

# Bauhaus

## History

*Staatliches Bauhaus* was a modernist art school in Germany (1919-1933) established by German architect Walter Gropius in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Germany was left in political, social and economic crisis after World War I. The school dedicated itself to unite all branches of the arts under one roof as well as to generate designs for mass-production, accessible to all people. Bauhaus has since morphed into its own modern art movement and to many, holds the title of being the most influential school of design.

## Influenced by

1. Modernism
  - Less is more
2. English Arts and Crafts movement
  - William Morris, 19<sup>th</sup> century English designer argued that art should meet the needs of society
3. Constructivism
  - Design seen as a potential force for good, both aesthetically and socially

Gropius blended these influences at the art house.

## General Traits/Attributes

1. Uniting art with craft and mass-production
  - Craft tradition merged with modern technology to cater to needs of system.
  - Gropius, director of Bauhaus, wanted to diminish the “arrogant barrier” between craftsmen and artists.
2. Idea of Gesamtkunstwerk
  - Total artwork
  - Makes use of all or many art forms.
3. Retaining integrity of craft materials
  - Materials should be used in their original form and not altered.



Art and Technology – A new Unity –  
Bauhaus Illustration Poster



'Ahnenbild 2411' by André Butzer, 2006

## Characteristics

1. **Form** follows function; simple.
  - Bauhaus artists didn't see a need for excessive decoration
  - Utility should come first



2. **Structure** reflects combination of theory with practicality.
  - Realistic and sensible approach
  - Using the basic elements, principles of design and colour theory to experiment with a range of materials and processes.
3. **Colours** used are often white and grey, or primary colours



- Gropius' disdained colours being used in his buildings

4. Bauhaus has a namesake font with a san-serif **typeface**



- Embodies simplicity and straightforwardness
- Legible and very readable
- Fairly even, thick stroke widths

5. Yellow triangle, red square and blue circle are classic Bauhaus **motifs**
- Wassily Kandinsky, a tutor at Bauhaus wanted to explore the relationship between colour and shapes
6. The more common **theme** is simplicity.

### The Influence of Bauhaus

Bauhaus influences appear everywhere from furniture to graphic design. The world caught up with the emphasis on function before form. The movement ensured good design would not be limited to for the elites but also helped the industry stay progressive in the face of adversity.

Pieces from IKEA, Muji, most 20<sup>th</sup> century furniture, are inspired by the designers of Bauhaus.

## References:

*"Appreciating the role of colour in architecture is a great missed opportunity of the Bauhaus"*

Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/11/29/bauhaus-100-colour-michelle-ogundehin/>

*Design Trend: The Bauhaus Design Movement*

Source: <https://creativemarket.com/blog/bauhaus-design>

*Artworks and Artists of Bauhaus*

Source: [www.theartstory.org/movement/bauhaus/artworks/#:~:text=The%20resulting%20yellow%20triangle%2C%20red,between%20visual%20and%20musical%20expression](http://www.theartstory.org/movement/bauhaus/artworks/#:~:text=The%20resulting%20yellow%20triangle%2C%20red,between%20visual%20and%20musical%20expression)

*THE BAUHAUS MOVEMENT*

Source: <http://bauhausinteriors.com/blog/the-bauhaus-movement/>

*Bauhaus: How the Avant-Garde Movement Transformed Modern Art*

Source: <https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-bauhaus-art-movement/>

*Quick History: The Bauhaus & Its Influence*

Source: <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/post-241-93344>

*ART AND TECHNOLOGY – A NEW UNITY – BAUHAUS ILLUSTRATION POSTER*

Source: <https://bauhausmovement.wordpress.com/2015/11/01/art-and-technology-a-new-unity-bauhaus-illustration-poster/>

*The characteristics of Bauhaus*

Source: <https://www.catawiki.com/stories/5263-the-characteristics-of-bauhaus>

*The Bauhaus: The design utopia we're still living in*

Source: <https://qz.com/quartz/1609729/what-is-bauhaus-design-a-historical-primer/>

*100 Years of Bauhaus: What it is and How It Shaped Today's Design Industry*

Source: <https://www.amara.com/editorial/style/bauhaus-design-movement#:~:text=Today%20Bauhaus%20influences%20can%20be,emphasis%20on%20function%20before%20form.>

*Bauhaus at 100: The school that shaped the way we live*

Source: <https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/literary/influence-of-the-bauhaus-movement-bauhaus-design>

