

MASTERPIECES VI

EMIL NOLDE  
ALEX VON JAWLENSKY  
MAX ERNST  
SAM FRANCIS  
OSKAR SCHLEMMER  
OTTO MUELLER  
MAX PECHSTEIN  
ERICH HECKEL  
ALEXANDER CALDER  
WIFREDO LAM  
MAX LIEBERMANN

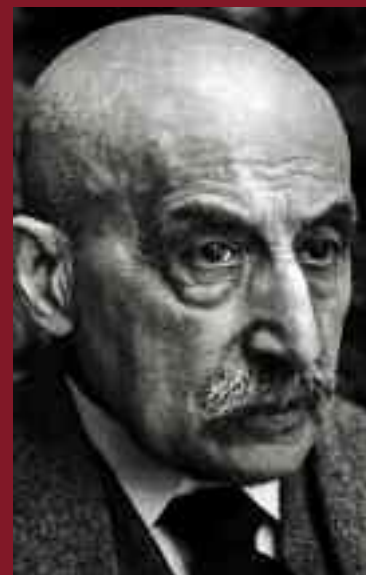
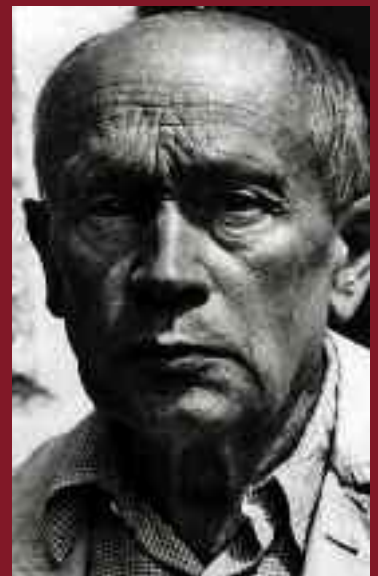
GALERIE THOMAS







## MASTERPIECES VI



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**GALERIE THOMAS**

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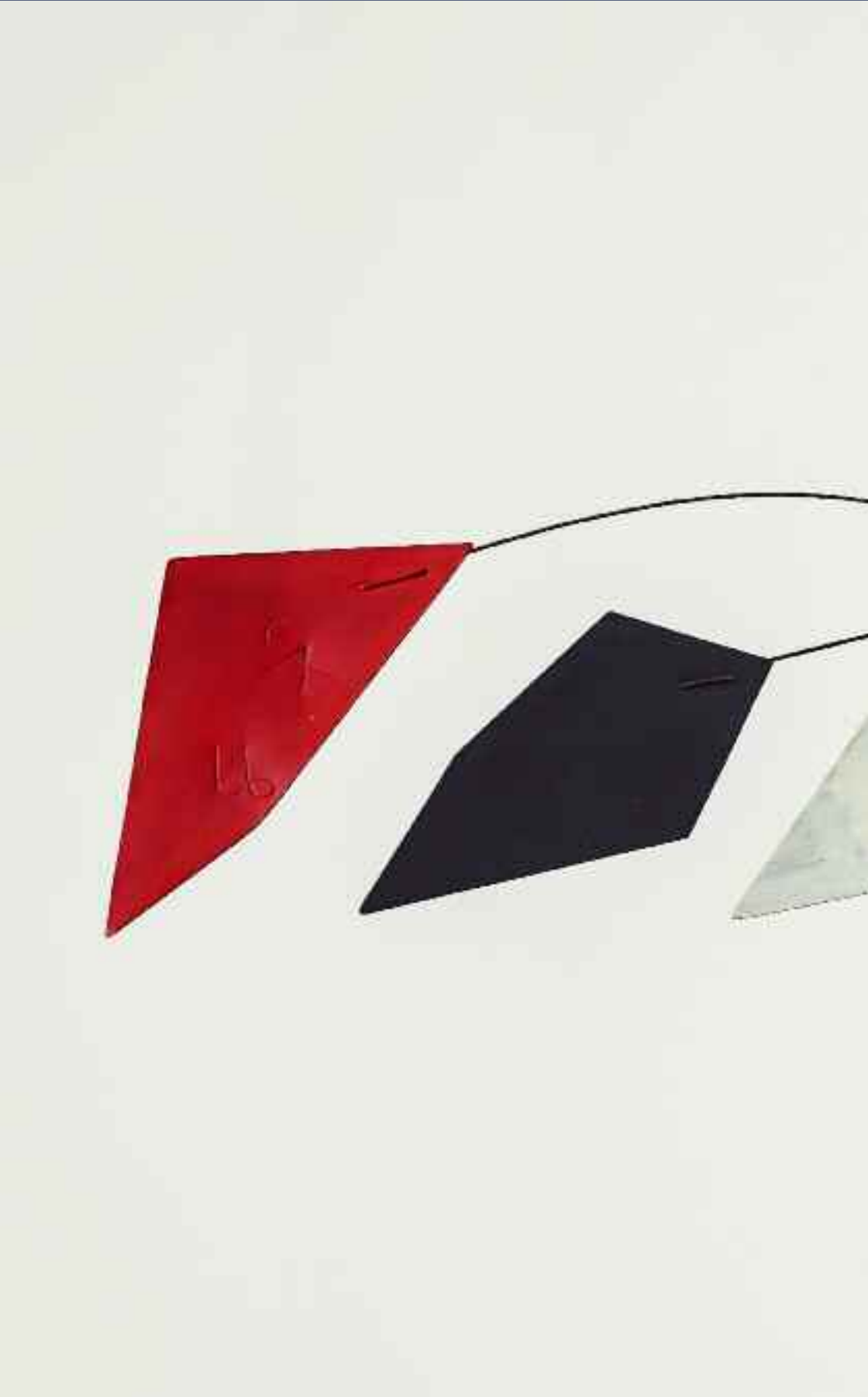
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**UNTITLED 1966**  
ALEXANDER CALDER

sheet metal and wire, painted

1966

38.1 x 111.7 x 111.7 cm

15 x 44 x 44 in.

signed with monogram

and dated on the largest

red element

Provenance

Galerie Maeght, Paris

Galerie Marconi, Milan (1979)

Private Collection (acquired from the above in 1979)

Private collection, USA (since 2013)

The work is registered in the  
archives of the Calder  
Foundation, New York under  
application number A25784.



# UNTITLED 1966

## ALEXANDER CALDER

"To most people who look at a mobile, it's no more than a series of flat objects that move. To a few, though, it may be poetry."

Alexander Calder

In the middle of the 1960s, the decade in which the untitled mobile being discussed here was created, Alexander Calder was concentrating on commissions for outdoor spaces or indoor public spaces, that is, on monumental sculptures, mostly stabiles, but also on large-format mobiles, which he had invented as an artistic form in the 1930s. In addition, there were works for the theatre, bringing him back full circle to the origins of his kinetic art.

With the *Cirque Calder*, which he had begun to develop in 1926, Calder not only explored the possibilities of wire sculpture, but also devoted himself to his favourite motif, the circus. Through the performances of the *Cirque*, Calder had, at the same

time, not yet become an exponent of kinetic art in the original sense of the word, but an exponent of a type of performance art that more or less invited the participation of the audience. He was thus moving between the worlds of theatre and of mechanical toys, which he both designed and produced himself in large numbers. Both elements are foundational for understanding his genuine invention of the mobile.

At that time, Calder was already moving in the circles of the Parisian Avant-garde and presenting his circus of wire sculptures to an illustrious audience of artistic and literary figures. In 1930, these included artists such as Joan Miró and Fernand Léger – who were to remain Calder's lifelong friends – or Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. In that year, Calder postponed his invitation to Theo van Doesburg to a performance of the *Cirque* by one day in order to avoid him having to meet Piet Mondrian – the two



main representatives of 'De Stijl' were in the meantime at loggerheads with each other about their understanding of abstract art.

For Calder and the development of his future mobile sculptures, the encounters with both of the latter were extremely productive. Calder's visit to Mondrian's studio in the same year has become part of the literature. This is how he tells the story:

"It was a very exciting room. Light came in from the left and from the right, and on the solid wall between the windows there were experimental stunts with coloured rectangles of cardboard tacked on. ... I suggested to Mondrian that perhaps it would be fun to make these rectangles oscillate. And he, with a very serious countenance, said: 'No it is not necessary, my painting is already very fast.' This one visit gave me a shock that started things. Though I had heard the word 'modern' before, I did not consciously know or feel the term 'abstract'. So

now, at thirty-two, I wanted to paint and work in the abstract. And for two weeks or so, I painted very modest abstractions. At the end of this, I reverted to plastic work which was still abstract."<sup>1</sup>

But Calder and van Doesburg are certain to have had a deeper consensus than this on their concept of art. Even in 1966 – the year in which the mobile which is in our focus here was created – Calder's description of his memory of van Doesburg's visit after the two performances of the circus is very revealing: "I got more of a reaction from Doesburg than I had from the whole gang the night before."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the theoretical understanding of Theo van Doesburg's Elementarism seems to have had a greater impact than the frequently evoked influence of Mondrian's Neo-plasticism and Calder's experience of awakening to abstraction in Mondrian's studio. Van Doesburg's dynamic contra-compositions

Alexander Calder  
*Calder's Circus*  
1926-1931  
Whitney Museum of  
American Art

<sup>1</sup> Calder 1966, quoted from Achim Borchardt-Hume (Ed.). *Alexander Calder – Performing Sculpture*. (New Haven: 2015) p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Calder 1966, quoted from Achim Borchardt-Hume (Ed.). *Alexander Calder – Performing Sculpture*. (New Haven: 2015) p. 218.

reflect quite precisely what Calder tried to achieve a little later with his mobiles. Although van Doesburg's reflections on pure concrete art beyond the abstraction of nature seem too strict at first glance to be able to describe Calder's sculptures, the latter are ultimately just that: concrete objects. Van Doesburg describes this progress from abstraction to concretion in exactly the same year, 1930, in which Calder had his revelation with abstraction: "In their search for purity, artists were forced to abstract the natural forms which concealed the plastic elements, to destroy the natural forms and, in their place, to substitute artistic forms. Today the idea of an art form is just as obsolete as that of a natural form. With our construct of the spiritual form, the era of pure painting is advancing. It is the concretisation of the creative spirit."<sup>3</sup>.

This summarizes all the theoretical and artistic ambitions of the Avant-garde of the 1920s, in which Calder's creative development took place: his forerunners and contemporaries, who paved the way for kinetic art, that is, the Constructivists, Duchamp, Moholy-Nagy, and Mondrian, as well as the already earlier virulent reflections in painting and sculpture on a non-mimetic, simultaneous art – that is, art that incorporates the passage of time and emulates the fourth dimension – as well as synesthetic and abstract, non-representational art.

The fact that the artists with whom Calder was acquainted recognized his importance for the development of sculpture, which made him the founder of all kinetic art in post-war art, is indicated by the distinctive aristocracy of the sponsors for the names of his works. After Marcel Duchamp had spontaneously called Calder's first movable sculptures 'mobiles', Jean Arp invented the term 'stables' for the American's immovable sculptures a year later, albeit more as a sarcastic commentary on Duchamp's word coinage.

The mobile became the unmistakable hallmark of Calder's art, and in the following thirty years he advanced this invention to ever new variations and twists. While the early mobiles were occasionally still iconographically legible – for example in the frequent occurrence of fish shapes – Calder's sculptures subsequently lost all figurative connotation. Despite this, associations with natural phenomena still generally prevail in the description of his mobiles: leaves, birds, feathers, flowers and more of

that kind. The fact is often overlooked that mobiles are altogether complex, mathematically calculated and totally abstract objects. This does not prevent their poetry from being developed through such lyrical analogies, as Calder himself says, but it does not capture the core of their artistic significance.

The actual relation to nature does not lie in these earthly analogies, but in the incomprehensible physics of the cosmos. Calder undoubtedly came into contact with the theories set up by van Doesburg and others in the wake of the reflections by Malevich on time and space and the fourth dimension – fully in keeping with the enthusiasm of the 1920s for modern physics and the theory of relativity. Of Calder's close associates not only had Theo van Doesburg delved deeply into this topic, Edgar Varese, of Calder's closer circle in Paris, was also supportive of this concept.<sup>4</sup> Calder expressed this comparison to his mobiles in 1932 as follows:

"Out of volumes, motion, spaces bounded by the great space, the universe.

Out of different masses, light, heavy, middling – indicated by variations of size or colour – directional line – vectors which represent speeds, velocities, accelerations, forces, etc ... – these directions making between them meaningful angles, and senses, together defining one big conclusion or many.

Spaces, volumes, suggested by the smallest means in contrast to their mass, or even including them, juxtaposed, pierced by vectors, crossed by speeds. Nothing at all of this is fixed.

Each element able to move, to stir, to oscillate, to come and go in its relationships with the other elements in its universe."<sup>5</sup>

Almost twenty years later he formulated this analogy even more specifically:

"I think that at that time and practically ever since, the underlying sense of form in my work has been the system of the Universe, or part thereof. For that is a rather large model to work from. What I mean is that the idea of detached bodies floating in space, of different sizes and densities, perhaps of different colours and temperatures, and surrounded and interlarded with wisps of gaseous condition, and some at rest, while others move in peculiar manners, seems to me the ideal source of form."<sup>6</sup>

This, then, is a very precise statement that Calder sees a four-dimensional art in his mobiles that

<sup>3</sup> Theo van Doesburg, *Commentaires sur la base de la peinture concrete*. In: *Art Concret* 1 (Paris : 1930) pp. 1-4; quoted from Charles Harrison, Paul Wood (Eds.). *Kunsttheorie im 20. Jahrhundert*. Vol. 1 (Ostfildern-Ruit: 1998) P. 442.

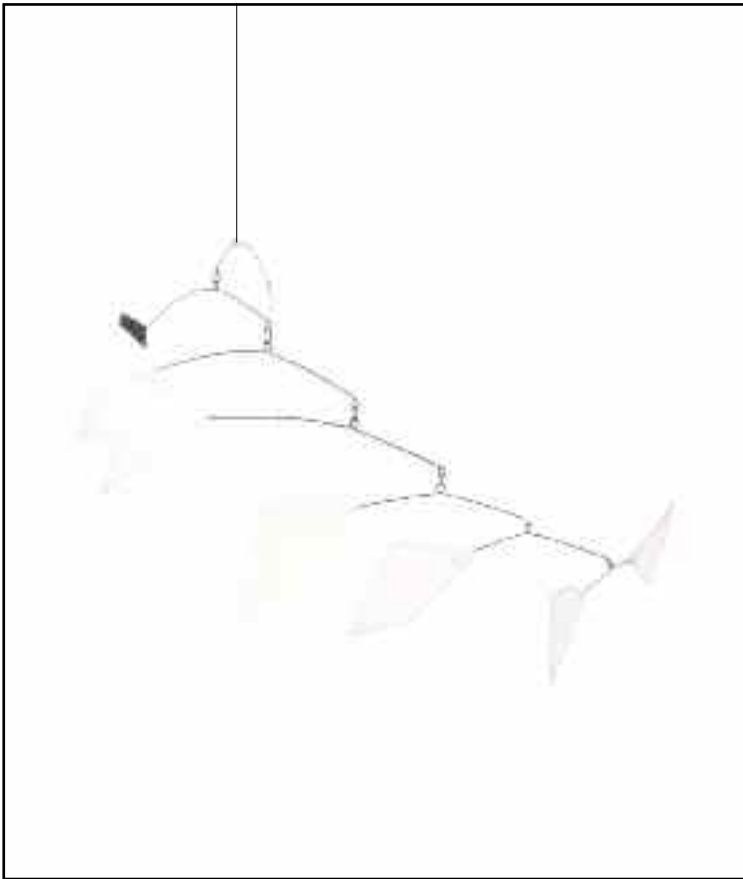
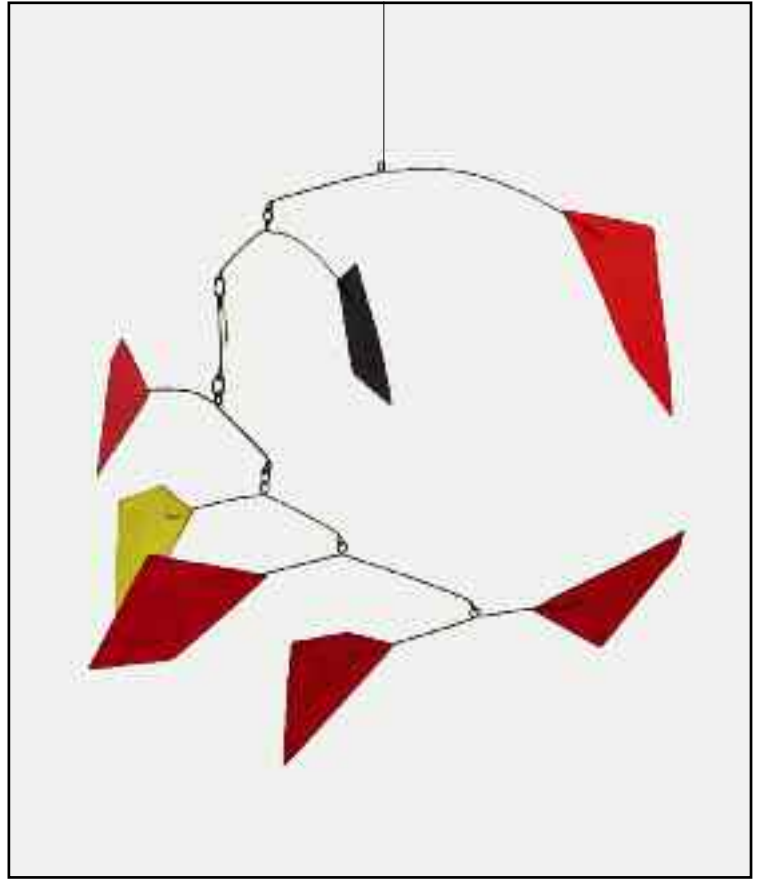
<sup>4</sup> For details on this point, see Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidian Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Calder. *Comment réaliser l'art?* In: *Abstraction-Création, Art Non Figuratif*, No. 1 (1932), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Calder. *What Abstract Art Means to Me*. In: *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 18, No. 3 (1951), p. 8-9.







brings together colours, forms, space, time and movement in ever new constellations, on the basis of the artist's composition (one is tempted to say the arrangement). Calder also sees movement as a compositional task: "Just as one can compose colours, or forms, so one can compose motions." And although the actual, manifold possibilities of movement are influenced by unpredictable external conditions and cannot therefore be anticipated, they nevertheless follow the laws determined by the artist through combination, size, colour, weight, precise balancing, etc. of these more or less complex structures.

In the course of his work, Calder experimented with numerous, sometimes very complicated variations in designing the structure of his mobiles. We see multiple branching and extreme differences in size of the individual elements, as well as the use of different shapes or materials. Also, the colouring, although essentially reduced to black, white and the primary colours – with Calder himself admitting to a preference for red<sup>7</sup> – is very diverse and another variable of the composition.

In his 1966 mobile, Calder used closed plane figures of varying sizes which he himself called polygons – in the colours black, white, red and yellow, with red dominating. In the typical application of the principle of the lever, the largest red element balances out the remaining seven elements, which in turn keep each other in balance. The mobile also has seven pivot and anchor points at which the individual parts can move with or against each other. Overall, one could speak of a simplification, but rather of a concentration of the earlier, more complex mobile structures. In contrast to the works with several branches, the mobile from 1966 is, to a certain extent, one-directional and very homogeneous, the quintessence of the concept of mobiles.

