COLLECTING THE BRÜCKE:
THEIR PRINTS IN THREE AMERICAN MUSEUMS
A CASE STUDY

by

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For Tom
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marginalized in contemporary American interpretations of the modernist art canon, I fondly remember her arching a sassy smirk over the rim of her teacup and replying, “Not at the prices I pay!”

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“America . . . is our land of hope.”†

—Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

“Art teaches us not to love, through false pride and ignorance, exclusively that which resembles us. It teaches us rather to love, by a great effort of intelligence and sensibility, that which is different from us.”

—Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

Collecting the Brücke: Their Prints in Three American Museums
A Case Study

Abstract

by

LORI ANN M. TERJESEN

In 1905 four architecture students in Dresden formed an artists’ communal group known as Die Brücke, or the Bridge. These progressive-minded artists were united by a vision of fusing their German artistic heritage with contemporary visual trends. The six members principally associated with the Brücke—Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Hermann Max Pechstein, Otto Mueller, and Emil Nolde—demonstrated a preference for expressive compositions, technical innovations within the mediums of painting, sculpture, and printmaking, and the desire to unify art and life. In time, the Brücke’s prolific graphic contributions became the hallmark on which their artistic renown was built in Germany.

Brücke members actively sought recognition abroad with the help of art dealers, museum professionals, and private collectors. Their American reception, however, was stymied by historical circumstances, including two World Wars, Adolf Hitler’s denouncement of the artists as “degenerate,” American partiality for French art, and strained U.S. socio-political relations with Germany. Despite these challenges, significant institutional collections of the Brücke artists’ graphic work dating from both their time as a cohesive artist group to their subsequent individual careers after the
dissolution of the group in 1913, were formed in the United States. This study examines the formation of three of the most important of these at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

These museums were selected not only for their notable collections of Brücke prints, but also due to their significant locations, interesting demographics, and history of patronage. The Museum of Modern Art amassed most of their Brücke prints through the wealthy patronage of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and choices of curator Alfred H. Barr, Jr., both of whom relied on the expertise of a number of Jewish émigré dealers living in New York. The influence of German Jews in New York on the establishment of MoMA’s collection of graphics by the Brücke members is particularly significant. Although the Art Institute of Chicago’s collection of such works was largely donated by German immigrants or German Americans living in the Midwest during the early half of the century, the details of this patronage were dissimilar. While New York boasted a higher population of both Germans and Jews than Chicago, those living in the mid-West remained less assimilated, and actively strove to maintain characteristics of their ethnic heritage. These cultural conditions, as well as the alternate personal motivations of non-Jewish German American donors and curators, including Henry Regnery and Carl O. Schniewind, led to the formation of the AIC’s collection of the Brücke artists’ prints.

The National Gallery of Art’s collection of Brücke graphics stems largely from two pivotal bequests by clothier Lessing J. Rosenwald and artist Jacob Kainen and his wife Ruth Cole Kainen. Rosenwald, a Jewish American of German descent born in Chicago, as well as the Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company until 1939, devoted himself to collecting rare books and art, pledging the bulk of his prints by the Brücke
artists to the NGA between 1943 and 1954. As the National Gallery did not open until 1941, Rosenwald’s patronage was essential to the founding of the nation’s renowned print collection. As a professional print curator and as a printmaker whose WPA-honed social conscience allowed him to identify with the graphic expressiveness of the Brücke artists, Jacob Kainen’s collecting habits were both ethically and aesthetically-driven, and the contributions he and his wife made reflect this motivation and his own expertise.

In the course of this study, the appeal of German Expressionism as an alternative to modern French art, fundamental questions regarding the role of ethnicity and heritage in the acquisition motives of key patrons, and the influence of dealers and museum professionals in this history converge. The most out-spoken advocates for the Brücke artists’ graphic output in this country were Germans intent on maintaining aspects of their heritage in their new homeland, and émigré Jewish dealers and collectors who promoted such art as a means of retaining intellectual ties to the homeland that rejected them. Institutional collecting practices of the Brücke artists’ prints in the United States were linked to these issues of nationality, class, race, and individual preference.
INTRODUCTION

More than one hundred years ago, four young architecture students in Dresden united to form the Künstlergruppe “Brücke,” or the Artists’ Group “Bridge.” Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff organized their efforts in order to establish a cohesive artists’ community, initially in Dresden, which would provide a viable alternative working environment and exhibition program to the state-sponsored art academies and exhibitions, as well as independent Secessions, already in place (fig. 1). Notable international artists like the Dutch Fauvist Kees van Dongen and fellow German artists such as Emil Nolde, Otto Mueller, and Hermann Max Pechstein were later welcomed into their ranks. The six members who principally became associated with the Brücke, Heckel, Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein, Mueller, and Nolde, drew inspiration from the cities in which they lived, from the open countryside in the outskirts of Dresden (1905-1910), to the frenetic pace of metropolitan Berlin (1910-1913). During their brief tenure as a collective group, their common goals were to “obtain freedom of movement and of life for ourselves in opposition to the older, well-established powers,” and to render art “directly and authentically.”

The Brücke’s artistic tendencies toward pronounced subjectivity, distorted figures, and liberal use of color gave impetus to a new emerging development in German art in the early twentieth century. A popular anecdote dating from the time of the Brücke’s communal move to Berlin in 1910 tells of art dealer Paul Cassirer being shown

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1 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Unser Programm (September 1906), n.p., translated by Reinhold Heller, “Brücke: Documents,” Brücke: German Expressionist Prints from the Granvil and Marcia Specks Collection, exh. cat. (Evanston, Ill.: Mary and Leigh Block Gallery, Northwestern University, 1988), 15.
a selection of Pechstein’s paintings that had been submitted for the Brücke’s debut exhibition with the Neue Secession. When asked if they could still be identified as “Impressionism,” the renowned dealer is reported to have responded stridently, “No! Expressionism!”

While the legitimacy of this story is questionable, published references to “Expressionism” as both a term and as an artistic movement began appearing regularly in 1911. Growing critical recognition in Germany of the term by the end of the first decade indicated a wider “anti-Impressionist” trend within contemporary German art, and that the Brücke artists were acknowledged as representatives of a new movement.

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2 According to Reinhold Heller, this anecdote was circulating throughout Berlin around 1916. However, Heller notes that Cassirer was not a member of the 1910 Neue Secession jury. On the other hand, Cassirer did sponsor Pechstein’s first solo exhibition at the Paul Cassirer Gallery in Berlin in 1912. See Reinhold Heller, “Brücke in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913,” Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913, exh. cat. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 42, 57.


4 In his 1966 essay entitled “On the Origin of the Word ‘Expressionism,’” Donald E. Gordon notes that the first group exhibition of “expressionist” artists opened in April 1911 as part of the 22nd Berlin Secession. Contemporary reviews indicate that in a separate gallery labeled Expressionisten, the recent works of eleven French artists were displayed. The eleven shown were members of the French Fauvist Henri Matisse’s peer circle in Paris, including Henri-Charles Manguin, Albert Marquet, Andre Derain, Jean Puy, Georges Braque, Othon Friesz, Kees van Dongen, Maurice de Vlaminck, Henri Doucet, Auguste Herbin, and Pablo Picasso. German critics reacted disparagingly to this selection of artworks, as well as the use of the word expressionists, prompting modern
The Brücke were also differentiated from other artists’ groups by their proficiency and liberal use of printmaking. From their earliest days, the Brücke artists showed a strong interest in prints as a means of artistic expression. Printmaking held numerous attractions for the young artists, who reveled in the particular qualities of each graphic medium and utilized the graphic arts to further clarify and define their own individual stylistic lexicons. Prints were used by the Brücke artists as easily affordable and distributable examples of their art for friends, families, and potential supporters. The woodcut, in particular, became a trademark of the Brücke artists, who favored the medium’s rough-hewn character and “unfinished” quality. For this reason, the artists used the woodcut medium to print their membership cards and lists, exhibition invitations and programs, various publications, and print portfolio covers. Moreover, the group used the woodcut, rather than lithography, to print posters advertising their exhibitions.

Lithography was by far the most effective means of printing exhibition posters at the time German artists to distance themselves from the term. Not until 1914, the year the Brücke artists disbanded, was the word expressionism first directly applied to the Brücke and Blaue Reiter artists by the newspaper journalist (and later the biographer of Max Pechstein) Paul Fechter. Donald E. Gordon, “On the Origin of the Word ‘Expressionism,’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 368-85.

Fechter described the Brücke and Blaue Reiter artists as representative of two “currents” of German expressionism because their works appeared antithetical to impressionism, intellect, and craftsmanship. According to Fechter, expressionism is seen in opposition to “mere talent,” “scientifically refined theories,” “the observer’s ‘physiological’ participation,” “representational intellect,” “conceptual or visual accuracy,” “scientific method,” and “literary and academic art.” Expressionist art was thereby conceived as “the concentrated, integrated expression of a feeling.” Paul Fechter, *Der Expressionismus* (Munich: R. Piper and Co., 1914) (the first book-length study of Expressionism as an international art movement), 21-28.

as it is a medium better suited to production in large numbers. In fact, the Brücke was the only artistic group in Europe to utilize the woodcut for their posters.\(^5\) This significant distinction served as a unifying factor among the Brücke artists, as well as a statement of artistic identity. Arguably, the Brücke artists’ most lasting contribution to art remains their graphic output.

Although the Brücke artists rose to acclaim and recognition in Germany during the first two decades of the century, the same regard for the Brücke’s artistic output did not immediately translate across the Atlantic Ocean to the art world of the United States. The first exhibition in this country to acknowledge the Brücke’s communal efforts was titled *Contemporary German Graphic Art*, held at the Berlin Photographic Company in New York from December 1912 to January 1913. The Photographic Company’s effort is momentous in that it was also the first significant exhibition of modern German art in the United States. Martin Birnbaum (1878-1970), the manager of the Berlin Photographic Company’s New York branch, organized the exhibit during a summer trip to Europe in 1912.\(^6\) An enthusiastic supporter of modern German art, prior to his departure he had eagerly written to the director of the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Cornelia B. Sage, that, “I

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\(^6\) Birnbaum immigrated from Hungary to the United States with his parents in 1883. Although he was trained as a lawyer, Birnbaum held a keen interest in art. During business trips and subsequent tours of Europe, he became acquainted with modern European art, and established social connections with wealthy Europeans and Americans. These contacts later led to an offer to serve as manager of the New York branch of the Berlin Photographic Company in 1910, a position he retained until the company’s forced closure in 1916 due to the First World War. It did not reopen after the close of the conflict. After his tenure at the Berlin Photographic Company, Birnbaum became a partner with the Manhattan art dealers Scott and Fowles before becoming a private art consultant in 1926. He continued acting as a consultant until his death in 1970. See also Martin Birnbaum, *The Last Romantic: The Story of More than a Half-Century in the World of Art* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960).
am sailing for Europe . . . to arrange the finest exhibition of modern German graphic art ever shown in this country."\(^7\)

Once in Europe, he met with representatives of “young German art,” including Käthe Kollwitz, Max Liebermann, and Max Pechstein. These introductions made a significant impression on Birnbaum, who wrote to John W. Beatty, director of fine arts at the Carnegie Institute, that he looked forward to creating a “great stir” with their work in America.\(^8\)

Eighty artists, either German-born or working in Germany, were included in the show, including the renowned German Expressionist sculptor and printmaker Ernst Barlach, the Berlin Secession’s first president Max Liebermann, and key members of Der Blaue Reiter (the Blue Rider) artist group Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. Pechstein was first represented in the United States in this exhibition with four prints; he was also the only Brücke artist represented in the show’s New York venue. Examples by Nolde and Mueller were later added to the exhibit’s following locations in Chicago, Buffalo, Worcester, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh.\(^9\) When contacting potential host museums for the exhibit, Birnbaum quickly made the discovery that careful selection of the works to be

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\(^9\) The exhibition traveled to the Chicago Art Institute (January 2\(^{nd}\) – 19\(^{th}\) 1913); the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (February 8\(^{th}\) – March 3\(^{rd}\) 1913); the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts (March 1913); the St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (April 1913); and the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (May 3\(^{rd}\) – June 6\(^{th}\) 1913).
included at future venues was necessary after receiving the following reply from William French, director of the Art Institute of Chicago:

I am afraid . . . that I have not as much enthusiasm for ‘advanced art’ as some of my eastern friends. A considerable proportion of the modern German illustrations appear to me not fit for publication. The jaded taste of the east may stand in need of them, but the fresh and fleecy west can get along without them.\(^\text{10}\)

Taking French’s tone into serious consideration, Birnbaum next turned his attention to persuading the Carnegie Institute, carefully stating in his letter to Beatty: “Works which I felt to be objectionable on account of their freedom have been rejected, as all the directors [of other potential American museum venues] were deeply concerned regarding the nature of the works to be shown.” Along similar lines, he stated in a letter to Philip Genter, director of the Worcester Art Museum, that:

There are comparatively few things which cannot be shown by reason of ‘puritanism,’ but even the men whose tendency is rather too free have other works which are representative and very decent, so that we can easily eliminate the objectionable works and still have an enormous collection to choose from.\(^\text{11}\)

Birnbaum’s discretion in selecting works of art for the 1912 exhibit in order to secure American museum interest in the show was not an isolated incident. Examination of this case study reveals that works were carefully chosen with an understanding of American artistic taste in mind. This prudence was particularly palpable in correspondence


\(^{11}\) Martin Birnbaum to Philip Genter, October 15, 1912, Worcester Art Museum Archives, Worcester, Massachusetts; as quoted by Bealle, *Obstacles and Advocates*, 58.
concerning the selection of German works for the Carnegie International Exhibitions during the mid-1920s that is discussed in detail in chapter two.

Similarly, French and Birnbaum’s choice of words in their correspondence indicate that even before World War I, American art audiences held preconceived notions regarding German art. Phrases such as “puritanism,” “too free,” “very decent,” and “objectionable on account of their freedom” suggest that German art had garnered a reputation for being too decadent. Although anti-German sentiments were present even before the war, it is difficult to determine the extent to which they influenced opinions on the art of this nation. It is more accurate to simply acknowledge that these prejudices affected the estimations of certain interested individuals.

Indeed, Birnbaum’s own essay for the Berlin Photographic Company’s exhibition catalogue suggests that he held reservations about specific types of modern German art. He attempted to establish a positive tone by aligning the artists featured in the exhibit as descendants of such esteemed German graphic masters as Albrecht Dürer and Martin Schongauer. He emphasized that Germany’s artistic genius had always centered on the graphic arts, rather than painting, and explained that this exhibition represented a continuation of that heritage. Accordingly, Birnbaum referred to Pechstein’s graphic art as “peculiarly felicitous and amusing,” and compared his body of work to that of Michelangelo and Honoré Daumier, both of whom, he noted, also achieved their aesthetics through expressive embellishment.¹²

On the other hand, Birnbaum felt equally the need to make concessions for the German artists, noting that Germany was in an early stage of modern artistic development. Despite this “shortcoming,” he emphasized that contemporary German art had the potential to become an important component of international modernism. For these reasons, Birnbaum cautioned viewers against hasty and overly harsh criticism, stating (in contradiction to his earlier comparisons with Old Master graphic art):

Germany is, after all, artistically a youthful country, full of vitality and promise, without centuries of cultivated tradition behind her, like France . . . . Merely to hurl shafts of cheap ridicule at new work is easy enough, but to prove conclusively that it is silly, or even grotesque, is not so simple.13

Furthermore, he expressed his belief that the younger German artists, in an attempt to make their work known to the world, needed to express their passions loudly and raucously, but would eventually “quiet down to produce works of lasting value.”14

Despite Birnbaum’s cautionary words, the art on view at the Berlin Photographic Company was not unanimously acclaimed, although the exhibition was recognized as something new and exciting. The New York Times critic observed that such artists as Max Klinger, Liebermann, Fritz Böhle, Max Slevogt, Kollwitz, and Hans Thoma were familiar to American audiences from book illustrations and magazine articles, but that artists such as Franz Marc and Pechstein were relatively unknown in the United States. Several reviewers followed Birnbaum’s example, praising the execution of the works and the continuation of Germany’s renown for the graphic arts, even as other aspects of the

13 Ibid., 19.
14 Ibid., 14.
works included, such as the subject matter, were found to be perturbing. The observer for

*American Art News* reported:

> It is a far cry from Dürer, Schongauer, Aldegraver, and Holbein to Liebermann, Pechstein, Kampf and Thoma, but the same influences which are revealed in the work of the far earlier men, are still evident in their latter day successors. German taste and expression—is today as alien to the Anglo-Saxon—as bizarre at times, as it was and probably ever will be. But cleverness of drawing, composition, and execution—these qualities appeal when subjects and ideas do not.\(^{15}\)

Undoubtedly, most reviewers appreciated the graphic technicalities, but found the subject matter and aesthetic of modern German art to be difficult.

The critics’ comments on this exhibition also reveal a sense of the aforementioned preconceived notion towards German art, a sentiment that is similarly expressed in both Birnbaum’s catalogue essay and the *American Art News* review. Critics anticipated that the exhibition would reveal modern German art to be immoral, politically objectionable, incomprehensible, and aesthetically unappealing. A *New York Times* reviewer suggested that:

> Their [the Germans’] taste, that indefinable quality of mind that so often gets confused with moral issues, is not so familiar to us and not always so acceptable as French taste. Their aesthetic expression is more often overpowering and not so easily understood . . . . [The prints] are eloquent of a fine restraint which most of us have not associated with the German temper of mind.\(^{16}\)


\(^{16}\)“Extraordinary Exhibition of German Graphic Art by Contemporary Artists Early and Modern,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1912, sec. 5, p. 15.
This lengthy article in the *Times*, the most complete critical reaction to the Berlin Photographic Company’s exhibition, went on to note that the artists featured in it were “strangers to us . . . whose passionate modernity is expressed often with violence, always with enthusiasm.”¹⁷ Pechstein’s 1910 woodcut *Somali Dance* (fig. 2) is described as a combination of “the primitive barbarity of the African Coast with the sophistication of a cake dance.”¹⁸ Finally, the artists were recognized as “Expressionist,” but found to represent not the “most convincing of the new doctrine of art that will have to suffer much folly in its name before it becomes established.” Such comments reveal marked hesitation in accompaniment with initial acceptance of modern German art in the United States.¹⁹

Martin Birnbaum, *The New York Times* article, and the *American Art News* reviewer all mentioned the greater appeal of French art to American audiences. This preference for French art was deeply entrenched in American artistic taste during the early twentieth century, and would remain a key obstacle in the initial acceptance of the Brücke artists’ graphic work by each of the museum collections examined in this study.²⁰ The New York venue of *Contemporary German Graphic Art* closed just weeks before the notorious 1913 *International Exhibition of Modern Art* held at the Armory of the 69th Infantry in Manhattan. The Armory Show exemplified the extent to which French art dominated the field of modern European art in the United States. The exhibit consisted of eighteen galleries, nine featuring American art, and eight largely dedicated to French

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¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ Ibid.
¹⁹ Ibid.
Art. A remaining gallery featured an assortment of English, Irish, and German examples. Of the principal Brücke artists, Kirchner was the only one represented in the 1913 Armory Show, with a single oil painting, *Garden Restaurant in Steglitz*, 1911 (cat. no. 208; fig. 3). Indeed, Wassily Kandinsky, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner were the only German modernists exhibited at the Armory Show. This was despite the fact that the exhibition had been inspired by the 1912 Sonderbund exhibit in Cologne, which had naturally featured a diverse selection of modern German artists. German art was all but omitted in New York because it did not appeal to the organizers’ tastes, demonstrating again that a preference for French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism art prevailed in this country before World War I.\(^{21}\)

The Brücke formally dissolved in 1913. The effects of the First World War (1914–1918) left relations between the United States and Germany strained not only politically, but also culturally, economically, and in terms of public opinion. The impact of this war, as well as socio-political events to come in the near future, affected further acceptance of the Brücke’s artwork in the United States in a myriad of ways. With these historical circumstances in mind, this study aims to analyze the formation of three major American museum collections of the Brücke’s graphic art. Besides being a source of innovative inspiration for the Brücke artists, prints add a further dimension to any collections history because they are more easily acquired by both private and institutional

\(^{21}\) Further evidence of the Brücke artists’, and indeed, of contemporary German artists’ in general, omitted renown in the United States is substantiated by the incorrect listing of Kirchner’s name as “T. L. Kirchner.” Association of American Painters and Sculptors, Inc., *International Exhibition of Modern Art*, exh. cat. (New York: Association of American Painters and Sculptors, 1913), 29, 89. The subject of the Armory Show will be examined in more detail in chapter three.
collectors due to their affordability, prolific quantity, and ease of transport. The graphic collections to be examined in depth in this study are those of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1924-1955), the Art Institute of Chicago (1938-1959), and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1937-1985).

Notable museum collections of the Brücke’s graphic art today include the Robert Gore Rifkind German Expressionist Prints and Drawings Collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection of German Expressionist Prints at the Milwaukee Museum of Art. The formation of these museums’ collections of Brücke works is later introduced for comparison. The importance of the collections chosen for this study, the personal motivations and interests of the private collectors who ultimately donated their holdings to these museums, as well as the institutions’ own collecting policies, financial backing, and curatorial oversight will be carefully considered. In order to clarify the scope of my study, I have placed respective emphasis on the period or periods that represent the height of each individual museum’s collecting or acquisition of Brücke prints. Accordingly, individuals and factors that influenced the introduction and critical reception of the Brücke’s art in the United States and within these institutions are specifically highlighted.

It is my thesis that the slowly-won acceptance of the relevance of the Brücke’s art in this country, as demonstrated by the formation of these three key museum collections, was not just a result of changing aesthetic tastes in America, but also involved the effects of an extraordinary set of historical circumstances. These circumstances include the previously cited post-war ambivalence in the United States toward Germany following World War I, the advent of modernism in America, the disastrous condemnation of
German Expressionist art by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime, the healing of socio-political relations after World War II, and the upward spiraling sales prices of German Expressionist art in the second half of the twentieth century. As curator Penny Joy Bealle has observed in connection with the latter, “The history of taste is much more than the history of taste.”\textsuperscript{22} It is my intent that a fresh examination of this activity will not only chronicle the critical reception of the Brücke’s art in this country, but will also contribute to a greater understanding of American patronage systems, the vagaries of institutional collecting, international cultural exchange, and the Brücke’s role within the discourse of modern art history.

The museum collections studied were chosen not only for their notable collections of Brücke prints, but also because of their significant locations, demographics, and history of patronage. For example, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York amassed most of its Brücke prints through the patronage of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, as well as through the support of the museum’s first director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and German-born museum professional William R. Valentiner, later the director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. German Jewish émigré art dealers such as J.B. Neumann and Curt Valentin were instrumental in bringing the Brücke’s art to the United States and MoMA when they were forced to flee their homeland under the Nazi regime, and they were among modern German art’s most significant supporters in this country.

The Art Institute of Chicago’s (AIC) collection of Brücke graphic arts was largely donated by German immigrants or German-Americans living in the Midwest during the 1930s and 1940s. However, the Institute’s acquisition of these works was sustained

\textsuperscript{22} Bealle, \textit{Obstacles and Advocates}, 5.
throughout the later twentieth century by the formidable efforts of two German-descended and German–educated print curators, Carl O. Schniewind and Harold Joachim. When the density of German immigrants and German-Americans who settled in the Midwest, and in Chicago in particular, is taken into account, it is not surprising that the AIC was interested in collecting Brücke prints and, indeed, modern German art in general. This trend was encouraged by greater German influence in Chicago and the Midwest in contrast to other parts of the nation more readily experiencing the debilitating effects of the political and ideological debates that were repeatedly waged against both Germany and her culture as a result of the two World Wars. Chapter three will focus on the personal motivations and cultural conditions that led to the formation of the AIC’s collection of Brücke prints.

The National Gallery of Art’s (NGA) collection of Brücke graphic arts, the subject of chapter four, stems largely from two pivotal bequests from the personal collections of clothier Lessing J. Rosenwald and the artist Jacob Kainen. Rosenwald, the Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company until 1939, was a Jewish American of German descent born in Chicago. After his retirement, he devoted himself full-time to collecting rare books and art, pledging the bulk of his Brücke print collection to the NGA in Washington, D.C., between the years 1943 and 1954. As the National Gallery only opened in 1941, Rosenwald’s patronage was essential to the founding of the Gallery’s renowned print collection. Notably, Rosenwald was also a serious collector of early fifteenth-century prints and early books often encompassing similar images that had provided so much inspiration to Kirchner and his fellow artists of the Brücke. Correlations between Mr. Rosenwald’s twin tastes for medieval prints and the
expressionist prints of the Brücke are explored, and the availability of both types of prints in the art market during Rosenwald’s years of collecting are assessed.

The other significant bequest at the NGA came from the artist and printmaker Jacob Kainen and his wife Ruth Kainen. The Kainens collected German Expressionist prints from the 1950s through the 1980s, and began gifting portions of their collection to the NGA in the mid-1970s. Although Jacob Kainen died in 2001, Mrs. Kainen has continued donating prints by the Brücke to the NGA’s collection up to the present.23 Jacob Kainen’s collecting habits appear to have been largely aesthetically-driven as he was a printmaker looking to German Expressionism for influence in his own work. Although his collection of prints was inclusive of other forms of Expressionism, including works by the Blaue Reiter, for example, Kainen was particularly partial to Kirchner’s prints. This focus provides an aesthetically-motivated dimension to the circumstances that helped mold the National Gallery’s collection of Brücke graphics.

In the three central chapters of this dissertation, I address how the influence of German culture in America, the socio-political relations between Germany and the United States, the reception of German Expressionist aesthetics, and the ideological attributions associated with German Expressionist art in America, combined to influence institutional acquisition of the Brücke’s graphic arts by museums in three very distinct cities. Though dealing primarily with the factors listed above, discussion of other aspects

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23 Mrs. Kainen died on September 13th 2009, at the age of 87. By the time of her death, she had donated 754 works of art to the National Gallery of Art, including more than 100 works by her husband. I am fortunate to have been able to interview Mrs. Kainen for this study at her home on August 12th 2009, just four weeks before her death. Information from this interview regarding the Kainens’ combined patronage of Brücke works to the National Gallery will be included in chapter four. See also, “National Gallery Benefactor Amassed Significant Art Collection,” The Washington Post, September 26, 2009, B4.
that may have had bearing on these museums’ collecting practices, such as the influence of Jewish patronage on modern German art, enhance the understanding of this topic.

There has been no lack of scholarship concerning the political and diplomatic relations between Germany and the United States, the influence of German culture in America, or the ideological debates within American history. However, the potential for determining how these factors influenced the acquisition of the Brücke artists’ art by American museums merits further exploration. This study investigates the interconnection of these factors and suggests new ways in which they affected institutional collecting practices of the Brücke artists’ prints.

The growing body of research within the art historical subfield of collections formation and the history of collecting has garnered increasing multidisciplinary interest in recent years. Regard for the relevance of this field is demonstrated by the 2007 founding of the Center for the History of Collecting in America at the Frick Art Reference Library in New York, the recent publication of periodicals such as the *Journal of the History of Collections* by Oxford University Press, and the bi-annual Seminars and their subsequent publication in the History of Collecting hosted by the Wallace Collection in London.

Reviewing the existing literature devoted to the theory and history of collecting is useful for understanding the situation of the Brücke artists’ reception in America. When French moralist Jean de la Bruyère published his monograph on collectors, *Les Caractères de Théophraste traduits du grec, ou les moeurs de ce siècle*, in 1688, he

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24 On this topic, see footnotes 41-45.
25 It should be noted that the breadth of this study is restricted by the predominance of English language sources in my research.
created a framework for a tradition of viewing collecting in broadly psychological terms. In a section entitled “De la mode,” La Bruyère characterized the impulse to collect as an obsessive drive in blind pursuit of certain objects. He wrote:

Collecting is not a taste of what is good or beautiful, but for what is rare and unique, for what one has and what others lack. It is not an attachment for that which is perfect, but for that which is sought after and in fashion. It is not an amusement, but a passion often so violent that it is no less potent than love or ambition, except for the smallness of its object.26

The enigma of the collecting impulse is still a great curiosity, as recent scholarship attests. Werner Münsterberger’s 1994 psychoanalytic study on the acquisition of objects, Collecting, An Unruly Passion, continues the example set by La Bruyère.27 The author’s principal conclusion, based on a number of case studies and life histories, is that individuals are driven to collect because they have suffered neglect or trauma in childhood. Their collecting activity, Münsterberger argues, serves to assuage the pain, deprivation, and anxiety experienced in early life. However, adhering to this type of psychoanalysis, which limits the practice of collecting to a pathology that is intrinsically neurotic, neglects the important and complex social and historical forces which also serve to develop and determine the formation of collections and collecting practices.

John Elsner and Roger Cardinal’s anthology of essays on this topic, The Cultures of Collecting (1994), furthers the definition of collecting and collections by exploring a more general logic of desire and possession, rather than specific traits of individual case

26 Jean de la Bruyère, Oeuvres completes, translated by Ting Chang (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1951), 386.
While psychoanalysis is not completely eschewed in this work, the scholarly studies included contribute to a wider understanding of the collecting impulse as it relates to the cultural, social, and political forces that aided in shaping the collections examined. Along similar lines, the more recent anthology *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, edited by Susan M. Pearce, identifies two main concerns: the conviction that both objects and collections can and should be studied in their own right, and that these examinations should be considered in the context of broader cultural studies. The methodologies utilized in Elsner, Cardinal, and Pearce provide a model for my own study which attempts to determine the collecting motives of American patrons of the Brücke artists’ graphic art from a variety of perspectives, historical, social, cultural, and political. This dissertation analyzes the impact of individual collectors’ personal desire to amass such works on the formation and acquisition habits of the institutional collections highlighted in this case study.

The aforementioned studies build on the efforts of W. G. Constable’s *Art Collecting in the United States of America: An Outline of a History* (1964) which surveys the history of art collecting in the United States, with a focus on private, rather

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28 John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). The contributors to this study examined a diverse range of collections, from everyday objects, such as Swatch watches, to fine art.

than institutional collections. Niels von Holst’s 1967 *Creators, Collectors, and Connoisseurs: The Anatomy of Artistic Taste from Antiquity to the Present Day* is an encyclopedic survey of the history of collecting, museums, and the concepts of connoisseurship, taste, and taste-making. Maurice Rheims contributed to the subject of collections history in his 1961 *The Strange Life of Objects: Thirty-five Centuries of Art Collecting and Collectors*. Rheims provides an overview of the evolution of art collecting, analyses of the psychology of collectors, a survey of the development of collections throughout history, and explores influential factors that have affected the value of art throughout the centuries. Studies, however, tend to neglect significant discussion of the dealers and other mechanisms of trade that provided objects for the collectors. My effort considers not only the collectors and their holdings, but examines relationships between dealers and their clients, particularly in those cases where print patrons were advised by one or more trusted dealers.

More recently, A. Dierdre Robson traced the development of the art market in New York, examining how museums, commercial galleries, and auction houses fueled the growing desire for ownership of modern art in the mid-twentieth century. Her *Prestige, Profit, and Pleasure: The Market for Modern Art in New York in the 1940s and 1950s* provides illuminating insight into similar issues to those I address concerning the

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Museum of Modern Art’s collecting habits during this time period. Peter Watson’s *From Manet to Manhattan: The Rise of the Modern Art Market* provides an additionally helpful overview of the development of the market for modern art in both the United States and Europe. These historical accounts of the modern art market are especially helpful for the purposes of assessing how the availability and pricing of the Brücke artists’ graphics affected buying and collecting habits of American patrons and institutions interested in their work.

Scholars who have addressed issues pertinent to those in my study specific to German Expressionism have typically concentrated on the broader themes of specific artists and subsequent groups of German Expressionists, such as Der Blaue Reiter or Die Blaue Vier (the Blue Four). In addition, a predilection towards painting and sculpture has also been favored over prints in these studies. Der Blaue Reiter was an Expressionist group founded in Munich in 1911 by Kandinsky and Marc. Like the Brücke, Der Blaue Reiter lacked an agreed upon formal artistic manifesto; however, the artists shared a common desire to expound spiritual truths through their art, demonstrate connections between visual art and music, illustrate spiritual and symbolic associations with color, and promote a spontaneous, intuitive approach to painting and printmaking. The group dissolved with the outbreak of war in 1914. In 1923, Kandinsky and three other artists, Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, and Alexej von Jawlensky, formed Die Blaue Vier in Weimar, Germany. Galka Emmy Scheyer, a German patron of the arts and former artist

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herself, was the unifying force behind the group’s formation. A supporter of Jawlensky since first seeing his work in a 1915 exhibition, Scheyer suggested the formation of the group for didactic and commercial purposes. Scheyer’s ultimate goal was to introduce the work of the four artists to American audiences and aid in the establishment of their artistic reputations in this country. Although Scheyer continued to promote and sell the artists’ works to American buyers until her death in 1945, Die Blaue Vier was a short-lived venture in which the artists exhibited and lectured in the United States for only a year in 1924.

Very little attention has been given to the incongruence of American receptivity in regard to the different forms of German Expressionism; i.e., the Brücke versus Der Blaue Reiter, or Die Blaue Vier. Taking into account the nuances of changing aesthetic taste among the American public, political relations, and the individual collecting motives of those promoters and collectors of modern German art in the United States, this distinction becomes directly relevant to receptivity and collecting patterns of the Brücke artists’ graphic art in this country.

A 2009 show held at the Neue Galerie in New York marked the first major exhibition solely devoted to the art and artists of the Brücke in the United States; the accompanying catalogue however fails to address this issue specifically. The catalogue, *Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913*, provides a wealth of information and new research concentrated on the Brücke’s role in spearheading the Expressionist art movement in Germany, and historical facts
documenting the artists’ time as a communal group.\textsuperscript{35} An essay by Rose-Carol Washton-Long, “Brücke and German Expressionism: Reception Reconsidered,” focuses on the Brücke’s historical reception in Germany within the larger context of the German Expressionist movement in a way that has not been previously addressed.\textsuperscript{36} Washton-Long’s enrichment of the historical and critical contexts in the period following the Brücke artists’ active years of association, will contribute to my assessment of the cultural and political nuances surrounding the reception of their work in this country.\textsuperscript{37}

Numerous articles, studies, and monographs on artists such as Max Beckmann, George Grosz, Paul Klee, and the members of Der Blaue Reiter and Die Blaue Vier, provide invaluable information for aspects of this subject.\textsuperscript{38} Research on promoters of modern art and modern German art by prominent figures such as Alfred H. Barr, Jr., art

\textsuperscript{37} Washton-Long observes that in the years after they disbanded, the Brücke artists were often marginalized in Germany by advocates of modernism for not being “modern” enough, and by critics of modernism for not being political enough. These paradigms of modernism, many of which were established in Germany before the First World War, were perpetuated in the critical reception of their artwork in the United States by influential figures such as Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and Clement Greenberg during the 1930s and 1940s. Washton-Long’s essay reconsiders the impact of such arguments on the reception of the Brücke members’ art in this country.
patron Katherine Sophie Dreier, Galka Emmy Scheyer, Detroit Institute of Art director William R. Valentiner, and Carnegie Institute Department of Fine Arts director Homer Saint-Gaudens, have also paved the way for further investigations of a more focused nature.\(^{39}\) I refer to these sources in my own study in order to provide a fuller history of the reception and advocacy of Brücke graphics in the United States during the first half of the century.

Concerning the history of German Expressionism in the United States, I rely on Edward Hagemann’s comprehensive bibliographical and chronological study *German and Austrian Expressionism in the United States, 1900-1939*\(^{40}\) that expands on John M. Spalek’s earlier 1977 bibliography on the same subject.\(^{41}\) The Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies followed these efforts with a more updated


bibliographical study in 1990 that served to complement the extensive research that went into the catalogue raisonné of the Rifkind Collection’s holdings of German Expressionist prints and drawings. This bibliography was edited by Bruce Davis in 1989 with numerous scholarly contributions by contemporary leading authorities on the subject of German Expressionism. Such studies provide a coherent timeline for how and when German Expressionism as an artistic movement penetrated the cultural conscience of the American art world, and constitute a rich resource of information regarding primary sources related to the subject of this dissertation. However, it is also important to note that these studies were compiled nearly twenty years ago, and there has been significant scholarship since that also contributes to my study. Included in the Rifkind text is a critically important essay by Stephanie Barron, curator of painting and sculpture at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, “The Embrace of Expressionism: The Vagaries of Its Reception in America.” Barron’s work here and in other LACMA catalogues has provided the groundwork for subsequent scholarship in the history of America’s reception of German Expressionist art. She presents information on early institutional patrons, collectors, and promoters of German Expressionism pertinent to my own study, as well as descriptions of key exhibitions and museum collections significant to the history of the Brücke movement’s acceptance in this country.

While Barron’s essay provides invaluable information on the reception of German Expressionism in the United States, it is not specific to the Brücke or any particular form of expressionism, and only minor attention is given to the graphic arts in comparison to painting and sculpture. Penny Joy Bealle’s 1990 analysis of the introduction of modern German art in the United States, *Obstacles and Advocates: Factors Influencing the Introduction of Modern German Art to New York City, 1912-1933: Major Promoters and Exhibitions*, runs parallel to my own study. Like Barron, however, Bealle focuses on all forms of German Expressionism (emphasizing the Blaue Reiter) and corresponding mediums (here, again, the author leans predominantly towards painting). Also, as the title suggests, Bealle’s study is centered on the New York art world alone. She provides an excellent examination of the challenges facing modern German art during the politically-charged era immediately before and after the First World War and its problems in gaining acceptance in America’s cultural capital leading up to the years marking Adolf Hitler’s entrance on the world scene as Chancellor of the National Socialist Party in Germany. Especially advantageous to my work are Bealle’s excellent analyses of the political relations between Germany and the United States during this time period and how politics influenced the cultural climate of New York, specifically in regards to how modern German art was received.

In a catalogue corresponding with another exhibition curated by Barron in 1997 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), art historian Shulamith Behr
contributed an essay on the subject of advocates of German Expressionist art. Called “Supporters and Collectors of Expressionism,” Behr’s essay is a notable contribution to this broader theme. Its focus revolves around those supporters and collectors who championed the success of German Expressionism in Europe and Germany. Behr trains a more narrow focus on such matters in regard to the inclusion of Brücke prints among institutional print collections in the United States specifically, and she does not distinguish between the various currents of German Expressionism or differentiate between the different artistic mediums employed.

When Barron organized the exhibition “Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler” in 1997 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, its accompanying catalogue included a contribution by Vivian Endicott Barnett. In “Banned German Art: Reception and Institutional Support of Modern German Art in the United States, 1933-45,” Barnett’s arguments expand on points made in Barron’s earlier essay in *German Expressionist Prints and Drawings*. But, as her title suggests, Barnett takes a more attentive approach to the discussion of institutional support of German Expressionism, including analysis of the involvement of a number of New York gallery owners who promoted modern German art. In that a significant portion of the Museum’s collection of these works was acquired through New York-based gallery owners who were sympathetic to the plight of both modern German art and the Brücke artists’

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acceptance in this country, and/or were sensitive to the fluctuations and availability of these works in the art market, this discourse has been particularly helpful to my own discussion regarding the collecting patterns of the Brücke’s prints by the Museum of Modern Art. In accordance with the LACMA exhibition’s theme, Barnett also delves into the political hindrances in both Europe and the United States that caused these artists to flee the Nazi regime. Her study summarizes the full-spectrum of German Expressionist artists without delving deeply into individual efforts for acceptance of each aesthetic or medium. My study attempts to correct this with regard to the Brücke’s graphic art.

Taking into account the tense climate between the United States and Germany before, during, and immediately following the World Wars, historian Geoffrey Stephen Cahn’s 1982 essay in the Yearbook of German-American Studies, “American Reception of Weimar Culture, 1918-1933,” provides a very useful trajectory of the “love-hate” relationship between the two nations in the interwar period that will play a role in my study.46 This was a time when suspicion of a former (and future) adversary remained high amongst the American public and nationalistic favoritism ran rampant in the art world. Cahn’s essay more effectively addresses the issues of cultural history and cultural relations between the two countries that other historians of German-American relations tend to omit. His summation on the interchanges of these interwar-era relationships is valuable to the historical context of my study.

Also of key importance as background to my thesis, John A. Hawgood’s sociological study, The Tragedy of German-America, published in 1940, notes the rise of

46 Cahn, n.p.
“Americanism” and regionalism as detrimental factors to the heritage many Americans of German descent had once considered with pride. Hawgood describes the climate of unease that this anxiety, in turn, wrought in German-American relations during this period. Similarly, in an effort to re-evaluate the countries’ ever-evolving relationship within the changing historical contexts of the past century, historian Hans W. Gatzke has provided a well-balanced account of American foreign policy and perceptions of Germany and her culture within the framework of the World Wars, the interwar period, the aftermath of the wars, and during the years of reconstruction following World War II. In Germany and the United States: A “Special Relationship?” he provides an unbiased report of American fluctuations of receptivity towards Germany politically, from favorable to hostile to friendly, throughout these decades. These studies provided applicable historical context to address key issues in my dissertation, such as German-American relations and the influence of German culture in America. These matters, as I will show, affected the reception of the Brücke artists’ graphic work by the American public and influenced factors wrought on the collecting of their works in the three museums I have identified.

More specifically related to art, Susan Noyes Platt has written two seminal studies concerning art and politics of the twentieth century: Modernism in the 1920s: Interpretations of Modern Art in New York from Expressionism to Constructivism (1985)


and Art and Politics in the 1930s: Modernism, Marxism, Americanism: A History of Cultural Activism during the Depression Years (1999).  

49 Platt’s close examination of the crossroads between art and politics, culture and criticism, and how modern art was implicated in all of these discussions in the early twentieth century provided additional needed background to my concerns. Her attention to German Expressionism in the first study is brief because she examines the full range of modernism during the 1920s, but it is succinct. She notes that, inspired by the political activism by artists in Europe during the war era, many American artists in the 1930s were stirred by the premise that culture was a means for revolutionary change. By identifying with workers, forming unions, marching in demonstrations, and working collaboratively on public art, prints, posters, and satirical cartoons as critical commentary, they, too, became involved in the political discourse of the time.  

50 For Washington, D.C., collector Jacob Kainen, given his own artistic career on the forefront of activism in the 1930s and 1940s, politics would play an important role in the Brücke artists’ work appeal.  

51 As noted, a number of the American patrons of Brücke works, such as Lessing Rosenwald, J.B. Neumann, and Curt Valentin, were Jews of German descent. Consequently, special attention is paid to the motivations of Jewish collectors of German Expressionist prints, and consideration is given to what has particularly drawn Jewish collectors to the work of the Brücke artists. I expand on Robin Reisenfeld’s argument

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50 Platt, Art and Politics, xv.  

51 See chapter four of this dissertation.
that Jewish patronage and appreciation of German Expressionist art in general has been less a matter of aesthetics, and more the result of a historical narrative shaped by identity politics, cultural biases, and nationalism.\textsuperscript{52} She states, “By collecting and selling German Expressionist art, particularly prints, the émigré German Jews could retain identification with a stream of German culture that was itself antithetical to the values of the Nationalist Socialist ideology that deemed it degenerate.”\textsuperscript{53} Furthermore, I examine Reisenfeld’s positing of spatial displacement, the need to sustain a cultural association with a country that had rejected both Jewish immigrants and Expressionist art, and the need to construct a new identity in a new place as motivating factors for Jewish patronage of German Expressionist art.\textsuperscript{54} Although I acknowledge that German Jewish émigré dealers such as Neumann and Valentin were able to influence supply and demand for German Expressionist prints because they had unique access to a niche market due to their friendships with the artists and first-hand knowledge of contemporary German visual trends, I will not be pursuing this argument directly, but rather relating it to the greater context of the study.

Stephen Birmingham, in “Our Crowd:” The Great Jewish Families of New York (1967), has examined the influence of wealthy German Jews on New York’s business elite, positioning them as a cohesive, recognizably distinct class of New York society. His work, a combination of financial analysis and social “chatter,” provides an informal history of the contributions of Jewish patronage to the fiscal life of New York City that

\textsuperscript{52} Robin Reisenfeld, “Collecting and Collective Memory: German Expressionist Art and Modern Jewish Identity,” in Jewish Identity in Modern Art History, Catherine M. Soussloff, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 114-34.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 127.
underpins some of the ideas crucial to my study. Similarly, Stanley Nadel’s *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (1990) depicts the experience of German immigrants in New York in the late nineteenth-century. While recent research in the field of immigrant studies has focused on communities in the Midwest where Germans left an enduring political and cultural legacy, German American life on the East Coast has received far less attention. Nadel’s study is an important contribution in remedying this deficit. His book traces the establishment of German American identity in New York. He delves into the subject of German Jewish ethnic relations during this period, which provided a historical foundation onto which twentieth-century German descendents and German Jews in New York subsequently built.

Parallel studies on the history of Jewish communities in Chicago and Washington, D.C., also provide pertinent information. Irving Cutler’s *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* (1996) expands on Hyman L. Meites’s earlier work dealing with the same subject, *History of the Jews of Chicago* (1990). Cutler’s study is of particular interest in that he traces ethnic relations between Jews, German Jews, and Christians in Chicago throughout the war years, while examining the Jewish contribution to the arts and cultural life of that city. His book is somewhat limited in scholarly analysis, however, as it is directed more toward a popular audience. Conversely, Martin Garfinkle’s 2005 *The Jewish Community of Washington, D.C.*, and Laura Cohen Appelbaum’s *Jewish Washington: Scrapbook of an American Community*, produced in conjunction with a 2007 exhibition organized by the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington and the Lillian and Albert Small Jewish Museum, provide scholarly and in-
depth historical accounts of Jewish life as relevant to the city of Washington, D.C. These texts are useful in making comparisons and determining contrasts regarding the impact of Jewish influence on institutional acquisition of the Brücke members’ artwork in the three central cities of this case study.

Finally, the recent past has seen a handful of works concentrated on the Brücke’s output of graphic art specifically, although authors interested in this topic have not been as numerous as those writing on the graphic art of the Expressionist movement as a whole. While these texts note certain supporters of the Brücke within the United States, such as Curt Valentin and William R. Valentiner, the subject of the Brücke artists’ reception and the history of collecting of their graphic works within this country is rarely studied in any depth. Among the more outstanding scholars of this subject is Reinhold Heller, who both curated and wrote the catalogue for a 1988 exhibition at the Mary and Leigh Block Art Gallery in Evanston, Illinois, titled Brücke: German Expressionist Prints from the Granvil and Marcia Specks Collection. This text represents the first extensive American examination of the Brücke group. Heller supplies a pithy


introduction to the emergence of the Brücke group, placing the members’ early aesthetic influences and their formation as a cohesive artist group within historical context. He elucidates the group’s ambiguous structure, goals, and principles as they were influenced by contemporary social and political events in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, noting that the program of the Brücke was essentially “programless,” and that their aims were somewhat vague. Nevertheless, the catalogue researchers, participants in Heller’s seminar on German Expressionism at the University of Chicago, identify commonalities in theme, technique, and outlook among the artists’ graphic work, chronicling both their communal development and the reaction against it present among the Brücke’s members even from the earliest years.

In a slightly earlier exhibition and accompanying catalogue curated and edited by Andrew Robison, curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., both Robison and artist-collector Jacob Kainen pay special—albeit brief—attention to the prints of the Brücke in general, and Kirchner specifically, in their respective essays.57 Both essays are concise and neither directly addresses the reception of the Brücke’s work in this country, but these authors provide valuable insight into the Brücke members’ working practices, the emphasis on printmaking within their oeuvres, and their aesthetic distinction from other forms of Expressionism. Unlike Heller, who considers the impact of social and political implications on the Brücke members development as a cohesive artist group in turn-of-the-century Germany, Robison

examines the artists’ individual aesthetics and graphic techniques, discussing the artwork on the basis of its own merits. He pays particular attention to the print oeuvres of Nolde and Kirchner, deeming these Brücke masters as the most prolific and graphically innovative among the original group members. In an essay of her own in the same catalogue, titled “Collecting Twentieth-Century German Prints,” Ruth Kainen addresses the collecting practices she and her husband developed in assembling their renowned collection of German Expressionist prints now housed at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.58

Following the three chapters outlined above, subsequent discussion in this dissertation draws parallels between the circumstances and motivating factors that influenced the institutional collecting of the Brücke’s prints in major museums in New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., in relation to other prominent museums in the United States that also collect Brücke graphics, such as the Robert Gore Rifkind Collection of German Expressionist Prints and Drawings in Los Angeles and the Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection of German Expressionist Prints at the Milwaukee Art Museum. The history of patronage and the images acquired by LACMA and Milwaukee will be considered in contrast and comparison to similar aspects identified in the three central institutions of this case study.

The intention of this dissertation is to determine what circumstances or factors influenced the collecting patterns of the Brücke’s graphic art by major art museums in the United States. Distinguishing both common denominators and significant differences

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58 Ruth Cole Kainen, “Collecting Twentieth-Century German Prints,” *German Expressionist Prints from the Collection of Ruth and Jacob Kainen*, 11-29.
serves to illuminate the reception of German Expressionism and the Brücke’s art in this country. Understanding how this Germanic art form was assimilated into our own artistic and cultural consciousness allows for greater appreciation of the hybridity of American culture.
I. BEGINNINGS: THE BRÜCKE IN GERMANY

At the turn of the twentieth century, Imperial Germany was a fledgling country. The thirty-nine previously independent states of the Pan-Germanic region of Europe were united in 1871 following a seventy-year span of crises that began with the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century and ended with the military successes of Otto von Bismarck during the Prussian-dominated wars of the 1860s. The resulting nation was the German Empire, with Berlin at its epicenter and a renewed sense of nationalism. By the 1890s, the art world in Germany was also in a state of flux.

While the numerous German art academies that were founded by the local princely courts of the eighteenth century continued to be the primary formal means of artistic education in Germany, various other arenas of activity offered alternative training for the country’s budding artists. This myriad of endeavors included new private art and technical schools founded by either individuals or groups of independent artists, newly-formed art associations, artist groups, and art unions. Similarly, the juried academic exhibitions, once the predominant stage for presenting new works by student and academy members to the public, were now supplemented by exhibitions sponsored by local Kunstvereine (art associations), and by local divisions of the new pan-Germanic artists’ union, the Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstgenossenschaft (Universal German Art Union). The local branches of the Kunstgenossenschaft, in turn, staged exhibitions that were financially backed by government funding.

These official exhibitions were frequently stymied by panels of juries that were intolerant of innovative art. Likewise, the exhibitions were dedicated to the display of extremely large numbers of works that repressed new artists from garnering fair critical
attention. As a remedy, loosely-banded groups of artists formed independent communal exhibiting societies known as “secessions” beginning in the 1890s in cities such as Munich, Dresden, Karlsruhe, and Berlin. Secessions served as alternative exhibition venues for artists excluded from the juried academy and art union exhibitions, or who those wished to participate in multiple exhibition settings. In these settings, artists could show their art in smaller exhibitions where their work was more likely to gain attention.¹

Secessions further sustained their distinction from the official exhibitions by partnering with commercial art galleries, such as the Berliner Secession’s (Berlin Secession) alliance with the prominent art dealers Bruno and Paul Cassirer. As art historian Robert Jensen has noted, the drive for distinction was not only an impulse of changing aesthetic taste, but also represented an economic reality for emerging artists, as well. Among the increasing throng of competing artists, commercial galleries provided an added prospect in the struggle for sales and exhibition space.² To this end, galleries helped promote individual artists and group shows and served as advocates for the secessions’ aesthetic ideologies, which the secessions were quick to defend publicly. For this reason, their stances eventually became rigid and resistant to alternative artistic


approaches presented by younger artists. As a new decade dawned, secessions quickly fell into similar patterns of exclusivity and intolerance for which the secessionist artists had condemned the official exhibitions and juried academic shows during their own youth. Increasingly, younger artists became as frustrated with the secessions’ prejudice towards stylistic innovation as many still were with the academies and state-sponsored artists’ associations.

Such pressures elicited even greater competition among artists for heightened access to commercial art galleries. Paradoxically, while the gallery system gave emerging artists increased audience exposure, it limited the number of artists who would receive serious critical attention from the press and the public. By their very nature, as small exhibition spaces, galleries could show only a small number of artists. The privileged few were typically selected by the dealer because their work was perceived as substantially different from the mass of contemporary artists. In this way, modern artists’ success was bound irrefutably to the commercial gallery. By the turn of the century, the art dealer had become a principal mediator between critics, the public, and the modern artist, a further indication of the transformative nature of Germany’s artistic landscape at this time.³

THE ARTIST GROUP Die Brücke

As demonstrated, this transformative nature served to modernize how artists organized, communicated, and ultimately presented themselves and their artwork to the

³ Jensen, 360-1.
This notion is integral to the formation of the Künstlergruppe Brücke (Artists’ Group Bridge), the collection of whose graphic output provides the topic for this study. Therefore, it is beneficial at this point to consider a brief history of the Brücke’s development and founding principles as a cohesive group, as it relates to the production, aesthetic, presentation, and reception of their artwork to an international audience.

Between the years 1895 and 1914, a new generation of artists favored a rapid revolution of radical styles, namely Realism, Impressionism, Symbolism, Jugendstil, Expressionism, and Abstraction. In 1903, a movement to organize and unify all artists across the German Empire, as opposed to the ephemeral succession of local secessions, exhibition societies, and various artist unions and associations, developed in Weimar. This took the shape of a broad, cooperative federation of artists known as the Deutscher Künstlerbund (German Art Association). Amongst this tide of reformatory artists’ groupings and changing artistic styles, four Dresden-based architecture students enrolled in the Königliche Sächsische Technische Hochschule zu Dresden (Royal Saxon Technical High School in Dresden): Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Together, they created the Künstlergruppe Brücke under the auspices of the Künstlerbund, noting the purpose of their group as “the arrangement of exhibitions of modern art.”

While they became acquainted at school, some of the founding members of the Brücke were also united by ties that had brought them to seek their training at the Technical School. Art historian Jill Lloyd has noted that Kirchner, although hailing from

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a lucrative middle-class family, lacked their support to seek formal academic training as an artist. He therefore enrolled in the architecture program at the technical school as a means to appease his father’s desire that he obtain a practical degree. The architecture program offered the young artist an additional opportunity to attend classes in drawing, perspective, art history, design, and aesthetics. Conversely, coming from a family of poor financial standing, Bleyl’s enrollment in the Technical School was founded on the need to economically obtain a degree that would allow him to pursue a practical career. Peter Lasko suggests that it was through Kirchner’s influence that Bleyl began attending more “philosophical” lectures such as the histories of art and architecture that would aid in establishing his interest in becoming a painter. Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff became friends in high school (gymnasium), where they often debated so-called “leftist” philosophy, art theory, and literature. Although little documentation survives of the financial situations of Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff or of what type of classes they took at the Technical School, it is apparent their shared early intellectual appreciation of literature was transferred into an appreciation of fine arts, accounting for their desire to pursue careers as artists.

The founding members of the Brücke closely modeled their ideology after that of the Künstlerbund, whose mission stated, “Here united and seen next to each other . . . [today’s] young, fruitful talents . . . will form a bridge from our own feverish, widely

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8 Ibid.
dispersed developments to the traditions of the nineteenth and of earlier centuries."9

Similarly, invoking the emblem of the bridge as a means of linking past, present, and future artistic direction, the Brücke artists declared their own objectives in *Unser Programm (Our Program)* in 1906:10

> With a belief in continuing evolution, in a new generation of creators as well as appreciators, we call together all youth. And as youth that is carrying the future, we intend to obtain freedom of movement and of life for ourselves in opposition to older, well-established powers. Whoever renders directly and authentically that which impels him to create is one of us.11

The artistic program of the Brücke, as stated above, was sown from a deliberate rejection of a defined aesthetic for their work. In essence, their program was “programlessness,” a concept as fundamental to the group’s artistic principle as to its dissolution in 1913.12 Art historian Annemarie Dube-Heynig observes:

> They wanted to preserve the spontaneity of experience, the power and directness of vision. It was their stubborn determination and self knowledge, the clear decisiveness of their extravagant claims and the atmosphere of their lives which enabled them to set their sights so high and to reject tradition in the spiritual as well as in the technical field. They were trying to grasp art as an original form, not as a

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10 The text of *Unser Programm* is most often attributed to Kirchner, although it is more likely that the wording was a communal effort. It was originally published in September 1906 on the occasion of the Brücke’s first group exhibition in Dresden at the showroom of the Karl-Max Seifert Lamp Factory. It was issued as a four-page woodcut brochure cut by Kirchner with a separate title page. The same year, it was printed as a leaflet that was distributed to potential supporters, as well as to visitors to the group’s exhibitions. See Rose-Carol Washton-Long, ed., *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 22-3, and Renée Price, ed., *Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913*, exh. cat. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 210.
skill; it seemed to them that their aims were not susceptible to learning.\textsuperscript{13}

While Bleyl and Kirchner completed their studies at the Technical School, the rest of the founding members opted to withdraw and pursue their own artistic training. Therefore, the later inclusion of older, more mature artists such as Emil Nolde (b. 1867), and academically trained artists such as Hermann Max Pechstein, served to establish “mentors” for the younger members. Additionally, the Brücke drew on the intellectual influence of the sculptor Hermann Obrist, with whom Kirchner had studied briefly at the Debschitz School in Munich during the winter semester of 1903-1904.\textsuperscript{14} In an essay titled “An Artistic Art Education,” written in 1900, it is easy to see how Obrist’s approach to an autodidactic art education would have appealed to the Brücke members.\textsuperscript{15} Obrist writes, “God protect you, young man, from that famous Professor, who for years exhibits only yellow-gray-brown canvases . . . so now numerous young painters have for some time worked on their own half or [as] totally self-taught artists.”\textsuperscript{16} Obrist championed Germany’s intensely active Jugendstil arts and crafts movement and a return to the communal working environment of the medieval guild.\textsuperscript{17}

Under Obrist’s tutelage, Kirchner was equally encouraged to seek out ethnographic material for the contemplation of the unfettered, unadorned, “childlike”

\textsuperscript{13} Annemarie Dube-Heynig, \textit{Kirchner: His Graphic Art} (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1961), 21.
\textsuperscript{14} Lasko, 61.
\textsuperscript{15} For more information on the career and pedagogy of Hermann Obrist, see his collected essays \textit{Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst} (Leipzig: E. Diederichs, 1903); and Museum Bellerive, \textit{Hermann Obrist: Sculpture, Space, Abstraction Around 1900}, exh. cat. (Zurich: Verlag Scheidegger and Spiess, 2009).
\textsuperscript{16} Hermann Obrist, “Wozu über Kunst schreiben und was ist Kunst?,” (1899), 64; as quoted in Lasko, 72-3.
aesthetic of “primitive” art. Kirchner claims in the Brücke’s 1913 self-history Chronik der Brücke that he “discovered” ethnographic art in 1903 when he first saw decorated roof beams from the Palau Islands at the Museum für Völkerkund (Ethnographic Museum) in Dresden, and that he, in turn, shared his discovery with the other members of the Brücke. The beams from the South Seas, he states, confirmed his artistic endeavors toward simple, direct, free expression, and exemplified a type of kinship between the working style of these so-called “primitive” artists and his own artistic method.

Kirchner and his fellow Brücke members became avid enthusiasts of material on view in both the Dresden and Berlin ethnographic museums, examining works from New Guinea, the Palau Islands, Asia, India, ancient Egypt, and Eastern European folk art.

A crucial aspect of this directness and authenticity of expression at the heart of the Brücke’s aesthetic involved the intermingling of art and life. In studios first in an industrial neighborhood in Dresden in 1908, and then in the sprawling metropolis of Berlin in 1911, the Brücke artists created an eccentric bohemian environment that was punctuated by their rejection of Wilhelmine culture and conventional middle-class values, desire for spontaneous artistic expression, fascination with non-Western art, and overt sexual preoccupation. Although it consisted of only three rooms, the Brücke members utilized the studio space at Berliner Strasse 80 in Dresden as living quarters for the artists, their friends and models, as well as a sleeping space and working atelier. The

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18 Lasko, 73.
largest of these rooms was painted a deep green and housed a cast-iron stove and large painted screens to provide privacy for the models. The room also contained an eclectic assortment of furniture, including carved and painted boxes that served as supports for sculptures and seats for a small, low-standing table. A smaller room adjacent to this workspace provided a sitting area for meals and gatherings around a second table with chairs.\textsuperscript{22}

An even smaller room is described by Reinhold Heller as “more a large niche than a room.”\textsuperscript{23} This “niche” served as the central nervous system of the Brücke’s atelier. Heller identifies it as the \textit{Ruheraum}, or “room of rest.” The niche’s décor, however, suggests anything but rest. Two curtains lined the entrance to the doorway: one curtain was decorated with a geometric pattern; the other was painted with silhouettes of figures engaging in explicit sexual activity. The walls of the \textit{Ruheraum} were covered with painted bed sheets depicting nude yellow figures outlined in red and black, lounging, crouching, dancing, or making love beneath stylized trees. A bed adorned with large cushions, a small table and bench, and various small sculptures, ceramics, and glass containers also crowded the room. Kirchner’s rendition of a Bohhisattva stood guard in one corner. The \textit{Ruheraum} represented an Expressionist interior environment that synthesized the stimulating, erotic themes of Indian temple sculpture with forms and colors that derived from the carved and painted beams from the islands of Palau that Kirchner had first observed in the Ethnographic Museum. The carvings on these beams

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
display various mythological and everyday scenes painted in green, yellow, and red. Most noticeable are the stylized figures of nude men with erect and engorged phalluses.

