is also captured by Hermann Bahr in his 1916 book *Der Expressionismus*, in which he writes:

> Never has an age been shaken by such horror, such mortal fear . . . The whole age becomes one single scream of anguish. Art joins in, screaming into the murky darkness, screaming for help, screaming for the Spirit. This is expressionism.[58]

While painters such as the German-Saxon Hans Eder served as war artists (*Kriegsmaler*), recording battles, victories, and atrocities, others, such as Cornelia Gurlitt, who served as a nurse in a war hospital in Vilnius, created drawings, prints, and paintings to cope with their personal experiences of war and life in the occupied territories. A number of German artists and writers, among them Paul Fechter, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Magnus Zeller, and Arnold Zweig, were drafted into the German army and served as artists and writers in occupied territories such as the Ober Ost, in Lithuania, where they wrote and illustrated for newspapers such as the *Kownoer Zeitung* (Kaunas News) and the *Wilnaer Zeitung* (Vilnius News).[59] Increasingly disillusioned by the war, Schmidt-Rottluff began to use religious subjects to depict human suffering, publishing a series of nine woodcuts titled *Christus* (Christ), in 1918. Zeller's portfolio *Entrückung und Aufruhr* (Rapture and Uproar), foreshadowing the catastrophic end of the war and the November Revolution in Germany, was illegally produced in the printing house of the Ober Ost press department in Kaunas in 1917–1918.

The aftermath of the First World War brought political upheavals, economic and social instability, and cultural changes. Postwar central Europe was plagued by epidemic disease, hunger, and unemployment, as well as continued violence, ethnic conflicts, and civil war. The European map was fully redrawn; with the dissolution of the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires, a number of new, multi-ethnic nation states were born, among them Czechoslovakia and Poland. Chaotic violence and terror accompanied wars for independence in Estonia and Latvia as well as the short civil war in Finland and the Polish–Soviet conflict. In parallel with deepening ethnic divisions, class conflicts intensified; life in the urban centers after 1917 was characterized by a growing wave of strikes and riots; in contrast to rural ethnicization, the workers' movements promoted internationalism. The October Revolution

