

AUGUST MACKE – UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

A Selection of Drawings and Pictures

February 10 – May 13, 2017



GALERIE THOMAS

FOREWORD

In the new exhibition, Galerie Thomas is presenting August Macke with a fine and private selection of family owned drawings, watercolours and paintings. Around 50 works give an insight into the artist's oeuvre from the beginning of his style development until shortly before World War I, which proved fatal for this important German Expressionist as well. Macke's path to the 'Blue Rider' can clearly be traced, up to his typical pictorial language, which – always focused on the figure – draws attention to colour first and at the same time gives a sense of the strong influence of the French Fauves – especially by Henri Matisse. There are works on paper and oil paintings which are autobiographically motivated and tell of Macke's stay in his home town Bonn and in Tegernsee. Equally present are pictures of the family or the circle of friends, for example of his wife Elisabeth or his son Walter. Impressions of every day life antedate the journey to Tunis in layout and composition, and Macke's interest in textile art also becomes comprehensible in his imaginative, colourful designs.

Macke may have been the most down-to-earth Expressionist, especially in the circle surrounding the Blue Rider, whose proximity to esoteric thought was evident in an even more spiritual manner than it was with the artists of the 'Brücke' group and yet played a very minor role for August Macke. In comparison to Kandinsky or Jawlensky, Macke was clearly less spiritually minded, instead he was drawn to the elementary power and the beauty of nature – possibly a mental connection with Matisse. Still, August Macke was also concerned with the questions of painterly abstraction, quite early on in fact, which some of the works within the exhibition reveal. But his closeness to nature and to people – which brings him much closer to Franz Marc or Gabriele Münter than to the other members to the Blue Rider and in his humanity clearly makes him a Rhenish Expressionist – has set August Macke in his art on a lifelong quest for the beauty and depth of life. It was defined by his dictum, which is inscribed in his memorial stone in Bonn: "For me, working is suffusing nature with joy."

Silke Thomas



"It was a 100 year-old farmer's house, situated somewhat elevated, surrounded by a large fruit orchard and two additional houses [...]. In front of the house were a small, overgrown arbour and a wood-lined bed, seeded with sunflowers. [...] The house was a solid farmer's house, preserved by tradition and culture for generations."

Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke, about 1910

„Worlds are opening up in this silence.“

August Macke, 1910

Our Little House in Tegernsee

oil on wood, 1910

30 x 19.5 cm / 11 ⁷/₈ x 7 ¹/₂ in.



Elisabeth

charcoal on paper, 1909, 28.5 x 27.5 cm / 11 1/4 x 10 7/8 in.
reverse: two drawings of a Christ sculpture, by Helmuth Macke



Girl Sewing by the Lamp (Elisabeth)

charcoal and pencil on paper, 1910
26 x 25.2 cm / 10 1/4 x 9 7/8 in.

"Dear Li, do you believe me, that you are my second me? But what am I asking?
I know my dearest sunflower oh so well. [...] Of course you are my main motif."

Letter from August Macke to Elisabeth, 1905



Elisabeth in the Bay Window

pencil on parchment paper, on paper, 1910
49.8 x 36.9 cm / 19 ⁵/₈ x 14 ¹/₂ in.



Morning Breakfast

pencil on paper, 1911
8 x 11 cm / 3 ¹/₈ x 4 ³/₈ in.



Female Nude

pencil on parchment paper, 1912
31.9 x 27 cm / 12 1/2 x 10 5/8 in.



Mother with Children

pencil on paper, 1913
16.4 x 10.3 cm / 6 1/2 x 4 in.

Elisabeth Gerhardt

charcoal on paper, 1908
17 x 13 cm / 6 5/8 x 5 1/8 in.





Elisabeth Reading on Green Sofa

oil and pencil on cardboard, on canvas, 1908
23.2 x 17.2 cm / 9 ¹/₈ x 6 ³/₄ in.



August Macke painted *Bildnis Walter Macke mit Rosenstrauß* (Portrait of Walter Macke with Bouquet of Roses) in Bonn in 1913. It shows the elder of Macke's two sons sitting on the couch in his parents' living room. August Macke painted several portraits of Walter: as early as three days after his birth, Macke created the first painting of the infant, and in 1912, the artist depicted his son on a small canvas with the same lace collar as in the portrait with the bouquet of roses.

The blue couch and table in front of the green wall appear in several paintings, watercolours and drawings, mostly of Elisabeth Macke reading or sleeping. Besides his typical colours, Macke used a characteristic perspective, concentrating the composition on the boy, who is most accurately painted, while the bunch of roses functions as an eccentric repoussoir which creates depth and pictorial dynamics and completes the composition to the left.

Portrait of Walter Macke with Bouquet of Roses

oil on canvas, 1913

85 x 78 cm / 33 1/2 x 30 3/4 in.

"The African landscape is even more beautiful than the Provence.
I would have never imagined that 200 steps away from us is a Bedouin camp
with black tents; donkey herds, camels and so forth are strolling around us."