As Jill Lloyd has noted, the erotic nature inherent in the Brücke’s form of primitivism as it appeared in both their studio environments and artistic oeuvres was indeed indicative of anti-bourgeois bohemianism, while simultaneously entrenched in bourgeois colonialist mentality. She points, for example, to the Brücke artists’ enthusiasm as visitors to the zoological gardens in Dresden, where native peoples from German colonies were displayed in engineered habitats. In March 1910, Kirchner wrote excitedly to Heckel of the Samoans who were to be featured in the zoological gardens that summer. Similarly, he described dancers in the African village there. These “ethnographic” displays were staged next to animal exhibits in the zoo according to evolutionary prejudices informed by racial politics of social Darwinism at that time. The “iconography of the primitive” from which the Brücke group members fused the


25 Weinstein, 185.

26 In the 1890s, social Darwinism emerged as a separate doctrine from Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution and natural selection. According to Darwin’s theory, animals must compete for survival. Those that are the strongest and best able to adapt will be able to overcome competition for resources necessary for survival. In this way, nature “selects” which animals are the strongest and fittest, as the weaker will not survive. Darwin also included human beings in his theory regarding natural selection. Social Darwinism, developed by British theorist Herbert Spencer, both distorts and expounds on Darwin’s original theory by including social and economic aspects in the “natural selection” of humans. Thus, Spencer’s theory suggests that so-called “civilized” races of sound economic standing not only prosper, but also progress human evolution. For this reason, social Darwinism was used to promote racist and nationalist ideas in turn-of-the-century Europe. Proponents of the doctrine promoted notions of European superiority over other non-European “races,” such as Africans, Indians, Native Americans, and Oceanic tribes. This theory was used to justify colonization of indigenous people as a basis for establishing “rational” exploitation of markets and products to economically benefit both the colonizer and the colonized, and the need to “civilize” the “noble savage.” Weinstein, 184. See also Mark Francis, *Herbert Francis and the Invention of Modern Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
lessons of style and conspicuous sexuality they observed from ethnographic sources into a new expressionist syntax of subjective, stylistic hallmarks (including nude figures and angular accenting), Lloyd has argued, was rooted in the “imperialist consciousness of their times.”

Robert Goldwater, an African arts scholar who was the first director of the Museum of Primitive Art in New York from 1957 to 1973, also points to the Brücke artists’ admiration for Gauguin, whose work the members knew from a 1905 exhibition at the Arnold Gallery in Dresden of Gauguin’s Tahitian paintings and through various personal visits to Paris. The German artists were careful observers of the French master’s technical style. The unhindered, natural pose of the nude woman graced with tropical flowers in Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1913 woodcut Seated Woman with Flowers (fig. 4) is reminiscent of a simple undated woodcut by Gauguin, Woman under a Tree (fig. 5). Both artists employ similar stylistic devices to achieve the relaxed, “carefree” poses in each composition, including the use of repetitive patterning. Gauguin employs it to depict the fan-like foliage of the tree and the curving vines surrounding his nude, while

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27 Lloyd, German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity, 31.
30 The Brücke members had a naïve, idealistic perception of a primitive, utopian society in which humanity, social barriers, and industry did not conflict. Other contemporary artists, such as Gauguin, who held similar views, also looked to Oceanic and African native life as examples of this so-called carefree and innocent life. However, this ideal was an imagined life that did not accurately reflect reality. In essence, the utopian ideal was a patina placed on the daily life of these native peoples by Western European biases. For more on this, see Colin Rhodes, Primitivism and Modern Art (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994).
Schmidt-Rottluff adds trapezoidal patterning along the limbs and curves of the woman’s body, and in the spiked forms of the flowers that seem to duplicate each other. Both artists’ images are flat and space-less, without any illusion of volume, and seem to grip the figures within the scenery. Thick, alternating forms of severe black and white nearly hide the remnants of wood grain in the heavy inking of both prints. Although the members of the Brücke obviously looked closely at the work of Gauguin, the younger artists were committed to the development of their own individual styles and opted to cast their nets even wider for inspiration.

To this end, the stylistic development of the Brücke was also influenced by historical circumstances and their rich Germanic heritage. When the group was founded, the German union was still relatively new (approximately thirty-five years old). The Brücke’s active period was marked with uncertainty, a time when Newtonian physics were being questioned by concepts of relativity, cities and lifestyles were beginning to reflect the results of increasing industrial capitalism, and new technologies were leading to the mechanization of labor. More and more, artists began feeling alienated from the dynamic fabric of society. A sense of anxiety became more apparent in Brücke artwork after the group’s collective move to Berlin, where the modern metropolis and its inhabitants became objects of intense scrutiny in their images. The sophisticated café culture, the prominent display of prostitution throughout the city, the nervous excitement and decadence of urban life all found visual response. Such tension is palpable in works such as Heckel’s *Opponents*, 1912 (fig. 6), in which two figures stand rigidly poised for a struggle with a knife lying pointedly on the table between them. As the First World War
approached in 1914, the artists’ agitated responses to mounting fears (both at home and abroad) would become even more pronounced.\textsuperscript{31}

In the culturally rich art world of Dresden, the Brücke had access to vast collections of Old Master paintings, drawings, and prints, as well as to commercial exhibitions of contemporary German and European art such as those held at the galleries of Ernst Arnold and Emil Richter.\textsuperscript{32} The Brücke artists found special resonance in the work of their countrymen both old and new. They especially admired the German iconicism of Albrecht Dürer, the expressive immediacy of Matthias Grünewald, the curvilinear nudes of Lucas Cranach the Elder, and the innovative working methods of Rembrandt van Rijn. They were equally interested in the work of more contemporaneous European artists, particularly in the rousing brushwork of Vincent van Gogh, the emotional symbolism of Edvard Munch, and the expressive color of Kees van Dongen,\textsuperscript{33} a member of the French Fauves group.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} For more on this, see Peter Selz, “The Expressionist Impulse in German Painting,” New Worlds: German and Austrian Art, 1890-1940, exh. cat., Renée Price, ed. (New York: Yale University Press, 2001), 136-8.

\textsuperscript{32} Dresden’s Gemäldegalerie and Kupferstichkabinett both housed outstanding collections of Old Master works and were renowned for their collections of art from the late-medieval German period and the Northern Renaissance. Upon its founding in the first half of the eighteenth century by Augustus the Strong, the Gemäldegalerie inherited many German and Italian Renaissance works from the previously established Kunstkammer (founded in 1560). In addition, the former Kunstkammer provided the newly formed gallery with a rich resource of graphic collections, considered to be one of the best in the world at the time. Among the German Renaissance prints included in the collection were works by Dürer, Cranach, Hans Burgkmair, and Albrecht Altdorfer. The Gemäldegalerie’s graphic collection also contained a wide variety of other print-related ephemera, from “primitive” block-book prints to drawings by Rembrandt, Japanese color woodcuts, and Jugendstil posters. Christian Weikop, “Brücke and Canonical Association,” in Price, Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 104.

\textsuperscript{33} Kees van Dongen was a Dutch painter associated with the colorful eclecticism of the French Fauve artists. In 1906, he moved to the Bateau-Lavoir in Paris, where he was included amongst the circle of friends and artists surrounding Picasso and Fernande Olivier. Although academically trained, Van Dongen reveled in creating eroticized, often
Munch’s work was first shown in Germany at the Verein Berliner Künstler (Union of Berlin Artists) in 1892. The controversy that arose from this exhibition stems from Munch’s non-traditional symbolist aesthetic and provocative subject matter. Evoking the influence of French avant-garde artists such as Van Gogh and Gauguin, as well as the liberal use of color by artists such as Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Munch used color and flowing line to evoke immediacy and emotion, as in his immensely famous painting *The Scream* of 1893 (fig. 8). The scandal from the exhibition (dubbed “The Munch Affair”) defined Munch’s reputation in Germany and he soon moved to Berlin to capitalize on the notoriety. However, sales of his paintings were slow, inducing him to take up printmaking as a means of commercial venture. Munch’s prints look forward to the Brücke’s own printmaking practices in the years to follow, especially in his use of chisel and gouge and exploitation of the wood grain. Munch was particularly innovative in his use of multiple block paintings for his color woodcuts, in which he sawed the block into several pieces for separate inkings, as in his 1901 *Melancholy* (fig. 9). This particular version of *Melancholy* is printed from two blocks: the first block is sawn into three pieces and inked with grey, blue and orange; the second block is carved with the garishly colored portraits. In his early career, the artist would often depict sailors and prostitutes in his portraits; however, after achieving notoriety through his association with the Fauve artists, Van Dongen became a popular portrait painter of high society ladies (see fig. 7). In addition, he was also a prolific graphic artist who mastered the techniques of lithography, etching, aquatint, engraving, pochoir and offset prints, book illustration and poster design. For more on Van Dongen, see Nathalie Bondil, et al., *Van Dongen*, exh. cat. (Paris: Hazan, 2008); and Jan Juffermans, *Kees van Dongen: The Graphic Work* (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2003).  

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34 See Weikop, 103-27.
graphic image and over-printed in black. Such technical devices were later adopted by the Brücke artists.35

In 1905, the Brücke artists eagerly attended the first major touring exhibition of some fifty paintings by Van Gogh at Galerie Arnold in Dresden, organized by Paul Cassirer. Fritz Schumacher, a former professor of Bleyl, Kirchner, Heckel, and Schmidt-Rottluff at the technical school, noted that the young artists “went wild” at their first viewing of original works by the Dutch artist.36 The impact of Van Gogh was expressed by the Brücke artists immediately. His broken brushwork and bright complementary colors, which the group members interpreted as authentic and spontaneous, introduced visual drama to the Brücke’s work and furthered experimentation that both Heckel and Kirchner had been exploring on their own. In addition, the young artists sympathized with the spectacle, emotion, and passion that characterized Van Gogh’s life story which had become increasingly more public after his death in 1890.37 A side-by-side comparison of Van Gogh’s Self-Portrait of 1889 (fig. 10) with Schmidt-Rottluff’s Self-Portrait of 1906 (fig. 11), or the Dutch-born artist’s Self-Portrait with Straw Hat of 1888 (fig. 12) with Kirchner’s own Self-Portrait with a Pipe of 1907 (fig. 13), shows just how closely the Brücke painters studied Van Gogh’s work and reprised his expressive verve and intense color.

As the members of the Brücke worked to enlarge their circle, they intentionally sought out like-minded artists who shared their admiration for artists such as Gauguin,

Munch, and Van Gogh. In 1906, Heckel met Pechstein, who was working on a commission to design a ceiling painting for the Saxon pavilion at the *Dritte Deutsche Kunstgewerbeausstellung* (Third German Applied Arts Exhibition) in Dresden.

Pechstein’s subsequent work, such as *The Red House* of 1910 (fig. 14), recalls Van Gogh’s agitated brushstrokes and vibrant color contrasts, which Lloyd suggests that Pechstein used to “render a heightened vision of nature.”38 Indeed, Pechstein enthusiastically acknowledged Van Gogh’s influence, exclaiming, “Van Gogh was father to us all!”39 Finding a kindred spirit in Pechstein’s work, in 1906 the Brücke extended an invitation to the artist to become a member of their group. It was readily accepted.

Nolde was also deeply engaged with the work of Van Gogh, as evident in his *Portrait of Schmidt-Rottluff*, 1906 (fig. 15). He admired Van Gogh’s fervent belief that color was not merely descriptive, but also expressive and symbolic. This mirrored Nolde’s own convictions about hue: “Yellow can depict happiness and also pain. Red can mean fire, blood or roses; blue can mean silver, the sky or a storm. Each color has a soul of its own.”40 In 1905, Nolde gained his first significant professional break with a solo show staged at Galerie Arnold. It was this exhibition that initially drew the attention of the founding members of the Brücke to Nolde’s artwork. They were struck by his “tempests of color” in the manner of Van Gogh, as Schmidt-Rottluff aptly described it.41 The following year, the Brücke artists extended an invitation to join their group to the

38 Ibid.
39 Quoted in Ibid., 11.
older artist with whom they felt such deep affinity. While Nolde accepted their invitation to join the ranks of the Brücke, he was skeptical of their admiration for Van Gogh and combined his voice with others, such as the famous art critic Paul Fechter, in criticizing a 1907 Brücke exhibition at the art gallery of Emil Richter. Stating that his colleagues were only superficially imitating the master’s artistic style, Nolde tartly suggested in a letter to his friend Hans Fehr that they “should not call themselves Die Brücke but Van Goghiana.”

As they continued to formulate their own individual artistic styles, the artists of the Brücke would reinterpret what they had learned from Van Gogh. The intensification of color and forms which they collectively admired in Van Gogh’s work were integrated into more personal forms of expression. The lively brushstrokes of Van Gogh they previously emulated gave way to broad, diagonal planes of color and spatially distorted

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42 In 1906, both Pechstein and Nolde joined the Brücke, as did the Swiss artist Cuno Amiet, and Dutch artist L. Zyl. The members also issued the first of numerous invitations for membership to Munch beginning this same year, though all were declined. The German artist Franz Nölken briefly joined the Brücke in 1908 before leaving for Paris to study with Henri Matisse. Finally, in 1911, Bohumil Kubišta of Prague joined the Brücke, without, however, establishing any close connections with the other members.


44 Letter to Hans Adolf Fehr, *Emil Nolde: Ein Buch der Freundschaft* (Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1960), 53; as quoted in Lloyd, “Vincent Van Gogh and Expressionism,” 15. Nolde resigned his membership in the Brücke the same year this letter was written. Bleyl, one of the first founding members of the group, married in 1907 and also left citing concerns for supporting his new family. The Finnish artist Axeli Gallén-Kallela was extended an invitation of membership into the Brücke while working in Dresden that year and accepted.
compositions. In what is now regarded as their artistic signature, color and composition served as fundamental elements of expression, rather than simply description.

Although Kirchner prominently omitted any of the Brücke’s indebtedness to French art and to other avant-garde pioneers in 1913 in Chronik der Brücke, he never denied their admiration of canonized German masters of previous centuries. “Brücke found its first art historical corroboration in Cranach, Beham, and other German masters of the Middle Ages,” he wrote. Both Nolde and Kirchner were particularly drawn to Rembrandt’s innovative work, but for different reasons. Where Kirchner strove to capture Rembrandt’s expressive movement and “freedom in figure treatment,” he also acknowledged that the Baroque master’s drawing style “helped me to attain a strongly abbreviated drawing manner.”

Nolde, on the other hand, imitated Rembrandt’s highly expressive quality, often adopting the latter’s chiaroscuro intensity, as in a 1908 etching, Self-Portrait (fig. 18). This portrayal recalls similar self-portraits by the Dutch master, including a 1630 etching Self-Portrait Frowning (fig. 19). Like Rembrandt, Nolde

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45 Compare, for example, Schmidt-Rottluff’s Midday on the Moor, 1908 (fig. 16), with a similar work made just two years later, Landscape with House and Trees (Dangast before the Storm), 1910 (fig. 17).


47 Bleyl had no trouble recalling otherwise writing in his memoirs: “One day Kirchner brought along from some bookstore or other an illustrated volume by Meier-Graefe on the modern French painters. We were enraptured.” Hans Wentzel, “Fritz Bleyl: Gründungsmilied der ‘Brücke,’” Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein 8 (1968): 24; as quoted in Lloyd, “Vincent van Gogh and Expressionism,” 27. It should also be noted that Kirchner was notorious for exaggerating dates, possibly in order to claim prior artistic achievement, also perhaps due to poor memory.


49 Kirchner, letter to Dr. Carl Hagemann, June 30, 1937; as quoted in Donald E. Gordon, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 15.

50 Ibid.

51 Weikop also suggests that it is likely that Nolde felt kinship with an artist such as Rembrandt based on the notion that they were, in a sense, countrymen, or Niederdeutsche
experimented with the use of tone on the etching plate, and recognized the fundamental
importance of the paper as support. “My joy and love were reserved for medieval
sculpture, Dürer’s linear fantasy, the passion and grandeur of Grünewald, the childlike

("lower Germans"). Niederdeutsche was a term used to describe the marsh-dwelling
and seafaring peasants of the Baltic lowlands. This region encompassed the northern-
most Baltic and North Seas areas from Denmark down through Holland. This conception
of geographical fraternity is espoused in the ideology of the German political theorist
Julius Langbehn. Langbehn was a considerable influence on the cultural milieu in
Dresden in which the Brücke developed; in fact, for a time Langbehn was, in many
circles, even more celebrated than Nietzsche. The theorist was considered an eccentric
thinker of the Völkisch movement who believed that the Niederdeutsche was unsurpassed
in creativity. Like Nolde, he was a native of the German-Danish border, whose wide
encompassing view of Niederdeutsche included Rembrandt’s birthplace of Leiden in the
southern Netherlands. He penned the widely read Rembrandt als Erzieher (Rembrandt as
Educator), written in Dresden and published in 1890 without attribution to the author. In
the book, Langbehn venerated Rembrandt for his identification with the people and went
on to state, “A figure like Rembrandt, at least for Germany, can create a bridge between
the fragmented man of today and the total man of the future.” [Julius Langbehn,
Rembrandt als Erzieher: Von einem Deutschen (Leipzig: C.L. Hirschfeld, 1890), 286; as
quoted in Weikop, 105.] The result of Langbehn’s imaginative “shifting” of German
gecultural boundaries permitted German art critics to “annex” not only the Dutch master
as one of their own, but also to consider other celebrated artists of Scandinavian, Swiss,
and Flemish nationality such as Munch, Van Gogh, and even Van Dongen as “Germanic”
artists. The viewing of art in an ethnological manner that extended the notion of
Germanness beyond the physical borders of the country became increasingly more
mainstream among critics and art historians by the turn of the century. In an analysis
of the significance of Van Gogh’s art on the development of the German avant-garde
written for an issue of the arts journal Der Cicerone in 1911, art historian Carl Gebhardt
stated, “This art is Germanic art, and perhaps the only continuation possible for German
painting following on from the later works of Rembrandt.” [Carl Gebhardt, “Die
neuerwerbungen französischer Malerei im Städelischen Kunstnstitut zu Frankfurt a.M,”
Der Cicerone 4 (1912): 762; as quoted in Weikop, 106.] Although it is not certain
whether or not Nolde was familiar with Langbehn’s ideas, he was acquainted with
Langbehn’s disciple Momme Nissen. Nolde and Nissen met in Copenhagen in 1901, and
it is likely that the subject of Nissen’s mentor would have been discussed. Weikop, 105-
6; see also, Ron Mannheim, “The German Van Gogh: A Case Study for Cultural
beauty of Cranach . . . Rembrandt’s divine humanity . . . all of them shining like rare and wonderful stars,” Nolde expounded in 1934.\(^{52}\)

In the newly unified nation of Germany, Dürer was espoused as a heroic icon of the fledgling state and a symbol of spiritual guidance for modern artists. Dürer had long since been revered as the paradigmatic German cultural hero. In the early Romantic age, poet and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had praised Dürer for the anticlassical, masculine, “Gothic” qualities of his work. By the late nineteenth century, Dürer’s nationalistic associations reached a summit, while his renowned engraving *Knight, Death, and the Devil* (fig. 20), 1513, was hailed as a symbol of nationalistic pride.\(^{53}\) Even the Brücke’s venerated hero, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, seemed enamored of Dürer’s symbolism, remarking, “A man who feels hopelessly isolated could not choose a better symbol than the *Knight with Death and the Devil* that Dürer has drawn for us.”\(^{54}\) In 1905, the year of the Brücke’s founding, Heinrich Wölfflin’s important study of Dürer’s work was published. This volume, entitled *Die Kunst Albrecht Dürers* (The Art of Albrecht Dürer), was widely read by young artists at the time, and it is likely the Brücke members were at least familiar with Wölfflin’s work, due to their previous schooling.\(^{55}\) For the Brücke, Dürer was not only a national cultural icon and a master printmaker; they admired him as an innovative artist, and as a pioneer in

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developing a specifically German artistic form, a goal toward which the Brücke painters were striving in their own time.

As Annemarie Dube-Heynig, a specialist in German Expressionism who has written extensively on the graphic work of Kirchner, has observed, “A strong creative force searching for the best means of expression chooses the most suitable medium.”56 Fired by an era imbued with nationalistic pride and new artistic direction, the Brücke turned their attention to the print medium, arguably their most lasting contribution to art, working in woodcut, lithography, drypoint, and etching. The Brücke’s quest for autodidactic innovation, direct expression, honesty of craft, and creative experimentation rendered printmaking an ideally suited medium. Because it is a malleable art form, printmaking allows the artist to manipulate the outcome of the final product through a number of means. These include, for example, varying the techniques and materials used (such as the preparation of the ink or the type of support), differing the manner in which a lithographic stone is inked or an etching plate is wiped, or experimenting with color, texture, and tonal effects. Additionally, in their prints, the Brücke artists sought to manifest the peculiarities of the means they used. For instance, they printed their lithographs on pieces of paper that were larger than the lithographic stone in order to incorporate the edges of the stone in the print. Correspondingly, they allowed the characteristics of a particular matrix—the grain and splinters of a block of wood or the cracks and breaks in the edges of a lithographic stone—to print, and left drips and splatters of ink to be flattened and smeared by the printing press. As the Brücke artists furthered their search for a more concise embodiment of their pictorial ideals, printmaking quickly became their dominant medium. Kirchner elaborated:

56 Dube-Heynig, 21-2.
The will which drives an artist to graphic techniques is perhaps partly the attempt to cement the vacillating lines of a drawing once and for all. The technical requirements also liberate forces in the artists which are never called upon in the much freer techniques of drawing and painting. The mechanical process of printing draws all the different phases of the work into a whole. The preparation can be infinitely expanded, and there is great attraction in working on a subject for months to achieve perfection of form and expression without losing the initial clarity of the block. Graphic works is always the best key to the understanding of an artist.  

THE BRÜCKE AS PRINTMAKERS

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938): “I had the audacious idea of renewing German art . . . .”

As we have seen, the nationalistic fervor that resulted from Germany’s recent unification also contributed to a revival of public interest in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German “Gothic” woodcuts. The members of the Brücke admired these, and associated the rejuvenation of this medium with an ideological value rooted in the woodcut’s historic correlation as particularly a Germanic form of artistic expression. In a letter to collector and art historian Gustav Schiefler dated September 24th 1922, Kirchner took credit for having introduced the other founding members of the Brücke to the art of the woodcut, stating, “In 1900 I saw the beautiful old German dotted prints and woodcuts in the Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg and began working again in that technique and then somewhat later told my friends in the Brücke, Heckel and S[chmidt]-R[ottluff] about

57 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, “Concerning Graphics,” (1913), supplement intended as an appendage to the Chronik der Brücke, n.p.; as quoted in Dube-Heynig, 22.
58 Letter from Kirchner to Curt Valentin, April 17, 1937, Curt Valentin Gallery, New York, 1952, n.p.; as quoted in Jacob Kainen, “E. L. Kirchner as Printmaker,” in Robison, German Expressionist Prints from the Collection of Ruth and Jacob Kainen, 34.
Some stylistic correspondences between these early woodcuts and the expressionist prints of the Brücke include restrained perspective, flattening of space, emphasis on the surface plane, simplified forms, and powerful, direct expression of images. The Brücke were to use this nationalistic association with the woodblock print to their advantage. In *Chronik der Brücke*, the artists stressed the importance of printmaking to their artistic goals and credited themselves with the revival of the woodcut medium. The link between the Brücke and the woodcut as a celebrated Germanic tradition, elevated further by the sense of nationalism being renewed all over Germany at this time, served as a means of establishing the group’s “Germanness,” thus forming an important notion of the group’s collective identity.  

 Kirchner was especially enamored of early fifteenth-century woodcuts and incunabula in the collection of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, and he repeatedly acknowledged the decisive influence of these works on his own expressionist woodcuts in letters, autobiographical essays, and in the *Chronik der Brücke*. In June 1935 Kirchner recalled:

 Somewhat diffidently I went again, visited the Germanisches Museum, and here saw for the first time the many extremely early woodcuts and incunabula with their

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60 Robin Reisenfeld, “Cultural Nationalism, Brücke and the German Woodcut: The Formation of a Collective Identity,” *Art History* 20, No. 2 (June 1997): 289. Woodcuts were also enjoying a revival in popularity in France due to the influx of Japanese woodblock prints, or *ukiyo-e*. The impressions became a particular source of inspiration for Impressionist artists in the 1850s, and later influenced Art Nouveau and Cubist artists. The popularity of Japanese woodblock prints extended to other parts of Europe, Germany included, where artists were especially affected by the prints’ lack of perspective or shadow, the extensive use of flat areas of vibrant color, and the compositional freedom in placing subjects off-center. For more on this see Jacquelyn Baas and Richard S. Field, *The Artistic Revival of the Woodcut in France, 1850-1900*, exh. cat. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1984).
woodblocks. This interested me very much, and I returned
to my own woodblocks with new motivation. I had already
learned the technique from my father.\textsuperscript{61}

As he indicates here, Kirchner’s passion for prints, and in particular the woodcut, can be credited to his father’s influence when the artist was a youth. Kirchner was born in Aschaffenburg in southern Germany, but at the age of seven, his family moved to Perlen, where his father, Ernst Kirchner, had accepted a position in a paper factory. Just two years later, in 1889, his father was named Professor of Paper Technology at the Chemnitz Technical College. During this time, Ernst began taking private drawing lessons.\textsuperscript{62} This introduction to inks and graphic materials, combined with his father’s extensive technical knowledge of papers, likely impressed upon him the potential and possibilities of artists’ use of these basic supports. The early development of Kirchner’s printmaking experience is recorded by the artist himself in 1921 writing under the pseudonym of a fictitious French art critic, “Louis de Marsalle,” from Davos, Switzerland. He adopted this ruse as a means of flattering his own work in the art journal \textit{Genius}:

\begin{quote}
While Kirchner was still a grammar-school boy, his father gave him some old blocks of wood with the seals of old paper factories on them and he made several impressions from them. The old wooden blocks with the primitive, bold drawings fascinated Kirchner, who set about cutting designs on cigar-box lids, thus learning the methods of wood cutting.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{62} Dube-Heynig, 17.
\textsuperscript{63} Louis de Marsalle [Ernst Ludwig Kirchner], “Über Kirchners Graphik,” \textit{Genius} 3 (1921): 251-63; as quoted in Ibid., 17.
As stated earlier, the accommodating nature of printmaking to the artist’s experimental impulses allowed Kirchner to clarify his pictorial ideals. His printmaking style became an extension of his drawing style, with an adherence to the kind of flattened perspective observed in fifteenth-century woodcuts. He attempted to seize upon the effects of motion derived from observing the feathery strokes of Rembrandt’s drawings and he developed a reduction of natural forms which the artist likened to “hieroglyphs of nature,” or forms reduced to their graphic counterparts. Having been introduced early to the woodcut, it is natural that Kirchner showed a strong affinity for the medium, producing nearly 1,000 woodcuts during his lifetime.

As seen in his 1914 print *Sailboats near Fehmarn* (fig. 21), Kirchner often rendered his woodcuts in terms of pattern and silhouette. The demands of the woodblock gouge also seemingly influenced his style of painting; here they were resurrected as quick nervous strokes of paint on the canvas. Meanwhile, his experimental bent with woodcutting and tonality led to distinctive prints that can only be identified as by Kirchner. For example, use of a v-shaped gouge in the manner of a burin in wood engraving on hard, dense planks of wood allowed him to produce woodcuts with white lines. In these, the white lines of the unprinted paper only serve to model forms that seemingly arise from the inked background, such as in the head of *The Wife of Professor Goldstein*, created in 1916 (fig. 22).

Kirchner drew his first lithographs in 1907. Again, the artist was not content merely to print these in the traditional manner, but rather he carefully considered individual printmaking techniques as a means to reinforce the subject matter of this type

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64 Dube-Heynig, 32.
65 Jacob Kainen, “E.L. Kirchner as a Printmaker,” 37, 39.
of graphic art. He habitually declined a professional printer’s assistance, choosing instead to print his own lithographs, often through elementary means. Kirchner willfully marked his lithographs with the uneven edges of the stone in order to give each print a handmade appeal. In an attempt to exploit the possibilities of the lithographic process, the artist would sometimes draw on the stone, add water and turpentine to the image, and fan the combination dry. This process would cause the lines and colors to mottle and bleed, on top of which Kirchner would etch the image. When rolled with ink, the lines produced would be reminiscent of the hastily-drawn, rudimentary style Kirchner seemed to favor, as seen in the 1909 color lithograph Russian Dancers (fig. 23). Attempts at “under-etching” the stone and applying acid in critical spots to color lithographs also produced unusual effects of ink, contour, and line with which Kirchner would continue to experiment throughout his artistic career.66

Despite this emphasis on technical innovation, Kirchner’s graphic impulse was always aimed at capturing the immediacy of everyday life. He specialized in portraiture, landscapes, seascapes, the nude form, and in closely observed scenes of urban life, maintaining a strong interest in the changing urban scene, as well as the challenge of arresting motion. In a 1937 letter to Curt Valentin, recalling a 1900 exhibition of Munich Secessionists images and the appeal of ethnographic art for its naturalism and directness, Kirchner passionately criticized the older artists then on view for their lack of interest in the day-to-day routines of life. He took the opportunity to purport his own artistic importance, stating:

Did you know that as far back as 1900 I had the audacious idea of renewing German art? Indeed I did, and the impulse came to me while looking at an exhibition of the

66 Ibid., 40.
Munich Secession in Munich. Their pictures were dull both in design and execution, the subjects uninteresting, and it was quite obvious that the public was bored. Indoors hung these anaemic, bloodless, lifeless studio daubs and outside life, noisy and colorful, pulsed in the sun. Why didn’t the good Secessionists paint this full-blooded life? The answer is that they could not because they did not see it. It was outside and it changed incessantly, and when they dragged it into their studios it ceased to be life and was merely a pose . . . . I arrived in Dresden and during my studies was able to arouse my friends' enthusiasm over my new ideas.  

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976)

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff was born in the town of Rottluff, near Chemnitz, the son of a miller. He attended grammar school in Rottluff from 1891-1895. While attending gymnasium in Chemnitz from 1895-1905, he met and befriended Erich Heckel (in 1901). Together, the two artists began architectural studies at the Technical School, joining the other founding members of the Brücke. When the Brücke was founded in 1905, Schmidt-Rottluff adopted the professional name of his home town in order to give distinction to his artistic identity.

While Kirchner took credit for introducing his friends to the woodcut, he credited Schmidt-Rottluff with introducing lithography to the younger members. In fact, lithography dominated the latter’s career from 1906 to 1909. Lithography allowed Schmidt-Rottluff to develop a signature working style that involved constructing images from planes of pure color. This method, combined with a flattening of images, striated hatchings, and strong contours appears to have had its origins in the earlier woodblock

67 Letter from Kirchner to Curt Valentin (April 17th 1937), Curt Valentin Gallery, New York, 1952, n.p.; as quoted in Kainen, 34.
68 Price, Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 208.
69 Robison, 65.
prints and ethnographic art of which the Brücke members were so fond. Flattened planes, striations, and strong contours, however, would also spill over into Schmidt-Rottluff’s woodcuts, as is evident in the 1915 woodcut Woman’s Head (fig. 24) with its broad, flat planes of vibrant black shapes, horizontal hatching, and angular features. After having completed nearly two-thirds of the 105 lithographs he would produce during his artistic career by 1909, the woodcut became Schmidt-Rottluff’s medium of choice.  

The large planes of color Schmidt-Rottluff employed in his lithographs transform themselves in his woodcuts to richly gouged areas of printed shapes that serve to build geometric masses of forms. This is evident in Schmidt-Rottluff’s use of simple, rectangular planes to emphasize the starkness of the women’s black robes and the S-shaped shoreline in his Mourning Women by the Sea (fig. 25) of 1914. Similar to his fellow Brücke members, Schmidt-Rottluff relished the hand-crafted nature of the woodcut medium and emphasized the graininess of the block. Writing on the artistic aims of the group and their common ground amid variety, Schmidt-Rottluff best defined his own artistic principles. “For myself,” he wrote, “I know that I have no program, only the inexplicable longing to grasp what I see and feel, and to find the purest expression for it.” His simplified geometric rendering of forms produced both directness and intensity that tied his compositions to the spirit of the Brücke.

Erich Heckel (1883-1970)

Erich Heckel was born on July 31st, 1883, in Döbeln, Saxony, near Chemnitz, the son of a railroad construction engineer. In 1901, he befriended Schmidt-Rottluff while

70 Ibid.
71 Kunst und Künstler 12 (1914): n.p.; response to the journal’s questionnaire concerning a new program for art; as quoted in Robison, 69.
attending grammar school in Chemnitz. The friends were active in the school debate club, Vulcan, where they were introduced to the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. As a young man, Heckel was interested in drawing, painting, and poetry. In 1904, he entered the Technical School in Dresden where he met fellow founding members of the Brücke, Kirchner and Bleyl.72

Under the auspices of the Brücke, Heckel’s style became increasingly angular and geometric, a direction that Mueller’s style would also take in the 1920s. This angularity was akin to the types of effects easily achievable with woodcutting, and, therefore, it seems natural that Heckel was particularly proficient at woodcuts. Heckel also experimented with various graphic effects, initially adopting similar uses of shadow and pattern in his woodcuts as Kirchner did, but also applying irregularly-shaped blocks to emphasize his subjects, as in his 1912 arcadian landscape, Two Seated Women (fig. 26). In this example, the shape of the block in the upper right-hand corner echoes the shape of the distant mountains framing the scene of the women seated in the foreground. Again, in a 1911 woodcut entitled Standing Woman (fig. 27), the rectangular plank widens down the length of the block as if mimicking the shape of the female nude’s body as it widens at the hips. As Heckel’s style became more crystalline and angular, the artist all but gave up his use of the etching plate in favor of drypoint for his intaglio prints. The scratchy sharpened lines of drypoint served to create more light and space with lots of white area left unprinted, while capturing a sense of movement in the reaching, pointed forms.73

Some of Heckel’s most successful prints depict a young model known as Fränzi. These works are representative of the Brücke’s studio life and emblematic of their most

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73 Robison, 63.
prevalent subject, the female nude. Fränzi was a favorite model of the Brücke members, particularly Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Heckel, Pechstein, and Mueller. The artists delighted in exaggerating her facial features (in the manner of so-called “primitive” art) and her awkward, lanky teenage limbs. As a result, she was a constant presence in the artists’ Dresden studio, symptomatic of the Brücke’s fondness for combining art and life. Fränzi is frequently seen posing languidly, completely at ease with both her nudity and her surroundings, unashamedly displaying her body, as in the woodcut Fränzi Reclining of 1910 (fig. 28).74 Jill Lloyd has observed that the Brücke artists’ exploitation of child sexuality in this manner was yet another source of rebellion against contemporary mores. She refers to their depictions of twelve-year-old Fränzi and her younger sister Marzella as “part of the bohemian attack on bourgeois morality.”75

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74 Fränzi was born Lina Franziska Fehrmann in Dresden on October 11th 1900. She was the daughter of a machinist and a milliner, one of fifteen children. Both Fränzi and her younger sister, Marzella (the youngest of the fifteen children), were favorite models, and arguably, the most important child models of the Brücke artists. They appear most frequently in works by Kirchner, Pechstein, and Heckel, dating from 1909 to 1910. These artists often depicted the girls with shy, skeptical expressions, and in unposed nude scenes. They were presented at once as childlike and vulnerable as well as exotic Lolitas. The sisters are difficult to tell apart in many works, as they were both slender with long dark hair. While the exact date and circumstances of the group’s acquaintance with the girls has been left to speculation, Fränzi began modeling earlier than her sister (Marzella began appearing in the group’s compositions in the spring of 1910). Fränzi was discovered by the caretaker at the Dresden Akademie who arranged her first modeling assignments (exact date unknown). In 1926, Fränzi was known to have two illegitimate children. On his last visit to see Fränzi in Dresden on February 12th of that same year, Kirchner noted in a sketchbook, “Fränzi herself is very sad and gloomy because of her misfortune with the children. Her youthful memories, of Moritzburg, etc., are the happiest part of her life.” In 1931, she married a printer by the name of Alfred Fleischer, but the marriage was not to last. They divorced in 1948. Fränzi died just two years later, aged forty-nine. Little is known of Marzella’s later life. See Johanna Brade, “Fränzi and Marzella Fehrmann,” trans. by Karen Goulding, Dictionary of Artists’ Models, Berk Jiminez, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 187-9.

75 Lloyd, German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity, 38.
The Brücke artists’ frequent depictions of the nude form pay homage to a lengthy and ongoing tradition in Western European art, particularly in the precedent of Lucas Cranach, whom they greatly admired. The group members’ nude bathing imagery and practice was further molded by a culture that emphasized the organic, spiritually associated principle of frequent nudity in nature as a means of promoting physical and mental health, social equality, and cultivation of the spirit in order to help combat the effects of a modern urban lifestyle. In 1903, the Dresden-based publicist and naturalist Heinrich Pudor first coined the term *Nacktkultur*, or “culture of nakedness.” The term was descriptive of this ideological principle that had gained metaphysical status in Germany and Europe beginning in the 1890s. The Brücke artists shared *Nacktkultur*’s assessment of the naked human form as revelatory of intrinsic truths, freedom and equality, and modern health, but were also intrigued by the idea of living freely in a “primitive” paradise of their own making. Frequent trips to lakeside resorts or wooded areas were intended to allow their models to be free to “frolic” in the natural beauty of the environment, unimpeded by sexual inhibitions and societal norms. A favorite pond, the Dippelsdorfer Teich, located near the Moritzburg castle, provided a secluded spot in which the artists and their models formed a temporary “primitive” lifestyle community where they sketched, painted, bathed, rested, and played sports. In 1918 Schiefler wrote of these forays:

> For many months they settled with numerous models at one of the ponds in the environs of Dresden and spent days there, as much as the climate permitted, naked in the open air . . . . What Gauguin had sought in the South Seas they produced for themselves in immediate proximity to the metropolis. The sketches they made there in endless

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77 Ibid., 30-31.
number are the documents of this original experiment, and since everything that the artists learned in previous years came to fruition in them, we find artistic achievements of a high order.\textsuperscript{78}

This fusion of nature with the Brücke’s construction of a “primitive” ideal is manifested in Heckel’s woodcut \textit{Ballplayers} of 1912 (fig. 29), where numerous nude figures are depicted out-of-doors in a variety of activities—playing ball, swimming, and lounging. These regular excursions to the Moritzburg ponds, as well as to the North and Baltic Seas, therefore, were a central component to Brücke art.

\textbf{Hermann Max Pechstein (1881-1955)}

Max Pechstein also reveled in the qualities of the graphic arts, evident in the stray lines that crisscross his drypoints and etchings, the apparent deliberate pitting of the plates, and the outline of the lithographic stone as seen in works such as \textit{Portrait of Erich Heckel} of 1908 (fig. 30). Pechstein received a formal academic education, including drawing lessons as a child, an apprenticeship with a local painter, and further artistic training in Dresden. He attended the \textit{Kunstgewerbeschule} (School of Arts and Crafts) and then the \textit{Akademie der Bildenden Künste} (Academy of Fine Arts). Although he was familiar with early German art and the French Post-Impressionists, by the time he befriended Heckel in 1906, his work had become more expressive and spontaneous in nature.\textsuperscript{79}

Heckel encouraged this line of creativity and invited Pechstein to join the Brücke that same year. After graduating from the academy in 1906, Pechstein spent the


\textsuperscript{79} Robison, 60.
following year studying and traveling throughout Europe on a scholarship. In Paris, he became personally acquainted with Kees van Dongen, the colorful expressionism of Henri Matisse and the Fauves, and tribal art, while in Italy he indulged his interest in early Renaissance painting and Etruscan art.\textsuperscript{80} Of all the Brücke artists, Pechstein’s work has the strongest affiliations with Fauvism, possibly allowing for his style to be more easily palatable in Germany due to the international popularity of French art at this time. Much like the Fauve artists, Pechstein made liberal use of a rich palette, solid masses of vivid color, and more naturalistic figures emphasized with heavy black outlines, as in his c. 1910 painting \textit{Young Woman with Red Fan} (fig. 31). In addition, the spontaneity of movement and freedom evoked by sexual liberation in his 1912 lithographic composition of bathers dancing in a landscape, \textit{The Dance—Dancers and Bathers in a Forest Pond} (fig. 32), is a direct response to Matisse’s own color lithograph of the same subject entitled \textit{The Dance}, also of 1912 (fig. 33). However, of all the Fauve artists, Van Dongen’s copious use of radiant, glowing colors appealed most to Pechstein (as demonstrated in Pechstein’s 1911 painting \textit{Landscape in Nidden} [fig. 34]).\textsuperscript{81} Color, Pechstein proclaimed, was the central emotive force in art. This declaration led him to denounce Impressionism, for its direct translation of color from nature (or, lack of imaginative color), and Cubism, for its cursory use of color.\textsuperscript{82}

Pechstein’s subjects were characteristic of the Brücke’s interest in nudes, landscapes, portraits, and everyday life. \textit{The Dance} demonstrates Pechstein’s fondness

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Pechstein was the impetus behind the Brücke’s invitation for membership extended to Kees van Dongen in 1908. The latter accepted, but only retained his membership for a brief one-year period. In 1909, the artists of the Brücke renewed their efforts to recruit Munch to their cause without success. They were equally unsuccessful in their attempt to engage Matisse in their efforts that year.
\textsuperscript{82} Rose-Carol Washton-Long, ed., \textit{German Expressionism}, 33-4.
for capturing the fleeting motion and *joie de vivre* of dance commonly shared by the Brücke artists. A 1914 trip to the Palau Islands in the South Seas also spurred a series of works capturing the tribal life and peoples of the Pacific Islands. Pechstein’s prints during his Brücke years (1906-1912) are exemplary of the influence of the collaborative nature of this young group of artists. Heavy applications of ink, mottled colors, and compositions printed on yellow paper, for example, are most likely indicative of Kirchner’s influence.83

**Emil Nolde (1867-1956)**

The eldest member of the Brücke, Nolde was born Emil Hansen in the village of Nolde in Northern Germany. Hansen being a very common name among peoples of Danish descent, Emil assumed the more distinctive moniker of his hometown as his artist’s name in 1902. The son of a farmer who had no desire to continue in his father’s stead, Emil Nolde apprenticed as a woodcarver in a furniture factory before turning his attention to the study of drawing and painting at the age of thirty. Eager to pursue a career as an artist, he secured a position teaching drawing classes at the Museum of Art and Industry in St. Gallen, Switzerland, in 1892. The financial earnings from a successful venture creating novelty postcards illustrating personified Alpine peaks, like *The Matterhorn Smiles* of 1897 (fig. 36), allowed the artist to spend the next three years

83 Kirchner was fond of using bright, yellow wove paper for the startling contrast created between the inky black lines of the composition, and the unprinted colored areas of the support (see fig. 35). Today, Kirchner’s yellow paper prints are considered quite valuable as not many impressions have survived.
(1898 to 1901) traveling throughout Munich, Paris, and Switzerland in order to educate himself visually.\textsuperscript{84}

Around the same time he achieved his premier exhibition at the Galerie Arnold eliciting the admiration of the young Brücke members, Nolde began making significant prints. Attracted by the various effects achievable in printmaking, and, unlike Kirchner who would unabashedly combine etching techniques on a lithographic stone or introduce acid to colored ink, Nolde appreciated the unique possibilities inherent to each medium. He emphasized the subtle range of gray tonalities and various textures achievable in an etching, the stark contrasts of black and white produced by the woodcut technique, and the draughtsman’s free expressiveness combined with the luminosity of color in a lithograph. In the tradition of Francisco Goya, Nolde developed the habit of conceiving and executing his images with the tip of a broad point brush, his customary drawing tool. This practice unites all three of his mediums, in that he used a brush to draw his images directly onto the lithographic stone, the etching plate, and even the woodblock, while rarely using the aid of preparatory drawings. For this reason, Nolde’s images are often rendered as masses of tone and texture, rather than through conventional line and contours.\textsuperscript{85} As seen in his 1911 lithograph \textit{Man in a Top Hat I} (fig. 37), or his \textit{Somber Head of a Man} of 1907 (fig. 38), this approach lends Nolde’s subjects a sense of immediacy and spontaneity, as well as a formless, fluid sensitivity from which the details of the subject must be patiently studied and subtly absorbed.

In his intaglio prints, Nolde frequently experimented with producing images of subtle tonal effects, rather than of etched line.\textsuperscript{86} The artist’s 1910 etching entitled \textit{Steamer—large, dark} (fig. 39) illustrates these delicate effects. Here, the suggestion of a ship with billows of steam following in its wake on rough, stormy seas is indicated by dark tonal masses, while waves, clouds, and streams of rain are produced through variations of gray tones, various textures of the etching needle and the draftsman’s brush, and through the unprinted whiteness of the paper. Similarly, intaglio prints such as his 1908 \textit{Diagonal Nude} (fig. 40) demonstrate the textural effects Nolde was so proficient in achieving. The animated broken darker tones surrounding the nude form of the model—perhaps manipulated while the ground was still tacky—give an impression that the woman is lying in a patch of lush grass or in the shallow rush of the surf. Once again, Nolde used the white of the support to indicate the mass of the woman’s body, while short, sketchy lines provide nominal details. This sketch-like directness conformed to the artist’s conviction that his prints should never appear labored, but rather retain a sense of spontaneity.\textsuperscript{87}

Nolde’s dedication to spontaneity allowed him to be open to the possibilities and stimulation that often came through accidental happenings in printmaking. The printing of the organic patterns of woodgrain or the knots in a plank of wood provided creative inspiration for his woodcuts, while improvisational and experimental color combinations became a hallmark of his lithographs. As a result, Nolde’s prints often developed through many states and variations since the muse of sheer accident provided

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 17.
the artist with the prospect of achieving a veritable plethora of desirable effects. On this he stated:

> The art of an artist must be his own art. It is . . . always a continuous chain of little inventions, little technical discoveries of one’s own, in one’s relation to the tool, the material and the colors. What he himself discovers has a real worth for him, and gives him the necessary incitement to work.\(^8^9\)

Nolde’s color lithograph, *Young Couple*, of 1913 (fig. 41) is an extreme example of the artist’s fascination with experimentation and color. Gustav Schiefler, the Hamburg-based art patron and collector who undertook the arduous task of cataloguing Nolde’s prints and chronicling their various states, records 121 impressions of this image printed in sixty-nine different variations.\(^9^0\) Many of these impressions are unique, while others are represented by only two or three examples. However, no more than eight impressions were printed of a single version.\(^9^1\) Furthermore, Nolde believed that the work of art was made complete in the viewer’s response. In essence, he allowed for many of these “happy accidents” to remain a feature in his work so that the viewer might be able to “re-create” the artist’s experience in making it. In this way, the artist and his audience could share in the fulfillment of his expressionistic vision.\(^9^2\)

Nolde was a colorist by nature, if not by necessity; as early as 1901, he began suffering from sensitivity of the eyes. Harsh black and white contrasts in reading,

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writing, and even printmaking were painful to him. Although vibrant color was a soothing balm to his eyes, Nolde also greatly appreciated the optical vibrations that a black-and-white woodcut could render, as seen in *The Prophet* (fig. 42) of 1912, or the “recreation” that would occur in a dark tonal lithographic image as it is closely examined for details (see figures 37 and 38). The artist explained, “I love color and yet, it isn’t everything—an Assyrian relief, a brownish-black Rembrandt drawing is equally electrifying.”

**Otto Mueller (1874-1930)**

Otto Mueller also came to the Brücke as an older artist with the foundation of his artistic persona already well laid. Early on, Mueller had trained as a lithographer (1890 to 1892), before spending two years studying at the Kunstakademie in Dresden from 1894 to 1896. In 1898, he left Dresden for Munich to continue his studies at the München Akademie, but he abruptly abandoned his formal training when he was denied matriculation. Thereafter, Mueller spent the next decade painting alone in Southern Germany. He began making prints in 1895, long before his interaction with the Brücke which began in 1910. True to the artist’s early training, of the 172 prints that encompass Mueller’s printmaking oeuvre, the majority are lithographs. Love of the female figure

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93 Ibid., 15.
and gypsies is prevalent in Mueller’s prints, although he also explored other themes, such as landscape and portraiture.\textsuperscript{96}

In 1908, Mueller moved to Berlin, where he met members of the Brücke at a joint exhibition of the Neue Secession. Mueller joined the Brücke after the years of their initial, significant communal development, and therefore, his prints remained stylistically distinct from theirs. In fact, few works from his Brücke period (1910-1912) survive, although those that do reflect Mueller’s similar interest in subject matter with his Brücke colleagues, such as portrayals of bathers and the nude in nature. One example of this is the c. 1912 lithograph, \textit{Two Female Nudes Sitting on a Couch} (fig. 43), which depicts two women sitting casually in the nude framed by mountain scenery in the background. Harmony between humans and nature, simplicity, and direct rendering of images connected the older artist’s work to the aesthetics of the younger Brücke artists, with whom he remained affiliated until the group’s dissolution in 1913.\textsuperscript{97}

Mueller created only six woodcuts during his artistic career, and he undoubtedly made those contributions in response to the strong enthusiasm for the woodcut medium among the younger members of the Brücke. Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Pechstein, and Heckel were roughly contemporaries in age and shared the artistic benefits of an early association in the communal environment of the Brücke. This association proved to be pivotal to their early artistic development in a way that could not be similarly shared by the older, more established artistic personalities of Nolde and Mueller, for example. Thus, the creative zest that the younger members experienced along with the introduction

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{96} Wolf Dieter Dube, \textit{Expressionism} (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 89.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Bessie Tina Yarborough, “Otto Mueller,” \textit{Brücke: German Expressionist Prints from the Granvil and Marcia Specks Collection}, 150.
\end{itemize}
of the woodcut medium to the group made less of an impact on Mueller, who had already found his niche with lithography, or on Nolde, who was already familiar with the craft.

THE SUCCESS AND DEMISE OF THE BRÜCKE IN GERMANY

Like other contemporary artists at this time, the Brücke members actively sought an audience and patronage for their particular brand of art. As a communal effort, the group members decided to distribute their graphic output in the form of portfolios, a marketing technique often employed by art dealers, as well.98 In 1906, the first Brücke graphics portfolio was issued including prints by Kirchner, Bleyl, and Heckel.99 The decision to circulate their art in graphic portfolios suggests a strategic choice in that prints are easily distributed due to their multiplicity, while the issuance of print portfolios may have prompted greater enthusiasm by collectors who wished to accumulate complete sets of their work. This effort most likely appealed to the Brücke artists as an effective marketing technique which may have been observed in the precedents of printmakers they greatly admired or carefully observed. Goya, Honoré Daumier, Gauguin, and Max Klinger, for example, also printed many of their works either in series of multiples, or as portfolios.

In order to ensure the success and longevity of their work, and recognizing the need to extend the scope of their audience and patrons beyond their immediate family and acquaintances, the group invited “passive members” to join their cause. Passive members began to enroll in the Brücke’s membership in conjunction with the publication of the

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group’s first print portfolio. These individual patrons paid an annual contribution of
twelve Marks (DEM) in return for the continued gift of an annual portfolio of prints by
the Brücke artists. The number of passive members increased incrementally over the
next few years: in 1907, twenty-two passive members were counted; in 1908, the number
rose to forty-eight; in 1909, there were fifty-five members; in 1910, sixty-eight members;
and eventually, in 1914, approximately seventy-five passive members, the highest
number on record, were included in the Brücke’s membership roster. Passive members
provided financial security and guaranteed at least some distribution of the Brücke’s
artwork throughout Germany.\footnote{Price, \textit{Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin}, 215-9.}

In their admiration and emulation of artistic talents such as Van Gogh and Munch,
the Brücke artists garnered the attention of notable collectors and art dealers who favored
the works of the aforementioned artists. The critic and print collector Gustav Schiefler, a
friend and supporter of Munch’s as well as a collector of Van Gogh’s work, became a
sustaining Brücke supporter. This came about through the group’s “introduction” to the
patron via Schmidt-Rottluff’s incessant letters to Munch inviting the older artist to exhibit
with the Brücke or to join their ranks. Schiefler’s home in Hamburg often served as a
meeting place for artists and intellectuals, including Munch. In this context, Kirchner and
Schmidt-Rottluff stayed as guests in his home in 1907. An ardent advocate of
Expressionism, Schiefler subsequently wrote catalogues on the graphic works of Munch,
Nolde, and Kirchner.\footnote{See Gustav Schiefler, \textit{Edvard Munchs graphische Kunst} (Dresden: E. Arnold, 1923); 
\textit{Ibid., Emil Nolde, das graphische Werk}; and \textit{Ibid., Die Graphik Ernst Ludwig Kirchners} (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Euphorion Verlag, 1926-31).} Likewise, the Hamburg-based art historian and art collector
Rosa Schapire was also a supporter of the Brücke, especially appreciating Schmidt-
Rottluff’s graphic art. She was a life-long friend of the artist and one of his closest confidantes. In 1924, Schapire published a catalogue of his prints, *Karl Schmidt-Rottluff’s graphisches Werk bis 1923.* Meanwhile, the Brücke artists were also promoted by prominent art dealers, such as Ernst Cassirer, Ludwig Schames, and Fritz Gurlitt active in major metropolises such as Berlin, Munich, and Dresden, who not only advocated for contemporary German art and modern French art in general, but were fervent supporters of the Expressionist movement in Germany.

Eventually, the Brücke members conceded the necessity to limit their isolation from other artist groups and exhibiting societies. They reconciled with other local artist organizations such as the *Sonderbund Westdeutscher Kunstfreunde* (Society of Northwest German Artists) and the *Künstler in Düsseldorf* (Association of Düsseldorf Artists), as well as with the local *Kunstvereine.* These associations not only provided additional exhibition opportunities beyond the group shows that the Brücke had previously staged on their own, but also inspired the artists involved to launch an ambitious series of traveling exhibitions unmatched in number by other avant-garde artists’ organizations at the time. This active promotion and exhibition of their work accounted for further dissemination and recognition of Brücke artwork throughout Germany and Europe.

Following German exhibitions held in conjunction with the Blaue Reiter artists in 1910,

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104 The role of art dealers in the promotion and advocacy of the Brücke artists and Expressionism will be further addressed in subsequent chapters.
as well as the French Fauves in 1911, the Brücke artists began garnering significant recognition as a vital part of the overall German Expressionist movement.\footnote{During this period, French modernism was centered on Cubism and Fauvism, while German modernism began to be considered as a more international happening; thus, the term “expressionism” began to be used primarily in relation to the German art movement. Washton-Long, “Brücke and German Expressionism: Reception Reconsidered,” \textit{Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913}, 80.}

But with recognition came critique, as well. Aesthetically cautious critics fiercely criticized the Brücke artists for what they termed “un-German” sources in their work, especially those resulting in non-naturalistic colors and formlessness in their compositions. Wilhelm Worringer, the German art critic and early advocate of Expressionism, rebutted these arguments in his 1911 essay “The Historical Development of Modern Art.”\footnote{Wilhelm Worringer, “The Historical Development of Modern Art” (1911), in Washton-Long, \textit{German Expressionism}, 9-13.} In his written account, Worringer defended both German Expressionists and the French innovators, while reminding those who decried Germany’s avant-garde movement that German art had long benefited from interactions with international sources. As if to echo Worringer’s sentiment, the Cologne Sonderbund presented a survey exhibition of Expressionism in 1912, emphasizing the movement’s international tendencies and including artists from all parts of Europe, such as Munch, Picasso, Cuno Amiet, Egon Schiele, the Brücke artists, the Blaue Reiter group, and representatives of the French Post-Impressionists (Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin). Kirchner and Heckel acquired further acknowledgement by being chosen to design the interior decoration for a chapel on display at the 1912 Sonderbund exhibition. Kirchner referred to their design for the chapel as “modern Gothic,” and he again gave primary
credit for its inspiration to those German masters whom the Brücke artists revered in the 1913 publication of *Chronik der Brücke*.\(^{108}\)

The Brücke artists’ values as a communal group, however, were soon challenged following the members’ move to Berlin in 1911. Ambition and hopes for further success spurred the Brücke artists’ move to Berlin, a very different city than Dresden. As the governmental seat of the German republic, Berlin’s population had grown to include more than two million inhabitants since the German unification of 1871, equaling nearly four times the population of Dresden. The ever-growing metropolis had emerged as one of Europe’s most modern industrialized urban centers by the 1890s. Berlin’s art scene was also booming. The opening of numerous art galleries in the capital fueled the German art market and young, emerging artists flocked there in order to take advantage of these intimate exhibition spaces. Berlin had become the country’s new artistic center.\(^{109}\)

For the Brücke artists, the experience of having individual studios, an enlarging circle of acquaintances, as well as the influence of new international art movements such as Cubism and Futurism that were prevalent in many of Germany’s large cities, ultimately led to discord and disunity in the Brücke’s previous shared goals. The seventh and final Brücke print portfolio was devoted to the works of Pechstein, with a cover by Mueller, and was distributed to the passive members only through special order. Since 1910, Pechstein had served as President of the Neue Secession after his work and numerous other young artists’ work were refused admission in the Berliner Secession’s


annual exhibit. The rejected artists had congregated to form the Neue Secession in protest of what they deemed “conservative” censorship of their art. The other Brücke members also became members of the Neue Secession on arriving in Berlin. However, instability and differences of opinion among the Neue Secession’s board of governors led to Pechstein’s failure to be re-elected to the board in 1911. In an act of solidarity, the Brücke artists resigned from the organization as a group. Then in 1912, Pechstein alone agreed to exhibit with the Berliner Secession, thereby breaking the Brücke’s vow never to exhibit except as a unified group. Pechstein’s ever changing opinion of the various secessions is indicative of the state of flux the German art world continued to experience. Pechstein was subsequently expelled from the Brücke, and his works were promptly removed from the group exhibition then traveling to Frankfurt and Hamburg.\(^{110}\)

Kirchner wrote the self-history *Chronik der Brücke* in the hopes that it would act as a unifying force among the increasingly distanced group members, particularly after the expulsion of Pechstein in 1912. It was this very publication, however, that caused greater discord and fractured what little unity remained amongst the Brücke artists. In reality, the Brücke organization had already served its purpose: the artists had developed their own individual styles within a communal environment and had garnered budding recognition and support of their efforts through the group’s exhibitions and the strategic decisions described above in order to advance their cause. By the time the *Chronik* was issued, individual stylistic differences had already begun to disrupt the unified stance that had held them together for so many years, but tempers flared even further over Kirchner’s treatment of the group’s history. Kirchner’s omission of any real recognition of the influence of international modernism and emphasis on the Germanic roots of their

brand of Expressionism contradicted prototypes the other members were only too ready to acknowledge. Likewise, the “fudging” of dates in order to claim artistic precedence provided an incorrect account of the group’s actual history. The text of the chronicle asserted the group’s faith in the future and suggested that, by working together, the Brücke would create a new German art. His fellow artists, however, took issue with the tone of Kirchner’s chronicle which implied a formal artistic program, and denounced it as self-serving and misdirected. In 1913, the Brücke members agreed to dissolve their nine-year alliance.\footnote{Washton-Long, German Expressionism, 22-3.}

By the time they disbanded, the Brücke had, however, made their impact on modern German art and had firmly established their place within the greater context of the Expressionist movement. One German art critic was prompted in 1920 to quip on the inflated esteem of the Brücke’s art within Germany, “Now it’s all Heckling and Kirchnering from every wall!”\footnote{Quoted in Norbert Wolf, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1880-1938: On the Edge of the Abyss of Time (Cologne: Taschen, 2003), 7.} The 1914 publication of Paul Fechter’s \textit{Der Expressionismus} signified the first book-length treatment on the subject of Expressionism. Fechter designated two separate poles within the movement: “extensive Expressionism” (Expressionism that references nature in order to evoke a higher spiritual state) and “intensive Expressionism” (the renunciation of nature in order to reach a transcendental state).