According to Calder<sup>8</sup> the extension of a mobile – which appears longitudinal in a static illustration – can only be described as a circle around the greatest possible distance between the two outermost elements. For it is a kinetic spatial sculpture, a three-dimensional moving structure or, if you will, a four-dimensional abstract painting – a constellation in the best and true sense of the word.

Jean Paul Sartre described the movement of the mobile as the essential characteristic, as it is not an

illusion but reality, and although Calder's works seemed to him to be absolute, self-referential and unsymbolic, Sartre at the same time described the lyrical expression of these objects, which seemed to be alive and, as Calder claimed for himself, much closer to nature than to technology.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps Alexander Calder's mobile can indeed best be described in Jean Paul Sartre's words: "Un mobile: une petite fête locale" – a mobile by Calder is a little local festival.

<sup>7</sup> As in an interview with Katharine Kuh. In: Katharine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York: 1962) pp. 38-51.

<sup>8</sup> Calder in a manuscript dated October 7, 1943, now in the Calder Foundation in New York.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Paul Sartre. *Les Mobiles de Calder*. In: Alexander Calder: *Mobiles, Stables, Constellations*. Exhib. Cat. (Paris: 1946) pp. 9-19.



# ALEXANDER CALDER

PHILADELPHIA 1898 – 1976 NEW YORK

## THE YEAR 1966

Once the major retrospectives of 1964, at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and 1965, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, had finished, Alexander Calder, in 1966, turned his artistic attention chiefly to commissions for public spaces. Such monumental works had increasingly occupied the artist in the preceding years. In 1966, three large 'stables' were erected and inaugurated in Calder's presence. The work *Peace* for the United Nations building in New York and in the same month *La Grande Voile* for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which he had conceived in collaboration with the architect I. M. Pei, were finally followed. In December 1966 by *Monaco* in the capital city of the Principality on the Côte d'Azur. Calder attended the inauguration in the presence of Prince Rainier and his consort Gracia Patricia, formerly the American actress Grace Kelly.

With just a few brief interruptions for travel in the USA, Calder spent the year in France with his wife Louisa, mostly at his house in Saché. In the same year, Calder also emerged as an author: his 'An Autobiography with Pictures' was published by Pantheon Books.

Alexander Calder,  
1952







# LES PEUPLIERS 1939

MAX ERNST

oil on paper on wood

1939

38.5 x 28 cm

15 1/8 x 11 in.

signed lower right

Spies/Metken 2334

Provenance

Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago

Eugene V. Klein, Sherman Oaks

Galleria Galatea, Turin

Galleria Iolas-Galatea, Rome

Galerie Levy, Hamburg

Private collection, Switzerland

Exhibited

Mayor Gallery, London 1959. Max Ernst. No. 22

Graphisches Kabinett Kunsthandel Wolfgang Werner, Bremen 1986.

Max Ernst, Werke aus den Jahren 1920-1940. No. 23, col.ill.

Museo del Corso, Rome 2002. Max Ernst e I suoi amici Surrealisti.

Fundacion Barrié, A Coruna 2004. Surrealismo. Max Ernst y sus amigos surrealistas.

Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris; Guggenheim, Bilbao 2012-2013. L'art en guerre.

Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf 2013. Unter der Erde, von Kafka bis Kippenberger.

No. 26, p. 92, col. ill.

Camp des Milles, Aix-en-Provence 2013. Bellmer, Ernst, Springer et Wols au camp des Milles. 2013.

Literature

Spies, Werner und Metken, Sigrid und Günter. Max Ernst Werke 1939-1953.

Cologne 1987. P. 16, No. 2334, col. ill.

Drost, Julia und Collombat, Sophie. Max Ernst Leben und Werk. Cologne 2005. P. 160, col. ill.





# LES PEUPLIERS 1939

MAX ERNST

In 1938 Max Ernst left the Surrealist group and fled from Paris to Saint-Martin d'Ardèche, a small village in southern France about fifty kilometres north of Avignon, with his new lover, the artist Leonora Carrington. The disputes with the Surrealists and with his wife Marie-Berthe Aurenche prompted Ernst to seek a hideaway with Leonora Carrington in virtual secrecy. In the old farmhouse the couple bought there, they created a Gesamtkunstwerk adorned with sculptures and paintings, where they worked together and entertained their artist friends: Paul Eluard with his wife Nusch, Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Man Ray were among those who visited them here.

The artists' idyll was cut short by the outbreak of war in 1939. Max Ernst was interned – part of the time with Hans Bellmer – in the notorious camp Les Milles, was released through the intervention of Paul Eluard and then detained again; he escaped twice and finally fled to the USA via Marseille, Madrid and Lisbon during 1941 and 1942. There was one more short meeting with Leonora in Lisbon, but their plans to escape together were dashed.<sup>1</sup>

One of the murals Max Ernst painted in Saint-Martin d'Ardèche was given the title *Un peu de calme* (a little tranquillity) – a reflection on the situation in this short intermezzo.

In 1939, a year marked by extreme events, Max Ernst painted *Les peupliers*. The direct association of two poplars against the blue background of the sky, as evoked by the title of the picture, is only taken in with the first look at the work. This perception is soon shattered and overturned by the bizarre, strange and confusing forms in which the paint winds, curls and forms signs and symbols.

Nowhere does the eye succeed in focussing on a familiar shape: profiles and faces, zoomorphic figures and cloud-like formations materialise, only to disappear again. Max Ernst achieves this surface effect through the technique of decalcomania, a transfer process, in which the paint is manipulated in such a way that the streaks, bubbles and curves that are typical of Ernst's paintings of this period are formed on the surface in an unplanned manner.

Through the brown hue of the paint the structures become reminiscent of earth formations, sand dunes or cliff edges, an alienating effect that Max Ernst most certainly intended. The inclusion of such technical, experimental procedures, and of forms of appearance that flow in an unstructured way into the image, is central to the aesthetic understanding of Surrealism. The range of possible interpretations in connection with the mysteriousness of the unread-

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g. Max Ernst. Fotografische Porträts und Dokumente, Exhib. Cat. (Brühl: 1991) pp. 136-139; Werner Spies (Ed.). Max Ernst, Leben und Werk (Cologne: 2005) pp. 141-151.





Max Ernst and Leonora Carrington,  
St Martin d'Ardeche, France 1939

Max Ernst's House  
St. Martin d'Ardeche  
France 1939

able – yet seemingly most meticulously planned and highly meaningful depiction, sets in motion the perception located between dream and reality that makes the expansion of consciousness as sought by the Surrealists possible in the first place.

*Les Peupliers* is one of a whole group of paintings in Max Ernst's oeuvre that contain rather similar stele-shaped structures and forms, created using the technique of decalcomania, and blend these structures into whole landscapes. The most important work in this group, of which *Les Peupliers* is one of the immediate forerunners, is without doubt the second version of *Europe After the Rain*, painted by Max Ernst between 1940 and 1942. Here the vertical forms and porous sections of landscape appear as a direct commentary on the events of war: a dreadfully changed Europe is presented to the eye of the observer, replacing the cheerful mood of the summer of 1939 at the Ardèche. The fact that Max Ernst is able to depict two completely conflicting perceptions using one and the same style, the same elements and an analogous iconography – if the imagery can

even be described as such – proves, on the one hand, the effectiveness of the surrealist concept and, on the other, the latent ambiguity and ambivalence of the art of Surrealism.

While the painterly surface in *Europe After the Rain II* has been transmuted into a metaphor for menace, destruction and violence, in *Les Peupliers* it still stood for the bucolic existence in Ernst and Carrington's hideaway in southern France. In both pictures, however, Max Ernst also successfully integrates the presentiment of the 'other' in each case – the menace as well as the hope.







# MAX ERNST

BRÜHL 1891 – 1976 PARIS

## THE YEAR 1939

After leaving the group of Surrealists, his wife and Paris in 1938, Max Ernst lived with Leonora Carrington in Saint-Martin-d'Ardèche, in a farm house that had been redecorated by the two artists. His break with the Surrealist movement is blamed on André Breton's feud with Paul Éluard, to whom Max Ernst remained a loyal friend. Breton's exhortation to sabotage Éluard's poem "using all available means," infuriated Ernst. Paul Éluard and his wife Nusch visited Ernst and Leonora Carrington at the refuge in the South of France, but this brief respite – Max Ernst painted his biggest mural *Un peu de calme* (a little calm) at his house on the Ardèche – was to be short lived. The outbreak of the Second World War would turn 1939 into a year of extremes.

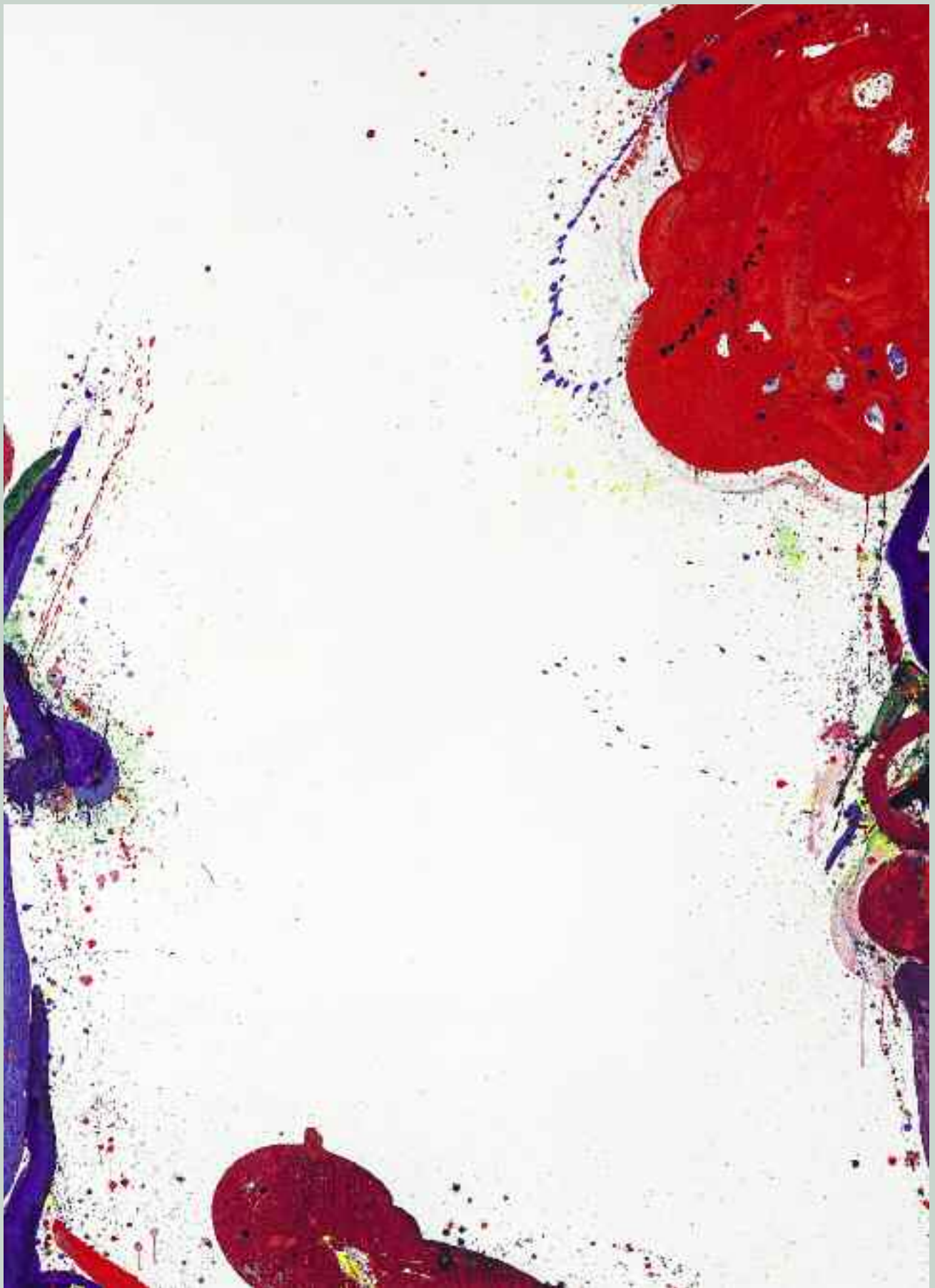
Following a year that was artistically fertile at first – with the creation of important works such as *Attirement of the Bride* or *Fascinating Cypress*, not to mention the sculptures and murals in St-Martin – Max Ernst was interned as a citizen of the German Reich. First he was detained in the L'Argentière camp, where he shared a room with Hans Bellmer. The camp commander required him to paint a view of the camp and Max Ernst yielded to the wish. Many years after the war, the former commander implored his now famous (and pricey) ex-prisoner Ernst, who was living in Paris again, to authenticate the painting as a "genuine Max Ernst". Ernst decisively rejected the appeal in an elegantly formulated, sarcastic reply to "Mon Capitaine".

In 1939, however, Max Ernst was still a prisoner in the notorious Les Milles camp. Only the intervention of his friend Paul Éluard, who championed Ernst, achieved his temporary release. Shortly afterwards, he was denounced and arrested again. In the following year, Ernst could be found on board the 'ghost train', which could evacuate the prisoners to Marseilles ahead of the German troops. This provided an opportunity for Max Ernst to escape and, with the help of Peggy Guggenheim, to reach New York by perilous means. By then the contact with Leonora Carrington had already broken off.

Max Ernst  
1933







# UNTITLED 1964/1965

SAM FRANCIS

acrylic and oil on canvas  
1964/1965  
305 x 212 cm  
120 x 83 1/4 in.  
verso signed and dated

Provenance  
Estate of the artist (1994)  
Private collection, Belgium (2000)  
Galerie Thomas Modern, Munich (2008)  
Private collection, Europe (2010)

SFF.410 Exhibited  
Royal Dublin Society, Dublin 1967. ROSC. No. 37  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1968. Sam Francis. No. 56, ill.  
Kunsthalle Basel, Basel 1968. Sam Francis. No. 73  
Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn; Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1993. Sam Francis. P. 174s., col. ill.

Literature  
Burchett-Lere, Debra. Sam Francis, Catalogue Raisonné of Canvas and Panel Paintings, 1946-1994.  
Berkeley 2011. No. SFF.410. CD with col. ill.



# UNTITLED 1964/1965

SAM FRANCIS

Sam Francis began work on this large, untitled painting in 1964, the same year that the renowned American art critic Clement Greenberg coined the term "post-painterly abstraction" for an exhibition he curated at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.<sup>1</sup> He sought to find an expression for his observation that recent tendencies in Abstract Expressionism indicated a shift toward a freer use of colour, larger unpainted areas, and a more one-dimensional approach to surfaces, which he called "flatness". Along with Sam Francis, the exhibition included artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland.

Ultimately, this freer mode of painting, characterized by non-hierarchical composition, gestural painting, and spontaneity, is an echo of earlier informal styles of painting, especially in Europe, and so it is not surprising that in 1970 the term "lyrical abstraction", based on the French 'abstraction lyrique', was coined and came into use.<sup>2</sup>

While in Sam Francis's paintings from the 1950s the canvases were often nearly completely covered with almost hazy fields of colour – which gave them the name "Cloud Paintings"<sup>3</sup> – the sky played an increasingly important role in the second half of the decade. The white areas grew larger and came to occupy ever more space in his paintings, and at first the viewer is confronted with a puzzle in which it is unclear whether the white areas overpower the colours or the coloured areas are about to penetrate into the white.

*Untitled*, which was painted shortly before the mid-1960s, shows the extensive development that this approach from the late 1950s underwent and which culminated in the 'Edge Paintings' beginning around 1965, with a radical climax starting in 1967: the canvas is left almost completely white, and only on the outermost edges do narrow bands of colour remain. With the growth of the central white area and the spread of the paint beyond the edge of the canvas, the paintings also increased in size. Even though *Untitled* is not a small painting, in these years Francis already enlarged his pictorial spaces to monumental proportions.

The colour fields condensed again beginning in the early 1970s to form grid structures, which in some works have an almost geometrically organized appearance. Sam Francis's paintings became solidified colour fields, and only in the 1980s did he return to these coloured areas and reveal the background – that is, the light and white areas.

Perhaps the formulation that Sam Francis found for *Untitled* and that dominates his works from this period can be understood as the most characteristic phase of the artist's work. After all, the large-scale paintings with colours dynamically surrounding a bright, white centre, which burst with power and energy in gestural accentuation, mainly concentrating on primary colours, and with impulsive drippings – so much so that they could be interpreted as explicitly erotic<sup>4</sup> – present an outstanding embodiment of the painter's central artistic ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Clement Greenberg: PostPainterly Abstraction, in: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Art Gallery of Toronto: PostPainterly Abstraction, Los Angeles, 1964, p. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York: Lyrical Abstraction, New York, 1970/71.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. among others Pontus Hulten, in: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Sam Francis, Bonn, 1993, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> William C. Agee: Sam Francis: Color, Structure, and the Modern Tradition, in: idem (ed.): Sam Francis: Paintings 1947-1990, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1999, p. 9-49, here p. 41.









Sam Francis  
*Untitled*  
 1980, SFF.773  
 310 x 635 cm, 122 x 250 in.  
 Galerie Thomas Modern, Munich

Two things are particularly influential in Sam Francis's art: not primarily colour, as one would think, but light and – inspired by Eastern philosophy, which Francis had an affinity for also due to personal, biographical connections – the idea of the 'void', empty space. As the origin of all existence and as a centre of power, emptiness is at the centre of East Asian thought, and not only this theoretical figure exerted an influence on Francis's creative work. In his works, Francis, who lived and worked in Tokyo for many years and was twice married to a Japanese woman, also transforms very practical approaches to Japanese ink drawing, for instance, into gestural abstraction.

This interest in the concept of the empty centre is typical of the time and began to fuel postmodern theory in these years. It was not without reason that Jean-François Lyotard, a pioneer of postmodernism, was attracted to Francis's works and published an entire volume of reflections on his oeuvre.<sup>5</sup> The 'void centre' occupied an important place in the reflections of this school of thought up until the 1980s, also including architecture, where it was even literally implemented.

For Sam Francis, however, the metaphysical level of this idea played an important role, and so his paintings from this period are not just a physical 'depiction' or an expressive reaction to it. Rather, they are a lyrical, poetic analogue to the otherwise incomprehensible.<sup>6</sup>

In interaction with the colours, the seemingly empty centre is an embodiment of light, the second essential component of the artist's painting. For him, colours are an expression of the relationship between brightness and darkness, and in their interaction the artwork points to a mental meaning, the self becoming conscious between these poles. Unlike many representatives of Abstract Expressionism, who sought to dissolve all meaning behind the picture, Sam Francis belongs to the important faction that wanted painting to express a mental or even spiritual power.

In addition to the empty centre as a relatively new symbolic element in Western reception, light is not only an ancient metaphor, but also a core problem of painting. In his own estimation, Sam Francis was equal in every way to the Impressionist Claude

<sup>5</sup> Jean-François Lyotard:  
 Sam Francis, *Lesson of Darkness*,  
 Venice, 1993.  
<sup>6</sup> Michel Waldberg:  
 Sam Francis, *Métaphysique du vide*,  
 Paris, 1987.