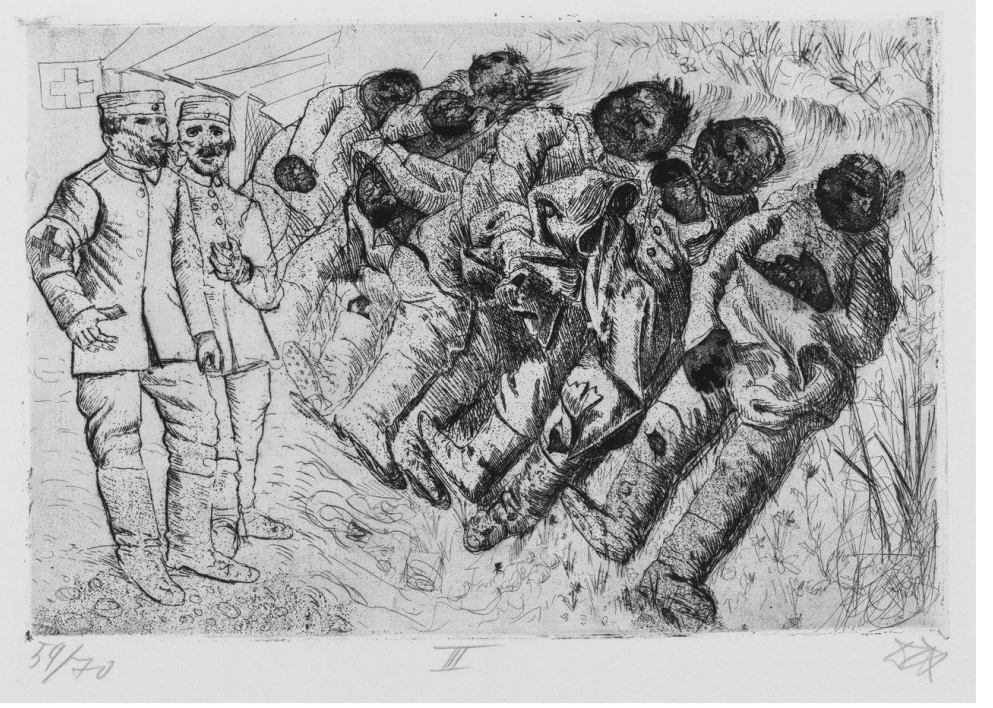

Figure 0.15 Otto Dix, *Gastote* [Gas Deaths], Templeux la Fosse, August 1916, from the portfolio *Der Krieg* [War] (Berlin: Verlag Karl Nierendorf, 1924), 15. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018

in Russia stimulated popular radicalism and Bolshevik upheavals in Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Latvia. During this period, when both right and left-wing radicalization as well as ethnic and class conflicts, riots, violence, and civil war dominated life in Europe, a universal longing for political stability, a functioning state, and law and order gradually prevailed.

In the immediate postwar years, expressionist and left-wing artists devoted their attention to graphic works such as leaflets, prints, and posters; debates revolved around the artist's social responsibility and the value of art for the masses. One of the most actively engaged artists was Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945), the first woman to be elected to full professorship at the Prussian Academy of Arts, in 1919. After the loss of her son to the war in 1914, she began to create powerful images depicting the trauma, senselessness, and evils of war. As a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, she produced a series of lithographs of war-stricken mothers and children that were distributed as postcards. In 1924, ten years after the outbreak of the war, at the request of the international trade union movement, Kollwitz created the anti-war poster *Die Überlebenden: Krieg dem Kriege* (The Survivors: War against War; Figure 0.16), a depiction of those uprooted by war. Her powerful and highly emotional anti-war prints reveal compassion and empathy; they influenced left-wing artists throughout Europe, and were widely shown in exhibitions and distributed through various print media.

During the interwar period, Berlin became the artistic center of a more socially engaged form of expressionism, one that offered a critical response to political developments and the social situation in interwar Germany, as exemplified in the work of artists such as Dix, Kollwitz, and George Grosz. After the November Revolution, in 1918, a number of new and for the most part politically engaged artists' groups were founded in Germany, among them the Arbeitsrat

Figure 0.16 Käthe Kollwitz, *Die Überlebenden: Krieg dem Kriege* (The Survivors: War against War), 1923, lithograph

für Kunst (Work Council for Art), the Novembergruppe (November Group), and International Association of Expressionists, Futurists, and Cubists. Collectively, their predominant message was a call for the progressive artists of all nations to unite in championing modern artistic idioms and leftist viewpoints and to take the lead in shaping contemporary cultural life and the design of a new, postwar society.[60] By the early 1920s, however, the attraction of expressionism in Germany, once a movement of spiritual and cultural rejuvenation, had begun to fade.[61] Ivan Goll, writing in *Zenit*, noted that expressionism was "being killed by the age that betrayed it . . . croaking on the bait of the revolution it had wanted to serve as high priestess."[62] Wilhelm Hausenstein noticed not only that "expressionism was dead," but that verism had already been proclaimed its successor by its adversaries. He urged artists to return not to the object or the individual, but rather to turn to the community in search of an art that could reach the masses.[63] Gustav Hartlaub, in his 1920 review of the Darmstadt exhibition *Deutscher Expressionismus* (German Expressionism), also noted a return to the object and identified some representatives of the second generation of expressionists who were then undertaking a new search for content: Albert Bloch, Carl Mense, Heinrich Maria Davringhausen, Kay Nebel, Ludwig Meidner, George Grosz, and Otto Dix. Hartlaub cautioned against distancing oneself from the physical world or reality because "today no metaphysical certainty, no religion, no church will give us a hold on the transcendental."[64]