At this point, a direct comparison of these two styles of Expressionism is beneficial. A color woodcut by Kandinsky entitled \textit{Sounds: Boat Trip} of 1911 (fig. 44), for example, is depicted in the emotionally-charged, non-objective manner that would become the hallmark of Kandinsky’s signature style. The forms of boats and the
suggestion of landscape in the distance are discernible upon closer inspection. Kandinsky was convinced that colors and shapes produce specific “sounds” that are interpreted within the viewer’s “inner mind” as internal spiritual responses. In this image, the juxtaposition of black and white tones, reds and blues, and contrasts of shapes are intended to produce such a response in the viewer. These experiences were intended to be similar to the way music inspires an emotional response from the ear to the subconscious. In contrast, a woodcut of similar subject matter made just four years prior to Kandinsky’s *Boat Trip* by Kirchner entitled *Sailboat* (fig. 45) depicts a small sailboat with nothing but water and sky visibly enveloping it. The lack of a shoreline does nothing to take away from the scene as the artist has managed to capture the frenetic churning of the waves surrounding the boat as it progresses through the water with a sense of movement inherent in both the sailboat itself and the angular clouds depicted above. Where Kandinsky’s lines are solid and deliberately placed, Kirchner’s lines appear as quickly wrought slashes in the wood and bear the mark of the matrix. The grainy texture of the wood itself and incidental ink smudges and spots are stubbornly left to be printed. Where Kandinsky’s print speaks of a new spiritually-grounded, non-objective artistic avant-garde, Kirchner’s print revels in the traditional printmaking technique of the woodcut, the primitive and raw aspect of its execution, and a sense of a renewed Germanic cultural heritage.

While Fechter put forward Kandinsky as the forerunner of “intensive Expressionism,” he promoted Pechstein as the foremost leading figure of “extensive Expressionism.”\(^\text{113}\) This preference toward Pechstein was an additional source of

disharmony early on among the Brücke members after they had settled in Berlin. Pechstein, having moved to the city in 1908 (with frequent trips to Dresden to visit his Brücke colleagues), was well ahead of his fellow members in establishing contacts within the art world, and had enjoyed a number of sales of his artwork from exhibiting with the Neue Secession. While he was able to offer some aid to his colleagues in launching their careers in Berlin, his prior experience in the metropolis meant that he was also a more influential figure there than were the other Brücke members. For this reason, he was invited to exhibit in group shows and solo exhibitions more frequently than they. Pechstein’s name was, likewise, mentioned more frequently in the press, and he was generally identified as the leader of the new generation of Expressionist artists, as well as of the Brücke group specifically. Pechstein did little to correct these implications, inevitably contributing to the growing disunity between the friends.\(^{114}\)

Art historian Rose-Carol Washton-Long points out that Fechter’s two-part division of the movement became the likely impetus behind mid-century critics’ preferential treatment of the more abstract branch of Expressionism (for example, the art of the Blaue Reiter) over the figurative variant (such as that of the Brücke).\(^{115}\) In spite of this, figurative Expressionism did enjoy a brief period of rejuvenation following the close of the First World War. In 1918, a number of German artists, including former members of the Brücke, joined with radical artists’ groups such as the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Workers’ Council for Art) in support of the newly established socialist Weimar Republic. Pechstein, for example, made posters and brochures for the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Socialist Democratic Party), and encouraged

\(^{114}\) Heller, “Brücke in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913,” 50.
\(^{115}\) Washton-Long, 81.
all artists to support the party during the 1919 constitutional elections. Schmidt-Rottluff aided in designing public housing projects, and encouraged the new government to avoid censorship practices. However, the newly founded Weimar Republic was ill-equipped to contend with the public’s growing frustrations. The government’s mounting failure to bring about institutional change was redirected into public anger toward the artists who had aligned themselves with the government and who had touted art as having the power to bring about a new era.

By 1919, Expressionism was being condemned by even its most eager former supporters. Worringer, who had once exalted Expressionism as key to a new social movement, attacked Expressionism during public lectures in the 1920s for becoming too mainstream. He accused the movement of having collapsed into mere decoration. Other critics, such as Wilhelm Hausenstein, drew blatant and angry parallels between Expressionism and the failures of the new republic. As rampant street fights, poverty, and inflation wrecked havoc among the young republic’s population and multitudes of wounded veterans, left-leaning artists and critics turned away in disgust from both the broken government and the artistic movement that had seemed to support it. To emphasize their denunciation of the movement, many of these same left-leaning artists threw their support behind a new budding movement, Dada. The First International

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117 Dada was an informal artist movement that began in Zürich, Switzerland, during World War I and reached its zenith from 1916 to 1922. The term “dada” is refuted to have numerous origins, including the use of the term as a non-sensical word by the group of Dada artists gathered in Zürich (Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Tristan Tzara, Jean Arp, Marcel Janco, Richard Huelsenbeck, and Sophie Täuber). Dada also refers to a child’s hobby horse in French, or the colloquial French phrase, “C’est mon dada” (“It’s my hobby”). The international movement involved visual arts, literature, poetry, theatre,
Dada Fair was held in a Berlin art gallery in 1920 with an accompanying manifesto that provided fertile ground for international artists to voice opposition to Expressionism. Without distinction between either figurative or abstract Expressionism, the movement as a whole was lambasted as ineffective and superficial.\textsuperscript{118}

While opinions may have continued to fluctuate in regard to Expressionism during the 1920s, the movement was attacked from all sides during the 1930s. Even though Expressionism was no longer considered part of the avant-garde by the mid-1930s, the Marxist theoretician Georg Lukács, influenced by Stalin’s hostility towards modern art and the National Socialist Party’s takeover of Germany in 1933, renewed the attacks on Expressionism. Lukács suggested that its chaotic, formless style was an attempt to hide the true nature of contemporary society. Such a “disguise,” he averred, made Expressionism the ideal tool for fascists seeking to inject subliminal messages. In light of this, Lukács called for a return to classically based naturalism that would be reflective of class struggle and authentic in its depiction of social realities.\textsuperscript{119} Four years later, the critic Alfred Kurella (writing under the pen name Bernhard Ziegler) vindicated Lukács’s prior assertions in a debate that raged in the Moscow-based periodical Das Wort (vol. 2, no. 9 [1937]) that both built upon and exaggerated Lukács’s earlier critique of the

dance, music, and graphic design. Dadaists rejected both Expressionism and prevailing standards of art, creating instead anti-art works such as “non-sense” poetry and non-musical compositions. Dada activities included cabaret performances, anti-war demonstrations, and the publication of art and literary manifestoes. For more on Dada, see Leah Dickerman, ed., Dada: Zurich, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, Paris, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2006).


Expressionist movement. Once again, making no distinction between the two poles of Expressionism that Fechter had previously identified, Kurella contended that the “irrational” and “mystical” components of Expressionism both led to the acceptance of fascism.  

Conversely, the National Socialists, in a retraction of initial support of Expressionism by Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler’s Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, also began to aggressively vilify Expressionism during the mid-1930s, maligning it along with all aspects of modernism and, despite the nationalistic rhetoric of the Brücke, reviving the old canard that Expressionism was “un-German.” Indeed, Robert Scholz, editor of *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* (*The Art of the Third Reich*), the official art journal of the Nazi party, opined that, even though many of the leading artists of the Expressionist movement were Germans, their work was tainted with “racially foreign ideology.”  

The former Brücke artists were featured in the notorious 1937 exhibition *Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)* that toured the country that year. Their paintings and prints were accompanied by demeaning and seditious subtexts written on the gallery walls, such as “German Farmers as Seen by Jews,” and “The Negro Becomes the Racial Ideal of a Degenerate Art.” Museums across Germany were forced to empty their galleries of the “hated” art, and replace it with

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120 Bernhard Ziegler [Alfred Kurella], “Nun is dies Erbe zu ende . . . ,” *Das Wort* 2, No. 9 (1937): 42-9.
122 The 1937 “Entartete Kunst” exhibition will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.
123 Weikop, 122.
government-approved artists who conformed to “wholesome,” “blood and soil,” Nazi “völkisch” ideals.\textsuperscript{124}

After having worked so deliberately to emphasize their Germanic roots and to align their art with iconic German masters such as Dürer and Cranach (artists, ironically, held in the Nazi’s highest esteem), Nolde and Kirchner were especially inflamed at being dubbed “un-German” by the National Socialists. Nolde, a naïve supporter of the Nazis when they first came to power, as well as an anti-Semite, could hardly comprehend why his work was blacklisted. Kirchner, in despair at the confiscation of his works from various museums by the Nazi authorities, sank further into a depression that had already been aggravated by his military service in the First World War.\textsuperscript{125} He escaped to Switzerland in order to seek treatment for mental health problems. The former Brücke members who remained in Germany during Hitler’s reign as Chancellor of the Third Reich were forbidden to continue making art.\textsuperscript{126}

Although written in 1914 before Germany’s crushing defeat in World War I, several decades later Schmidt-Rottluff’s words remained a fitting response to the homeland that had nourished their artistic dreams as youths and rejected them within a matter of years. “I never liked art that was nothing but pretty to the eye,” he wrote, “and

\textsuperscript{124}See Lynn H. Nicholas, \textit{The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War} (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Peter Adam, \textit{Art of the Third Reich} (New York: Abrams, 1992); and Stephanie Barron, et al., “\textit{Degenerate Art:}” \textit{The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany}, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991). The fate of the Brücke’s artwork removed from these museums will be addressed in chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{125}Weikop, 122. See also Neil Levi, “‘Judge for Yourselves!’—The ‘Degenerate Art’ Exhibition as Political Spectacle,” \textit{October} 85 (Summer, 1998): 41-64.

\textsuperscript{126}All the former Brücke members—Schmidt-Rottluff, Nolde, Pechstein, Heckel, and Mueller—remained in Germany during this time, except Kirchner, as previously mentioned.
yet, I realize, elementarily, that one has to find even stronger forms—forms so strong that they withstand . . . such madness of nations.”

II. COMING TO AMERICA: THE BRÜCKE AT THE MODERN, 1924-1955

EARLY RECEPTION AND EXHIBITION OF THE BRÜCKE’S WORK IN THE UNITED STATES, 1918-1932

Chapter two focuses on advocacy of the Brücke artists’ graphic art in New York by German émigrés between the years 1924 and 1955, and their influence on specific supporters of the avant-garde in preserving and collecting the very art that Adolf Hitler deemed “degenerate” in 1937. In doing so, I will examine the role of the Museum of Modern Art as the vehicle by which these efforts were realized with a focus on the years 1924-1955, which represent the height of the museum’s acquisition of Brücke prints. However, to further clarify this story, more general historical background is required.

Infertile Ground

The United States joined the First World War relatively late. Fighting had already raged across Europe for several years prior to American involvement in the war. However, on May 3rd 1917, American troops rendezvoused with British, French, and Russian troops in France to check Germany’s aggression. Popular opinion in the United States had previously been largely opposed to the country’s involvement in the conflict. President Woodrow Wilson, on the other hand, felt differently and rallied the nation to fight. In a January 8th 1918, joint session of Congress, he articulated his vision for a new international order based on democratic principles that, he asserted, would produce a more just and lasting peace at the war’s conclusion. Wilson’s war aims are commonly known as the Fourteen Points. These aims included, among other things, the establishment of new nations to replace the defunct Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman
empires, reductions in armaments, and a league of nations that would serve to resolve future controversies. Wilson's proposal came at a time when many among the American public and the Allies believed that the struggle would be lost; therefore, it was greeted with special yearning both at home and abroad.¹

Meanwhile, within the very first years of war public opinion had turned hostile towards the German-American community. Numerous of its members unwittingly contributed to the growing negative opinion by openly advocating for American assistance to the Central Powers early on in the conflict. Some even opposed American intervention on behalf of the Allied Forces. While most German-Americans became loyal supporters of the allied war effort once the United States was actively involved, the damage to social relations had already compounded.² A public campaign to purge American society of all things German reached a nearly hysterical atmosphere following the United States’ declaration of war on Germany in 1917. During this time and in the years following the war’s conclusion, schools removed German language courses from their curricula, German books were removed from library shelves, German dramas were excluded from the Broadway stage,³ and the Germanic Museum at Harvard University was closed.⁴

² Ibid., 660.
³ Geoffrey Stephen Cahn, Weimar Culture and Society as Seen through American Eyes: Weimar Music—The View from America (PhD diss., St. John's University, 1982), 125.
⁴ “Germanic Museum,” American Art News 19 (26 March 1921): 1. The Germanic Museum at Harvard University was founded in 1903 through the efforts of Kuno Francke, an American citizen of German birth and professor of German literature at Harvard. It was built with funds given by German-born Colonel Adolphus Busch, the St. Louis-based beverage magnate and co-founder of Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company. The museum originally contained only reproduction plaster casts of major Germanic
At the same time, Americans of German descent became an inevitable target of abuse. Germans were habitually fired from war industry jobs in fear that they might “sabotage” the country’s war efforts, while others were forced out of positions entirely unrelated to the war. Karl Muck, the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, for example, was accused of sympathizing with the axis powers for conducting performances of German music and was pressured to tender his resignation. Afterwards, he was arrested under the Alien Enemies Act and interned at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, for the duration of the war. In addition, vigilante groups routinely patrolled immigrant neighborhoods in large cities such as Boston, New York, and Chicago, and subjected sculptural and architectural monuments utilized as teaching resources. Closed during the First World War due to the prevalence of anti-German sentiment at the time, at the war’s end, the Harvard Illustrated Magazine suggested that the university convert the Germanic Museum into a war museum, where trophies, honor rolls, war letters, military equipment, and portraits of fallen American and British soldiers would be displayed. This idea was ultimately abandoned and the museum remained empty for numerous years.

Under the curatorship of Charles L. Kuhn in 1930, the Germanic Museum resumed its commitment to the promotion and exploration of the arts of the German-speaking countries of Central and Northern Europe, a mission that remains relevant to this day. Kuhn expanded the museum’s previous collection to include all forms of media, focusing particularly on art of late medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods, as well as collections of late 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Although a 1935 bulletin from the President and Fellows of Harvard College regarding the Germanic Museum’s collection of modern art states, “Believing that the purpose of studying the past is for understanding the present and building for the future, the Germanic Museum has been developing its collection of contemporary art,” only Nolde’s name is mentioned of the former Brücke members as “worthy of study.” In 1950, the Germanic Museum was renamed the Busch-Reisinger Museum in honor of the St. Louis families who contributed monetary support and artistic donations for the museum’s founding. Today, the museum holds nearly 40,000 original works of art from these founding donors and through purchased acquisitions that range from the seventeenth century to the present, including works by all the major Brücke artists. For more on the Germanic Museum, see “Use for Germanic Museum,” The New York Times, June 13, 1918, n.p.; The President and Fellows of Harvard College, “Modern Art at the Germanic Museum,” Germanic Museum Bulletin 1, No. 1 (November 1935): 3+5; and “The Dedication of Germanic Museum of Harvard University,” German American Annals 2, No. 1 (January 1904): 3-4, 20-5.
Germans to harassment and beatings. While relatively few Americans favored such extremes, many remained wary of their German neighbors.  

Under the weight of the combined strength of the United States and the Allied Powers, Germany accepted an armistice on November 11th 1918. All nations agreed to stop fighting while the terms of the peace were negotiated in Paris. President Wilson arrived to a hero’s welcome at the Paris Peace Conference on December 13th 1918.

Though the war-weary masses of the Continent were eager to greet him, Allied leaders and heads of state were now less prepared to fall in line with Wilson’s international goals or to budge from their nations’ individual demands and interests under the glare of global scrutiny.

In this politically-charged environment, the broad principles espoused in Wilson’s Fourteen Points were not welcomed at the peace negotiations. After six months of tense negotiations, the resultant Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28th 1919 (albeit under German protest). The treaty departed most conspicuously from Wilson’s ideals on the matter of reparations. The Allied leaders were uncompromising in their demand that Germany be required to pay retributions to the Allies for civilian damages and military costs. The final figure, established in 1921, was $56 billion, a sum that far exceeded the severely crippled German economy’s capacity to pay. Additionally, one of the most significant and controversial provisions in the treaty, under the terms of Articles 231-247,

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5 Current, 660.
6 Ibid., 662-3.
8 Ibid., 663.
required Germany to accept sole responsibility for having caused the war (later known as the “War Guilt Clauses”), as well as to assume responsibility for all damages and losses suffered by the Allied and Associate governments as a consequence of the war. A series of various other economic and territorial penalties (including the mandatory disarmament of the German state), combined with the devastating cost of the reparations, intended to keep Germany not only weak, but also prostrate for an indefinite period. Never again, the Allied leaders avowed, should Germany be allowed to become powerful enough to threaten the peace of Europe.

Exchange of cultural relations between Germany and America had also been impaired by the fighting. During the war years, German art rarely left its homeland or entered into the United States. As a result, art audiences here were unfamiliar with recent modernist tendencies in Germany. Beginning around 1920, the column “Berlin Letter” written by Flora Turkel (later the wife of art historian Max Deri) in the periodical American Art News became an important vehicle for informing the American art scene about the state of German art. Although anti-German sentiment remained prevalent in United States society after the war, the regular appearance of Turkel’s column attests to the gradual return of interest in German art by American art enthusiasts. Reporting from Berlin, Turkel provided updates on the currents of contemporary German art and the newly established Weimar Republic’s administration of cultural affairs. She noted that there were some German artists who enjoyed great renown in Germany, but were less

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well known outside her borders. These included the Brücke members. In 1921 Turkel wrote, “When there are again normal relations between America and Germany, the following names of artists will probably find interest in the States: Nolde, Kirchner, Heckel, Pechstein, and Schmidt-Rottluff.”

William R. Valentiner’s Introduction to German Expressionist Art

While interest from an American audience was initially slow to come, the Brücke did find an advocate in the United States in Dr. William R. Valentiner (1880-1958). A fervent defender of German Expressionist art, Valentiner was largely responsible for its introduction to the American public. William Valentiner came from a family of museum professionals. His father was the director of the astronomical observatory and professor of astronomy at the university in Heidelberg. His mother was the daughter of Carl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884), curator of Egyptology at the Berlin Museum. Valentiner attended the Gymnasium in Eisenberg before entering the university in Leipzig. He became interested in the Flemish “primitives” after visiting a 1902 exhibition on Netherlandish art in Brussels; however, it was only as a graduate student at Heidelberg that he committed to an academic career in art history after taking courses with Michelangelo scholar Henry Thode. Because Thode was not an advocate of modern art movements such as Impressionism or Jugendstil, Valentiner took courses in modern art under art historian Carl Neumann, who instilled in him a keen appreciation for such work. Through Thode, Valentiner was introduced to Rembrandt scholar Cornelius

10 Penny Joy Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates: Factors Influencing the Introduction of Modern German Art from Germany to New York City, 1912-33: Major Promoters and Exhibitions (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1990), 81.
Hofstede de Groot, a visiting professor at Heidelberg. Under De Groot’s tutelage, Valentiner wrote his dissertation on Rembrandt, *Rembrandt und seine Umgebung* (1904). Its publication brought him to the attention of Renaissance art scholar and Prussian Museum Director General Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929), who hired Valentiner in 1906 as his personal assistant at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.\(^\text{12}\) Bode prepared Valentiner for a career in art museum administration by assuring that he gained practical work experience in all the departments.\(^\text{13}\)

By the time Valentiner immigrated to the United States in 1908, he was a well-seasoned veteran of the museum profession.\(^\text{14}\) His biographer, Margaret Sterne, notes that Valentiner had become restless in the small, cramped museums of Berlin, and was constantly dismayed by the pittance of his salary.\(^\text{15}\) He was more than eager for a fresh start and an easier life when offered a position as curator of decorative arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1907. In this position, Valentiner regularly traveled on buying excursions to Europe on the museum’s behalf. Though rumors of the impending war had reached American shores by the summer of 1914, the eager curator pressed forward with his plans for such an excursion to Germany, trusting in the judgment of an American banker friend who had declared that, because Russia was

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\(^\text{14}\) Valentiner’s professional skills were later instrumental in enhancing the prestige and diversification of the collections of notable American museums through his directorships at the Detroit Institute of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the North Carolina Museum of Art.

\(^\text{15}\) Sterne, 86.
bankrupt, there could be and would be no war. Valentiner arrived in Bremen, Germany, on July 24th 1914. One week later, war broke out.\textsuperscript{16}

Like many Germans that summer, Valentiner experienced a wave of patriotic sentiment and immediately tried to enlist in the German army. However, unable to board the cramped trains to Berlin, which were full of enthusiastic young men eager to enlist, Valentiner was forced to remain several days in the elegant Munich hotel where he had been staying. While his American travel companions urged him to abandon his pursuit and return to the United States, Valentiner spent the following days wandering between military offices and barracks, waiting in line for hours, only to be told that the military had no use for a middle-aged art museum curator. However, Valentiner’s persistence eventually paid off due to the efforts of a security guard at the \textit{Alte Pinakothek} (Museum of Old Master Paintings) in Munich, who had been drafted as a sergeant-major in the Bavarian Field Artillery. The Sergeant-Major smuggled Valentiner into the barracks and pressed forward his case to serve. Valentiner was accepted into the Bavarian Field Artillery, but his initial surge of optimism and patriotism quickly disintegrated into disillusionment and unhappiness.\textsuperscript{17}

Valentiner’s military service is significant to the history of German Expressionist art in the United States and its collection by the Museum of Modern Art because it was during this period that he became acquainted with the artist Franz Marc. Marc was a founding member of the Munich-based Expressionist group \textit{Der Blaue Reiter} (The Blue

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 111.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 111-2.
Rider).\textsuperscript{18} Other members of Der Blaue Reiter included most prominently the Russian painters Wassily Kandinsky, Alexej von Jawlensky, and Marianne von Werefkin, as well as the German artists August Macke and Gabriele Münter. The group, founded in 1911, had disbanded in 1914 with the encroachment of war. Because of his professional tenure in America during previous years, Valentiner had had almost no contact with such contemporary German artists. He was unfamiliar with Marc’s work or that of the other Der Blaue Reiter artists. However, Valentiner confided in his diary of the uplifting experience that Marc’s friendship provided during those unhappy times and of how touched he was by Marc’s artwork. On August 10\textsuperscript{th}, 1915, he wrote:

Even the worst experiences are not without their compensations; during the officers’ training course I became friends with a painter who already occupied an important place in the world of modern art movements, although I did not know it. He was the Munich artist Franz Marc, a leader of German Expressionism, who, unfortunately, was killed only a few weeks after we had finished our officers’ training. I found a chance to ask him about these artistic endeavors in Germany, the subject of an impassioned conflict for some time before the war . . . . Such deep sensitivity . . . . I never had the opportunity to express to this master how deeply the spirit of his unique art moved me.\textsuperscript{19}

While it was Marc who first aroused Valentiner’s interest in German Expressionism, it was his political associations after the war that undoubtedly cemented the curator’s fervor for the art and its artists. Like other veterans returning home after the


\textsuperscript{19} Sterne, 113-5.
armistice in November 1918, Valentiner found himself angry over the repercussions of the war and wondering what to do. Many artists, intellectuals, and working class citizens in Germany blamed the war and its horrors on the “moral collapse” of the military and the bourgeoisie. Nationalism, idealism, and the military, they felt, had failed the people of Germany. When political and social unrest became imminent, the Kaiser fled to the Netherlands and a provisional president became head of the newly found Weimar Republic (1918-1933).

Despite the escalating violence between blue-collar workers and white-collar “proletarians” in the streets, Valentiner was convinced that the arts had a role to play in creating a democratic Germany. To this end, he helped to establish the *Arbeiterrat für Kunst* (Workers’ Council for Art). The group advocated for the incorporation of art into everyday life for the purpose of changing the world for the better. The council promoted sweeping reforms such as the abolition of all academic institutions and the establishment of a world parliament, along the lines of President Wilson’s proposal to establish a League of Nations, which they greatly admired. Valentiner became chairman of the council and meetings were held in his apartment. His association with this organization is likewise fortuitous to the story of German Expressionism and the Brücke’s acceptance in America, in particular, because it brought him in personal contact with some of the best artists in Germany who he would later champion when he returned to the United States. The former members of the Brücke group who had remained in Germany (Heckel, Schmidt-Rottluff, Nolde, Pechstein, and Mueller) were among those artists

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20 Ibid., 126-7.
whom Valentiner met through the council, and with whom he formed lifelong friendships.

The most pressing concerns of the Workers’ Council for Art concerned the role of artists in relation to society. The council members frequently debated means of establishing artistic relationships with schools, universities, art academies, and other public institutions. Most pressing was the question of how to persuade the masses of the importance of the creative arts, and to expound the need for an education system based in the crafts. Coming from a museum background, Valentiner was also convinced that museums should be involved in the solution to each of these concerns. He composed a long thesis suggesting the reorganization of German museums as educational establishments. He further proposed that the Kaiser’s former private collections be left as a gift to the state, and that a new national museum be established from the combined artistic treasures of the nation. Valentiner recommended that the collections be arranged chronologically for the edification of the people, and as a symbol to other nations that a defeated Germany was still capable of competing on an international scale both conceptually and culturally.²¹ Valentiner’s ideas were met with scorn and the new

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²¹ At the turn of the century, German museums frequently displayed their collections in separate galleries arranged chronologically according to nationality to emphasize the historical development of art in a specific region. This method, however, tended to fragment the visitor’s experience into a series of pleasing encounters that lacked a unified visual history of art. Moreover, this type of display was both costly to produce and maintain, and few museums had enough authentic works from a particular era or country to recreate the historical narrative effectively. Additionally, once arranged, such displays were difficult to change, thus inhibiting a museum’s future growth or reorganization. In the years preceding 1914, most German museum designers abandoned the use of separate galleries in favor of exhibiting a relatively small number of works, typically hung in a single row at eye level. Sufficient space was left around each work to allow optimal viewing, thereby allowing museums to seem brighter and more spacious. With this new
government was unwilling to assist him in creating innovative methodologies for the state’s museums. Numerous German collectors were also furious with the insinuation that they should donate their private collections to the establishment of a national museum, and referred to Valentiner as a communist. Other adversaries accused Valentiner of promoting his own interests. Frustrated and hurt by the backlash from his proposals, Valentiner gave up active participation in politics and looked to reestablish ties in America, where he realized his future lay.\textsuperscript{22}

On October 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1921, Valentiner arrived back in the United States. He immediately returned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he was given a cool reception by his former colleagues.\textsuperscript{23} He was granted a temporary assignment cataloguing the Widener Collection of Old Master art. Valentiner realized that, since bitterness toward the Germans lingered and public knowledge of his service in the visual style of display, art museums were following the lead of influential commercial galleries, such as Paul Cassirer’s gallery in Berlin.

The art critic and novelist Julius Meier-Graefe advocated for more than just an abandonment of strict chronological and national order in art museums; ideally, he argued, art would not be grouped by “nationality, century, or other arbitrary concepts,” but according to the character of the individual works [quoted in Catherine Krahmer, “Tschudi und Meier-Graefe,” in Johann Georg Prinz von Hohenzollern and Peter-Klaus Schuster, eds., Manet bis van Gogh: Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die Moderne (Berlin: Prestel, 1996), 374]. This new formula attacked the very foundations of traditional art history and prompted debate and outrage among more conventional scholars, such as Valentiner, who believed that such a radical rejection of chronological order would mean the loss of national historical narratives of art as it had been understood since the pioneering efforts of art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Valentiner’s fears were not necessarily justified, however. While it was understood by 1900 that history was not the only principle means of organization, most museums continued to employ some kind of chronological arrangement to display their collections, albeit with less emphasis on national patrimony. James J. Sheehan, Museums in the German Art World: From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179-83. See also, Andrew McClellan, The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{22} Sterne, 129-30.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 134-5.
German military remained in the forefront of many people’s minds, he would not be able to rely on old connections and former friends to make his fresh start. At the time, it seemed that America was infertile ground for the reception of German Expressionist art. Gradually, though, past acquaintances did indeed warm to Valentiner again, particularly wealthy art collectors eager to hear about conditions in Germany. One such wealthy supporter was Chester Aldrich, the brother of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Abby was to be instrumental in the founding of the Museum of Modern Art, as well as one of its greatest patrons of Brücke graphic art. Encouraged, Valentiner renewed his determination to introduce German Expressionist art to the American public.

The Brücke’s Debut in America

Throughout his re-establishment in the United States, Valentiner did not forget his artist friends in Germany, or their struggle to maintain a livelihood through their art. He stayed in regular correspondence with many of the Brücke artists, including Heckel, Mueller, Kirchner, and Schmidt-Rottluff. Of the correspondence between him and the latter, no less than forty-one letters remain. After finishing his assignment at the Met, Valentiner began working as an art consultant to private collectors, museums, and galleries. He often accompanied various clients on buying excursions in Europe and attempted to arouse their enthusiasm for Brücke art. On one such trip in 1922, he noted in his diary that he purchased several small works by Schmidt-Rottluff, Heckel, and Nolde for his own private collection in an attempt to “lead by example.” Several of the

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24 Abby Aldrich Rockefeller’s patronage of the Museum of Modern Art and as a print collector will be further explored below.
American visitors who had accompanied him, including the Detroit collector Ralph H. Booth, followed suit, also purchasing works from Nolde and Schmidt-Rottluff. The Brücke artists were grateful for Valentiner’s advocacy of their artwork to an American audience, and for their friend’s continued patronage. Upon learning of Valentiner’s purchases of Brücke artwork for his own collection, an elated Mueller wrote to him, “Thus the old friends are reunited in your living quarters.”

That same year, Valentiner, acting in the role of art consultant to the Detroit Institute of Arts, recommended the purchase of works by five of the central members of the Brücke: Kirchner, Heckel, Schmidt-Rottluff, Mueller, and Pechstein. Likewise, in 1923, Valentiner paid even greater tribute to the artists of his native land with an exhibition he curated at the Anderson Galleries entitled Modern German Art (c. October 3rd 1923–October 30th 1923). The Anderson Galleries was an auction house in Manhattan that rented some of its galleries for special exhibitions. Mitchell Kennerley,

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27 Quoted in Sterne, 147.
28 Bealle, 97, 99-100. The works by the Brücke purchased by the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1921 were: Heckel, Woman (1920); Kirchner, Coastal Landscape on Fehmarn (1913); Mueller, Bathers (1920); Pechstein, Under the Trees (1911); and Schmidt-Rottluff, Cactus in Bloom (1919). For more on Valentiner’s role in developing the German Expressionist collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts, see Horst Uhr, Masterpieces of German Expressionism at the Detroit Institute of Arts (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1982).
29 American photographer and modern art promoter Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), for example, regularly organized exhibitions at the Anderson Galleries between the years 1921-1925. These shows served to promote the works of modern American artists such as Marsden Hartley, Georgia O’Keeffe, John Marin, and numerous others. In 1925 Stieglitz was invited by the Anderson Galleries’ president Mitchell Kennerley to assemble one of the largest exhibitions of American art that had ever been organized. The exhibition was entitled Alfred Stieglitz Presents Seven Americans: 159 Paintings, Photographs, and Things, Recent and Never Before Publicly Shown by Arthur G. Dove,
president of the galleries, actively supported both American and European modern art and collected modern German art. 30  Rudolf Reidstahl, who served as the Anderson Galleries representative for the exhibition, was also an enthusiastic supporter and collector of German art. During Valentiner’s 1922 sojourn to Germany, Riefstahl had asked him for assistance in locating works by artists such as Paula Modersohn-Becker, Martel Schwichtenberg, Nolde, and Schmidt-Rottluff for his own private holdings.

As plans for the exhibit progressed, Riefstahl enthused to Valentiner in an October 1922 letter that the show would demonstrate to “everybody here what a fine movement there is in Germany now and that it is only a question of time until America will go in heavily for this movement.”31  In the introduction for the exhibition’s catalogue, however, Valentiner assumed a more measured tone, reasoning that:

The exhibition in New York of a collection of modern German art is an experiment. Many people are entirely unacquainted with the German phase of the modern art movement; many are hostile to it. It is indeed very difficult to understand the artistic spirit of a country that has been

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*Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Charles Demuth, Paul Strand, Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz.* It ran for three weeks and was very well attended. After its close, Stieglitz renting one of the rooms at the Anderson Galleries, deciding it was just the right space for a series of smaller, more in-depth exhibitions. In December 1925 he opened this new space, publicly called “The Intimate Gallery,” but referred to by Stieglitz as simply “The Room” due to its small size. Over the next four years he put together sixteen group exhibits of works by Marin, Arthur Dove, Hartley, and O’Keeffe, along with individual shows by artists such as Gaston Lachaise, Oscar Bluemner and Francis Picabia. See Sarah Greenough, *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2000), 26–53.


cut off from the world for years and has developed an art more indigenous than ever before in its history.\textsuperscript{32}

The exhibition included 274 works by thirty artists, including prints by both Mueller and Pechstein, and marked the first major exhibition in New York and in the United States to feature art by German artists after the First World War.\textsuperscript{33} The Brücke artists were particularly prevalent in the exhibition, with a total of fifteen works by Heckel, fourteen by Mueller, thirty-two by Nolde, twelve by Pechstein, and twenty-four by Schmidt-Rottluff—a testament to the high esteem in which Valentiner held these artists throughout his career.\textsuperscript{34} On this point, Valentiner’s biographer Margaret Sterne notes that:

Schmidt-Rottluff always considered Valentiner the greatest friend the German Expressionists had. He felt that Valentiner alone, with his tremendous enthusiasm for German Expressionism, was responsible for awakening American art collectors to its significance—not an easy accomplishment in the early 1920s [fig. 46].\textsuperscript{35}

Valentiner’s exhibition, however, drew predictable reactions from an American audience that still tended to favor examples of French Impressionism and academic art. One critic writing for \textit{The New York Times}, for instance, wrote:

At the Anderson Galleries there is a large collection of modern German art, sponsored by W.R. Valentiner. On entering the main gallery one is convinced that German artists have not discovered that the war is over, for seemingly this attempt of the individual to make his voice heard above the din of battle results in a loud-voiced cacophony that is most disturbing.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{32} Sterne, 144.
\textsuperscript{33} Bealle, 101-2. Numerous documents in relation to this exhibit are found in the Valentiner Papers of the Archives of American Art and at the Ferdinand-Möller-Stiftung in Berlin; however, an Anderson Galleries archives with corresponding documentation and sales records has yet to be found.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{35} Sterne, 149.
\textsuperscript{36} Quoted in Sterne, 149.
This 1923 event at the Anderson Galleries was the first momentous showing of German Expressionist art since the Berlin Photographic Company’s effort in 1912.\textsuperscript{37} Valentiner’s exhibition, however, was plagued with logistical problems from its inception. Most of the difficulties stemmed directly from the rampant inflation that was quickly gripping Germany’s post-war economy. In addition, the harsh reparations payments demanded by the Allied governments as outlined in the Treaty of Versailles proved to be overwhelming in light of such conditions. For the German public, variability and unpredictability proved to be the most damaging aspects of the inflation, as both businesses and consumers alike struggled to adjust to the rollercoaster-like changes in currency that had a direct impact on daily life.\textsuperscript{38}

Efforts such as the Dawes Plan of 1924 were enacted by the United States and the Allies in order to alleviate the effects of the reparations demands. These endeavors provided temporary relief from the growth of inflation in Germany, but set up an unsustainable pattern of loans and repayments within international finance.\textsuperscript{39} Under the Dawes Plan, American banks lent money to Germany to aid the nation in making its reparation payments to France and Britain. France and Britain, in turn, used those funds (as well as large loans they themselves were receiving from American banks) to repay war debts owed to the United States. With the help of American loans, inflation in Germany was temporarily alleviated. For several years, this circular cash flow was

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\textsuperscript{37} See introduction to this dissertation for discussion of “Contemporary German Graphic Art,” held at the Berlin Photographic Company in New York from December 1912 to January 1913.

\textsuperscript{38} In August 1923, a loaf of bread in Germany cost 310 million marks. Where the conversion of a U.S. dollar in July 1914 equaled 4.2 marks, by November 15\textsuperscript{th} 1923, a single dollar equaled 4,200,000,000,000 marks (i.e., 4.2 x 10\textsuperscript{12}). (Sterne, 143)

prolonged only by virtue of the enormous debt Germany and other European nations were acquiring to American banks and corporations. However, the inherent strain this arrangement placed on financial resources within the United States was a contributing factor to the inevitable collapse of this dangerous pattern. Consequently, Germany, along with other European nations and the United States, was once again plunged into a devastating financial situation.  

With inflation on the rise during the planning phase of the 1923 exhibition at the Anderson Galleries, Valentiner faced exorbitant cost increases for transportation of artwork from Germany, insurance, and custom duties. In a November 1923 diary entry, he records having invested nearly half of his entire savings toward the escalating costs of the show (approximately $1,800). For this reason, he was forced to postpone the opening of the exhibition, which had previously been scheduled for February, until October, in order to raise supplementary funds. Furthermore, as the German mark continued to lose value under the strain of inflation, artists who had registered a full year earlier to exhibit in the show panicked over the prices they had previously quoted Valentiner for their works. Many of these artists, or their representing dealers, re-evaluated the price of their art in either U.S. dollars or goldmarks, and demanded higher returns.

40 Current, 761.
41 Sterne, 143.
42 By the end of 1923, the governing Weimar Republic introduced the goldmark in order to help buoy the rapidly deflating Germany currency. The goldmark was an abstract unit of account defined as a dollar multiplied by 4.2 (the pre-war mark-dollar exchange rate). Foreign currency, such as the U.S. dollar, became the preferred method of payment for numerous artists, though, as Germans had largely abandoned the papermark for pricing purposes or as a real store of value. Balderston, 58-9. See also, “German Art Trade Put on Gold Basis,” Art News 22 (3 November 1923): 5. In addition, the artists who
Adding to the artists’ frustration at this time was their misconstrued view of the American art market. During the war, Germans in need of quick cash had sold their art (primarily Old Master works, but also some modern art) to American collectors. This trend continued even after the war’s end, as wealthy American industrialists and businessmen bought art, and particularly easily affordable prints, as secure investments. The German Expressionist printmaker Conrad Felixmüller, represented by the prominent Berlin art dealer Jsreal Ber (‘‘J.B.’’) Neumann, recalled how the inflation buoyed the market for prints at this time:

During Neumann’s 1921 visit in my Klotzscher studio, he bought a furniture truck full of pictures and in addition a big pile of graphics—the inflation destroyed my profits, artist’s bad luck! With inflation came numerous art fans, in part speculators, who used art as “commodity” to save themselves, but there were also collectors, who became true friends of the painters: they bartered their “commodity” for graphics. Some would buy suits, clothing for wives, wardrobes from head to toe for the children, others ‘tropical fruit and fruit wholesale’ to hundredweight sacks of walnuts—as the collector and clothing manufacturer Robert Graetz said: these transactions with artists are our best. Whoever was a customer of J.B. Neumann sought contact with his artists.  

The inventory that Neumann accumulated during this time of economic hardship in Germany was to be an integral part of the collateral by which he would open his first gallery in New York just three years later. 

registered to participate in the exhibition at the Anderson Galleries were instructed to include a 33.33% sales commission in the prices for their artwork. Bealle, 116.  
44 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 249.
As inflation continued to cripple the livelihood of German artists during the early 1920s, foreign sales became of considerable importance. America was considered a stable and profitable market to tap. For this reason, several prominent art dealers, including Neumann, Paul Cassirer, Ferdinand Möller, and Heinrich Thannhauser, traveled to the United States in 1923 in order to assess the feasibility of establishing branch offices here. However, Americans had purchased artwork during the war at relatively inexpensive prices and expected to take advantage of the worsening economic situation in Germany after the war to continue their thrifty collecting. Möller, the highly respected art dealer in Berlin who represented most of the notable German Expressionist artists (including the former Brücke members) and who worked closely with Valentiner on securing loans of artwork for the Anderson exhibition in New York, complained of wealthy American art collectors who came to his gallery “bargain hunting.”

Nolde and Pechstein were among the former Brücke artists who thought it was possible to take advantage of a “lucrative” American art market. Nolde priced his works in dollars only. His inflated ego and naïve optimism, however, caused him to greatly embellish the price of his artworks. The cost for Nolde’s oil paintings at the Anderson Galleries show ranged anywhere from $1,000 to $10,000 (or, $12,672 to $126,725 by current currency standards), while his prints were priced at $60 to $200 ($760 to $2534 by current currency standards). Conversely, Pechstein had priced his art far more

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46 Sterne, 143.
47 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 112-13. Current currency standards here and throughout text converted using the following formula suggested by the American Institute for Economic Research and consumer price index (CPI) data sourced from the
moderately in marks but, once the exhibition closed, he expressed great frustration and anger over the disparity of his earnings. An article in the journal *Art News*, reporting on the results of the sales at the exhibition, described Pechstein’s works as selling at prices from $7.50 to $45 each ($95 to $570 in today’s currency).\(^4^8\) After converting the prices into dollars and subtracting the sales commissions, Pechstein’s total earnings were approximately $129 (or, $1634 in 2010). Comparatively speaking, average daily wages in the United States during the early 1920s was only about $3.39, or $42.96 in today’s currency.\(^4^9\)

Valentiner described Pechstein as “furious” over his short earnings, and refusing to turn over the pictures. Ultimately, Valentiner was obliged to pay Pechstein $160 in order to appease his anger ($2027 by current currency standards). While none of Nolde’s exorbitantly priced works sold at Valentiner’s exhibition, twelve out of the thirteen works by Pechstein *did* sell.\(^5^0\) Based on the historical buying habits of American collectors in the preceding years, it is reasonable to assume that Pechstein’s works proved to be more favorable to American buyers due to their more palatable prices. This economic reality, therefore, was an influential factor in the rate of collecting and early receptivity of the Brücke’s art in the United States.

Even as ballooning inflation in the German currency made determining fair prices extremely difficult, Valentiner took every precaution to ensure that artists were paid fair

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\(^{5^0}\) Bealle, *Obstacles and Advocates*, 119.
prices for their works. Regardless, many artists, dealers, and even buyers were left feeling that they had been cheated in the mass confusion. Consequently, when Möller arranged an exhibition of modern German watercolors and prints at the Erhard Weyhe Gallery in New York in late November 1923 as a means of exploring the possibility of opening a branch office of his gallery in New York, numerous artists requested higher prices. Among those demanding more for their works were the former Brücke members Heckel, Schmidt-Rottluff, and Nolde.

Although Möller hoped his exhibition would continue the momentum of Valentiner’s show at the Anderson Galleries, the show generated little success for a number of reasons. First, Valentiner’s exhibition at the Anderson Galleries had closed just several weeks prior to the opening at the Weyhe Gallery, and therefore, immediate demand for Brücke art, or modern German art at all, had been satisfied. Secondly, the works from the Anderson Galleries that sold had done so at unreasonably low prices to the artists’ expectations. As a result, it was impossible for Möller to demand even higher prices for similar works in order to satisfy his artists. Finally, an audience in the United States that was sympathetic to the Brücke’s work was still not completely formed at this time. Equivocal assessments similar to those presented in reviews of the Anderson Galleries exhibition resurfaced with the opening at the Weyhe Gallery. Further, the “primitive,” angular style, vibrant palettes, and subject matter of the Brücke’s compositions posed further stumbling blocks for appreciation of their work by an
American art audience.\textsuperscript{51} Sales were so sparse that Möller gave up on his plans for a New York branch of his gallery and returned to Berlin.

**Brücke Art in American Collections**

A further perspective resulting from these exhibitions, however, merits examination. Valentiner had not forgotten the cold reception he had received upon his return to New York. While planning his exhibition the following year, he anticipated that lingering post-war anti-German resentment might also obstruct American appreciation of the Brücke’s work and of modern German art. In two separate interviews conducted with the journal *American Art News* in 1921 and 1922, Valentiner sought to educate an American audience on the turmoil and trauma that Germany had experienced during and after the war. He emphasized how events of World War I had greatly affected Germany’s artists and their art, and noted that the anxious anticipation of war in the years preceding it and the violent influence of the war itself had redefined the artists’ aesthetic.\textsuperscript{52}

In an attempt to formulate a grander, more respectable heritage for modern German art, Valentiner compared the paintings, sculpture, and graphic works of Nolde,


Schmidt-Rottluff, and Heckel, with Italian Renaissance masters who had had “so many inspiring visions” that they were unable to restrict themselves to any one medium.\(^{53}\) Valentiner’s introductory essay for the Anderson exhibition’s catalogue continued to build on these ideas. He appealed to the “lack of prejudice and the broad understanding of American friends of art,” and noted that Americans had readily welcomed French Impressionist art long before it had become acceptable to European audiences.\(^{54}\) In a May 3\(^{rd}\) 1923, letter to Valentiner, the German-American artist Lyonel Feininger (then working in Berlin) expressed hope that art could conquer the socio-political divide between the two nations, writing solemnly, “If only our German art can win us friends in foreign countries, for at present there is very little friendship for us in the world.”\(^{55}\) It was Valentiner’s desire that Americans be willing to welcome German Expressionist art in much the same way as they had modern French art in earlier decades.

In addition, an illustrated article by Frank E. Washburn Freund appearing in *International Studio* in October 1923 had preceded the exhibition. Freund was the New York editor for *Der Cicerone*, an art journal published in Leipzig. Freund’s article echoed Valentiner’s assertions that the stress of Germany’s political and social disorder both before and after the war had affected the nature of the nation’s art.\(^{56}\) Again, he highlighted the work of the Brücke artists, pointing to Schmidt-Rottluff’s woodcuts of religious subjects as examples of a universal search for introspection, comfort, and

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\(^{55}\) Quoted in Sterne, 146.

deliverance, and de-emphasizing their German patrimony.\textsuperscript{57} Freund also noted the numerous landscapes of Pechstein and Nolde as compositions that reflected the artists’ heart and mind. Like Valentiner, Freund hoped that by informing Americans as to the war’s impact on Germany’s artists, New York audiences would approach the exhibition with a more empathetic viewpoint.

Critical comments such as the one cited above from the \textit{Times} demonstrate that anti-German sentiment did indeed color public reactions and initial reception of the Brücke’s art in the United States. In a review written on the occasion of Möller’s 1925 exhibition, another \textit{New York Times} critic suggested that the exhibition at the Anderson Galleries two years prior had been too soon after the war to be judged without prejudice.\textsuperscript{58} However, while such ruminations, seen in conjunction with Valentiner and Freund’s concerns regarding anti-German sentiment, were well-founded, there is no real proof that such sentiments inhibited the collection of the Brücke’s art by enthusiasts of modern art during this early introduction of German Expressionist art to an American audience. Curator Andrew Robison came to a similar conclusion while conducting research on patterns of American collecting of “later” German drawings (c. 1550-1900), which he realized were inexplicably omitted from American museum collections during

\textsuperscript{57} See, for example, Schmidt-Rottluff’s portfolio \textit{9 Holzschnitte (9 Woodcuts)}, 1918. From 1915 to the end of World War I, Schmidt-Rottluff served as a soldier on the eastern front. He returned to Berlin in 1918. The \textit{9 Woodcuts} portfolio depicting the life of Christ was made during the war years when, traumatized by the brutality he witnessed, Schmidt-Rottluff suffered crippling anxiety that left him unable to paint. He then turned to the more therapeutic practice of carving woodblocks and wooden sculpture. Between the years 1917 and 1919, Schmidt-Rottluff devoted himself primarily to religious subjects, including plate eight of this portfolio, entitled \textit{Christ}. An inscription at the bottom of the woodcut reads pensively, “Has not Christ appeared to you?”

the early twentieth century. In the resulting article for *Master Drawings*, Robison states:

> In searching for an explanation, many of us begin by thinking that this . . . was an effect of two terrible world wars, provoking opposition to German culture and art. We do see something of this in the history of the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard . . . . However, I no longer believe wartime anti-German sentiment to be the primary explanation.

Significantly, Robison notes that Americans never lost a taste for German music such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or Brahms during this time (although Wagner was omitted). Likewise, there was never a lack of interest by American art collectors in works by German Renaissance masters such as Schongauer, Dürer, or Cranach, which continued to be avidly pursued and fetched high prices at auctions. Regarding American collecting of the Brücke’s art, Robison concurred along similar lines, stating that anti-German resentment had “surprisingly little effect on American collecting of [modern] German art.” On the contrary, as we have seen, art enthusiasts in the United States had already demonstrated curiosity and concern in regard to German art and artists after the close of the war. It was such enthusiasm that had encouraged Valentiner to pursue his plans for the 1923 Anderson Galleries exhibition of German Expressionist art.

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60 Ibid., 171.
61 Ibid.
The Carnegie Institute Annual Exhibitions

In the following years, there would be a number of opportunities for the American art world to be exposed to the work of the former Brücke members through the inclusion of their artwork in United States exhibitions. One of the most important venues, due to the international acclaim and visibility it garnered, was the Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, held under the auspices of Homer Saint-Gaudens, Director of Fine Arts at the Institute.63

The Annual Exhibition was started by Pittsburgh industrialist Andrew Carnegie as a means of supplementing the educational mission and paintings collection of the Carnegie Institute, founded in 1895. While most United States art museums established at the turn of the century collected primarily Old Master works, antiquities, and decorative arts, Carnegie envisioned a more modern museum that focused on the “masters of tomorrow.”64 In 1896 he initiated the Annual Exhibition as a yearly survey of international contemporary art. Until World War I, American painting primarily dominated the exhibition, which typically featured 250-350 paintings by living artists from the United States and Europe. The showing was usually limited to oil paintings with only one or two examples representing each artist, although occasionally sculpture was also included, or an individual artist was a subject of focus. When the war intervened in 1914, the Annual Exhibition was put on hiatus until 1919; however, once the show resumed in 1920, German art was often excluded from the exhibition altogether.

63 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 155-6.
64 Over the past century, the Carnegie Institute has expanded its scope of interest to include European and American decorative arts from the late seventeenth century to the present.
Under Homer Saint-Gaudens who assumed in 1922 the directorship of the Fine Arts Committee in charge of organizing the Annual, the scope and attendance of the exhibition was greatly expanded. Ironically, very little avant-garde art had been exhibited at the Annual prior to Saint-Gauden’s tenure. Both the governing body of jurors, as well as popular public taste, favored traditional figurative French, British, and American art and landscapes. Therefore, critics and reviews of the exhibition had previously written the yearly effort off as “provincial,” an accusation as prejudiced by the museum’s location in Pittsburgh as it was by the art included.  

The twenty-fourth Annual Exhibition of 1925 marked the first inclusion of German art since 1914. This show was evidence of a renewed exchange of cultural relations between the United States and Germany. It was widely advertised and garnered considerable press. Although Saint-Gaudens, son of the famous American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and a maternal relation of Winslow Homer, was not personally fond of German art, he understood the need to include cross-sections of both contemporary American and European art in keeping with the original spirit of the show. After the publicity generated by Valentiner’s New York exhibition in 1923, Saint-Gaudens and the Pittsburgh Fine Arts Committee were also aware of an increasing American curiosity about German art. On December 8th 1924, Saint-Gaudens wrote to

Valentiner for advice in determining which artists to include in the German section of the 24th Annual exhibit. 67 While Saint-Gaudens approved of Valentiner’s suggestion of Max Liebermann and Hans Purrmann as representatives of the older, impressionist generation, he balked at Valentiner’s recommendation of former Brücke artists such as Heckel, Nolde, and Kirchner.

Cultural officials from the Weimar Republic were also invited to participate in the selection process for the Pittsburgh exhibition. Representatives in the Reichs Art Advisory and the Foreign Affairs Office concurred with Valentiner and elected to send works by Heckel, Kirchner, and Pechstein, whom they felt represented contemporary German concerns socially, politically, economically, and even aesthetically. The Carnegie representatives, on the other hand, in keeping with Saint-Gaudens’s more subdued tastes, pressed their German counterparts for examples from more impressionistic artists such as Liebermann, Max Slevogt, and Lovis Corinth. 68 Nevertheless, Saint-Gaudens acquiesced to the numerous voices that advocated the Brücke artists. On January 20th 1925, he responded bitingly to Valentiner saying, “I am aware of the German radical tendencies, and I expect to show them to a certain extent . . . .” 69

This correspondence documenting the interactions between Saint-Gaudens and various authorities on modern German art, including Valentiner, the Weimar government representatives, and various other museum personnel and art dealers in Germany is

68 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 159-60.
69 Homer Saint-Gaudens to William Valentiner, January 20, 1925, Carnegie Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; as cited in Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 179.
preserved in the Archives of American Art. Its contents reaffirm the importance of dealers, museum professionals, and even cultural officials in Germany to the introduction of the Brücke’s work in the United States. Saint-Gaudens would continue to play an important role in the collecting history of Brücke art in the years to follow, as well. 70

In the years after the Carnegie Institute’s 24th Annual Exhibition, Brücke artists continued to be represented in this event, mostly with landscape examples of their work. This exhibition often traveled to other parts of the country, furthering their exposure to American audiences. The initial 1925 exhibition, for example, traveled to the Art Club of Philadelphia (January 1st-February 15th 1926) following its showing in Pittsburgh (October 15th-December 6th 1925), and then traveled to the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York (March 7th-April 21st 1926) before closing at the City Art Museum in St. Louis (May 15th-July 1st 1926). 71 Thus the Brücke’s inclusion in the Carnegie Annual Exhibitions was an important facet in fostering greater curiosity and interest in their art

70 The role of Saint-Gaudens in the collection of Brücke art and prints in the United States will be addressed below.

71 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 155. Following World War I, the Carnegie International was held annually until dire economic circumstances resulting from the Great Depression forced the cancellation of the 1932 exhibition. Because of strained international relations during the Second World War, the Institute presented only annuals of American art from 1940 to 1949. However, the spirit of the International was resumed in 1950. During the 1950s, the International again underwent a series of transformations. In the 1950 exhibition, the Carnegie International was renamed the Pittsburgh International and became a biennial event. In 1955, the International was again changed to a triennial event until 1970. During the 1970s, the name was changed to the International Series, and broke with tradition to present one- and two-person exhibitions rather than the inclusive offering of the International exhibition. Not until 1982 did the exhibition resume the original format of the Annual Exhibition, adopting the name Carnegie International. Today, it continues to be held as a triennial survey of international contemporary art. See Carnegie Museum of Art, “A History of the Carnegie International,” and Peter Hastings Falk, Record of the Carnegie Institute’s International Exhibitions 1896-1996 (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1998).
by an American audience. This budding interest in the Brücke’s work, and in modern German art in general, also gave greater impetus for the 1931 exhibition German Painting and Sculpture at the newly founded Museum of Modern Art in New York.

A New Museum for Modern Art

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) opened just one week after the American Stock Market Crash in October 1929. It was founded by such prestigious backers as the aforementioned art patron Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and her friends Lillie Plummer Bliss, and Mary Quinn Sullivan. All of these were women of great wealth; one is reminded that modern art was considered a commodity of an elite few at this time, dependent on considerable disposable income. The combined talents of art collector and business-savvy industrialist Anson Conger Goodyear (of Goodyear Tires fame) as MoMA’s first president and the refined academicism of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the museum’s first director, gave the venture an added credibility lacking in earlier, more informal attempts at establishing a permanent collection and exhibition venue dedicated to modern art in New York. These included efforts by art patron Katherine Dreier and photographer

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turned gallerist Alfred Stieglitz. Prior to his appointment at the Museum of Modern art, Barr was an associate professor of art history at Wellesley College, where in 1926 he offered the first-ever undergraduate course on modern art, “Tradition and Revolt in Modern Painting.”

73 Painter and collector Katherine Dreier (1877-1952) joined fellow artists Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray to found the Société Anonyme, an organization designed to support, exhibit, and generate awareness of modern art. The group’s name is derived from a French phrase meaning “incorporated,” thereby signifying the fact that the organization was not affiliated with any particular artistic school. The Société Anonyme introduced new artists through the arrangement of exhibitions and actively promoted their reputations among galleries and collectors. Dreier headed the Société Anonyme’s small private gallery, curated exhibitions, and wrote essays and gave lectures in support of modern art. Katherine S. Dreier Papers / Société Anonyme Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, YCAL MSS 101. See also Jennifer R. Gross and Ruth L. Bohan, The Societe Anonyme: Modernism for America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

Alfred Stieglitz was a recognized pioneer in the advancement of pictorial photography in America and abroad. As a photographer, publisher, gallerist, and impresario, he also made unparalleled contributions to the introduction of modern art in America and gave unequivocal support to young American modern art painters. In 1905, Stieglitz, in association with the photographer and painter Edward Steichen, opened the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession in Steichen's former studio at 291 Fifth Avenue. Commonly known as "291," the small gallery was originally an outlet for exhibiting work by Photo-Secessionist photographers, but subsequently, it became a preeminent center for the exhibition of modern European and American artists. With the aid of artistic advisors Steichen, Marius de Zayas, and Max Weber, who had connections with artists and galleries in France, 291 became the first venue in America to exhibit works by French artists Auguste Rodin and Henri Matisse in 1908, Paul Cézanne in 1910, and Pablo Picasso in 1911. From 1907 to 1913, Stieglitz's rigorous exhibition program at 291 continued to introduce and promote the work of other European modern artists while simultaneously cultivating an advanced circle of young American artists, including Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Alfred Maurer, Steichen, Abraham Walkowitz, Weber, and de Zayas. James Voorhies, “Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) and His Circle,” in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004) <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stgl/hd_stgl.htm> (Accessed January 8th 2009). See also William Innes Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), and Sarah Greenough, Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2000).

From the outset, MoMA concentrated on French modernist works, particularly artists from the School of Paris collected by the institution’s Board of Trustees. Because of this, attention to the more difficult arena of modern German art was for a long time neglected. Although Barr’s interest in modern German art had been fostered before his years of service at the museum, as he later confided to the art critic James Thrall Soby, he had kept this interest hidden from the public and the museum’s Board of Trustees for a long time, stating, “[I] frankly did not want to be identified with a stand which would have seemed to the Museum supporters a very reactionary one.” Such a statement is a tell-tale indication of American receptivity towards modern German art in the late twenties, and again points to antipathy for Germany’s post-war fate and lack of empathy for its effects on her artists. The museum’s neglect of modern German art, however, was finally upended in 1931 by a comprehensive exhibition on modern German art organized by Barr. With this show, the Brücke’s introduction to American audiences found new footing. Not surprisingly, Barr recruited the help of J.B. Neumann because of his expansive knowledge of modern German art, to assist with organization of *German Painting and Sculpture*.

Although he was born in Austria in 1887, an unhappy marriage and the undermining effects of post-war inflation spurred Neumann’s immigration to the United States in 1923. Once settled, in February of the following year he opened a satellite

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office of his lucrative Berlin art gallery in New York, J.B. Neumann’s Print Room. The new premises were inaugurated with a series of exhibitions that documented the history of graphic art from early German woodcuts to modern art prints. Neumann was a tireless advocate and friend of many German Expressionist artists, including those formerly associated with Die Brücke. He often exhibited their art alongside Old Master works, believing that an appreciation of early art would cultivate better understanding of modern art in a country that still considered a “primitive” aesthetic such as the Brücke’s as “radical.” In his unpublished memoir, “Confessions of an Art Dealer,” Neumann wrote, “Most of my energies in a half-century of art dealing have gone into the promotion of artists not yet accepted by the public by the time I took them up.”

To this end, Neumann was diligent in marketing and exhibiting the Brücke’s works in such a way as to render them appealing to American viewers. For example, following increased demand for contemporary German art after the 1929 Carnegie Institute Annual Exhibition, which had included works by Heckel, Schmidt-Rottluff, and Nolde, Neumann planned a 1930 showing of Erich Heckel’s art. This exhibition was the first comprehensive viewing of Heckel’s paintings offered to an American audience. Neumann intentionally chose primarily watercolors of a softer palette and gentler subject matter which he suggested demonstrated Heckel’s “close allegiance with the

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76 J.B. Neumann’s Print Room was renamed the New Art Circle gallery in 1924 to better reflect Neumann’s desire that the gallery function as a meeting place and community for artists, art lovers, and critics.

impressionist tradition.” By more closely aligning Heckel’s work with the favored impressionist aesthetic of American art lovers, Neumann hoped to demonstrate to the American public that, “Contemporary Germany, dominated as it is by the expressionist movement . . . is still by no means blind to the sheer joy of painting nature.”

Neumann’s strategy was successful, and the exhibition received positive reviews. According to one reviewer who praised Heckel for his “lyric charm and sensitiveness,” the artist was “fortunate in escaping something of the heaviness and obvious self-determination that tinctures so much of the modern German school.”