Monet, whom he studied intensively since his time in Paris, when he characterized light from this perspective, thus pointing back to the very direct practice of painting: "Los Angeles is the best for me for light in my work. New York light is hard. Paris light is a beautiful cerulean gray. But Los Angeles light is clear and bright even in haze."<sup>7</sup>

Japanese calligraphy,  
late 19<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in William C. Agee (ed.): Sam Francis: Paintings 1947-1990, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1999, p. 147.







## **SAM FRANCIS**

SAN MATEO 1923 – 1994 SANTA MONICA

### THE YEARS 1964 – 65

From the early 1960s, Sam Francis turned his attention back to Los Angeles, after having been active virtually worldwide in the preceding years, with studios in Venice / Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Tokyo and Berne. In 1964, he purchased the house in Santa Monica, which he had been living in since 1962 and had formerly belonged to Charlie Chaplin. In 1965, he began erecting his large studio. Nevertheless, along with other journeys, Francis spent a large part of the year in Japan. Here, he occupied himself with printed graphics, which increasingly interested him, and worked on ceramics and sculptures. In the same year, besides many other exhibitions, Francis took part in documenta III in Kassel, Germany.

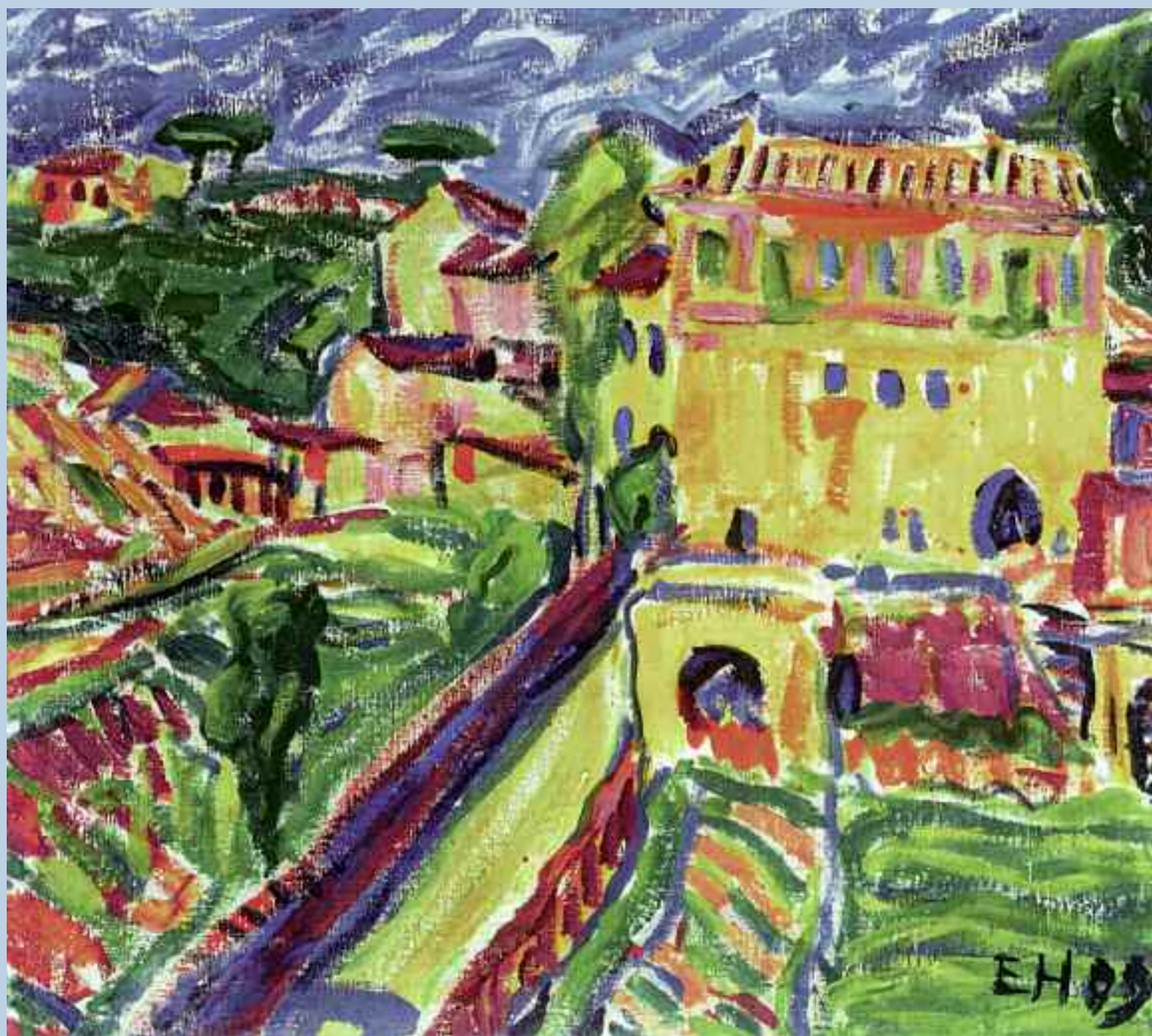
Alongside an increased emphasis on printed graphics, 1964 and 1965 also represented an important turning point in the development of Sam Francis's painting. He had already been working more and more on very large, indeed monumental canvases in the preceding years. In these years, he began increasingly organizing the composition of his paintings around a central space, which was to characterise his style until the eventies.

It was also an eventful time in his private life, since he had been handling the separation and divorce from his wife Teruko Yokoi since 1963. In 1964, Francis had met the filmmaker and video artist Mako Idemitsu, whom he eventually married in 1966. Their son, Osamu William, was born in the same year.

Sam Francis in Paris café,  
1950s







## **BRICK FACTORY 1908**

## **HOUSES NEAR ROME (LANDSCAPE NEAR ROME) 1909**

ERICH HECKEL

oil on canvas,  
painted on both sides  
1908 (Brick Factory),  
1909 (Houses near Rome)  
68.5 x 76 cm  
27 x 29 7/8 in.  
signed with monogram  
and dated lower right on  
*Houses near Rome*

Hüneke 1908-18  
and 1909-14;  
Vogt 1909/22

### Provenance

Studio of the artist  
Klaus Gebhard, Wuppertal/Munich (acquired from the artist)  
Private collection, Munich (by descent from the above in 1976)  
Private collection (1988, acquired from the above)  
Private collection, Luxemburg (since 2006)

### Exhibited

Museum Folkwang, Essen; Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 1963/64. Erich Heckel. Zur Vollendung des achten Lebensjahrzehnts. No. 9, col. ill.  
Galleria Nazionale, Rom 1977. Espressionismo Tedesco 'Die Brücke'. No. 6  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Adelaide; National Gallery, Victoria, Australien, 1989/90.  
German Expressionism. The Colours of Desire. P. 51.  
Galerie Wolfgang Wittrock, Düsseldorf 1991. Erich Heckel. No. 21  
Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesmuseum, Schleswig; Brücke-Museum-Berlin, 2010/2011.  
Erich Heckel: Aufbruch und Tradition – Eine Retrospektive. No. 20, col. ill.

### Literature

Hüneke, Andreas. Erich Heckel – Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde, Wandbilder und Skulpturen (cat.rais.).  
Munich 2017. Vol. I, 1908-1918, p. 47, no. 1908-18 and p. 69, no. 1909-14, both with col. ill.  
Vogt, Paul. Erich Heckel. Werkverzeichnis. Recklinghausen, 1965. No. 1909-22, ill.  
(only *Houses near Rome* (*Häuser bei Rom*), *Brick Factory* (*Ziegelei*) not mentioned)







## BRICK FACTORY 1908

## HOUSES NEAR ROME (LANDSCAPE NEAR ROME) 1909

ERICH HECKEL

*Brick Factory*  
(detail)

The members of the Brücke group were always drawn to nature, and on the rough North Sea some of them hoped to discover a new landscape and find the necessary peace to work. They settled on Dangast in the region around Oldenburg, and Schmidt-Rottluff was the first of the group to arrive in the fishing village. Erich Heckel followed shortly thereafter, and in the following years Max Pechstein also joined them. For Heckel, the summer retreats in Dangast between 1907 and 1910 were of great importance to his art. The coloration, composition, and brushwork changed markedly in these years: from the creamy and thickly applied brushwork of previous years, he increasingly developed a liberated style, with more generously sized areas of colour; the paint (not the colour!) became lighter and simultaneously richer in contrast, while the brushwork became looser, and the focus was on the essential. Landscapes, water, ships, buildings integrated into the landscape, and farms were the dominant subjects of this period. These also include depictions of brick factories, large structures that merge with the landscape.

The *Ziegelei* (brick factory) shown here is probably the Günther Lauw brick factory in Bockhorn, west of Varel, not far from Dangast. The building characteristically had two different chimneys, which makes it easy to identify.<sup>1</sup>

The flat building of the brick factory, bright yellow and orange, is nestled against the gently undulating, dark-green meadow. The chimneys rise up into the dark blue sky, forming a geometric contrast to the landscape, which is horizontal in its composition and brushwork. The vertical element of the chimneys is continued in the brushwork of the blue sky and divides the painting into top and bottom parts.

In August 1908 in Dangast, Heckel met the art historian Rosa Schapire for the first time, who was a passive member and supporter of the Brücke group since 1907. That same year in September, two important exhibitions for Heckel took place. The first was the Brücke retrospective at Kunstsalon Emil Richter, for which Heckel designed the poster,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hüneke, Andreas:  
Erich Heckel: Werkverzeichnis der  
Gemälde, Wandbilder und Skulpturen,  
Munich, 2017, vol. I,  
no. 1908-18, p. 47.









Brick factory Carl Lauw,  
Bockhorn

and the second was the special exhibition 'Heckel und Schmidt-Rottluff' at the Augusteum in Oldenburg.<sup>2</sup>

It was February 1909 when Heckel began his journey to Italy, which took him to Rome via Verona, Padua, Venice, and Ravenna – his first major trip abroad, which he financed himself – thus following an old German artistic tradition. He was very fond of light, colours, and the classic Italian monuments (although he was of the opinion that there were similarly fascinating natural spectacles of colour in northern Germany).<sup>3</sup> For instance, he was enchanted with the archaic and primeval aspects of Etruscan culture.

Viewers of *Häuser bei Rom* are presented with an enormous spectrum of colours: intense yellow, green, blue, and red are divided into a landscape

of dynamic lines, hatching, and gentle curves out of which fields, gardens, and trees emerge. From a slightly elevated position, the viewer follows the loose brushstrokes, which lend the composition an almost watercolour-like lightness, to a large Italian, yellow-painted villa with smaller houses around it. In their lively structure, the surrounding gardens and landscape develop an abstract, ornamental life of their own. Blue contrasts set distinctive accents and conclude a harmonious juxtaposition of nature and civilization in the dark blue of the sky – nature and human beings, in line with the basic ideas of Expressionism.

Heckel worked intensively in Italy in his own studio and created many drawings, watercolours, and some oil paintings, totalling at least 130 works during his four-month stay (some of which could have been created after his return to Germany).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Moeller, Magdalena M. (ed.): Erich Heckel: Aufbruch und Tradition, Eine Retrospektive, Munich, 2010, p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hüneke, 2017, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> Gabelmann, Andreas: Entdeckung des Südens: Erich Heckel in Italien, in: Moeller, Magdalena M. (ed.): Erich Heckel: Aufbruch und Tradition, Eine Retrospektive, Munich, 2010, p. 34.



In his letters to Rosa Schapire, he described in detail his Italian compositions and included sketches of some of them, to which he added a description of the colours: " – but I would like to specify the colour, the main thing ... houses and fields yellow, sky red and blue dark, green very intense."<sup>5</sup>

It is surely a characteristic aspect of the time that he continued his relaxed style of painting with thinned oil paints that allow the canvas to shine through, and that his brushwork became even more linear, which does not allow any changes to be made afterward and formally concentrates on the essential.

His trip to Italy was a significant milestone in Heckel's oeuvre, which even years later he emphasized, stating: "It must be very important for us to have seen this southern, rich country, to have experienced its

high standard of artworks, since one's ... gaze is sharpened for one's own task in the fatherland."<sup>6</sup>

For the opening of the Brücke exhibition at Emil Richter's gallery, which took place with international participants, Heckel returned to Dresden on June 12. Together with Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and their girl friends, the artist spent the month of August at the Moritzburger Teiche for the first time. In the following years they worked intensively together and participated in exhibitions with their fellow artists from the Brücke group, culminating in the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne in 1912, which focused on recent international art.<sup>7</sup>

As for the origins of this double-sided painted canvas, Heckel either painted it on one side with *Ziegelei* and brought it to Italy rolled up, where he painted the other side with *Häuser bei Rom*, or

Erich Heckel  
*Path near Rome*  
1909  
Woodcut

<sup>5</sup> Letter from April 16, 1909 from Heckel to Rosa Schapire in Hamburg, quoted from Gabelmann, 2010, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Erich Heckel from Osterholz to the collector Klaus Gebhard from July 1921, quoted from Gabelmann, p. 41 and 43.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Moeller 2010, p. 302-303.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hüneke 2017, p. 47.

*Houses near Rome*  
(*Landscape near Rome*)  
(detail)

perhaps the latter was created after his return to Germany based on his Italian sketches.<sup>8</sup> Heckel initially wrote the title 'Häuser bei Rom' on the painting *Ziegelei* (also on the stretcher), and signed and dated it. Later he painted over this inscription and wrote the title 'Landschaft bei Rom'.

These overpaintings and inscriptions were removed in 1999, and the painting *Ziegelei* was uncovered.<sup>9</sup> Captivated by his trip to Italy, Heckel probably initially favoured the works that he created during that time.

Painting canvases on both sides was a common practice among the Expressionists of the Brücke group. This was motivated by the urge to create something new and the simultaneous shortage of materials. The fact that an artist was more attached to a newly created work than to an older one is a common thread that runs throughout art history. For viewers today, both sides of the canvas undoubtedly represent independent works of equal value. They describe two completely different phases of the artist's work, though they follow a consistent artistic development.

the Brücke artists Heckel and Kirchner. Besides Eduard von der Heydt and Rudolf Ibach, Gebhard was a role model for the younger collectors in the Rhineland. Among other things, he donated outstanding works to the Von der Heydt-Museum and connected the generations of collectors from before World War I and after World War II.

The first owner of the painting was the manufacturer Klaus Gebhard (1896-1976) from Elberfeld, who headed the silk weaving mill of the same name in Vohwinkel for many years. As an art collector he concentrated on Expressionist works, in particular

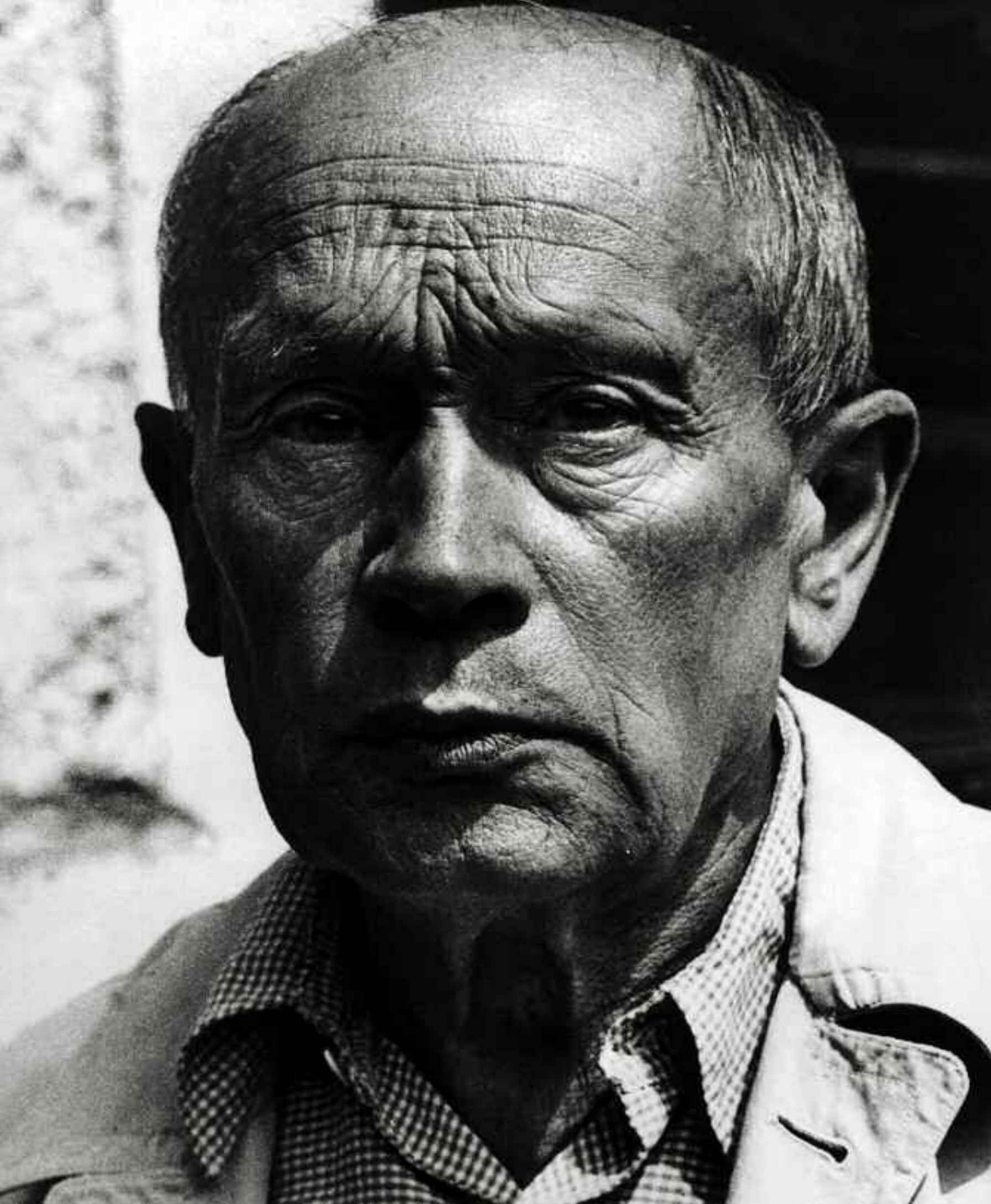
<sup>9</sup> This information was kindly provided to us by the Erich Heckel Estate.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Gerhard Finck in an interview with Martina Thöne: Privatsammler erhalten eine Ruhmeshalle, in: Westdeutsche Zeitung, February 14, 2008, [www.wz.de/nrw/wuppertal/kultur/privatsammler-erhalten-eine-ruhmeshalle](http://www.wz.de/nrw/wuppertal/kultur/privatsammler-erhalten-eine-ruhmeshalle).









# ERICH HECKEL

DÖBELN/SAXONY 1883 – 1970 RADOLFZELL/LAKE CONSTANCE

## THE YEARS 1908/1909

Until 1907, Erich Heckel had still been working in Wilhelm Kreis's architecture firm in Dresden, but now gave up the job to turn to painting. After a long stay, together with Schmidt-Rottluff, in Dangast on the North Sea, Heckel returned to Dresden in November, where from then on he shared the studio with Kirchner. In March 1908, Heckel departed for Dangast yet again, where in summer he met the art historian Rosa Schapire for the first time, who had been a passive member of Brücke since 1907; she would become an important reference person for all the artists of the Brücke school.

