Expressionism

- Art, literature, music, and drama movement that began in the early 20th century.
- Focuses on the emotional and spiritual.
- Colour is used arbitrarily.
- The roots of Expressionism are found in Northern European art...specifically in German art.
- Expressionist styles can be seen as early as 1480 with Martin Shongauer’s (1448 - 1491) engraving, The Temptation of Saint Anthony.

Martin Shongauer. The Temptation of Saint Anthony (c. 1480). Engraving on copper (print).
Early Expressionism

- Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890) even applied Expressionist principles to his artwork - despite the term “Expressionism” having not yet been coined.

Instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I see before my eyes, I use color more arbitrarily to express myself forcibly. - Vincent van Gogh

Early Expressionism

- Edvard Munch (1863 - 1944) was a Symbolist artist, a movement that preceded Expressionism.

- The Symbolist manifesto described Symbolism as:

In this art, scenes from nature, human activities, and all other real world phenomena will not be described for their own sake; here, they are perceptible surfaces created to represent their esoteric affinities with the primordial Ideals. In a nutshell, 'to depict not the thing but the effect it produces'

- Munch is considered one of the primary artists who inspired the Expressionists.
Early Expressionism

- Munch's work reflects an emotional and psychological glimpse into his thoughts and feelings:

I was walking along the road with two friends. The sun set. I felt a tinge of melancholy. Suddenly the sky became a bloody red. I stopped, leaned against the railing, dead tired. And I looked at the flaming clouds that hung like blood and a sword over the blue-black fjord and city. My friends walked on. I stood there, trembling with fright. And I felt a loud, unending scream piercing nature. - Edvard Munch

Expressionism

Expressionism can primarily be categorized into the following groups:

1. German Expressionism
2. Austrian Expressionism
3. New Objectivity
German Expressionism can be divided into 2 groups:

*The Blue Rider (Der Blaue Reiter)*
*The Bridge (Die Brücke)*

**The Blue Rider (Der Blaue Reiter)**

- The Blue Rider movement offered “spiritual leadership” in the arts.
- Blue Rider art was meant to highlight the similarities in different approaches to making art.
- Paintings were commonly influenced by musical compositions (Kandinsky)
German Expressionism

- The movement was formed in Moscow by Russian artist Vassily Kandinsky and German Franz Marc.

- Franz Marc mostly painted animals and felt they were more “primitive” and purer than humans...thus enjoying a more spiritual relationship with nature.

- The Blue Rider movement ended in 1916 when Franz Marc was killed in World War I (Orders had been sent to pull him and other notable artists from duty, but he was struck in the head by shrapnel before the paperwork got to him).
Franz Marc. *The Large Blue Horses* (1911). Oil on canvas. 3’ 5” x 5’ 11”. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Alexej Jawlensky. *Schokko with Red Hat* (1909). Oil on board. 30” x 28”. Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio.
Vassily Kandinsky. *Composition VII* (1912). Oil on canvas. 78" x 119". State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia.
German Expressionism

The Bridge Movement (Die Brüke)

-Die Brüke (The Bridge) movement was founded in Dresden, Germany in 1905 by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938), Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976), Erich Heckel (1883-1970) and Fritz Bleyl (1880-1966).

- The meaning of the name suggested they would build “the bridge” from the great German artistic past of Albrecht Dürer and Matthias Grunewald over the contemporary artistic bourgeoisie to a new and better future.
German Expressionism

“Putting our faith in a new generation of creators and art lovers, we call upon all youth to unite. And being youth, the bearers of the future, we want to wrest from the comfortably established older generation the freedom to live and move. Anyone who directly and honestly reproduces that force which impels him to create belongs to us.” - Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Die Brücke Manifesto

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Fränzi in Front of Carved Chair (1910). Oil on canvas. 28” x 19.5”.
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. *Anlegeplatz am Fluss* (1956). Oil on canvas. 30” x 39”. 
Emile Nolde. *Crucifixion* (1912). Oil on canvas. 87” x 76”.
Austrian Expressionism

- Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka were the two main figures in the Expressionist movement in Austria.

- Both men were rivals but their styles and subject matter were similar.

- The body is usually shown as psychologically charged, giving a glimpse into the artist’s psyche.

Austrian Expressionism

- His 1909 Expressionist play, *Murderer, Hope of Women*, was performed during the 1909 Kunstschau (Art Show) and caused a massive scandal in Vienna (Austria).

- He moved to Dresden, Germany in 1917 and taught at the art academy in Dresden until 1923.

- Kokoschka was considered a “degenerate artist” by the Nazis, and his works (along with other artists) had their art confiscated and/or destroyed.

- He was forced to flee Germany in 1934 and lived in Prague, London, and Switzerland, where he lived for the rest of his life.

Austrian Expressionism

- Austrian Egon Schiele’s (1890 - 1918) artwork communicates physical and psychological angst and torment.

Austrian Expressionism

- Schiele's father suffered from insanity and died because of untreated conditions related to syphilis when Egon was 14.

- These emotional and physical ailments suffered by his father are visible in Schiele's art.

Austrian Expressionism

- Schiele (only 28) and his pregnant wife died in 1918 from the Spanish Flu epidemic that reached Vienna, Austria.

- Egon died three days after his wife passed away.

- *Dying Edith Schiele* (1918) is Schiele’s last work.

New Objectivity

- New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit) arose in the 1920s in Germany as a challenger to Expressionism.

- Focuses on the objective world and reality.

- These works are mostly portraiture with painting influences of the old masters

- Notable New Objectivity artists include Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, and George Grosz.


Overview

**Artistic Style**
- Expressionists use color, shape, and forms to convey pure emotion rather than rational thought.
- Color is not used as normally seen in “real life” (arbitrary).
- Figures and objects typically have an outline around them to clearly define their shape.
- Whimsical and strong emphasis on primary colors (seen mostly in the Blue Rider movement).

**Subject Matter**
- Portraits (formally posed or more expressive and psychologically revealing)
- Notable (Christian) religious themes or events
- Abstract, fluid compositions (ala the Blue Rider movement)

Your name. *Your Title* (2013). Oil on canvas. 24” x 30”. 
Suggestions

1. Portrait of family member or friend (use a live model for your sketch)

2. Self-Portrait (use a mirror for your sketch)

3. Depiction of religious scene

4. City view or landscape view of Yukon (create your sketch on location)

5. Painting based on musical composition (classical music recommended)

Your name. Your Title (2013). Oil on canvas. 24” x 30”.
Daily Class Plan

Day 1 (Monday) - Expressionism introduction, introduction to canvas construction, apply gesso to canvas, oil painting introduction, begin sketches on paper (continue Monday afternoon & evening after class).

Day 2 (Tuesday) - Oil painting introduction (continued), begin sketching your painting on gessoed canvas based on your sketch on paper. Begin painting.

Day 3 (Wednesday) - Continue painting.

Day 4 (Thursday) - Continue painting.

Day 5 (Monday) - Continue painting.

Day 6 (Tuesday) - Class critique & continue painting.

Day 7 (Wednesday) - Continue painting.

Day 8 (Thursday) - Complete painting.