In the summer of 1926 Alfred Barr visited Neumann’s gallery, then one of the few in New York to exhibit works by modern German artists. Barr was impressed with Neumann’s expansive inventory of brilliantly colored, emotion-laden canvases and strong, expressionist prints. Animated conversation between the two men further evolved once Barr learned that Neumann maintained close connections with the German avant-garde, and the two continued their discussion over lunch at a nearby restaurant. Two weeks later Barr wrote to Neumann, identifying himself as “the ignorant young man with whom you had lunch a fortnight ago,” and requested to come back for another lesson.

This initial meeting signified the beginning of a long, committed friendship between dealer and curator. Neumann’s insights into the German avant-garde greatly enhanced...

78 Heckel exhibition announcement (November 24-December 13, 1930), J.B. Neumann Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. [Film NAAA1, Frames 725-728].
79 Ibid.
81 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to J.B. Neumann, 1926; as quoted by Marquis, 38.
Barr’s own knowledge and passion for modern German art. From then on, Barr would frequently consult Neumann for advice on modern German art and the visual arts in general. In 1927, Barr went to Europe to conduct research for his dissertation, supported by a small grant from Paul J. Sachs, Barr’s mentor in museology and connoisseurship at Harvard University. On this trip Barr met a number of contemporary artists through letters of introduction given to him by Neumann. Through Neumann Barr became acquainted with most of the major figures of modern German art, including the artists of

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83 Paul J. Sachs was the eldest son of Samuel Sachs, a partner at the investment firm Goldman Sachs, and Louisa Goldman Sachs, the daughter of the firm’s founder Marcus Goldman. As a student at Harvard University, Paul Sachs collected prints and drawings with his fellow classmate Edward W. Forbes. After graduating in 1900, Sachs went to work in the family business, becoming a partner in 1904. He maintained his interest in art history and prints, however, and made frequent donations to the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum where Forbes had served as director since 1909. In 1912 Sachs was appointed to the Fogg Museum’s Board of Trustees Visiting Committee and subsequently left the investment industry to become an assistant curator at the Fogg just two years later. His business savvy proved useful in 1916 when he began lecturing on art history at Wellesley College.

Sachs, a Lithuanian, was the first Jew to obtain an appointment in art history at a major American university. His celebrated course in museum curatorship, “Museum Work and Museum Problems” established new standards in the education of emerging museum professionals. One aspect of his famed “Museum Course” was the commonly called “Print Course,” a seminar-style analysis of works on paper drawn largely from Sach’s own personal collection. After the First World War, Sachs was named director of the Fogg Museum in 1923. In 1929 Sachs advised Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to hire his student Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to be the first director of the Museum of Modern Art. Sachs, too, became one of seven founding members of MoMA’s Board of Trustees, and made sure that the graphic arts would have a place among the fledgling museum’s permanent collection with a donation of German prints in 1929. Marquis, 36. See also, Agnes Mongan, “Introduction,” Memorial Exhibition: Works of Art from the Collection of Paul J. Sachs, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1965), 7-13; Sally Anne Duncan, Paul J. Sachs and the Institutionalization of Museum Culture between the World Wars (Ph.D diss., Tufts University, 2001); and Paul J. Sachs, Tales of an Epoch (unpublished memoir), Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The founding of the Museum of Modern Art, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller’s role in its history, and Sachs’ 1929 print donation to the museum is included below.

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the Bauhaus group, Neue Sachlichkeit, and former members of the Brücke group, including Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff.

In his devotion to promoting modern German art, Neumann also supported plans for the founding of the Museum of Modern Art. He advocated for an understanding of modern art defined as a shared reflection of “our time,” that would be less concerned with concrete geographical boundaries. Hence he stated:

New York, the most modern of great cities, must have the most modern art museum... only through the creation of a museum devoted exclusively to the art of our time can the public acquire intimacy with these forms of expression that are essential to a comprehensive construction of our day.  

Barr could not have chosen a more formidable ally than Neumann to assist in the coordination of the 1931 German Painting and Sculpture (March 13th – April 26th 1931) exhibit inaugurating the newly-opened Museum of Modern Art’s second season. Over the six weeks it was open during March and April of that year, 26,044 people visited the show. The artwork on view included examples by a number of the Blaue Reiter artists, Neue Sachlichkeit artists such as Dix, Grosz, and Beckmann, and important modern sculptors, including Ernst Barlach and Wilhelm Lehmbruck. In addition, examples by the former Brücke members were also shown, including Heckel’s stark portrayal of a woman’s profile in Portrait Study, 1918 (fig. 47), Kirchner’s mesmerizing perspective of the Rhine Bridge in Bridge Over the Rhine at Cologne, 1914 (fig. 48), and Nolde’s gruesome yet mystical Masks of 1911 (fig. 49). Barr excluded artists who were not German (such as Kandinsky) and German artists who worked outside of Germany. He made a conscious effort to include only “the really important men,” as he described in a

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84 “A Modern Museum,” Art Digest 2 (1 November 1927): 12.
letter to Neumann. The exhibition presented a comprehensive review of German art from the present and preceding thirty years, and consisted of works borrowed from both American and German museums, as well as private collections. It garnered nation-wide attention, but was received with mixed reviews. The Art Digest, for example, perceived the exhibition as fortuitously timed, reporting:

> Back in 1923 when war prejudice against anything Germanic still existed, the New York art public was given the opportunity to see what the Germans . . . were doing in the field of fine art in an exhibition at the Anderson Galleries, but the show received scant notice. Not so was the reception given the exhibition of contemporary German art now being held at the Museum of Modern Art. Attendance is unusually heavy and enthusiastic, for art lovers, long starved for the latest artistic expression from Germany, are now eager to judge for themselves.

Such a statement again demonstrates that, while post-war anti-German sentiment initially influenced the broader perception and reception of modern German art such as the Brücke’s, devoted American modern art enthusiasts, on the other hand, were still eager to learn about and ultimately collect German art.

Writing in March 1931 the New York Times art critic Edward Alden Jewell applauded the works of Beckmann and Dix at MoMA and praised Nolde’s work for its

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“vivid and dramatic colors.”\textsuperscript{88} Margaret Breuning, anticipating that many in the New York art world were tiring of French art’s dominance in popularity, predicted in the \textit{New York Evening-Post} that American audiences “who like their artistic food well spiced” would appreciate the Expressionists’ “color that hits you hard between the eyes, and violent, vehement expression rather than subtlety.”\textsuperscript{89} Lloyd Goodrich’s review in the journal \textit{Arts} also provides interesting insight as to the reception of the German art exhibit within the circles of modern art appreciators in the United States. Goodrich welcomed the museum’s effort as a “change from the usual Parisian affair,” and praised the organization of the show.\textsuperscript{90} However, he complained that the exhibition, which included numerous works by the Brücke artists and the Blaue Reiter, focused too heavily on outmoded traditions.\textsuperscript{91} Indeed, both the Brücke and Blaue Reiter groups had dissolved some seventeen years prior to this showing. Goodrich argued:

\begin{quote}
German expressionism has not proved a lasting influence nor left behind works of such permanent interest as the corresponding French movements . . . . Such works as those of Nolde and Kirchner, whatever their value as historical documents, seem today little more than extremely childish, crude, and weak paintings.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

Barr, on the other hand, defended his decision to include those artists whom he felt had made such an important contribution to the development of modern art in the pre-war years. In fact, Barr had intentionally included plentiful examples of the Brücke’s art

\textsuperscript{89} Margaret Breuning, “The Modern Museum Presents a Group of German Artists,” \textit{The New York Evening-Post}, March 21, 1931, sec. 4, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{90} Lloyd Goodrich, “German Painting at the Museum of Modern Art,” \textit{Arts} 17 (April 1931): 502-507.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 502.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 507.
because he felt that, “all the Brücke people seem to me to have gone down, with the exception of Otto Mülle."

Barr’s comment reflects opinions he formed while visiting the artists and arranging loans of artwork in Germany in preparation for the exhibit with Neumann during the summer of 1930. The reviewer for the German language daily *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung und Herold* also criticized the exhibition for focusing too narrowly on Expressionist tendencies rather than current trends, such as the objective style of the Neue Sachlichkeit artists, Surrealism, or the Bauhaus artists. However, where Goodrich had disparaged the art’s aesthetic merit, the *Staats-Zeitung* defended the works on view as accurate reflections of the extreme socio-political crises Germany had experienced in recent history.

Barr, too, seemed to harbor mixed views. His introductory essay to the exhibition’s catalogue began with an acknowledgement of the lack of appreciation for German art in the United States. He then attempted to clarify the German Expressionist aesthetic for his audience by identifying its particular characteristics. Barr explained, “Most German artists are romantic, they seem to be less interested in form and style as ends in themselves and more in feeling, in emotional values and even in moral, religious, social and philosophical considerations . . . . They frequently confuse art and life.”

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93 Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to J.B. Neumann, August 1930, J.B. Neumann Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. [Film NJBN1, Frame 101].
that German painting is second only to the School of Paris, and that German sculpture is at least equal to that of any other nation,” he wrote.\footnote{Ibid., 14.} French art, he implied, was still the widely accepted standard.\footnote{ Although quickly gaining an American audience, German art was frequently compared unfavorably with modern French art, thereby demonstrating the extent to which French aesthetics still dominated American artistic taste at this time. See, for example, Edward Alden Jewell’s comparison of French and German art at the Cologne Museum in “Extraordinary French Art Seen in Cologne Museum—German Work Good,” \textit{The New York Times}, July 13, 1930, sec. 8, p. 7.} Neumann, on the other hand, throughout his career never made apologies for the “emotional” value of the German Expressionist aesthetic. When asked by the art editor of \textit{Life} magazine in an undated interview to describe German Expressionist art in simple terms for the average person, Neumann replied:

\begin{quote}
It’s very simple. Just imagine the following situation. I am riding home quietly at the end of the day on the commuters’ train. A man sits down next to me and lights up a big cigar. This upsets me terribly. I can’t stand tobacco smoke. I look down at the end of the car. There is a big sign: NO SMOKING. What to do? Should I get up and move away? Should I tell the man to stop smoking? I don’t do either. I just sit and writhe in my own inner torment. That’s Expressionism!\footnote{Neumann, “Confessions of an Art Dealer,” 2.}
\end{quote}

Following this groundbreaking exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Neumann increasingly exhibited modern German artists in the early 1930s, including shows that highlighted the works of Heckel, Kirchner, and Nolde. The insubstantial market for modern German art combined with the devastating economic effects of the depression, however, forced the dealer to close the doors to his gallery in June 1932. For the next two years, he continued to organize exhibitions in neighboring galleries while closely monitoring the deteriorating political situation in Germany.
opened a new gallery in 1934, the German art world was once again in limbo as the weakened Weimar Republic dissolved and the Nationalist Socialist Party came to power.

It is certainly the case that many of Barr’s essays have influenced the perception and understanding of modernism in this country.\textsuperscript{100} This is no less true in the case of his introductory essay to the modern German art exhibition. In an analysis that brings to mind Fechter’s 1914 division of Expressionism discussed earlier, Barr separated contemporary German art into two different branches of modernism: “Expressionism” and “Post-Expressionism,” a model of art history similar to the division of French modernism into Impressionist and Post-Impressionist schools. Barr’s characterization of German Expressionist tendencies fell roughly along a chronological division centering on the First World War. He analyzed the Brücke and the Blaue Reiter artists, in particular, as belonging to this pre-war Expressionist definition of modernism, explaining that such artists sought inspiration in human emotion and the subconscious. According to Barr, Expressionism was the antithesis of Impressionism. Post-Expressionism’s post-war aesthetics, he reasoned, were based on more figurative and “architectonic” tendencies, as in the case of the work of the Neue Sachlichkeit and artists such as Oskar Schlemmer, who depicted the human figure in a geometric style.

Barr also elaborated on the very different styles of Expressionism employed by the Brücke artists versus the Blaue Reiter artists. Whereas the Brücke’s artists demonstrated stylistic similarities based on shared artistic goals and aesthetics (such as their use of vibrant colors, decorative patterning, and heavy outlines), the artists of the Blaue Reiter demonstrated artistic sensibilities that varied in range from Kandinsky’s

\textsuperscript{100} Bealle, \textit{Obstacles and Advocates}, 311.
abstractions to Marc’s sensitively depicted animals. They shared fewer stylistic similarities than the Brücke did. Barr described the spirit of the Blaue Reiter group as “less naïve, more belligerent, and more doctrinaire” than the Brücke artists, whose cohesiveness was based on理想主义 aspects of the medieval guild and so-called “primitive” culture.101

Barr’s classification of German Expressionist art held great appeal for an American art audience less familiar with these styles. His pioneering work served to promote modern German work and instill an understandable appreciation for “difficult” art such as the Brücke’s in American audiences. Furthermore, Barr’s catalogue was the only American publication on German Expressionist art until 1957 when new interest and scholarship on the subject generated a multitude of publications on the subject. The 1931 modern German art exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art was also the last major showing of the Brücke’s art in the United States until after the Second World War. It was the last occasion on which progressive cultural officials from the Weimar Republic could celebrate the significant achievement of their modernist artists by recommending them for inclusion in a foreign exhibition.102

A NEW WORLD CRISIS, 1933-1939

A Perfect Storm

President Franklin D. Roosevelt faced a dual challenge on entering office in 1933: worldwide Depression and corrosion of international political structure. The two were

101 Barr, Introduction to German Painting and Sculpture, 7-14.
102 Bealle, Obstacles and Advocates, 287.
not unrelated. Mounting war debts to the United States had caused many European
countries to default on their loan payments and their economies to collapse during the late
1920s and early 1930s. Abrupt halt of these war debt payments from the Allies to the
United States, exacerbated by the Stock Market Crash of 1929, plunged the nation into
economic ruin. Like other countries who suffered from economic hardship, the American
civilization turned increasingly inward and became isolated and removed from the realities of
world affairs. In response to the United States’ continued isolation and the effects of the
worldwide economic downturn, new, dangerously nationalistic governments emerged on
the European continent. In Germany, the Weimar Republic (1918-1933), discredited by
the unchecked ruin of inflation, collapsed with little popular support remaining. The
situation was a perfect storm for the rise of the stridently nationalistic leader of the
National Socialist Party (or Nazi Party), Adolf Hitler, who exploited the commonly held
fear of communism and promised the German people abrogation of the Treaty of
Versailles and a return to economic health, imperial stability, and national pride (fig.
50).103

A failed art student himself, Hitler was an acrimonious opponent of
Expressionism. This did not, however, prevent his propaganda minister, Paul Josef
Goebbels, from initially supporting Expressionism as the official Nazi art. Similar to the
way Kirchner and his fellow Brücke members had envisioned and promoted their work
twenty years prior, Goebbels claimed that Expressionism was true to “the mystical
German spirit and heir to the national indigenous Gothic style.”104 Between 1932 and

103 Current, 762-3.
1933, Goebbels courted avant-garde artists and writers to join the Nazi party. Even as Hitler denounced the movement as *Kulturbolschewismus*, the Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn, and former Brücke artists Emil Nolde and Erich Heckel, signed appeals to support Hitler in the hopes they might be able to continue to work in peace.\(^{105}\) At the time, numerous high-ranking Nazi officials considered the prestige with which avant-garde art was celebrated among cultivated members of the German public to be advantageous toward fostering support for their political agenda, thereby taking precedence over Hitler’s objections. This notion was not to last.

By 1934, the *völkisch* ideals of Alfred Rosenberg had displaced Goebbels’ earlier support of Expressionism. Rosenberg was an intellectually influential member of the party who became one of the main authors behind key Nazi ideological creeds (*Gedankengut*), including the party’s racial theory, persecution of Jews, assumption of *Lebensraum* (literally, “living space,” a reference to Nazi Germany’s territorial aggression), and fierce opposition to Expressionist art. In 1930 Rosenberg wrote, “We see cultural bolshevism in the subhuman style of Köllwitz, Zille, Barlach, the technical bungler Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff, Chagall, and in the ethical nihilism of Dix, Hofer and Grosz.”\(^{106}\) Rosenberg stressed that, when it came to preserving and growing the party’s influence, it was more practical to accede to the supposed wishes of the masses in matters of stylistic taste, rather than continually having to cozen the cultural and intellectual elite who supported avant-garde art. In this way, it was easier to promote the illusion that the

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masses actually ruled. Hitler reiterated Rosenberg’s sentiments by declaring that art
must be comprehensible to the people, although he admitted that the masses could not
possibly appreciate achievements of science “or any of the other loftier expressions of
life or philosophy.”

Despite their ardent support of Hitler and the Nazis, party supporters such as
Benn, Heckel, and Nolde became a liability to this new culturally conservative agenda.
Rosenberg attacked Nolde’s art as “negroid, impious, crude, and lacking in any formal
inner powers.” Other National Socialist ideologues, such as critic Bettina Feistel-
Rohmèder, believed that art by the Brücke members, with its concentration of “primitive”

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107 Writing in 1939 in New York, American art critic Clement Greenberg reflected
scathingly on political suppression of the avant-garde in favor of appealing to the masses
in his essay “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.” He stated:

Where today a political regime establishes an official
cultural policy, it is for the sake of demagogy. If kitsch is
the official tendency of culture in Germany . . . it is not
because their respective [government is] controlled by
philistines, but because kitsch is the culture of the masses
in these countries . . . . The encouragement of kitsch is
merely another of the inexpensive ways in which
totalitarian regimes seek to ingratiate themselves to their
subjects. Since these regimes cannot raise the cultural level
of the masses—even if they wanted to—by anything short
of surrender to international socialism, they will flatter the
masses by bringing all culture down to their level. It is for
this reason that the avant-garde is outlawed, and not so
much because a superior culture is inherently a more
critical culture . . . . Kitsch keeps a dictator in closer contact
with the “soul” of the people. Should the official culture be
one superior to the general mass-level, there would be
danger of isolation.

Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* (Fall
1939): 34-49.

108 Roh, 152.

109 Ibid.
subjects and improbable colors, “destroyed the sense of race” and were indications of degeneration. Nolde, along with the other former members of the Brücke group, was declared “decadent” and labeled “degenerate.” Such work was banned from public exhibition (Ausstellungsverbot) and the Brücke members were eventually forbidden to paint (Malverbot). A letter requesting Schmidt-Rottluff’s resignation from his teaching position at the Preussische Akademie der Künste (Prussian Academy of Arts), where Pechstein was also an instructor, arrived in 1933. At the same time, the Nazi news agency Deutsche Korrespondenz reported that all artwork that displayed any indication of “foreign influence” was to be removed from the nation’s museum collections, and noted that all museum directors who supported or exhibited foreign art were to be dismissed from their positions. The state-run paper suggested further that the names of all Marxist and Bolshevist artists be banned from public mention ever again. Recognizing the potential destruction and inherent loss of such works from living history, many German museum professionals removed the “hated” art from public view, but kept the works safely tucked away in storage until 1937 when they were forcibly removed from public institutions by Nazi forces.

Aktion “Entartete” Kunst

The year 1937 marked the start of a particularly disastrous time for Expressionist art in Germany. On July 18th 1937, the Haus der deutschen Kunst (House of German Art) was inaugurated in Munich as the nation’s new museum for officially approved German art. In a speech delivered at the opening, Hitler set out the artistic program

111 Grimm, 340.
112 Ibid.
which German artists were to follow: “The artist does not work for the artist but like everybody else he works for the people. And from now on we shall see to it that it is the people who are called upon to judge his art.”

The first exhibition at the Haus der deutschen Kunst was the Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung (Great German Art Exhibition), intended as an edifying contrast to the condemned avant-garde art on display in the concurrent Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibit that opened in Munich the following day (figs. 51 and 52). In total, 730 works by 112 artists labeled “degenerate” were showcased in Entartete Kunst, including examples from all of the former Brücke members.

The disorderly presentation of the artwork in the Entartete Kunst exhibit was intended to create an aura of contrived chaos that visibly contrasted with the static, traditional arrangement of the officially approved art in the opposite building (figs. 53 and 54). In the exhibit of avant-garde art, works were grouped into crowded sections. Some hung without frames while others were left on the floor leaning against the wall. Each section bore its own title written in bold lettering on the walls. Titles such as “Vilification of the German Heroes of the World War,” “Complete Madness,” and “Destruction of the Last Vestige of Race Consciousness” were intended to inflame and disgust the German public. Similarly, labels including the prices paid for the works in inflationary amounts were displayed under each work as an additional measure to provoke public anger over the state’s use of such funds. The following year, works of modern art were either hung or displayed next to drawings by mental patients from the private collection of the German psychiatrist and art historian Hans Prinzhorn—an action

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113 Quoted in Günter Busch, Entartete Kunst: Geschichte und Moral (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1969), 22.
intended to outrage that was ultimately ironic, as avant-garde artists and mental patients were always kept to the periphery of bourgeois society.\textsuperscript{114} Though hardly adequate in the

\textsuperscript{114} Georg Bussmann, “‘Degenerate Art’—A Look at a Useful Myth,” Christos M. Joachimides, et al., eds., \textit{German Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1905-1985} (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1985), 118. The National Socialists were not the first to use the artistic works of hospital patients as a vehicle for their ideologies. In the early 1920s the Hamburg psychiatrist and clinic director Professor Wilhelm Weygandt collected "the art of the insane" for use as defamatory evidence against avant-garde art. Contrary to Hans Prinzhorn’s attribution of not only aesthetic but also existential verity to such works and their authors, Weygandt interpreted everything that was irregular, “naïve,” or artistically untraditional in these pictures as signs of incurable “insanity.” Astonishingly, none of his colleagues contradicted him.

After the Nazi party came to power, this system of comparing pictures so as to cast the avant-garde in a pathological light was used in publications as well as exhibitions. A 1933 exhibition outrageously titled \textit{Mannheim’s Chamber of Horrors}, held in Erlangen, Germany, compared drawings by children and the mentally ill with a selection of modern art from the Mannheimer Kunsthalle. Similarly, after the opening of the \textit{Entartete Kunst} exhibition in Munich, 1937, plans were made to include works by the mentally ill from Dr. Prinzhorn’s personal collection in order to heighten the propaganda effect during future venues of the exhibition’s tour by highlighting pathological comparisons.

In 1938, Carl Schneider, director of the Heidelberg Psychiatric Department, complied with a request from the Central Reich Propaganda Office for loans from Prinzhorn’s collection for \textit{Entartete Kunst}. Schneider set aside a selection of pictures that resembled, in either form or content, pictures by modern artists. According to the visual rhetoric of \textit{Entartete Kunst}, these modern artists were either “mentally ill” or degenerate. Avant-garde works were compared with four drawings from Dr. Prinzhorn’s and arranged to appear as equally “insane” and “inept” as those works by the mental patients. The actual works from Dr. Prinzhorn’s collection which were shown in \textit{Entartete Kunst} are largely unknown. Records at the Psychiatric University Hospital in Heidelberg dating from June 1938, where the collection is now housed, note that a preliminary selection was sent to Berlin but was not shown there and soon after returned.

It should also be remembered that the National Socialists at this time deemed mentally ill patients as “incurable,” “empty shells of human beings” and condemned most of those labeled as such to death by euthanasia. Art historian Bettina Brand-Claussen has suggested that, as evident from the nearly seventy works of art by the mentally ill that were returned to the Prinzhorn collection from Berlin, the Nazis’ intent was to draw parallels between “insane” and avant-garde artists. By aligning avant-garde artists alongside already condemned mental patients, the Nazis sought to further the mindset that these bothersome artists should also be “disposed of.” Thus, for instance, the numerous seascapes by psychiatric patient Clemens von Oertzen, with their strong lines and rich watercolor tones, or the ambitious oil paintings of Else Blankenhorn were planned as counter-examples to the “primitive” aesthetics of Expressionist art. The
face of such aggression, Prinzhorn had protested the absurdity of such comparisons as early as 1922, stating:

The conclusion that because this or that painter paints like this or that mental patient he himself is therefore mentally deranged is no more convincing or profound than the conclusion that because Pechstein, Heckel and others make wooden figures like those made by negroes in the Cameroons they themselves are therefore negroes from the Cameroons.\footnote{Hans Prinzhorn, \textit{Bildnerei der Geisteskranken} (Berlin: J. Springer, 1922), 346; as quoted in Bussmann, 119.}

In retrospect, it can be surmised that the unruly display and generally audacious spectacle of the \textit{Entartete Kunst} exhibition resulted in an unintended upturn for avant-garde art.

With more than 20,000 visitors a day, such enthusiastic public reception had a negative impact on the National Socialist regime’s ability to communicate their politically charged message.\footnote{Bussmann, 119-120.}

\textit{religious artwork of Franz Bühler was presumably meant to contrast with comparable pious works by avant-garde artists such as Beckmann’s \textit{Descent from the Cross}, 1919, or Nolde’s \textit{Crucifixion} of 1912.}

While *Entartete Kunst* toured the Reich, preparations were being made to dispose of the “hated” art for a profit. When the *Gesetz über Einziehung von Erzeugnissen entarteter Kunst* (Law Effecting the Confiscation of Products of Degenerate Art) became effective in May 1938, museum collections across the nation were further plundered and stripped of all works not considered officially approved. Three-hundred fifty-seven works by Mueller, 326 works by Pechstein, over 600 works by Kirchner, 729 works by Heckel, 608 works by Schmidt-Rottluff, and 1,052 works by Nolde (by far the greatest number of any artist, let alone by the former Brücke members) were either removed or destroyed from national museum collections.\(^{117}\) In total, approximately 12,000 drawings and 5,000 paintings were confiscated.\(^{118}\)

On November 17th 1938, Ferdinand Möller was one of four German art dealers appointed by Hitler to a new eight-man *Verwertungskommission* (Disposal Commission). The commission was charged with selecting from the accumulated stock of confiscated “degenerate” art in Berlin and from the works in the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition items that


\(^{118}\) The financial loss for museums in connection with these seized artworks was equally staggering. The Nationalgalerie in Berlin alone lost more than a million goldmarks in looted art. The revenue generated from the sales of “degenerate” art went into a special account at the Reichsbank after government leaders and the art dealers took their share. This *Sonderkonto Entartete Kunst* (Special Account for Degenerate Art) generated slightly over one million marks during its existence. The revenue was intended to help fuel German war efforts during the Second World War, but in reality, this was rarely the case. Museums and galleries were also barely compensated for the art they had lost. Of the million goldmarks in art that was lost by the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, for example, only about one-sixth of the total losses were compensated. Not surprisingly, these funds were placed in a London bank account and were used to acquire artwork for Hitler. Any remaining works were often exchanged for art by European Old Master painters coveted by leaders of the Third Reich government. Roh, 153. See also Gabi Huesca, “Between Collaboration and Resistance,” [https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/access/content/user/gkh1/enforcement.htm](https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/access/content/user/gkh1/enforcement.htm) (Accessed December 3rd 2009).
could be sold at auction in Lucerne, Switzerland the following year.\footnote{Research continues on this period of German art history: The Forschungsstelle “Entartete Kunst” (Research Center “Degenerate Art”) was established in March 2003 at the Freie Universität in Berlin by the initiative of the Ferdinand-Möller-Stiftung (the archive of the Ferdinand Möller Gallery at the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin) for the purpose of studying the history and methods of Nazi art policies. The center is currently working to compile a complete list of all the artworks confiscated from German museums during the Aktion “Entartete” Kunst campaign in 1937. This inventory will be published as one of five databanks of the Freie Universität’s Portal of Memorial Culture. In addition, a second research center for “Degenerate Art” at the Universität Hamburg is working on a reference edition of texts on the reception of Expressionism in Germany from the Weimar Republic to the post-World War II era. This study is expected to be published forthwith. Furthermore, Werner J. Schweiger of the Kunsthandel der Moderne in Vienna is preparing a lexicon of galleries and dealers in the German-speaking world (specifically Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) that either sold and/or exhibited modern and contemporary art between the years 1905 and 1937. A particular focus is on the connections and various relationships between dealers. In addition to this information, the lexicon will also contain new findings on various artists and exhibitions. A publication is being prepared at this time.} The other three dealers included on the commission were Karl Haberstock, Karl Meder, and Max Taüber. On this topic, J.B. Neumann notes in his memoir, “Had they appointed a committee of experts to make a better selection of the best in modern art, they could scarcely have done better.”\footnote{Neumann, “Confessions of an Art Dealer,” 41.} The commission was chaired by the notorious antagonist of modern art, Franz Hofmann, although Goebbels was given ultimate decision-making power. Dealers such as Möller often collaborated with the Nazis with the covert goal of “humanitarian concern for the artworks.”\footnote{Jonathan Petropoulos, Art as Politics in the Third Reich (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 78.} Aware that Hitler’s government had no qualms about destroying the art that could not be sold, much of German Expressionism’s visual history remains intact due to the efforts of these foresighted men. Between 1938 and 1942, Möller and his associates either sold abroad or traded thousands of works of modern art, including works by the Brücke, that might otherwise have been destroyed by the Nazis.
The former Brücke artists reacted to harsh treatment by the Nazis and isolation within their own country in individual ways. Nolde attended the _Entartetete Kunst_ exhibition with his friend and supporter Friedrich Doehlemann, director of the _Bayerische Gemeindebank_ (Bavarian Community Bank), which had financed the _Haus der deutschen Kunst_. On seeing some twenty-seven of his own works included in the show as examples of the mockery of artistic and religious values, Nolde left the exhibition confused and distressed. He canceled plans for a celebration of his seventieth birthday with friends at his home in Seebüll, and made a personal appeal to the Nazi Gauleiter (regional leader) Baldur von Schirach in Vienna in protest of the defamation made against him. He demanded the return of all his works not destroyed. Nolde was successful in gaining back his artworks and in 1938 he participated in a protest exhibition of works by the so-called “degenerate” artists at the New Burlington Galleries in London. Although by 1941 he was forbidden to paint even in private, Nolde began a series of small compositions (these varied in size from five to ten inches) which he called his “unpainted pictures.” He worked in watercolor because he feared the odor of oil paints would compromise him during unannounced visits by Nazi enforcement groups that often searched the artist’s home for fresh art supplies.\(^\text{122}\) In expression of his trauma and sadness, Nolde wrote privately in October 1944, “Only to you, my little pictures, do I sometimes confide my grief, my torment, my contempt.”\(^\text{123}\) Nolde and his wife, Ada, resided in relative isolation in Seebüll until after the Second World War.

\(^{122}\) Grimm, 319.

\(^{123}\) Quoted in Henry Grosshans, _Hitler and the Artists_ (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983), 82.
Pechstein was dismissed by the Nazis from his teaching position at the *Preussische Akademie* in 1937. Homer Saint-Gaudens, who had invited Pechstein to exhibit works in the Carnegie Annual Exhibits in years past, found buyers in the United States for Pechstein’s work, thereby helping him to remain solvent for some time.\textsuperscript{124} Pechstein went into seclusion in Pomerania, a region on the south shore of the Baltic Sea. In 1944, he was captured by Russian soldiers and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner. At the war’s end, he returned to Berlin, where he found his studio burned and many of his remaining works destroyed.\textsuperscript{125} Infuriated by these events, Pechstein would later rage that the Nuremberg trials had not taken into account the crimes “that those inhumane people committed against their own, the Germans.”\textsuperscript{126}

Kirchner had by this time returned to Davos, Switzerland, where continued threat of Nazi encroachment on the region led him to destroy all of his woodblocks, some of his sculptures, and to burn many of his other works.\textsuperscript{127} In a letter to Valentiner dated March 15\textsuperscript{th} 1938, the artist lamented:

> As a German painter, one is looked at now as something not very pleasant. Thus, my position after the “defamation” has become very difficult, and during the past few months after one unfortunate thing after another has happened I have had to fight against melancholy which otherwise is foreign to me. Not that I have despaired of my work; I still can see my way clearly and shall go on as until now, but from a human point of view, I have become very lonesome, and this one discovers when he becomes old.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{124} Jürgen Schilling, *Max Pechstein*, exh. cat (Kaiserslautern: Pfalzgalerie, 1982), 75.
\textsuperscript{125} Grimm, 328.
\textsuperscript{126} Quoted in Schilling, 183.
\textsuperscript{128} Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to William R. Valentiner, March 15, 1938; William R. Valentiner, ed., *E.L. Kirchner, German Expressionist*, 48.
On June 15th 1938, racked with agitation over the Nazis’ continued attack on modern art and further onset of illness, Kirchner committed suicide.

Heckel lived quietly in rural locations from 1932 to 1939, and in Austria from 1940 to 1942 before returning to Germany. In January 1944, he returned to his Berlin studio to find it had been destroyed by Allied bombs. Many of his works, including all of his woodcut blocks and print plates, were destroyed in these bombings. Schmidt-Rottluff remained in Berlin, but, like Nolde, was forbidden from painting in 1941. The following year, he withdrew to the country estate of his friend Count Helmuth James Graf von Moltke, where he could work in freedom. Von Moltke was strongly opposed to Hitler and even participated in the attempt on his life in July 1944. He was executed for his effort by the National Socialists in January 1945. Schmidt-Rottluff remained in seclusion in Pomerania for long periods during the war. In 1943, much like his Brücke kin, his Berlin studio was also bombed, and he too lost most of his work. Schmidt-Rottluff and Heckel were to be the longest surviving members of the former Brücke group. Both donated many of their remaining works, as well as works given to them by the other members of the group, to the Brücke-Museum in Berlin, opened by their initiative in 1967. 130

Advocates, Émigrés, Art Dealers, and Institutional Response to the Brücke in America

As previously noted, the harsh, humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles that were imposed upon Germany at the end of the First World War sowed the seeds for

129 Grimm, 251.
130 Ibid., 341.
future conflict by breeding resentment among the German public. Demands by the people for vengeance were compounded with the election of Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933. By early 1939, Nazi Germany had abandoned its commitments to the Versailles Treaty by introducing conscription, remilitarizing the Rhineland, annexing Austria, and occupying Czechoslovakia in an effort to reclaim “lost” territory. The conditions for war were primed when, on September 1st 1939, Hitler ordered the unlawful invasion of Poland, resulting in subsequent declarations of war on Germany by the United Kingdom and France. Europe was once again engaged in an all-encompassing war.

As early as April 1933, a large number of artists and art historians who were considered “modern” were dismissed from academies and museums by Hitler’s government. Unlike most of the former Brücke members, faced with such a hopeless situation, many went into exile in France, Britain, Switzerland, and the United States. Kandinsky fled to Paris. Klee, like Kirchner, went to Switzerland. Josef Albers and George Grosz, fled to the United States. The Bauhaus architect and founder, Walter Gropius, escaped to London in 1934 on the pretext of making a brief visit to England. Three years later, he settled in the United States. The devastating 1937 Entartete Kunst exhibit prompted a second wave of emigration by German modernists. Kirchner wrote to Valentiner on September 17th 1937:

As happened to our art epochs in Germany, all the artists have been attacked and despised. You probably know how it ended in Munich. I, of course, do not need to say that it had no influence upon my work. Slowly the leaders of the “degenerate” exhibition in Munich will discover from the
attitude of the visitors, that they have acted like a child which throws a jewel in to the river.\textsuperscript{131}

Berlin art dealer Curt Valentin (1902-1954) and Karl Nierendorf (1889-1947), a gallerist from Cologne, left Germany under such conditions and re-established themselves in Manhattan. Artist Max Beckmann left for Amsterdam the very next day after the opening of the Munich exhibition, and eventually received assistance from Barr to enter the United States. In 1938, the architect Mies van der Rohe also chose to leave his homeland and sought refuge in the United States. As an unintended consequence of Hitler’s attempt to annihilate Expressionist art in Germany, the exodus of so many of Germany’s cultural figures led to an extended knowledge of modern German art abroad.\textsuperscript{132} However, while artists such as Albers, Gropius, Mies, and Beckmann were welcomed into the United States, and offered teaching positions in Chicago, St. Louis, and North Carolina that helped to further promote their work, none of the surviving Brücke artists left Germany permanently. Their lack of presence in this country naturally contributed to less renown for their work in the United States than that of their fellow countrymen who had chosen to emigrate.

For this reason, support from such valuable promoters as Valentiner, Neumann, Valentin, and Nierendorf, was ultimately of vital importance to the reception and collection of Brücke art in America, particularly after the landmark year of 1937. In February of that year, \textit{Art News} reported:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{131} Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to William R. Valentiner, September 17, 1937; quoted in Valentiner, ed., \textit{E.L. Kirchner, German Expressionist}, 45. \\
\textsuperscript{132} Peter-Klaus Schuster, “The ‘Inner Emigration’: Art for No One,” \textit{German Art in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century: Painting and Sculpture 1905-1985} (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1985), 460.
\end{flushright}
The opening of the Nierendorf Gallery in New York, one of the backbone galleries of modern art in Germany, promises to make America more familiar with the great figures in experimental Germany . . . . The gallery is filled with the work of German expressionists, beginning with several of the pioneers, Heckel and Nolde.\textsuperscript{133}

Also in January 1937, Valentiner, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts since 1924, organized a showing of Kirchner’s work in conjunction with Detroit’s first exhibition of paintings by Paul Cézanne. Valentiner acquired another painting by Schmidt-Rottluff, \textit{Rain Clouds, Lago di Garda,} 1927 (fig. 55), for the museum’s growing collection of German Expressionist art. The previous year, Valentiner had been responsible for organizing Schmidt-Rottluff’s first one-man exhibition at the Westermann Gallery in New York. This unfailing support was not lost on any of the former Brücke artists. On January 24\textsuperscript{th} 1938, Kirchner wrote to Valentiner:

\begin{quote}
You are doing so much for us German artists. You were certainly right in saying that a delicate flower which is trampled [sic] upon can never revive. Today the youth on the other side of the frontier get acquainted with art, which is not permitted, and hold on to it like an old friend; and what a situation that is. We will be the laughing stock of the other countries . . . . America has a direct relation to art and therefore a clearer vision of the modern development. It is our land of hope. Many thanks again.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

With Valentiner as intermediary, Curt Valentin opened a one-man show of Kirchner’s work at the Buchholz Gallery in Manhattan in 1937.\textsuperscript{135} Although the exhibition, which included twelve of the artist’s prints, marked the first solo exhibition of Kirchner’s art in


\textsuperscript{134} Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to William R. Valentiner, January 24, 1938; William R. Valentiner, ed., \textit{E.L. Kirchner, German Expressionist}, 47-8.

the United States, comments made in the introductory essay of the catalogue caused the artist some anxiety. Kirchner wrote to Valentiner: “The exhibition in New York opened with a strange preface written by Barr; ‘irascible’ and ‘distorted drawing’ was no recommendation. Why Valentin did that to me, I do not understand.”

Barr’s analysis was, however, consistent with his current esteem for certain artistic elements of modern art, German Expressionism included. Art historian Susan Noyes Platt notes that, as early as the summer of 1933 while Barr was in Germany on leave from his duties at the Museum of Modern Art, a subtle shift had occurred in Barr’s discussion of the historical survey of modern art. She suggests that this was perhaps in reaction to Hitler’s rise to power and the beginning of the oppression of the avant-garde in Germany.

It was at this point that Barr turned his attention to the abstract aesthetic of the Cubists, Kandinsky, and Mondrian, praising these as “the most striking.” By the fall of 1933 Barr had granted Cubism a place of central importance in the development of modern art, as epitomized in his famous evolutionary chart published on the dust jacket.

136 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to William R. Valentiner, January 24, 1938; quoted in Valentiner, ed., E.L. Kirchner, German Expressionist, 47. Curt Valentin also organized a solo exhibition of Nolde’s work at the Buchholz Gallery in 1939, the first to have significant impact on his reception in America. Consisting entirely of watercolors, the exhibition featured twenty-nine works from the period 1910 to 1934, and subsequently traveled to the San Francisco Museum of Art.

137 Platt, “Modernism, Formalism, and Politics: The “Cubism and Abstract Art” Exhibition of 1936 at the Museum of Modern Art,” 288-9. Barr wrote a series of articles in Ascona, Switzerland, on art in the Third Reich in May 1933, after his stay in Stuttgart, Germany. It is very telling that these articles were only published after the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, in conjunction with a 1945 exhibition presented by Nierendorf, “Forbidden Art in the Third Reich: Paintings by German Artists Whose Work was Banned from Museums and Forbidden to Exhibit.” See Alfred H. Barr, Jr., “Art in the Third Reich—Preview, 1933,” Magazine of Art 38 (October 1945): 212-22.

of the 1936 *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition catalogue (fig. 56).\(^{139}\) Only “abstract” forms of Expressionism (developed circa 1911 in Munich) were included in Barr’s evolution. Not only were the Brücke artists’ art and aesthetics again pushed to the fringes of the avant-garde, they were completely left absent from this and numerous ensuing considerations of the modernist canon.

The efforts of émigré art dealers in New York during the first half of the twentieth century, however, ensured that the Brücke’s work would not remain permanently relegated to the fringes of modern art history. The dealers who supported, collected, and preserved German Expressionist art at a time when modern German art was an undervalued element of early modernism, including Neumann, Valentin, and Nierendorf, were all German Jews. In her essay “Collecting and Collective Memory: German Expressionist Art and Modern Jewish Identity,”\(^{140}\) Robin Reisenfeld argues that because German Expressionist art had been deemed “degenerate” by Hitler’s government and eschewed to the periphery of Nazi Germany culture, German Jewish émigrés retained an identification with this tributary of German culture that was itself antithetical to the values of National Socialist ideology. Collecting and selling German Expressionist art, particularly prints which were more affordable and more easily distributed, these émigrés contributed to the introduction of the Brücke’s graphic art in the United States and the preservation of their work in general.\(^{141}\) Reisenfeld notes that a high proportion of German Jews from the Wilhelmine era through the Weimar period entered art professions

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\(^{141}\) Ibid., 114.
due to their problems entering university, military, law, and government positions. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that Jewish interest in German Expressionist art was likely sparked by an affinity Jews felt between their own position on the fringes of society and German political rejection of aesthetic innovations in modern art.\footnote{Ibid., 116.}

\textbf{Art Caught in the Middle}

It is not surprising that dealers such as Neumann, Valentin, and Nierendorf, who witnessed growing anti-Semitism concomitant with the rise of the National Socialists, continued to identify closely with German Expressionist art even after their emigration to the United States. The 1937 \emph{Entartete Kunst} exhibition had served to crystallize and reinforce the outsider status of both modern German art and the German Jew.\footnote{Ibid., 121.} According to Reisenfeld, these Jewish dealers realized that with the virtual abolishment of the modern art movement in Germany, it was not merely their careers that were at stake were they to remain in Germany, but the very essence of their identity, as well as their lives. As German Jews their goal was to promote and preserve Expressionist art because they viewed themselves as guardians of a cultural tradition that was very much a part of living history. The preservation of this culture reassured Jews in exile of their German identity. The émigrés’ desire to make German Expressionist art known to an American audience and legitimize its position within the modern art canon demonstrates their commitment to this belief.\footnote{Ibid., 123-4.} German Jewish émigrés upheld a component of
German intellectual culture that served to sustain a link with their home country after being forced to leave it.\textsuperscript{145}

Such supporters of German Expressionist art in the United States had significant obstacles to overcome once the Second World War broke out. Although considerable purchases of modern German art were made by American museums and private collectors at the 1939 art auction in Lucerne, fighting across the European continent following the invasion of Poland disrupted the flow of the art market by curtailing travel by museum professionals, collectors, and art dealers seeking to purchase art.\textsuperscript{146}

Similarly, shipping artwork abroad at this time was often a costly and hazardous venture. American dealers of European art who were able to remain solvent in the gallery business did so with inventories of art they had acquired prior to the outbreak of war. Cultural exchanges between the two nations were further disrupted as socio-political relations between the United States and Germany disintegrated. Marit Werenskiold notes in her historiographic study of the origins of the term “German Expressionism” that, from 1910

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 127. Reisenfeld further suggests that the émigrés’ sense of spatial displacement—or, the compulsory abandonment of their homeland—and ethnicity became underlying motivations for German Jewish collectors, who, while acquiring art produced in the nation with which they most identified, reinterpreted these works to obscure the boundaries between their former cultural identity and their new home.

\textsuperscript{146} See, for example, MoMA’s purchases of five works by André Derain, Henri Matisse, Kirchner, Klee, and Wilhelm Lehbruck in the 1939 auction in Switzerland. “Exiled Reich Art Put On View Here,” \textit{The New York Times}, August 8, 1939, n.p. In this article in \textit{The New York Times}, Barr blames Hitler’s “reactionary taste” as the cause for the expulsion of these works and notes that, “There are . . . more cultivated elements in the Nazi party who are very much embarrassed by the ‘degenerate art’ theories of der Führer. These men sincerely regret the loss of many works of art. They also regret the terrible damage done to Germany’s reputation as a cultivated nation, for, before the Nazi revolution, the art of Germany stood second only to that of France among European nations.” See also “The Creative Life Vs. Dictatorship: Works Exiled from Reich Collections and Now Acquired by the Museum of Modern Art—Freedom in Democracy,” \textit{The New York Times}, August 13, 1939, n.p.
to 1920, the umbrella designation for works by the Brücke shifted from “Expressionism” to *German* Expressionism.\textsuperscript{147} Because of the increasingly hostile and nationalistic feelings engendered by World War II, audiences on both sides of the Atlantic came to regard modern German art as the product of a nationalistically defined character.

Incredibly, while the Nazi government in Germany regarded German Expressionist art as degenerate and seditious, American art audiences projected Nazi signification onto it. Neumann experienced this phenomenon with regard to the artist Max Beckmann, whom he represented. The dealer wrote in an unpublished autobiography:

> While Beckmann was under pressure in Nazi Germany because of his ties to me [Neumann refers to Nazi prejudices toward Jews here], I was under pressure from anti-Nazis in America because of my connection with him. In fact, I recall that the art dealer Joseph Brummer stopped me in the street one day and reproached me for continuing to represent a “Nazi” artist like Beckmann.\textsuperscript{148}

For this reason, when New York art dealer Karl Lilienfeld chose to exhibit a one-man show of Pechstein’s work at his East 57\textsuperscript{th} Street gallery in 1938,\textsuperscript{149} his selections for the exhibit were carefully chosen. *Art News* editor Alfred M. Frankfurter noted that the dealer had significantly opted “to eliminate the controversial ‘middle’ period of the artist[’s oeuvre] from the works shown, thus concentrating on the paintings up to 1914, exemplary of Pechstein’s first maturity and his outgrowth from the early violence of


\textsuperscript{148} Neumann, “Confessions of an Art Dealer,” 40.

\textsuperscript{149} Lilienfeld’s showing was Pechstein’s first American exhibition in five years since the dealer had opened the artist’s first solo show in the United States at his gallery in 1932. See Edward Alden Jewell, “Two New Exhibitions by College Art Association Include Retrospective Show of Pechstein’s Works,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 1932, n.p.
Brücke and the watercolors since 1933.”\textsuperscript{150} Frankfurter’s comments suggest that Pechstein’s post-war oeuvre held less appeal for Lilienfeld than did the artist’s Brücke-era work with its blatant aesthetic intensity, or his more contemporaneous watercolors.

In an effort to counter negative reception based on Nazi associations projected onto Expressionist art, a flurry of small exhibitions dedicated to educating and informing the American public about modern German art prospered in the late 1930s. This was, in part, a reaction to works of art that began arriving in the United States in 1938 which had been seized by the National Socialists from German museums. One such exhibition, titled \textit{Modern German Painting}, opened in 1938 at the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts at the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Valentin and Neumann were the principal lenders of Brücke works to this exhibit.

There was no official German presence at either the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco or the World’s Fair in New York in 1939. Various plans for an exhibition of banned German art at the World’s Fair Freedom Pavilion were eventually vetoed by local businessmen and politicians.\textsuperscript{151} However, coinciding with the World’s Fair, the Museum of Modern Art celebrated its tenth anniversary with an exhibition \textit{Art in Our Time} held from May to September of that year. Among the works shown was Kirchner’s \textit{Street, Berlin} of 1913 (fig. 57) which was purchased by the museum. On this occasion, \textit{Art News} reported that, “None of these works were excluded from Germany on racial grounds,” (a reference to the Nazis’ vilification of Jewish artists) and stressed that “the Museum, like other European and American collections, by acquiring [works such as


Kirchner’s], gives the strongest condemnation to the policies which barred these and similar artistic expressions.\textsuperscript{152}

Moreover, arrangements were made for a portion of the New Burlington Galleries’ \textit{Exhibition of Twentieth Century German Art} to travel from London to the United States. The show opened at the Milwaukee Art Institute in June 1939, but not everyone was pleased. Jere Abbott, director of the Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, Massachusetts, wrote to his friend Alfred Barr, in distress, stating:

Some time ago we contracted to show the exhibition which was held in England . . . of German deposed art . . . I am now, because of what I have subsequently heard, getting a little cold feet about the exhibition, not by any political consideration but because I hear that the works in it are really not representative of the men. It this is the case, the show would do more harm than good because it would give people the opportunity to say, quite rightly, that the pictures were not worth hanging in museums.\textsuperscript{153}

Abbott’s fear that the exhibition might “do more harm than good” was not unjustified. Reactions from certain members of the foreign press had already contributed to the negative image. Raymond Mortimor writing for the \textit{New Statesman and Nation}, reported that Hitler’s dislike of modern German art was “the best thing we’ve heard from this

\textsuperscript{153} Jere Abbott to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., August 23, 1939, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers [AAA:2165:697], The Museum of Modern Art, New York. It should be noted that there was no formal discourse on the connoisseurship of German Expressionist art in the United States at this time. Art audiences less familiar with modern German artistic tendencies were reliant on the judgment and expertise of dealers such as Neumann and Nierendorf, or professionals such as Valentiner to establish measures of value and quality for this field. The history of connoisseurship of German Expressionist art is a topic that merits further research.

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gentleman so far." Consequently, Barr related to the Cincinnati art collector Paul E. Geier in a letter dated October 5th 1939:

Our Museum bought some months previous . . . several other works from German museums. As a result we had planned to organize a small exhibition of the very highest quality . . . to show here in New York first and then send to other museums which might be interested . . . . I should add that the reason we are doing this is that we have heard—this is confidential—that there is a large exhibition of German art, rather badly chosen, touring museums. It seems to be doing a lot of harm so far as the reputation of German painting is concerned and is even causing people who are not in sympathy with modern art to say, with a certain relief, that Hitler is right. The purpose of our carefully selected small show would be in part to correct this state of affairs.\footnote{155}

Although the exhibition did not take place as planned, a handful of other institutions heeded the call to action. The Springfield Museum of Fine Arts in Massachusetts and the Institute of Modern Art in Boston both held comprehensive exhibitions of modern German art in 1939, including works by the Brücke. Valentin also organized a very well-received exhibit titled \textit{Landmarks in Modern German Art} at the Buchholz Gallery in New York in support of German artists in 1940. The show was comprised of art that had been forcibly removed from eleven different German museums by the National Socialists. In a review of the exhibition, art critic Elizabeth McCausland noted:

Today the artists [Die Brücke, Der Blaue Reiter, and early independent Expressionist artists] represented in the Buchholz exhibition are no strangers to the American public; their major contribution to twentieth century art is accepted. Yet accepted though they may be, it is almost

like a new experience to see the masterpieces assembled by Curt Valentin; they prove the valid power of modern German art . . . All in all, an art too long neglected in America.¹⁵⁶

COLLECTING AT THE MODERN, 1940-1955

Die Brücke Prints in MoMA’s Collection

The Museum of Modern Art’s graphic collection currently includes seventy-three prints by Kirchner, sixty-eight by Heckel, twenty-six by Schmidt-Rottluff, sixty-eight by Nolde, twenty-seven by Pechstein, and sixteen prints by Mueller. Notable examples of Brücke prints in MoMA’s collection today include Heckel’s woodcut invitation to the group’s exhibition at the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt in Berlin in 1912 (fig. 58, acquired in 1952), Schmidt-Rottluff’s The Three Magi of 1917 (fig. 59, acquired in 1945), Nolde’s Prophet of 1912 (see fig. 42, acquired in 1956) and Candle Dancers of 1917 (fig. 60, acquired in 1952), Kirchner’s 1901 woodcut Dancer with Raised Skirt from the 1910 Brücke graphics portfolio (fig. 61, acquired in 1997) and Standing Nude signet of the Brücke Artists’ Group of 1911 (fig. 62, acquired in 1952), and Heckel’s Portrait of a Man, 1919 (fig. 63, acquired in 1950) and Kneeling Nudes, 1910, from the cover of the 1910 Brücke portfolio (fig. 64, acquired in 1997).

Prints had been accorded a place in MoMA’s permanent collection early in the museum’s history. The first graphics acquisition was a group of modern German prints bought for the collection by Alfred Barr’s former professor at Harvard, and MoMA Board of Trustees member, Paul J. Sachs in November 1929. Sachs had begun collecting

prints and drawings during his college days at Harvard. Although he collected widely across all mediums of printmaking and periods of art history, Sachs particularly admired modern graphic works and published a book on the subject in 1954 titled *Modern Prints and Drawings: A Guide to a Better Understanding of Modern Draughtsmanship.* His gift to the Museum of Modern Art included the color woodcut *Dialogue* of 1920 by Brücke artist Max Pechstein (fig. 65).

The generous patronage of another of the museum’s own founders, Abby Rockefeller, was even more critical to MoMA’s collection of Brücke prints. Even though Barr described Mrs. Rockefeller’s tastes as “definite,” records show that she, too, relied on the expertise and guidance of German émigrés such as Valentiner, Neumann, Valentin, and Erhard Weyhe for selecting works and supplementing her growing print collection. Abby Greene Aldrich Rockefeller was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on

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159 Ibid., 7.

160 Erhard Weyhe was born in Salzwedel, Germany, on September 28th 1882. He emigrated to the United States in 1914 after apprenticing in several bookshops in Europe and England. After working a secession of odd jobs in Manhattan, Weyhe opened his own bookstore on Lexington Avenue in 1921. At the Erhard Weyhe Gallery and Bookshop, he offered a unique stock of art books and atlases. His command of an assortment of languages gave him a further advantage over his rivals in the field. In order to attract a diverse patronage, Weyhe also provided gallery space in the rear of his shop where he exhibited both emerging and established artists, such as Käthe Kollwitz, Diego Rivera, and Alexander Calder. In 1930 the gallerist began to publish art books, an enterprise that enhanced his relationship with book collectors, art collectors, librarians, and bibliographers. He was a founding member of the Antiquarian Bookseller’s Association of America, an organization he continued to support throughout his career. Weyhe died on July 11th 1972, leaving his daughter and granddaughter to continue the business. “Erhard Weyhe,” *Antiquarian Books* 7, No. 14 (August 1972): 236-8. See also, W. G. Rogers, *Wise Men Fish Here* (New York: Harcourt, 1965), 57, 62, and “Erhard Weyhe,” *The New York Times*, July 13, 1972, 38.
October 26th 1874. She was the fourth child of Abby Pearce Chapman and Nelson Wilmarth Aldrich. Her father rose in position from a bookkeeper in a wholesale grocery firm to become a member of the State House of Representatives. From 1876 to 1877, he served as the Speaker of the House. Later, he served as a United States Senator for the state of Rhode Island, where he held a place on the Senate Finance Committee until his retirement in 1911. The family often traveled between their homes in Providence, Warwick Neck, and Washington, D.C.

Art history was a part of Abby Rockefeller’s education from an early age. After completing her studies in 1893, she made her first European voyage to England, thereby inaugurating a lifetime of travels to Europe. During her travels, she frequently visited art museums with her parents, who fostered and helped form her aesthetic education and judgment of art. At a dance held in the fall of 1894, Abby was introduced to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874-1960), heir to the Standard Oil Company fortune and at that time a sophomore at Brown University. After a lengthy courtship, the couple was married in October 1901. The Rockefellers had six children (Abby, John, Nelson, Laurance, Winthrop, and David) and maintained homes in Manhattan; Pocantico Hills, New York; Seal Harbor, Maine; and Williamsburg, Virginia.\footnote{For more on the life of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, see Mary Ellen Chase, \textit{Abby Aldrich Rockefeller} (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950); on her philanthropic activities, see Bernice Kert, \textit{Abby Aldrich Rockefeller: The Woman in the Family} (New York: Random House, 1993).}

Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller were both enthusiastic art collectors, though their tastes differed greatly. While both had reserved and quiet personalities, Mr. Rockefeller was far more reserved in his artistic choices. For many years, the Rockefellers collected only Old Master art in accordance with Mr. Rockefeller’s preference, but by the 1920s Mrs.
Rockefeller was increasingly drawn to contemporary art and gradually began collecting modern art on her own. His biographer Raymond B. Fosdick quotes Frank Crowninshield, a close friend, as stating that Mr. Rockefeller preferred Old Master painting and Chinese porcelains over modern art because there was “a certain impersonality about the porcelains which ... appealed to [him].” Crowninshield added, “There was none of the ‘self-expression’ which he found so objectionable in modern art. Instead there was the formality and restraint of civilization.” Mrs. Rockefeller’s interest in modernism was initially inspired by Japanese prints, which she and her husband later collected. Furthermore, although she enjoyed the collection of Old Master works that she and Mr. Rockefeller had gathered, Mrs. Rockefeller questioned their relevance and impact on modern and contemporary art, and their connection to future generations. “Gradually,” she is quoted as saying, “there developed in my mind the thought that probably the coming generation would neither be able to buy the sort of things that we had, nor would they be particularly interested to do so.”

163 Ibid.
164 Kathleen D. McCarthy, Women’s Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 197. McCarthy also notes that Mr. Rockefeller found Mrs. Rockefeller’s “sudden” interest in modern art bewildering. He confided to his biographer:

I wasn’t particularly interested in [Italian Primitives] at first, but we kept them and finally commenced to buy them. And then all of a sudden my wife, who was very catholic in her tastes and loved all sorts of beautiful things, became interested in modern art . . . . I have spent years trying to cultivate a taste for the great primitives, and just as I begin to see what they mean [she] floods the house with modern art!

Fosdick, 328; as quoted by McCarthy, 200.
In partnership with Lillie P. Bliss, a patron of the American painter Arthur B. Davies, and Mary Quinn Sullivan, an art collector, Abby Rockefeller’s artistic insight, administrative skills, and personal connections found their fullest application with the founding of the Museum of Modern Art in May 1929. From the start, Mrs. Rockefeller’s dedication to modern art reflected a sense of mission. According to her son Nelson, his mother’s purpose in helping found a museum dedicated to modern art was specifically “to reduce dramatically the time lag between the artist’s creation and the public’s appreciation of great works of art.”

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller held several positions at MoMA between 1929 and 1945. For the first five years of the Modern’s existence, she served as the museum’s treasurer. From 1934 to 1936, and again from January to May 1939, Mrs. Rockefeller served as First Vice President. During the war years of December 1941 through November 1945, she held the post of First Vice Chairman. In addition, Mrs. Rockefeller was a member of several committees of the Board of Trustees, including the Executive Committee (1930-1945), the Fine Art Committee (1930-1934), and the Exhibitions Committee (1930-1939). She advocated for the establishment of the Film Library in 1935, and with Stephen C. Clark and Kenneth Chorley, she organized the War Veterans’ Art Center in 1944. The center, which offered art classes and free gallery lectures to disabled veterans until 1948, was the museum’s greatest contribution to America’s war effort during the Second World War, and a source of great fulfillment for Mrs. Rockefeller.

Along with immense personal satisfaction on a variety of levels, the Museum of Modern Art provided Mrs. Rockefeller with a permanent home for her personal

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collection of modern art. Her largest gift of art to the museum, and indeed the largest in
the museum’s short history since the 1934 bequest of Lillie P. Bliss’s collection, came in
1935. It comprised 181 paintings, sculptures, and drawings, and included virtually her
entire collection of modern art, assembled over the preceding ten years. Donations of
artwork intended to supplement the new museum’s fledgling permanent collection were
of particular necessity to the livelihood of the museum, as the founders had decided not to
provide the museum with an endowment. A. Deirdre Robson has suggested that it was
the founders’ intent that the museum’s collections, if any, be formed by gifts from a
variety of private donors. 166

One of Mrs. Rockefeller’s distinctive, but lesser known interests lay in the field of
modern graphics and drawings, two areas in which she had quietly collected during the
past decade. Her interest in works on paper had blossomed in her youth, when her
admiration for Old Master works was equally met by her attraction to drawings and
woodcuts by Degas and paintings by the Italian Primitives of the thirteenth, fourteenth,
and fifteenth centuries. She purchased her first example of contemporary art, an undated
watercolor by Erich Heckel titled Landscape, in Germany while on a sight-seeing tour in
Europe with her sister, teenage daughter, and two female companions in 1924. 167

William R. Valentiner rendezvoused with the party in Paris and accompanied Mrs.
Rockefeller to Germany, charged with the task of scheduling programs and guiding the
group through various collections there. Being well-connected with the German avant-
garde art world, the far-sighted Valentiner introduced Mrs. Rockefeller to members of the
former Brücke group, including Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff, and to the gallerist

166 Robson, 29.
167 Kert, 220-1.
Ferdinand Möller, who represented many of the German Expressionist artists in Berlin.\textsuperscript{168}

It was during this time with Valentiner that Mrs. Rockefeller purchased the majority of the Brücke prints for her graphic collection that she would ultimately donate to the museum’s permanent collection.