Heckel engraved the poster woodcut for the Brücke exhibition at Kunstsalon Richter in Dresden. "We have had over 200 copies of the advertising-pillar poster printed ... It was very interesting for me to have the opportunity to engrave such a large block."<sup>1</sup>

In Dangast, he created a number of paintings with local subjects: the harbour, landscapes, houses and larger structures, such as brickyards, including the present work *Ziegelei* „ ... in Dangast ... he discovered the feeling for the breadth of the space and the physicality of the air ..."<sup>2</sup>. For Heckel, Dangast meant the breakthrough for his artistic self-image, he discovered his 'style'..

In October 1908, Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff departed from the North Sea again and stayed with Pechstein in Berlin for two weeks.

In February 1909, Heckel started out on his great Italian journey, which he undertook on his own initiative, funding it with his own savings. Heckel loved to capture the colours and forms of the country, his palette became lighter at this time, and he developed a kind of personal perspective, combining the central perspective and the bird's eye perspective, which Heckel also used in his later paintings. He only returned to Dresden in June 1909, where he was expected in order to set up the Brücke exhibition at Emil Richter's gallery.

He spent the summer together with Kirchner and their models, including the little girls Fränzi and Marcella, at the Moritzburger Teiche near Dresden, an extremely significant artistic period for Heckel. He stayed in Dangast again for the rest of the summer, and only returned to Dresden again in December by a circuitous route.

Erich Heckel,  
c. 1948

<sup>1</sup> Heckel's letter to Gustav Schiefler of August 28, 1908. Quoted from: Ebner, Renate: Biographie, in: Hüneke, Andreas: Erich Heckel – Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde, Wandbilder und Skulpturen, volume II (1919-1964), Munich, 2017, p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Schiefler in Paul Westheim's 'Kunstblatt', 1918. Quoted from: Gabler, Karlheinz: Erich Heckel und sein Kreis – Dokumente, Fotos, Briefe, Schriften, Stuttgart and Zurich 1983, p. 52.









# PARK OF DILBORN 1914

ERICH HECKEL

oil on canvas	Provenance
1914	Studio of the artist
83.9 x 96.7 cm	Heinrich Kirchhoff, Wiesbaden (1916-1921)
33 x 38 in.	Kunstkabinett Trojanski, Düsseldorf
signed and dated lower left	Klaus Gebhard, Wuppertal/Munich (1930)
verso signed and dated	Private collection, Munich (by descent from the above, 1978)
	Galerie Wolfgang Wittrock, Düsseldorf
Hüneke 1914-7	Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt/M. (since 1989)

## Exhibited

Freie Secession, Berlin 1916. II. Ausstellung. No. 80 (?)  
Kunstsalon Ludwig Schames, Frankfurt / M. 1916. Erich Heckel. No. 20  
Neue Kunst – Hans Goltz, Munich 1916. Erich Heckel. No. 20  
Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden; Freie Secession, Berlin 1916. Erich Heckel.  
Neues Museum, Wiesbaden 1917. Privatsammlung Heinrich Kirchhoff. No. 25  
Städtisches Museum, Wuppertal 1947. Expressionistische Malerei. No. 20  
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco 1980.  
Expressionism, A German Intuition 1905-1920. No. 98  
Puschkin Museum, Moskau 2004/05. Aus deutscher Sicht – Die Sammlung der Deutschen Bank.  
August Macke Haus, Bonn; Städtische Galerie im Park, Viersen; Kunst-Museum, Ahlen 2011/12.  
Treffpunkt und Topos: Schloss Dilborn 1911-1931, Das Künstlerehepaar Heinrich Nauen und Marie von Malachowski und seine Gäste. Col. ill. p. 59

## Literature

Vogt, Paul. Erich Heckel. Mit einem Oeuvre-Katalog der Gemälde, Wandmalerei und Plastik.  
Recklinghausen 1965. 1914, No. 14  
Wallerstein, Viktor. Eine Madonna von Erich Heckel, in: Das Kunstblatt I. 1917. P. 162-196, ill. p. 179  
Exhibition catalogue: Landschaften eines Jahrhunderts. Chemnitz; Aalen; Duisburg; Passau; Lübeck;  
Offenburg; Oldenburg; Aschaffenburg; Augsburg; St. Ingbert; Kapstadt 1999-2002. No. 157  
Hüneke, Andreas. Erich Heckel, Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde, Wandbilder und Skulpturen,  
Band I (1904-1918). Munich 2017. No. 1914-7, p. 283



# PARK OF DILBORN 1914

ERICH HECKEL

This painting was created in 1914 during a five-week stay by Erich Heckel and Siddi Riha with their friends, the painter Heinrich Nauen and his wife Marie von Malachowski, also an artist, at their residence Schloss Dilborn.

Heckel and Nauen had probably met through a mutual friend, the art historian Walter Kaesbach,<sup>1</sup> but were acquainted at the latest by 1912, during the 'International Sonderbund Exhibition' in Cologne, which both participated in. Along with Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Heckel painted the chapel at the exhibition.

In early 1914, 64 works by Heckel were presented at Otto Feldmann's 'Rheinischer Kunstsalon' in Cologne. The critic Heinrich Willemsen wrote: "At the Rheinischer Kunstsalon, the young Berliner Erich Heckel emphatically demands attention. It is interesting to observe in the nineteen oil paintings on display how a strong individuality seemingly devours foreign influences and uses them to heighten its expressive possibilities. Confident abstraction out of manifold phenomena into a few unalterable shapes and lines, a never garish colouration of unbelievable power, and an inwardness that is not far from melancholy in its deepest moments elevate Heckel as a strong hope out of the masses of his fellow painters."<sup>2</sup>

Heckel was invited to participate in the 'Werkbund' Exhibition in Cologne in 1914, which opened on May 15. He designed the rooms in Feldmann's

gallery for the exhibition. The event drew around one million visitors, although after the German declaration of war on Russia on August 1, the presentation of modern design and architecture, which was planned to run until October, was closed.

Heckel and Riha – they did not marry until 1916 – then visited Heinrich Nauen. In May 1911, he had left the bustling city life of Berlin with his wife Marie and daughter Nora and moved into an apartment at Schloss Dilborn. The apartment spanned 365 square meters of the north wing, including the tower. Each of the two artists had two studio rooms.

The residence was surrounded by a large park, and there was even a small lake. The two artists used the park as a place for relaxation as well as a subject in their paintings. It was also a source of inspiration for their numerous artist friends during their visits. Among the visitors were the artists Helmuth Macke, Heinrich and Adda Campendonk, August and Elisabeth Macke, Franz and Maria Marc, and Johan Thorn Prikker, as well as the art historians Edwin Redslob, Edwin Suermondt, Walter Kaesbach, and Paul Clemen.

During Heckel's visit, he and Nauen painted together in the park. Heckel produced several views of the park, including one of the lake. The two painted portraits of each other, and Nauen created the almost life-size, full-length *Double Portrait Siddi and Erich Heckel*, which Walter Kaesbach purchased. The work is now believed to be lost.

<sup>1</sup> Drenker-Nagels, Klara;  
Leismann, Burkhard;  
Muschwitz, Tanja:

Treffpunkt und Topos: Schloss Dilborn  
1911-1931, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Der Cicerone, no. 3,  
February 1914, p. 95.









Erich Heckel  
*Park in Dilborn*  
 1914  
 Woodcut

Schloß Dilborn near Brüggen in  
 Schwalmatal, historical postcard



In *Park of Dilborn II*, Heckel created an almost mystical view. It was early summer, May and June, when Heckel was at Schloss Dilborn. The artist captured the atmosphere here with expressive brushstrokes, perhaps just before a spring thunderstorm. A yellowish light, usually a sign of hail, covers the darkly towering trees. In the foreground, a path forks around a hill. Above it, the pale, low sun hangs below a black cover of clouds. This is an example of what the critic Willemsen described: "a never garish colouration of unbelievable power, and an inwardness that is not far from melancholy in its deepest moments." Heckel also depicted the same subject in a woodcut.

Erich Heckel and Siddi Riha traveled to Belgium and Holland in June. During the summer they were in Osterholz on the Flensburg Firth, where they learned of the outbreak of the war.

In 1921, the owner of Schloss Dilborn, Count of Westerholt-Arenfels, decided to live in the north wing. The Nauens had to move to the south wing. However, Heinrich and Marie Nauen lived in separate parts of the now 580-square-meter apartment spanning three floors; they no longer spoke to each other. From then on, the park was reserved for the count. In 1931, Nauen became a full professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he had previously taught for several years. With a heavy heart, they gave up their apartment in Schloss Dilborn and moved to Neuss.

Erich Heckel's documents show that Siddi Heckel sent the painting *Park of Dilborn* to Carl Hagemann in Leverkusen for inspection on November 16, 1915. Hagemann apparently was unable to decide whether to buy the work. In 1916, the collector and patron Heinrich Kirchhoff (1874-1934) from Wiesbaden purchased it. He had only begun to collect art a year before and was open to the latest artistic trends. Later, the painting entered the collection of Klaus Gebhard (1896-1976), a manufacturer from Elberfeld. Beginning in 1947, he was director of the Kunst- und Museumsverein Wuppertal, which still exists today.



## ERICH HECKEL

DÖBELN/SAXONY 1883 – 1970 RADOLFZELL/LAKE CONSTANCE

### THE YEAR 1914

Like the other artists of the 'Brücke' group, Erich Heckel moved to Berlin in autumn of 1911. He took an apartment in Mommsenstrasse 66 in Berlin-Steglitz. The following year, together with Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner, he painted the chapel of the groundbreaking Sonderbund Exhibition in Cologne, which presented almost 650 works by modern artists from throughout Europe, including the "highly controversial painting of our time", as the catalogue put it. Erich Heckel was represented in the exhibition with three paintings.

For artists – like the members of the Brücke school – this was an opportunity to view works by the painters they admired, such as Van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse and Munch in the original and to exchange ideas with one another. Heckel made many new acquaintances, such as Walter Kaesbach, Heinrich Nauen, Wilhelm Lehmbruck and Christian Rohlf.

Franz Marc and August Macke visited him in Berlin. In autumn, Heckel met Lyonel Feininger, with whom he corresponded until his death in 1956.

In May 1913, the Brücke school broke up due to internal disputes – the artists had simply grown apart, artistically too. In this year, Heckel had his first solo exhibition at Fritz Gurlitt's gallery in Berlin. He traveled to Osterholz on the Flensburg Firth for the first time, where he would spend his summers until 1944.

In early 1914, 64 works by Heckel were presented in Otto Feldmann's 'Rheinischer Kunstsalon' in Cologne. The critic Heinrich Willemsen wrote an enthusiastic review.

Heckel was invited to take part in the 'German Werkbund' exhibition in Cologne. For the exhibition, he decorated the rooms of Feldmann's gallery.

Erich Heckel and Siddi Riha then visited Heinrich Nauen, who had been living in a wing of Schloss Dillborn in Schwalmthal with his wife, the painter Marie von Malachowski, since 1912. The artists painted together – and one another.

At the end of June, Heckel and Riha left Dillborn and traveled to Holland and Belgium. In summer, they could be found in Osterholz again, where they heard of the outbreak of war at the beginning of August. Heckel tried to enlist voluntarily, but as he was found to be unfit, he joined the Red Cross as a nurse.

Heckel was sent to Flanders as a medical orderly in the Kaesbach first-aid company, where he organized the return of injured soldiers. He encountered Beckmann, who was also a medical orderly, and visited James Ensor in Ostend. On June 19, 1915, Siddi Riha (real name Milda Frieda Georgi) and Erich Heckel married in Berlin-Steglitz. Heckel's medical service ended on November 15, 1918.





# HEAD OF A WOMAN C. 1913

ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

oil on cardboard

c. 1913

53.3 x 49.8 cm

21 x 19 5/8 in.

Provenance

Kunstsalon Dr. Rusche, Cologne

Victor Achter, Mönchengladbach (acquired from the above in 1946)

Private collection (from 1981, by descent from the above)

Private collection

With a certificate of  
authenticity from the Jawlensky  
committee, Locarno, dated  
September 29, 2014.

The work will be included in  
the catalogue raisonné of the  
paintings of Alexej von  
Jawlensky.





# HEAD OF A WOMAN C. 1913

ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

"Jawlensky's main theme is the human face. In it he found the perfect expression for Eastern spirituality and mysticism. The path of his tireless artistic development led from the strongly coloured heads of the Fauvist period before the First World War and the austere Constructivist faces of the 1920s to the last mysteriously glowing 'Meditations' of his late period. Other than Jawlensky, no other modern artist has pursued a single theme with such consistency."<sup>1</sup>  
Clemens Weiler 1970

Jawlensky had already come into contact with modern French art during his time at the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg. In the summer of 1896, he undertook a long journey through Europe with Marianne von Werefkin, during which they also visited Paris. In November of the same year, Jawlensky went to Munich with two artist friends and von Werefkin. There, he studied at Anton Azbé's famous school of painting.

Jawlensky travelled to Paris again in 1903. He was represented at the 'Salon d'Automne', in 1905 and again in 1906. He became acquainted with Matisse and through him with the Fauves, who were committed to pure colour. Until then, Jawlensky had been more strongly influenced by Impressionism, however, his encounter with the Fauves and with Father Willibrord Verkade, who belonged to the group 'Les Nabis' that had grown up around Gauguin, in 1907, led to a change in his style of painting.

From 1907 onwards, Jawlensky's paintings became increasingly colourful with landscape, still life and figures still having equal importance. In 1909, he founded the 'Neue Künstlervereinigung München' (Munich New Artists' Association) with Wassily Kandinsky, Gabriele Münter, Werefkin and others.

A visit to Prerow on the Baltic Sea in the summer of 1911 was seen by the artist as a turning point:

"This summer brought a major development in my art. There I painted my best landscapes and large figural works in very strong, glowing colours, and not at all naturalistic or substantial ... This was a turning point in my art."<sup>2</sup>

There was also a fundamental change in the choice of motifs. Jawlensky now concentrated almost exclusively on the figure, in particular the human face. It would remain the principal motif for the rest of his life.

Jawlensky's *Head of a Woman* is the result of the significant developments in the artist's work in this period. Monumental, executed in strong colours and passionate, the heads that the artist created during this period are a preliminary highpoint in his oeuvre.

*Head of a Woman*, painted around 1913, shows the bust of a young woman with blond hair and large blue eyes. The colour palette ranges from the

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Weiler, Jawlensky. Köpfe, Gesichte, Meditationen, Hanau 1970, p. 13.  
<sup>2</sup> ibidem, p. 112.









Alexej von Jawlensky  
*Sturmkiefern in Prerow*  
 1911  
 Private collection

blues of the background and the white of the dress to the yellow, green and burgundy of the face. The composition is enlivened by green colour fields in the shadows of the face and neck. The interaction of the colours is finely adjusted and creates a fascinating effect – exciting and harmonious at the same time.

The structures of the face – eyes, nose, chin and neck – are accentuated with black brush strokes. The hair almost touches the upper and right edges of the picture, so that the representation is firmly anchored in the picture. The painting conveys a strong sense of directness – an apparent closeness – that attracts and captivates the viewer.

continued to develop this kind of abstraction and spiritual elevation in his work, but without the powerful colouring so typical of the 'pre-war heads'.

The forced exile that came with the outbreak of the First World War ended this important phase of Jawlensky's work.

"...we had to flee to Switzerland with nothing more than what we could carry and came to a small village, St. Prex on Lake Geneva near Morges. In our small apartment there I had only a small room to work in with one window. I would have liked to continue painting my monumental pictures with intensive colours, but I felt I could not do so. My soul did not allow this sensual style of painting, yet there is much beauty in my work."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Father Willibrord Verkade in:  
 Clemens Weiler, Jawlensky.  
 Köpfe, Gesichte, Meditationen,  
 Hanau 1970, p. 125.

Using techniques such as strong reduction, mask-like geometry and exotic colouring, Jawlensky has here created a kind of icon. In the following years, he

# ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

TORSCHOK, RUSSIA 1864 – 1941 WIESBADEN

## THE YEAR 1913

Jawlensky spent the summer of 1911 with his family, namely Helene Nesnakomoff, their son Andreas, and Marianne von Werefkin, in Prerow on the Baltic Sea, where he painted his "best landscapes and large figurative works in very powerful, glowing colours". He regarded this time as "a turning point in my art".<sup>1</sup>

In autumn, he travelled with Werefkin to Paris, where he saw Matisse again. In December, Kandinsky, Marc, Münter, Kubin and Macke left the 'Neue Kunstvereinigung', Kandinsky and Marc founded the 'Blue Rider' school. Jawlensky traveled to Barmen, where his first solo exhibition was held in the Ruhmeshalle.

Jawlensky and von Werefkin left the 'Neue Künstlervereinigung' in 1912; his works were exhibited with the 'Blue Rider', even though he never officially joined the movement. In summer, he traveled with his family to Oberstdorf in the Allgäu district, where they stayed until the end of December. At the end of November, he was in Zurich, taking part in an exhibition at the Kunstsalon Wolfsberg. He met the Swiss collector Rudolf Kissing, who purchased three of his works.

Jawlensky got to know Paul Klee, whom he regarded as "one of the greatest artists in Europe",<sup>2</sup> and was thrilled by an exhibition of Emil Nolde's works in Munich.

In 1913, Jawlensky submitted four paintings to the first 'Deutscher Herbstsalon', organized by Herwarth Walden in Berlin. He participated in the 'Futurist and Expressionist Exhibition' in Budapest, and 41 of his paintings were shown in Lemberg. An argument led to his first separation from Marianne von Werefkin, who returned to Lithuania.

In 1914, Jawlensky chose the group of Russian artists for participation in the 'Baltiska Utställningens' exhibition in Malmö. Besides his own works and those of von Werefkin, paintings by his son Andreas were also shown. In spring, Jawlensky travelled alone to Bordighera on the Italian Riviera for health reasons.

He subsequently visited his mother and siblings in Russia, and von Werefkin in Lithuania. He returned to Munich alone; von Werefkin followed a little later.

