

Exhibition: *Expressionism in Germany and France:
From Van Gogh to Kandinsky*

On View: June 8–September 14, 2014

Location: LACMA, Resnick Pavilion



(Image Captions on Page 4)

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky* (June 8–September 14, 2014), an exhibition that sheds new light on the extraordinary response of artists in Germany and France to key developments in modern art in the early 20th century. For the first time in a major museum exhibition, Expressionism is presented not as a distinctly German style but as an international movement in which artists in Germany and France responded with various aesthetic approaches to modern masters such as Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Paul Gauguin, among others. Over 40 artists—including Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, Gabrielle Münter, Franz Marc, Robert Delaunay, and Pierre Bonnard—are represented in over 90 paintings and 45 works on paper, in addition to approximately 30 ephemera objects.

“*Expressionism in Germany and France* offers a unique opportunity to observe the ways that a generation of artists was influenced by some of the greatest names in modern art history,” says exhibition curator Timothy O. Benson. “Our visitors will gain insight into the culturally rich cosmopolitan milieu established by the many exhibitions, collectors, gallerists, critics, and not least the artists of the time (many of whom traveled between Paris and Germany) and how this cultural atmosphere transcended national borders.”

“This exhibition is a fascinating look at artistic influence in Europe that shatters barriers of nationality,” says Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “These artists’ practices were not constrained by their borders—and in fact many creative breakthroughs of the 20th century happened thanks to this dialogue between these two countries, as artists reshaped their national identities.”

In addition to domestic and international loans of key paintings by Van Gogh, Cézanne, Matisse, Gauguin, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Paula Modersohn-Becker, and Gabrielle Münter, *Expressionism in Germany and France* showcases works from LACMA's Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies, one of the most distinguished collections of German Expressionist art in the United States. The loans in the exhibition come from a range of world-class institutions, including MoMA, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), Musée d'Orsay, Petit Palais, Tate Modern, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Brücke Museum, Museum Folkwang, and Kunsthaus Zürich. *Expressionism in Germany and France* also highlights significant works from LACMA's collection by Gauguin, Cézanne, Kirchner, Edouard Vuillard, Max Pechstein, and Erich Heckel, among others.

The exhibition is currently on view at the Kunsthaus Zürich (February 7–May 11, 2014), where it goes by the title *Expressionism in Germany and France: From Matisse to the Blue Rider*. Following its presentation at LACMA, the exhibition travels to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (October 6, 2014–January 25, 2015).

Exhibition Overview

Expressionism in Germany and France explores the process of artistic influence and contributes to new scholarship on issues of French-German relations. The exhibition offers insight into how the visual arts are conveyed between cultures and are influenced by ideas of national identity and cultural heritage.

Expressionism, an artistic movement in which pictorial imagery is depicted through dramatically expressive colors and brushwork, digresses from traditional representation in which artists attempted to recreate a likeness of reality; instead, the movement gives form to artists' individual perceptions, feelings, and psychologies. While Expressionism has come to be recognized as a predominately German movement, this association evolved gradually long after the movement had begun and is partially attributed to the first book on Expressionism, authored by the German art critic Paul Fechter in 1914 and on view in the exhibition. The publication imbued the movement with a national identity, commensurate with the patriotic tone in Germany during World War I. In reality, Expressionism was born from a shared advance toward modernism among French and German artists as the latest French trends reached Germany through a network of collectors, critics, and art lovers, creating a mutually rich cosmopolitan milieu.

Expressionists discovered new artistic possibilities through the first modern masters. They recognized expressive gesture and color in Van Gogh, nascent abstraction in Cézanne, and a new approach to the decorative in Gauguin and Matisse. *Expressionism in Germany and France* brings together significant works that Expressionists would have seen and carefully studied in exhibitions and collections of the time throughout Germany as well as Paris. Through a process of give and take, the Expressionists moved toward an

international art while also seeking to maintain their national cultural heritage, combining tradition with aesthetic evolution.

While some of the works by Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh date from the 1870s and 1880s, the main chronological scope of the exhibition ranges from approximately 1900—when the works of these artists began to be exhibited in Germany—to August 1914, when the cosmopolitan climate of Europe was abruptly ended by the onset of World War I.

Exhibition Organization

Expressionism in Germany and France is organized both chronologically and geographically along a continuous Paris “spine” that spans the length of the exhibition and on which hangs key works by Gauguin, Cézanne, Henri Rousseau, and Matisse that were exhibited in Paris and seen by visiting German artists. The lateral galleries extending from this central corridor each convey a specific theme and location, including Berlin, Private Collectors, Brücke, Brücke- Fauves, Blaue Reiter, and Cubism.

The exhibition was designed by the architectural firm Frederick Fisher and Partners.

Catalogue

Expressionism in Germany and France: From Van Gogh to Kandinsky is copublished by LACMA and DelMonico/Prestel. The 260-page catalogue features more than 200 illustrations and showcases masterpieces of Neo-Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism alongside landmark German Expressionist works. Edited by Timothy O. Benson, the volume includes contributions by significant scholars including Laird M. Easton, Claudine Grammont, Frauke Josenhans, Peter Kropmanns, Katherine Kuenzli, Magdalena M. Moeller, and Sherwin Simmons.

Related Programming

Protecting and Crossing Borders: Expressionist Encounters with the French Avant-Garde

Sunday, June 8, 2014 | 1 pm

LACMA, Bing Theater

Lecture by Dr. Christian Weikop, Chancellor’s Fellow, History of Art Department, University of Edinburgh

Locating Expressionism

Saturday, September 6, 2014 | 10 am–4 pm

Sunday, September 7, 2014 | 10 am–3:30 pm

LACMA, Bing Theater

This symposium seeks to expand the topic of the exhibition geographically and chronologically, considering cultural networks and patterns of exchange between

Central and Eastern Europe or Scandinavia and Germany and France in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Conference co-organized with the Historians of German and Central European Art and Architecture and the Max Kade Institute for Austrian-German-Swiss Studies at USC

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Kunsthaus Zürich in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Funding for the exhibition is provided by Violet Spitzer-Lucas and the Spitzer Family Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by the Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

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Image Captions:

(Left): Franz Marc, *Stony Path (Mountains/Landscape)* Steiniger Weg (Gebirge/Landschaft), 1911 (repainted 1912), oil on canvas, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Gift of the Women's Board and Friends of the Museum. Photo © San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

(Center): Paul Gauguin, *The Swineherd (Le Gardien de porcs)*, 1888, oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Gift of Lucille Ellis Simon and family in honor of the museum's 25th anniversary (M.91.256), Photo © 2014 Museum Associates/LACMA

(Right): Wassily Kandinsky, *Arabian Cemetery (Arabischer Friedhof)*, 1909, oil on cardboard, Hamburger Kunsthalle, © 2013 Wassily Kandinsky/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris, Photo credit: bpk, Berlin / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany / Photo: Elke Walford / Art Resource, NY

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes over 120,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art, Latin American art, ranging from pre-Columbian masterpieces to works by leading modern and contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over a million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives, such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement at lacma.org. Situated in Hancock Park on over 20 acres in the heart of Los Angeles, LACMA is located between the ocean and downtown.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

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