Landscapes, figures, the occasional still-life, and bather motifs reminiscent of the Degas woodcuts and Italian Primitives she admired as a young girl dominated Mrs. Rockefeller’s collection of Brücke prints. By far, Nolde was Mrs. Rockefeller’s favorite artist among the former Brücke members, having purchased eleven of his prints from Galerie Ferdinand Möller with the aid of Valentiner. Nolde’s \textit{Young Couple} of 1913 (see fig. 41, previously discussed in chapter one), his color lithograph depicting a Danish landscape in \textit{Mill by the Water} of 1926 (fig. 66), and \textit{Hamburg, Reiherstiegdoek} of 1910 (fig. 67) from Nolde’s renowned views of Hamburg’s ports and waterways are some of the more prominent images by the artist Mrs. Rockefeller collected. Similarly, Heckel’s quaint cityscape etching of \textit{Antwerp}, 1914 (fig. 68), 1917 self-portrait woodcut \textit{Portrait of E.H.} (fig. 69), and Schmidt-Rottluff’s radiant woodcut portrayal of \textit{Saint Francis}, 1919 (fig. 70), and Mueller’s white-on-black 1912 woodcut \textit{Boy among Leaves} (fig. 71) are also examples of Brücke graphics she purchased while abroad. Each print had been carefully documented by Mrs. Rockefeller in hand-written ledgers with the title, artist’s name, date, purchase price, and sometimes a cut-out reproduction to accompany each entry.\textsuperscript{169} Significantly, works she owned such as Nolde’s \textit{Mill by the Water} and portrayal

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{168} Sterne, 151-2.
\textsuperscript{169} The entry for the Heckel landscape purchased in 1924, for example, reads: “Heckel, \textit{Landscape}, watercolor, undated, $500; bought in Germany, 1924; given to the Museum on 6/20/35.” Inventory page for Heckel \textit{Landscape}, n.d., Rockefeller Family Archives,
\end{footnotesize}
of waterways, as well as Heckel’s cityscape of Antwerp, are not entirely characteristic of their Brücke-era oeuvre, but rather exhibit the artists’ careful observations of old master influences such as Rembrandt. These selections indicate just how much Mrs. Rockefeller appreciated the correlation between old master works and the Brücke artists’ graphic output.

Additionally, Mrs. Rockefeller began purchasing American folk art in the late 1920s, a collection of works that eventually led to the creation of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1957. Although it is likely that Mrs. Rockefeller was drawn to the “naïve,” and most often, colorful qualities of folk art for the importance of establishing background and providing historical insight related to her interest in modern American art, the clean lines, unadorned compositions, and intentionally simplistic, “primitive” style of the artists’ Brücke-era graphic art probably appealed to such an interest, as well.\(^{170}\) One can detect, for example, an affinity in the plain, unfettered portrayal of feminine faces in works such as Nolde’s 1912 woodcut *Head of a Woman III* (fig. 72) and an oil painting titled *Child with Dog* by an unidentified artist, c. 1770-1790 (fig. 73), both owned by Mrs. Rockefeller.

Underrepresented in her collection of Brücke prints are works by Pechstein (there are only two) and Kirchner (two are credited to Mrs. Rockefeller, albeit through exchange by the museum). It is reasonable to suggest that these omissions are due more

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RG 2, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller series, Box 17, Folder 179, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.

to the circumstances in which Mrs. Rockefeller originally purchased her Brücke graphics, than to mere dislike of their art on her part. When Mrs. Rockefeller and Valentiner made their trip to Germany in the summer of 1924, Kirchner had already left Germany for Switzerland. He would, in fact, make his final visit to Germany in 1925. Although Kirchner received numerous visitors from Switzerland and Germany at his Haus auf dem Wildboden (Wildboden House) in Davos during the summer of 1924, the Rockefeller party did not include Switzerland in their travel itinerary. In June and July, the Winterthur Art Association in Zurich organized a major exhibition of Kirchner’s work that was given a hostile reception by the press and public alike.\textsuperscript{171} It is possible that Valentiner chose not to further press Mrs. Rockefeller’s introduction to the artist’s work during this time of poor publicity.

Pechstein, on the other hand, was undergoing significant life changes at this time, including a hasty divorce from his first wife Charlotte Kaprolat in 1923, followed by an equally hasty marriage to his lover Marta Möller (no relation to Ferdinand Möller) the same year. In 1924 Pechstein and his new wife traveled frequently to locations such as Monterosso al Mare in northern Italy, the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea, and Switzerland, only returning to Germany in 1926. Moreover, Valentiner was not personally acquainted with Pechstein as he was with Nolde, Heckel, and Schmidt-Rottluff, thereby possibly prompting a higher evaluation of these artists’ artwork over the former.

The World at War

The Museum of Modern Art’s founders’ decision not to provide the museum with an endowment was further frustrated by the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Depression. Thus, while other comparatively new modern art museums in the city, such as the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, had access to regular sources of funding for acquisitions through established endowment funds, the Museum of Modern Art constantly had to seek alternative sources of funding in order to purchase art. During the first five years of the museum’s activities, Barr had access to a mere $1,000 for use on purchases, including a $500 check from Mrs. Rockefeller in 1931 for the exclusive purpose of purchasing prints. In 1935, Mrs. Rockefeller provided Barr with another $1,000 with which to purchase European avant-garde works that were crucial to the formation of the Abstract Art and Cubism exhibit in 1936 and the Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism show the following year. In 1938, anonymously, Mrs. Rockefeller gave the museum its first unrestricted general purchase fund (later renamed the Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Purchase Fund). This was supplemented and increased by Nelson in his mother’s name and renewed each year until 1942.¹⁷²

As the Depression Era of the 1930s drew to a close, MoMA’s Board of Trustees began to make plans for a new museum building. Throughout this planning period, Barr

¹⁷² Alfred H. Barr, Jr. to Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, December 28, 1936, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers [AAA:3264:998], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. In 1942 this fund was channeled into the general budget with the provision that three to five percent of it be used for purchases. According to Barr, this was not done and the money was lost. A. Deirdre Robson, Prestige, Profit, and Pleasure: The Market for Modern Art in New York in the 1940s and 1950s (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 29-30.
notes that Mrs. Rockefeller continually argued for the inclusion of a print room. She reminded her colleagues that prints, because of their affordable prices, should hold a place of special significance in a museum that was concerned with the encouragement of widespread collecting of original works of art by both contemporary artists and those of recent history. Although New York already had several public print collections which included modern and contemporary work, such as the graphic collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA’s Trustees agreed that there was clearly a need for a department at the museum devoted to the representation of prints from around the world from both the recent past and the present. Space was therefore set aside for a print room in the plans for the new building, which opened in 1939 at 11 West 53rd Street. Due to the looming threat of war, however, the print room was not to be opened for another ten years.

In 1940, Mrs. Rockefeller generously donated to the museum her collection of some 1,600 prints. Her gift was advantageously timed: as war spread through Europe, the proliferation of exhibitions of modern German art in the United States during the late 1930s ended quickly. On December 7th, 1941, the Japanese military attacked U.S. naval fleets stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, prompting the United States to declare war on Japan. Germany and other member nations of the Tripartite Pack, in turn, declared war on the United States. America was now officially engaged in the Second World War and resultant expressions of patriotism were reflected in museum exhibitions and press releases across the nation during the 1940s. During the war years, the space intended to be used as a print room in MoMA’s new building was dedicated to the showing of films in connection with various defense and war offices. In the meantime, the prints
themselves were kept in storage. Museum schedules were also sharply curtailed as numerous museum professionals were called to serve in the military.

After the United States declared war, Germany officially became the enemy. As a result, during the war years, German art was not shown in American museums. Even the Museum of Modern Art, which had been the greatest champion of European art in the United States, turned its focus to more chauvinistic demonstrations. Barr reflected in his “Report of the Director” for the museum’s 1940 annual report that:

More serious questions confronted the Museum . . . . The catastrophe in Western Europe suddenly created an emergency toward which the Museum, profoundly concerned with the preservation of cultural freedom, could not remain indifferent. The Museum studied its program in relation to a sense of new and wider responsibility. It studied the question of American morale. Could not the American’s pride in his own civilization be confirmed by pointing to achievements in the arts?173

In 1942, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, emblazoned with the words “The Museum and the War,” was dedicated to the special wartime activities of the museum during the past two years, including social activities for enlisted troops and showings of films, photographs, and paintings intended to serve as records of the war.174

Nevertheless, due to the continued vigilance of Neumann and Valentin during the war years and beyond, the museum acquired a significant portion of its Brücke print collection between 1937 and 1955, through purchases, gifts, and exchanges initiated through the efforts of these tireless advocates. In particular, Neumann negotiated a significant donation of 120 European prints to MoMA by Dr. Franz Hirschland in 1942

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Franz Hirschland was a close friend of Neumann who emigrated to the United States from Essen, Germany in circa 1907. He was the eldest of three brothers from an influential banking family, but worked in the metal industry once he had settled in the United States. Hirschland’s collection of German Expressionist art included works by Feininger, Klee, Marc, the Brücke artists, Lehmbuck, and Georg Kolbe. His collection was largely dispersed following his death in 1973. Approximately eleven examples of Brücke art were included in the group of prints which Dr. Hirschland anonymously donated to the museum in the early 1940s. Each was purchased through Neumann, and included landscapes and nude compositions such as Heckel’s 1911 woodcut *Bathers in the Pond* (fig. 74), Schmidt-Rottluff’s *The Sound* of 1909 (fig. 75), Mueller’s 1920 lithograph *Discovery of Moses* (fig. 76), and Pechstein’s lithographic *Four Nudes at the Sea* of 1917 (fig. 77).

While it is a fitting tribute to his efforts to see German Expressionist art succeed in America that so many of Neumann’s imported works and sales of Brücke art ultimately found a permanent place within MoMA’s graphic collection, the dealer himself also contributed gifts of the Brücke’s prints to the museum’s collection. In 1941, Neumann presented the museum with a particularly generous selection of Kirchner images that included the Brücke’s signet designed by the artist in 1906 (fig. 78) and the *Programm der Künstlergruppe Brücke* (i.e., the *Program of the Brücke Artists’ Group*) from 1906 (fig. 79). It is interesting to note Neumann’s concentration on collecting and preserving the historical documents from the Brücke’s active period, rather than just

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individual images that may have appealed to him, as Mrs. Rockefeller seems to have done. On this note, it is difficult to determine whether this difference in collecting acumen is due to Neumann’s personal associations with the Brücke artists while still in Germany, or perhaps the dealer’s discerning eye encouraged him to diversify his selections in order to preserve these ephemera that document a unique movement in the history of art.

Valentin also contributed significant examples of graphic works by the Brücke to the museum’s collection, such as Kirchner’s *Head of Ludwig Schames*, 1918 (fig. 80) in 1947. After his death in 1954, the Buchholz Gallery’s inventory was liquidated and sold at a Parke-Bernet auction in November 1955. The Museum of Modern Art received a selection of prints by the former Brücke members as part of Valentin’s bequest, including Nolde’s *Elderly Men* of 1926 (fig. 81). Many works, such as Pechstein’s cover from the 1911 Brücke graphic portfolio *Kneeling Nude with Bowl* (1911) (fig. 82) continued to be purchased from this inventory during the 1950s under the auspices of the museum’s first print curator William S. Lieberman.

The years during the Second World War presented particular difficulties for those art dealers, such as Valentin and Neumann, who had previously specialized in European art and counted on providing museums and collectors such as Mrs. Rockefeller with fresh stock of Brücke prints and modern German art. Once the nation was at war, the availability of European works sharply declined. These dealers were forced to turn their attention instead to exhibiting and promoting emerging American artists.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, as

¹⁷⁷ Robson, 86.
we have seen, much of the Brücke’s graphic art did not survive the war’s devastation and a fresh inventory of Brücke prints became increasingly hard to find.

While Mrs. Rockefeller was an infrequent client of the aforementioned art dealers for her graphic collection, she was occasionally inclined to add to her collection of prints by the former Brücke artists if an image came along that she liked. Barr often advised her on these purchases, which were frequently made through J.B. Neumann’s gallery, or the Weyhe Gallery. For example, Mrs. Rockefeller purchased Nolde’s 1918 etchings *Young Prince and Dancers* (fig. 83) and *Man and Young Woman* (fig. 84) from the Weyhe Gallery in October 1929. She also purchased Schmidt-Rottluff’s sketch-like *Dancer III* of 1922 (fig. 85) the same year from Weyhe. Similarly, Mrs. Rockefeller acquired Mueller’s 1914 lithograph *Two Bathers on the Shore* (fig. 86) and Pechstein’s 1923 etching with aquatint *Sailboats near the Coast* (fig. 87) from Neumann’s gallery in January of 1931, all of which she gave to MoMA. As these dealers experienced a short supply of German prints during the war years, Mrs. Rockefeller turned her attention to collecting prints by emerging American artists. Thus, she collected relatively few works by the former group members after her travels in Germany with Valentin.

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178 The Weyhe Gallery and Bookshop was a center of modernist artistic activity. Patrons such as Lewis Mumford, Frank Crowninshield, Alfred Lunt, and Jo Mielziner bought books and prints by the gallery’s circle of artists, among them Aristide Maillol, Gaston Lachaise, John Sloan, Reginald Marsh, and Diego Rivera. In addition, Carl Zigrosser, a co-founder and director of the gallery from its inception until 1940, was one of a number of early American curators who sought to raise the public’s awareness of graphic art as a serious art form. Under Zigrosser’s directorship, the gallery published prints individually and in portfolios with the notion of presenting less expensive works by emerging artists. The Weyhe Gallery was one of the few galleries to exhibit from its earliest years works by the German Expressionists, Matisse, Picasso, and Mexican and African art. The gallery is today run by Deborah Kiley, Erhard Weyhe’s granddaughter. For more on the Erhard Weyhe Gallery, see Reba White Williams, *The Weyhe Gallery between the Wars, 1919-1940*, PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 1996.
The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room: A Place for Prints

On April 5th 1948 Mrs. Rockefeller died of a heart attack in her Park Avenue apartment at the age of seventy-three. Although never himself a great supporter of modernism and the avant-garde, Mr. Rockefeller donated over four million dollars in securities and land to the Museum of Modern Art in his wife’s memory. He confessed to his son Nelson that modern art had “never greatly appealed;” his gift to the museum was intended “to preserve for the future the important work of this institution which meant so much to Abby.”

MoMA’s Board of Trustees also wanted to honor Mrs. Rockefeller’s contribution to the museum, but initially struggled to find a worthy commemoration. Due to the sheer number of artworks that Mrs. Rockefeller had donated, the idea for a memorial exhibition featuring all the works she contributed was proposed. In addition, plans for a new print room were already underway, and the recommendation of a print show to coincide with the larger memorial exhibition was also circulated. However, Alfred Barr quickly saw a flaw in the plans for a memorial exhibit and suggested a fitting alternative to Nelson Rockefeller. On April 29th 1948, Barr explained in a letter to Nelson:

Your mother gave the Museum a very large number of works of art perhaps in all 2500 objects . . . including oils and watercolors, sculpture, over 150 drawings and about 2000 prints. But because of her modesty as a collector . . . [she] was always reluctant to have her name used but often we could persuade her to do so on the grounds that it helped both the Museum and the artist. However in 1942 she asked for the list of all her gifts of painting and sculpture and withdrew her name from the great majority of her gifts saying she thought her name occurred too often in catalogs and labels . . . . Unfortunately she withdrew her

179 Quoted in Fosdick, 330.
It should be recalled that Abby Rockefeller had stipulated early on that she hoped the museum would establish a place for prints within the permanent collection, with proper facilities and a curatorial staff to oversee the care, growth, and exhibition of the graphic collection. Therefore, it was a touching tribute when, later that year, John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, announced the opening of this new dedicated space, to be named The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room.

MoMA’s new Print Room was inaugurated on May 12th, 1948, with an exhibition that included graphics from both Mrs. Rockefeller’s collection and the museum’s permanent collection titled Master Prints from the Museum Collection. The Brücke’s graphic art was well represented in the exhibition with Heckel’s 1914 woodcut Crouching Woman (fig. 88); Kirchner’s 1914 color woodcut Two Ladies in the Street

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180 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, April 29, 1948, Rockefeller Family Archives, RG 4, Projects series, Box 153, Folder 1527, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.
Kirchner’s *Head of Ludwig Schames*; two works by Nolde, including *Young Couple* (1913); Pechstein’s *Dialogue*; and Schmidt-Rottluff’s *The Three Kings*.

Likewise, with the founding of the Print Room at the Museum of Modern Art, a new seriousness, or credibility, was granted to the graphic media, allowing subsequent print exhibitions to be prioritized in the years to follow. The war being won, Brücke prints were also given a new focus. By the early 1950s, when the Museum of Modern Art planned a series of exhibitions that highlighted particular movements within the modern art canon, it was possible to mount 20th Century Movements: German Expressionism consisting entirely of works by the Brücke artists, including paintings, drawings, and prints. The latter prints were drawn from the collection of The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room. The purpose of the exhibit was to give a condensed “summary” of German Expressionist art. In this case, the show concentrated on the earliest Expressionist movement in German avant-garde art. To this end, images such as Kirchner’s 1906 woodcut manifesto, *Programm der Künstlergruppe Brücke*, were among the prints exhibited. An effort to encompass the Brücke’s wide variance in compositions was noted with works such as Mueller’s *Two Girls in the Dunes at Sylt* (c. 1920-1924) (fig. 90), Nolde’s *Christ and the Children* (1910) (fig. 91), Pechstein’s *Ballet Dancers* (1912) (fig. 92), and Schmidt-Rottluff’s *Autumn Landscape* of 1913.

This exhibit traveled around the country, and frequented cities that were not generally familiar with Brücke art. The publicity record for the exhibition’s venue at the Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center in Miami, Florida, for example, noted that over a thousand people attended the show. Marie Schenck, the Miami Art Center’s art director at that time commented, “We consider the attendance record to be excellent.
Without doubt it would have been greater had we not been closed for the Fourth of July. . . In that case we would have achieved a fiscal year record for one presentation.” “A final analysis, based upon comments by those who appreciate the advantage of seeing material otherwise generally confined to New York,” she noted, “indicates that the privilege of having it here was of great moment.” The show also traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Louisville, Kentucky; Manchester, New Hampshire; Williamstown, Massachusetts; Winnipeg, Canada; Seattle, Washington; Vancouver, Canada; Eugene, Oregon; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Other German Expressionist exhibits featuring Brücke graphic art became possible due to the increased exposure granted to the Brücke’s prints by way of the Museum of Modern Art’s Print Room. The Van Diemen-Lilienfeld Galleries (formerly run by Karl Lilienfeld) opened two exhibitions in 1951, Expressionism and German Art of the First Quarter of this Century, that featured Brücke art. That same year, European Expressionists opened at the Feigl Gallery in New York with a handful of Brücke works. Similarly, Valentin featured a solo exhibition of Kirchner’s work in April 1952 consisting largely of the artist’s woodcuts. The show also traveled to the Dudley Peter Allen Memorial Art Museum in Oberlin, Ohio. Finally, An Exhibition of 20th-Century Drawings and Watercolors from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Davis, Wayzata, Minnesota also opened at the Fogg Art Museum in 1951 with a number of examples from the former Brücke artists. Kirchner and Nolde received an even greater

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nod with the opening of *Nolde and Kirchner: An Exhibition of Prints* in November 1955 at MoMA. Curated by William S. Lieberman, the exhibition consisted of eighty-five prints largely drawn from The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room. This was a significant exhibition in that it was the first major showing of German Expressionist art in the United States since the end of the Second World War. The Brücke artists’ graphic work had seemingly finally acquired validation and an audience in America.

**Conclusion**

The artistic careers of the Brücke members coincided chronologically with two periods of war, devastating economic conditions, and tense political relations between Germany and the United States. Moreover, fervent admiration for examples of French art and a lingering preference in some circles for academic art by an American audience rendered the Brücke’s implausible colors and “primitive” aesthetic antithetic to American taste during much of the first half of the twentieth century. Although these factors and significant historic events could have buried American recognition of the Brücke members’ contribution to modern art in a tide of politics, stagnating artistic preference, and physical destruction, the efforts of German émigrés such as William R. Valentiner, Curt Valentin, and J.B. Neumann ensured that Brücke art was not lost for future generations, but found a new home in New York.

It is telling that, even after the close of the Second World War, German Jewish émigré art dealers remained the primary advocates of the Brücke’s art in the United States, a fact that demonstrates these individuals’ commitment to maintaining a connection to their homeland and modern artistic German culture. Their ability to influence museum professionals such as Alfred Barr, and wealthy collectors such as
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, to buy and exhibit German art that had been rejected and
deeled “degenerate” by Hitler and the National Socialist Party in its homeland, kept
Brücke art from being omitted completely from the modernist art canon that developed in
the United States. The Museum of Modern Art became the instrument through which
their goal of educating an enthusiastic and empathetic audience for Brücke art in the
United States came to fruition. Mrs. Rockefeller’s belief that, “Art makes all those who
appreciate it more sane and sympathetic, more observant and understanding,” is a
testament to their efforts. ¹⁸³

The following chapter will explore the formation of the Art Institute of Chicago’s
holdings of Brücke graphic art, a feat that was largely dependent on the Midwestern
metropolis’ significant German immigrant population who were fervent in maintaining
and promoting their Germanic heritage in their new homeland.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Gere and Vaizey, 170.
III. COLLECTING IN THE MIDWEST: THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, 1938-1959

The Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) was founded as the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in 1879. The name was changed to its current title in 1882. The Art Institute, as both an arts school and a museum, was shortly in need of a new home for its expanding collection, as well as its growing student body. As the city prepared to host the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, its trustees negotiated with the city’s civic government for a new structure located on a park site at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street. The neo-classical design of the museum’s new beaux-arts building by the Boston firm Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge was in keeping with the style of the World’s Fair exhibition buildings. Its size allowed for development of the institution’s ambitious forward-reaching goals of diversifying its art collections and adding a research library. The Art Institute officially opened at this site on December 8th 1893. Within a year, the museum, whose holdings were largely dependent on the generosity of private wealthy donors, had received its first major gift, a collection of French paintings, from Chicago art collector and AIC patron Mrs. Henry Field. In 1913, the museum astounded the city by hosting the Armory Show, an extensive and somewhat controversial exhibition of contemporary American and European painting and sculpture, first shown in New York. Purchases from that exhibition initiated the Art Institute’s collection of modern art.

However, modern art did not come easily to the city of Chicago. For many years, avant-garde art was highly debated and contested, particularly among the more subdued tastes of the Art Institute of Chicago’s board of trustees. Once a group of the museum’s patrons became interested in supporting art of the new century, however, French art was
collected disproportionately to other schools of the avant-garde, the Brücke included. It was well into the start of the twentieth century before the Art Institute began acquiring images from the Brücke’s graphic oeuvre. The museum did not have a significant patron or donor of this art as the Museum of Modern Art in New York did in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, nor were there dealers such as J.B. Neumann or Curt Valentin who specialized in modern German art yet established in Chicago.

The city was, however, rich in German American heritage due to the Midwest’s healthy population of German immigrants. For this reason, demographics played a greater role in the formation of the Art Institute’s collection of Brücke prints than at the Museum of Modern Art. First and second generation Americans, eager to preserve the culture of their ancestral land, eagerly promoted and preserved their Germanic heritage. One such individual was hotelier Emil Eitel (1865-1948), a German immigrant, who purchased graphic works by the Brücke from dealers in Germany for his own enjoyment. His gift of these works to the Art Institute can be seen as a gesture of pride in his Germanic heritage, as well as an attempt to see German art represented in the museum’s collection of otherwise French-laden art. In addition, like Mrs. Rockefeller, Eitel was also an admirer of old master prints. In conjunction to acquiring works by the Brücke, Eitel added a number of medieval German prints to the museum’s holdings. For this reason, the connection of tastes for old master graphics and the Brücke’s art is again explored in this chapter.

Henry Regnery (1912-1996) was a second source of the Art Institute’s holdings of Brücke prints. Regnery was a publisher of conservative political posturing, as well as a German American who was greatly concerned for the people of Germany following the
war. He published pamphlets calling for the United States to adopt a foreign policy that would rehabilitate the German population “victimized” by Nazi and Socialist rule. While not a serious collector of art, Regnery’s small gift to the AIC of Emil Nolde’s prints suggests a political motivation, or display of sympathy and solidarity with the German artist “brutalized” by the Nazis in their treatment of his artwork, which they deemed “degenerate.” Regnery’s motivations for acquiring and donating works by Nolde to the Chicago museum stand in direct contrast with the impetus of German Jewish émigré dealers in New York, such as J.B. Neumann, who were forced to leave Germany or risk their lives and whose enthusiasm for the Brücke artists’ work had an important impact on MoMA’s collection. Likewise, Regnery’s rationale for his patronage demonstrates the clash of ethnic relations in the United States following the close of the war, highlighting in particular the potentially politically-charged nature of an oeuvre such as Nolde’s in this climate.

Finally, this chapter will examine AIC print curator Carl O. Schniewind’s efforts to diversify the Art Institute’s graphic collection by correcting the negligence earlier donors to the museum had shown to other schools of modern art, specifically German Expressionism, in preference for French art. Schniewind was fortunate to have in place a reliable system of patronage for acquisitions of Brücke prints through the financial support of the museum’s Print and Drawing Club founded in 1922. Most of the Art Institute’s collection of Brücke graphics was acquired during Schniewind’s tenure with the club’s backing. Therefore, it is important to assess the images he purchased, as well as the vagaries and influences that had an impact on his selections for the museum.
MODERN ART AND GERMANIC CULTURE IN CHICAGO, 1913-1937

Modernism’s Divided Reception in Chicago: Morality vs. Aesthetics

Modern art received a divided reception at the Art Institute of Chicago. This division was marked by moral posturing on the one hand, and aestheticism on the other. As early as 1910, the term *modernism* was being treated as a nonspecific descriptor by local art critics, intended to encapsulate avant-garde European work beginning with the post-impressionists, especially Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent Van Gogh, and continuing through cubism, expressionism, and as time passed, surrealism and constructivism. The term was applied equally to contemporary artists whose work had assimilated aspects of the European avant-garde, or whose innate rebellious belief in individualism placed them in direct opposition to the generally reserved stance of the Art Institute of Chicago’s board of trustees. This governing body of local philanthropists consisted of wealthy, civic-minded patrons who valued art for its social utility. Reflecting a commonly held notion regarding the importance and function of art museums in the United States at the turn of the century, the AIC trustees wanted to educate and elevate the masses through art’s “civilizing” effect and beauty.  

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2 Carol Duncan has addressed this idea concerning the social function of the art museum. She identifies the following “ritual” aspects of the art museum: first, there is “the achievement of a marked-off, ‘liminal’ zone of time and space in which visitors, removed from the concerns of their daily, practical lives, open themselves to a different quality of experience,” and secondly, she suggests that the very organization of a museum’s setting acts as a kind of “script or scenario which visitors perform.” These characteristics, she argues, were historically intended by art museum founders to equate closely to the kind of rationales often given for traditional rituals, thereby leading to enlightenment, revelation, and spiritual rejuvenation. Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 20.
During the early teens, the conventional artistic values of these Midwest philanthropists prevailed at the Art Institute, promulgated by the professionals they hired to staff the museum and its art school, and by their own power as cultural leaders in the city’s social elite. In their hands, the artistic program of the Art Institute was to remain comfortable, definable, and morally correct. The goals of the trustees were furthered by contemporary social mores.³ Mere days before the opening of the Armory Show at the Art Institute in 1913, a police order forced the removal of a copy of French academic painter Paul Émile Chabas’s 1912 painting *September Morn* (fig. 93), (now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art) from the window of a local art store. The city’s official art censor, acting on behalf of the mayor, reportedly brought suit against the proprietors for offering for sale a picture that was described as “indecent.”⁴ Concurrently, newspapers reported on the removal of a painting by Bernhard Folkestad titled *Summer Day* (now lost) from an exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian art at the Art Institute in 1913 that included works by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. The painting evidently depicted a poultry scene in a barnyard; the chickens’ “activities,” one can only surmise, were found to be objectionable by the Art Institute’s officials.⁵ Nevertheless, in both cases, morality was the arguable point, not aesthetics.

It was against this backdrop of conservative civic leadership and moral censure that modern art was introduced in Chicago. Between March 24th and April 16th 1913, the Art Institute hosted the International Exposition of Modern Art, the famously known

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³ Prince, 95-6.
⁴ “When is Art Art? When Wicked?,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 14, 1913, n.p. The art gallery, located at 44 S. Wabash, was owned by Fred D. Jackson and Eleanor Semelmeyer.
Armory Show that had opened in New York, featuring 634 works of art that traced the development of the avant-garde from Goya through the Cubist artists. Fresh from its first venue, the exhibit arrived in the city roughly half the size of the New York show due to space constraints (the original featured some 1,300 works of art), but Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s 1911 painting *Garden Restaurant in Steglitz* (fig. 94) was included.

Contemporary art, like that shown in the Armory Show, was not altogether unfamiliar to Chicago. In addition to the aforementioned *Exhibition of Contemporary Scandinavian Art* held at the Art Institute from February 25th to March 16th 1913, the W. Scott Thurber Gallery, located in the Fine Arts Building where the museum was also housed, had organized a series of exhibitions the year prior featuring works by contemporary American artists Arthur Dove, Jerome Blum, and B.J.O. Nordfeldt. The Art Institute, too, had presented an exhibition of “contemporary” German prints in January 1913 (*Contemporary German Graphic Art*, January 2nd-19th 1913), although the show focused on more mature, established artists such as Max Klinger, Hans Thoma, Max Liebermann, and Fritz Böhle.6

The effect of these exhibitions was negligible compared to sensational press from the New York opening of the Armory Show that was already garnering considerable notice. Such attention predisposed Chicago reporters to negative opinions of the exhibit. The three major art critics in Chicago at the time were George B. Zug, an assistant professor of art history at the University of Chicago who wrote for the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* until it ceased printing in 1914; Lena May McCauley, a society lady who wrote for the *Chicago Evening Post*; and Harriet Monroe, a matron of Chicago’s elite high

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6 See *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Contemporary German Graphic Art*, introduction by Martin Birnbaum, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1913).
society, as well as the founder of *Poetry* magazine in 1912, who contributed to the *Chicago Tribune*. These critics’ widely read reviews had a significant bearing on Chicagoans’ initial understanding of modern art.

Both George Zug and Harriet Monroe traveled to New York to see the Armory Show before its opening in Chicago; however, the two critics espoused very different views on the subject. Zug’s opinions were based on an informed, yet unyielding, conviction in academic standards. To this end, he disparagingly compared the work of Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Matisse to the work of children, adding, “They apparently never learned to paint.” He described cubist works as “freak products” and “refuse for bumbo artists.” After the opening of the show at its Midwest location, George Zug’s judgments continued to be negative; although, grounded as they were in art history, his assessments were critical of the modernist aesthetic in general, rather than taking issue with morality.

Harriet Monroe’s reviews in the *Tribune* indicate that, although she was largely unfamiliar with Cubism, she was refreshingly open to and curious about the exhibit’s offerings. In her earliest review, Monroe cautiously ventured:

> The show has an air of cosmopolitanism never before attained in this country except at world’s fairs, and it is less bound by academic standards. Even the cubists seem to be playing interesting games with kaleidoscopic polygons of color; even Matisse is dancing a wild tango on some weird barbarous shore.

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7 Prince, 98.
10 Prince, 100.
A month later, Monroe wrote a lengthy article on modern art with the stated purpose of preparing her readers for the show’s opening in Chicago. In it, she discussed Clive Bell’s theory of significant form and cited French critics who championed the “new” art. Throughout the show’s run in New York, Monroe continued to comment each week.

Once the Armory Show opened in Chicago, however, she quickly became exasperated with negative critics such as Zug, and openly lashed out at the exhibit’s detractors. In an April 6th 1913 column, she wrote:

We are fighting one of those battles of the intellect—those of us who have any—which are common enough in Paris, but altogether too rare in our provincially shortsighted and self-satisfied community . . . It is to be deplored that our discussion is not always quite urbane . . . Better the wildest extravagances of the cubists than the vapid works of certain artists who ridicule them.

Now confidently supportive of modern art, Monroe accused American art of becoming insipid, photographic, and far too engrossed with nineteenth-century realism. She suggested to Chicago readers that modern art was a revolt against such elements, and that it was representative of a search for new truth and beauty.

Lena May McCauley’s impressions of the Armory Show and modern art were cautiously optimistic. Four days before the show’s opening, she seemingly gave voice to her readers’ questions: “The air is alive with questions—what are the impressionists, the post impressionists, the cubists and futurists?” Unfamiliar with modernist art movements, she avoided giving direct opinions and kept her reviews to a safe, neutral stance. Her neutrality was significant, however, in contrast to the angry, moralizing

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position of critics such as Zug, or various other non-art critics writing on the show’s opening in Chicago, such as H. Effa Webster who described Gauguin’s works as “obscene” and “vile” in the *Chicago Examiner.*\(^{15}\) Days before the arrival of the Armory Show in the city, McCauley warned readers and local artists in an unsigned article to consider modernism on its own merits, stating:

> It is too deeply and too widely grounded in the great art centers of the world . . . it at least embodies a spirit of individualistic revolt that ever wins the respect of men. This spirit American art can least of all afford to reject. We need it keenly right here in the art schools of Chicago.\(^{16}\)

Although she remained open to modern art’s reception in Chicago, a number of post-impressionist artists, including Matisse and Henri Rousseau, as well as expressionist artists, such as Wassily Kandinsky and Kirchner, did not appeal to McCauley’s tastes. She acknowledged that she did not understand the non-academic message of their work, but recognized that a change of criteria was at the epicenter of such art. Moreover, she never condemned the artists or their morality, despite her objections to their aesthetic.\(^{17}\)

The controversy in the press announcing the Armory Show’s arrival in the Midwest bred public interest in the exhibition, while the Art Institute’s international renown helped build upon the show’s standing as a credible cultural event. During the twenty-three days that the Armory Show was on view in Chicago, 188,560 people visited

\(^{15}\) H. Effa Webster, “Moderns Here on Exhibition Called Art Desecration,” *Chicago Examiner,* April 1, 1913, n.p.

\(^{16}\) “Fair Play for Insurgent Art,” *Chicago Evening Post,* March 24, 1914, n.p. Although unsigned, this article has been identified by Sue Ann Prince as consistent with McCauley’s writing and opinions. Prince, 249.

\(^{17}\) In a March 27\(^{th}\) 1913 article for the *Chicago Evening Post,* McCauley wrote, “Taking ‘Art’ as a science of drawing, composition and color for the interpretation of an ideal principle, these men are outside the pale. They make no claim to any of the tenets of art . . . and message they have none.” Prince, 100-101.
the galleries, thereby surpassing attendance of the New York presentation. This number of curious attendees was equal to roughly eighty percent of the city’s population at the time, averaging nearly 8,200 guests daily.\(^{18}\) Most either took advantage of free days or paid a minute admission fee to view the heavily disputed works of modernist art. Debate over these continued throughout the summer, provoking Edward E. Hale, Jr. to note in the June 1913 edition of Chicago’s *The Dial* magazine that the air was “full at present of utterances concerning Futurists, Cubists, Neo-Impressionists, and Post-Impressionism.”\(^{19}\)

The Armory Show forever changed how art was viewed in Chicago, establishing the significance of avant-garde art to the broader public, motivating private collectors, and paving the way for future assemblies of modern art, including examples of German Expressionism, at the Art Institute of Chicago. In the following years, the landscape of modern art in Chicago widened to include such influential landmarks as Frank Lloyd Wright and Alfonso Iannelli’s Midway Gardens (1914, demolished in 1925) (fig. 96) in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago’s South Side; the founding of the Arts Club of Chicago in 1916; and the formation of the city's many independent exhibition societies during the 1920s. These autonomous artist groups included the so-called “introspectives” formed in 1917 around the former New York imaginary symbolist artists Benjamin Kopman, Abraham Harriton, Jennings Tofel, and Claude Buck; and the 1921 “Cor Ardens” (“Ardent Hearts”) group that claimed radical Chicago artists Raymond Jonson,

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\(^{18}\) The *Chicago Daily News* reported statistics on attendance at the show on April 22, 1913.

Rudolph Weisenborn, Carl Hoeckner, the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck, and one-time Brücke painter Axel Gallen-Kallela of Finland among its membership.  

The Arts Club of Chicago was, in fact, a direct outgrowth of the Armory Show’s influence on the city’s artistic culture, and it became one of the few places that exhibited modern art, other than French, in the Midwest. The club’s mission, as defined at the inaugural meeting, was “to encourage higher standards of art, maintain galleries for that purpose, and to promote the mutual acquaintance of art lovers and art workers.”  

At its founding, the club’s membership roster was composed of various local artists, such as the American Impressionist painter Lawton Parker, sculptor Nancy Cox-McCormack, and painters Grace McGann and Frederick Clay Bartlett, as well as numerous art enthusiasts, including Chicago society matron Rue Winterbotham Carpenter, collector and attorney Arthur T. Aldis, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Director Frederick Stock, and Art Institute trustees Charles L. Hutchinson and Martin A. Ryerson. In November 1916, the club opened its first exhibition in the Fine Arts Building on South Michigan Avenue with portraits by nineteenth-century artists James Abbott McNeill Whistler, John Singer

20 For more on the emergence of independent artist groups in Chicago during the 1920s, see Paul Kruty, “Declarations of Independents: Chicago’s Alternative Art Groups of the 1920s,” in The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde, 77-117.


22 Arthur T. Aldis, an enthusiastic supporter of modern art, met Armory Show organizers Arthur B. Davies, Walt Kuhn, and Walter Pach during a November 1912 expedition to Paris to select works to exhibit in the upcoming show. Aldis was so impressed with their efforts that he became ardent in bringing the exhibition to the Midwest. By late December of that year, Aldis had secured the commitment of his fellow colleagues on the Art Institute’s Board of Trustees to host the show immediately following its close in New York, despite the reservations of the museum’s director William M. R. French. Illinois State Museum, “Art in the Abstract: The Armory Show—Abstraction Arrives,” <http://www.museum.state.il.us/ismddepts/art/Abstract/htmls/illinois/abstractionarrives-armory.html> (Accessed January 25th 2010).
Sargent, Henry Golden Dearth, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Mary Cassatt. The following exhibit in December showed paintings by American Ashcan School artists Robert Henri, George Bellows, and John Sloan. These exhibitions provided Chicago collectors and public institutions, such as the Art Institute, the opportunity to purchase works of modern art—albeit not entirely contemporary—that had previously been in short supply in the Midwest.

Within the first two years of its founding, the Arts Club underwent several important transitions. In 1918, Grace McGann (1867-1949), who had originally been tapped to serve as the organization’s President, resigned. She had understood the club’s goal to be the promotion of Chicago art, but the larger membership felt that their efforts should reach out more broadly. Rue Winterbotham Carpenter (1879-1931) was elected club President in the spring, a position she would hold until her death in the early 1930s. Alice F. Roullier (1883-1963), director of the Albert Roullier Galleries in downtown Chicago, became chairman of the exhibition committee, a position she would hold until 1941. Under the leadership of these women, the Arts Club redefined its agenda, and set out to introduce local audiences to contemporary European art, music, and literature, in conjunction with promoting contemporary American art. The club began exhibiting in a gallery at the Art Institute in December 1922 with the intent of extending their “sphere of usefulness.”

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24 Ibid.
Although the Art Institute had been host to the controversial Armory Show in 1913, in the following years the museum concerned itself only rarely with modern art, thereby avoiding any fresh controversy after the famous exhibition’s original uproar had finally subsided. As late as 1921, the museum’s collection contained only two works by twentieth-century European artists, salon-style paintings in the academic tradition.\textsuperscript{26} As we have seen, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Lillie P. Bliss, and Mary Quinn Sullivan’s efforts centered on the founding of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the 1920s. In a comparable situation, when museum leadership in Chicago failed to collect and exhibit works of avant-garde art, it fell to forward-thinking and well-to-do society ladies such as Carpenter and Roullier, to bring avant-garde art to their city. The Art Club’s exhibition schedule, as laid out by the new leaders, was intended both to complement and enhance the relatively demure programming of the museum, and eventually augment the Art Institute’s collection of modernist works.\textsuperscript{27} Between 1921 and 1927, in their gallery at the Art Institute the Arts Club arranged exhibitions that could be called modern, although not always avant-garde or contemporary. This strategic

\textsuperscript{26} Richard R. Brettell and Sue Ann Prince, “From the Armory Show to the Century of Progress: The Art Institute Assimilates Modernism,” in Prince, ed., \textit{The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde}, 219.

\textsuperscript{27} The Arts Club was committed to the development of public collections of modern art in Chicago museums, specifically the Art Institute and the Field Museum. In 1923, the club’s executive committee established the Arts Club Gift Purchase Fund (in operation until 1932), which was supplemented by sales from commissioned artworks and annual contributions by club members. The club’s purchases for the Art Institute began immediately with the establishment of the fund, which was used to purchase a bronze sculpture by Rodin for the museum’s collection in 1923. The club gave over fifty works of modern art to the Art Institute, and ten African, Asian, and Oceanic objects to the Field Museum. Shaw, 22. The Arts Club of Chicago remains in existence today in new premises at 201 East Ontario Street in Chicago. It maintains its commitment to Chicago art collections while actively accumulating its own collection of modern and contemporary art, as well.
stance with regard to modernism, likely taken in deference to the Art Institute’s subdued nature in general, included exhibitions of works by artists such as Mary Cassatt, Auguste Rodin, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (his first exhibition in the United States, 1924). Affiliation with the AIC, which was maintained until the end of 1927 when the Arts Club sought a new, more long-term location, allowed modernism to be kept in the eyes of the Art Institute’s daily visitors. At the same time, the arrangement allowed the Arts Club to cultivate a relationship with the Art Institute’s trustees that encouraged further acceptance and future interest in collecting modern art at the museum. Similarly, while the Brücke artists were never exhibited at the Arts Club of Chicago, other artists affiliated with German Expressionism, such as the more figurative painters George Grosz, Max Beckmann, and Ernst Barlach, as well as the abstractionists Paul Klee and Kandinsky, were frequently featured in the club’s exhibition schedule. These shows provided an additional venue through which modern German art was introduced to the city’s art audience.

It can be deduced that the Arts Club’s effort to nurture the acceptance of modern art at the Art Institute of Chicago were successful: in 1933, in conjunction with the

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29 As mentioned above, the Art Institute was collecting modern art at this time, albeit reluctantly. In 1926, for example, Frederick Clay Bartlett, described in a 1952 Life magazine article as a “foresighted buyer,” created a furore among the Art Institute’s Board of Trustees when he donated his collection of post-impressionist and modern art to the museum. Though the trustees ultimately accepted the gift, some denounced the works by Cézanne, Georges Seurat, and Matisse as “obnoxious.” Life goes on to state that, “Though some Chicagoleans still object to modern acquisitions and once organized the Society for Sanity in Art to counteract the revolutionary trends, most Chicago collectors have continued to be as vigorous and adventurous as their predecessors.” “Chicago’s Fabulous Collectors,” Life 33 (27 October 1952): 90-100. On the Society for Sanity in Art, see below in text.
“Century of Progress” World’s Fair Exhibition held in the city that year, the museum hosted a concurrent exhibition of the same name (June 1st 1933-November 1st 1933). This exhibit was vital to further educating Chicago audiences about modern art, and fostering its appreciation. A substantial collection of American art and a smaller international survey that stressed contemporary French and German artists was arranged chronologically to follow the sequence of art history. Each period of art was granted equal consideration, and paintings were hung at eye level, surrounded by generous wall expanses. This chronological format broke with the museum’s tradition of arranging galleries strictly by donor, rather than by movement, country of origin, or subject matter. Cézanne was presented as a pivotal figure in the genesis of modern art, and works by Matisse and Picasso were hung side-by-side with paintings by Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Van Gogh, thereby establishing a clear lineage between post-impressionism and other early twentieth-century art movements, including expressionism. While still a selective representation of art history, this indicated a willingness by the Art Institute to integrate modernist schools into the museum’s collection.30

The theme of the Century of Progress exhibition was broadly interpreted by the Art Institute to mean progress in art collecting in the United States, rather than merely a showing of artistic advances in the past one hundred years. Indeed, art from the mid-thirteenth century to 1933 was displayed in the exhibition. One of the principal aims of the show was to demonstrate changes in taste in painting acquisitions by both public and private American collectors. Twenty-five museums and over two hundred collectors lent paintings to the Art Institute for this prominent exhibition, including William R. Brettell and Prince, “From the Armory Show to the Century of Progress: The Art Institute Assimilates Modernism,” The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde, 223-4.

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Valentiner and Karl Lilienfeld.\textsuperscript{31} Valentiner mostly sent compositions by the Brücke artists that were typical of each artist’s oeuvre, including Erich Heckel’s \textit{Boats} (undated), Otto Mueller’s 1921 \textit{Girls Bathing} (fig. 97), and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff’s somber 1919 painting \textit{Evening by the Sea} (fig. 98). Lilienfeld sent two paintings by Max Pechstein, \textit{The Bridge} of 1913, and the richly colored \textit{Woman and Indian} of 1910 (fig. 99). Loans by these staunch advocates of modern German art ensured that the art of the Brücke was not left out of the contemporary German painting gallery at the \textit{Century of Progress} exhibit.\textsuperscript{32} The entire installation of modern art occupied twenty-seven galleries, though it was not referred to as “modern” in any of the exhibition print materials.\textsuperscript{33} However, according to reviews at the time, attending audiences—some 831,370 people by September 1\textsuperscript{st} 1933—were more receptive to the new art than they had been previously.\textsuperscript{34} Malcolm Vaughan reported in the \textit{Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago} that:

\begin{quote}
It is significant to see the change from the reaction of 1913. In the memorable Armory Show of that year, the crowds milled round Duchamp’s \textit{Nude Descending the Stairs}, shrieking with laughter. Today the general attitude is more humble; there is perhaps more inclination to doubt themselves rather than the artist. In letters which the visitors send home or in accounts which they publish in their local papers many confess that the moderns interest them, even when they cannot entirely understand the principles involved . . . What we see throughout the entire
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} In fact, these five paintings alone represented the Brücke aesthetic at this pivotal show. The Art Institute of Chicago, \textit{A Century of Progress: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture Lent from American Collections, June 1 to November 1, 1933}, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1933), 82-3.
\textsuperscript{33} Brettell and Prince, “From the Armory Show to the Century of Progress: The Art Institute Assimilates Modernism,” \textit{The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde}, 224.
\textsuperscript{34} Malcolm Vaughn, “The Significance of the Century of Progress Art Exhibition,” \textit{Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951)} 27, No. 5 (September-October 1933): 83.
exhibition is a public trying conscientiously to understand.\textsuperscript{35}

In response to Chicago audiences’ continuing interest in modern art, the Art Institute made a valiant effort to supplement its educational programming during the run of the exhibit.\textsuperscript{36} Daily tours, gallery talks, and an extensive lecture program are reported to have been widely attended. Similarly, the exhibition catalogue was designed with this budding audience in mind. Special attention was paid to the modern art portions of the catalogue, relaying information that described the evolutionary roots of contemporary art, rather than just providing the artist’s name and title of the work. In fifteen weeks, the first edition of 25,000 catalogues was exhausted, while the new edition sold 12,237 in the four weeks following its release. The prints catalogue was also relatively successful, selling nearly 2,100 copies. This catalogue illustrated sixty-three reproductions of old master prints, and provided historical introductions and notes on the various printmaking mediums.\textsuperscript{37} By November, critics were calling the *Century of Progress Fine Arts*

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 86.
\item \textsuperscript{36} The Art Institute of Chicago, and the city’s art audience, had previously benefited from private patronage of modern art. Bertha Palmer, for example, was a leading figure in Chicago society and an enthusiastic collector of contemporary art. While visiting Paris in 1889, she and her husband, Potter, a Chicago financier, were introduced to American Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt. Through Cassatt, the Palmers came to know and collect the work of other Impressionist artists. In the 1890s, the couple amassed a fortune in department store and real estate investments, enabling them to vastly expand their collection. In 1891 alone, Mrs. Palmer bought twenty-five paintings by Monet, with whom she was personally acquainted. Two years later, she organized the exhibition of modern European paintings at the World’s Columbian Exposition. This event gave many Americans their first comprehensive exposure to the Impressionist movement. In 1922, the Palmers gifted the majority of their accumulated works to the Art Institute of Chicago. For more on this see, Sally Sexton Kalmbach, *Jewel of the Gold Coast: Mrs. Potter Palmer’s Chicago* (Chicago: Ampersand, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 84.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Exhibition a success, despite earlier skepticism when the idea was first introduced.

Vaughn noted that:

A showing of this kind—old masters and modern masterpieces—had never before been attempted in connection with a world’s fair, and certain critics were frankly skeptical. ‘Your visitors won’t understand it,’ they objected. ‘All they want is an exhibition of popular art . . . . That’s the kind of a show the public loves.’ But the cynics . . . were wrong. Lost in the maze of Salon art which graced the Columbian Exposition they did not realize . . . that ‘as the result of the great educational work which has been carried forward by our museums during the past decade a new public has arisen capable of intense enthusiasm for such an opportunity.’ It is this new public rather than the old that has been attending the exhibition by the thousands . . . In the course of five months [the Century of Progress Exhibition] has discovered a public eager to know, eager to enjoy and has played a remarkable role in educating them.38

At last, Chicago art audiences seemed prepared to expand their seemingly limited interest in just old master and nineteenth-century academic art, in favor of a broadened palette that incorporated modern and contemporary art, like that produced by the Brücke.

The Century of Progress exhibition effectively established modern art as within the art historical canon for Chicago audiences three years before the Museum of Modern of Art’s 1936 Cubism and Abstract Art show that included Alfred H. Barr, Jr.’s authoritative formulation of the evolution of modern art (see fig. 56). Indeed, all that had appeared too radical and revolutionary at the 1913 Chicago Armory Show was now integrated into the mainstream by way of its historicization twenty years later. In particular, five Chicago art collectors with ties to the Art Institute (either as trustees or patrons) heartily embraced modern art’s new found esteem in the city. In the decades

38 Ibid., 82-83, 88.
immediately following the First World War, these five collectors, millionaire Martin A. Ryerson, attorney Arthur Jerome Eddy, artist Frederic Clay Bartlett and his wife Helen Birch, and society matron Annie Swan Coburn, helped to expand the basis of the museum’s collection of modern paintings. These individuals focused much of their attention on the accumulation of French post-impressionist art, largely in response to ideas espoused in British critic Roger Fry’s 1909 essay, “An Essay in Aesthetics.”

In both Britain and the United States, Fry’s theories provided the basis for preliminary formal criticism of modern art in the 1920s. His concepts, however, might have only found influence in academic spheres had Fry not supported his views with examples by Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin, thereby creating an aesthetic paradigm for post-impressionist art. In this way, Fry contributed a coherent formulation of the development of modern art that started with Manet and subsequently explored what he dubbed the “expressionistic” reaction to impressionism in works by the three main post-impressionist masters. Fry described the work of these artists as promoting “the re-establishment of purely aesthetic criteria in place of the criterion of conformity to appearance—the rediscovery of the principles of structural design and harmony.”

Moreover, he found the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century to be logical continuations of the post-impressionist paradigm.

This paradigm provided a rationale and a guide to art collecting for the five aforementioned Chicago collectors, all of whom were familiar with Fry’s formalist interpretation of art history as evidenced by listings of the contents of their personal art collections:

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40 Ibid., 19.
libraries. With the exception of Eddy, who also collected art by the German Expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter, these prominent patrons were collectors of French art, which they each later gifted to the Art Institute of Chicago. Although their holdings provided a strong basis for the inclusion and institutionalization of modern art at the museum, their emphasis left a gap in representation of other schools of avant-garde art to the detriment of contributions by Italian, Russian, American, and German artists, the Brücke members included. This gap was not to be closed until curator Carl O. Schniewind’s tenure at the museum from 1940 to 1957, explained below.

Following the burgeoning interest in modern art garnered by the Armory Show, the founding of the Arts Club of Chicago, and the success of the Century of Progress Exhibition, art dealer Katherine Kuh (1904-1994) opened her eponymous gallery on North Michigan Avenue in 1935. Kuh’s gallery was the first in Chicago devoted wholly to avant-garde art, and featured works for sale by Picasso, Kandinsky, Albers, Léger, Klee, and the Brücke artist Emil Nolde. Kuh was the daughter of Morris Woolf and Olga Weiner Woolf. Her father was a British-born Jewish silk importer and distant relation to the publisher and author Leonard Woolf (1880-1969). In 1909, Morris Woolf moved his family from St. Louis to Chicago, where Kuh was raised. In 1914, Kuh contracted polio while traveling with her family in Europe and spent her following

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42 Germer, 191.
childhood years in a body brace. During this time of enforced solitude, her father interested his daughter in collecting old master prints.\textsuperscript{44}

Although Katherine Woolf continued to suffer the effects of polio for the rest of her life, she went on to attend Vassar College where a course on Renaissance art taught by the young Alfred H. Barr, Jr. convinced her to study art history. She remained friendly with Barr his entire life. After completing her Master’s Degree in art history at the University of Chicago in 1929, Katherine moved to New York to pursue a doctoral degree at New York University. She returned to Chicago in 1930 to marry businessman George Kuh. Kuh, however, envisioned a stay-at-home wife and was unsympathetic toward Katherine’s devotion to modern art. The couple divorced in 1935, the same year her gallery opened. Kuh developed an important personal collection of modern art, often taking advantage of its relatively unknown status in Chicago.\textsuperscript{45} However, it was Kuh’s notable public battles with the radical art group, the Society for Sanity in Art, which demonstrated just how divided the city remained in regard to the acceptance of modern art throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

In the year before Kuh’s gallery opened, a highly publicized confrontation occurred between the Art Institute of Chicago and poet Josephine Hancock Logan (1862-1943), the wife of art patron Frank Granger Logan (1851-1937), a founder of the Chicago brokerage house Logan & Bryan. Mr. Logan served as a founding member of the Art Institute’s Board of Trustees and, at the time of his death, its honorary president. The Logans established the famed Logan Medal of the Arts at the AIC in 1917, a prize that

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 155-69.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
honored a select work of art each year and provided funds for the museum to purchase said work. Between 1917 and 1940, 270 awards of prize money were distributed.

Mrs. Logan lead a vociferous attack against the Art Institute and the “vulgarity” of the artwork featured in the museum’s *Forty-Sixth Annual American Exhibition*, held in November 1935. She complained bitterly that a number of the paintings looked “out of focus” and that much of the subject matter, reflecting life in America at the height of the Great Depression, was morbid and depressing. Mrs. Logan objected to the picture to which the Art Institute’s award committee had granted that year’s Logan Medal, Doris Lee’s *Thanksgiving* (fig. 100), a bustling domestic scene depicting a group of women performing various kitchen tasks in preparation for a Thanksgiving meal, while children and pets look on and play underfoot. After failing to persuade the AIC to retract Lee’s award, Mrs. Logan became even more vocal in her attacks on the museum and on modern art, commenting to a local newspaper that, “A sane person leaves this exhibit feeling the art world has the jitters or delirium tremens.”

By January 1936, Mrs. Logan’s sentiments had spread sufficiently throughout Chicago society to give rise to a vigilante group called Sanity in Art, whose purpose was to, as she described, “solidify the wave of public indignation against such trash as is shown in our art galleries.” To this end, Mrs. Logan appointed herself a champion of academic painting in the United States, publishing at her own expense a monograph,

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Sanity in Art, in 1937 (fig. 101), which soundly attacked expressionism, abstraction, cubism, and surrealism, while extolling the virtues of representational art. Mrs. Logan’s book continued in the tradition of early Chicago art critics who often interchanged and misrepresented artistic movements such as expressionism and abstraction with “modernism.” By continuing these misrepresentations, even a work such as Lee’s, which is not in the tradition of any of the aforementioned movements, was disparaged. In her book, Mrs. Logan described her ire with the AIC:

About seven years ago . . . [Mr. Logan and I] found we were no longer in complete accord with the judges regarding [the] selections [for the Logan Prize Fund] . . . With the advent of the new French art influence we made no public comment although we suffered in bewildered silence over many things that seemed to us gross miscarriages of artistic justice. For after all we felt we must rely upon those in charge, and out of respect for the dignity of this great Institute, which meant and does mean so much to us, we could not bring ourselves to utter any criticism. As we followed the trend of so-called Modernism, however, we began to suspect that Chicago had been tricked. By reason of its very prominence the city attracted imposters who considered it a prime objective in a campaign to foist upon the public generally things of doubtful value, aided by a publicity campaign which sought to destroy all former artistic standards.47

Katherine Kuh’s Gallery became an instant target for Mrs. Logan’s Society for Sanity in Art, as well as for Eleanor Jewett, an art critic for the Chicago Tribune. Jewett published columns berating Katherine Kuh’s efforts to establish a market for modern art in the city with headlines reading “Kuh-Kuh Must Go.” Members of the Sanity in Art

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group frequently stormed into the gallery during exhibitions, loudly disparaging the art on display and heckling any customers who happened to be present. They slung insults at Mexican artist Carlos Merida at a showing of his work, and generally tried to disrupt business at the gallery. 48 Their harassment culminated in the smashing of one of the gallery’s large street-facing windows during an exhibition of surrealist Joan Miró’s art in November 1938. The group’s obvious objective was to put Kuh out of business and prevent further exposure in Chicago of the kind of avant-garde art exhibited at the gallery. Kuh later reminisced, “We were among Philistines then. I think I must have been insane to run an experimental gallery in Chicago at that time. I would never try to buck the tide that way again.” 49 Branches of Sanity in Art began to organize across the

48 Merida was also Kuh’s lover at the time. Nathan Kernan, “Kuh's coups,” Art in America <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_4_94/ai_n26823693/> (Accessed January 19th 2010).
49 Avis Berman, “An Interview with Katherine Kuh,” William McNaught, ed., Archives of American Art Journal 27, No. 3 (1987): 8. Kuh closed her gallery in 1943 when the war interrupted the flow of art from Europe. Two years later, she took a position in the Art Institute’s public relations department. However, her contributions to the promotion of modern art hardly slowed with her gallery’s closing. In 1949 Kuh organized the first post-war exhibition of modern art in Chicago at the AIC, and in 1954 she became the first female curator of European art and sculpture at the museum. Kuh’s biographer, Avis Berman, reports that Kuh reminisced on the following regarding her career. She said, During the 1930s the term ‘modern art’ was anathema in the Midwest—a label of opprobrium. To sell contemporary work was an uphill push all the way, and only a blithe neophyte would have been brash enough to consider trying it. It almost seemed as if the daring imagination that Chicago had expended on commerce exhausted its ability to cope with visual innovations either than in the field of architecture, which, to be sure depended on the city’s industrial life. Some years later, when I was a curator at the Art Institute, I encountered the opposite dilemma. By then a handful of wealthy trustees (who were also avid collectors) [i.e., Ryerson, et al.] blindly championed modern art to the exclusion of the past, even opposing the acquisition of a Tintoretto. They found it ‘old-fashioned’
country in such major metropolises as San Francisco, Boston, and Milwaukee. Alfred G.
Pelikan, director of the Milwaukee Art Institute, complained in an August 25th 1939 letter
to Museum of Modern Art director Alfred Barr:

For some time I have been subjected to criticism by
a growing group of local ‘Sanity in Art’ members
who have been successful in getting one of the local
newspapers to sponsor a campaign against modern
art. The latest move is to try to condemn the
inclusion of works of art by such men as Gauguin,
Cézanne, and Van Gogh for study purposes in
schools.  

Instances such as these exemplify the fierce opposition between conventional and avant-
garde artistic tastes which made acceptance of German Expressionist art by cities in the
Midwest, even major urban centers like Chicago, slower than New York.

