

Escape into Art? The Brücke Painters in the Nazi Period

14 April – 11 August 2019

In 1937, the Nazis confiscated thousands of artworks from German museums, including key works by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Pechstein and Emil Nolde. In the propaganda exhibition entitled *Degenerate Art*, public scorn was then poured on them. These aggressive attacks on their art have tended to overshadow to this day how the *Brücke* painters themselves experienced the Nazi regime. This focus on the events in the years 1937/38 has led to the artists primarily being considered victims of the Nazi policy on art.

The exhibition *Escape into Art? The Brücke Painters in the Nazi Period* is the first to be devoted to the oeuvres and everyday realities of the artists and the room to manoeuvre they actually had under National Socialist rule and in the immediate post-war period. The show focusses on Erich Heckel, Max Pechstein and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Emil Nolde, a staunch Nazi, constitutes a special case amongst the *Brücke* artists. Simultaneously, a major exhibition on him is taking place in the Neue Galerie at Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin.

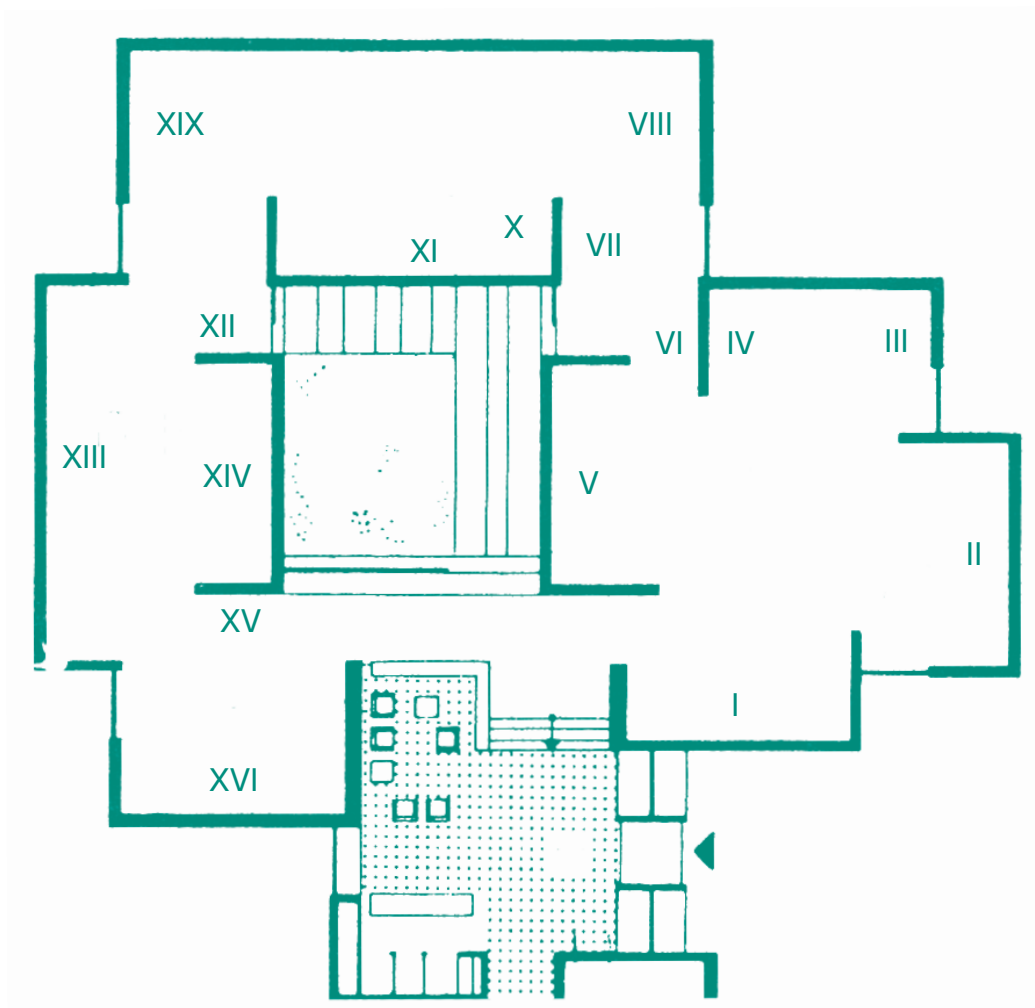
Works from the *Brücke*-Museum collection form the backbone of *Escape into Art?*, supplemented by selected loans from the estates of the various artists and from private collectors. The exhibition also marks the first time the museum is opening out in spatial terms: While the period up to 1945 will be portrayed at *Brücke*-Museum, the neighbouring Kunsthaus Dahlem will house the second part of the show and shed light on the immediate post-war era. Both galleries are united in their interest in a critical inquiry into the history of their respective venues and institutions, as well as the wish to fulfil their role as enlightened, transparent and socially relevant establishments. The artworks on display thus challenge viewers to critically explore the customary narratives, such as that surrounding terms like 'inner emigration' or 'Zero Hour'.