This shift in orientation is best exemplified in the work of George Grosz (1893–1959) whose critical imagery and politically aggressive polemics in portfolios such as *Gott mit Uns* (God with Us, 1920; Figure 0.17), *Das Gesicht der herrschenden Klasse* (The Face of the Ruling Class, 1921), and *Ecce Homo* (1922) earned him an international reputation. Grosz, who was active in left-wing politics and contributed to communist journals published by the Malik-Verlag in Berlin,

equally attacked government members, the military, and the bourgeois. Grosz, who understood that naturalism was more comprehensible to his intended mass audience, was to have a great influence on artists throughout the Weimar period and beyond. Along with German artists, such as Dix and Otto Griebel, who came under his influence, artists such as the Portuguese painters Mário Eloy and Bernardo Marques (who resided in Berlin between 1927 and 1931) and the Croatian artists Ljubo Babić and Krsto Hegedušić were greatly inspired by the highly critical commentary imbued in his prints and drawings. Grosz's works were widely exhibited, among other venues, in exhibitions in Paris (1924), Venice (1930), New York (1931), and Zagreb (1932). In the early 1930s, he applied the same harsh visual language to the National Socialists before he was forced to flee Nazi Germany.

The visual language of expressionism also influenced the social realist movement in North America. In the 1930s, American social realists such as Ben Shahn and Philip Evergood used expressionist devices in their depictions of urban blight, poverty, moral corruption, and sickness; the same can be seen in the prints and paintings of the Canadian artists Fritz Brandtner and Caven Atkins, who captured the despair felt by many in Winnipeg during the Great Depression.[65] In Latin America, artists adopted the visual language of expressionism to transmit political and social messages of human existence in light of the processes of modernization and the emergence and consolidation of nations. Latin American expressionist artists, in particular, addressed and

Figure 0.17 George Grosz, *Ecrasez La Famine, Die Kommunisten fallen—und die Devisen steigen, Blood is the Best Sauce*, from the portfolio *Gott mit uns* [God with Us], 1919, photolithograph, 30.8 × 45.1/30.5 × 45.2 cm (Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1920). © Estate of George Grosz, Princeton, NJ/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018

critically denounced the human suffering due to marginalization, poverty, war, and urbanization. Artists such as the Ecuadorians Eduardo Kingman and Oswaldo Guayasamin, the Mexican muralists José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, the Argentinian Héctor Basaldúa, the Brazilian Emiliano di Cavalcanti, and the Peruvian Víctor Humareda depicted the dispossessed, forgotten, ignored, and abandoned along the path toward a modern state and capitalist system. Their work drew attention to social injustice and the need for a new society and model of development with the human spirit as its focal point.[66]

Expressionism and the Art of the German Minorities

The "Germanization" of expressionism during the First World War raises the question of how this movement was perceived by German minorities in multi-ethnic regions such as the Baltics, Poland, and Romania. In Lithuania, expressionism arrived, with Marianne Werefkin, as a German artistic import from Munich in the 1910s and eventually became a key feature of the national school of art that arose in Kaunas during the interwar period. The expressive approach to creativity signified independence and thus seemed to offer the most fruitful path to the creation of an authentic, modern national art. (In Soviet times, it offered an alternative to Socialist Realism, and after 1990, with the dissolution of the USSR, it was briefly seen as the basis for another new cultural identity.) In contrast, in Latvia, with a very dominant German-Baltic minority, German (and Russian) culture was viewed as a hindrance to the establishment of an independent Latvian modernism; to signify their independence, Latvian modernist artists looked instead to contemporary French art.

In the multi-ethnic city of Poznań, things were quite different. During the First World War and in the interwar period, the term expressionism was used as a catch-all label for various modern stylistic trends; it offered an activist, performative connotation not only to the German social-aesthetic revolution but also to the restitution and reunification of the Polish country after its partition. Artists in the Poznań artists' group Bunt (Revolt) looked to Berlin, which offered them opportunities to participate in the international network of the avant-garde. Thus, Poznań expressionism's association with the German art movement provided the artists with a means to move beyond the local and regional and connect ideologically and artistically with the international avant-garde.[67]