Redefining Deutschtum

If not for the region’s historic German roots and thriving Germanic culture, the
Brücke’s graphic art might never have found a receptive audience in Chicago. Germans
first settled in Chicago in the 1830s, but it was not until 1848, when failed political
revolts in German states drove away so many citizens, that they started to arrive in
significant numbers in the United States. Between the years 1848 and 1914, nearly six
million Germans relocated to the United States, thereby doubling the German-American
population at the time. The number of German-born immigrants in Chicago reached a
peak of 191,168 in 1914, and comprised more than fifteen percent of the city’s total

and out of step with contemporary life. Modern art had

population. Although their immediate reason for leaving Germany was political turmoil, their underlying motive, like that of later German immigrants, was largely economic. In general, the Germans who arrived in Chicago in 1848 or soon thereafter (called the “Forty-Eighters”) were well-educated and skilled in a variety of occupations, including craftsmen, mechanics, technicians, and small shop owners. By 1900, Germans in Chicago accounted for over one-half of the city’s bakers and butchers, one-third of the masons, one-third of the iron and steel workers and machinists, one-third of the blacksmiths, and nearly one-third of the local officials.51

Comparatively speaking, Germans began arriving in New York as early as the late seventeenth century. Manhattan’s German population by 1910 reached 278,137 (Chicago boasted 182,289 German immigrants that year). New York, since 1870 the only other major American city with a higher population of German-born citizens than Chicago’s, served as a major entry port for German immigrants entering the United States, many of whom simply stopped and stayed in the city in order to find work immediately. Germans in both cities settled into ethnic neighborhoods in which they established German-language newspapers, grocery stores, churches, and schools. This emphasis on preserving their culture was intended to ease the burden of transition in their new homeland while maintaining ethnic ties to their native country. The early arrival of Germans in New York meant that these neighborhoods and institutions were established

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long before German immigrants began moving west to the relatively less populated states of the nation’s Midwest region.\textsuperscript{52}

The Midwest’s remote nature, however, was advantageous for maintaining the integrity of such neighborhoods and establishments. Conversely, New York’s large, otherwise diverse population meant that the daily life of German-born immigrants was shared with a greater variety of other ethnic groups. In addition, having been established in the city for so much longer than their Midwest counterparts, Germans living in New York more readily experienced the deteriorating consequences of generational change, cultural moderation, and gradual integration of the once distinguishable group into the broader society. This process was further hastened by anti-German sentiment during the First World War, but was already well underway, scholars agree, in longer established German enclaves such as New York before war clouds loomed on the horizon.\textsuperscript{53} For this reason, Germans living in New York were more quickly assimilated into American culture (“Americanized”) than in other parts of the country, and future generations struggled to maintain connections to their Germanic ethnicity.\textsuperscript{54} As a result, as


\textsuperscript{54} Thernstrom, 413.
emigration historian Stephan Thernstrom has observed, “The large cities of the Midwest became the most characteristically German urban environments [in America].” By 1920, just over thirty percent of the German-born population in the United States was settled in the Mid-Atlantic region, while over sixty-two percent resided in the Midwest.

In 1841, Jews began permanently settling in Chicago, the vast majority of whom were from Germany. Eastern European Jews began arriving in the city after 1871. By 1880 they constituted only a small portion of Chicago’s 10,000 Jews. However, after the brutal pogroms in the Russian empire in 1881 and the repressive May Laws of 1882, Russian and Polish Jews arrived in the United States in large numbers. By 1930, nearly eighty percent of Chicago’s 272,000 Jews were of Eastern European extract. New York, on the other hand, retained higher populations of both Eastern European Jews and German Jews than Chicago. These immigrants formed largely self-sufficient, Yiddish-speaking settlements in the city.

Christian German culture found a strong foothold in Chicago, as the Germans were somewhat “group conscious.” This trait led to the early establishment of German-owned theaters, restaurants, breweries, unions, and grocery stores, as well as German-language schools, teacher training seminaries (Töchter-Institut), and newspapers, including Abendpost founded in 1889. Additionally, by 1900 there were 122 German

55 Ibid.
57 For more on this, see chapter four of this dissertation.
59 Cutler, 70.
churches in Chicago.\textsuperscript{60} Thernstrom has noted that cities large enough to support a German church were more likely to expand their German population over time, and intensify their ethnic character than communities that lacked the cultural reinforcement of religion.\textsuperscript{61} This “ethnic character” was perhaps best exemplified by the numerous, highly-attended German clubs and associations established throughout Chicago known as \textit{Vereine}. The Germania Club, for example, was founded in Chicago in 1865 with the intent to “bring together American citizens of German extraction, and to foster and perpetuate German cultural ideals and the fine inheritance known as \textit{Gemütlichkeit} (the comfortable life).”\textsuperscript{62} Similar organizations were dedicated to the preservation and advocacy of German literature and music (\textit{Kulturverein}), art (\textit{Kunstverein}), and athletics (\textit{Turnverein}). This collective effort by German-born immigrants to maintain their ties to the Fatherland while living in the United States developed a uniquely German-American culture, commonly referred to as \textit{Deutschtum}.

The cohesion of German-Americanism that had united so many immigrants from Germany in the United States at the turn of the century began, however, to crack under the strains and suspicions associated with Germanic culture during the First World War. By 1914, most people in the United States who were active participants in German-American culture, Chicago included, had actually been born in this country, and naturally

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid. By 1860, there were approximately twenty German churches in Manhattan. See Richard Haberstroh, \textit{The German Churches of Metropolitan New York} (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2000).

\textsuperscript{61} Thernstrom, 412-13.

felt themselves to be “one-hundred-percent American.” But Germany’s central role as an enemy state in the war was a source of great embarrassment for many young German-Americans. Ironically, the immediate effect of the outbreak of war in Europe was to draw German Americans closer together. The slow disintegration of Deutschtum was temporarily alleviated. Most young German-Americans took up the position of American non-interference and strict neutrality in regard to the war, thereby avoiding the awkward position of advocating for aggression toward their ancestral land while still remaining concurrent with popular public opinion for an impartial American stance toward the fighting. The Germanic Club of Chicago advised its membership to avoid showing public partiality for either side of the conflict, but changed its name to the Lincoln Club in May 1918 to avoid ethnic implication after the close of the war.

This stance toward impartiality was integrated into German-America’s revised adaptation of Deutschtum. However, it was a position that could not be maintained as the war progressed. German-Americans came to be regarded as traitors in America and deserters in Germany. Citizens in Germany were as much appalled by German-Americans crusading in favor of strict neutrality as were sympathizers for the Allied’s cause in the United States. Neither side understood, nor wished to understand, the unique brand of Deutschtum which these German-Americans adopted. To Germans in Germany, Deutschtum was understood as support of the Fatherland; to Allied sympathizers and a growing population committed to the war effort in America, it stood for disloyalty to the

64 Ibid.
Constitution and the traditions of the United States. Only to the German-Americans themselves did Deutschtum still appear as something both laudable and innocuous.\(^66\) Being all but disowned by their brethren in Europe and treated with suspicion and mistrust by their fellow Americans took its toll on the German-American psyche. As a result, it became the tendency among German-Americans in the post-World War I period to drop the traditional hyphen from their designation as “German-Americans.” As historian John A. Hawgood notes, when the hyphen, which German descendants had for so long used to unite their two cultures, was dissolved, their Germanism was thereby divided from their Americanism, indicating that they felt they could no longer maintain both.\(^67\)

Remarkably, German Vereinsleben, or “club life,” lasted throughout the First World War, the interwar period, and World War II. Between the wars, German Americans continued to support numerous German clubs, including school clubs, shooting clubs, national and regional clubs, as well as men’s choirs and mutual aid societies. In 1935 Chicago maintained 452 active German clubs. Many of these organizations were preoccupied with fundraising for the benefit of war-torn Germany, including the Germania Club (still referred to as the Lincoln Club at this time). At the same time, emigration from Germany to the United States declined to insignificant levels, due to the devastating economic effects of the Great Depression and the passage of the National Origins Act in 1924. This legislation instituted admission quotas for immigrants trying to enter the U.S. by using the 1890 census to determine the population of a particular nationality group; the government then permitted only two percent of that

\(^{66}\) Hawgood, 293-4.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., 295.
population to enter the country. In addition, the act completely barred immigration for those whom the Supreme Court prohibited from obtaining U.S. citizenship, specifically Asians. The discriminatory National Origins Act drastically lowered the total quota of immigration, from 358,000 to 164,000 people annually.\(^{68}\)

During the early 1930s, while German Americans remained interested in the economic revival of Germany, they typically offered little support for Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. With the onset of the Second World War, club enrollment gradually declined and non-Germans began to be admitted. German Americans once again felt they had to distance themselves from their heritage.\(^{69}\) In Chicago, the more than two-hundred German musical societies of 1900 had dwindled to ninety-five by 1935, and the number of German daily and weekly publications steadily dropped from 201 in 1920 to 128 in 1930, eighty-one in 1940 to forty-two in 1950, thus signifying waning interest in the preservation of Deutschtum and the erosion of German American cohesiveness in the city.\(^{70}\) Even the arrival of some 130,000 German and Austrian refugees in the United States after World War II offered only temporary reinforcement of ethnic services and clubs in either Chicago or New York. Overwhelmingly Jewish, these displaced persons formed their own organizations within the cities and were unusually assimilation-minded.\(^{71}\) It is reasonable to assume that as attempts to preserve Germanic culture in

\(^{68}\) Congress abolished the national origins quota system in the 1960s on the grounds that the legislation was biased and unfair. Robert Paul McCaffery, Islands of Deutschtum (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 109.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 140.

\(^{70}\) Thernstrom, 423.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
Chicago subsided, enthusiasm for promoting German art such the Brücke artists’ suffered a negative impact.  

GERMAN AMERICAN INFLUENCE AND COLLECTING AT THE ART INSTITUTE, 1938-1948

The AIC Acquires Brücke Prints

When the National Socialist Party came to power in Germany in 1933, German American loyalties were tested. That same year, the notorious “Society of the Friends of New Germany” was formed in New York, marking the first open appeal to Nazi sympathizers in this country. The emergence of such a group prompted an ensuing anti-Nazi boycott that quickly spread across the nation. By 1934, a stream of immigrants fleeing the brutalities of Nazi intolerance began to reach the United States. Many of them were German Jews or opponents of the National Socialist government. Their stories of Nazi atrocities helped to strengthen the boycott. Moreover, these also reawakened suspicion of German Americans, even as a growing number of this group reacted in condemnation of National Socialists and their supporters in the United States.  

Resulting distrust in the following years, particularly at the height of the Second World War, led to the requirement of some 300,000 German-born residents living in America to register with the federal government under the Alien Registration Act of 1940. This legality also allowed for restriction of their travel and property ownership rights, even if they were now United States citizens. Under the still active Alien Enemy Act of 1798,

72 Although German American culture in New York was also to be negatively impacted by the Second World War, it should be remembered that German art advocates such as Neumann and Barr had continued to organize exhibits of modern German art in Manhattan throughout the 1930s. See chapter two of this dissertation.  
73 Hawgood, 304-5.
the American government interned an estimated 11,000 German immigrants between the years 1940 and 1948 in two designated camps at Fort Douglas, Utah, and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Approximately five hundred were arrested without warrants, while others were held without charge for months and interrogated without benefit of legal counsel. Likewise, convictions were not eligible for appeal.

A witness and participant to these changes and historic struggles by German Americans was Chicago hotelier Emil Eitel. Eitel was born in Stuttgart in 1865 and immigrated to the United States in 1891. Settling in Chicago, he quickly established a German imports business in partnership with his brother Karl (1871-1954). The rapid success of this business allowed Eitel to purchase a hotel, restaurant, and a wholesale wines and liquors firm by 1892. Like many German-born American citizens, Eitel retained loyal ties to his home country, and actively promoted German culture and interests in the Chicago area. He was a member of the Germania Club, the Schwabenverein (a German social club), and the Chicago Turnverein (German athletic club). Eitel both initiated and funded the building of the former Bismarck Gardens (in the tradition of Germany's Biergarten) at Broadway and Grace Streets in downtown Chicago in 1893 (fig. 102), and provided monetary aid to the International Red Cross during post-war European relief initiatives, especially those intended for the Stuttgart

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74 This number is distinctly disproportionate to the roughly 200,000 Japanese Americans who were interned across the nation after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th 1941. See William Kramer, “A Sordid Time in Our History: Internment of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor,” L.A. Daily, April 12, 1989, J7, col. 1.
75 Ibid.
76 Bismarck Gardens was renamed Marigold Gardens in 1915 in response to growing anti-German sentiment in Chicago during the First World War.
region, after World War I. Because his father, younger brothers, and other members of his immediate family were still living in Germany, Eitel was likely to be less concerned with the accusations of disloyalty resounding from both sides of the Atlantic during wartime than were those with no ties to the fatherland. Chicago’s cultural sector had long been associated with the Germans of the city; the founding of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1891, for example, was largely due to their enterprise, and the ninety-member orchestra remained predominantly German well after the turn of the century.

Eitel, as an active member of the German community in Chicago and a patron of various civic arts organizations, was both a benefactor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a Life Member of the Art Institute.

In 1938, Eitel donated a gift of twelve graphic works by the Brücke to the library collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, including a 1918 woodcut by Heckel titled *Girl by the Sea* (fig. 103) (also at the Museum of Modern Art), Mueller’s 1923 lithograph *Nude Girl under Trees*, Nolde’s *Near Sonderburg* of 1907 (fig. 104) (also at MoMA), and Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1908 etching *Old Dresden Houses* (fig. 105). Though little information is recorded regarding this gift, accession records indicate that Eitel purchased his prints from the married couple Johanna Ackermann (1889-1956) and Walter Sauerwein (1889-1968). Ackermann and Sauerwein were German art dealers active first in Frankfurt and then by 1933 in Munich, as well as private collectors. The couple specialized in both collecting and selling modern and old master graphics; their collection included examples by Käthe Kollwitz, the Expressionists, and French prints of the

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78 Cutler, 72.
eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The extensive inventory from which they traded was inherited by Ingeborg Tremmel af ter Sauerwein’s death in 1968.  

Eitel’s attraction to the Brücke’s graphic art may point to his mutual interest in German old master prints, which, as we have seen, provided the Brücke artists with aesthetic influence and inspiration to experiment with graphic mediums. Eitel often donated funds with other like-minded patrons in order for the Art Institute to purchase rare and costly examples of old master prints. Significantly, later in 1947, he contributed monetarily to the AIC’s acquisition of a hand-colored fifteenth-century German woodcut titled *Man of Sorrows* (c. 1565-70) (fig. 106) by an unknown artist. *Man of Sorrows* depicts a grief-stricken Christ with raised palms displaying bleeding wounds on his palms, torso, and forehead from a crown of thorns. His head is encircled by a red halo, while the instruments of his torture are displayed significantly behind him, including a spear, crucifix and nails, and whips.

These types of early medieval woodcuts had served a practical use as personal devotional items during the fifteenth century, and for this reason, have not frequently survived. Their historical and cultural significance, combined with their uncommon appearance on the print market, has made them particularly valued and expensive purchases. German print enthusiasts such as Eitel may have correlated the *Man of Sorrows*’ “primitive” aesthetic and stark simplicity as prototypical of the Brücke’s own graphic style, evident in Nolde’s 1912 woodcut of a similar subject titled *Prophet* (see fig. 41) (in the Museum of Modern Art’s collection). Nolde’s composition portrays a

Christ-like figure with a heavy brow, tortured eyes, and a heavily bearded face in broad, black outlines. The crude, unfinished appearance of this work brings to mind the Man of Sorrows’ naïve, unpolished character, which clearly appealed to Eitel’s twin tastes for old master and expressionist twentieth-century works.

Eitel’s aesthetic tastes were not unlike Museum of Modern Art patron Abby Aldrich Rockefeller’s in that both collectors acquired compositions by the Brücke that reflect rather modest preferences in terms of decorum. Because Eitel and Mrs. Rockefeller chose relatively traditional subjects, such as bathers and landscapes, such images as Müller’s undated lithograph Two Bathers on Shore (see fig. 86), illustrating two nude women seated casually beside a lake with plant fronds arching above them, can be found in both museums’ holdings. Although there were no other overlaps between the two institutions’ print collections at this time, similar subjects as Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1908 etching Old Dresden Houses (see fig. 105), an image from Eitel’s gift to the Art Institute portraying a sketch-like street scene reminiscent of Rembrandt’s etchings of cottages and windmills in the Dutch countryside, also appear in MoMA’s graphic holdings. Schmidt-Rottluff’s impression, for example, is in the same vein as Heckel’s 1914 tonal etching Antwerp (see fig. 68), a contribution to the Museum of Modern Art from Mrs. Rockefeller depicting a similarly rendered populated plaza and waterway. As we will see, as the Brücke’s graphic work gained more renown in the United States, younger collectors would purchase more broadly across the group’s collective oeuvre, indicating that the relatively more familiar compositions of bathers and landscapes favored by Mrs. Rockefeller and Emil Eitel were most likely a generational preference.
Establishing a Collection

There was no curatorial oversight of the Art Institute’s growing inventory of prints until its compilation of graphic works on paper was separated from the library collection in 1940 under the direction of Carl O. Schniewind. It is fitting that Schniewind (1900-1957), the AIC’s first curator of prints, would be an American of German extraction, as well as a promoter of modern art. Although born in New York, Schniewind’s mother relocated the family to her native Germany after the death of Schniewind’s father in 1914. His father had been a prominent chemical engineer who studied art as a hobby. In Europe, Carl Schniewind began his studies in medicine at the University of Zurich and in Bern, Switzerland, before changing fields to art history. He received his Ph.D. at the university in Heidelberg, Germany, where he amassed an extensive collection of Daumier prints and drawings. In 1933, Schniewind sold his entire collection at auction in order to support his new bride, Heidi Bretscher. As newlyweds, the couple lived in Paris until 1935 where Schniewind could be close to the French art scene. That same year, Schniewind joined the Brooklyn Museum as librarian and curator of the department of prints and drawings. During his time at the Brooklyn Museum, he oversaw the organization and expansion of the department of prints and drawings there (which he similarly separated from the library collections in 1937), and he promoted the acquisition of modern prints, including works by the Brücke.\(^8\)

Before leaving New York in 1940 to head the prints and drawings department at the AIC, Schniewind took on the task of cataloguing the Museum of Modern Art’s graphic collection at the request and personal expense of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. His association with both the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Modern Art provided Schniewind with connections to leading New York print dealers including Curt Valentin, Karl Nierendorf, and J.B. Neumann, all of whom became invaluable sources through whom Schniewind would purchase the majority of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Brücke print collection.

Today, the Art Institute’s holdings of Die Brücke prints totals 110 works, including thirty-four by Nolde, twenty-six by Kirchner, twenty-three by Pechstein, ten by Schmidt-Rottluff, nine by Mueller, and eight by Heckel. Decades of further acquisitions have made the collection diverse and wide-ranging, expanding on Eitel’s original gift of subdued compositions to encompass a fuller range of the Brücke’s graphic techniques and more avant-garde subjects. These include renowned impressions such as Nolde’s 1907 color lithograph Tingel-Tangel III (fig. 107), Pechstein’s 1912 color lithograph The Dance (see fig. 31), Kirchner’s 1918 woodcut Mother Müller (fig. 108), and Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1914 woodcut Kneeling Woman (fig. 109).

The latter, for example, depicting a nude woman combing her hair, exemplifies Schmidt-Rottluff’s aesthetic style at the height of his experience within the Brücke. The woman’s sensual presence, full breasts, and his emphasis on heavy black outline demonstrates Schmidt-Rottluff’s search for a simple, monumental nude form. With the woodcut medium, the artist relies on the flatness of the wood to accentuate the geometricized and simplified qualities of the kneeling woman. In contrast to Eitel’s gift
of Schmidt-Rottluff’s early etching, *Old Dresden Houses*, reminiscent of Rembrandt’s sketchy style and quaint subject matter, *Kneeling Woman* reveals Schmidt-Rottluff’s development of his own individual avant-garde style. Additions such as these have made the Art Institute’s holdings of Brücke graphics a notable study collection with examples that encompass each of the artists’ individual oeuvres.

To the present day, funds for purchases of Brücke prints have come most often from the AIC’s formidable Print and Drawing Club. The club was established in December 1922 to collect prints, manuscripts, catalogues, and drawings from all periods of art history for presentation in the department of prints and drawings, and to encourage private collecting of works on paper. The members pledged sums of $300 to $500 annually, providing a considerable fund for the museum’s purchase of prints. Schniewind was successful in cultivating the members of the Print and Drawing Club, who respected the curator’s breadth of knowledge concerning works on paper, his connections with notable print dealers, and his savvy in taking advantage of the art market in order to purchase outstanding modern and old master examples.  

After the war, Schniewind actively collected Brücke prints in order to improve their representation in Chicago’s collection, as well as to acknowledge the Brücke’s role within the modernist canon. As we have seen, works of art by so-called denounced “degenerate” artists in Germany were finding their way to the United States at this time, and were available for purchase at bargain prices. Schniewind took advantage of this

81 Art Institute of Chicago, “The Print Department,” *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951)* 17, No. 2 (February 1923): 20. Further information was sought from the Art Institute of Chicago Archives regarding the makeup and identity of the original members of the Print and Drawing Club; unfortunately, these records were unable to be located.
historic opportunity to build up the Art Institute’s collection of Brücke and modern German prints, largely neglected in previous years due to the board’s reluctance to collect works other than French. In total, twenty-one Brücke works were purchased using funds from the club during these years. These included examples from each of the principal Brücke members save Mueller, whose art had become short in supply due to his early death and destruction of his works by the Nazi party. Prominent examples acquired include Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1914 woodcut *Mourning Women by the Sea* (see fig. 24) and Kirchner’s 1908 etching *Two Sisters* (fig. 110).

The AIC’s collection was further supplemented by the gift of eight Brücke prints from the publisher Henry Regnery (1912-1996) in 1947. Regnery was a German American from Chicago, born to a family of textiles makers. He obtained a degree in mechanical engineering from MIT in 1934, and later conducted postgraduate work at the University of Bonn in Germany and Harvard University. Regnery decided not to follow his father into the textile industry, but rather established his own publishing firm, the Henry Regnery Company in Hinsdale, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, in 1947. In an undated essay titled “Growing Up in Hinsdale: A Memoir,” Regnery describes his childhood experience in Hinsdale as:

> Concerned with matters of the spirit, of literature and the arts, but the driving concern of the community, like that of the Chicago area of which it was a part, was business. Culture was simply not a calculated part of everyday experience. There was no sense, as Goethe put it, that ‘One ought, everyday at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.’

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Despite his eventual involvement with the Arts Club of Chi and his contribution of Nolde’s prints to the Art Institute of Chicago, Regnery was not a serious collector of art.

Regnery’s principal legacy as a publisher was to produce books that gave shape and definition to an emerging conservatism in the United States. As a second generation German American, Regnery was not sympathetic to the Nazi regime, but he was very sympathetic toward Germans. Among his first publications were a series of pamphlets condemning the harsh treatment of German Americans and Japanese Americans in popular opinion, as well as in the United States federal government’s post-war policies toward the former Axis countries. Similarly, Regnery’s first book-length publication was by Jewish socialist author Victor Gollancz, entitled *In Darkest Germany* (1947). Gollancz’s book criticized Allied bombings of German citizens late in the war, and treatment of the country in the war’s aftermath.84

Regnery established personal friendships with published European critics of liberalism such as Wyndham Lewis, Roy Campbell, Ezra Pound, Ernst Juenger, Gabriel Marcel, and Max Picard. Indeed, it was the Swiss philosopher Max Picard to whom Regnery owed his direction as a publisher. In the aftermath of World War II, Regnery sought to understand the destruction and anguish wrought by the war. After reading Picard’s work, Regnery saw book publishing as the best means to challenge prevailing “liberal” opinions of the postwar generation. He described Picard’s book *Hitler in Our Selves*, which he published in 1947, as “a study of Hitlerism, not as an exclusively German phenomenon, but as an expression of the sickness of the West, which had taken a particularly virulent form in Germany.” Picard’s message was concretized for the young

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84 Nelson, XIII.
publisher by the events during and after the war. Regnery came to the conclusion that the United States’ involvement in the war had been inherently detrimental to the German people, and, in the late 1940s and subsequent decade, adopted the widely-held belief among U.S. audiences that the country’s defeat had merely opened the door for further expansion of communism from Soviet Russia. This belief, coupled with Regnery’s sympathetic stance toward the German populace, became a defining characteristic of his career.85

Along this line, Regnery strongly criticized contemporary accounts of American involvement in the war, claiming that President Roosevelt had orchestrated international relations and events in order to engage the country in the fight. In the fall of 1950, the Regnery Company published historian and journalist William Henry Chamberlin’s America’s Second Crusade, its first of many written accounts of the origin, causes, and impact of the Second World War. This book, according to the author, denounced America’s victory in the Second World War as “a colossal political and moral failure. Its net result has been to strengthen an equally vicious and more dangerous form of totalitarianism as a substitute for those we destroyed,” referring to the advancement of the USSR into Eastern Europe.86

In the years to follow, Regnery continued this line of posturing, publishing such works as Charles C. Tansill’s Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941 (1952), followed by Husband E. Kimmel’s Admiral Kimmel’s Story (1955). The latter title, written by one of the two commanders at Pearl Harbor at the time of the Japanese attack, charged that he himself had been made a political scapegoat in a

85 Ibid., XIV-XVI.
86 Quoted by Nelson, XVII.
Congressional investigation of the December 7th 1941 bombing. A January 23rd 1942 report by the Roberts Commission charged Kimmel with dereliction of duty and errors of judgment during the attack. Because the Admiral’s persistent attempts to appeal these judgments were continually denied, Regnery sought to provide him with a forum to clear his name and “set the historical record straight.” Regnery compounded his vilification of American involvement in the Second World War into a political attitude which fostered the idea that the German people needed to be “rescued” from the consequences of National Socialism and the Third Reich. He alleged that Nazi rule had not only stained international perception of the German people, but that devastation from the war and the Allies’ treatment of Germany after the war would prevent the country from ever again being a productive and equal member of the European community of nations.

Because few records remain regarding Regnery’s patronage of the Art Institute, the motives for his gift of Nolde’s prints is most readily interpreted from the vantage of his overt political posturing. Nothing else of substance was uncovered in the course of this study’s research regarding his motives for art collecting. Written requests to the publisher’s surviving family in Alexandria, Virginia, were either returned or went unanswered. However, it is in a political light that Regnery’s patronage to the Art Institute can be viewed. Regnery’s gift to the museum consisted solely of prints by Nolde made in 1907, including Alice (fig. 111) (also at the Museum of Modern Art), Kneeling Woman (fig. 112), and Somber Head of a Man (see fig. 37). The majority of these prints were purchased from Curt Valentin’s Buchholz Gallery in New York,

87 Ibid.
Although no dates of purchase are indicated in accession records. Parallels can be drawn between Regnery's concern for the German people, whom he felt had been "victimized" by Nazi rule, and Nolde's denouncement as "degenerate" by Nazi officials.

It is necessary, however, to address the problematic issue of Nolde's own equivocal association with the Nazi party. As discussed in the previous chapter, Nolde had signed a declaration of allegiance to the National Socialist party in 1933. However, he had expressed interest in the Nazis as early as 1920, when he joined a regional branch of the political party in Denmark. Although Nolde made recurrent claims that art and politics had nothing to do with one another, his motivations for joining the National Socialists were based on his naïve belief that this association would highlight him as the embodiment of German artistic ideals. His political "career" was motivated by little more than blatant fame-seeking. On the other hand, certain aspects of Nolde's persona did align with Nazi principles. Art historian Dorothea Dietrich points out that the artist, who came from Nordschleswig near the German-Danish border, often expressed anti-Semitic views. For example, in 1934 Nolde commented bitterly on Max Liebermann's rejection of his 1910 painting on a Christian theme, Pentecost (fig. 113), from an exhibition at the Prussian Academy of Arts: "I was battling against the Jewish powers that rule all the arts." Additionally, as Christine Temin has observed, Nolde's pride in coming from a long line of farmers ties in with Nazi ideas of "blood and soil," as does his

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interest in native folklore. Both appear as themes in his art, although not necessarily in any of the impressions gifted by Regnery to the Art Institute.

Clearly, Nolde harbored notions of national superiority and racial purity. Indeed, the artist’s views on this subject were complicated. A self-absorbed loner, he sincerely believed that Germany was superior to other surrounding countries. Similarly, he felt that every race had various and intrinsic qualities that were inherently unique. For this reason, he maintained opinions that emphasized his Aryan belief that any “mixing” of races would “dilute” or ultimately destroy characteristics indigenous to a race. During the six months Nolde spent in the South Seas in 1913, for example, he created numerous drawings and watercolor studies of the “tribal” life he witnessed. These studies were later worked into full-scale compositions, such as his 1917 woodcut Flirtation (fig. 114) depicting the duality of the sexes in which a long-haired young woman sensuously bares her breasts to a young man. Possibly due to these racial beliefs, Nolde did not adapt the vocabulary of South Seas native art into his own work, choosing instead to remain a witness who recorded passively scenes of daily “tribal” life through the filter of eyes trained in Northern European art. Nolde wrote in his autobiography published in 1967 that:

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90 “Blood and soil” (Blut und Boden) refers to a nineteenth-century Prussian ideological concept centered on ethnicity based on descent (blood) and homeland (soil). It romanticized the relationship of a people to their ancestral land, and placed high esteem on the virtues of rural living as opposed to urban life. The German expression was popularized by Hitler’s Minister of Food and Agriculture, Richard Walther Darré, during the 1930s as a means of winning over popular support of middle-class German citizens. For more on this concept and its relationship to art, see Peter Adam, Art of the Third Reich (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992).

My many color drawings and paintings that I created in the South Seas were formed without being influenced by exotic formal vocabulary. Yes, even my small wooden sculptures, created ‘with what material was at hand’ among the islands and tribes of primitive native populations, remained in their mood and depiction as heimatlich North German as medieval German sculptures are—and I too am.\textsuperscript{92}

*Heimatlich*, meaning native or local, is used to reference characteristics of one’s homeland. Nolde’s emphasis on this nature of his work may have been prompted by Nazi attacks on his art as being “tainted” by what they termed “inferior negroid” influences.\textsuperscript{93}

Of course, as we know, the Nazis ultimately deemed Nolde’s art “degenerate,” destroyed many of his works, and forbade him to paint. Based on Regnery’s re-thinking of the events of the Second World War, Nolde’s reports of shock, outrage, and feelings of betrayal in response to this treatment may have directly appealed to the publisher’s sympathy for Germans who had been “victimized” by the National Socialists. In this manner, Regnery most likely viewed his patronage of Nolde’s work as a show of solidarity and sympathy for the artist. Regnery’s version of World War II coupled with his sympathetic attitude toward Nolde’s plight sets him up in contrast to the experiences of New York art dealers J.B. Neumann, Karl Nierendorf, and Curt Valentin who were German Jewish émigrés. While Regnery looked for “historical truth” in alternative theories regarding the victims of the Second World War, Neumann, Nierendorf, and


Valentin survived the very real aspects of discrimination, threats, seizure of property, and forcible expulsion, and escaped Nazi Germany with their lives. Their witness to these events is testament to historic truths that Regnery felt compelled to question. Likewise, while Regnery based his patronage of Nolde’s art on his political beliefs, the New York art dealers advocated for the Brücke artists in the United States in order to preserve a piece of German cultural life that might otherwise have been completely destroyed by Nazi rule.

A NEW DECADE FOR THE BRÜCKE, 1949-1959

Economic Recovery in Germany: Fresh Interest, New Demand, and Art Market Changes

By the end of the Second World War much of Europe had been devastated. Fighting had extended throughout most of the continent, encompassing an area even larger than that of the First World War. In Germany, sustained aerial bombardment had left major cities such as Dresden and Berlin in ruins. Industrial production was particularly hard-hit, breaking the country’s economic structure, and leaving millions of people homeless. Heavily targeted transportation infrastructure, such as railways, bridges, and roads, and the general destruction of agricultural production and merchant shipping led to conditions of starvation and mass shortages of consumer goods. As most Allied European nations had exhausted their treasuries during the war, none were in a position to offer assistance for reconstruction to their neighbors, let alone to the former enemy nation.

The only major world power whose infrastructure had not been significantly harmed in the war was the United States. The country had entered the fighting later than
other Allied nations and had not suffered the physical damage or destruction of infrastructure and industrial production as had Europe, Japan, or China. In fact, the war years had seen the highest yield of economic growth in the nation’s history as American factories were retooled to support the war effort of the United States and that of her allies. These plants quickly returned to the production of consumer goods in the post-war period. After the scarcity of such products during the war years, a boom in consumer spending created a thriving American economy. The formation of the communist Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe, combined with the ongoing dire conditions across western Europe, prompted the United States government to consider German recovery of primary importance to American foreign interests and security. President Harry S. Truman decreed that “an orderly and prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany.”

He appointed General George C. Marshall as Secretary of State in 1947 and designated such a plan for recovery as Marshall’s principal task.

Prior to Marshall’s appointment, the United States was already providing a great deal to aid Europe in recovery. Much of this aid manifested as lend-lease agreements and the continued presence of American troops in Europe to help restore infrastructure. Numerous bi-lateral agreements were signed, including the Truman Doctrine’s pledge to provide military assistance to both Greece and Turkey. The newly formed United Nations (established in 1945) also spearheaded a series of humanitarian and relief efforts under the directive of the organization’s Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in order to provide help to countries liberated from Axis powers, Germany

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included. The majority of the UNRRA’s relief money was funded by the United States. However, while all these were worthwhile endeavors toward European recovery, they lacked central organization and comprehensive planning. Europe and Germany’s fundamental needs far exceeded what these efforts could supply.\footnote{Tony Judt, Introduction, \textit{The Marshall Plan: Fifty Years After}, Martin Schain, ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 4.}

Consequently, Secretary Marshall initiated the European Recovery Program (commonly referred to as the Marshall Plan) in April 1948. The reconstruction plan, developed at a meeting of participating European states, was established on June 5\textsuperscript{th} 1947. The principal goals of the Marshall Plan were to rebuild, reestablish, and modernize European industrial and business facilities and practices based on contemporary high-efficiency American models, reduce artificial trade barriers, provide for the fundamental daily needs of citizens, and, in general, instill a sense of hope and self-reliance among European nations.\footnote{Barry Eichengreen, \textit{The European Economy since 1945: Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 64-73.} During the plan’s four-year period of enactment, the United States provided some $13 billion in economic and technical assistance to European countries participating in the plan, including Germany.\footnote{Alan S. Milward, \textit{The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 46.} By 1952 when the funding ended, the economy of every participant state had surpassed pre-war levels, thereby achieving output levels in 1951 that were thirty-five percent higher than in 1938.\footnote{Eichengreen, 57.} Economic historian Herman van der Wee concludes:

\begin{quote}
[The Marshall Plan] gave a new impetus to reconstruction in Western Europe and made a decisive contribution to the renewal of the transport system, the modernization of industrial and... 
\end{quote}
agricultural equipment, the resumption of normal production, the rising productivity, and the facilitation of intra-European trade.  

In the post-war era, Germany both recovered its economic prosperity as a result of successful ventures like the Marshall Plan, and rediscovered its pre-Nazi artistic past, an interest largely moved by nostalgia for the pre-war era. The 1950s saw development of a significant market for previously neglected artistic tendencies (such as German Expressionism) on an international scale. As more Germans continued to recuperate financially, enthusiastic collector demand for German Expressionist art such as the Brücke’s also drove up prices in America, as prices in Europe often commanded three times the amount of those in American galleries. The passing of two more Brücke artists during this time period—Max Pechstein died in 1955 and Emil Nolde in 1956—spurred even greater demand for their work while it was still widely available.

In May of 1949 the Art Institute of Chicago exhibited a small, comprehensive show of Kirchner’s prints, organized by Schniewind with the help of Curt Valentin. A letter from Schniewind to Valentin dated May 27th 1949 states: “The Kirchner show has been extremely popular . . . . Naturally I decided to extend [the exhibition] which seem[s]

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101 Ibid.
to create most interest.”  

Similarly, two major surveys of modern German art were held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1953 and 1957, and a wider selection of shows featuring German Expressionism held at commercial galleries at this time also helped to make this art more widely known and placed within a modernist art historical framework.  

These activities prompted J.B. Neumann to comment in 1957 that German Expressionist art had at last established irrefutable support in the United States. He wrote, “Today the Expressionists no longer need any special pleading for they have won their case. But though they are internationally established, they have been relatively neglected in America . . . . That neglect is now being corrected.”  

Neumann’s comments draw attention to favoritism shown to French art by American art audiences in previous decades, suggesting that this had been amended by the fresh interest then being shown for the Brücke’s art.

These factors taken together meant that demand, and therefore prices, steadily increased for German Expressionist art throughout the decade. By 1959, works by German Expressionist artists commanded prices three to ten times greater than those of the previous decade, and these were being achieved at much greater frequency at auctions. A. Deirdre Robson notes that in New York galleries, where artworks in Chicago holdings mostly originated, prices for Kirchner’s paintings appreciated on

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102 Carl O. Schniewind to Curt Valentin, May 27, 1949, Curt Valentin Papers, III.E.[5], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. The exhibition was extended through the fall of 1949.

103 Robson, 241. See chapter 2 for discussion of MoMA’s exhibitions and select commercial gallery exhibitions.

average from their historic high of $3,000 in 1949 to a range of $10,000 to $12,000 in 1958. Some works appreciated up to ten times their value, particularly after the 1953 German Expressionist exhibit at MoMA. At the same time, average prices for Nolde’s paintings rocketed from a mere $500 to $10,000, likely due to the artist’s recent death. Although graphic art sold for comparatively less than did oil paintings, the Brücke artists’ growing renown contributed to an escalation in their print prices, as well.105

Unfortunately, what is good for business is not necessarily good for non-profit institutions. During this decade of escalating interest in German Expressionist art, the Art Institute of Chicago was suffering financially. Whereas, in the previous decade, the AIC was able to acquire significant numbers of Brücke prints at fairly low prices, the postwar years saw a sharp decline in number of acquisitions of these works at the museum. Between the years 1949 and 1955, few graphic works by the Brücke entered the collection. This does not appear to be for lack of interest, however. On the contrary, a 1949 letter between Schniewind and Valentin on the subject of a group of Kirchner’s prints describes the institution’s predicament. On May 5th Schniewind wrote to the Manhattan dealer:

Dear Mr. Valentin,

What am I to do with you? You continue to tempt us, with a sorely riddled budget. I hardly get through with one purchase and then you come with something we want very badly and donors are dropping by the wayside like dead flies [sic].106

105 Robson, 241-2.
Consequently, Valentin often sold prints to the AIC at reduced rates. A 1948 correspondence between the two men documents the sale of a group of four prints for $650, instead of the $705 they had previously discussed.\footnote{107 Curt Valentin to Carl O. Schniewind, March 19, 1948, Curt Valentin Papers, III.E.[5], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.} In addition, whereas private collectors and institutions in New York, like the Museum of Modern Art, enjoyed the benefit of easy access and “first picks” of these dealers’ stocks, Schniewind was forced to labor around the disadvantage of geographical separation. For this reason, he worked to maintain friendly relations with dealers such as Valentin and Neumann through personal and professional correspondence, and visits to the dealers’ galleries when budgeting allowed. His efforts were duly rewarded when gallerists such as Valentin gifted graphic works to the Art Institute’s collection, including Mueller’s iconic 1926 color lithograph \textit{Two Gypsies} (fig. 115), illustrating a portrait of a mother and daughter, given to the museum in 1949.

\textbf{Conclusion}

In 1957 the Art Institute of Chicago planned its first art buying expedition to Europe since the end of the war. Schniewind intended to search art galleries in Italy and England, and private collections in Germany, for desirable prints and drawings to purchase for the museum’s collection. Accompanying him was the AIC’s current director Daniel Catton Rich, Schniewind’s wife, and two other patrons of the museum. Schniewind would not return from this trip, dying of heart failure while in Italy. The assistant curator of prints and drawings, German-born and trained scholar Harold Joachim, was tapped the same year to replace Schniewind, but the museum’s acquisitions
of the Brücke’s prints never returned to the rate of enthusiastic collecting that was enjoyed under Schniewind’s tenure. This was largely due to the steep rise in prices for German Expressionist art. From the late 1950s onward, there was not only a diminishing supply of great examples of such art, but also an increased number of interested buyers in both Europe and the United States vying for the same material.

Likewise, although he was German by birth, this distinction was no guarantee that Harold Joachim (1909-1983) would continue to collect German Expressionist prints with the same devotion as did Schniewind. Joachim was particularly interested in eighteenth-century French drawings, and he cultivated relationships with like-minded donors such as Helen Regenstein who provided the new curator with funding from her family’s foundation for Art Institute purchases of such works. During his tenure at the museum (1958-1984), Joachim accumulated a significant collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French and early Italian drawings, including important works by major artists. These types of rare purchases were expensive ventures. Thus, less than a quarter of the Art Institute’s collection of Brücke graphics was collected during Joachim’s tenure, serving as a reminder that curatorial preference plays a considerable role in the art a museum collects.

It is clear that German Americans, like AIC donor Emil Eitel, were a decisive factor in the successful collection of Brücke graphic art at the Chicago museum, more so than at the Museum of Modern Art. Such efforts were driven by an inherent interest in

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108 Edith Weigle, “He was an Expert, but He had Time for Everybody,” Chicago Daily Tribune, March 9, 1958, E8.

maintaining Germanic culture in the United States, even as these patrons redefined *Deutschtum* to make it more relevant to their own lives. Large metropolises in the Midwest, including Chicago, were heavily populated with German Americans intent on maintaining their ethnic heritage. Germans in Chicago were also particularly interested and invested in the city’s arts and cultural arenas, making demographics a key factor in the formation of the AIC’s collection of Brücke prints. In addition, the Art Institute of Chicago did not have a major donor or funder like Abby Aldrich Rockefeller at the Museum of Modern Art. Mrs. Rockefeller, having cultivated a taste for Brücke art through the guidance of William R. Valentiner, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and J.B. Neumann, collected predominantly with the museum in mind. Art Institute patrons Eitel and Henry Regnery both gifted works to the museum originally acquired for their own enjoyment, or in the case of Regnery, in response to private, likely politically-driven motivations.

It was largely due to Carl O. Schniewind’s attentiveness to filling in the gap left by years of Art Institute patrons who favored French art that the museum’s holdings were rounded out to include German prints, including the Brücke’s. Because Schniewind bought predominantly from the same New York dealers as the Museum of Modern Art, namely Curt Valentin and Neumann, many of the same images from the Brücke members’ oeuvres do appear in both institutions’ holdings. Historical circumstances, such as diminishing social relations between Germans and Americans during World War II, or the impact of Germany’s renewed interest in their pre-Nazi artistic heritage on the international art market, that particularly affected the collecting patterns of Brücke graphics at the Art Institute of Chicago.
Various cultural and personal motivations in conjunction with discerning curatorial oversight provided the basis for the Art Institute’s acquisitions of the Brücke’s graphics in Chicago. In the following chapter, we will compare and contrast the collecting practices and images assembled by another set of collectors whose holdings formed the basis for the National Gallery of Art’s holdings of Brücke graphic art in Washington, D.C.
IV. COLLECTING FOR A NATION: THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C., 1937-1985

The National Gallery of Art’s collection of Brücke graphics stems largely from pivotal bequests from two personal collectors. One was the clothier Lessing J. Rosenwald (1891-1979), Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company for seven years, who devoted himself to collecting rare books and prints on a full-time basis after his retirement in 1939. While Rosenwald had always expressed an interest in modern graphics, his appreciation of German Expressionist prints was honed through the encouragement of his curator Elizabeth Mongan, and, as with the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art’s Die Brücke patrons, by German émigré art dealers including Curt Valentin and J.B. Neumann. Rosenwald pledged the bulk of his Brücke print collection to the NGA between the years 1943 and 1954. His early patronage was critical to the founding of the gallery’s renowned print collection. Notably and not surprisingly, Rosenwald was also a serious collector of early fifteenth-century prints that inspired the images produced by Kirchner and his fellow artists of the Brücke.

The other significant source of Brücke prints for the National Gallery of Art came from the artist and printmaker Jacob Kainen (1909-2001) and his wife Ruth Cole Kainen (1922-2009). The Kainens collected German Expressionist prints from the 1950s through the 1980s, and began gifting portions of their collection to the NGA in the late 1970s. As will be demonstrated, Jacob Kainen’s own career as a printmaker was both influential and instructional in his decision to collect graphic works by the Brücke. Although the Kainens’ collection of prints was inclusive of other forms of Expressionism, including works by the Blaue Reiter, for example, they each were particularly partial to Ernst
Ludwig Kirchner’s graphics. This preference allowed the couple to form a successful partnership along a mutual line of interest. Like Rosenwald, the Kainens were also fervent admirers and collectors of old master prints; therefore, significant correlations between these twin tastes for medieval prints and the expressionism of the Brücke are furthered explored in this chapter alongside the collectors’ respective motives for building the collections of the NGA.

The National Gallery of Art’s graphics collection began with just four hundred prints, all given in 1941 by a handful of donors that included W.G. Russell Allen, Paul Sachs, Philip Hofer, Ellen Bullard, and, prominently, Rosenwald. These gifts were intended to lay a strong foundation for a national collection that would both enhance and complement the gallery’s compilation of paintings and sculpture. Since 1966, the gallery has maintained an active presence in the prints market, using a variety of purchase funds and private monetary donations to acquire additional important works. Because of its public role, the National Gallery is dependent upon donations from private citizens for

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1 W.G. Russell Allen, Paul J. Sachs, Philip Hofer, and Ellen Bullard were members of the same wealthy social circles in Boston. Allen and Sachs, in particular, were life-long friends and classmates at Harvard University at the turn of the century. The four shared similar interests in collecting antiquarian books as well as works on paper ranging from old master graphics to early modern impressions. Like Sachs, Hofer was a curator who founded the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts at Harvard’s Houghton Library in 1938. Bullard came from a family interested in print collecting. Her own interest mirrored her father, Dr. William Norton Bullard’s appreciation of works by Dürer, Rembrandt, Goya, and Blake, for example. Each of the collectors gifted generous portions of their holdings to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Fogg Art Museum (where Sachs served as director from 1923 to 1945), and the National Gallery of Art. Laura Howland Dudley, “Goya Exhibition,” Notes (Fogg Art Museum) 2, No. 6 (June 1931): 317-324; see also, “Philip Hofer, a Book Collector at Harvard,” [obituary] The New York Times, November 12, 1984, B15; and H.P.R., “Miss Ellen Bullard’s Gift of Prints,” Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts 24, No. 141 (February 1926): 12-16.
both funding and acquisitions; the federal government provides funding only to maintain the physical sites of the gallery and for staff salaries.²

In addition, because of its status as belonging to the American public, the National Gallery of Art does not de-accession objects from its collection, therefore making the decision to accept works of art the result of serious deliberation and consequence. Indeed, the circumstances by which the National Gallery of Art was founded has had a direct impact on the manner in which the gallery is now governed, maintained, and expanded. As described, these circumstances have also affected the practices by which art, including prints, is now collected at the NGA. For this reason, a brief history of the founding of the National Gallery of Art is beneficial.

AN ART MUSEUM FOR THE NATION

A Tale of Two Institutions: The Founding of the National Gallery of Art, 1937-1941

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., was founded by financier Andrew W. Mellon (1855-1937) in 1937 (fig. 116). Mellon came from a Pittsburgh banking family, and soon made his fortune in similar pursuits of finance, industry, and in particular, aluminum. In March of 1921, Mellon was appointed Secretary of the Treasury by President Warren G. Harding, a position he retained through two consecutive presidential administrations, until February 1932. During his tenure at the Treasury,

Mellon encountered numerous political adversaries who opposed the banker’s controversial Depression-era tax plans.³

By the mid-1920s, Mellon was the third wealthiest tax payer in the United States, following John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford. Mellon used his amassed fortune to collect old master paintings and sculpture during the early years of the First World War, but, by the late 1920s, he had decided to redirect his collecting efforts towards expanding the permanent collection of the nation’s existing “National Gallery of Art.” In 1903, Harriet Lane Johnston, an art collector and niece of President James Buchanan, bequeathed her small collection of European art (consisting of thirty-four objects) to form a “national gallery of art.” Johnston’s probated will forced the defining decision by the Supreme Court to officially recognize the Smithsonian Institution’s art collection as a “National Gallery of Art” in 1906.⁴

³ See Andrew W. Mellon, Taxation: The People’s Business (Manchester, NH: Ayer Company Publishers, 1924), for more on Mellon’s tax policies. ⁴ The foundation of the Smithsonian Institution’s permanent collection began modestly in 1829. Art collector and Washington native John Varden appointed himself the task of forming a permanent museum for the nation with his collection of European art in order to better enrich the young capital’s cultural prestige. His collection was initially placed in a room he added to his own home near the Capitol Building, which he opened to the public and variously called “John Varden’s Museum” and later, the “Washington Museum.”

In 1841, Varden’s collection was displayed in the newly constructed Patent Office Building, now home to the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. At the Patent Office, Varden served as curator of the newly created “National Institute” for government-owned artistic and historic items. Paintings and sculpture, for example, shared exhibit space with the Declaration of Independence and Benjamin Franklin’s printing press. However, the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 eclipsed the prestige of the so-called “National Institute,” and by 1858, many items in the Smithsonian art collection on view at the Patent Office Building were moved to the newly completed Smithsonian Castle. The remainder of the collection, including Varden’s contribution, followed in 1862 when the National Institute’s charter expired. History of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, n.d.), n.p.  See also
Serving as a commissioner to the Smithsonian Institution’s National Gallery of Art in the early 1930s, Andrew Mellon proposed to endow a new building specifically for the institute’s growing art collection with funds dedicated to the acquisition of new works. He confirmed his intent in 1930 with the formation of the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, to which Mellon turned over legal ownership of those works he had amassed with a national collection in mind. During its initial year of operation, the trust made its first significant acquisition, twenty-one paintings from the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, which included such masterpieces as Jan van Eyck’s The Annunciation, c. 1434. Meanwhile, Mellon had recently returned from London where he had served as United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom for a year in 1932. His plan was to retire quietly into private life in Pittsburgh; however, the recently founded Educational and Charitable Trust had drawn suspicion from the current presidential administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a political antagonist of Mellon, and the President’s distrust of the financier had become apparent in his opposition to Mellon’s tax policies during the latter’s tenure at the Treasury. (This was because Mellon had cut tax rates for the wealthiest citizens in order to discourage tax evasions.) Roosevelt’s dislike of Mellon continued as public wariness of wealth, monopolies, and big banks resulting from the 1929 Stock Market Crash escalated in the run up to the 1932 presidential election.

From 1932 to 1936, Mellon was subjected to a series of politically-motivated investigations centered on his 1930 and 1931 income tax returns. In an ironic turn of

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events, Mellon was himself accused by the Roosevelt administration of tax evasion and thereafter publicly condemned in the press. Wearied by the negative publicity, officials from the Smithsonian backed away from their association with Mellon and the proffered terms for the national gallery’s expansion (fig. 117). Although a grand jury found the banker to be innocent of all accusations in 1934, the final and most significant lingering issue concerned the legitimacy of Mellon’s Educational and Charitable Trust. Since 1927, rumors had been circulating throughout Washington that Mellon actually intended to establish a new national gallery in the nation’s capital as a gift to the American people. The federal government, therefore, charged that the Educational and Charitable Trust was not a bona fide trust, but a facade created for the purposes of avoiding the payment of taxes. In support of the claim, federal attorneys submitted the fact that the trustees were Mellon himself, his son Paul, his son-in-law David Bruce, and his lawyer Donald Shepard, insinuating that such a coterie was more concerned with benefiting the Mellon family than the American people. Furthermore, Mellon had not yet relinquished personal control of his paintings, nor had they been publicly displayed, a situation that appeared alien to the trust’s ostensible objectives. The works Mellon intended for a national collection were housed at this time in the basement of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.\(^5\) The only people with access to the collection were Mellon himself and, at his invitation, close friends and relations. As for the national gallery, there was yet to be any material evidence of its existence. The United States attorneys argued that the trust in question had been established in spurious support of a fictional gallery, and that, by claiming charitable deductions from donations of money and art work made to

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such a trust, Mellon knowingly and deliberately sought to defraud the United States government.\textsuperscript{6}

Andrew Mellon had intentionally tried to keep his plans to build a new gallery under wraps, fearing that making the scheme public would drive up the price of any pictures he might wish to acquire for it in the future. Although his defense attorneys were successful in 1936 in convincing the jury that the Educational and Charitable Trust was indeed a legitimate endeavor, it was thereby necessary for them to disclose publicly Mellon’s plans for the new museum. While the harsh treatment by the government resulting from the accusations and trials only reinforced Mellon’s tenacity to establish a national art gallery that would emulate and rival European culture and public art collections, it also solidified his determination to make the conditions of his offer to the government non-negotiable. Throughout the planning phase for the new gallery (1935-1941), Mellon insisted that procedures only be chartered on his terms with no modifications that might subject the museum to future political currents, which in his own experience had proved to be negative.

Alongside the offer of his collection of pictures (valued then at approximately fifty million dollars), the endowment for a new building, and the funds to maintain it, Mellon insisted on devising an organizational structure modeled after the governing constitution of the National Gallery in London (figs. 118 and 119). Through correspondence with the director of the latter, Mellon came to the conclusion that ownership of the new national gallery in Washington should be vested in a department of government on behalf of the people. He conceded that the Treasury would pay for the

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 531-532.
annual cost of upkeep with public funds. In addition, he saw the need for a board of trustees, an appointed director, and career staff to sustain the gallery. In a further effort to eradicate politics (as much as realistically possible) from its governance, Mellon insisted that neither the trustees nor the museum’s director be appointed by or beholden to the presiding government. He wanted this gallery to be provided with a realistic acquisitions budget that would enable the collection to grow and develop around the nucleus of his own intended gift. Ultimately, as previously mentioned, these purchase funds would stem predominantly from private donations. To this end, Mellon was adamant in his resolve to appropriate from the Smithsonian the title “National Gallery of Art” for his new museum, understanding that the prestige such a title bestowed on the institution would attract further donations from other private citizens. In this way ensuring perpetuation and national pride in a collection intended to be “by the people and for the people,” would be ensured.⁷

On December 24th 1936, Andrew Mellon formally submitted his proposal with its concrete terms in a handwritten letter to President Roosevelt. Along with the requirements outlined above, Mellon also designated a location for the gallery on the National Mall, and submitted drawings created by John Russell Pope illustrating the design for the building along with his proposal (fig. 120). The gift was accepted exactly according to Mellon’s wishes in 1937, and the nation’s new art museum opened its doors to the public in 1941, just as he envisioned it. This institution became known as the National Gallery of Art (NGA), and the Smithsonian bureau that had previously born that name was re-designated the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian

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⁷ Cannadine, 539-541.
American Art Museum). The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust financed the building and furnished the collection of art exhibited there. In return, “the faith of the United States” had been pledged to maintain, protect, curate, administer, and operate the gallery with funds which Congress would appropriate as necessary. Though established as a bureau of the Smithsonian, the NGA continues to operate with its own board of trustees. The board’s decisions are not subject to review by any federal agency other than a court of law, and the gallery displays no works of art unless they are of a “similar high standard of quality” to those first established by the Mellon Collection. The interest of private donors has been the primary means by which the National Gallery collected prints by the Brücke artists, in this case Lessing J. Rosenwald and the Kainens, in particular. How that came about is the focus of this chapter.

COLLECTING AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Lessing J. Rosenwald: Print Collector

Lessing J. Rosenwald, one of the National Gallery’s foremost donors of graphic works was born in Chicago, Illinois, the eldest son of Julius Rosenwald, a prominent first generation German-American Jew. The elder Rosenwald was a successful clothier who became part-owner and president of Sears, Roebuck and Company from 1908 to 1923, and chairman from 1923 to 1932. Lessing Rosenwald (fig. 121) followed in his father’s footsteps, beginning his career at Sears as a shipping clerk in 1911. In 1920, he was

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8 As cited by Cannadine, 564.
given the important task of establishing a catalog supply center in Philadelphia for the company’s rapidly expanding mail-order company. The younger Rosenwald settled in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia, and later succeeded his father as chairman of Sears Roebuck from 1932 to 1939, although he maintained his Jenkintown residence. After 1939, Lessing Rosenwald’s accumulated fortune permitted him to retire from the company and dedicate himself full-time to collecting rare books and graphic art.  

The history of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, which has been well documented, provides significant insight into Rosenwald’s practices and motivations.  

Between 1926, when he purchased his first print, and 1979, when he died, Rosenwald purchased approximately 22,000 old master and modern prints and drawings. His endeavor was essentially a time-consuming avocation, driven by sheer aesthetic pleasure for the graphic arts. As a young collector, Rosenwald credited his mother for his initial interest in prints. Augusta Nusbaum Rosenwald was herself a modest collector of late

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11 The most concise history concerning the Rosenwald collection is Ruth E. Fine’s *Lessing J. Rosenwald: Tribute to a Collector*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1982); see also Lessing J. Rosenwald, *Recollections of a Collector* (Jenkintown, PA: Alverthorpe Gallery, 1976), and Rosenwald, “Reminiscences of a Print Collector,” *The American Scholar* 42, No. 4 (Autumn 1973): 620-35. The Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers housed at the National Gallery of Art Archives, Washington, D.C., also provide a succinct source of information. The Paul J. Sachs Papers and Agnes Mongan Papers at the Harvard University Art Museum Archives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are also useful for information regarding the Rosenwald Collection. Sachs was a life-long friend of Rosenwald, who often counseled the collector on his purchases. Agnes Mongan was the first female director of the Fogg Art Museum from 1969 to 1971, and the elder sister of Elizabeth Mongan, Rosenwald’s personal curator from 1937 to 1963 (see below). Elizabeth Mongan’s personal papers are housed with the Agnes Mongan Papers at Harvard.

nineteenth-century etchings. By 1924, Rosenwald’s serious interest in prints was fully kindled. His library at that time contained important print reference volumes including Arthur M. Hind’s *A Short History of Engraving and Etching*, Malcolm C. Salaman’s *The Etchings of Sir Francis Haden, P.R.E.*, and Campbell Dodgson’s *Old French-Colour Prints*. While the exact date of Rosenwald’s first print purchase is unknown, David Young Cameron’s *Royal Scottish Academy* (fig. 122) of 1916 appears to be his earliest acquisition. His first purchases were attained from the Philadelphia book and print dealer Charles Sessler, whose sales records indicate Rosenwald was a client beginning in the summer of 1926. After her death in 1929, parts of Mrs. Rosenwald’s collection were gifted anonymously by her family to cultural institutions in New York and Chicago, while other works she purchased had previously found their way into her son’s budding collection. Examples from this latter group that are now in the National Gallery’s collection include Ernest David Roth’s *Cliffside* of 1916 (fig. 123).

Over the more than half a century during which Rosenwald made his acquisitions, his tastes continued to develop and evolve, thereby adding to the diversity of such a vast compilation. At first, Rosenwald purchased works by artists who participated in the revival of etching in France, England, and the United States during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Charles Meryon, Muirhead Bone, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, and Jean-Louis Forain. Their subjects ranged from landscape views and architectural scenes to cityscapes. Whistler was a particular favorite of Rosenwald’s. He

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14 Fine, 24.
collected nearly three hundred impressions by the artist, including several of the rare late Amsterdam subjects such as *Long House—Dyer’s—Amsterdam* of 1889 (fig. 124), now in the collection of the NGA.

By the close of 1927, Rosenwald had established himself as a connoisseur of early modern prints, having purchased a substantial number of works by comparable artists such Alphonse Legros, Auguste Lepère, and Joseph Pennell. His expanding tastes were no doubt influenced by the popularity of the annual editions of *Fine Prints of the Year*, compiled by Malcolm C. Salaman and published in England from 1923 to 1938.¹⁵ Salaman’s journal was an annual review of contemporary engravings and etchings that focused predominantly on English, French, Italian, and American printmakers. The graphics considered in *Fine Prints of the Year* often reflected “Grand Tour” aesthetics, or images a collector might acquire while traveling to scenic locales. Legros, Pennel, and others were regularly documented in this journal, which was very influential among collectors of modern prints at the time. In fact, Rosenwald maintained a print storage box labeled “Fine Prints of the Year” in which he kept impressions featured in Salaman’s volumes.¹⁶

The year 1928 marked a pivotal time in Rosenwald’s vocation as a collector. In January of that year, he purchased the first of what would become an impressive compilation of old master prints and rare fifteenth-century German woodcuts, metal cuts,

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¹⁶ Fine, 25.
and paste prints.\textsuperscript{17} Ruth Fine, curator of the Rosenwald Collection from 1972 to 1980, noted that:

The woodcuts and metalcuts in particular, characterized by simplified and often schematic forms, frequently enhanced by broad color areas applied directly or through a stencil, had a special appeal for Rosenwald. In admiring their primitive qualities, he often referred to them as “children only a mother could love.”\textsuperscript{18}

It is not hard to conclude that the “primitive” expressiveness of many of these old master prints resonated with Rosenwald similar to fellow collectors such as Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. It correlated as well with the Kainens’ interest in the Brücke artists’ graphic art. Rosenwald’s initial purchases from Philadelphia dealer Charles Sessler included Albrecht Dürer’s engraving Melancolia I (fig. 125), 1514, and Rembrandt’s 1639 etching Self-Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill (fig. 126), both now at the National Gallery.