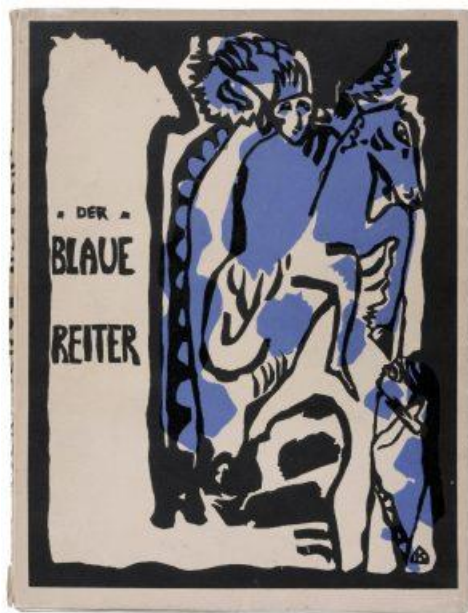
## Expressionism (1910-)

### History

Although the term “Expressionism” was first used in the 1850s in Germany, it was only popularized by Czech art historian Antonin Matějček in 1910. Matějček intended to denote the opposite of Impressionism.

The movement first emerged when four German students founded the Die Brücke (the Bridge) group and later another group of students formed Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider). These two groups are the foundation of German Expressionism movement.

The movement also later developed in France, Paris and Austria.



Cover of Der Blaue Reiter

### Influenced by

Expressionism gained traction throughout different cities of Germany as a response to widespread anxiety post World War I. It was heavily inspired by the Symbolist current in late 19<sup>th</sup> century art.

### General Traits/Attributes

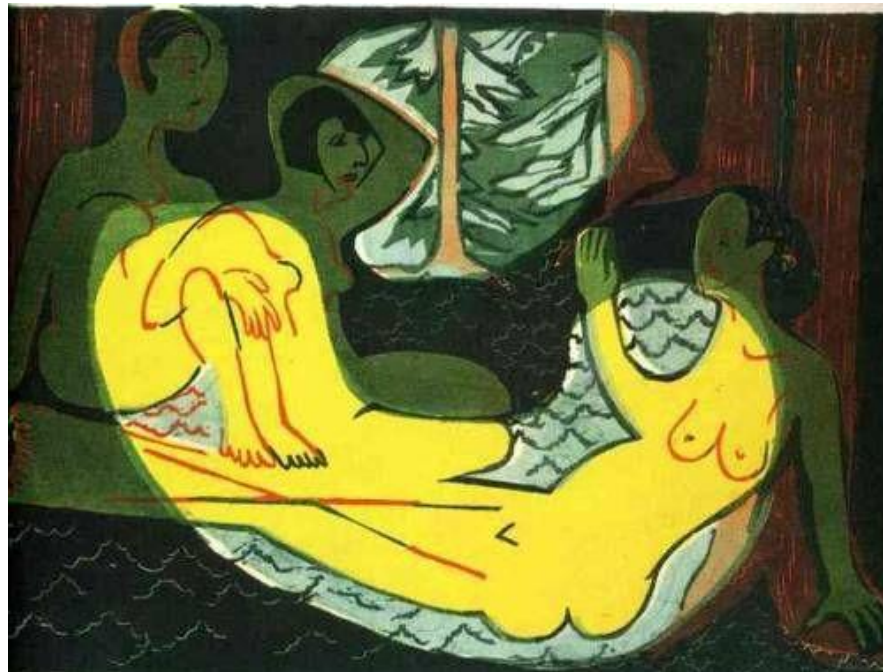
1. Application of elements are:
  - a. Vivid
  - b. Jarring
  - c. Violent
  - d. Dynamic
2. Subjective emotions depicted
3. Powerful mode of social criticism



Edvard Munch: The Scream

### Characteristics

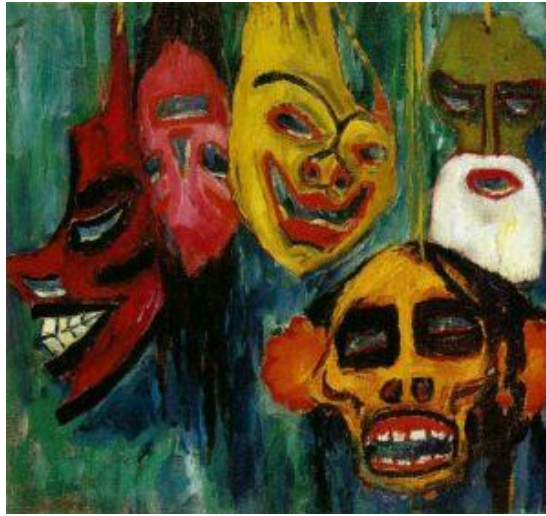
1. Expressionists use distorted and jagged **forms**
  - To elicit an emotional response from the viewer
  - Influenced by medieval and primitivist art forms like Cubism and Fauvism