Embracing expressionism allowed artists in Transylvania in the German ethnic minority to become part of an established majority culture. Expressionist painting as practiced by Hans Eder, Hans Mattis-Teutsch, Grete Csaky-Copony, and Fritz Kimm thus coalesced into an ethnically charged identity, an artistic affirmation of Germanity in the troubled period following the First World War. The German community in the region, however, being quite conservative, feared the political potential behind the visual idiom of German expressionism, and thus criticized the cultural representatives of the German minority in Transylvania as being potentially subversive, leading the artists to eventually move toward a modest expressionist visual language and a more traditional subject matter (Figure 0.18).[68]

The "Jewishness" of Expressionism

Expressionism, particularly its themes of human suffering and personal tragedy, has also been readily identified with Jewish culture and suffering and even interpreted by a few critics as a foreshadowing of the Holocaust.[69] Before the First World War, a number of young Jewish artists from Eastern Europe left their homeland to study art in Paris, among them Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, Emmanuel Mané-Katz, Jules Pascin, and Chaim Soutine, who later joined the École de Paris. In the aftermath of the war, when conflicts between the rural and the urban

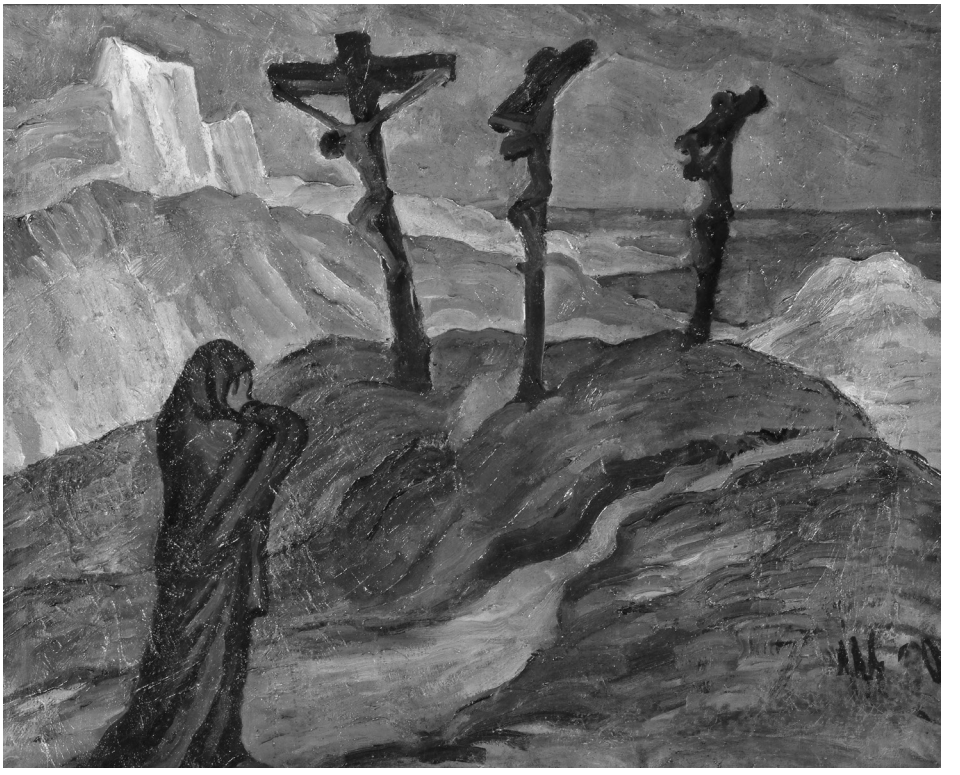

Figure 0.18 Hans Eder, *Kreuzigung* (Crucifixion), 1930, oil on canvas, 59 × 72.5 cm, Siebenbürgisches Kulturzentrum Schloss Horneck e.V. © Siebenbürgisches Museum Gundelsheim

populations in Ukraine, Belarus, Eastern Poland, and Hungary coincided with militant anti-Semitism, they were followed by Neemija Arbitblatas and others. This foreign-born group of Jewish artists was active on the left bank in the Parisian neighborhood of Montparnasse from the 1910s to the 1930s.