Rosenwald’s arder for old master prints took hold immediately, and he purchased the greatest number of works during these early years from 1928 to 1930. A large majority

\textsuperscript{17} Woodcut is a relief method of printmaking in which the artist carves away everything that is not to be printed. A thick ink is then rolled on top of the woodblock, leaving the carved-out areas clean. Similarly, metal cuts were also printed from a raised inked surface, rather than from inked incisions etched into a matrix as in intaglio printmaking techniques. In contrast to woodcuts, however, considerably less printing surface was eliminated in metal cutting because artists often used goldsmiths’ punches and gouges to “dot” the plate. The resulting white-on-black effect and the various tools used for patterning give metal cuts a distinctive, decorative appearance.

Paste prints are so called because a soft paste was spread on the paper to receive an impression from the plate on which the image was engraved. (Rarely, a glue ground was first laid on the paper to act as a binding medium to hold the paste to the paper.) In this respect, paste prints differ from other printmaking techniques that are produced by bringing the inked surface directly in contact with the paper. Both paste prints and metal cuts are exceedingly rare as relatively few were originally produced and many have not survived over the centuries. Laura Howland Dudley, “Three Paste-Prints,” Notes (Fogg Art Museum) 2, No. 2 (June 1926): 50.

\textsuperscript{18} Fine, 52. Fine served as the Curator of Modern Prints and Drawings from 1988-2002 at the National Gallery of Art. She is now Curator of Special Projects in Modern Art at the museum.
of Rosenwald’s old master prints were acquired at auctions in Europe, at which J. Leonard “Dick” Sessler, the son of Charles Sessler, served as the collector’s agent. After further expansion of his holdings, in 1937 Rosenwald began building a new estate in Jenkintown that would include sufficient space to house not only the growing print collection, but also its related library. Two years later, Alverthorpe Gallery, a dedicated wing of the newly constructed family residence was opened to visiting scholars and students, with Elizabeth Mongan installed as the collection’s new curator.19

Elizabeth Mongan (1909-2002) came highly recommended by Paul J. Sachs, a childhood friend of Rosenwald. The young curator held a degree in art history from Bryn Mawr College (1931), completed the Museum Course at Harvard University with Sachs in 1933, and had returned to take a course on the history of prints at Harvard, again under Sachs’s tutelage, in 1936.20 Until Mongan’s appointment as curator of the Rosenwald Collection in 1937, no professional oversight or serious scholarly attention had been directed toward it. Prior to this time, Rosenwald’s personal secretary assisted scholars and conducted arrangements for ongoing loan exhibitions of Rosenwald’s prints. With more than 5,000 works already in the collection, Mongan’s first tasks involved determining proper storage and conservation for both the prints and books, and planning for public use of the new Alverthorpe Gallery.21 In the following two decades, the collection enjoyed an increase in the number of modern European works, particularly late nineteenth- and twentieth-century French prints by Paul Gauguin, Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Camille Pissarro, and Pablo Picasso, as well as twentieth-century

19 Ibid., 25, 29.
Expressionist prints, including examples by Käthe Kollwitz, Edvard Munch, Paul Klee, and the Brücke artists. Mongan’s taste for modern graphics may have provided greater stimulus for Rosenwald’s heightened attention to twentieth-century works during this period. In his 1976 written memoirs, *Recollections of a Collector*, Rosenwald confided:

> As anyone with reasonable intelligence would, I leaned very heavily on [Mongan’s] judgment, discernment, and ability during the most active portion of my collecting career. If, as I hope, my collection is of fine quality, it is due in large measure to her advice for which I cannot thank her sufficiently.\(^{22}\)

Along this same line, Rosenwald was also able to draw on the advice of an ever-widening circle of local dealers with whom he associated. One such dealer was Carl Zigrosser of the Weyhe Gallery in New York. Zigrosser was the author of *Six Centuries of Fine Prints*, 1937, which served as a primer on graphics collecting for novice collectors.\(^{23}\) The book was a success among print enthusiasts, and served to further heighten Zigrosser’s reputation as an authority on prints. In 1941, Zigrosser left the Weyhe Gallery to become the first curator of prints at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where Rosenwald served on the board of governors. Zigrosser was equally interested in modern prints and old master works, and the two became close friends who often consulted one another regarding various print purchases for their personal collections. In addition, as Rosenwald began to buy from a larger range of dealers under Mongan’s direction, he was likely offered a broader selection of works from which to make his purchases. Indeed, Rosenwald now often acquired large groups of prints in single non-auction-related buying sprees from dealers such as Sessler, Jean Goriany, Gérald Cramer,


A.S.W. “Doc” Rosenbach of the The Rosenbach Company, M. Knoedler and Company, and Frederick Keppel and Company, among others. In May 1950, for example, Rosenwald acquired more than three hundred graphic works from Parisian art collector Henri M. Petiet that included examples by Raoul Dufy, Théodore Géricault, Paul Cézanne, Aristide Maillol, and Pablo Picasso. The same year, he bought several hundred Expressionist prints and drawings in a single purchase. Brücke artist Otto Mueller’s 1912

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24 Rosenwald made his earliest print purchases at Charles Sessler’s book shop and print gallery on Walnut Street in downtown Philadelphia, while Sessler’s son J. Leonard (“Dick”) Sessler served as Rosenwald’s buying agent at European print sales and international auctions. Fine suggests that it was the younger Sessler’s influence that was most influential during the formative years of the Rosenwald Collection. As his representative at auction, Sessler perhaps introduced Rosenwald to a wider range of possible avenues open to a print collector, thereby shifting Rosenwald’s initial interest in turn-of-the-century graphics to procuring old master works, such as Antonio Pollaiuolo’s *Battle of the Nudes*, c. 1470-1475. Rosenwald and Dick Sessler maintained their professional relationship until the 1940s when differences in opinion over a proposed purchase brought the acquaintance to an abrupt halt.

A.S.W. (“Doc”) Rosenbach was the other dealer of importance during the initial years of the Rosenwald Collection. The Rosenbach Company, formed by the brothers Philip and Doc, was the primary source of Rosenwald’s print reference book purchases beginning in the early 1920s. Rosenwald and Doc Rosenbach formed a strong personal and professional relationship that lasted until Rosenbach’s death in 1952. Although Doc Rosenbach is more readily associated with the formation of the Rosenwald rare book collection, the Rosenbach Company was also a supplier for many of Rosenwald’s print acquisitions. From the late 1920s forward, Rosenwald purchased numerous graphic works by his favorite artists from the Rosenbach Company, including examples by Whistler, Rembrandt, and Blake. After Rosenwald’s falling out with Sessler in the 1940s, the Rosenbach Company served as an agent for the collector at sales of old master, modern, and contemporary prints.

Jean Goriany served as a source of modern prints, particularly French, for Rosenwald. Originally in business in New York, the dealer moved to South America in the 1940s. Throughout the 1940s until the end of Rosenwald’s life, dealer Gérald Cramer in Geneva also aided Rosenwald in introducing important modern graphic works into the collection. Rosenwald eventually expanded his circle of dealers to include a number too large to enumerate here. To this end, he made a point of visiting booksellers and print dealers who specialized in both old master and modern stock during his frequent travels, and often made one-time purchases from these galleries or from various printmakers’ societies that formed in generous numbers in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. Fine, 36-38.
woodcut *Nude Figure of a Girl in a Landscape* (fig. 127), depicting the simplified form of a nude girl seated among surrounding brush, now in the collection of the National Gallery, was included.\(^\text{25}\) Mueller’s image was to be the first of a sizeable number of Brücke graphics which the collector would add to his growing compilation of works on paper. It is not unreasonable to suggest that, as Rosenwald’s circle of advisors and dealers expanded, his evolving interests and aesthetic tastes made him more aware of similarities between old master and more recent works of art. This correlation will be revisited again in this chapter.

**Collecting for the Nation, 1941-1958**

Despite deciding to collect graphic works for pure enjoyment, Lessing Rosenwald took the educational value of his vast collection very seriously having inherited his father’s philanthropic spirit.\(^\text{26}\) Throughout the 1930s, the Rosenwald Collection was

\(^{25}\) Fine, 28, 30-31, 33.  
\(^{26}\) Julius Rosenwald participated in regular charitable giving during his lifetime. Appreciating the commitment of Jane Addams, he was a fervent supporter of her famous Chicago settlement house, the Hull House, during the turn of the century. He also contributed to Jewish communities both locally and internationally, working to aid thousands of impoverished Jewish refugees. Though Mr. Rosenwald never identified with the Zionist movement himself, he did contribute to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and worked to unite local Jewish efforts to found the Federation of Jewish Charities of Chicago.

Mr. Rosenwald’s philanthropic efforts were predominantly directed toward the betterment of education for African-Americans. Mr. Rosenwald had a revelation in 1910 after reading *An American Citizen: The Life of William H. Baldwin*, by John Graham Brooks. Baldwin was an advocate on behalf of educational opportunities for Southern blacks. Likewise, Baldwin supported the work of Dr. Booker T. Washington, a prominent African-American educator in the South. After reading Washington’s autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1901), Mr. Rosenwald agreed with the mission of gaining practical education for African-Americans. He formed a friendship with Washington and supported his efforts with advocacy and financial support.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund was established in 1917 for this purpose. The foundation undertook a four-pronged initiative in regards to educating African-
among the primary lending sources for the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s print exhibitions. As the magnitude of the collection and the collector’s reputation for generously lending his works grew, requests for loans from institutions across the country increased substantially. Thus the Rosenwald Collection began to provide a means of further acquainting the broader American public to the idea of graphics as a serious fine art medium. In addition to loans and support for accompanying catalogues, Rosenwald welcomed scholars engaged in various research projects, as well as print classes from numerous university art history departments to work with the collections at Alverthorpe Gallery.  

While the educational component of the Rosenwald Collection continued steadily even following the entry of the United States into World War II, Rosenwald’s rate of acquisition slowed significantly during the war years. During this time, Rosenwald spent Americans in the South, including building schools, developing libraries, educating teachers, and developing opportunities for higher education for blacks. Overall, 5,357 schools were built as a result of this programming. The foundation also sought to create individual educational opportunities by offering $437,612 in support for some 400 fellows, including authors James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, and Claude McKay; French physicist and Nobel Prize winner Jean Perrin; and singer Marian Anderson.

Similarly, civic roles proved to be of high importance to Mr. Rosenwald. Within his home in Chicago, he co-founded the Municipal Voters League. His participation on the Chicago Planning Commission aided in development of the city. Along this same line, the University of Chicago recognized his gifts of nearly 4.5 million dollars with a position on the university’s board of trustees, and he gained further national recognition with his appointment to the Council of National Defense Advisory Committee by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

Inspired by the industrial museums in Munich and Vienna during a trip abroad, Mr. Rosenwald offered three million dollars to build a similar museum in Chicago, known today as the Museum of Science and Industry. Though attempts were made to immortalize his generosity by naming the museum after him, Mr. Rosenwald refused. He died on January 6th 1932. Alicia S. Roberts, “Julius Rosenwald,” Learning to Give (Indianapolis: Center on Philanthropy, Indiana University, n.d.), <http://learningtogive.org/papers/paper121.html> (Accessed June 4th 2010).

27 Fine, 46.
weekdays in Washington, D.C., serving on the War Production Board. He continued this routine through 1942, returning to Jenkintown only on the weekends. The time he spent in the nation’s capital allowed him first-hand access to continuing news reports cycling the details of the Mellon tax trial, and Mellon’s subsequent plans for a national gallery of art. With the thought in mind of reaching as broad an audience as possible, Rosenwald gave his first gift of thirty old master prints to the National Gallery of Art in 1941, just months after its opening. Two years later, in 1943, he donated a large portion of his extensive collection of prints, paintings, and sculpture, which then consisted of some 6,500 works, and related material to the gallery. Rosenwald simultaneously donated his collection of rare books to the Library of Congress.

Rosenwald also gave generously to other cultural institutions, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Philadelphia Print Club. Andrew Mellon’s hope that the prestige of a museum bearing the title National Gallery of Art would attract future donors was realized in Rosenwald’s motives for gifting the majority of his collection to the NGA. This belief in the ability of the printed image to communicate the essence of Western humanistic concerns, coupled with a desire to share his treasures with a wide public for enjoyment and instructional purposes, made the National Gallery an ideal recipient of Rosenwald’s vast print collection. An undated letter written by Elizabeth Mongan to her sister Agnes Mongan, curator of drawings at the Fogg Art Museum and later its first female director in

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28 Fine, 31.
29 RG45A, Lessing J. Rosenwald Papers, Biography, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gallery Archives.
1969, further reveals Rosenwald’s motives for selecting the NGA as recipient for his collection:

. . . neither Harvard nor Philadelphia ever had even the smallest chance. [The] Phil.[adelphia] [Museum of Art] not—as I explained to you—on account of one the well known Philadelphia indifference to the care and exhibition of art, and two [from] F.[iske] Kimball’s behaviour. Though Lessing is very fond of PJS [Paul J. Sachs], I know that even that would not have been enough to swing the prints to Cambridge. As soon as the Nat.[ional] Gall.[ery] was opened he wanted his prints to go there but only if he could afford it and when he died. He wants the satisfaction of seeing his things in the Nat.[ional] Capital [sic] and he thinks that is where his Father Julius would have left them. Also he thinks that the Gov.[ernment] is the only power after the war that will [sic] certainly be able to take proper care of them. All thses [sic] things added up to a tremendous pressure for Washington, which nothing else could have changed. I was only exercised as to the method as you know and not the final disposition.\(^\text{30}\)

Several terms of agreement were prescribed in Rosenwald’s 1943 deed of gift to the National Gallery. One was that Rosenwald reserved the right to expand the art collection. Any additional materials would be subject to the same provisions outlined in the original deed of gift. Secondly, while the collection was to be an immediate gift to the gallery, the bulk of it was to remain at Alverthorpe until Rosenwald’s death. For this reason, the third provision in the terms of agreement indicated that the owner would assume responsibility for expenses pertaining to the upkeep and care of the collection,

\(^{30}\) Elizabeth Mongan to Agnes Mongan, undated. Agnes Mongan Papers, SC1, folder 160. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fiske Kimball was the director of the then Pennsylvania Museum of Art from 1925 to 1955. It is unclear from either Mongan’s or Rosenwald’s personal papers what “behavior” might have soured the otherwise amicable relations between Kimball and Rosenwald.
including annual salaries for professional staff. Soon after the terms were made, Mongan was concurrently appointed as the National Gallery’s first prints curator. From 1943 to 1963, Mongan spent her days working in Washington, D.C., and weekends in Jenkintown, attending to the Rosenwald Collection. Also listed in the terms of agreement was Rosenwald’s express concern that access to the collection for himself, students and scholars, would continue, and loans from the collection to other institutions would also continue as appropriate. In the same letter noted above, Mongan wrote of her feelings concerning the agreement:

Both the Natl. Gall.[ery] and the Libl of Congress seem very happy—so I suppose that I should not worry. I can see why LJR. [Lessing J. Rosenwald] did it. He fears post war troubles, he has also pulled in his horns [sic] in Sears thought [sic] this is confidential. He wants the collection used more. He is going to continue to buy, but as he buys he will turn all over immediately to the two institutions, there is such a clause in the papers. So his fun of acquisition will not stop and the two institutions will benefit. Also he will pay upkeep and all salaries except mine—so my first talk did have some good effect. Set up the way it is both the Nat.[ional] Gall.[ery] and Library will benefit and it is an extraordinary gift all future criticism to the contrary. Washington is unquestionably a better place than Phil.[delphia] . . . . I am to spend part of my time here and part of my time in Washington.

Clearly, Rosenwald also felt that the federal government would function as the safest and most reliable custodian for his prized artworks in the post-war era, a conclusion he most

32 Elizabeth Mongan to Agnes Mongan, undated. Agnes Mongan Papers, SC1, Folder 160. Harvard Art Museums Archives, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
likely came to during his tenure with the War Production Board. Nevertheless, his
decision to donate the assembled works to the nation’s capitol was a well thought out,
multi-faceted decision, as Mongan’s letter indicates.

The Brücke’s Prints in the Rosenwald Collection

In May 1941, Rosenwald purchased Emil Nolde’s experimental, tongue-in-cheek
lithograph *Young Couple* (see fig. 40), 1913, printed in gray and black, from Curt
Valentin of the Buchholz Gallery in New York. Along with the same artist’s 1910
woodcut *Woman in Profile*, it was among the first expressionist prints to enter his
collection. Between 1941 and 1952, Valentin sent prints for approval from New York to
Jenkintown on a regular basis. In spite of such encouragement from Valentin, Elizabeth
Mongan, and other proponents of modern art such as Paul J. Sachs and Carl Zigrosser,
Rosenwald’s collection of modernist prints never rivaled its number of old master works.
However, the persuasive Valentin left his thumbprints on the collection by introducing
into it a number of works by the former Brücke artists. Rosenwald bought his first prints
by Nolde, Kirchner, and Schmidt-Rottluff from this dealer, culminating in approximately
seventy-five prints purchased from Valentin before the latter’s death in 1954.33

Another significant acquisition of Die Brücke prints came in the form of a
purchase of fourteen graphic works from the Buchholz Gallery in December 1944, the
result of a sealed bid public sale held by the office of the Alien Property Custodian. The
Alien Property Custodian was a governmental department originally enacted by President
Woodrow Wilson during World War I. It was essentially set up as a wartime agency
responsible for the seizure, administration, and sale of “enemy” property in the United

33 Fine, 208.
States, as well as an uncomfortable reminder of the strained relations between the United States and Germany at this time. Alexander Palmer Mitchell, a former Congressman, was appointed as the first Custodian, a position he held from 1917 to 1919. In 1942, President Roosevelt reestablished the office as an independent agency under his direct authority. Leo Crowley, a former banker and chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, became Custodian under the Roosevelt administration. During the war years, the Custodian amassed a vast portfolio of “enemy” property, including art, real estate, business enterprises, ships, and intellectual property in the form of trademarks, copyrights, patents, and pending patent applications. The agency remained active until 1966 when President Lyndon B. Johnson issued an executive order abolishing the office effective that year.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34} Stanley Coben, \textit{A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 128-135. Property confiscation has occurred in the United States during wartime since the Revolutionary War. As described above, during World War I and World War II, property seizure was revived as an instrument of wartime governmental policy. Departing from its general principle of not disturbing alien-owned property in times of hostility, Congress enacted the Trading with the Enemy Act on October 6\textsuperscript{th} 1917. This statute created the Office of Alien Property Custodian, which sequestered and held in trust approximately $700 million of “enemy-owned” or “enemy-controlled” property, particularly patents and other forms of intellectual property during the war years. Always considered to be a questionable edict, Congress determined that the custodian’s operation was no longer necessary and abolished the office in 1935. Most of the confiscated property was returned to its original owners. Under the above statutory wording, such goods had not actually been confiscated, but merely “frozen” for return upon termination of hostilities.

Similarly, during World War II, Congress amended the original Trading with the Enemy Act and reestablished the Office of the Alien Property Custodian. During the following years, millions of dollars worth of “enemy” property was confiscated and labeled as “frozen” assets. Following the war’s end, Congress enacted the War Claims Acts of 1948 and 1962 under which “enemy” property held in trust by the United States was vested and used to satisfy in part the war claims of American citizens. In 1966, the Office of Alien Property Custodian was once again deemed redundant and abolished.
The 1944 sale in New York which attracted Rosenwald consisted of art objects owned by Karl Buchholz, a Berlin art dealer and proprietor of the Buchholz gallery in Manhattan where Curt Valentin served as director. The sale also consisted of property from other foreign nationals of designated “enemy” countries—in this case, Nazi Germany. The objects had been confiscated in accordance with wartime orders from the office of the Alien Property Custodian, and public sale notices had been widely dispersed in art journals and national newspapers. Nine days were allotted for public inspection of the works of art, which included ninety lots featuring 319 paintings, plus sculptures, prints, and drawings that had been placed on consignment by Karl Buchholz from January 1937 to December 1939. With the encouragement of Valentin, Rosenwald acquired three drawings and three woodcuts by Schmidt-Rottluff, three prints and one watercolor by Nolde, and four prints by Max Beckmann at the sale, comprising three of the ninety lots. Other works in the sale were eagerly acquired by museums, dealers, and collectors throughout the country.\(^{35}\) The type of wartime hostility toward German nationals demonstrated by the confiscation and sales of personal goods conducted by the Alien Property Custodian further highlights the resiliency of émigré art dealers such as Valentin in promoting German Expressionist art, and the tenacity with which American art enthusiasts overlooked political strains in order to collect this art.

As influential as the advice and expertise of Elizabeth Mongan and various art dealers proved to be for accumulating his collection and diversifying his artistic tastes, Rosenwald’s most sizable purchase of German Expressionist prints was made alone on a business trip, away from his trusted friends and advisors. In 1950, while traveling in

\(^{35}\) Fine, 206.
Montevideo, Uruguay, Rosenwald purchased a lot of some 1,200 German Expressionist prints by the dealer Claude Schaefer. Among this group were Kirchner’s 1912 woodcut Woman Tying Her Shoe (fig. 128), and forty drawings, including a 1913 pencil drawing by Heckel, Three Figures (fig. 129). Unfortunately, Rosenwald only fully understood the scope of the collection after it had been cleared by South American authorities for transport to another buyer in Antwerp, Belgium. Although his competing bid for the lot was ultimately accepted, it was too late to change the freight’s destination. Thus, the crates went first in Europe before being redirected to the United States. They arrived safely in Jenkintown nearly two months after their departure from South America.36

Along with the forty drawings, Rosenwald selected approximately three hundred prints to retain for his own collection, distributing the remainder to other cultural institutions. More than fifty artists were represented among the works that Rosenwald kept for himself, which featured examples by all six of the primary Brücke members. Eleven prints and drawings by Heckel and more than twenty works by Mueller were selected, all of which were eventually turned over to the NGA. Other German Expressionist artists in this acquisition included Christian Rohlfs, Max Beckmann, Ernst Barlach, Edvard Munch, Lovis Corinth, and the Austrian Oscar Kokoschka. Eventually, Rosenwald would gift a total of 109 Brücke graphics to the National Gallery. With the exception of his significant holding of graphic works by the German artist Käthe

36 Ibid., 204.
Kollwitz, this singular purchase essentially defined Rosenwald’s collection of twentieth-century German art.37

The Brücke’s Prints in the Collection of the National Gallery

Lessing Rosenwald gave the first graphics by the Brücke artists to the National Gallery in 1943. This donation consisted of approximately fifteen prints, including Otto Mueller’s color lithograph *Couple at a Table* of c. 1922 (fig. 130). A half dozen of these impressions can also be found in the Museum of Modern Art’s collection, for example, Erich Heckel’s 1919 hand-colored woodcut *Portrait of a Man* (see fig. 63), Kirchner’s *Woman Tying Her Shoe* (see fig. 128), and Emil Nolde’s 1912 woodcut *Prophet* (see fig. 41). Some of these same images are also now in the Art Institute of Chicago, including Nolde’s lithograph *Mother and Child* of 1913 (fig. 131) and his *Young Couple* of 1913 (see fig. 40). Not surprisingly, Rosenwald’s selection of prints by Brücke artists reflects more genteel tastes formed from heeding his mother’s example. The majority of works by the Brücke artists in the Rosenwald Collection depict figures, portraits, and landscapes, with just a handful of examples featuring the nudes and dancers with their frenetic energy for which the group members are so well-known.

In the following years, additional gifts of prints by the former Brücke group members from the Rosenwald Collection came to the NGA. In 1945, Rosenwald donated the six prints he had purchased from the Buchholz sale. This group featured Nolde’s well-known 1913 color lithograph *The Three Kings* (also in MoMA and the AIC) (fig. 132) and Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1915 woodcut *Head of a Woman* (also at MoMA) (fig. 133).

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37 Ibid. Rosenwald’s South American acquisition of German Expressionist prints did not include any of the Kollwitz prints included in the Rosenwald Collection at the National Gallery of Art.
The most substantial donations came in 1950 and 1951 as a result of the South American acquisition. Once again, many of the more well-known impressions encompassed in these two gifts are found also at the Museum of Modern Art, such as Heckel’s 1913 woodcut *Brother and Sister* (fig. 134) and Mueller’s *Discovery of Moses* of 1920 (see fig. 76). The 1951 NGA gift also included Nolde’s 1906 woodcut *Italian Man* (fig. 135), likewise owned by the Art Institute of Chicago. Rosenwald made his last donation of graphics by the Brücke artists to the NGA in 1958 with the presentation of *Mother*, a 1916 woodcut by Schmidt-Rottluff (fig. 136) (also at MoMA). Each of these images indicate Rosenwald’s rather subdued tastes, as they keep to “safe” subjects of portraits, familial ties, and biblical references.

Of the nearly 197 Brücke prints in the National Gallery’s collection today, thirteen prints by Heckel, six by Kirchner, eighteen by Mueller, twenty-one by Nolde, fifteen by Pechstein, and eighteen by Schmidt-Rottluff (a total of ninety-one prints by the Brücke artists) all came from Rosenwald. Like Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Rosenwald did not collect so many works by Kirchner and, as indicated, just over a handful of works by the artist came from him to the NGA. This exclusion is most likely due to his penchant for buying prints *en masse*, as in the South American purchase from Schaefer, or the three lots purchased from the Alien Property Custodian in 1944. Such large purchases did not guarantee the inclusion of an equal number of works by each or every Brücke artist.

It is noteworthy, that Rosenwald was a German American Jew whose own father was very much involved with Jewish charities and other philanthropic organizations. Lessing Rosenwald also involved himself in the Jewish community, but he took a
different stance toward his heritage than did his father. The younger Rosenwald is most noted for his position as President of the American Council for Judaism. Rosenwald accepted an invitation to lead the council in 1943, a position he held until 1955, after which he remained Chairman of the Board. The American Council for Judaism was created in 1942 by a group of Reform rabbis to protest a resolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis that supported the establishment of a Jewish army in Palestine. At its inception, the association consisted of thirty-six rabbis who were eager both to revitalize Reform Judaism in America and oppose Zionism. Once leadership was turned over to Rosenwald, the association was more readily perceived as a secular anti-Zionist pressure group whose purpose was to provide “a distinctive alternative vision of identity and commitment for the American Jewish community.”38 The council’s mission states that, “We interpret Judaism as a universal religious faith, rather than an ethnic or nationalist identity . . . Nationality and religion are separate and distinct . . . Israel is the homeland of its own citizens only, and not of all Jews.”39 The organization remains active today.

Rosenwald’s affiliation with this group is notable because it contrasts his experience as a Jew of German descent from that of other prominent German Jews discussed in this study, such as J.B. Neumann and Curt Valentin. The council was met with bitter opposition from its founding and was condemned as ill-timed, particularly as Jews throughout Europe were being attacked by Hitler’s National Socialist Party as a “nation,” a term used to designate “race” in Nazi terminology. At this time, Americans

were just learning of the gruesome existence of Nazi death camps in Europe, and the details of what Hitler termed the “Final Solution.” In addition, Zionism, which had been in decline in the United States in recent times, now found fresh support among American Jewry due to the efforts of the Biltmore Program of 1942. The Biltmore Program, named for New York City’s Biltmore Hotel where the conference was held, was the result of a convergence of frustrated Jews living in the U.S. who were desperate to save European Jews from Nazi annihilation by any means possible. The conference concluded with the proposal of a series of eight resolutions that, in sum, demanded an internationally recognized Israeli state to serve as a place of Jewish refuge. The American Council for Judaism, on the other hand, opposed Israeli nationalism, sought to promote integration of Jews, and actively established institutions, such as schools, that were resistant to Zionism.\(^{40}\)

In 1945, pro-Zionist Albert Einstein, who emigrated to the United States in 1933 to escape the Nazis, called the American Council for Judaism “a pitiable attempt to obtain favor and toleration from our enemies by betraying true Jewish ideals, and mimicking those who claim to stand for one-hundred-percent Americanism.”\(^{41}\) Indeed, Rosenwald’s involvement with the group may have reflected his German American heritage more so than his Jewish heritage. As noted in the previous chapter, many second-generation German Americans adopted a stance of “one-hundred-percent


American” integration at the breach of the First World War. This was particularly true of German Americans living in Midwestern metropolises such as Chicago, Rosenwald’s hometown, where Deutschum, or German culture, was prominently displayed. Another sign that Rosenwald’s views were likely more strongly rooted in German American culture was his advocacy of the America First Committee, a non-interventionist pressure group formed in 1940 to protest American entry into World War II. As previously noted, this stance toward impartiality and strict neutrality in regard to the United States’ involvement in both World Wars was one frequently assumed by German Americans to avoid the conflict of advocating for aggression toward their ancestral land, and/or seeming like traitors in their new homeland.

Due to a lack of evidence to verify the connection, only conjectures can be made as to whether Rosenwald’s German heritage was a factor in his attraction to the Brücke’s graphics. It can, however, be more readily stated that Rosenwald’s experience as a Jew did not mirror the experiences of other Jewish patrons of the Brücke examined in this

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42 The America First Committee was established on September 4th 1940 by Yale University law student R. Douglas Stuart, Jr. By the following year, the committee claimed approximately 800,000 members in 650 chapters, located most prominently near or around Chicago. The America First Committee established their national headquarters in Chicago while General Robert E. Wood, Rosenwald’s successor as Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Co. in 1939, was elected as Chair of the organization in 1940. Although Wood only accepted for the position for the interim, he remained head of the association until it disbanded in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7th 1941). Despite the onset of war in Europe, an overwhelming majority of the American people wanted to stay out of the Second World War, if possible. The committee attempted to leverage this widespread anti-war feeling in an effort to grow its membership in the years preceding the attack on Pearl Harbor. As part of its political efforts, the America First Committee launched a petition aimed at ensuring enactment of the Neutrality Act of 1939, and sought to pressure President Roosevelt to maintain his pledge to keep the country out of the war. Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953), vii-xi.
study, such as J.B. Neumann, Curt Valentin, and Karl Nierendorf, all of whom were likewise merchants, but not in the same social stratum as the heir to the Sears Roebuck’s fortune. We have observed that the compulsion to uphold a component of German intellectual culture became a means of sustaining a connection to the home country these émigrés were forced to leave behind, and was a likely impetus for them to advocate and preserve German Expressionist art once in New York. Rosenwald, on the other hand, as a second-generation German American Jew, did not encounter forcible exile. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that he felt the same compulsion to collect or advocate for modern German art from the vantage point of a Jew or as an American of German descent as did the New York dealers and Art Institute of Chicago patron Emil Eitel. Instead, his collecting habits appear more closely parallel to those of the equally wealthy Abby Aldrich Rockefeller in the sense that both patrons simultaneously admired old master art as well as Brücke graphics, and both were upper class collectors who viewed art as a philanthropic venture to be employed for public benefit.

To this end, both Rosenwald and Mrs. Rockefeller were adamant that their graphics be gifted to a museum where they would be used for the purpose of public edification. As described above, Rosenwald made specific provisions in his donor agreement with the National Gallery of Art that his collection be made available to visiting scholars, school groups, and the public. Similarly, Mrs. Rockefeller insisted on the consideration of a future print room at the Museum of Modern Art that would allow visitors to examine graphic works more closely, and that would provide greater legitimacy to the medium as a fine art. However, their manner of accumulating prints greatly differed, thereby accounting for differences in the homogeny of their collections.
Mrs. Rockefeller often selected prints by the former Brücke members for purchase with the expert advice of professionals such as Barr, Neumann, Valentiner, and Valentin, with the goal of further diversifying and growing the Museum of Modern Art’s graphic holdings. This meant that she did not necessarily always acquire works that she personally cared for or intended to enjoy for herself. On the other hand, as has been shown, even though he often consulted the advice of his curator Elizabeth Mongan and various dealers on other art purchases, Rosenwald purchased the majority of his works by the Brücke artists on his own volition and for his own initial enjoyment.

As already pointed out, Mrs. Rockefeller and Rosenwald did share similar taste in subject matter, favoring landscapes, bathers, and portraits. Both acquired, for example, Mueller’s lithographic One Girl Bathing and the Other Sitting on the Shore of c. 1919 (fig. 137), a relatively conventional composition showing three nude women bathing in a surrounding woods, reminiscent of Paul Cézanne’s Three Bathers of a similar subject, c. 1879 (fig. 138). As noted, such a selection is in contrast to some of the Brücke members’ penchant for more primitive and expressive subjects, like Emil Nolde’s 1913 dynamic color lithograph Dancer (fig. 139), depicting a bare-breasted indigenous woman pacing to the throes of an unheard drumbeat. However, Rosenwald actually purchased far more Brücke works in a more varied range of graphic mediums than did Mrs. Rockefeller, including a handful of works by Kirchner, whose graphic art is absent from Mrs. Rockefeller’s collection. For this reason, the Rosenwald Collection is more successful than was Mrs. Rockefeller’s in covering the full range of the Brücke artists’ graphic accomplishments.
EXPANDING THE NGA’S COLLECTION

Jacob Kainen: Printmaker

The other significant bequest that helped to comprise the National Gallery of Art’s collection of Brücke graphics came from the artist and print collector Jacob Kainen, and his wife Ruth Cole Kainen (fig. 140). As a printmaker himself, Jacob Kainen could relate to the Brücke artists’ quest for experimental graphic techniques and the thrill of innovation, thereby providing a very different source of Brücke patronage. Jacob Kainen’s technical eye for aesthetics and the potential of graphic mediums, differed from other benefactors in this study. As Smithsonian curator Janet A. Flint has observed about Kainen’s own prints, his graphic oeuvre is “distinguished by a willingness to give up the security of a mastered convention for the sake of new expression.” While a co-religionist to many of the collectors being discussed, Kainen did not come from a wealthy or artistic family, but was the son of a mechanic. He was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on December 7th 1909, one of three sons of Russian Jewish immigrants. In 1919, the family relocated to New York City, a strategic move that opened up new opportunities for Jacob to pursue an early interest in art. By the age of sixteen, he was studying at the Art Students League in Manhattan.

Between 1926 and 1929, Kainen attended the New York Evening School of Industrial Art, and in 1930, graduated from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. The Pratt Institute promoted study of old masters, in particular, and was known for its virtually anti-modernist curriculum. Kainen, however, was equally interested in modern art, and at the age of twenty-one, he began to follow where his curiosity and independent

inclinations led him. Essential to Kainen’s development as a young artist were his frequent explorations of New York’s art museums, graphic collections, and art galleries. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library, Kainen copied paintings by Rembrandt, John Constable, and Claude Lorrain, and absorbed both old master and contemporary aesthetics as exhibited in New York’s museums and galleries. This autodidactic education, reminiscent of the young Brücke artists’ own emphasis on independent learning, helped Kainen to focus his artistic insights and strengthen his own aesthetic opinions.44

At the Museum of Modern Art, Kainen sought out avant-garde artists interested in the directions kept under wraps at Pratt. He admired the innovations of the School of Paris, as seen in the works of Raoul Dufy, Piet Mondrian, and Henri Matisse, but was wary of falling too heavily under the influence of Picasso. As a counterforce to the latter’s extensive shadow, Kainen turned to German Expressionist art. As we have seen, the efforts of German Jewish émigré gallerists such Neumann, Nierendorf, and Valentin at the Buchholz Gallery provided fairly consistent opportunities to see German Expressionist art in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1937, Kainen saw the first solo exhibition of Kirchner’s work in the United States at the Buchholz Gallery. Kainen was as attracted to the German Expressionists’ self-imposed social alienation and emotional vigor as he was to the formal qualities of their art: “They had flattened patterns, but their subjects were based on the streets, the kind of life we had,” he observed.45

44 Ibid.
In his own compositions, Kainen mirrored the Expressionists’ flattened forms, emphasis on shapes and pattern, and articulated contours, as demonstrated in the planar geometric designs of his 1936 woodcut Plasterer (fig. 141). Karl Schmidt-Rottluff had employed comparable stylizations in his Portrait of Guthmann (fig. 142), 1914, which Kainen later gave to the National Gallery of Art. In Schmidt-Rottluff’s work, the inherent resistance between the gouge and woodblock permitted the artist to achieve simplified forms and angular cuts for geometric patterning as found in the background surrounding the sitter, as well as varying degrees of cross-hatching to indicate texture, as seen in the foreground. Bold outlines and the use of smoky tones for atmospheric effects in Kainen’s lithographic Aftermath of 1937 (fig. 143) bring to mind Emil Nolde’s Man in a Top Hat I (see fig. 36) of 1911, also a gift from the Kainens to the NGA. Both artists employ the lithographic medium as a painter might, demonstrating freely drawn, expressive thick black brushstrokes, and tonal nuances to promote a sense of gloom and melancholy in their compositions.

A chance friendship with Armenian-born artist Arshile Gorky during the 1930s opened up a new world for Kainen. Gorky and Kainen would frequently take walks together through the streets of New York, while Gorky pointed out variations in the city’s architectural textures and colors, often created by chance and weathering. Much of Kainen’s subject matter at this time is taken from these observations of city life stripped to its most basic forms, as seen in his 1938 Banana Man (fig. 144), illustrating a solitary vendor seated cross-legged on a crate next to his wooden fruit cart. One of the artist’s earliest experiments in color lithography, Banana Man depicts an otherwise mundane

view of urban life with gentle humor and exhibits rudimentary forms that emphasize the humble manner of the merchant. Other times, the two artists, along with Russian-born painter and theorist Ivan Dabrowsky, now known as John Graham, would visit galleries where Gorky and Graham would analyze the color and composition of paintings while Kainen listened. These visits and analyses proved formative for the young American artist. It was during his explorations through New York galleries that Kainen became fascinated by the inherent aesthetic qualities of graphic works. Like the former Brücke members, he found himself attracted by the unique properties particular to each print medium. Early in his career, he had briefly tried to create a few drypoints scratched on aluminum plates and printed with a clothes wringer; however, with the establishment of the Depression-era WPA Federal Art Projects, Kainen was presented with an opportunity to focus on graphic work.47

47 Flint, 10. The Federal Art Project was the visual arts division of President Roosevelt’s New Deal Work Progress Administration Federal One program. It operated from August 29th, 1935 until June 30th, 1943. The program’s primary goals were to employ out-of-work artists during the Great Depression, and to provide art for non-federal government buildings such as schools, hospitals, and libraries. The program consisted of three central divisions: art production, art instruction, and art research. In the art production arm of the Federal Art Project, artists created posters, murals, paintings, prints, and photographs culminating in some 200,000 works of art. Particularly advantageous to American culture was the program’s support of numerous artists now considered iconic figures of the American avant-garde school of art. Abstraction, for example, had not yet gained a significant audience in the United States during the mid-1930s and early 1940s, causing sales of abstract art in this country to stagnate. Because the Federal Art Project made no distinction between representational and non-representational art, the program supported many Abstract Expressionist painters, including Jackson Pollock, before their work had achieved renown or could provide them with sufficient income. For more on the Federal Art Project, see Roger Kennedy and Ann Prentice Wagner, 1934: A New Deal for Artists, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum and D. Giles, Ltd., 2009); Ellen G. Landau, Artists for Victory, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1983); Francis V. O’Connor, ed., The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1972); and O’Connor, ed., Art for
American modernist painter Stuart Davis, a close friend of Gorky and Graham, advised Kainen to avoid the more disorganized, over-crowded easel and mural sectors of the Federal Art Project and join the graphic arts program instead. In contrast to producing unique works of art such as paintings that have the potential to be lost or carelessly mishandled, Davis suggested that working in graphic mediums would allow Kainen to create multiple images that would satisfy the terms of employment for the program, and would permit the young artist to promote and circulate his work widely. With Davis’s advice in mind and in view of his own mounting interest in printmaking, Kainen joined the New York WPA Federal Graphic Arts Project in August 1935, although its headquarters were not yet fully equipped with etching and lithographic presses, paper, plates, lithographic stones, or experienced printers.

Kainen began experimenting in trial-and-error fashion with lithography; due to its potential for direct, painterly expression, he demonstrated an immediate affinity for this medium. Because lithography utilizes the antagonism between grease and water to achieve visual effect, it easily approximates drawing and painting. Therefore, a trained painter and draughtsman such as Kainen was particularly adept at achieving a variety of lines and shading using the medium. This is demonstrated by the various linear textures and areas of light and dark densities in his 1939 lithograph Loading Up (fig. 145), a scene from Depression-era daily life illustrating coal workers loading a cart. Like Nolde, Kainen also appreciated the often unpredictable affects of intaglio techniques and the direct involvement demanded of the print artist’s hand. He enjoyed the surprise and spontaneity by which an etching or an aquatint changes or “suffers,” as Kainen termed it,

by the artist’s whim. Similarly, he delighted in the impulsive “after thoughts” that would result in the accumulation and densities of ink, line, and tone that add tactile richness to a surface.\textsuperscript{48} These aspects can be seen to advantage in his 1949 work, The Night Obscure (fig. 146), illustrating a sleeping man floating above city rooftops in a nocturnal sky. The combination of drypoint and aquatint in this composition allowed Kainen the luxury of enjoying both the immediacy necessary to produce the fine, calligraphic lines of the suspended figure, as well as the unexpected ambiguous effects that often result from the use of aquatint. The artist used these to produce the soft, intimate atmosphere of the surrounding night sky.

Part of the appeal of German Expressionism for Kainen was the movement’s association with rebellion and social scrutiny. As noted, like Rosenwald, Jacob Kainen was Jewish, although his experiences were very different since his family came from Eastern Europe. The history of Jews in modern Russia is marked by bouts of oppression and persecution, enforced by anti-Semitic edicts under the authority of a string of Russian leaders, beginning with Catherine II in 1762 and continuing throughout the reigns of Alexander II (1855-1881), Alexander III (1881-1894), and Nicholas II (1894-1917).\textsuperscript{49} These policies restricted where Jews could live, as well as the kinds of occupations they could hold. Alexander III, considered to be a staunch reactionary and anti-Semite, enforced the most oppressive of these policies in order to ignite “popular anti-Semitism,” which portrayed the Jews as “Christ-killers” and oppressors of Orthodox Slavic Christians. In 1881, a large-scale wave of anti-Jewish pogroms, or violent mobs, swept

\textsuperscript{48} Flint, 14.
\textsuperscript{49} James P. Duffy and Vincent L. Ricci, Czars: Russia’s Rulers for Over One Thousand Years (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2002), 324.
through southwestern Russia after Jews were wrongly blamed for the assassination of Alexander II.\textsuperscript{50}

As a result of this outbreak, thousands of Jewish homes were destroyed, families reduced to extreme poverty, and large numbers of men, women, and children injured or killed. In response to the violence, a conference was convened at the Ministry of Interior, and on May 15\textsuperscript{th} 1882 “temporary regulations” known as the May Laws were introduced. This restrictive legislation expelled Jews from their homes in Russia and forbade them to obtain mortgages or leases on real estate located even outside of the borders of Russian towns and boroughs. In addition, Jews were forbidden to conduct business transactions on Sundays or on Christian holy days. These so-called “temporary regulations” remained in effect for more than thirty years, and were further impetus for mass emigration of Russian Jews to the United States at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{51}

Although Kainen himself did not witness these events, his parents were part of this mass emigration to escape oppression, violence, and economic devastation at the hands of the Russian tsars. As a first generation American, Kainen’s Russian Jewish heritage likely predisposed him to sympathize with social issues resulting from the Great Depression in his own time.\textsuperscript{52} Having witnessed in New York the eviction of dozens of

\textsuperscript{50} Nicholas Valentine Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 395.
\textsuperscript{52} It is unclear whether Kainen’s Jewish heritage was the source of any additional attraction to the Brücke’s graphic art, as there is no evidence to support supposition in his personal papers. A close friend of the Kainens, National Museum of American Art curator Joann Moser, described Jacob Kainen as a “secular Jew.” More concretely
people in entire city blocks, the plight of the working poor on the city streets, and the overall deepening misery of the bad economic times of the thirties, Kainen’s compassion and indignation at the inequities of social welfare emerged in his work of that period. In Kainen’s account of his artistic friends, “We were poor, footloose, had never been anywhere, and had no prospects of going. The Depression had driven us to think of social change; in such an atmosphere a more than passing concern with aesthetics was tantamount to frivolity.” In the artist’s first lithograph produced under the auspices of the Federal Art Project, *Drought* of 1935 (fig. 147), we see a visual transcription of these words. The print illustrates a farmer with a face etched with worry lines seated on a rock, hunched in defeat, his pitchfork abandoned beside him. A gnarled tree presides over the figure and the barren field that has succumbed to the effects of drought seen in the background further captures the feeling of loss and frustration experienced by so many during this era.

In 1938 Kainen married Bertha Friedman, a young woman he had known for a few years. Although Bertha Kainen had a part-time job in a doctor’s office, just shortly after their wedding she began to suffer from health problems that left her too weak to work. The couple was dependent upon Kainen’s WPA salary, but by 1942 assignments from the New York Graphic Arts Project were few and hard to come by, making employment in the program precarious at best. Feeling strained and at odds with his fragile finances, his rocky marriage, and the uncertainty of a future in the Federal Art
Project, Kainen accepted a job as an aide with the Division of Graphics Arts at the United States National Museum (now the National Museum of American History), part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Although the museum did not specialize in art, there was a small collection of works on paper. Ruel P. Tolman, who was curator, acting director, and Kainen’s supervisor, had acquired few graphic works for the museum since the founding director of the print collection, Sylvester R. Koehler, died in 1900. The Graphics Art Division was located in the Smithsonian Castle, where visitors looked at prints in the out-moded arrangement of glass cases crowded together. Similarly, the Division offices were adorned haphazardly with old master prints, many faded and damaged by exposure to direct light for so many decades.56

Kainen was quickly disillusioned by this new job. His principal duty was to answer questions from all segments of the public on the identification of prints. He was also responsible for examining each work in the collection, re-cataloguing, re-matting, and even re-attributing works, if necessary. Indeed, Kainen’s keen artistic eye rooted out forgeries and he identified prints by Eugène Delacroix and Jusepe de Ribera that had previously been listed as anonymous. Despite what he described as a continued lack of gratification, this position proved to be invaluable to Kainen’s development as a print curator and expert. In an October 1942 letter to his friend Joseph Solman, Kainen wrote candidly of all these feelings, stating:

I am learning a hell of a lot about printmaking, printing processes and office procedure, but the stale atmosphere of anti-art is beginning to get on my nerves. Fortunately, my nerves are extremely tough and apply the minimum

56 Avis Berman, *Jacob Kainen*, 22-23.
connotation to certain outrageous standards by which prints are measured in this place . . . 57

Two years later, in recognition of his industrious efforts, Tolman promoted Kainen to the position of assistant curator, a title that more accurately reflected his professional status and actual workload. 58

Kainen’s professional success continued in the coming years. In 1946, he was appointed as Curator of the Smithsonian Division of Graphic Arts, a position that brought him into closer contact with print dealers and other curators across the nation. The division represented the only museum department in Washington, D.C., that dealt systematically with prints, and Kainen found the collection to be lacking in notable areas. He wasted no time in reshaping the department, heightening its role within the United States National Museum, and working to fill sizeable gaps in its compilation of works on paper, which had not been added to for nearly half a century. His first purchases on behalf of the museum included examples by French artist Honoré Daumier, an artist currently not represented in the collection, as well as Dürer and Rembrandt. Because the division also did not own any works by modern masters, Kainen purchased graphics by Édouard Manet, Pierre Bonnard, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Jasper Johns, and Willem de Kooning. He was familiar with the latter through his association with Gorky but was never a close friend. 59 Most importantly for this study, he also acquired examples by the German Expressionists.

57 Jacob Kainen to Joseph Solman, October 1942, Jacob Kainen Archives, Chevy Chase, Maryland; as quoted by Berman, 23.
58 Avis Berman, Jacob Kainen, 23.
59 Ibid., 28.
As part of his duties Kainen took over a program of monthly print exhibitions at the United States National Museum. The shows featured either solo contemporary artists or historical masters of the medium. Kainen’s organization of this program meant that graphic works by many modern artists such as S.W. Hayter, Josef Albers, Adja Yunkers, Louis Lozowick, Karl Schrag, José Guerrero, Louis Schanker, Werner Drewes, and Boris Margo were shown in the nation’s capital for the first time. Local D.C. artists were also given priority, including James Wells and Prentiss Taylor. Kainen provided professional installations, press releases, a photographic record, and excellent opportunities for a review to these printmakers. In deference to Kainen’s sensitive handling of their artwork, artists often donated a graphic composition to the museum at the close of their show.60

In 1947 the Washington Workshop Center for the Arts opened on the top floor of the former Walsh-MacLean mansion on Massachusetts Avenue. When asked by American artist Leon Berkowitz to teach evening classes in painting and printmaking there, Kainen assumed the role that more experienced artists had once fulfilled for him in New York. From 1947 to 1954, Kainen served as a teacher and mentor to young local artists who trained in classes offered by the workshop and exhibited at the center. In addition, because of his links to New York and relative renown as both a curator at the Smithsonian and as a local exhibiting artist himself, Kainen became a magnet figure for his colleagues and students at the workshop. His mentorship was instrumental in furthering the careers of artists well-known today such as Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis. Throughout his tenure at the workshop, Kainen adhered to a rigorous routine to maintain his three chosen professions of artist, curator, and teacher. He toiled at the

60 Ibid.
museum until 5:15 each evening, then either made his way to the workshop to teach evening classes at six o’clock, or, if he was not teaching, Kainen would spend his evenings in his unheated studio on M Street, making his own art. Sometimes he taught or painted until ten or eleven o’clock before returning home to conduct research and write until the early hours of the morning, because the Smithsonian would not allow him to do scholarly writing on government time.61

Because of his long-time commitment to printmaking, Kainen also continued to make graphics, using the museum’s printing presses after hours. Between 1945 and the mid-1960s, Kainen produced more than fifty prints, even while juggling his other responsibilities. This dedication to his graphic output indicates an additional connection between Jacob Kainen and Brücke artist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Already a great admirer of the German artist’s expressionist aesthetic, Kainen was equally impressed by Kirchner’s impressive graphic output during his relatively short life. Kainen’s opinions on Kirchner and his prints were most clearly expressed in a 1985 essay titled “E.L. Kirchner as a Printmaker,” which he wrote for the accompanying catalogue of an exhibition of his and his wife Ruth’s collection of German Expressionist prints held at the National Gallery of Art.62 In his essay, Kainen marveled:

The Dubes have catalogued about 2,150 of [Kirchner’s] known prints, a stupendous body of work unmatched by that of any other Western printmaker, including Picasso, who outlived Kirchner by thirty-four years. It is awesome (no other word seems suitable) to consider that Kirchner alone, without professional assistance, prepared, executed, and printed virtually all of his prints, many in a full range

61 Ibid., 27-29.

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of colors. Perhaps only a printmaker or printer can appreciate fully the magnitude of such an effort . . . . We are dealing with one of the great workhorses of art history—only Picasso in this century had the same superhuman dedication. One cannot avoid an immoderate tone in speaking about him . . . .

In the same spirit, Kainen printed a self-portrait during his tenure as curator at the Smithsonian depicting himself in a printer’s apron holding a drypoint needle, emblems of his artistic persona and true vocation (fig. 148). In this work, *Self-Portrait with Drypoint Needle*, the apron covers, but does not impede, the necktie and shirt that serve as reminders of Kainen’s other profession as a curator. This juxtaposition efficiently encapsulates Kainen’s dualistic calling.

Ironically, as his reputation as a curator and an authority on prints grew, Jacob Kainen’s career as a printmaker became more obscure. Finding even the slightest presumption that he might use professional contacts to benefit his artistic career reprehensible, Kainen virtually dropped from the national print scene. He continued to show his paintings in one-man and group shows in New York and Washington, D.C. from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s; however, his prints of this period are scarcely known outside of Washington. Kainen’s eventual decision to all but put aside his graphic career did not come without regret, however. In his 1972 memoir Kainen concluded his description of his time with the Federal Art Project by lamenting, “I am sure that the feeling of lost possibilities, of youth spent without cultivating our deepest talents, lies at the heart of the bitterness we all feel, despite the fond memories. ‘In art,’

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64 Avis Berman, *Jacob Kainen*, 27.
65 Flint, 12.
66 Ibid.
Henry James said, ‘there is no second chance.’”67 This demonstrates regret over Kainen’s decision to marginalize his career for the financial stability of a museum professional.

By 1967, Kainen’s professional unhappiness was compounded by a separation from his wife Bertha, followed by divorce a year later. Therefore, it was with reluctance that he accepted a noon speaking engagement in February 1968 at the Women’s National Democratic Club. During the luncheon, the subject of Kirchner came up in table conversation. Kainen turned politely to inform the woman seated next to him about this artist. His luncheon partner, Ruth Cole, a writer and publicist from Rosboro, Arkansas, replied with annoyance that she knew very well who Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was, as she had been collecting German Expressionist prints and drawings for years. Also, Cole informed the startled curator, she happened to own a lithograph by Kirchner. “Two days later,” Ruth later explained in an interview with The Washington Post, “He called to ask if he could come see it, and we were on.”68 The couple was married in February 1969.


In Ruth Cole, Jacob Kainen found a partner to share his enthusiasm for print collecting, as well as a willing pupil in the study of graphic works. Like so many of the other patrons in this study, the couple’s artistic tastes were broad, ranging from 15th-

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century and old master prints to modernist and, in their case, contemporary works. In
time, they would accumulate a substantial number of works on paper by American
abstract expressionist artists of the mid-20th century, many of whom had been Jacob’s
colleagues when he was a painter in New York. In the 1985 exhibition published when
the NGA showed their collection mentioned previously, Ruth Kainen contributed a
memoir of the couple’s early years of collecting, focusing on twentieth-century German
prints. In this essay, Mrs. Kainen notes that her husband always maintained that the
exhibitions of modern German art at the galleries of Neumann, Nierendorf, and Valentin
were more important influences on members of his artistic generation than has generally
been acknowledged. This early influence whetted his appetite for German
Expressionist prints. Impressions that were once a part of Jacob Kainen’s personal
collection, such as Schmidt-Rottluff’s tender 1918 woodcut Kiss of Love (fig. 149) and
Heckel’s expressive lithograph The Brothers Karamazov of 1919 (fig. 150), are now part
of the National Gallery of Art’s collection of Brücke works.

Mrs. Kainen had graduated with a bachelor’s degree in English from the
University of Oregon in 1942 and served in the Navy WAVES during World War II.
After the war, she went to Yale University to study music and received a second
bachelor’s degree in that field in 1950. Her father held stake in a local timber company
that was initially established in the family’s hometown of Rosboro, Arkansas, but was
later moved to Oregon. After her father died, Mrs. Kainen remained a major stakeholder
in this timber and lumber company throughout her life, thereby providing the couple with
funds to purchase artwork when business was booming. As she indicated at their first

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70 Ibid., 11-29.
71 Ibid., 13.
meeting, Mrs. Kainen had already accumulated a small collection of prints and drawings prior to the couple’s marriage. Interested in art since her college days at the University of Oregon, Ruth Cole began collecting prints because they were more affordable than paintings.72

As she notes in her 1985 essay, Mrs. Kainen’s first impression was purchased in a small framing gallery on Madison Avenue in January 1964.73 She had intended to purchase a Matisse lithograph that caught her attention, but found herself riveted by an exhibition of Kirchner’s prints featured in a narrow room of the shop. Though unfamiliar with the artist, she purchased a 1909 lithograph by Kirchner, *Girl in a Bathtub* (fig. 151) (also a work owned by the Museum of Modern Art), on credit with the shop owner for $395. Shortly after the Kainens were married, Jacob returned home with Ruth’s prized image in a new frame. Together they hung the work next to the Matisse lithograph Mrs. Kainen had purchased on the same buying excursion. Their reaction to seeing the two side-by-side was enlightening. In Mrs. Kainen’s words: “. . . Something unforeseen happened: the Matisse rather quickly began to seem less satisfactory . . . . Eventually we put it on another wall some distance from the Kirchner.”74

The Kainens maintained “his” and “hers” collections during their marriage, although Mrs. Kainen admits to adding several select impressions to Jacob’s collection from her own that were his favorites, including Schmidt-Rottluff’s woodcut *Woman with Unbound Hair* (fig. 152), 1913, and Kirchner’s famous 1914 woodcut *Five Tarts* (fig. 153), now both in the collection of the NGA. As time passed, it became less clear exactly

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74 Ibid., 13.
which works belonged to whom or from which dealers they were acquired. Having realized their shared passion for prints, the couple was eager to begin an “ours” collection of graphic works. Similar to Lessing Rosenwald, Jacob and Ruth Kainen’s collection at first included both old master and German Expressionist prints. With the rising cost of the former, the couple decided in the early 1970s to concentrate on the latter, especially Kirchner. This reflects more adventurous tastes on their part than patrons of previous generations.

What the couple admired most about the Brücke members was their “total disregard for practical issues [of printing]” and their “rejection of traditional printing.” The spontaneous, experimental nature of the Brücke artists’ manner of printmaking was particularly appealing. On this point, Jacob explained in his catalogue essay:

> Good professional craftsmen [at the turn of the century] were required to make all impressions in an edition as identical as possible. But Brücke members felt no need to print in this way. They had no responsibilities to publishers, only to themselves; they could risk failure, they could vary inks, papers, and techniques as they pleased.

From the vantage point of his expertise as both a print curator and printmaker, Kainen informed his collecting partner that a good print will possess print quality (that is, it would clearly exhibit those characteristics and aesthetic qualities particular to a specific graphic medium); moreover, that a graphic work demonstrates unique characteristics arising from the particular medium used to create it; and most importantly, that “quality of expression” is an essential element to a truly remarkable print. According to Jacob

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75 Jacob Kainen, “E.L. Kirchner as a Printmaker,” 35.
76 Ibid.
77 Ruth Cole Kainen, personal interview with the author, Chevy Chase, Maryland, August 12, 2009.
Kainen, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s work thus provided the best example of graphic art, hence his and Ruth’s attraction to this artist’s oeuvre. Kainen related “quality of expression” to “graphic intensity.” He wrote in the 1985 catalogue:

All of the Brücke emphasized a lusty attack but Kirchner had the strongest and most varied command of composition . . . . As a printmaker his phenomenal productivity and graphic intensity set him apart from his contemporaries. I don’t say emotional intensity—Munch, Rohlf, Rouault, Nolde, Beckmann, Dix, Grosz, Corinth, Meidner, and Kollwitz, among others, could be as troubling. But Kirchner’s prints as graphic products generate more excitement, they go deeper into each medium’s latent potential. I cannot think of another twentieth-century printmaker, not even Munch or Nolde, who consistently gives off quite so strong a smell of graphic flesh and blood.  

Kainen’s remarks indicate his admiration for Kirchner’s continual search for original formal and graphic qualities and his ability to interpret everyday life with stimulating results.

One of the effects Kainen singled out for praise was the “effect of deep perspective” produced by lines resulting from the woodcut medium’s planar effect that form a radiating pattern in Kirchner’s 1908 graphic Female Nude (fig. 154), an image collected by the couple. He also pointed to the artist’s use of rhythmic lithographic “brushstrokes” to reciprocate the movement of figures embraced in a dance in Kirchner’s 1909 Dancing Couple (fig. 155), which they also owned. Likewise, Kainen appreciated the German artist’s ability to manipulate graphic potential, especially in the woodcut medium. He noted that Kirchner sometimes used a hard, dense wood, such as maple, that could hold shallow tonal incisions made with a chisel, or respond to a v-shaped gouge.