Letter from August Macke to Elisabeth, Tunis 1914



Riding Arabs II

pencil on paper, 1913, 12.4 x 17.9 cm / 4 ⁷/₈ x 7 in.
reverse: Arabian heads



Battle of Turks

pencil on paper, 1912
11.5 x 19.9 cm / 4 ¹/₂ x 7 ⁷/₈ in.



Riding Javelin Throwers

pencil on paper, 1911
16.3 x 10.3 cm / 6 ³/₈ x 4 in.

Trotting Horse with Carriage

pencil on paper, 1912
8 x 10 cm / 3 ¹/₈ x 3 ⁷/₈ in.

Kings from the Orient II

pencil and coloured crayon on paper, 1913
22 x 28.5 cm / 8 ⁵/₈ x 11 ¹/₄ in.

Macke's *Bacchus* is based on an illustrated story by Wilhelm Busch (1832 – 1908), which describes how Silenus, the companion of Bacchus, drunkenly rides his donkey. The little Amor, winged god of love, plays pan pipes behind a hedge. When he sees Silenus on his donkey, Amor shoots a dart from his blowpipe into the donkey's behind, which then throws off its rider. To catch him, Silenus rests against a tree, pretending to be asleep.



Bacchus under a Tree
oil on wood, 1912
12 x 16 cm / 4 ¾ x 6 ¼ in.



Restaurant Garden
oil and charcoal on paper, 1907, 23 x 28.5 cm / 9 x 11 ¼ in.
signed and dated lower right



Woman Scooping Water

India ink and pen on paper, 1913, 11 x 8 cm / 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.



Stylized Bathing Woman

pencil on paper, 1912, 17.8 x 15.3 cm / 7 x 6 in.



Reclining Sleeping Woman

charcoal on parchment paper, 1912
27 x 32 cm / 10 ⁵/₈ x 12 ⁵/₈ in.



Cat

other side: *Bouquet of flowers with cigar*
oil on cardboard, 1912, 30.5 x 36 cm / 12 x 14 1/8 in.

"I was in Munich this week and met the brand new artist association at Thannhauser, Jawlensky – Kandinsky and so on.
These people are very, very good for Munich. It was interesting for me."

Letter from August Macke to Franz Marc, 1910



Abstract Forms I

pencil and coloured crayon on paper, 1913, 20.5 x 16 cm / 8 1/8 x 6 1/4 in.



Forms I

India ink on paper, 1913, 53.6 x 35.5 cm / 21 1/4 x 14 in.

"What you write about Kandinsky's journey of composition is all very dear to me and it all seems very necessary to me for the art.
The ornamental (in wider terms), the nature of things, which delights us (for example horse, human, tree).
Where lies the purest joy, in the purely musical-painterly or in the recreated expressive?"

Letter from August Macke to Franz Marc, 1911

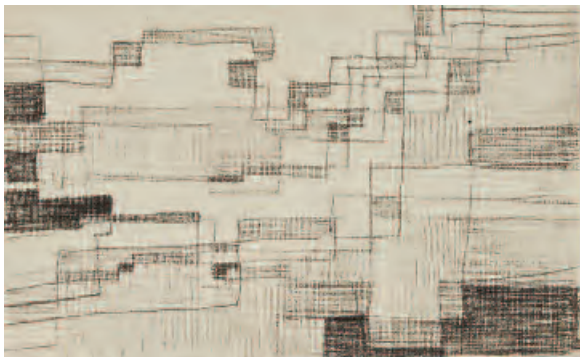


Bird with Flower Bouquet

pastel, coloured crayon and pencil
on parchment paper, 1912
32.1 x 26.8 cm / 12 ⁵/₈ x 10 ¹/₂ in.

Abstract Composition II

watercolour, pencil and colour
crayons on paper, 1913
21 x 16.3 cm / 8 ¹/₄ x 6 ³/₈ in.
on the reverse: cluster of lines



Abstract Composition XXXV

pencil on linen structured paper, 1913
8.3 x 13.3 cm / 3 ¹/₄ x 5 ¹/₄ in.





"A young farmer's boy came once in a while as a model, August painted after him."

Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke, about 1910

The depicted farmer's boy is the thirteen year old Franz Drexler from St Quirin at Tegernsee, whom August Macke approached on his way to school and asked, if he would model for him. Several works were created by Macke with the boy as a model, who received a silver coin each time. The farmer's boy sits on the balcony of the Staudacher House in Tegernsee, where the Macke family lived during these years.

Farmer Boy on Balcony

oil on canvas, 1910, 62.5 x 48.3 cm / 24 ⁵/₈ x 19 in.



Still Life with Water Carafe and Apples

India ink on drawing board, 1910, 49 x 33 cm / 19 1/4 x 13 in.
reverse: several sketches: *Don Quichotte I and II*, *Storyteller*, *Oriental Musicians*



Night-Time Promenade

watercolour and India ink on thick paper, 1904
9.5 x 5.7 cm / 3 1/2 x 2 1/8 in.