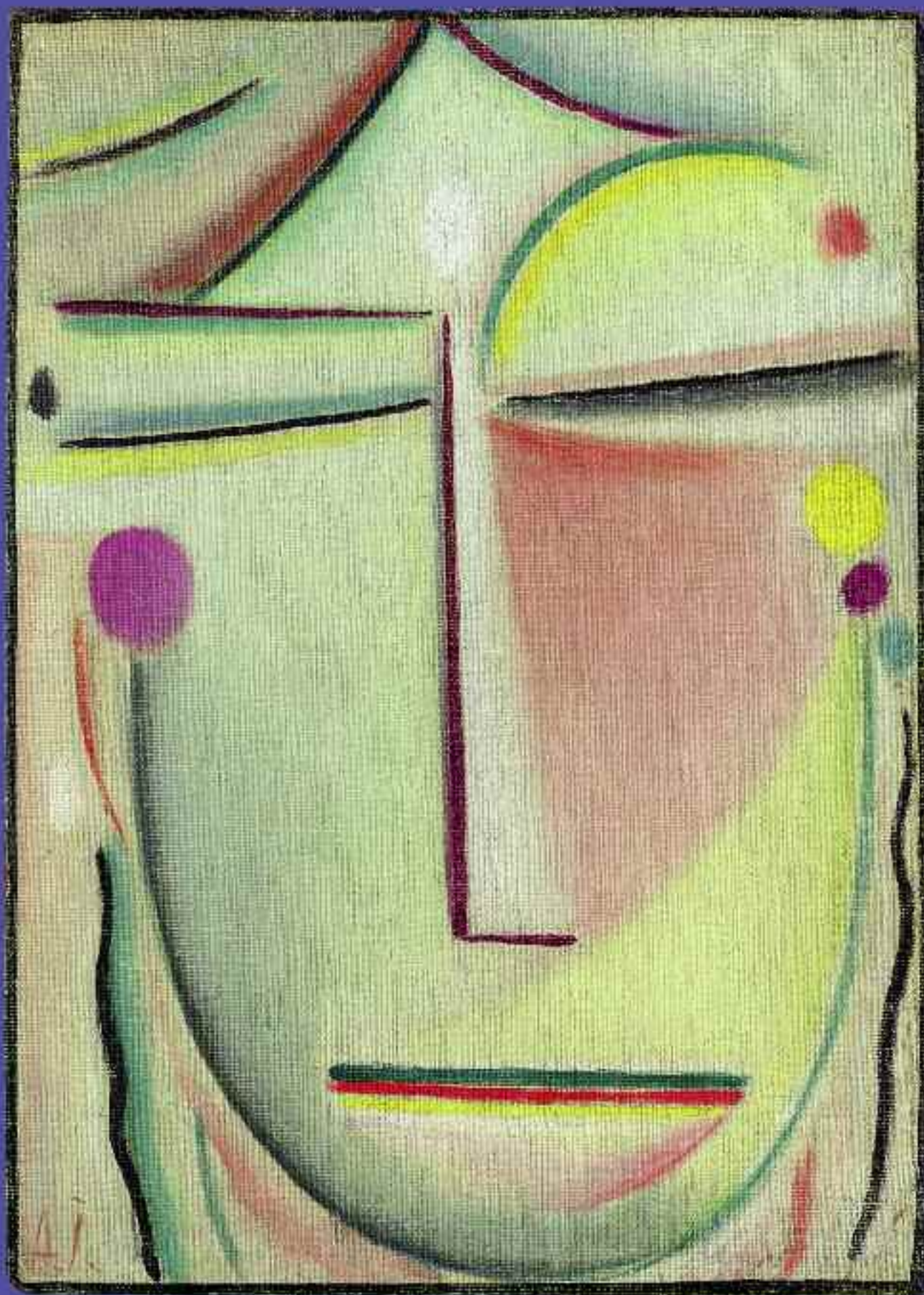
With the outbreak of war in August, Jawlensky and his family had to leave Germany within 48 hours. They travelled to Saint Prex, a small village on Lake Geneva. Thanks to the mediation of a friend, they were able to rent an apartment there in Rue du Moty. The studio and the household in Munich were looked after by their friends Adolf Erbslöh and Lily Klee. The 'Farbige Köpfe' series came to an abrupt end.

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Weiler, Alexej Jawlensky. Köpfe, Gesichte, Meditationen, Hanau 1970, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 115.







# **ABSTRACT HEAD: EARLY LIGHT C. 1920**

ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

oil on linen-finish paper on cardboard ca. 1920 35.4 x 26.8 cm 13 7/8 x 9 3/4 in. signed with monogram lower left verso inscribed by Galka Scheyer 'Jawlensky Frühlicht' and 'early day' Jawlensky 1129	<p>Provenance</p> <p>Studio of the artist Galka Scheyer, Hollywood, CA (from 1924) Marjorie Eaton, Palo Alto, CA Oakland Museum of Art, CA (after 1986, Marjorie Eaton Bequest) Private collection, USA (1993) Private collection, USA (by descent from the above)</p> <p>Exhibited</p> <p>California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco 1931. The Blue Four. Nr. 41 (as 'Light, loaned by Marjorie Eaton', dated 1921). Oakland Art Gallery, Oakland 1931. The Blue Four. Nr. 29 (as 'Light, Private Collection, Miss Marjorie Eaton', dated 1921). Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago 1932. The Blue Four. Nr. 76 (as 'Light', dated 1921). Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena 1964 (label). Alexei Jawlensky, A Centennial Exhibition. Nr. 152 (dated 1928).</p> <p>Literature</p> <p>Jawlensky, M., Pieroni-Jawlensky, L., Jawlensky, A. Alexej von Jawlensky: Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil Paintings, Vol II 1914-1933. London 1991. No. 1129, p. 334, ill.</p>
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# ABSTRACT HEAD: EARLY LIGHT C. 1920

ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

Starting around 1911, the theme of the human head played an increasingly important role in Alexej von Jawlensky's work. The face as a conveyor of expression became the motif on which he could apply the stylistic achievements of the Expressionist movement.

His early portraits in vivid colours, which he himself called 'coloured heads', were influenced by Matisse and the Fauves and their teaching of the dominance of colour, which was increasingly becoming dissociated from the imitation of nature.

Jawlensky, who had lived in Munich for 18 years, was declared an 'enemy alien' when Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914 and was ordered to leave the country within 48 hours. He and his family – which included Marianne von Werefkin, Helene Nesnakomoff and his son Andreas – found a safe refuge in Switzerland.

He himself wrote later, "We had to flee to Switzerland with nothing but what we could carry. We settled at St Prex on Lake Geneva, a small town near Morges. I wanted to continue painting the powerful, intense pictures, but I could not. I felt that I must find another language, a more spiritual language .... But my soul was so gloomy and unhappy because of all these terrible events that I was happy that I could sit quietly by the window and collect my thoughts and feelings."<sup>1</sup>

Jawlensky now had no studio of his own, only a room with one window looking onto the garden. He was no longer able to paint the coloured heads of

the pre-war period. He concentrated on what he could see – the garden and nature in its changeableness.

During the following years, Jawlensky created a series of nearly 400 'variations' on the motif 'view from the window'. With the same motif, he traced the changes in times of day or in the seasons and the variations of mood, also in his own feelings and musings.

Jawlensky was the first artist of the Modernist period to make the serial, the infinite variability of one motif, the main focus of his work – by analogy with the 'variations on a theme' in music. However, he maintained that each work should at the same time still be a self-contained entity.

"For several years I painted these variations, and then I felt I needed to find a form for the face, because I had understood that great art should only be painted with religious feeling. And I could only bring that to the human face. I understood that the artist must express with his art through forms and colours the aspects of himself that are divine. That is why a work of art is God made visible, and art is an expression of the desire for God."<sup>2</sup>

In 1916 Jawlensky became acquainted with the young artist Emmy Scheyer. Because of her black hair he gave her the nickname Galka – the Russian word for jackdaw. She became so committed to his art that she gave up her own painting and devoted

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Weiler, Jawlensky. Köpfe, Gesichte, Meditationen, Hanau 1970, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> ibidem, Letter to Willibrord Verkade, p. 125.









Helene Nesnakomoff  
with Andreas,  
1905

Alexej von Jawlensky  
*Helene with Red Waistcoat*  
1907  
Private collection



herself entirely to Jawlensky's work. She often sat as a model for him and the portraits he painted of her became the basis for the series of heads.

These series overlap and, to some extent, exist parallel to and on an equal footing with one another. In 1917 he began to paint the 'Mystical Heads', and continued to do so until about 1919, and, at the same time, the series 'Saviour's Faces' from 1917-1922. These became more androgynous and increasingly abstracted over the years.

The series 'Abstract Heads', which he painted from 1918 to 1933, was the next logical step in abstraction and continued the colour field painting that he had developed in the 'Variations'. They demonstrate an increasing inner contemplation; the gaze of the closed eyes is directed inwards and the colours correspond to moods that are often reflected in the titles. For example, *Winter Mood* is painted in subdued grey and brown tones with just a few pale yellow accents. In the work we are discussing here, the colour scheme in pastel colours with few strong accents suitably matches the title: *Morning Light*. Here the artist has applied the colours of the sky at dawn to the canvas, from pale yellow to subtle orange-pink, pale blue and pale green.

With the 'Abstract Heads', Jawlensky was continuing the tradition of depicting the true face of Christ, the 'vera icon'. For centuries this has followed a fixed pattern, which is equally recognisable whether in the Turin Shroud or in the Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna and Constantinople. The painters of icons still adhere to it today.

The characteristic features are: the centre parting, the asymmetrical face, the unequal nostrils, the slightly wavy hair framing the face and often a stylized curl that falls over the forehead. In the present work he has replaced the curl with a white swab in the middle of the forehead, which he retained in the series 'Meditations', which he commenced in 1933.

The increasing abstraction culminated in the 'Meditations', which date from 1933-1937 – devotional paintings in which the horizontal axis of the face, the eyes, and the vertical axis, the nose, are indicated by a dark cross that automatically divides the composition into four fields, which the artist filled with clear, parallel brushstrokes, mostly in dark colours.

*Abstract Head: Morning Light* combines characteristics of both the 'Saviour's Face' and the 'Abstract Head' paintings.



The nose is not yet as strongly abstracted and the artist has incorporated a typical feature of the face of Helene Nesnakomoff, the mother of his son Andreas: a raised eyebrow.

The difference in the features can be seen in the juxtaposition with an *Abstract Head* created in 1929 and a *Meditation* dating from 1936. In the *Abstract Head*, with its clear brushstrokes and colour fields, there is already a premonition of the next step, the 'Meditations'.

In 1924, Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Lyonel Feininger founded the artists' group 'Blue Four'. It was an exclusively commercial association, aimed at making the four artists known in the USA. They commissioned Galka Scheyer as their agent. The 'Ambassador of Modern Art' sailed from Hamburg on May 8, 1924 and arrived in New York on May 18. In her luggage she had, among others, *Abstract Head: Morning Light*; it is on the list of paintings she took with her, as well as on a list from 1928, which recorded the works that were still in her possession.

In 1929, Scheyer decided to move to Hollywood after being invited by gallery owner Harry Braxton to curate four consecutive 'Blue Four' exhibitions at his

gallery in Los Angeles under the patronage of the film director Josef von Sternberg. The exhibitions were a great success. The publicity generated by Sternberg's patronage attracted the attention of the public, the press and also important collectors.

In 1926, Galka Scheyer had met a young artist, Marjorie Eaton (1901-1986) who came from a rich family. Scheyer became her mentor, encouraged her in her painting and aroused her interest in the artists that she was representing. The first work that Eaton acquired was a painting by Paul Klee. Since Eaton travelled a lot, she had a special chest built, in which she could take her works of art with her. Soon one of these was *Abstract Head: Morning Light*, which she acquired some time after 1928 but before 1931, because in this and the following year it was shown on loan from her in several exhibitions. Marjorie Eaton kept the painting until her death in 1986.

Alexej von Jawlensky

left:

*Abstract Head: Early Light*

c. 1920

centre:

*Abstract Head*

1929

Private collection

right:

*Large Meditation: Harmony in Green*

1936

Private collection





# ALEXEJ VON JAWLENSKY

TORSCHOK, RUSSIA 1864 – 1941 WIESBADEN

## THE YEAR 1920

From 1914, Alexej von Jawlensky lived with Marianne von Werefkin, Helene Nesnakomoff and their son Andreas in St. Prex on Lake Geneva.

In 1916, he met the young artist Emmy Scheyer. She had seen a painting by Jawlensky, and wanted to get to know the artist. They formed a profound spiritual and intellectual bond. Because of her black hair, he called her 'Galka', Russian for jackdaw. She inspired him to return to his favourite subject, the human face. He started the series of heads that he continued until his death, and rendered with ever greater abstraction. In 1917, he started the 'Mystical Heads' and the 'Saviours Heads'.

In autumn 1917, Jawlensky returned to Zurich with his family. He got to know other exiles, including Wilhelm Lehbruck, Paul Cassirer, as well as the Dadaists Hans Arp, Sophie Taeuber, Tristan Tzara and Hugo Ball. He exhibited in the Kunstsalon Wolfsberg and the Galerie Coray. Following a severe bout of flu, his doctor advised him to move to a milder climate.

In April 1918, he moved to Ascona on Lake Maggiore. They moved into an apartment in Castello Bezzola on the lakeside promenade. The dancer Lotte Bachrach and the fur trader Bernhard Mayer purchased several paintings during this time. In Ascona, Jawlensky painted the first of his 'Abstract Heads'. In poor health, he was admitted to the clinic of Dr. Bircher-Benner in Zurich.

After a break-in at the Munich apartment, Jawlensky, Helene and Andreas returned to Munich in May 1920 to clear out the apartment in Giselastrasse, and then travelled to Berlin, where Emmy Scheyer had organised a Jawlensky exhibition at the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt. It was subsequently shown in twenty German cities, including Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover.

In September, the Sacharoffs, and then Paul and Lily Klee, visited him in Ascona.

The Bauhaus Dessau courted Jawlensky, who refused their entreaties, believing that art could not be taught. Pictures by Jawlensky were shown at the Biennale in Venice.

Jawlensky met Alexander Archipenko. In December, he was admitted to the clinic again.

In 1921, Scheyer organised a successful exhibition at the Neues Museum in Wiesbaden; over 20 paintings were sold. Jawlensky met interesting people there, including Heinrich and Toni Kirchhoff, who became collectors of his art. He decided to move to Wiesbaden, and arrived there in June 1921. Helene and Andreas soon followed.

Jawlensky and Helene married on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, which, after many arguments, led to a final break with Marianne von Werefkin.

Alexej von Jawlensky







# UNTITLED 1966

WIFREDO LAM

oil on canvas	Provenance
1966	R.J. Nicolas, Cannes (from 1971/72)
114.5 x 147.5 cm	Galerie Melki, Paris
45 x 58 in.	Private collection, Europe
signed and dated lower right	Private collection

Laurin-Lam 66.10	Literature
	Pol Fouchet, Max. Wifredo Lam. Barcelona / Paris 1976. Pl. 521, S. 241.
	Pol Fouchet, Max. Wifredo Lam. Barcelona / Paris 1989. Pl. 553, S. 261.
	Laurin-Lam, Lou. Wifredo Lam: Catalogue Raisonné of the Painted Work, Vol. II 1961-1982.
	Lausanne 2002. Pl. 66.10, S. 293.







# UNTITLED 1966

WIFREDO LAM

"Wifredo Lam is a mystic, that is, open to the world – to the hidden world – and in mysterious ways connected through this world to the origin of man and the emergence of the world, and that is why his art is in its very essence humanistic."<sup>1</sup>

Eugène Ionesco

In 1966, the year in which Wifredo Lam created this untitled painting, the spokesman and leading theorist of Surrealism, André Breton, died in Paris. Wifredo Lam, who had made Paris his home since the 1940s, and even more so in the 1950s, was among the participants in the funeral procession for Breton, who had been a friend and companion to the painter for decades. Lam illustrated volumes of poetry by Breton, and during the turbulent period of the Second World War and the exile of the Surrealists, had travelled with Breton and others to Martinique in 1941 and to Haiti in 1944, to his Caribbean roots.

Born in Cuba, Wifredo Lam was the son of a Chinese father and a Cuban mother of African descent. After his training in the Caribbean state, he moved to Europe, and in 1938, after spending time mainly in Spain, where he also fought in the resistance against Franco, he became acquainted in Paris with Breton, Picasso and other exponents of the Avant-garde and Surrealism. These formative years in the world capital of art of that time, combined with his diverse cultural origins, shaped the art of Wifredo Lam.

In fact, it is impossible to overlook the formative input from Pablo Picasso, who recognized him as a soulmate, in his painting. Especially when the war and persecution forced him to emigrate to the United States, this input became stronger and, along with the influences of Lam's cultural origin, they were concentrated into a syncretistic and yet completely new pictorial language, as in the untitled 1966 painting. It is a spontaneous, creative and multicultural fusion, in the best sense of the word, which characterized Lam's works from the 1940s onwards, making him one of the most notable representatives of his generation and a kind of postmodern artist 'avant la lettre'. Josefina Alix has summarized this as follows:

"Of a very different character (in comparison with Yves Tanguy), the Cuban Wifredo Lam – who had been in Paris since 1938 – also left Europe with the Surrealist group. The reencounter with his roots caused a substantial change in his painting. The figures with elongated faces adopted the form of masks and symbiotically mingle with the abundant vegetation of his native Caribbean. ... Lam had not needed anthropological research; his transformation arose in an absolutely spontaneous way, from his experiences, from the voodoo rites he had seen in his childhood, from his innate conviction that the powers of nature were an extension of the human spirit itself."<sup>2</sup>

This change in his painting – which is essentially an apotheosis of all his influences and insights – is most strongly expressed in Lam's works of the 1960s.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Wifredo Lam Exhib. Cat. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf: 1988) p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Josefina Alix. Indigenous art and nature. The encounter of the art of the old and new worlds. In: Les Surréalistes en exil et les débuts de l'école de New York. Exhib. Cat Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (Strasbourg : 2000) pp. 359-370, here p. 366.









Picasso and Lam,  
Vallauris 1954

Wifredo Lam in his studio  
in Albissola,  
c. 1970



In purely formal terms, the adaptation of the Cubist language of form in conjunction with an iconography derived from a wide variety of sources is unmistakable. The proximity to Picasso's painting of the 1930s and 1940s is already palpable when one compares the parallels in one of the heads of Lam's mythical creatures in the 1966 painting with the horse figure in Picasso's *Guernica*. In addition, many other formal reminiscences of the European Avant-garde are incorporated, especially – and astonishingly – sculpture. Thus, the polygon shape in the upper right quarter of the picture is strikingly similar to works by Lynn Chadwick or Kenneth Armitage – who shared Lam's animistic feeling for the figure and nature. In comparison with other works in which these rhomboid forms emerge, often interlinked and occasionally complemented by biomorphic elements, it becomes apparent that they are a symbol for light or spirit beings, as in *Umbral* from 1950 or *Al Final de la Noche* from 1969.

Lam's approach in both iconography and colour, on the other hand, is entirely his own, hence the special amalgamated character of his painting. In this he is close to the distinctive feature of the religious movement of the so-called 'Santería' in his Cuban homeland, which superimposes the Christian

saints of the colonialists on the ancient gods and demons of the African-Caribbean culture.

Thus, the abstract, indissolubly intertwined dragon or snake figures could be associated with the mythical figures of Damballa and Ayida, deities of the Voodoo cult, who embody the absolutely good, the creative, sexuality and fertility and who appear frequently, and also by name, in Lam's work<sup>3</sup>. With a use of colour that is as impressive as it is brilliant, Lam allows these central symbolic figures, rich in contrast and with his typical, geometrical contour lines, to emerge from a dark background as if they were oversized earth drawings, such as the famous Nazca lines or other portraits that can only be seen from a great height, that is, that are created for superhuman viewers.

In his own way, Wifredo Lam redefined the aesthetic principle of Surrealism. For he creates the core of the Surrealist programme of cognition, namely the connection of the unrelated and of things alien to each other to something new, in order to obtain from this unexpected encounter the spark of deeper insight into the intercultural alloy of which his pictures consist. Daniel Abadie has ingeniously summarized this exceptional position of Wifredo Lam:

"There are paintings of revelation and Lam's work is

<sup>3</sup> In e.g. *Damballah*, created in 1947 or in *The Abalochas dance for Dhombala*, the god of unity from 1970.





evidently among them. It is precisely the 'familiar strangeness' that Louis Althusser found in them that causes problems for our occidental eyes. These figures so profoundly expressive of the spirit of a place, so tied to Cuba, to the voodoo cult, are at the same time ours and part of our culture. ... It was Lam's deed, this man both African and Chinese revealed to himself in Europe, to have known how to raise ... these unknown hybrids, familiar to all, these new cultures with the dimensions of a world."<sup>4</sup>

Wifredo Lam described in his own words the intention that his pictures pursue with the syncretic, cross-cultural combination of his artistic sources:

"My own painting despite my particular mental circumstances, is a general proposal – a proposal of democracy, if you like – made to all men."<sup>5</sup>

Pablo Picasso  
*Guernica*  
1937  
Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Abadie.  
Wifredo Lam, *The Soul of the Jungle*  
(Paris: 1985) unnumbered.  
<sup>5</sup> Quoted from  
Max-Pol Fouchet, *Wifredo Lam*  
(Barcelona: 1976) p. 108.