Indeed, all the artists remained active professionally throughout the years in question, the only exception being the final months of the war. The destruction of their Berlin studios and their forced relocation to rural areas made artistic work as good as impossible, not least owing to a lack of

materials. However, until the summer of 1937 they were still exhibiting their works at galleries and art associations, and in fact Pechstein continued to do so until 1939. Their respective personal situation and stance during the Nazi era can thus not be seen as some unchanging status, but must rather be construed as a dynamic process.

It bears mentioning here that there were many artists who were victims of physical persecution: Charlotte Salomon, Otto Freundlich, Moissey Kogan and Felix Nussbaum, for example, were murdered in concentration camps; countless collectors and patrons of *Brücke* were forced into exile after being classified as Jewish according to the Nuremberg Race Laws. Any discussion of the outlawing of expressionism and the living conditions of the artists needs to be carefully contextualized, particularly against the backdrop of this racist and politically driven persecution.

Please note that you can find the translation of all longer texts in this booklet, some captions are not translated. We included a list of techniques for your convenience.



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Artistic Techniques

Ahorn	maple wood
Aquarell	watercolour
Aquarell über Bleistift	watercolour on pencil
Aquarell und Deckfarben	watercolour and opaque paints
Aquarell und Farbkreide	watercolour and coloured chalk
Aquarell und Tusche	watercolour and ink
Bleistift	pencil
Bronze	bronze
Erlenholz	alder wood
Federzeichnung	ink drawing
Fichtenholz	spruce wood
Holz	wood
Holzchnitt	woodcut
Holzstock Fichte	spruce woodblock
Leimfarbe auf Rupfen	distemper on hessian
Lithografie	lithograph
Tempera auf Leinwand	tempera on canvas
Tempera auf Pressplatte	tempera on hardboard
Öl auf Leinwand	oil on canvas
Pappelholz	poplar wood
Tusche und Farbkreide	ink and coloured chalk

The Dispute over Expressionism

From a nationalist, conservative point of view, expressionism came about as a counter-model to French-inspired impressionism: its proponents emphasized the links with German gothic and romanticist art. This is why the *Brücke* members initially hoped that their works would meet with the approval of the Nazi regime. Heckel, Nolde, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff also assumed that through their membership of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, which the Propaganda Ministry had established in autumn 1933, they were still accepted as artists.

As early as the summer of 1933, there was a heated debate in the art world about the role of expressionism, which reflected the dispute within the Nazi Party about the direction to be taken: it was about the position of *Brücke* artists such as Nolde, Heckel, and Schmidt-Rottluff in the new state. The dispute revolved around the question of whether 'Nordic' expressionism could represent Nazi ideology better than the reactionary-völkisch art ideal, with its academic, naturalist influence. Responding to National Socialist supporters of a moderate modernism, opponents were frequently especially vociferous. In particular Alfred Rosenberg, the founder of the Militant League for German Culture and head ideologist in the Nazi Party, ranted against anybody in his own ranks who promoted modernism.

In 1933, the outcome of this dispute over expressionism, which continued until 1937, was still unclear. Even during the *Degenerate Art* exhibition it had not resulted in a clear official stance on individual artists and works.

1 Paul Fechter, *Der Expressionismus (Expressionism)*, Munich 1914, cover
The 1914 book *Der Expressionismus (Expressionism)* by the art writer Paul Fechter played a role in demarcating expressionism as a German movement from other European trends in art. After 1933, Fechter championed expressionism as an official art form in the country. As an example, he quoted fascist Italy, where the futurists enjoyed official recognition.

