

Expressive!

The Artists of “Brücke”

The Hermann Gerlinger Collection

1.6. bis 28.9.2007

EXHIBITION DATA

Exhibition title	Expressive! The Artists of "Brücke" The Hermann Gerlinger Collection
Exhibition duration	1 June – 26 August 2007
Press conference	31 May 2007, 10 am
Opening	31 May 2007, 6.30 pm
Venue	ALBERTINA, Propter Homines Hall and Kahn Galleries
Exhibits	approx. 260 works (Hermann Gerlinger Collection, Moritzburg Foundation, Albertina and other Viennese museums)
Catalogue	Expressive! The Artists of "Die Brücke". The Gerlinger Collection (Expressiv! Die Künstler der Brücke. Die Sammlung Gerlinger) Published by Hirmer Verlag. With texts by Johann Thomas Ambrózy, Susanne Berchtold, Wolfgang Büche, Hermann Gerlinger, Rudolf Koella, Marietta Mautner Markhof, Christian Rathke, Katja Schneider, Heinz Spielmann and a foreword by Klaus Albrecht Schröder, 416 pages, EUR 29 (available in the ALBERTINA Shop, shop@albertina.at).
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Opening times	Daily 10 am – 6 pm, Wed 10 am – 9 pm
Admission	Regular € 9.50, reduced € 8.00/7.00
Guided tours	Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays at 3.30 pm, 1 hour T+43 (01) 534 83 – 540, besucher@albertina.at
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Expressive!
The Artists of “Brücke”.
The Hermann Gerlinger Collection
1 June – 26 August 2007

From 1 June to 26 August 2007, the Albertina is presenting a comprehensive view into the extraordinary and highly expressive pictorial world of the “Brücke” artists. The exhibition is titled “*Expressive! The Artists of Die Brücke. The Hermann Gerlinger Collection*” and shows around 260 works from the Hermann Gerlinger Collection, the Moritzburg Foundation, the Kunstmuseum of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, the Albertina and other Viennese museums. The last “Brücke” exhibition in Vienna was shown more than 10 years ago, and the Albertina is endeavouring to pay justice to this enormously influential group of German Expressionists in a compilation of all media and genres.

The birth of German Expressionism

When in 1905 a group of four self-taught artists shocked the art world with intensive colours, taboo-breakingly realistic motifs and woodcut-type forms, the four architecture students – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Erich Heckel and Fritz Bleyl – had no idea that one day their hurricanes of colour would be counted among the most important German contributions to the avant-garde movement of expressionism.

At the beginning of their artistic career, the artists did indeed base their work to a great extent on the current art trends of their time, in particular the “Secession” in Dresden, or neo-impressionism. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff produced works during the early days of “Die Brücke” that show the influence of Dresden plein-air painting. In addition, the artists were interested in everything that was state-of-the-art at the turn of the century. Their confrontation with art nouveau is manifest in the traces left by their decorative interplay of lines, above all in the early woodcuts.

Particularly significant for the development of painting within the “Brücke” group was their response to neo-impressionism. Yet in contrast to the ambitions of French pointillism to render light in the modulation between bright and shaded parts of a painting, the “Brücke” artists sought to use the power of colour – also its material quality – by intensifying the unmixed juxtaposition of brilliant colours. Starting out from this approach, the young painters soon found their way to an expansively conceived personal touch imbued with dramatic gesture while maintaining the intense colouration. However, the use of complementary colours served less the development of contrasts than the intensification of colour radiance within these pairs of opposites.

New forms of expression in artistic technique

Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Heckel and Bleyl and the later members Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein and Otto Mueller wanted to use colour and form to find pure and direct expression not only in the drawing, but also in the woodcut, the lithograph and the etching.

These artists were not interested in copying things, in imitation. In an impetuous process of abstraction, they transformed visible reality into images of pure sensation. What characterises the artists' development is their critical attitude to traditional, academic painting and the search for new and free artistic solutions in representing reality. Their most powerful vehicle of articulation is colour, rapturously intensified to achieve a state of pure expression, with forms being expressively simplified and exaggerated to transport this expressive energy.

The new, uncorrupted will to express things was based on the principle of forgetting what had been learned; this included not only dispensing with all traditional and conventional aesthetics, but also created access to new motifs and subjects. Emil Nolde's description of his work as an act performed "without fixed and contoured ideas" pinpoints this idiosyncrasy of the early anti-style of the "Brücke", which, as George Grosz knew already, was formless and primitive when seen from the "high vantage point of technical tradition". Technical skills were neglected, inner expression was all, and everything was based on a garishly-coloured and unorthodox way of painting which adopted the aesthetic principles of African primitive peoples, whose art, like that of Oceania, became an important source of inspiration.

Searching for the lost paradise

This search for new simplicity was pivotal not only for the European avant-garde in the early twentieth century, but has always been a constantly appearing phenomenon in art history as a starting point for new artistic developments. The uninhibited life of the "Brücke" artists was founded on such things as the culture of naturism and nudism, and the life reform movements. Depiction of the sensual-erotic relationship between the sexes is one of their key subjects. At the same time this yielded the "primitivism" of the "Brücke". They believed that uninhibited and free eroticism could only be found in extra-European cultures, which is why their own search for an authentic and natural lifestyle was inseparably associated with so-called "primitive" art. Their unhampered lives bathing at the Moritzburg Lakes or the Baltic Sea was the substitute for unattainable, exotic paradises; actually travelling there was reserved only to a happy few. The "Brücke"'s counter-plan to the developing industrial society around them had a romantic subtext, and was based equally on far-gone epochs of their own history and on African or Oceanic cultures.