## WIFREDO LAM

SAGUA LA GRANDE, CUBA 1902 – 1982 PARIS

### THE YEAR 1966

From 1964, Wifredo Lam owned a house with studio in the Italian coastal resort of Albissola Mare, spending a large portion of the time there when he was not travelling; while his third wife Lou Laurin mostly stayed in the couple's Paris apartment with their two sons Eskil and Timour, who were subsequently to be joined by a third. Lam wrote many letters to his family, visiting them approximately once per month, provided that the family did not go to Albissola or accompany him on his travels. Even in 1966, the artist travelled extensively, having, since his participation in documenta III in Kassel in 1964, been invited to many large solo exhibitions of his work. In 1966, a range of retrospective exhibitions thus began at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, and continued in the following year at, for example, the Kunsthalle Basel, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Even before then, Lam had been awarded prestigious prizes, such as the Guggenheim International Award and the Premio Marzotto.

Lam's international recognition thus reached a new zenith by 1966, and almost had a symbolic aspect in that, in the same year, André Breton – one of his closest confidantes from their time together with the Surrealists – died and was interned in Paris in the presence of Wifredo Lam. However, despite the

travels of 1966 through Europe and almost to Moscow, Albissola still formed the focus of his artistic activity. Besides the paintings, Wifredo Lam also increasingly turned to graphic prints, having been in close contact with Giorgio Upiglio and his Grafica Uno studio in Milan.

However, in 1966, there was one work that Wifredo Lam, in his fertile and distinctive technique of these years, probably completed at least partially in Cuba: he painted *El tercer mundo* – The Third World – here, for the presidential palace of Fidel Castro. Lam was still sympathetic to the revolution in his Caribbean homeland, also taking part in the Salon de Mai exhibition, which transferred from Paris to Havana the following year.

Wifredo Lam,  
Cuba, 1963









# THE GARDEN IN WANNSEE LOOKING NORTHEAST 1917

MAX LIEBERMANN

oil on canvas	Provenance
1917	Paul Cassirer, Berlin
73.5 x 92 cm	(acc. to cat.rais. possibly Franz Oppenheim, Berlin)
28 7/8 x 36 1/4 in.	Franz Resch, Gauting/Munich
signed and dated lower right	Galerie Gunzenhauser, Munich
	Private collection, Switzerland (1964)
Eberle 1917/8	Private collection
	Exhibited
	Palais de Beaulieu, Lausanne 1964. Exposition National Suisse Lausanne, Chefs d'Oeuvre des Collections Suisses. No. 32 ill. (label)
	Literature
	Eberle, Matthias. Max Liebermann, Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde und Ölstudien. Vol. II 1900-1935. Munich 1995. No. 1917/8, p. 933.





# THE GARDEN IN WANNSEE LOOKING NORTHEAST 1917

MAX LIEBERMANN

"A well-painted turnip is as good as a well-painted Madonna."

Max Liebermann

In 1909, when Max Liebermann purchased a large lakefront property in the Alsen villa colony on Wannsee, where he had a country house – or, as he called it, his villa or mansion<sup>1</sup> – built in the neo-classical style by the architect Paul Baumgarten until 1910, the garden played an important role from the outset of the project. For the design of the garden, Liebermann relied heavily on his friend Alfred Lichtwark, the first director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle and, significantly, a proponent of and writer on a reform movement for modern gardening. The house and garden were used for different purposes for many years after the war, but since 2006 the house has been a museum, and the garden has been largely restored to its original state, so that the artist's Wannsee residence can now be experienced as it was depicted in his paintings.<sup>2</sup> On the long property, the villa roughly divides the upper third facing the street from the lower two-thirds facing the lake. In the upper, smaller part, a gardener's shed was also built, and a vegetable garden was created. On the lake side is a terrace adjoining the villa, followed by a large lawn flanked by hedges and rose gardens, a birch grove, flowerbeds, shrubs, and groups of trees.

Max Liebermann himself had clear ideas about the entire property, as he wrote to his architect: "If I stand here on the shore, I want to be able to see through the house to the part of the garden that lies

behind it. In front of the house, there should be a simple meadow so that I can see the lake unobstructed from the rooms. And to the right and left of the lawn, I want straight paths. That's the most important thing. Something else. The room located on the axis should be the dining room. So, now you can build."<sup>3</sup>

The client's specifications were all fulfilled, and in 1910 the Liebermann family was able to move into the house on Wannsee. In the following twenty-five years until Liebermann's death, he created some 200 paintings that predominantly show the garden – not counting the drawings, pastels, and prints. Astonishingly, there are no real views of the house itself: it always appears only as a backdrop, or as a marginal element in the picture. Liebermann only incorporates parts of the architecture of the house and sometimes also the gardener's shed into his compositions. Even the interior is only rarely shown, and only in the mid-1920s, when the painter used the hall for a family portrait. His studio, which Liebermann had set up on the first floor of the house, only appears in a few pictures from 1932 onward. This is the least surprising aspect, because in his garden on Wannsee Liebermann worked almost exclusively in the open air, at nature's doorstep: the main subject, which he continually reinterpreted, was almost exclusively the garden.

In his painting of the vegetable garden looking to the northeast, Liebermann shows a partial view from the garden patch in the front of the property

<sup>1</sup> Hansen, Dorothee, in:

Max Liebermann:

Der deutsche Impressionist,  
exh. cat. Kunsthalle Bremen,  
Munich, 1995, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> On the restoration of the  
original garden, cf. Braun, Günter and  
Waltraud (eds.): Max Liebermanns  
Garten am Wannsee und seine wechselvolle Geschichte, Berlin, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Jedlicka, Gotthard: Begegnungen mit  
Künstlern der Gegenwart,  
Zurich, 1945, p. 29.









Max Liebermann  
*The Studio in Wannsee*  
 c. 1932

to the front of the house with the two ionic columns supporting a loggia. Some French windows are visible, with the hallway and the cloakroom behind them on the ground floor. The window visible on the upper floor through the foliage belongs to Liebermann's studio. Once again, the house only plays a role as a theatre wall, as a concluding element in the background. The lead role is played by the color composition of the flowers, shrubs, and trees of the garden. The upper edge of the picture is taken up by the green band of the tall hedge of linden trees. Below it, in front of the house, we see the lawns with the rounded boxwoods, and finally, extending up to the foreground of the picture, on both sides of the garden path that cuts through the picture diagonally, the flowerbeds with their lush yellow, white, and red blooming vegetation. The fact that it is a vegetable garden is only recognizable from the lower right corner of the picture, in which Liebermann apparently depicted a bed of cabbage or lettuce. From the dark green of the leaves and the magnificent blossoming flowers, we can tell that the picture was painted in the summer. Nothing indicates that the painting was created during the penultimate year of the war, and that large parts of the lawns were repurposed as cabbage fields to feed the family. Liebermann also captured

this process in pictures, so that we can follow how the cabbage takes over the garden and is then beaten back by the flowers. Even in the idyll of this Wannsee Arcadia, the difficult circumstances of the times are visible.

But this is not the subject of Liebermann's paintings. This painting is a particularly beautiful example of his depiction of perspective among the large group of Wannsee paintings. His choice of framing is often unusual, and many of his Wannsee paintings show a dynamic view seen from the diagonal. Here Liebermann composes a dominating diagonal through the garden path, which follows the almost gesturally painted flowerbeds and which is bordered by the house wall and especially the row of linden trees. The viewer's position appears slightly elevated, so that the angled view further alters and accentuates the perspective. Moreover, in the swirl of colours of the plants and flowers, which are by no means depicted naturalistically, the immediacy of outdoor painting becomes palpable, through which Liebermann seeks to achieve a distribution of colour and mass that does not primarily aim to capture the momentary visible impression, but the inner essence of this phenomenon of colour, masses, light, and movement.



Liebermann is thus part of the tradition of French Impressionists, but clearly sets himself apart from them through his different approach to painting – and in particular through his artistic aims. This French style of outdoor painting is certainly close to his own, and the subjects and formal aspects are analogous to Monet's pictures from his garden in Giverny and especially the famous water lilies; after all, Monet also created a visible autonomy of color through abstraction (and practically at the same time as Liebermann's garden pictures). However, despite these artistic similarities, Liebermann's understanding of the essence of painting is different. In this context, it is telling that Liebermann acquired Claude Monet's 1874 painting *Manet Painting in Monet's Garden in Argenteuil* in 1904 and later hung it in his Wannsee villa. After all, Manet's famous *Bunch of Asparagus* is figuratively nothing more than the well-painted turnip that Liebermann mentioned. For Liebermann, the "well-painted" is a synthesis of the technical and artisanal capturing of the phenomenon of nature and its depiction formed by the artist's mental penetration. Liebermann calls this fundamental artistic process "imagination": "For all art is based on nature, and everything that endures in it is nature. Not just the nature surrounding the artist, but above all his own nature. How he, the artist, looks at the

world, with his inner and outer senses – this is what I call his imagination – the shaping of his imagination is his art."<sup>4</sup> Liebermann's concept of imagination is a mental construction that creates and captures artistic experience, a unity of perception, sensation (not same thing), and idea in the moment of painting through perfection of technique.<sup>5</sup>

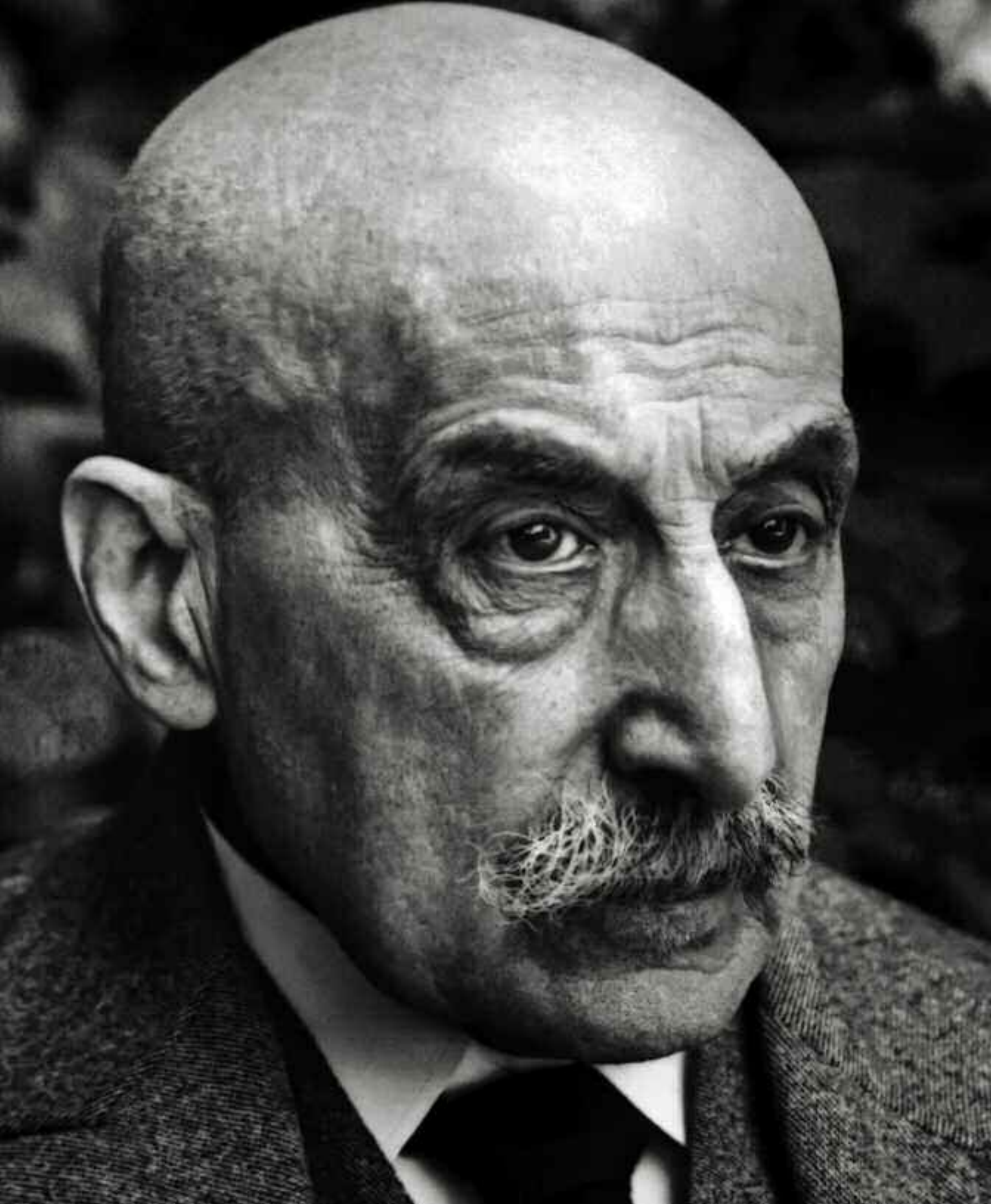
Seen from this perspective, Liebermann's painting of his kitchen garden in Wannsee looking toward the northeast is not only a beautiful, summery, colourful garden picture full of light and lightness. Above all, it is a brilliant painterly realization of his idea of art.

Max Liebermann's villa (street side)  
on Wannsee, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Liebermann, Max:  
Die Phantasie in der Malerei,  
Berlin. 1916, 1922, p. 7f.

<sup>5</sup> On Liebermann's art-theoretical  
views, cf. Melcher, Ralph:  
'Wissen Sie, ich habe Sie ähnlicher  
gemalt, als Sie sind.' Max Lieber-  
manns Kunsttheorie zwischen Idea-  
lismus und Naturalismus, in:  
idem (ed.), Max Liebermann:  
Zeichnen heißt weglassen:  
Arbeiten auf Papier,  
Ostfildern. 2004, p. 32-35.







# MAX LIEBERMANN

1847 – BERLIN – 1935

## THE YEAR 1917

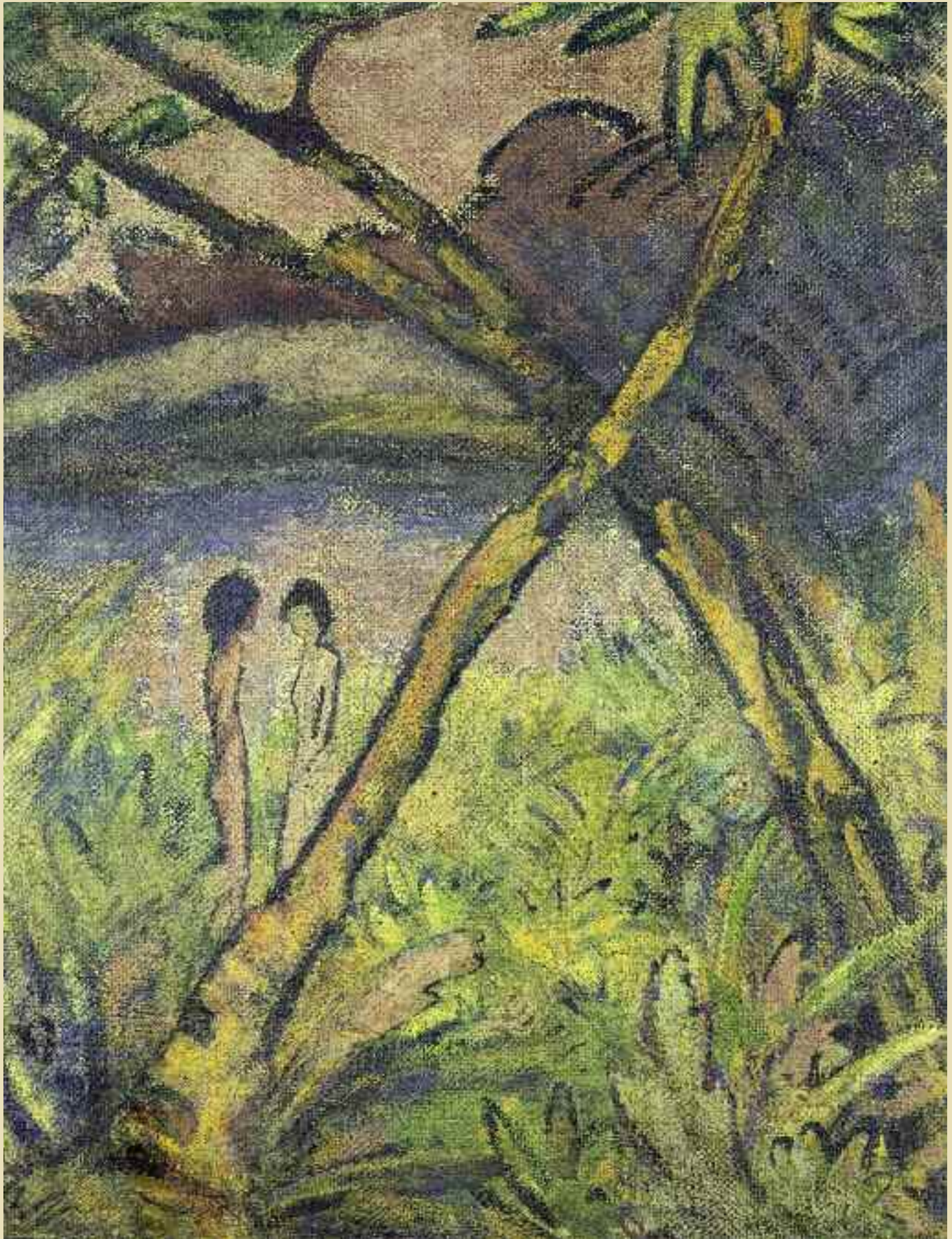
The plot of land by the Wannsee, acquired in 1909, with the house built by Liebermann until 1910, and the both lovingly and expertly planted garden, were to develop into an oasis of retreat for Max Liebermann and his family – the outbreak of war in 1914 meant that this happened to an extent far more than had originally been conceived. In 1917, the course of the war had hardly reached Berlin and Liebermann himself. Nevertheless the garden and, most of all, the cabbage fields dug even on the ornamental lawn, were required for self-sufficiency. Besides the garden pictures painted here, Liebermann continued to paint upper class portraits of Wilhelmine society, which was already staring into the abyss – a disconcerting contrast, not only between the reality of the world war and the idyll in the house by the Wannsee, but also between the way Prussian society portrayed itself and its actual situation.

In Liebermann's private life, his granddaughter Marta, born in 1917, enriched the family life and, playing in the garden by the Wannsee, became one of the artist's favourite subjects.

In the same year, Max Liebermann himself celebrated his 70th birthday and the Academy of Arts marked the occasion by organizing his greatest solo exhibition to date, showing almost 200 works. In addition, the Kaiser awarded him the Order of the Red Eagle, an honour for the artist and a mark of esteem that continued after the end of the war. In 1918, the National Gallery established a Liebermann Hall, and in 1920, Max Liebermann was unanimously elected as President of the Prussian Academy of Arts – thus closing the circle for this former leader of the Secession and opponent of this very academy.

