



SMART MUSEUM OF ART
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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EXPRESSIONIST IMPULSES: GERMAN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN ART, 1890–1990

October 1, 2015–January 10, 2016

*Special exhibition charts the ebb and flow of Expressionism in Germany and Central Europe
Senior Curator Richard A. Born's capstone exhibition before retirement*



The University of Chicago's Smart Museum of Art presents *Expressionist Impulses: German and Central European Art, 1890–1990*, a collections-based exhibition that charts the ebb and flow of Expressionist tendencies in Germany and Central Europe including Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania, among other countries.

On view October 1, 2015 to January 10, 2016, the exhibition spans a century of momentous and rapid political, social, and economic change. The incisive, emotionally charged paintings, drawings, and sculptures on view bear powerful witness to periods of war, utopian dreams, economic depression, political division, and personal and political exile. No single style, technique, or theme dominates. Rather, *Expressionist Impulses* offers a fluid account of multiple waves of artists who were concerned with stylistic innovation bent in the service of social and political critiques.

The exhibition features approximately 80 works drawn from the Smart Museum's collection and supplemented by select promised gifts. Exhibition curator Richard A. Born, who retires at the end of December, has been responsible for bringing much of the work into the collection over the course of his 35-year curatorial career at the Smart Museum.

Expressionist Impulses opens with a public reception on Wednesday, September 30 from 7:30 to 9 pm.

ABOUT EXPRESSIONISM

In the years before World War I, Expressionism was a term vanguard art circles in France, Germany, and Central Europe used to denote various modern art movements that arose after Impressionism.

Whether figurative or abstract, pre-war Expressionism was foremost anti-naturalist in style and idealist in content. Utilizing simplified forms, distorted details, and unnatural colors, Expressionist artists sought to penetrate to the essence of outer appearances to elicit an emotional response from the viewer. For such artists, exaggeration expressed their inner responses to the visual world around them, whether in the service of utopian idealism or to rebut contemporary social mores and injustices.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition focuses on painting, sculpture, and drawing. The works are presented in loosely chronological sections that cover major Expressionist moments in Germany: Die Brücke (1905–1914), Der Blaue Reiter (1911–1914), New Objectivity (1920s), and Neo-Expressionism (1960–80s).

The exhibition also brings to the surface often overlooked international connections to modernism and the expressive impulse in avant-garde artists active across the great art centers of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the rupture of The Great War and in a divided Germany and Communist Europe throughout the Cold War.

ARTISTS

Josef Albers, Georg Baselitz, Lovis Corinth, Max Dungert, Lyonel Feininger, Emil Filla, George Grosz, Erich Heckel, Hans Hofmann, Jörg Immendorff, Wassily Kandinsky, Martin Kippenberger, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Käthe Kollwitz, Karel Malich, Jan Matulka, Ludwig Meidner, Gabriele Münter, Richard Oelze, Emil Nolde, Felix Nussbaum, Max Pechstein, Karl Peter Röhl, and Kurt Schwitters, among others.

CURATOR

Richard A. Born, Smart Museum Senior Curator and Interim Chief Curator

RELATED PROJECTS

In nearby galleries, the Smart Museum presents two related collection-based projects. *To See in Black and White: German and Central European Photography, 1920s–1950s* offers a selection German and Central European photography by Walter Peterhans, Hannah Höch, František Drtikol, Jaromír Funke, and others. *Expressionist, New Objectivity, and Constructivist Prints, 1905–1925: Recent Acquisitions* presents prints by the Austrian, German, and Hungarian masters Max Beckmann, Wassily Kandinsky, Alfred Kubin, László Moholy-Nagy, Emil Nolde, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Unless noted, all programs are free and open to the public and take place at the Smart Museum of Art.

Opening Reception

Wednesday, September 30, 2015, 7:30–9 pm

Public opening reception.

Family Day: Rainbow Faces

Saturday, October 3, 2015, 1–4 pm

Create colorful self portraits and face paintings inspired by works on view in *Expressionist Impulses*.

All materials provided. Family programs are best for kids 4–12. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Biting Satire

Thursday, October 8, 2015, 5:30–7:30 pm

A satirical BBQ in the Smart's sculpture garden. Create “biting” food collages and enjoy free frankfurters, KippenBurgers, and Spam-based delicacies inspired by work by George Grosz and others in *Expressionist Impulses*.

Film Screening

Artists, Amateurs, Alternative Spaces:

Experimental Cinema in Eastern Europe, 1960–1990

Friday, October 23, 2015, 7:00pm

Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E 60th Street, screening room

Independent and experimental film shorts dating from the postwar period to the last decades of Communism in Eastern Europe. Including films by Mieczysław Waśkowski and Tadeusz Kantor from Poland, Naško Križnar and the OHO Group from Slovenia, and Vladimir Havrilla from the former Czechoslovakia.

Presented in collaboration with the Film Studies Center and CEERES at the University of Chicago.

Film Screening

Nosferatu (1922)

Monday, October 26, 2015, 7:30pm

Rockefeller Chapel, 5850 S Woodlawn Avenue

Screening of F.W. Murnau's archetypal film of the Dracula legend, which obliterated boundaries between the real and unreal. With live organ accompaniment by Dennis James.

Presented in collaboration with Rockefeller Chapel.

Family Day: Pillow Poppin'

Saturday, November 7, 2015, 1–4 pm

Silkscreen, sew, and stuff your own pillow. Inspired by works on view in *Expressionist Impulses*.

All materials provided. Family programs are best for kids 4–12. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Gallery Talk: To See in Black and White

Saturday, November 21, 2015, 2 pm

With Kimberly Mims, curator of *To See in Black and White*.

Family Day: Costume Mania

Saturday, December 5, 2015, 1–4 pm

Make colorful costumes and write mini-plays inspired by theatrical illustrations by George Grosz.

All materials provided. Family programs are best for kids 4–12. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Gallery Talk: *Expressionist Impulses*

Saturday, December 12, 2015, 2 pm

With Richard A. Born, Smart Museum Senior Curator and Interim Chief Curator, and Reinhold Heller, Professor Emeritus in Art History, Germanic Studies, and the College, The University of Chicago.

Family Day: Family Day: Yellow Trees and Green Beaches

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 1–4 pm

Paint unnaturally colored natural landscapes to brighten up the winter.

All materials provided. Family programs are best for kids 4–12. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

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First page images (l–r):

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Dodo in the Studio*, 1910, Pastel on paper. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of Paul and Susan Freehling in memory of Mrs. Edna Freehling, 2002.70.

Jörg Immendorff, *No Light for Whom? (Kein Licht für wen?)*, 1981, Oil on linen. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of Edith Fantus DeMar and David A. DeMar, 2007.173.

SUPPORT

Support for *Expressionist Impulses* and its programming has been provided by the Smart Museum's Pamela and R. Christopher Hoehn-Saric Exhibition Fund, Nuveen Investments, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, the University of Chicago's Arts Council, the Franke Institute for the Humanities, and the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on German Literature and Culture.

ABOUT THE SMART MUSEUM OF ART

The Smart Museum of Art is an intimate museum for bold encounters with art. Both fueling and expressing the creative energy of the University of Chicago, the Smart opens the world to boundary-breaking art and ideas through innovative special exhibitions, dynamic programs, and distinctive collections.

Mission

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago opens the world through art and ideas.

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Hours

Tuesday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Thursday evenings until 8 p.m.

Galleries are closed Mondays and holidays.

Admission is always free. All are welcome.