2 Ludwig Thormaehlen, *Bildnis Erich Heckel (Portrait of Erich Heckel)*, 1924, bronze, Brücke-Museum, 1966 donated by Erich Heckel

In 1932 Ludwig Thormaehlen, curator at the Nationalgalerie and himself a sculptor who for decades had been acquainted with Heckel, organized the major exhibition *Neuere Deutsche Kunst (Recent German Art)*. In Oslo, Copenhagen, and Bergen, among others, it showcased contemporary German art and triggered spirited debates in Berlin. His intention with the show was to provide a representative insight into current art in Germany, though ultimately what was displayed was a selection which, for example, deliberately ignored works by the German impressionist Max Liebermann. For Thormaehlen with his nationalist, conservative mindset, Liebermann was part of an influential art scene which he perceived to be dominated by Jews and which he could not reconcile with his idea of national contemporary art. Protests by numerous artists followed quickly, and the liberal press was also incensed by the touring exhibition. The show marked the beginning of the dispute about the direction of German art, which continued in summer 1933.

3 Otto Andreas Schreiber, 'Preface', in: *30 deutsche Künstler (30 German Artists)*, exh. cat. Galerie Ferdinand Möller, Berlin, July 1933, bpk / Zentralarchiv, SMB

The exhibition *30 Deutsche Künstler (30 German Artists)* was staged in July 1933 by the National Socialist Student Union

at Galerie Ferdinand Möller in Berlin. Works by *Brücke* artists were contrasted with works by young unknown artists with a view to demonstrating lines of development towards a potential Nazi modernism. The exhibition was initially banned on the orders of Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick. Around two weeks later, with the help of the artist and Goebbels' aide Hans Weidemann in the Propaganda Ministry, it reopened, on the condition, however, that the NS Student Union was no longer mentioned as the official organizer.

4 Ludwig Hohlwein, *Der Deutsche Student kämpft für Führer und Volk (The German Student Fights for Führer and the People)*, poster, ca. 1933, bpk / Kunstbibliothek, SMB

The National Socialist Student Union was a sub-organization of the NSDAP, the Nazi Party. Founded in 1926, it was intended to spread Nazi ideology among students.

5 Alfred Rosenberg, 'Revolution in der bildenden Kunst' ('Revolution in the Fine Arts'), *Völkischer Beobachter (Norddeutsche Ausgabe)*, 188, 7 July 1933, p. 7, bpk / Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – SPK, Zeitungsabteilung

As early as 1928 Alfred Rosenberg, one of the leading Nazi ideologists, founded the anti-Semitic Militant League for German Culture, whose stated objective was to influence German cultural life in keeping with nationalist ideas – especially within the Nazi Party. As a declared enemy of modernism, in July 1933 Rosenberg described the controversy surrounding expressionism as a 'spirited discussion' within the party's own ranks. As *Reichsleiter* during the Second World War, Rosenberg was part of one of the major stolen art organizations in the occupied territories in the West and East. There he had the cultural assets of, in particular, Jewish citizens confiscated and 'used' for the benefit of the Reich.

6 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner to the president of the Prussian Academy of Arts, Max von Schillings, 17 May 1933, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Historisches Archiv, PrAdK, no. 1102, sheets 66–67

In May 1933, the Prussian Academy of Arts urged the artists Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff and Nolde, who had been admitted two years earlier, to resign. Schmidt-Rottluff complied with the request, while Nolde and Kirchner successfully refused. In a detailed reply, Kirchner explained his position as a pioneer 'of a new, strong and genuine German art'. Like Pechstein, he was not expelled until the summer of 1937. Nolde managed to prevent his expulsion through a convincing statement, in which among other things he made reference to his party membership.

7 Organigrams, Reich Chamber of Culture and Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, in: *Handbuch der Reichskulturkammer*, ed. Hans Hinkel, Berlin 1937.

The headquarters of the Reich Chamber of Culture were in Berlin and were organized as seven individual chambers each with their own departments. As of September 1933, membership of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts was a prerequisite for being able to exhibit publicly. Not being admitted to or being expelled from it was tantamount to being banned from working. The Reich Chamber of Fine Arts was initially headed by the architect Eugen Hönig; as of late 1936 until the end of 1943 it was run by the painter Adolf Ziegler.