Max Liebermann,  
1932







# **TWO NUDE GIRLS AND CROSSED TREE TRUNKS AT THE FOREST POND 1918/20**

OTTO MUELLER

distemper on burlap

1918/20

111 x 86 cm

43  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 33  $\frac{7}{8}$  in.

verso: *Two Girls by the Shore*

Lüttichau/Pirsig 128

Provenance

Galerie Flechtheim, Düsseldorf

Galerie Paffrath, Düsseldorf (1920)

Private collection, Düsseldorf (until 1991)

Galerie Thomas, Munich

Private collection, Switzerland

Exhibited

Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich; Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2003. Otto Mueller. Col. plate 62.

Literature

von Lüttichau, Mario-Andreas. Otto Mueller. Cologne 1993. P. 101, col. plate 5

von Lüttichau, Mario und Pirsig, Tanja. Otto Mueller Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde und Zeichnungen (CD-ROM), no. 128, col. ill.



# TWO NUDE GIRLS AND CROSSED TREE TRUNKS AT THE FOREST POND 1918/20

OTTO MUELLER

From the bottom left corner, a large tree trunk moves diagonally into the painting towards the right. It tapers towards the top and ends at the upper right edge of the picture, where the first leaves of the crown are visible. A little further into the background, another tree trunk is growing in the opposite direction, starting at the lower right side of the picture. The crossed tree trunks form a kind of gate, which allows a view to a pond, in front of which two nude girls are standing. Wild green vegetation sprawls around the tree trunks, which thins out a little towards the edge of the pond, while still hiding the figures up to their calves. Mueller's typical clayey colours are given a warm, peaceful mood by the last glow of the setting sun, which casts a rosy haze over the earthy palette. It is this reserved, pastel colouring which distinguishes Mueller from his fellow-artists from the 'Brücke' and steeps his paintings in the atmospheric harmony that characterises his work. He develops his expressive painterly gesture through the form, which is also influenced by the glue-bound distemper technique he uses, which he usually applies on coarse burlap. This technique does not permit any progressive development of the draft of the image or any subsequent overpainting. The draft must be determined beforehand; the execution does not permit the artist to lose himself in detail and it is precisely in this simplification of form that Mueller brings his work to perfection. The glue-bound paint provides him with the matt surface he wants, which sometimes seems to glow from the inside. Mueller's

almost infinitely varying shades of green, which fascinate the eye of the observer, are unrivalled. His landscape depictions are not dramatic, he is not seeking the unique moment in them – his depictions are discreet and calm – "ruled by the deep, breathless silence of the first day of creation."<sup>1</sup>

In this work, Otto Mueller again devotes himself to his classical theme, the nude in a landscape – a theme which he pursued for over two decades. The human being appears in unison with natural surroundings that resemble an unspoiled paradise, far from any civilization. Here he is also in agreement with his artist friends from 'Brücke', and the time he spent with them in natural surroundings, especially with Heckel and Kirchner at the Baltic Sea, fuelled a shared artistic understanding of nature. But while the latter also turned their attention to the garish and noisy civilization of the city and made these a theme in their pictures, Otto Mueller remained true to his "calm depictions of human beings who, unaware of their physicality, feel in their silent togetherness that they are themselves creatures and are at one with the nature that surrounds them".<sup>2</sup>

In 1915, Mueller was drafted for military service in the First World War, from which he returned to Berlin, seriously ill, in 1918. As early as 1919, he was appointed professor at the Academy of Art in Breslau, which at the time was one of the most progressive schools of art in Europe. Especially

<sup>1</sup> Lothar-Günther Buchheim,  
Otto Mueller – Leben und Werk  
Buchheim Verlag,  
Feldafing: 1963 p. 140.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.









from the 1920s, the Academy enjoyed a reputation for cosmopolitanism and liberality. Mueller taught here until his death in 1930 and was held in high esteem.

The principle of composition, borrowed from Jugendstil art and very frequently found in Mueller's work, which frames the figures with plants, leaves or vines, thus constructing a kind of window or field of vision, is transmitted in this picture into a dynamic that emphasizes the depth of field by means of the expressively crossed tree trunks. Still quite classically styled here, the trees function as a repoussoir as we know it in the paintings of the Old Masters, but the symbolically superimposed cross form and the over-dominance of their presence in proportion to the landscape and to the human figures give them a meaningfulness that seems to contradict their true role. The idyll that is actually depicted is thus imbued with a tension that seems both to exclude the observer from the bucolic events in the background and to give rise to the premonition of an imminent occurrence.

Christiane Remm has analysed this complexity and the meaning of the picture and the distance that is thus established, which Mueller achieves by means

of the contrast between arcadian tranquillity and vigorous symbolism of the trees:

"These consciously fashioned nude/landscape compositions no longer describe a direct experience of nature but encompass a reliving of innocence. This method of stylising nature is derived basically from the spirit of Jugendstil art, ... The 'defilement of Paradise' is abrogated in the increasing stylisation of nature. A loosely associated system of semi-abstract, partly ornamental symbolism emerges, which simplifies objects and bodily forms and uses them repeatedly. Nature becomes a composition and is transformed into a timeless, unchangeable and artificial paradise that is free of individual, spontaneous or confusing coincidences."<sup>3</sup>

Mueller still remained true to his unmistakable style after the war, but without becoming repetitive. His painting did not become rigid through reiteration but continued to expand its creative power as it probed the recurring canon of themes.

Mueller's artistic achievements are seen in his exploration of the diversity of forms of nature and humankind, the simplification in overcoming detail and the reduction to the essential.

Otto Mueller  
*Three Figures and Crossed Tree Trunks*  
1916  
Lithograph

3 Remm, Christiane. Otto Mueller.  
Munich 2014, p. 29.





## OTTO MUELLER

LIEBAU, SILESIA 1874 – 1930 OBERNIGK N. Breslau

### THE YEAR 1918

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Otto Mueller appeared completely unimpressed by the event, and did not, like many of his artist colleagues, including Heckel and Kirchner, voluntarily enlist for war service. For almost two years, he managed to avoid war service, but in July 1916, now almost 42 years old, he was conscripted into the Landsturm as an infantryman. He was sorely oppressed by the cruelties of war, homesickness and concern for his wife Maschka. With a lung infection, he was taken to a military hospital in Neuss on the Rhine. Here, he was able to use his time to conduct business, and, besides his exhibitions in Berlin, he also organised his participation in exhibitions of the Düsseldorf Secession (1917) and the Nassau Kunstverein Wiesbaden (1918). He also received portrait commissions, and thereby got to know a lot of people who were closely associated with the history of modernism in Rhineland: Rudolf Ibach, Hans Koch, Edwin Suermondt, Carl Georg Heise and the lawyer Johannes Geller, who became an important patron of Mueller. After his recovery, Mueller was transferred to the Eastern Front in Russia in June 1917 – artistic work was possible here to a modest extent. After his transfer to the airship department in Berlin in 1918, Mueller worked as a draughtsman, and experienced the end of the war there.

Mueller's range of subjects remained constant and was not changed by the war, which he had never made a subject of his pictures. By April of the following year, Paul Cassirer organised an extensive solo exhibition for him at his Berlin gallery. Some 37 works from 1912 to 1919 were shown, together with a large number of drawings and graphic works. For Otto Mueller, the show was extremely important for his ultimate success as an artist, and also received a positive echo in the press.

In April 1919, Mueller was appointed professor at the State Art Academy in Breslau. Even when he no longer needed this appointment, since his livelihood was secured by the numerous sales and continuing exhibitions of his works, he remained a lecturer in Breslau until his death in 1930.

Otto Mueller







# **AUTUMN SEA XII (BLUE WATER, ORANGE CLOUDS) 1910**

EMIL NOLDE

oil on jute  
1910  
74.2 x 89.6 cm  
29 1/4 x 35 1/4 in.  
signed lower right

Urban 400

Entered in the artist's  
work manual of 1910,  
b,c as no. 322, and in the  
work manual of 1930 as  
'1910 Herbstmeer XII (Blaues  
Wasser, orang. Wolken)'.

## Provenance

I. Feitler, Frankfurt/M. (before 1930 – emigrated to Brasil in 1936)  
Prof. Bettina Bjorksten-Orsech (née Feitler), USA (by descent from the above, until 1972)  
Private collection, Germany  
Fischer Fine Art, London (1973, no. 50)  
Dresdner Bank, Frankfurt/M. (1976)  
Galerie Dr. Rathke, Frankfurt/M.  
Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt/M. (since 1983)

## Exhibited

Galerie Commeter, Hamburg (label with no. 2239); Kunstverein, Jena; Weimar 1911. Emil Nolde.  
Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster 1912. Emil Nolde.  
Der Neue Kunstsalon, Munich 1912. Emil Nolde. No. 19  
Kunstverein, Essen 1921. Emil Nolde.  
Gesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst, Bonn 1921. Emil Nolde.  
Ruhmeshalle Kunstverein, Barmen 1922. Emil Nolde.  
Ludwig Schames, Frankfurt / M. 1922. Emil Nolde. No. 11  
Fischer Fine Art, London 1976. Universe of Art III. No. 1, ill.  
Städel Museum, Frankfurt 2014. Emil Nolde – Retrospektive. No. 31, p. 101, col. ill.

## Literature

Nemitz, Fritz. Deutsche Malerei der Gegenwart. Munich 1948. Ill. p. 75  
Urban, Martin. Emil Nolde Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde Bd. 1, 1895-1914. Munich 1990.  
No. 400, p. 344, ill. (as oil on canvas)





# AUTUMN SEA XII (BLUE WATER, ORANGE CLOUDS) 1910

EMIL NOLDE

"Nolde knows the sea as no other artist before him has known it."<sup>1</sup>  
Max Sauerlandt, 1921

The sea always fascinated Nolde, and it played an important role in his art from the very beginning up to the end of his career. More than any other landscape, the infinite vastness of the sea, whose natural power remains untamed by human beings, embodies the originality and unpredictability of creation. Nolde himself describes this in his autobiography as follows: "Everything primal and primordial always captivated my senses. The great, roaring sea is still in this primordial state. The wind, the sun, even the starry sky are almost as they were fifty thousand years ago."<sup>2</sup> The sea as a metaphor for emotional states and as a mirror of the endlessness of the sky represented an existential task of painting, especially for the Expressionists, which they sought to capture in their art.

Especially the series of 'Autumn Sea' paintings, which include the present painting, have even been viewed as a concrete expression of Nolde's own turbulent state of mind after his break with the Secession.<sup>3</sup>

Nolde's engagement with the sea as a subject intensified noticeably in his work beginning in 1910. He often stayed in Hamburg. Every time he went to his Berlin studio, he stopped there, not least because some of his most important patrons lived there, including Luise and Gustav Schiefler and

Martha and Paul Rauert. In February 1910, the artist settled down in a guest house on the harbour and lost himself completely in his work: he created eleven paintings and several works on paper there. He was less fascinated by the liveliness, the noise and activity of the harbour, which continued day and night, than by the confrontation of the force of nature that is the water and industrialized technology as manifested in steamers, tug boats, cranes, and docks, which he captured in his drawings and prints. In his paintings, he dealt with the atmosphere of the water and the light on the Elbe, at times harmoniously intermingling the two (*Qualmende Dampfer* (Smoking Steamers), 1910), and at others cutting through the luminous idyll (*Schlepper auf der Elbe* (Tugboats on the Elbe River), 1910).

His interest in water and the sea intensified after his departure from Hamburg. Nolde spent the summer of 1910 in Ruttebüll on the west coast, and in addition to other views he soon began his 'Autumn Sea' series of paintings, which he numbered using Roman numerals, creating a total of fourteen in November 1910, and six more in the following year.<sup>4</sup> He completely devoted himself to the colours of the sky and the sea, which he applied to the canvas while sitting in a shack on the beach. Dramatic atmospheres of light and sometimes threatening cloud formations meet the turbulent sea on the horizon: colour is the determining element of these paintings. In some of them, the subject recedes entirely into the background, right up to the threshold of abstraction.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Ring, Christian: Emil Nolde: Das Meer, Cologne, 2015, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from ibid., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> King, Averil: Emil Nolde: Artist of the Elements, London, 2013, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Krämer, Felix: Seestücke, in: Krämer, Felix (ed.): Emil Nolde: Retrospektive, Munich, London, New York, 2014. p. 89 f.













The painting style and brushstrokes vary from thick and dynamic to translucent.

In the painting *Autumn Sea XII*, the sea and sky meet in a sharp contrast: the dark-blue, turbulent sea at the bottom of the painting is stirred up by the white tones of the curling crests of the waves. Toward the horizon, the colour of the sea darkens and meets the dark-yellow and greenish glowing evening sky, which is dominated by orange-red illuminated clouds and yellow-green streaks of light. The paint is thickly applied, and the brushstrokes are confident. The atmosphere of the painting is powerful and dynamic, but not threatening. A thunderstorm may have just occurred, which is now dying down, driven away by the reappearing sun, which is about to set.

Although the unprecedentedness and the independence of Nolde's seascapes are often emphasized, this choice of subject matter of course makes him part of a long tradition. The similarities to Gustave Courbet's waves and seascapes, which Nolde may have been familiar with, are astonishing. Courbet's paintings of the sea were exhibited in Munich, Berlin, and Hamburg, and Nolde could have seen them.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it is surprising how, for example, Courbet's 1867 painting *Autumn Sea*,

now in a Japanese museum collection, or *Wave* from 1870 in the collection of the Museum Folkwang in Essen at first glance seem to anticipate the depiction of the waves and the cloud-covered sky in Nolde's works. However, despite the skillful portrayal of the violence of these forces of nature of the sea and the wind, in his paintings the realist Courbet does not transport the emotional atmospheres and does not use the expressive colors of Nolde's works. Unlike Courbet, Nolde's aim as a painter is not to capture the sight, the physical experience of the sea, but to create a metaphor for mental states and the nature of those forces by evoking these sensations.

"To Nolde, the sea was always an image of the elemental power of nature. He experienced it in all its states. The sea personified itself as an elemental creature of a dramatic kind, and Nolde had always painted it in this personal way."<sup>6</sup>

Ada and Emil Nolde in front of the fisher cottage on the island of Alsen around 1910-1915

<sup>5</sup> Averil King. *Emil Nolde, Artist of the Elements*. London 2013, S. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Haftmann, Werner, quoted in: Reuther, Manfred: *Emil Nolde*, Cologne, 2010, p. 186.



# EMIL NOLDE

NOLDE, SCHLESWIG 1867 – 1956 SEEBÜLL

## THE YEAR 1910

In February 1910, the Galerie Commeter in Hamburg held a major Nolde exhibition, which subsequently moved to Essen – several pictures were sold. Nolde also travelled to Hamburg and moved into quarters in a guesthouse in the Port of Hamburg until March. He creates a number of works inspired by the surroundings: Ink-brush drawings, the series of Hamburg etchings, four woodcuts and several paintings.

Nolde spent the summer in Ruttebüll by the North Sea: he created paintings with Biblical subjects. Then he moved to the island of Alsen, where he painted the 'Autumn Sea' series, in which the artist continued to exploit the potential of colour, breaking the boundaries of representation and attaining an unprecedented degree of abstraction in his painting.

In 1908, Nolde joined the Berlin Secession, although its president, Max Liebermann, severely criticised the generation of young painters and Nolde from the outset. In May 1910, on Georg Tappert's initiative, the 'Neue Secession' was founded, with Max Pechstein becoming its president, and was joined by the painters rejected by the Berlin Secession. When, in December 1910, Nolde's painting *Pentecost* was rejected, Nolde finally broke with and was expelled from the Berlin Secession, since he severely attacked Liebermann in an open letter. Nolde became renowned as a scandalous artist throughout Germany. Along with approval, Nolde also received a great deal of headwind, which afflicted him: "I was never discouraged, nor did I regret anything, but I was at a very low ebb"<sup>1</sup>. After

his exclusion, Nolde immediately joined the Neue Secession, and took part in exhibitions until 1912.

In the coming winter, the artist turned his attention to the Berlin nightlife. His resting point was the studio with apartment he had newly occupied in Tauentzienstrasse 8, where he lived with Ada for the next 19 years. The studio largely shut out the hustle and bustle of Berlin, "only very, very gently could we hear the humming of the sound waves and city air laden with dust."<sup>2</sup> Despite producing many paintings, watercolours and drawings concerning the cabaret, dancing bars and theatre, which he visited with Ada, Nolde remained ambivalent, if not hostile, towards the city – there is always an overtone of his longing for a simple life, close to nature.

Emil Nolde,  
1909

<sup>1</sup> Nolde, Emil:  
Jahre der Kämpfe – 1902-1914,  
Flensburg, 1958, p. 154.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 117.







# **GREAT MILL DITCH BRIDGE 1922**

MAX PECHSTEIN

oil on canvas  
1922  
80.5 x 101 cm  
31 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 39 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
signed and dated lower right  
Soika 1922/34

Provenance  
(according to cat.rais possibly William R. Valentiner, 1922/23)  
Anderson Galleries, New York (1923)  
Private collection, USA (from the 1950s)  
The Hefner Galleries, Grand Rapids, Michigan (1985)  
Galerie Pels-Leusden, Berlin (1986)  
Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt/M. (since 1986)

## Exhibited

Anderson Galleries, New York 1923.  
Galerie Pels-Leusden, Berlin 1986. Zeitspiegel I, 1891-1945. No. 140, p. 83, ill.  
Chemnitz; Kunstverein, Aalen; Museum Küppersmühle, Duisburg; Museum Moderner Kunst-Stiftung Wörlan, Passau; St. Annen-Museum, Lübeck; Kunstverein Offenburg/Mittelbaden, Offenburg; Galerie der Stadt, Aschaffenburg; Augsburg; Museum, St. Ingbert; South African National Gallery, Kapstadt 1999-2002.  
Landschaften eines Jahrhunderts aus der Sammlung Deutsche Bank. Pp. 162-163, ill.

## Literature

Soika, Aya. Max Pechstein, Das Werkverzeichnis der Ölgemälde I. Munich 2011.  
No. 1922/34, p. 278, ill.  
Neue Galerie. New Worlds, German and Austrian Art 1890-1940. New York 2001. P. 265, ill.





# GREAT MILL DITCH BRIDGE 1922

MAX PECHSTEIN

In search of a new workplace and new inspiration, Pechstein traveled to the Pomeranian Baltic Sea coast in March 1921 and decided to stay in the small town of Leba, where he spent the summers until 1945, and even lived there from 1944 onward. In Leba, in a way, he found the lost paradise that he had experienced and lost in the South Seas: a primeval place of pristine nature. After Nida, which was now inaccessible for political reasons, and his South Sea voyage, Leba became the third destination that Nolde yearned for, almost an end point in Pechstein's search for a "Baltic Arcadia".<sup>1</sup>

Pechstein explored the entire area with tremendous productivity for his painting, absorbed the colours of the landscape, and applied them to the canvas with an energetic brush.

The bridge backlit by the sunlight-flooded dusk is almost swallowed up by the lush, dark-green vegetation that surrounds it in the wild growth. The river below, on the other hand, reflects the bright, yellowish colours of the sunset, which shines behind the towering trees. A remnant of blue sky corresponds to the watery surface of the river and creates an effective contrast to the glowing red brick buildings of the mill.