The disbandment of the “Brücke”.

News of the disbandment of the “Brücke” group of artists was officially circulated on 27 May 1913, on the outside the perceptible endpoint of a development signalled by the painters’ relocation from Dresden to Berlin. But this declaration in spring 1913 did not mean the end of things, for the artistic impetus of “Brücke” expressionism continues to take effect as an astonishingly fresh and uninterrupted phenomenon.

Expressive! at the Albertina

The exhibition is divided into three main sections. Section 1 shows works on the formation of the “Brücke” style – nudes in woodcut, drawing or gloriously colourful oil painting by Schmidt-Rottluff and Kirchner, while Section 2 illustrates the way into the war, and cubist influences. Objects are also on show, such as a mahogany pendant by Schmidt-Rottluff, or the painting with the everyday scene “At the Barber’s” by Erich Heckel.

Section 3 of the show – focusing on woodcuts and sculptures by Schmidt-Rottluff and Heckel – is devoted to the period after the war and the influences of Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) and Art Deco. Finally, there are two special rooms for works by Otto Mueller and Emil Nolde. Their independence demarcates them from the other “Brücke” artists.

The African sculptures presented in section 2 of the exhibition aim to underline how cult objects provided the artists with inspiration; they can be rediscovered in rudimentary form in various motifs. Furthermore, the confrontation of spontaneous and formally contrived graphic works demonstrates the artists’ various work processes.

Press Pictures

EXPRESSIVE! THE ARTISTS OF "THE BRIDGE"

The Hermann Gerlinger Collection

1.6.–26.8. 2007

ALBERTINA

01

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Mügge/see, 1909/1912

Coloured woodcut

37.5 x 27 / 30.2 cm

Private collection

Photo: © Peter Schälchli, Zürich

02

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

The Blue Girl in the Sun, 1910

Oil on canvas

71 x 81 cm

Hermann Gerlinger Collection

© Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger

Photo: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

03

Emil Nolde

Moonlit Night, 1914

Oil on canvas

69 x 89 cm

Albertina, Vienna – permanent loan by R. and H. Batliner Art Foundation

Photo © Atelier Walter Wachter, Gapetsch 7, FL-9494 Schaan

04

Max Pechstein

Sailing Boats by the Reed Shore, 1919

Oil on canvas

81 x 71 cm

Albertina, Vienna – permanent loan by R. and H. Batliner Art Foundation

Photo: © Atelier Walter Wachter, Gapetsch 7, FL-9494 Schaan

05

Max Pechstein

Iris in the Evening Shade, 1925

Oil on canvas

99 x 62 cm

Albertina, Vienna – permanent loan by R. and H. Batliner Art Foundation

Photo © Studio Heinz Preute, Pflugstraße 30, FL-9490 Vaduz

o6

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

Woman Reading (*Else Lasker-Schüler*), 1912

Oil on canvas

102.7 x 76.5 cm

Hermann Gerlinger Collection

© Hermann Gerlinger Sammlung

Photo: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

o7

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

Dunes and Pier, 1917

Coloured woodcut

29 x 33.5 cm

Sheet: 45.8 x 50 cm

Hermann Gerlinger Collection

© Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger

Photo: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

o8

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

Northern Road, 1906

Oil on card, 50.0 x 71.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

o9

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff,

Sitter amid Greenery, 1910

Oil on canvas, 83.5 x 76.0 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

10

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff,

Path with Trees, 1911

Coloured woodcut, 39.3 x 50.0 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

11

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff,

Red Dune, 1913

Oil on canvas, 66.0 x 74.2 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

12

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff,
Lighthouse with Sickle Moon, 1922
Watercolour, 49.2 x 60.0 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

13

Erich Heckel,
Yellow House, 1908
Watercolour, 37.5 x 27.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

14

Erich Heckel,
Fränzi with Blanket, 1909
Watercolour, 22.6 x 28.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

15

Erich Heckel,
Two Girls by the Water, 1910
Oil on cardboard, 55.4 x 70.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

16

Erich Heckel,
White Horses, 1912
Coloured woodcut, 30.8 x 32.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

17

Erich Heckel
Woman Standing, 1920
Poplar wood, 79 x 13 x 12.8 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

18

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Moonlit Winter Night, 1919

Woodcut, 30.0 x 29.5 cm

© Dr. Wolfgang & Ingeborg Henze-Ketterer, Wichtrach/Bern

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

19

Emil Nolde

Farmhouse in Marsh Landscape, c.1914

Watercolour, 35.2 x 46.5 cm

© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

20

Max Pechstein

'Reclining Nude with Cat', 1909

Oil on canvas, 55.2 x 60.5 cm

© VBK, Wien

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

21

Otto Mueller

Girl Squatting, c. 1912

Watercolour on card, 12.1 x 12.0 cm

© Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz

22

Otto Mueller

Five Yellow Nudes by the Water, 1921

Coloured lithography, 33.5 x 44 cm

© Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger

Foto: © Sammlung Hermann Gerlinger: Klaus Göltz