Cubist portrait of expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

2. Art is built on more psyche **structures**
  - The expressionist rejects immediate perception
  - Symbolism

3. **Colours** chosen are usually arbitrary
- Based on what the artist is experiencing when making the art
  - Powerful but simple colours to evoke strong emotions



Masks by Emil Nolde, 2011

4. Kenneth Vanoverbeke says that expressionist **typefaces**, like the art, should give a certain look and feel to the work shown next to them

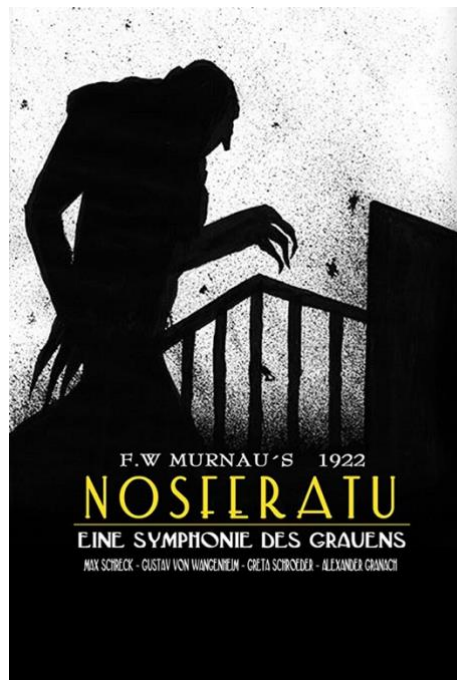


Basylik Font by Kenneth Vanoverbeke

5. There are no set in stone **motifs**
- The motifs used in Expressionist art need only fulfil the criteria of expression
  - Usually bold
  - Violent motifs common in plays
6. **Themes** in Expressionist art is always personal feelings, usually dark
- Rather than merely the observation of objects
  - Reaction

## In-depth Study

### Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror



*In Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*, a film that tells the story of a real estate man selling property to Count Orlok by F.W. Murnau. The film was released in 1922, after Germany had lost World War I. The country's debt led to inflation and German citizens experienced a wave of uncertainty.

The German Expressionism film is riddled with dark themes of death. For example, the suicide of the real estate man's wife.



It used effects like lighting, staging, special effects and makeup to tell the distorted version of Dracula, getting into Orlok's inner psychology. Every movement Orlok makes in the film is calculated to form a shadow, showing the over-dramatics of German Expressionism. The filmmakers used "extreme distortion to express an inner emotional reality rather than surface appearances."



The editing of the film is slow paced, shots are dragged out longer during the suspenseful scenes to evoke stronger emotions from the audience.

From the distorted form of Count Orlok to the violent and dark shots in the film, *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* is the embodiment of an Expressionist film.

Reference:

<http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/expressionism.htm>

<https://useum.org/Expressionism/History-of-Expressionism#:~:text=As%20a%20movement%2C%20the%20term,more%20passive%20style%20of%20Impressionism.&text=Since%20then%2C%20Expressionism%20became%20a%20widely%20recognized%20form%20of%20modern%20art.>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/expressionism/>

<https://www.britannica.com/art/Expressionism>

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/subjective-dynamic-and-religious-on-the-practically-unknown-artist-edvard-munch-and-german-expressionism-from-1950-5887/>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/expressionism/history-and-concepts/>

Cited in Donald E. Gordon, *Expressionism: Art and Ideas*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, p. 175.

Gombrich, E.H. (1995). *The Story of Art* (16. ed. (rev., expanded and redesigned). ed.). London: Phaidon. pp. 563–568. ISBN 978-0714832470.

<https://gallerynyman.com/expressive-art-german-expressionism-1905-35/>

<https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/kenneth-vanoverbeke-baskylisk-graphic-design-typography-231118>

[https://www.gibelwho.com/home/nosferatu-a-study-of-german-expressionism#:~:text=Nosferatu%20\(1922\)%20has%20made%20its,filmmaking%2C%20especially%20for%20special%20effects.](https://www.gibelwho.com/home/nosferatu-a-study-of-german-expressionism#:~:text=Nosferatu%20(1922)%20has%20made%20its,filmmaking%2C%20especially%20for%20special%20effects.)

“Film History: An Introduction” by Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell. Second Edition. page 104.