Since expressionist tendencies in the French cultural context could not be categorized as German, they were seen collectively as Jewish, and despite significant differences in the work of Chagall, Moïse Kisling, Mané-Katz, Pascin (Figure 0.19), and Soutine, French critics tended to emphasize their similarities and Jewish ethnic background. For them, "Jewish expressionism" reflected anguish and suffering, in contrast to French fauvism, which was perceived as something more joyful. Adolphe Basler, himself a Polish-Jewish immigrant who advocated the assimilation of foreign-born Jewish artists into the French tradition, even went so far as to label some of the Jewish artists of the École de Paris as Express-Sionistes (Express-Zionists),[70] thus conflating expressionism and Jewishness into one. Bernard Dorival, another French critic, reduced the so-called École de Paris collectively to "Jewish expressionists," whose works were characterized by a spirit of pessimism, intellectualism, despair, and disquietude.[71]

Expressionist art practices were also pursued by Jewish artists who immigrated to North and Latin America and South Africa.[72] In the United States, Max Weber started painting Jewish life and history in an expressionist style in the late 1910s and continued to do so for the rest of his life. Lithuanian artist Lasar Segall, who had studied in Berlin and Dresden before the war, settled in Brazil, in 1923, bringing with him influences from Brücke expressionism. Wolf Kibel, a

Figure 0.19 Jules Pascin, *The Bar of the Bal Taberin*, 1912–1913, oil on canvas, 93 × 73 cm, private collection

Jewish painter from Poland who moved to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1929, was particularly indebted to the work of Soutine and Chagall.

The Question of Artistic Individuality

Like no other artistic style, expressionism served and supported the image of the lonely artist, the genius, blessed by deeper knowledge and sharper senses than his contemporaries, but often misunderstood. The image of the outsider or outcast, haunted by artistic struggle, financial strain, and personal drama, is most strongly exemplified by artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Edvard Munch, and James Ensor, all three of whom were major role models of the expressionist generation. Some authors have even argued that the expressionist term can only be properly applied to the work of true artistic outsiders. Examples are easily found, beginning with the work of the Bohemian painter Jan Zrzavý, characterized variously as freakish, hideous, disfigured, and emotionally deformed, and Josef Váchal, who developed his esoteric style in total isolation.[73] The perennial subject of the Slovakian painter Anton Jaszsuch was the wanderer, adrift in a world whose extreme depictions alternated between one of harmony and universal unity and one of apocalyptic visions of the vanity of human quest.[74] The work of Estonian artist Nikolai Triik was enhanced by personal drama, existential crisis, and the artist's striving to visually express his own suffering and anguish.[75] The loneliness of life in the metropolis left him especially receptive to the expressionistic pathos of suffering, as evidenced by his drawings of this period—images

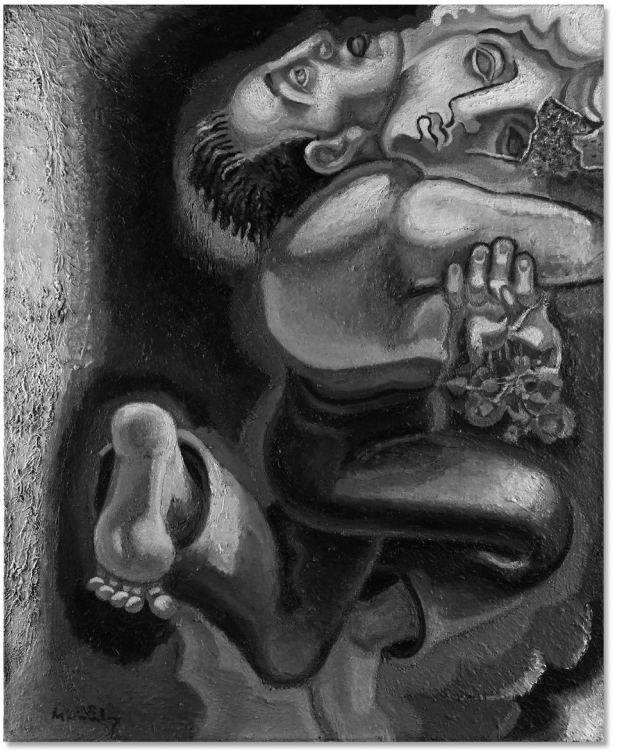

Figure 0.20 Mário Eloy, *A Fuga* (The Fugue), 1938, oil on canvas, 80 × 100 cm, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, inv. no. 04P1268. © Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Calouste Gulbenkian Museum—Modern Collection. Photo: Paulo Costa