78 Jacob Kainen, “E.L. Kirchner as a Printmaker,” 32, 35.
79 Ibid., 35.
that the artist pushed across the wood plane with little pressure or forethought. In this way, he produced compositions of “white line” forms in which the paper remained unprinted against solid inked backgrounds, as in *Head of Ludwig Schames* of 1918 (see fig. 80) or *The Blond Painter Stirner* of 1919 (fig. 156) (the latter of is represented in the Kainen Collection at the National Gallery of Art). Kirchner’s portrait of Stirner, also owned by the Art Institute of Chicago, is a large composition against a solid violet background. The subject looks directly at the viewer with pale blue eyes set in a brown face defined by white lines. A sickle moon echoes the curve of Stirner’s upward tilted head, while a tiny black cat is imprinted on his neck. The subject is flanked by two small primitive nudes, set like afterthoughts on either side.\(^{80}\)

Finally, Kainen noted his particular affinity for Kirchner’s color lithographs, suggesting that, of all the Brücke master’s prints, these are the most aligned with his own paintings and drawings because of lithography’s ability to emulate the effects of other mediums. Kainen again observed Kirchner’s “technical unorthodoxy” in these prints. He pointed to a 1909 Kirchner lithograph owned by the couple titled *Russian Dancers* (see fig. 22) as an example of such unusual printing methods. *Russian Dancers*, a vibrantly colored composition depicting a lively couple in movement, exemplifies Kirchner’s bold, rhythmic outlines and superimposed colors. The artist used acid in critical spots to lighten, blur, or mottle the colors, thereby providing frenetic energy and movement to the work. Kirchner’s intentional spotting, mottling, and smudging with acid in both his lithographic and intaglio works, which is particularly visible along the edges of his drypoint with tonal etching *Bridge on Crown Prince Embankment*, 1909 (fig. 157),

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 37, 39.
collected by the Kainens, demonstrates the artist’s desire to provide a less “professional” look to his prints that connoted an “unpolished,” or “handmade” appearance.\footnote{Ibid., 40-41.}

Due to the couple’s mutual affinity for the artist’s work, Kirchner’s prints became the most sought-after and amassed examples of German Expressionist art in the Kainen’s collecting career, a situation that differentiates the National Gallery of Art’s holdings from others already discussed. The Kainens’ acquisition habits differed greatly from the previous generation of wealthy philanthropic patrons of the Brücke’s graphic art, especially Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Lessing J. Rosenwald. Unlike Rosenwald and Mrs. Rockefeller, whose aesthetic tastes and even their print selections were often guided by the advice of curators (especially Mongan and Barr), the Kainens collecting habits were largely guided by Jacob’s artistic eye and his own technical knowledge of graphic mediums. In addition, although Rosenwald collected more Brücke prints for the National Gallery than did the Kainens, he had made his purchases at a time when the Brücke artists were still relatively unknown in the United States and their graphic works were still quite affordable, thereby allowing him the luxury of buying prints in generous groupings. By contrast, during the 1970s when the Kainens began collecting in earnest, both prices and demand for Brücke works had increased significantly, forcing the couple to be more focused in their acquisitions. Because the Kainens were not wealthy like Mrs. Rockefeller or Rosenwald, their purchases were carefully selected and deliberate. Due to these circumstances, while the couple’s collection and ultimate gift to the NGA was smaller than Rosenwald’s, it was more diverse and expanded the full range of the
Brücke’s graphic accomplishments, enhancing coverage of the subjects that appear most often in each member’s oeuvre.82

Because the Kainens had limited financial resources, they decided to focus their accumulation efforts on Kirchner’s work. Indeed, of the two NGA gifts, the Kainens contributed many more works by Kirchner, thirty-two prints to Rosenwald’s six. Because of Rosenwald’s relatively small ownership of Kirchner’s graphics, the Kainens’ former holdings better illustrate the broad scope of the artist’s graphic oeuvre and successfully fill an important gap. Mrs. Kainen’s 1985 memoir indicates that, as they began to collect with more energy, the couple phoned a roster of art dealers across the United States, London, and Germany, who they thought might have German Expressionist prints to sell. Although the Kainens did not keep consistent records as to which impressions they purchased from whom, thereby making it difficult to assess what impact individual dealers had on the formation of this collection, it was the watchful eyes of these art dealers to which the couple credited their collecting success.83 By this time, iconic dealers such as Valentin and Neumann were deceased, leaving the couple to seek out the expert advice of a new generation of art dealers.84 However, it is notable a number of these new dealers, like Valentin and Neumann, were also Jewish émigrés.

82 See chapter one of this dissertation for discussion of topics and subjects the Brücke members favored as compositions.
83 The Kainens worked with a large number of art dealers and gallerists during their most active years of collecting (c. 1973 to 1985), including Peter Deitsch, Dorothea Carus, Helen Serger, David Tunick, and Leonard Hutton in New York; Allan Frumkin and Alice Adam in Chicago; Harry Lunn and Jem Hom in Washington, D.C.; R.E. Lewis and Robert M. Light in California; Ferdinand Roten in Baltimore; Angus Whyte in Boston; Frederick Mulder at the Colnaghi Gallery in London; and Wolfgang Wittrock in Berlin. Ruth Cole Kainen, “Collecting Twentieth-Century German Prints,” 14-16.
84 Curt Valentin died in 1955; J.B. Neumann died in 1967.
One such dealer was Serge Sabarsky (1912-1996), a leading authority on German and Austrian Expressionist art.

Born in Vienna, Sabarsky fled the Nazis in 1938 and settled in New York. After the Second World War, he held a series of jobs, including work as an architectural designer. Sabarsky retained ties to his homeland through his passion for Austrian Expressionist art and design and twentieth-century German art. In the 1950s, Sabarsky began seriously collecting art, amassing an important body of work over the years by artists such as Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Oskar Kokoschka, Beckmann, Heckel, and Kirchner. In the late 1960s he made the decision to open his own gallery on Madison Avenue devoted to Austrian and German Expressionist art. The Serge Sabarsky Gallery opened in 1968 and remained in business until 1985, when Sabarsky closed its doors in order to serve as a private curator, organizing museum exhibitions. For a year in 1990, he also served as director of the Nassau County Museum of Fine Art. Sabarsky’s greatest legacy remains his contribution to the founding of the Neue Galerie in Manhattan, a museum dedicated to Austrian and German Expressionist art. Although he did not live to see its opening on Fifth Avenue in 2001, he aided in establishing a foundation in 1993, with long time friend and fellow art collector Ronald S. Lauder, dedicated to the opening of this museum.  

Another dealer from whom the Kainens acquired Brücke graphics was Felix Landau (1924-2003). Landau was also born in Vienna and he too fled from the Nazis with his family in 1938, settling in New York. He attended City College before serving

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in the Army in the Pacific theater during World War II. After the close of the war in 1948, Landau moved to Los Angeles. Like Sabarsky, Landau was an advocate of Austrian and German Expressionist art, and he founded the Felix Landau Gallery on La Cienega Boulevard in 1951 when renown for this art in the United States was on the rise. Through the gallery’s exhibition programming, Landau acquainted West Coast audiences to the work of artists such as Klimt and Schiele, and its success prompted him to open a sister gallery in New York, the Alan-Landau Gallery in 1966.86

Contrary to Sabarsky, who remained firmly committed to Austrian and German Expressionist art all his life, Landau eventually diversified his representation into other schools of art. His ties to his homeland were possibly not as strongly remembered as Sabarsky’s, likely due to his young age when his family fled from Austria. Regardless, in the following decades both of Landau’s galleries became respected sites for viewing contemporary and modern art. At the Los Angeles gallery, the dealer continued to exhibit works by prominent European artists, including Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso and Francis Bacon, as well as works by artists with ties to California, such as Sam Francis and Richard Diebenkorn. In 1971, Landau closed both galleries and moved to Paris where he worked as a private art dealer until his death in 2003.

The Kainens also purchased prints by the Brücke members at auctions in Germany, and at the Galerie Kornfeld in Bern, Switzerland. In fact, Mrs. Kainen has stated that most of their prints by these artists were acquired at auction in Europe with the

assistance of a purchasing agent.\textsuperscript{87} New York dealer David Tunick or Berlin gallerist Wolfgang Wittrock often represented them at these sales. The late 1970s was marked by soaring new highs in auction prices for both the Brücke artists’ prints and graphic works by other modern German artists, such as Beckmann. By the end of the decade, color prints by Kirchner became available only for sale at auction. Mrs. Kainen recalls witnessing a Kirchner color lithograph, \textit{Man Stepping into the Sea}, bringing in $135,894 at an auction in 1981, out-distancing by far other nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints that had previously dominated the auction field.\textsuperscript{88} Such a steep price was a far cry from the $395 Mrs. Kainen paid for her first Kirchner lithograph in 1964. In a further sign of the increasing demand for prints by the Brücke artists, the Kainens observed a fellow collector at this same auction lamenting, “The fun’s gone out of collecting. It used to be you could go around on your own and find something in an out-of-the-way place . . . . Now it’s just a matter of how much you’re willing to pay.”\textsuperscript{89} Although such changes in the market for graphics by the Brücke artists did not prevent the Kainens from continuing their acquisitions, they purchased fewer works in the late 1980s and 1990s as prices continued to soar and the availability of prized works by the former Brücke members decreased.

\textbf{The Kainens and the National Gallery of Art}

In 1974, Andrew Robison became Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Art. Now advanced in age, Lessing J. Rosenwald, the National Gallery’s great prints patron, was buying very few works of art during his last years; therefore, the young

\textsuperscript{87} Ruth Cole Kainen, interview with the author, August 12, 2009.  
\textsuperscript{88} Ruth Cole Kainen, “Collecting Twentieth-Century German Prints,” 19-21.  
\textsuperscript{89} Quoted in Ruth Cole Kainen, “Collecting Twentieth-Century German Prints,” 20-21.
curator had to begin actively seeking other donors to continue the momentum of print collecting at the NGA. Robison describes German Expressionist prints as his own “special claim” among the gallery’s graphic collection, and he once confided to Ruth Kainen that he aspired for the gallery’s prints collection to be “my monument.” A native of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and a print connoisseur himself, Robison was ideally suited for this task in part because he was familiar with local collectors, the Kainens included. Robison had studied classics, philosophy, and religion at Princeton University from 1958 to 1962. Afterward, he read early Christianity at Oxford until 1965, a period that included a year in India studying Hinduism, before returning to Princeton where he graduated with a doctoral degree in philosophy in 1970. From 1970 to 1973, he taught philosophy at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He initially joined the curatorial staff of the National Gallery of Art in 1974, became senior curator in 1983, and the Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator in 1991.

By the time Robison joined the National Gallery, the Kainens had already designated the German Expressionist graphics they owned to other institutions. Although his intent was to plead with the Kainens for support of the National Gallery’s growing accumulation of German Expressionist prints, Mrs. Kainen recalls that Robison initiated his first meeting with the couple by soliciting advice for diversifying the

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90 Andrew Robison, telephone interview with the author, September 16, 2009.
After Robison left, Mrs. Kainen reports that Jacob turned to her a little nervously and said, “He’s going to be very hard to resist!” Indeed, Mrs. Kainen once observed of Robison, “He is truly interested in the Gallery’s prints and drawings; and he is incredibly thorough, trying to fill in all the gaps, leaving no stone unturned. But one is always conscious he is not asking [for] help for himself.” Robison’s priority, she felt, is always the quality and well-being of the museum’s prints and drawings collection, rather than his own.

A friendship soon formed between the Kainens and Robison, who enthusiastically supported the couple’s ongoing endeavor to amass a more extensive collection of German Expressionist prints. Even before her marriage, Mrs. Kainen had given some thought to what she would do with the prints she owned. Since she grew up in Eugene, the small collection of prints Ruth had accumulated before her marriage was designated to go to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon. However, during a visit to Oregon in the mid-1970s, the Kainens became dismayed by the apparent lack of interest in their growing tandem collection evidenced by the Schnitzer Museum’s director Richard Paulin. Prior to meeting with Robison, the couple had begun to search for alternative institutions to which they might gift their collection, considering the Portland Art Museum, due to Mrs. Kainen’s ties to the state of Oregon, and significant museums in close proximity to their Chevy Chase, Maryland home, such as the Hirshhorn Museum

94 Ruth Cole Kainen, interview with the author, August 12, 2009. Mrs. Kainen described Robison’s attempt to ingratiate himself to the couple by asking for advice on collecting as “very clever.”
96 Ibid.
and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., and the Baltimore Museum of Art. 97 While the Kainens ultimately did give generously to these and a number of other cultural institutions, the relationship they formed with Andrew Robison became the catalyst by which a decision was made to leave the bulk of their graphic collection to the National Gallery of Art.

Once this was decided, the Kainens and Robison began to work in concert to buy, promote, and collect graphic arts at the National Gallery of Art. In relation to Brücke prints specifically, in 1977 the Kainens donated the first of what would ultimately amount to forty-nine graphic works by the group to the National Gallery. Their most significant contribution, however, came after the 1985 exhibition of their collection at the museum, *German Expressionist Prints from the Collection of Ruth and Jacob Kainen*, curated by Robison. When Robison first suggested the exhibition in the late 1970s, Jacob Kainen refused even to speak of it, a direct consequence of lingering regret for having put aside his career as an artist. He still felt strongly that his reputation as an artist had suffered because of his professional associations as a scholar and a curator. Although the Kainens were already known for their collection of German Expressionist graphics by this time, Jacob had no desire to add the designation of collector to his repertoire, fearing it would further impede his status as an artist in the public’s eye.

The discussion of an exhibition of the Kainen Collection at the National Gallery was, as a result, tabled until the early 1980s. This was unfortunate especially since the prior two decades had seen a revival of interest in German Expressionist scholarship, leading to important publications in English on the subject, including a 1974 reprint of

Peter Selz’s groundbreaking *German Expressionist Painting*, and Stephanie Barron’s first effort on this topic, *German Expressionist Sculpture*, in 1983. Additionally, noteworthy museum exhibitions centered around German Expressionist collections, and particularly prints, had taken place elsewhere: the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts in San Francisco organized *Prints by German Expressionists* in 1958, and Harold Joachim at the Art Institute of Chicago highlighted the AIC’s collection in *German Expressionists: An Exhibition of Prints and Drawings from the Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago* in 1968.

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Print curators Frances Carey and Antony Griffiths presented a comprehensive exhibition regarding the history of modern German printmaking in 1984, *The Print in Germany, 1880-1933*, at the British Museum in London, and the following year witnessed one of the first museum exhibitions dedicated exclusively to the graphic works of any of the Brücke artists in the United States, *Prints by Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, A Centenary Celebration*, organized by the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in July 1985. Even more importantly, a catalogue of Los Angeles collector Robert Gore Rifkind’s extensive holdings of German Expressionist drawings, graphics, illustrated books, and other related ephemera was published in 1977 by Orrel P. Reed, thereby providing impetus for Ida Katherine Rigby’s preeminent monograph *An alle Künstler: War—Revolution—Weimar: German Expressionist Prints, Drawings, Posters, and Periodicals from the Robert Gore Rifkind Foundation* in 1983.  

Clearly, nearly forty years after the close of the Second World War, the Brücke and their fellow Expressionists had finally found a more interested audience in the United

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States. As more private collectors turned to acquiring their works, Jacob Kainen, acknowledging that German Expressionists had been little exposed in the nation’s capital city, finally acceded to a showing of his and his wife’s collection at the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition opened in September of 1985. Of the ninety works shown, forty-one were impressions by the Brücke artists, including Pechstein’s vibrantly colored 1909 lithograph on yellow paper *Variety Dancer* (fig. 158), and Nolde’s atmospheric tonal etching, *Hamburg, Church of Saint Catherine* of 1910 (fig. 159). After the exhibition closed, the Kainens donated all twenty-three Kirchner prints selected for the show to the NGA. This was the first substantial gift of Brücke prints to the NGA since Rosenwald’s bequests in the 1940s and 1950s, and the Kainens were hoping for a lasting impact. In Mrs. Kainen’s words, “It was not just that I wanted the Gallery to have a horde of Kirchner prints but also that I thought this gift would set a precedent for other people who had NGA shows from their collections, though I didn’t say so.”

Over the next two decades, the Kainens continued to gift Brücke prints from both their individual and joint collections to the National Gallery of Art, ultimately contributing eight works by Heckel, thirty-two by Kirchner, two prints by Mueller, three by Nolde, two by Pechstein, and two by Schmidt-Rottluff. Prominent examples exemplified by each of the predominant Brücke artists from the Kainen Collection are now housed at the National Gallery of Art, including Heckel’s 1911 woodcut *Standing Nude* (fig. 160); Kirchner’s 1909 lithograph in red, *Performer Bowing* (fig. 161), and his *Portrait of Ludwig Schames*, 1918 (see fig. 80) (also at MoMA and the AIC); Mueller’s 1921 lithograph *Girl on a Couch* (fig. 162); Nolde’s 1911 tonal etching *Scribes* (fig. 163)

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101 See also, Pamela Kessler, “Prints of German Expressionism.”
(also at MoMA); Pechstein’s woodcut *Fishermen Seated at a Table*, c. 1922 (fig. 164); and Schmidt-Rottluff’s 1910 lithograph *Sunset on the Quay* (fig. 165). As Mrs. Kainen expressed their goal, the couple desired, through these gifts, to “become part of a rich overall portrayal of modern German art that will be as important for study purposes as for display.”

The Kainen Collection at the National Gallery of Art fulfilled this vision by filling a substantial gap in the museum’s collection with an excellent and diverse selection of prints by Kirchner, thus providing a more conclusive representation of the Brücke group’s contribution to German Expressionist art.

**Conclusion**

Lessing J. Rosenwald’s collecting practices were similar to those of MoMA patron Abby Aldrich Rockefeller in that he, too, was wealthy and philanthropically inclined. Rosenwald viewed art as a commodity intended for public benefit and, through the counsel of various dealers and curators, collected with the National Gallery of Art in mind. Aware of the parallels between “primitive” expressionism and the graphic techniques that the Brücke artists’ prints shared with old master works of art, like Mrs. Rockefeller, he was most interested in the formal qualities of this aspect of German artistic vision. Similar to the fifteenth-century prints he also acquired, the “handmade,” rough-hewn nature of German Expressionist graphics proved to have significant allure for the collector. Rosenwald’s generous contribution of Brücke graphics was instrumental in establishing the National Gallery of Art’s holdings of these works. His more conventional tastes notwithstanding, Rosenwald’s collection covered a wide range of the Brücke’s visual compositions and graphic accomplishments, making the NGA’s

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compilation of their works comparable in scope and diversity to the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago’s holdings.

Jacob and Ruth Kainen’s acquisition habits were vastly different from other private collectors examined in this study, due to Jacob’s artistic background and print expertise. This knowledge meant that he looked beyond composition to the inherent characteristics that endowed prints their expressive quality. Kainen related “quality of expression” to a print’s graphic intensity, and both he and his wife felt that Kirchner’s print oeuvre was exemplary of this attribute. They found Kirchner’s work to be compositionally exciting and appreciated the Brücke members’ bravado in breaking from traditional printmaking techniques in favor of exploring more innovative means of production. Once again, it is worth noting that the Kainens began their collection with old master prints, further cementing a connection of taste for the stylistic correspondences between these and the expressionist prints of the Brücke. These included restrained perspective, simplified forms, emphasis on the surface plane, and powerful, direct expression of images. However, unlike the previous generation of wealthy Brücke patrons, such as MoMA’s Abby Rockefeller, the Art Institute’s Emil Eitel, or the National Gallery’s own Lessing Rosenwald, the Kainens had limited funds. Focusing their acquisitions on Kirchner’s graphic work, while collecting impressions by the other Brücke artists all the more selectively because of their restricted means, the Kainens succeeded in giving the NGA’s collection more and better works by the Brücke’s most innovative master.

Ultimately, the couple’s gift, particularly their vast accumulation of Kirchner graphics, helped to broaden the scope of the museum’s Brücke works by correcting the
previous donor’s under-representation of prints by the Brücke’s main practitioner.

Although the Museum of Modern Art’s collection of Brücke graphics is presently the most comprehensive in terms of representing the oeuvres of each of the members of the Brücke and the range of their graphic achievements, this has only been the case in recent decades. A series of knowledgeable print curators at the Museum of Modern Art, including William S. Lieberman, Riva Castleman, and Deborah Wye, has helped to flesh out the areas of this movement not as well represented in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller’s gift to the museum, which, similar to Rosenwald’s, included few graphic works by Kirchner. These same curators have also actively sought to collect important ephemera by the Brücke members, including woodcut exhibition invitations, title signets for catalogues, and portfolio covers. This material more readily distinguishes MoMA’s collection of Brücke graphics from the others in this study by providing a more inclusive demonstration of the Brücke’s innovative marketing techniques and their efforts to differentiate themselves from other artist groups in Germany, while further documenting their rich history as a communal group.

Such documents, worthwhile artistic renderings in themselves, have provided further enticement for a new generation of collectors as Brücke graphics become increasingly hard to find in today’s art market, and auction prices for such works bring in staggering sums. The following chapter concludes this study by drawing parallels and contrasts between the history of collecting Brücke prints at the three museums considered thus far, comparing patronage systems, and analyzing the circumstances and motivating factors that have influenced other contemporary institutional patrons of Brücke graphics, including the Robert Gore Rifkind Collection of German Expressionist Prints and
Drawings at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles and the Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection of German Expressionist Prints at the Milwaukee Art Museum. Such a comparison will demonstrate how the effects of an extraordinary set of historical circumstances in the first half of the twentieth century, changing aesthetic tastes, and the spiraling prices of German Expressionist art in the latter half of the century had different, yet lasting, impact on the collecting practices of more recent patrons of the Brücke’s prints.
CONCLUSION: COLLECTING THE BRÜCKE IN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

Common Elements

In 1910 German art dealer Paul Cassirer first characterized the Brücke artists as Expressionists. Since the early twentieth century, their artwork has assumed a variety of categorizations in both their native Germany and the United States, ranging from inclusion in international modernism to representation of native Germanic artistic traditions, and charges of being “formless,” “foreign,” and “anti-intellectual.” The political extremes and extraordinary historical circumstances of the three decades following Cassirer’s characterization led to misunderstanding of the group members’ work as a pioneering effort in the evolution of German Expressionist art, prompting instead intense scrutiny by critics of its non-naturalistic, avant-garde aesthetic. While the more abstract modes of Expressionism, like that of the Blaue Reiter, found popularity among art audiences in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century,¹ the figurative style of the Brücke was further devalued among American collectors. Yet, as we have seen, despite the slow reception of the Brücke in this country, their international renown as innovative printmakers provided a point of entry through which American collectors, museums, and art audiences could become familiar with their oeuvre and affordably collect it.

By tracing the reception of the Brücke’s graphic art and its subsequent acquisition by private patrons and key American art institutions, it is clear that common elements of interest, unique patterns of acquisition, and the impact of historical events all contributed

¹ For this, see the introductory chapter of this dissertation.
to the relevance of the Brücke artists’ graphic contributions for U.S. audiences. For example, the long-reaching influence of German émigré art dealers, such as J.B. Neumann, Karl Nierendorf, and Curt Valentin, although located primarily in New York, prevailed in each of the museum collections examined in this case study. There is no question that the positive reception of German Expressionist art in this country, especially the Brücke artists’ prints in large part, is due to the formidable efforts of these German dealers. Their endeavors to put aside social and political prejudices in the face of pejorative historical circumstances, to educate the broader American public on the narrative and formal innovations of German Expressionist art, and to ensure that the work of German modernists found a safe haven in American museums reflects a valiant commitment to the artistic culture of the homeland that rejected their ethnicity and they were forced to leave behind.

That museum patrons who bought graphics by the Brücke artists from these dealers acquired old master prints as well reveals an interesting repeated occurrence. While several curators and private collectors with whom I spoke while conducting research for this dissertation underplayed the correlation between an interest in old master prints and “primitive” or folk art with affinity for the prints of the Brücke artists, these recurring instances of concurrent collecting imply otherwise. Print curator Peter Parshall at the National Gallery of Art wrote on a very similar subject in 2005:

. . . The momentous encounter between the artistic avant-garde and the “primitive woodcut” closely coincided with collecting patterns in museums and the scholarly interpretation of these works. Yet, however related they
may seem, the interests of artists, curators, and historians . . . [have historically been] at odds with one another.²

In the three cases I have studied, there is no question of a connection of taste between admiration for certain kinds of old master prints, particularly German, and the Brücke’s graphic art. Moreover, the Brücke members looked to “old master” printmakers, indigenous folk art, and so-called “primitive” art from their homeland as a source for their own prints. Their recognizable graphic styles, restrained perspectives, simplified forms, flattened surface planes, and emotive expressive imagery, radiates with the hallmarks of these influences.

**The Robert Gore Rifkind Collection and Institutional Collecting in California**

It is important to note that, in addition to New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., Southern California is also home to a number of significant German Expressionist art repositories, including the Blue Four Galka Scheyer Collection at the Norton Simon Museum of Art in Pasadena, the Hammer Museum’s Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts at the University of California in Los Angeles, and the Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.³ Because

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of the extensive studies already written about the Robert Gore Rifkind Collection of German Expressionist prints, I chose to focus on other museum collections of the Brücke artists’ graphic art that have not received the same attention. The institutions highlighted in this study were chosen not only due to the considerable number of graphic works by the Brücke artists in their holdings, indicating that special emphasis has been placed on the acquisition of such works, but because they represent different collecting patterns of historical interest. However, a brief comparison between the Rifkind Collection and those underscored in this case study will be helpful to generating an overall understanding of the narrative regarding the formation of institutional collections of the Brücke artists’ graphic art in this country.

Like Jacob and Ruth Kainen, Robert Gore Rifkind (b. 1928 in Los Angeles, California) was similarly drawn to the movement’s graphic intensity, which he too found to be antithetical to French art. He began seriously collecting graphic art by the former Brücke members in the early 1970s (at approximately the same time as the Kainens). In 1989 Rifkind described his attraction to German Expressionist prints:

> It is impossible by examining the entire body of early twentieth-century French art to learn . . . that the First World War had shaken man’s destiny . . . By contrast the German Expressionists . . . rather than dematerializing man . . . strove to penetrate his psyche to a degree that has not been seen before or equaled since. These qualities of

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4 Similarly, the impressive collection of German Expressionist art at the Saint Louis Art Museum in Missouri, particularly the Morton D. May Collection of twentieth-century German art, was not featured in this study due to its greater emphasis on the more abstract styles of German Expressionism, including works by the Blaue Reiter artists, and post-World War I Expressionist paintings by artists such as Otto Dix, Oskar Kokoschka, and Max Beckmann. For more on this collection, see Saint Louis Art Museum, *The Morton D. May Collection of 20th-Century German Masters*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1970).
German Expressionist art fascinate me . . . Having examined every form of German Expressionism, I am convinced that the movement is best understood through its graphics, not its paintings or sculpture.\(^5\)

German Expressionist art, including material by the Brücke artists, was still widely available and still relatively affordable at the time Rifkind began acquiring such works, two circumstances that permitted a serious collector of substantial wealth to acquire a large number of works of the best quality. However, Rifkind insists that the affordability of these works was not his primary motivation. In 2001 he told the *Los Angeles Times*:

“I didn’t collect [German Expressionist art] because of the price. I wanted it because of the emotional impact it had on me. I was awed by the vigor, the power and intensity of it . . . . This art isn’t intended to relax you.”\(^6\) To this collector, hearing the voices of revolutionary, avant-garde German artists creating before and during a turbulent era was significant in view of the abundance and natural beauty Rifkind was accustomed to, having grown up in a privileged lifestyle in Beverly Hills, California.

A retired securities lawyer, Rifkind’s wealth combined inherited and earned income. His paternal grandfather, Jacob Rifkind (born in Manhattan) relocated the family from New York to Los Angeles in 1890 where he established a chain of pharmacies now known as Rite-Aid. (The family no longer holds an interest in the chain.) His paternal grandmother, Mary Rifkind, was an émigré from Hamburg, Germany. Robert’s father, Joseph Rifkind (1898-1976), served as a lawyer and later a federal bankruptcy court judge, prompting his son’s own interest in law. His mother,

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Bettie Levikow Rifkind (1904-1994) hailed from a Russian émigré family. The Rifkinds were a wealthy Jewish family who appreciated and collected art, primarily European painting and sculpture, c. 1300-1920, during Robert’s youth. As a young man, Rifkind was exposed to works that were more decorative than the style that later became the hallmark of his own acquisitions. With recollections that bring to mind Jacob Kainen’s struggles with the studio art faculty at Pratt, Rifkind reminisced on his early days of art collecting:

Like almost everyone in my generation, I was brainwashed into thinking if art was French, it was good. When I graduated from Harvard Law School in the ‘50s, I began to collect what everyone else did—Chagall, Matisse, Durand, Dufy, Picasso. I was drawn to Renaissance art, which my parents loved and had a few pieces of, but I knew it would be difficult for me to amass a major collection of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Rafael [sic].

Robert Rifkind first became acquainted with German Expressionist art while at Harvard University, where he would often stop by the Busch-Reisinger Museum to view its collection. Works by Max Beckmann, Oskar Kokoschka, Nolde, and Heckel were fascinating and new, leaving him perplexed and eager to know more; however, he was frustrated by the lack of major texts in English on the movement. In 1954 Rifkind returned home to Los Angeles. Having decided that art and collecting should be a part of his lifestyle; he began his acquisitions with prints from the School of Paris. A turning point came in the late 1960s when Rifkind discovered a corpus of recent publications in English on German Expressionism, including Peter Selz’s *German Expressionist Painting* and Bernard S. Myer’s *The German Expressionists: A Generation in Revolt*.

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7 Ibid., 2-3.
both published in 1957. After two years of independent studying, Rifkind felt knowledgeable enough to begin acquiring works of this style.  

Similar to other wealthy patrons in this study, especially Lessing J. Rosenwald, Rifkind enlisted the aid of a professional curator, the renowned German art scholar and former gallerist Orrel P. Reed. Reed was an expert in both old master and German expressionist prints, as well as a co-religionist of Rifkind. He was responsible for the latter’s earliest German Expressionist acquisitions, including Nolde’s 1907 lithograph *Head with Pipe, E.N. [self-portrait]* (fig. 166), which Reed purchased for Rifkind at auction in Munich in November 1970. The majority of the Rifkind Collection was acquired at auctions in Europe, including Germany, Switzerland, and England.

Like Rosenwald’s curator and advisor Elizabeth Mongan, Reed encouraged Rifkind’s interest in German Expressionist prints, but pressed the collector to develop his own taste and learn what appealed to him. Inevitably, it was Reed who convinced Rifkind that a true education in the breadth of German Expressionist prints could be accomplished only by accompanying him on purchasing excursions. However, being of Jewish heritage and more aware of the horrors of the Holocaust at this point, Rifkind struggled with the prospect of traveling to Germany. During the Second World War, Rifkind recalls public demonstrations of anti-German sentiment; these were responses which his parents also shared, going so far as to ban German composer and Nazi sympathizer Richard Wagner’s music from their home. Rifkind was uncertain that he

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could overlook the negative feelings harbored since his youth, and was generally fearful to travel in Germany as a Jew.⁹

Rifkind’s experience as a Jewish collector differed from that of Jacob Kainen, who, while also Jewish, relied largely on his own expert knowledge of graphic media and frequently had his own prior knowledge of which prints he desired to purchase at a given auction. This insight permitted Kainen and his wife to rely more comfortably on the services of trusted sales representatives to do their traveling, bidding, and purchasing for them abroad. Rifkind, on the other hand, was forced to overcome his fears of xenophobia to further his visual education and develop his tastes as a collector. He finally acceded to joining Reed in Germany in the summer of 1972. Their time in Germany was spent attending auction previews, and conversing with museum directors, print curators, art dealers, and other collectors. He never experienced an anti-Semitic incident on this first trip to Germany, a revelation that set him at such ease that he continued to visit the country at least once a year during many of his consecutive years of collecting. Rifkind gave up his admiration for French art for the next fifteen years, and devoted himself wholly to pursuit of German Expressionist graphic works, purchasing six to eight impressions a day from auctions, galleries, and private dealers. The resulting accumulation of over 6,000 works on paper and more than 4,500 related books and ephemera formed the nucleus of the Robert Gore Rifkind Center for German Expressionist Studies established at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1983.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., 156.
¹⁰ Ibid., 156-7.
This significant compilation of German Expressionist works includes eighty-five prints by Schmidt-Rottluff, eighty-six by Nolde, eleven by Mueller, 154 by Pechstein, eighty-one by Heckel, and 326 impressions by Kirchner. With the exception of the occasional landscape, the majority are figurative compositions, a preference reflected throughout the entirety of Rifkind’s expansive collection of German Expressionist prints. The Brücke’s emphasis on figuration, literary references, and observations from daily life appealed to Rifkind, a self-described student of the human condition. This interest prompted the purchase of rare impressions, such as Heckel’s 1907 woodcut portfolio of eleven illustrations for Oscar Wilde’s poem “The Ballad of Reading Gaol,” published in 1898 (figs. 167-170). Mirroring Jacob Kainen’s evaluation of the Brücke’s woodcuts, Rifkind wrote:

> Another reason why German Expressionist prints particularly fascinate me is that of all the graphic media, the woodcut is the most exciting, the most emotionally charged, and has the greatest ‘wall power.’ The Germans brought the woodcut to a high level of technical and aesthetic accomplishment in the early sixteenth century, and the Expressionists made a conscientious effort to revive the art form of their ancestors. To me the results have been spectacular and emotionally overwhelming.11

Although old master prints were never his primary area of interest, Rifkind likewise recognized the historic correlation between the Brücke’s graphic oeuvre and the work of the fifteenth-century German print master, Albrecht Dürer. To this end, he gifted Dürer’s c. 1497 woodcut *The Men’s Bath House* to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2002 (fig. 171). This depicts a group of seven figures engaging in conversation,

music, drink, and frivolity in a bath house set against a Northern European landscape; it is an important image that prefigures the Brücke’s interest in creating and depicting ideal, sexually-liberated utopian environments based on their interpretation of “primitive” art and culture. Rifkind’s extensive woodcut holdings not only reflect his predilection for this medium, but, like the Kainens, his collection demonstrates his great admiration for Kirchner’s woodcut output in particular. Among the 317 woodcut impressions he acquired by this artist as testament to the artist’s graphic versatility is Portrait of Dr. Spengler of 1919 (fig. 172), a work that displays Kirchner’s trademark “white line” technique and generous use of solid black areas to create texture and depth.

After the birth of his youngest son, Max, in 1989, Rifkind ceased his spirited fifteen-year collecting. He donated the bulk of his collection to LACMA in the early 1980s where Stephanie Barron, Max’s mother, served as curator of twentieth-century art. Barron and Rifkind had married in November 1984. As we have seen, Barron greatly enhanced the scholarship on Brücke and German Expressionist art, organizing exhibitions and contributing to seven publications on the topic during her thirteen-year marriage. She expanded the scope of German Expressionist art to consider anew such

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implications as two World Wars, concomitant changes in German society, and the
immigration of German artists and intellectuals to the United States during the Second
World War to the receptivity and understanding of modern German art and sculpture in
this country. In 1989, she spearheaded efforts to research and catalogue the entire
inventory of the Rifkind German Expressionist Prints Collection at LACMA, resulting in
the publication of the two-volume text, German Expressionist Prints and Drawings, a
critically important study for all subsequent scholarship on Brücke graphic art.

The Marcia and Granvil Specks Collection, Milwaukee

During the 1980s, with the two World Wars a distant memory, a sharp rise in
demand for art by the former Brücke members resulted in significantly increased prices
for their graphic output. This prompted a flood of new material to surface by sellers
eager to capitalize on the market’s momentum. Chicago natives Marcia (b. 1926) and
Granvil Specks (b. 1927 to Russian immigrant parents) began their collection of German
Expressionist prints during this art market boom, purchasing prints from private sources
and at auction in Germany into the early 1990s. With the increased circulation of
German Expressionist material after the reunification of East and West Germany in 1991,
the Specks were able to acquire high quality examples of rare and interesting impressions
by Brücke artists including Kirchner, Nolde, Heckel, Pechstein, and Schmidt-Rottluff.

The Specks Collection covers a wider period of German art from the 1890s to the
1930s, and incorporates generous numbers of impressions by the Brücke members,
including sixty-six works by Heckel, sixteen by Kirchner, three by Mueller, forty by

Expressionism: Art and Society, 1909-1923, exh. cat. (Milan and New York: Palazzo
Grassi and Rizzoli, 1997).
Nolde, forty by Pechstein, and fifty-six by Schmidt-Rottluff. Contrary to Rifkind’s preference for figurative compositions depicting the anguish and social turbulence in Germany from 1906 to the post-World War II era, the Specks’ interests in graphics by the Brücke artists reached more broadly to include figuration, landscapes, literary references, and scenes from the metropolis. Pechstein’s 1923 color woodcut of a cabaret performer before her audience, *Dancer in the Mirror* (fig. 173), is one example of the latter. Rather than viewing modern German art through a politically tinged lens, the Specks, also Jews, appreciated German Expressionism as a valid component of Germany’s cultural history as well as exemplifying an important aspect of the modernist art historical paradigm. They strove to maintain and respect the unique qualities and characteristics inherent to each aesthetic period of German art represented in their collection, from the Jugendstil style of the turn of the century to contemporary graphic images.\(^{14}\) The Brücke’s representation within the Specks Collection of German Expressionist Prints is distinguished by examples that emphasize youth, nature, bohemia, movement, love, and eroticism, as captured in such compositions as Mueller’s 1921 color lithograph *Five Yellow Nudes* (fig. 174) portraying young women bathing and frolicking near a pond. They also purchased rare images (rare due to the few remaining impressions) such as Nolde’s 1917 woodcut *Flirtation* (see fig. 112), illustrating a romantic encounter between a young man and woman.

The Specks’ special attention to particular styles and artistic goals imparted breadth and diversity to their acquisition of German Expressionist prints, making their

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collection particularly appealing in an institutional context. In 2001, the couple gifted 446 graphic works to the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM). As suggested by former MAM curator Kristin Makholm, similar to Chicago, Wisconsin’s rich Germanic culture provided the impetus for the Specks’ choice of the Milwaukee Art Museum.\(^\text{15}\) Like Illinois and other mid-Western states, a significant number of German immigrants had settled in Wisconsin during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Specks Collection at the Milwaukee Art Museum enhanced what was already a considerable American repository of German art of this period. “One of the reasons [the Specks] looked favorably on us,” Makholm has stated, “was that we have a lot of great strengths in German art, not only in 19\(^{th}\) century but in contemporary too.”\(^\text{16}\) Clearly, the couple sought a setting for their collection that reflected a mutual interest in providing a comprehensive visual reference of German art history. Although broader in scope because the Specks Collection includes examples from a wide range of modern German artistic styles, their contribution to the Milwaukee Art Museum’s holdings is comparable to more recent collecting patterns at the Museum of Modern Art. As mentioned in chapter two of this study, MoMA curators have subsequently built on Abby Aldrich Rockefeller’s initial contribution of prints by the Brücke artists to provide a more thorough compilation of the members’ graphic œuvres.

**Collecting the Brücke**

Today, the Brücke artists are internationally recognized as seminal printmakers, making exceptional impressions of their works increasingly more difficult to find. When


\(^{\text{16}}\) Ibid, 26.
works do become available, they command prices that demand the type of financial resources that only few individuals, such as Robert Gore Rifkind or Marcia and Granvil Specks, possess. As Alice Adam, a private Chicago art dealer who has specialized in German Expressionist prints since the early 1960s notes, this phenomenon has caused a drastic change in her roster of patrons, as well as the number of such works she keeps in stock and sells. “Young collectors today must stick to contemporary prints,” she observed, “Eventually the market for German Expressionism will dwindle.”

As this dissertation has established, the reception of the Brücke artists’ art in the United States was marred by the historical circumstances of two World Wars, which damaged socio-political relations with Germany, requiring art to triumph over what Karl Schmidt-Rottluff insightfully called “such madness of nations.”

Admiration for the Brücke members’ work was clouded by the perception that it might be considered an “Aryan” Germanic art form, even though Adolf Hitler’s Nazi party mercilessly victimized the Brücke artists and their work as “degenerate.” It is interesting that, during their time together as an artistic community, the Brücke group members intentionally sought to establish an audience for their work in America, a notion that contributed to their prolific output of easily disseminated graphic works. In addition, because the Brücke artists did not emigrate to, or even visit, the United States as did other German artists, such as painter Max Beckmann and architect Mies van der Rohe, their success here was dependent upon the extraordinary efforts of generations of Germans already in

17 Alice Adam, interview with the author, March 10, 2009, Chicago, Illinois.
the United States and eager to preserve their Germanic culture, as well as, in particular, Jewish collectors and dealers who were forced to flee the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s and remained intent on preserving the intellectual culture of their homeland. As we have seen, the profuse number of Jewish collectors in this group’s acquisition history demonstrates that anti-Nazi sentiment did not bar acquisition of the Brücke’s works in this country. These works were ultimately appreciated on an aesthetic basis.

Along this same line, while French art remained the preference of many American collectors up through the mid-twentieth century, this study has shown that, although they too borrowed elements from modern French art particularly in the group’s early years, the Brücke’s artistic style provided a viable alternative for discerning graphic art collectors. This unprecedented inclination for modern German art not only supplied a supplementary motive for acquiring Brücke graphics in this country, but lent credence to the Brücke artists’ work as a relevant component within the discourse of modern art history. As the Brücke members’ graphic art persists in appealing to such contemporary collectors as the Specks, art historical paradigms on modern art continue to be revised. A prominent example of institutional reconsideration of the Francocentric view of modernism and re-evaluation of German Expressionism’s pivotal role within modern art is demonstrated by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s recent reorganization of its twentieth-century galleries. The new arrangement, presented in 2008, allows museum visitors to enter the twentieth-century collection from rooms emphasizing either the Germanic or the French
origins of modernism. Additionally, curators at both the National Gallery of Art and the Museum of Modern Art have noted that their own institution’s significant numbers of Brücke graphics have prompted a desire to build upon holdings of the Brücke artists’ art in other mediums, such as painting and sculpture. The bridge to greater understanding of the work of the Brücke artists in this country continues to be spanned: in 2009, the Neue Galerie in New York presented the first major exhibition in the United States devoted to the work of the Brücke artists with *Brücke: The Birth of Expressionism in Dresden and Berlin, 1905-1913*. It is remarkable to consider that now, nearly a full century after the Brücke artists’ introduction to American art audiences, their artwork is being reevaluated and given further serious consideration.

The purpose of this study was to pose and examine fundamental and important questions regarding how and why American museum collections of the Brücke artists’ prints were formed, particularly in light of the complex historical circumstances in which their artwork was implicated during the first half of the twentieth century. Museum curator Susan Pearce has noted that collections gain meaning not as repositories of individual objects with cultural value, but as sets of objects whose value depends on their context as part of a category. Collectors organize their identities around their passion for

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19. This was a subject of Rose-Carl Washon-Long’s installation lecture, “International Modernism Reconsidered: Exhibiting its Germanic roots,” presented April 13th 2008 at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California.
certain objects, mixing cultural experiences, personal taste, and their pursuit for higher order into patterns of consumption. In this way, objects in private collections make manifest the categories used by collectors.\textsuperscript{22} Acquisition and advocacy of the Brücke artists’ work in the United States was ultimately tied to issues of nationality, class, race, and individual predilection. Such aspects of the history of collecting, Pearce has observed, are symptomatic of Western material culture. More than that, however, and key for the purposes of this case study, they narrate the great impact which the World Wars and resulting socio-political circumstances had on acquisition practices of early collectors and advocates of the Brücke artists’ graphics in the United States, as opposed to later, more assimilated collectors further removed from these events.

Finally, museological study has in the past decade grown beyond the practical applications of the field to include the history and theories of collecting as significant elements of this discourse. As this study illustrates, it is a complex network of private collectors, curators, dealers, and governing museum bodies that often interpret the credence and value of an artistic movement. Anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu suggests that collecting signifies a struggle for the monopoly of power to define art. These various components of acquisition, he suggests, help to shape and define artistic production through cyclic moments of “radicalized” taste, thus allowing (or, in some cases, disallowing) the claims of new artistic innovation to occupy a privileged social and aesthetic position with the authority to displace others’ tastes. In doing so, certain

periods of artistic contribution run the risk of being negated from the art historical cannon. Examination of the historical patterns of collecting provides illumination of those names and movements that have been excluded from further consideration or displaced from the visual record, as this study has attempted to demonstrate. These museological narratives within acquisitions history reinforce the importance of understanding the personal preferences, historical contexts, socio-political implications, and patronage systems that both form and inform our most distinguished institutional art collections.

**Fig. 1:**
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
*A Community of Artists*
Oil on canvas
1926

**Fig. 2:**
Hermann Max Pechstein
*Somali Dance*
Woodcut with watercolor
1910

**Fig. 3:**
Kirchner
*Garden Restaurant in Steglitz*
Oil on canvas
1911
Fig. 4:
Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
*Seated Woman with Flowers*
Woodcut
1913

Fig. 5:
Paul Gauguin
*Woman under a Tree*
Woodcut
undated

Fig. 6:
Erich Heckel
*Opponents*
Woodcut
1912
Fig. 7:
Kees van Dongen
*Woman with Large Hat*
Oil on canvas
1906

Fig. 8:
Edvard Munch
*The Scream*
Oil on canvas
1893

Fig. 9:
Edvard Munch
*Melancholy*
Color woodcut
1901
Fig. 10:
Vincent van Gogh
*Self-Portrait*
Oil on canvas
1889

Fig. 11:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Self-Portrait*
Oil on canvas
1906

Fig. 12:
Van Gogh
*Self-Portrait with Straw Hat*
Oil on canvas
1888
Fig. 13:
Kirchner
*Self-Portrait with Pipe*
Oil on canvas
1907

Fig. 14:
Hermann Max Pechstein
*The Red House*
Oil on canvas
1910

Fig. 15:
Nolde
*Portrait of Schmidt-Rottluff*
Oil on canvas
1906
Fig. 16:
Schmidt-Rottluff
Midday on the Moor
Oil on canvas
1908

Fig. 17:
Schmidt-Rottluff
Landscape with House and Trees (Dangast before the Storm)
Oil on canvas
1910

Fig. 18:
Nolde
Self-Portrait
Etching with tonal effects
1908
Fig. 19:
Rembrandt van Rijn
Self-Portrait Frowning
Etching
1630

Fig. 20:
Albrecht Dürer
Knight, Death, and the Devil
Engraving
1513-14

Fig. 21:
Kirchner
Sailboats near Fehmarn
Woodcut
1914
Fig. 22:
Kirchner
*The Wife of Professor Goldstein*
Woodcut
1916

Fig. 23:
Kirchner
*Russian Dancers*
Color Lithograph
1909

Fig. 24:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Woman’s Head*
Woodcut
1915
Fig. 25:
Schmidt-Rotluff
*Mourning Women by the Sea*
Woodcut
1914

Fig. 26:
Heckel
*Two Seated Women*
Woodcut with watercolor
1912

Fig. 27:
Heckel
*Standing Woman*
Woodcut
1911
Fig. 28: Heckel

*Fränzi Reclining*

Color woodcut

1910

Fig. 29: Heckel

*Ballplayers*

Woodcut

1912

Fig. 30: Pechstein

*Portrait of Erich Heckel*

Lithograph

1908
Fig. 31:
Pechstein
*Young Woman with Red Fan*
Oil on canvas
c. 1910

Fig. 32:
Pechstein
*The Dance—Dancers and Bathers in a Forest Pond*
Lithograph with watercolor
1912

Fig. 33:
Henri Matisse
*The Dance*
Color lithograph
1912
Fig. 34:

Pechstein

*Landscape in Nidden*

Oil on canvas

1911

Fig. 35:

Kirchner

*Milliner with Hat*

Lithograph on yellow wove paper

1910

Fig. 36:

Nolde

*The Matterhorn Smiles*

Color photomechanical print

1897
Fig. 37:
Nolde
\textit{Man in a Top Hat I}
Color lithograph
1911

Fig. 38:
Nolde
\textit{Somber Head of a Man}
Lithograph
1907

Fig. 39:
Nolde
\textit{Steamer—large, dark}
Tonal etching
1910
Fig. 40:
Nolde
*Diagonal Nude*
Tonal etching in blue-green ink
1908

Fig. 41:
Nolde
*Young Couple*
Color lithograph
1913

Fig. 42:
Nolde
*The Prophet*
Woodcut
1912
Fig. 43: Otto Mueller

Two Female Nudes Sitting on a Couch
Lithograph with chalk and watercolor
c. 1912

Fig. 44: Wassily Kandinsky

Sounds: Boat Trip
Color woodcut
1911

Fig. 45: Kirchner

Segelboot (Sailboat)
Woodcut
1907
Fig. 46:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Portrait of Valentinner*
Woodcut
1923

Fig. 47:
Heckel
*Portrait Study*
Oil on canvas
1918

Fig. 48:
Kirchner
*Bridge Over the Rhine at Cologne*
Oil on canvas
1914

Fig. 49:
Nolde
*Masks*
Oil on canvas
1911

Fig. 50:
Nazi Propaganda Poster
*Adolf Hitler: “Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer!”*
Undated

Figs. 51-52:
Installation Photos of *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art, 1937)
View of a Portion of the South Wall in Room 5; Work by Beckmann, Xaver Fuhr, Kirchner, Mueller, Nolde, Christian Rohlfs, and Schmidt-Rottluff Visible
View of Room 4; Works Shown in this Room were Mostly by the Brücke Artists; Kirchner’s *Painters of Die Brücke*, 1927, is Particularly Notable, Second from Left
Fig. 53:
Installation Photo of Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung (Great German Art Exhibition), 1937
Adolf Ziegler’s *Die vier Elemente* (The Four Elements), 1937, is Visible on the Far Wall

Fig. 54:
Cover Art from the Program Guide for Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung, 1937

Fig. 55:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Rain Clouds, Lago di Garda*
Oil on canvas
1927

Fig. 56:
Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
Development of Modern Art Chart
_Cubism and Abstract Art_
1936

Fig. 57:
Kirchner
_Street, Berlin_
Oil on canvas
1913

Fig. 58:
Heckel
Cover of the Invitation to the Exhibition *Brücke Artists’ Group* at the Galerie Fritz Gurlitt, Berlin
Woodcut
1912

Fig. 59:
Schmidt-Rottluff
_The Three Magi_
from the portfolio *Ten Woodcuts by Schmidt-Rottluff*
Woodcut
1917
Fig. 60:
Nolde
*Candle Dancers*
Woodcut
1917

Fig. 61:
Kirchner
*Dancer with Raised Skirt* from the portfolio *Brücke 1910*
Woodcut

Fig. 62:
Kirchner
*Standing Nude, Signet of the Brücke Artists’ Group*
Woodcut
1911

Fig. 63:
Heckel
*Portrait of a Man*
Color Woodcut
1919

Fig. 64:
Heckel
*Kneeling Nudes, Cover from the portfolio Brücke 1910*
Woodcut
1910

Fig. 65:
Max Pechstein
*Dialogue*
Color Woodcut
1920

Fig. 66:
Nolde
*Mill by the Water*
Color Lithograph
1926

Fig. 67:
Nolde
*Hamburg, Reiherstieg dock*
Etching
1910
Fig. 68: Heckel
*Antwerp*
Drypoint, etching, and tonal etching
1914

Fig. 69: Heckel
*Portrait of E.H.*
Woodcut
1917

Fig. 70: Schmidt-Rottluff
*Saint Francis*
Woodcut
1919

Fig. 71: Otto Mueller
*Boy Among Leaves*
Woodcut
1912

Fig. 72: Nolde
*Head of a Woman III*
Woodcut
1912

Fig. 73: Unidentified Artist
*Child with Dog*
Oil on canvas
c. 1770-1790

Fig. 74: Heckel
*Bathers in the Pond*
Woodcut
1911

Fig. 75: Schmidt-Rottluff
*The Sound*
Woodcut
1909
**Fig. 76:**
Mueller
*Discovery of Moses*
Color lithograph
c. 1920

**Fig. 77:**
Pechstein
*Four Nudes at the Sea*
for the illustrated book
*The Samland Ode*
Lithograph with watercolor
1917

**Fig. 78:**
Kirchner
*Signet/Title Vignette for the Artists’ Group Brücke*
Woodcut
1906

**Fig. 79:**
Kirchner
*Manifesto of the Artists’ Group Brücke*
Woodcut
1906

**Fig. 80:**
Kirchner
*Head of Ludwig Schames*
Woodcut
1918

**Fig. 81:**
Nolde
*Elderly Men*
Lithograph
1926

**Fig. 82:**
Pechstein
*Kneeling Nude with Bowl, Cover from the portfolio Brücke*
1911

**Fig. 83:**
Nolde
*Young Prince and Dancers*
Etching and tonal etching
1918
Fig. 84:
Nolde
*Man and Young Woman*
Etching
1918

Fig. 88:
Heckel
*Crouching Woman*
Woodcut
1914

Fig. 85:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Dancer III*
Drypoint
1922

Fig. 89:
Kirchner
*Two Ladies in the Street*
Oil on canvas
(version for color woodcut of same subject)
1914

Fig. 86:
Mueller
*Two Bathers on the Shore*
Lithograph with gouache
1914

Fig. 90:
Mueller
*Two Girls in the Dunes at Sylt*
Color lithograph
c. 1920-1924

Fig. 87:
Pechstein
*Sailboats near the Coast*
Etching, drypoint, aquatint
1923

Fig. 91:
Nolde
*Christ and the Children*
Oil on canvas
1910
Fig. 92:

Pechstein

*Ballet Dancers*

Oil on canvas

1912
Fig. 93:
Paul Émile Chabas
*September Morn*
Oil on canvas
1914

Fig. 94:
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
*Garden Restaurant in Steglitz*
Oil on canvas
1911

Fig. 95:
Armory Show Catalogue Cover
at the Art Institute of Chicago
March 24th - April 16th 1913

Fig. 96:
Frank Lloyd Wright
Midway Gardens, Chicago
1914
Fig. 97:
Otto Mueller
*Girls Bathing*
Pastel
1921

Fig. 98:
Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
*Evening by the Sea*
Watercolor
1919

Fig. 99:
Max Pechstein
*Woman and Indian*
Oil on canvas
1910

Fig. 100:
Doris Lee
*Thanksgiving*
Oil on canvas
1935
Fig. 101:
Cover, *Sanity in Art*
Josephine Hancock Logan
1937

Fig. 102:
Bismarck Gardens, Chicago
c. 1915

Fig. 103:
Erich Heckel
*Girl by the Sea*
Woodcut
1918

Fig. 104:
Emil Nolde
*Near Sonderburg*
Color lithograph
1907

Fig. 105:
Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
*Old Dresden Houses*
1908
Etching
Fig. 106:  
Unknown  
*Man of Sorrows*  
c. 1465-70  
Woodcut with hand-coloring

Fig. 107:  
Nolde  
*Tingel-Tangel III*  
1907  
Color lithograph

Fig. 108:  
Kirchner  
*Mother Müller*  
1918  
Lithograph with red and blue

Fig. 109:  
Schmidt-Rottluff  
*Kneeling Woman*  
1914  
Woodcut
Fig. 110:
Kirchner
*Two Sisters*
1908
Etching

Fig. 111:
Nolde
*Alice*
1907
Color lithograph

Fig. 112:
Nolde
*Kneeling Woman*
1907
Color lithograph

Fig. 113:
Nolde
*Pentecost*
1910
Oil on canvas
Fig. 114:
Nolde
*Flirtation*
1917
Woodcut

Fig. 115:
Mueller
*Two Gypsies*
1926
Color lithograph
**Fig. 116:**
Philip Alexius de Laszlo
*Secretary Andrew W. Mellon*
Oil on canvas
1931

**Fig. 117:**
“It seems there are two Uncle Sams and two Andy Mellons.”
A cartoon from the time of the tax trial (1933-34) in *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* illustrates Andrew Mellon’s odd paradox as national benefactor and accused tax cheat.

**Fig. 118:**
The National Gallery in London, artist’s rendering
The London National Gallery was Mellon’s inspiration and model for the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

**Fig. 119:**
The site for the National Gallery of Art on the National Mall, shortly after groundbreaking, c. 1935.
Fig. 120:
Building the National Gallery of Art, c. 1936

Fig. 121:
Gardner Cox
Lessing J. Rosenwald
Oil on Canvas
1955

Fig. 122:
David Young Cameron
Royal Scottish Academy
Etching
1916

Fig. 123:
Ernst David Roth
Cliffside
Etching
1916
Fig. 124:
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
*Long House—Dyer’s—Amsterdam*
Etching and drypoint
1889

Fig. 125:
Albrecht Dürer
*Melancolia I*
Engraving
1514

Fig. 126:
Rembrandt van Rijn
*Self-Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill*
Etching
1639
Fig. 127:
Otto Mueller

*Nude Figure of a Girl in a Landscape*
Woodcut
1912

Fig. 128:
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

*Woman Tying Her Shoe*
Woodcut
1912

Fig. 129:
Erich Heckel

*Three Figures*
Graphite
1913
**Fig. 130:**
Mueller
*Couple at a Table*
Color lithograph
c. 1922

**Fig. 131:**
Emil Nolde
*Mother and Child*
Color lithograph
1913

**Fig. 132:**
Nolde
*The Three Kings*
Color lithograph
1913
Fig. 133:
Karl Schmidt-Rottluff
*Head of a Woman*
Woodcut
1915

Fig. 134:
Heckel
*Brother and Sister*
Woodcut
1913

Fig. 135:
Nolde
*Italian Man*
Woodcut
1906
Fig. 136:
Schmidt-Rottluff
Mother
Woodcut
1916

Fig. 137:
Mueller
One Girl Bathing and the Other Sitting on the Shore
Lithograph
c. 1919

Fig. 138:
Paul Cézanne
Three Bathers
Oil on canvas
c. 1879

Fig. 139:
Nolde
Dancer
Color lithograph
1913
Fig. 140:
Jacob and Ruth Kainen, 1985

Fig. 141:
Jacob Kainen
*Plasterer*
Woodcut
1936

Fig. 142:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Portrait of Guthmann*
Woodcut
1914

Fig. 143:
Kainen
*Aftermath*
Lithograph
1937
Fig. 144:  
Kainen  
*Banana Man*  
Color lithograph  
1938

Fig. 145:  
Kainen  
*Loading Up*  
Lithograph  
1939

Fig. 146:  
Kainen  
*The Night Obscure*  
Drypoint and Aquatint  
1949
Fig. 147:
Kainen
*Drought*
Lithograph
1935

Fig. 148:
Kainen
*Self-Portrait with Drypoint Needle*
Drypoint
1945

Fig. 149:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Kiss of Love*
Woodcut
1918
Fig. 150:
Heckel

*The Brothers Karamazov*
Lithograph
1919

Fig. 151:
Kirchner

*Girl in the Bathtub*
Lithograph
1909

Fig. 152:
Schmidt-Rottluff

*Woman with Unbound Hair*
Woodcut
1913
Fig. 153:
Kirchner
*Five Tarts*
Woodcut
1914

Fig. 154:
Kirchner
*Female Nude*
Woodcut
1908

Fig. 155:
Kirchner
*Dancing Couple*
Lithograph on yellow paper
1909
Fig. 156:
Kirchner
The Blond Painter Stirner
Color woodcut
1919

Fig. 157:
Kirchner
Bridge on Crown Prince Embankment
Drypoint with Tonal Etching
1909

Fig. 158:
Max Pechstein
Variety Dancer
Color lithograph on yellow paper
1909
Fig. 159:
Nolde
*Hamburg, Church of Saint Catherine*
Tonal etching
1910

Fig. 160:
Heckel
*Standing Nude*
Woodcut with watercolor
1911

Fig. 161:
Kirchner
*Performer Bowing*
Lithograph in red
1909
Fig. 162:
Mueller
*Girl on a Couch*
Lithograph
1921

Fig. 163:
Nolde
*Scribes*
Tonal etching
1911

Fig. 164:
Pechstein
*Fisherman, Seated at a Table*
Woodcut
c. 1922

Fig. 165:
Schmidt-Rottluff
*Sunset on the Quay*
Lithograph
1910
Fig. 166:

Nolde

*Head with Pipe, E.N. [self-portrait]*

Lithograph with watercolor

1907

Fig. 167:

Heckel

*The Prisoner from The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

Woodcut

1907

Fig. 168:

Heckel

*The Prison Guard from The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

Woodcut

1907
Fig. 169:
Heckel
The Judge from The Ballad of Reading Gaol
Woodcut
1907

Fig. 170:
Heckel
The Horror from The Ballad of Reading Gaol
Woodcut
1907

Fig. 171:
Albrecht Dürer
The Men’s Bath House
Woodcut
c. 1497
Fig. 172:
Kirchner
*Portrait of Dr. Spengler*
Woodcut in yellow and black on pink wove paper
1919

Fig. 173:
Pechstein
*Dancer in the Mirror*
Color woodcut
1923

Fig. 174:
Mueller
*Five Yellow Nudes*
Color lithograph
1921
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