"This Bonn is quite the retiree town. Everything is very quiet, serious and inconspicuous. The area we live in has many stimulating things. Packs of dogs, horsemen and horsewomen, children battering each other. Then houses all around look at you with vivid eyes. This part of the town is extremely dear to me."

Letter from August Macke to Franz Marc, 1910



Adolfplatz in Bonn

charcoal on linen structured paper, 1908
12.8 x 17 cm / 5 x 6 ¾ in.

"Hilterfingen – what careless, happy and fulfilled time was bestowed on us both there with the children, paradisiacally beautiful, almost unreal – before the terrible world catastrophe came down on Europe!"

Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke, about 1913



Street in Hilterfingen

charcoal on paper, 1914
14.5 x 8.8 cm / 5 ¾ x 3 ½ in.

"Such a strong sensuality lies in the Italian landscape, as I would have never suspected it."

Letter from August Macke to Elisabeth, 1905



Memories from the Italian Journey

oil on board, 1908
15.5 x 11.5 cm / 6 ⅛ x 4 ½ in.



"I know no place offering
such classic, beautiful areas
as this wonderful Kandern.
If only you could be here.
I paint a lot."

*Letter from August Macke to
Elisabeth, 1905*

Church in Kandern

oil on cardboard, 1911
30 x 35 cm / 11 ⁷/₈ x 13 ³/₄ in.
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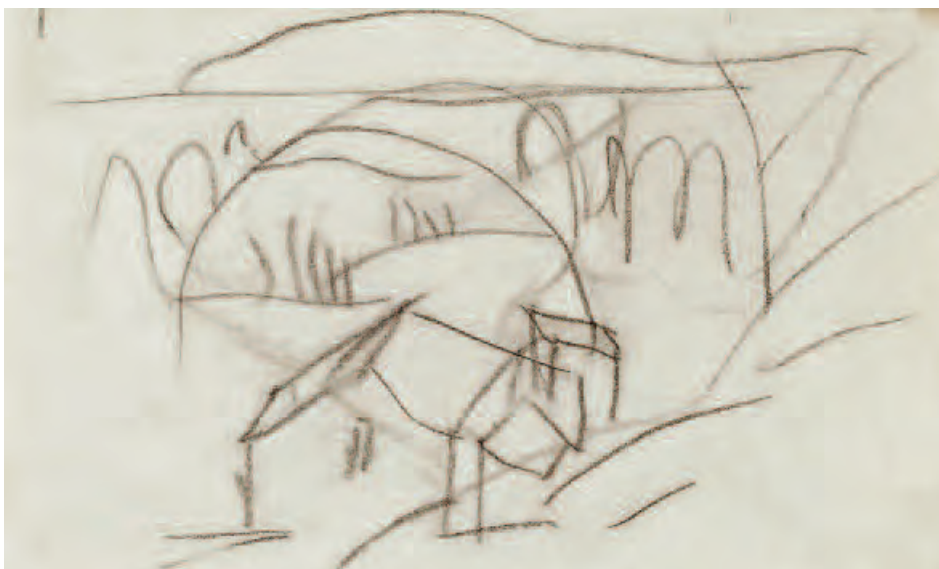
Types III

pencil on thin paper, 1913
16.3 x 10.3 cm / 10 ³/₈ x 4 in.



Landscape with Trees

pencil on paper, 1909/10
14.8 x 19 cm / 5 ⁷/₈ x 7 ¹/₂ in.
reverse: sketches



House on Slope

charcoal on paper, 1914
8.8 x 14.4 cm / 3 ³/₈ x 5 ⁵/₈ in.



*Nude Men
Scooping Water*

pencil on squared sketchbook
paper, 1913
13.5 x 7.5 cm / 5 ³/₈ x 2 ³/₄ in.
reverse: female nude

"Something absolutely new inspired August this year.

He started to draw designs for plates, vases and jars (I unfortunately don't remember what started it).
The motifs were predominantly Rococo scenes again, of which a series of charming watercolour designs exist."

Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke, about 1912



Playing Children in the Garden

watercolour, gouache, and pencil on
paper, 1912
54.6 x 68.8 cm / 21 1/2 x 27 1/8 in.



Design for Embroidery II

coloured chalk on parchment paper, 1912
32 x 27 cm / 12 5/8 x 10 5/8 in.



Pastoral Scene I

coloured and black India ink
on parchment paper, 1912
27 x 32.5 cm / 10 5/8 x 12 3/4 in.



Pastoral Scene II

coloured and black India ink
drawing paper, on cardboard, 1912
32.0 x 44.5 cm / 12 7/8 x 17 3/8 in.

"I have thought of you, dear child, a lot these past days, about both the little guys. I always see Wölfchen's dear, blonde head and Walter's big, dreaming eyes. If only I could see them both! Now I always see it as a miracle that these are my boys ... I would be happy to come home, into your arms, if I could paint again (it is almost like a dream now). But when I think about the children, a wild despair comes over me, that I might never see them again. It is only egotism, when I feel a pain about the sight of my children being wrested from me. Child, what will we be happy when this war is over and we are together again ..."

Letter from the field from August Macke to Elisabeth, 1914

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