of apocalypse and redemption, suffering and exaltation. Among the Russian avant-garde, Pavel Filonov, creator of the "made painting" (*sdelannye kartiny*), likewise pursued his own very singular and non-classifiable approach to painting.[76] Along with the German expressionists, he shared the desire to move beyond the superficial, formal elements of an artistic style in order to reveal universal principles and intrinsic meaning, but his approach, philosophy, and symbolism extended much further.

Finally, we turn to the Portuguese painter Mário Eloy, a largely self-taught artist, who drew inspiration from the work of artists such as El Greco, Cézanne, van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse, and Kokoschka (Figure 0.20). Eloy's artistic style, which married cubist geometrization with the emotional tensions of expressionism and the subtle unrest of Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity), reflected a life shaped by psychological problems, strong mood swings, and the gradual progression of Huntington's disease, which eventually led to his death.[77]

Hybrid Modernism versus Radical Avant-Garde Art

During the interwar period, expressionism provided an artistic idiom for both anti-war and leftist political engagement, often with the inclusion of socialist ideas as well as anti-war positions built on more universal and often religious perspectives that would eventually move toward traditionalism in art and embrace Neue Sachlichkeit. This division within the expressionist

movement marks the distinction between expressionism as radical avant-garde art versus aesthetic/universal modernism.

In Poland after 1918, expressionism as a German movement was perceived by some as a foreign style and an ideology dangerous to the new Polish state; at the same time, others used it as a label for various modern stylistic tendencies and related it in avant-garde terms to a social-aesthetic revolution, with Berlin as the crucial melting pot and hub for a transnational exchange network of artistic ideas. For artists in the Poznań-based group Bunt, expressionism was a means to connect with the international avant-garde. In contrast, expressionism in Estonia comprised merely a number of individual artistic approaches seeking expressive form for depicting emotional experiences and social tensions. Modernist artists in Estonia adopted various concepts and mixed artistic styles—a fauvist color palette, neoimpressionist pointillism, and the Russian fusion of cubism, futurism, and constructivism, for example—thus expressionism became just one ingredient in a hybrid modernism on the European periphery.

Much the same thing happened in Slovenia, where expressionism evolved from an amalgamation of impressionism, the Secession movement, expressionist tendencies, and folk art that mixed prewar influences with new postwar tendencies. A rather heterogeneous artistic response to the new political, social, and individual psychological situation marking the immediate aftermath of the First World War and the chaotic early 1920s, expressionism was also linked with the so-called New Catholic Renaissance, i.e., the reinstatement of religious art—the return of the divine at a moment of despair and destitution, leading toward more traditional subjects and New Objectivity. Expressionism in Croatian culture manifested itself as the sum of individual contributions marked by diverse artistic influences. Its all-encompassing affirmation began during the First World War with the emergence of magazines that propagated revolt against conventional culture and traditional aesthetic forms. Immediately after the war, expressionism took up the undisputed avant-garde position on the Zagreb cultural stage. Artists such as Vilko Gecan articulated it on two levels: on the level of content and on the level of form, expressing a feeling of uneasiness, insecurity, anxiety, and even drama.

In Serbia, expressionism cannot be distinguished as an art movement with a coherent style or ideology; it existed as an impulse that episodically appeared within the individual practice of various artists, marking the period of transformation from impressionism and naturalism toward what Serbia art historians call the *new art*, which developed after the First World War and during the 1920s. Likewise on the Iberian Peninsula, expressionism did not figure prominently in the development of modern art, but was pursued by artistic outsiders. This was not only due to the region's peripheral geographical location but also because of the political situation—the Franco regime in Spain and the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal, who oversaw artistic production and promoted rather conservative and nationalist artistic values.