The painting represents a characteristic subject for Pechstein's work during his time in Leba and in the 1920s: the landscape as a spectacle of nature, atmospheric lighting and in particular also reflections on the water. The application of paint be-

comes lighter beginning in 1919; the brushstrokes become looser, the colours are luminous, but the compositions themselves become more compact.

The contemporary critic Paul Fechter writes: "The powerful effect of Pechstein's new works is likely based on the fact that today the energy of experiencing and creating are of corresponding intensity and remain in balance. There are early works by him in which one or the other predominates. Today he has found a secure balance."<sup>2</sup>

After experiencing the horrors of the war and a period of crisis in which he was barely able to paint, Pechstein found his inner peace again and returned with renewed energy to his artistic work, aided by nature. The themes of his paintings also changed again, and the works that dealt retrospectively with the South Seas became fewer in number. His stays in Ratzeburg in 1919 and later in Nida inspired him to engage again with the landscape as well as the human figure. In 1921 he found a new artistic home in Leba, and his personal life also changed: he met his second wife Marta Möller there, with whom he would start a new family, and divorced Lotte.

Pechstein's exhibition activities increased again: in February 1921 he showed 44 paintings at Galerie Goyert in Cologne. Parts of the exhibition travelled to Frankfurt and were shown there in May at Kunstsalon Schames. In addition to exhibitions at the Kunstverein Potsdam and the Kunstverein Hamburg,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Soika, Aya: Max Pechstein: Auf der Suche nach einem baltischen Arkadien, in: Zwei Männer, ein Meer: Pechstein und Schmidt-Rottluff an der Ostsee, exh. cat. Pommersches Landesmuseum Greifswald, 2015, p. 11-37, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Fechter, Paul:

Zu neuen Arbeiten Max Pechsteins, in: Die Kunst, XXXV, 1920, p. 224, quoted from: Krause, Markus: Max Pechstein, in: Moeller, Magdalena M. (ed.), Max Pechstein im Brücke-Museum, Munich, 2001, exh. cat., p. 10.









Mühlengrabenbrücke Leba,  
historical postcard  
before 1938

the Pechstein exhibition at the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin received a great deal of attention from the press. The show also featured a number of paintings that were created in Leba. The disputes with his gallerist Wolfgang Gurlitt, whom Pechstein accused of having unlawfully appropriated paintings by him, reached a climax, culminating in a lawsuit in 1922 by Pechstein, which ultimately forced Gurlitt to return several works to Pechstein.<sup>3</sup>

In January, the 'Kestner-Gesellschaft' in Hannover hosted a major exhibition of 60 paintings, watercolours, and prints. In October, the Kunsthütte zu Chemnitz opened an exhibition of more than 40 paintings, and in December 1922 the first Max Pechstein monograph, written by Max Osborn, was

published. Peace returned to Pechstein's life: he spent the summers in Leba and completed many of the paintings that he sketched there in the winter in his Berlin studio. The period until 1933 was marked by a great artistic continuity, during which the struggles for artistic recognition also receded into the past.<sup>4</sup>

Whether the subject of the bridge connecting the two banks in light of Pechstein's living conditions – his new family connection to Leba, his alternating stays in Berlin and Pomerania, his reestablished security as an artist – can also be read symbolically, is an open question. Pechstein repeatedly depicted the two wooden bridges, the cutters and boats along the seawall, and the surrounding landscape, and in this painting, *Great Mill Ditch Bridge*, his in-

<sup>3</sup> Soika, Aya: Max Pechstein: Das Werkverzeichnis der Ölgemälde, vol. II, Munich, 2011, p. 10-13.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Krause, 2001, p. 18.



tense efforts in particular regarding the coloration are especially apparent. When viewing the painting as a whole, it is hardly noticeable how little the artist modulates the usually intense colors; he needs only the three primary colors and the secondary colors green and orange in order to reproduce, indeed exaggerate, the glowing atmosphere of the evening light.

Pechstein himself describes his enthusiasm for his newfound place of longing in a letter from 1921: "New landscape, new people, I've eaten my way in, wild, like a predator, and swallowed the food now." In his memoirs he writes: "I not only came to appreciate this coast, but also to love it."

Max Pechstein  
*Great Mill Ditch Bridge*  
1922

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Soika, Aya: Max Pechstein: Auf der Suche nach einem baltischen Arkadien, in: Zwei Männer, ein Meer: Pechstein und Schmidt-Rottluff an der Ostsee, exh. cat. Pommersches Landesmuseum Greifswald, 2015, p. 11-37, p. 28 and 33.







# MAX PECHSTEIN

ZWICKAU 1881 – 1955 BERLIN

## THE YEAR 1922

In May 1921, Pechstein travelled with his family to a holiday in the small fishing village of Leba on the Baltic Sea coast. They stayed at the Möller inn, where they made the acquaintance of the landlord's daughters Marta and Lise, and probably their brother Hermann as well. Leba became Pechstein's new artistic sanctuary, now that Nidden had become part of Lithuania. In the following three months, Pechstein produced over fifty paintings here, with different landscape subjects, including several of the mill ditch, which runs through the entire locality, with its two wooden bridges, the large and small mill ditch bridge. While they were staying there, Max Pechstein and his wife Lotte each fell in love with Marta and Hermann Möller respectively; the divorce followed in December 1921. Pechstein's preoccupation with local subjects in Leba continued in summer 1922, and gained a new intensity with the mill ditch, he produced his work *Great Mill Ditch Bridge*.

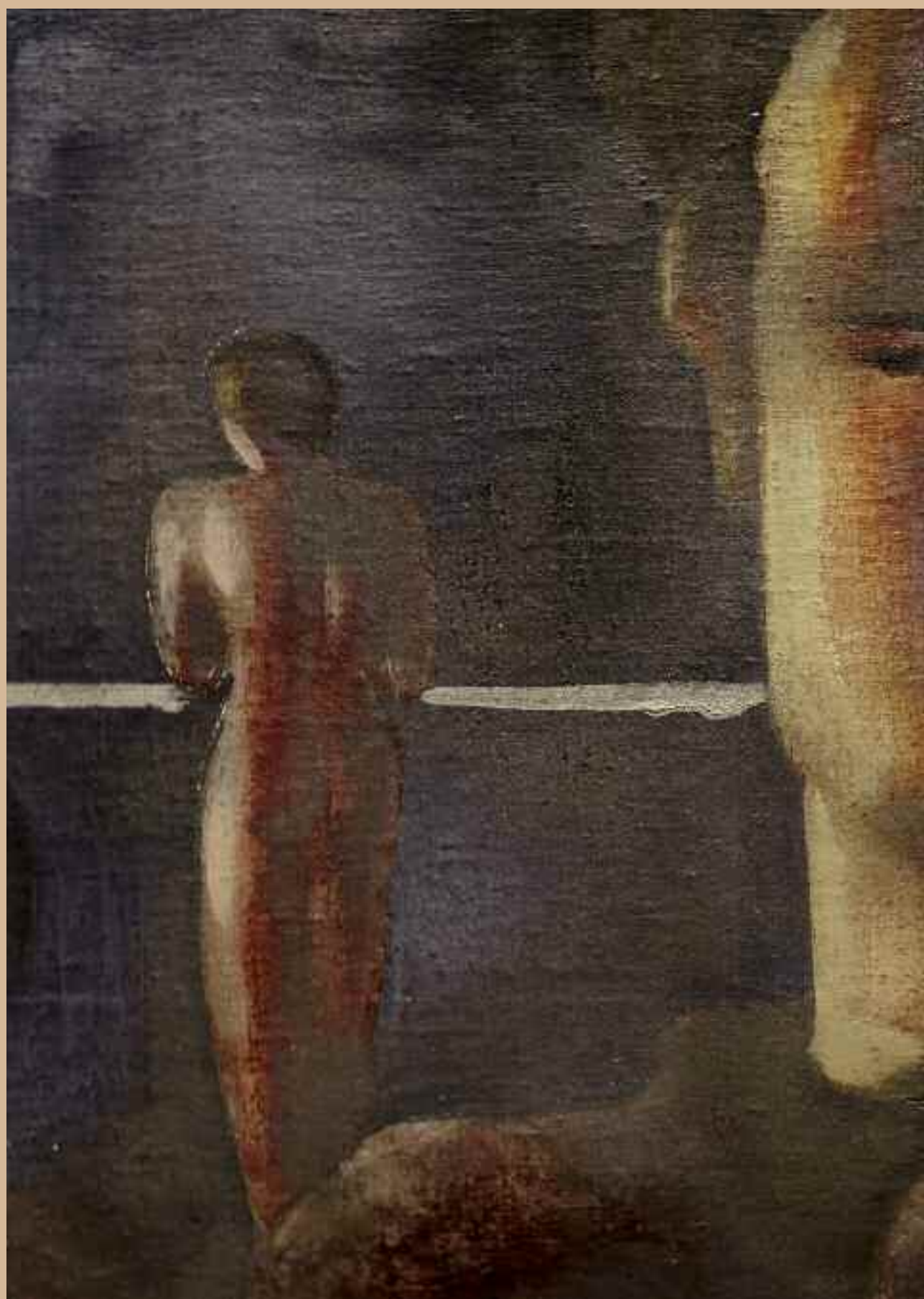
His relationship with his gallerist Wolfgang Gurlitt has already been completely shattered in 1922.

From 1912, Pechstein was under contract to Gurlitt, who, until the early 1920s, counted among the artist's most important patrons. In 1912, the first Berlin exhibition of the Brücke was held in his rooms; Gurlitt financed the artist's journey in the South Seas, and supported the family in the First World War. In return, in 1914 and after his military service, Pechstein transferred almost his complete artistic oeuvre

to Gurlitt. This dependency by Pechstein increasingly led to tensions, especially as Gurlitt not only had the exclusive rights for dealing in Pechstein's works, but also considered the artist's consignment goods held in storage as his own property, refusing to release them to the artist. The disputes with Gurlitt eventually led to a court claim in December, which gave Pechstein his property back, at least in portions. Following the quarrel with Gurlitt, it was the collector and friend Dr. Walter Minnich who supported Pechstein emotionally and financially and regularly acquired new works. The two had met one another in 1919 – Minnich had already acquired pictures from Pechstein before the outbreak of the war. Although Pechstein sold his pictures at exhibitions very successfully, received great public recognition and had loyal collectors, he suffered constant financial problems during the 1920s, because he had no reliable gallerist to represent him and organise his sales. 1922, at least, ended with welcome news for Pechstein, and he wrote to Minnich: "Osborn's monograph has now fortunately been published, and looks really good".<sup>1</sup>

Max Pechstein

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from: Soika, Aya: *Max Pechstein – Das Werkverzeichnis der Ölgemälde*, volume I – 1905-1918. Munich, 2011, p. 13.







# TWO HEADS AND TWO NUDES, SILVER FRIEZE IV 1931

OSKAR SCHLEMMER

oil and distemper on canvas

1931

33 x 54.5 cm

13 x 21 1/2 in.

von Maur G 248

Provenance

Studio of the artist

Gustav Schleicher, Stuttgart (acquired from the artist before 1934)

Private collection, Southern Germany

Private collection, Germany

Exhibited

Galerie Valentien, Stuttgart 1933. Oskar Schlemmer. No. 11

Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart 1953. Oskar Schlemmer, Gedächtnisausstellung zum 10jährigen Todestag. No. 99

Haus der Kunst, Munich 1953. Oskar Schlemmer, Gedächtnisausstellung zum 10jährigen Todestag. No. 88

Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover, Von-der-Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Karl-Ernst-Osthaus-Museum, Hagen 1953/54. Oskar Schlemmer, Gedächtnisausstellung. No. 39

Kunsthalle, Bern 1959. Oskar Schlemmer. (Verso label 'No 0343')

Literature

Hildebrandt, Hans. Oskar Schlemmer. Munich 1952, No. 202. Title with the addition 'Silberfries II'

von Maur, Karin. Oskar Schlemmer, Bd. II: Oeuvrekatalog der Gemälde, Aquarelle, Pastelle und Plastiken (catalogue raisonné of paintings, watercolours, pastels and sculpture). Munich 1979. P. 99, no. G 248



# TWO HEADS AND TWO NUDES, SILVER FRIEZE IV 1931

OSKAR SCHLEMMER

"We need numbers, measure, and law as weapons and armour so as not to be swallowed up by chaos."

Oskar Schlemmer, 1932

In October 1929, Oskar Schlemmer, at the height of his career, moved into one of the master studios at the art academy in Breslau. The next three years would become the happiest and most intense of his life as an artist.

Shortly after his arrival, he wrote to his friend Otto Meyer-Amden, who, like him, had been a member of Hölzel's circle at the Kunstakademie Stuttgart: "So far, I like it here. Studio nice and big. Students so very different than in Dessau! Willing, decent, and not untalented. The professors also so different, Moll mediating, kind, also interesting people outside the academy. For now I'm an optimist."<sup>1</sup>

His interest centered around the theme of the human being and space, which he also sought to convey to his students.

In 1930 he worked on additional versions of the Folkwang pictures and traveled to Paris for the first time in sixteen years, where three of his *Triadic Figures* were presented at the exhibition of the Société des Artistes Décorateurs at the Grand Palais.

His stay in Paris was exciting and provided him with new inspiration.

In 1931 Schlemmer participated in numerous exhibitions, the first of which was an extensive solo exhibition at Flechthelm's gallery in Berlin, which later traveled to Krefeld and the Kunsthaus Zürich. He participated in exhibitions at the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich, the Städel in Frankfurt, the Berliner Bauausstellung, the Künstlerbund exhibition in Essen, the Munich Secession, as well as numerous group exhibitions.

Schlemmer increasingly worked with architects to design architectural murals, many of which were never realized. Beginning in the summer of 1931, he depicted architectural subjects in his paintings,

<sup>1</sup> Von Maur, Karin:  
Oskar Schlemmer,  
Munich, 1979, p. 200.







Reconstruction  
Silver Frieze

which culminated in the Bauhaus staircase. Instead of only showing the figures in succession, he used stairs and railings to achieve a more staggered effect.

He implemented this in his *Silver Frieze*, in which he contrasted the back wall with light areas and integrated a railing, which one of the figures is leaning over. Another trick that can be found in very few of Schlemmer's other works is the use of silver powder, which he sprayed on individual parts of the frieze just before finishing the work.

Schlemmer's fundamental problem, depicting human beings in space in a dynamic that reflects the sense of space and time, without becoming an illusion or constant repetition, presented him with a double problem in the art form of the frieze: after all, the basic principle of the frieze is its repetition in a row. At the same time, as a second problem, it was necessary to avoid the flattening that inevitably occurs when a frieze is placed in a real space, in the three-dimensionality of the architecture. This explains the staggering of the figures in the foreground, middle ground, and background, the exclusive use of frontal or side views, and the restrained depiction of movement. These arise on their own through the possibilities of movement in depth, which explains the architectural elements in the picture. The addition of silver powder enhances Schlemmer's already contrasting effect of light and shadow: the bodies modulated by

the light are thus actually materially connected to the illuminated space surrounding them. Schlemmer described the artistic principle of his use of surfaces with reference to the preceding Folkwang series in his diary the year before the creation of the silver frieze:

"Asymmetry as a value over the symmetry of the architecture. Lively element. The middle picture also asymmetrical. Furthermore, emphasis of the horizontal-vertical not with fluctuating groups of figures, but as an architectural element in which the few figures, fitted in, are related to it. Effect: Few but important formations 'hold' the surfaces, extend to the outer edge ... and thus add tension to the surface. This also makes the figures tense, bound to the surface."<sup>2</sup>

The artist cut the silver frieze into four parts. Karin von Maur identified and numbered the four parts with Roman numerals in her catalogue raisonné.

Part I is in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; part II, the smallest of the four, was kept by the artist himself, and was part of his estate; part III belonged to the architect Hans Fischli in Zurich and then to the Bauhaus artist Gunta Stölzl; the largest part, the above-mentioned work, is number IV.

This work was acquired by the architect and artist Gustav Schleicher (1887-1973). Schleicher, a native of Stuttgart, like Willi Baumeister, Oskar

<sup>2</sup> Oskar Schlemmer, diary entry from February 21, 1930, quoted from Hüneke, Andreas (ed.): Oskar Schlemmer: Idealist der Form, Briefe, Tagebücher, Schriften 1912-1943, Leipzig, 1990, p. 217.





Schlemmer, and Otto Meyer-Amden, was part of the circle around Adolf Hölzel at the art academy in Stuttgart. From 1912 to 1914, he was a student of the famous architect Adolf Loos. Later he became chief building officer, and in 1945 he established his own architectural office in Stuttgart.

Gustav Schleicher owned the work soon after it was created, because in a letter to Oskar Schlemmer, of October 31, 1934, he wrote: „I have given Silver Strip II 2 Heads 2 Nudes of 1931 to Valentin, but only as a provisional arrangement ...”.

At that time this part was still numbered II, which was kept up in Hildebrandt's publication. Karin von Maur was able to reconstruct the original *Silver Frieze* and to establish a new order.

*Silver Frieze*  
Part I, 1931  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam





# OSKAR SCHLEMMER

STUTT GART 1888 – 1943 BADEN-BADEN

## THE YEAR 1931

Oskar Schlemmer taught at the Bauhaus from January 1921 until summer 1929. The artist taught, successively, mural painting, metal-working, wood and stone carving and nude drawing. He took on the stage work, developed his famous 'triadic ballet' and executed the wall decoration at the Weimar workshop building. In 1925, he moved to Dessau with the Bauhaus. In 1928, he introduced 'the human' as a teaching subject.

From 1928, Schlemmer worked on the drafts for decorating the walls of the fountain room in the Folkwang Museum, which he completed in 1930.

Differences of opinion with the new Bauhaus director, Hannes Meyer, prompted Schlemmer to look for a new position. In July 1929, he received a telegram from the director of the Breslau Art Academy, Oskar Moll, congratulating him on his appointment.

In the exhibition 'The Beautiful Human in New Art' in Darmstadt, Schlemmer received both a gold medal and a prize to the value of 1,000 Marks.

In September 1929, he moved to Breslau. The Academy had an excellent reputation; the professors included Otto Mueller, Alexander Kanoldt, Carlo Mense, Johannes Molzahn and Georg Muche. Schlemmer expanded his main topic, which he now called 'Human and Space', and taught a stagecraft class again.

In 1930, the Thuringen NSDAP State Minister of the Interior and People's Education, Wilhelm Frick, ordered that Schlemmer's murals in the workshop building in Weimar should be destroyed.

In 1931, Galerie Flechtheim in Berlin presented a solo exhibition, which was subsequently shown in Krefeld and Zurich.

Schlemmer was often approached by architects, asking him for wall designs. He thus created a colour concept for the rooms, as well as a novel three square-meter wall sculpture of copper, brass and nickel silver wire for the villa of the physician Dr. Rabe in Zwenkau near Leipzig, which was built by the architect Adolf Rading. It is still preserved.

On April 1, 1932, the Breslau Art Academy was closed by emergency decree. Schlemmer was appointed to the United State Schools of Art and Crafts in Berlin. He painted his most famous painting: *The Bauhaus Stairway*.

The following year, March 1933, Oskar Schlemmer's retrospective in Stuttgart was closed even before its official opening – one day after Josef Goebbels was named as Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. An NS poster denounced Schlemmer and some of his colleagues as "destructive Marxist-Jewish elements". On May 17, 1933, Oskar Schlemmer was summarily dismissed.

Oskar Schlemmer





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