Conclusion

Expressionism as a current of European modernism is most readily to be seen in central Europe, particularly in those artistic centers that were part of or closely linked with the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian empires, such as Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary. On the northern European periphery, in Scandinavia, the movement was most closely associated with French fauvism and the art of Henri Matisse. In the other, more peripheral regions of Europe, including the Baltics and the Balkans, expressionism neither appeared as a clearly defined movement with a specific program or ideological background nor succeeded in creating a distinctive and autonomous style. Instead we find a hybrid modernism that linked aspects of expressionism, cubism, and futurism in the prewar period and eventually moved toward

more radical avant-garde art (constructivism) or toward traditionalism (new objectivity) during the interwar period.

Expressionism in the United States and Canada in the 1910s often intersected with other styles, in particular fauvism but also cubism and abstraction. North American expressionists, among them Albert Bloch, Fritz Brandtner, Charles Burchfield, and Marsden Hartley, felt a particular affinity for German art, culture, and society, which separated them from the majority of the Canadian and American modernists, who were more interested in French art and culture. Thus, expressionism in North America evolved from a more personal and spiritual art form to one that became more socially aware and politically active in the 1930s and 1940s, when it also influenced regionalism, social realism, and American surrealism. In contrast, Latin American painters reinterpreted and appropriated the visual language and aesthetic principles of German, figurative expressionism in order to represent their individual countries' particular realities, emphasizing or denouncing the challenges posed by the process of modernization. This was made possible by the establishment of transatlantic relations and cultural exchanges through travel and migration, as was also the case in South Africa, where German expressionism played a significant role in the emergence of modern art in general. The settler artists Irma Stern and Maggie Laubser, who worked closely with Brücke artists in Berlin, looked to the "primitive" sense of life they fictionalized in their paintings as a welcome alternative to war-torn Europe and a way to establish themselves as modern painters in their South Africa.

This volume makes accessible in English a wealth of source materials and scholarly discussions that have to a large extent previously been restricted to less widely read languages and regional audiences. A special feature of the book is its global scope, bringing together contributions from almost all geographical regions of Europe, North and Latin America, and South Africa. We therefore hope that the book will serve as a major reference work on expressionism in twentieth-century art and culture.

Notes

1 Norma Broude, ed., *World Impressionism: The International Movement 1860–1920* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990).
2 Claudine Grammont, "Henri Matisse as Herr Professor: The Académie Matisse and the Internationalization of the Avant-Garde, 1905–1914," in *Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky*, ed. Timothy O. Benson (Munich: Prestel, 2014), 155.
3 Gustav Geffroy, *L'oeuvre de Gustave Moreau* [The Work of Gustave Moreau] (Paris, 1903), 29, cited in Donald E. Gordon, "On the Origin of the Word Expressionism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 368.
4 Henri Matisse, "Notes d'un peintre" [Notes of a Painter], *La Grande Revue* [The Great Review], December 25, 1908. English translation in: Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 73.
5 Grammont, "Henri Matisse as Herr Professor," 156–158; see also Shulamith Behr, "Académie Matisse and Its Relevance in the Life and Work of Sigrid Hjerten," in *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900–1925*, ed. Hubert van den Berg et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 149–161.
6 See Chapter 1 in this volume.
7 *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, Nov. 8, 1910 to Jan. 15, 1911 (London, 1910; exh. cat.). Roger Fry, quoted in Frances Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art and Life* (London: Elek, 1980), 133. See Chapter 14 in this volume.
8 "Ferner haben wir noch eine Anzahl Werke jüngerer französischer Maler, der Expressionisten, untergebracht, die wir glauben nicht dem Publikum und namentlich nicht den Künstlern vorenthalten zu dürfen, da die Secession es von jeher für ihre Pflicht hielt, zu zeigen, was ausserhalb Deutschlands Interessantes geschaffen wird." *Katalog der XXII. Ausstellung der Berliner Secession* [Catalogue of the 22nd Exhibition of the Berlin Secession] (Berlin, 1911), 11. See also Marit Werenskiold, *The Concept of Expressionism: Origin and Metamorphoses* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984), 5.