8 *Kunst der Nation*, 1 November 1933, title page

The founding of the pro-modern magazine *Kunst der Nation* in November 1933 was an attempt to embed 'Nordic' expressionism ideologically and historically in the new state. In numerous articles the predominantly young authors explained why expressionism was a paragon for aspiring National Socialist artists. The authors included the art historian Werner Haftmann, who after

the Second World War, among other things as the first director of the Neue Nationalgalerie, was a driving force behind the canonization of *Brücke* art. On the back of political pressure from Rosenberg, publication of the magazine ceased in February 1935.

9 „Aufruf der Kulturschaffenden“ ('Call of the Cultural Workers'), in: *Völkischer Beobachter* (Berliner Ausgabe), 18 August 1934, p. 10, bpk / Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – SPK, Zeitungsabteilung

In mid-August, Heckel and Nolde agreed to sign the 'Call of the Cultural Workers' formulated by one of Goebbels' staff members, which confirmed Hitler as the head of state. On 18 August 1934 this avowal of loyalty appeared in the party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, among other daily papers.

10 Max Pechstein, *Das Symbol der Arbeit* (*Kraft durch Freude*) (*The Symbol of Work* [*Strength through Joy*]), 1934, competition entry for the Propaganda Ministry, location unknown, bpk / Kunstbibliothek, SMB

This design for a mural was Pechstein's entry in a competition staged by the Nazi organization *Kraft durch Freude*. Had it been realized, the figures would have been life-sized – the original dimensions were 2.5 x 2 metres. The motto *Kraft durch Freude* (*Strength through Joy*) – with the swastika resplendent beneath – and the design's subtitle *Das Symbol der Arbeit* (*The Symbol of Work*) can be explained by the brief. The image conforms to the Nazi art ideal; at the same time the way the figures are portrayed is highly reminiscent of Pechstein's stained-glass window designs of the late 1920s. When the winning entries were published in *Kunst der Nation*, Pechstein was disappointed not to be one of the prize winners.

Brücke as the founder of a 'new German art'?

The *Brücke* group of artists was founded in 1905 in Dresden and disbanded in 1913 in Berlin. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Fritz Bleyl were its first members. Whereas the latter left the group as early as 1907, the others formed its constant core and for as long as it existed continued to acquire new members, who were linked to *Brücke* for different lengths of time and with differing degrees of closeness. Over the course of time, Emil Nolde and Max Pechstein, among others, joined. The group's radical style had a far-reaching impact. After 1914 the term expressionism increasingly became perceived as a 'German counter-model' to impressionism. In the 1920s the artists themselves became established protagonists of the contemporary art scene and many of their artworks were represented in numerous museum collections.

Biographies:

Erich Heckel (1883–1970) was known at the end of the First World War for his use of motifs from German gothic art and romanticism. Even in July 1933 the proponents of his art were still celebrating him as one of 'the purest proclaimers of the German perception of art' and proposed his art as a contemporary alternative to the traditional academic style. Despite successful solo exhibitions in 1934 and 1935, his desire for official recognition was not fulfilled. Following the confiscation of his artworks from German museums and the defamation of his oeuvre as 'degenerate', Heckel avoided the public domain. After his Berlin flat was destroyed in a bombing raid on 30 January 1944, the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts in Berlin helped him by writing a letter of recommendation for his search for new accommodation in southern Germany. The artist moved to Hemmenhofen on Lake Constance. Although in the post-war years he received an offer of a teaching post at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Berlin, Heckel never returned to the capital. From 1949 until 1955 he taught at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Karlsruhe.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884–1976)

The debates surrounding Karl Schmidt-Rottluff illustrate the contradictions and ambivalence of the Nazis' art policy.

As of the late Weimar Republic, portraits by Schmidt-Rottluff in particular were the target of reactionary, nationalist polemic. At the same time, given his representations of farm life and his origins in the country, the conservative proponents of his art saw in the artist a suitable representative of Nazi cultural ideology. From Schmidt-Rottluff's correspondence, it becomes clear that with regard to questions of art he was initially cautiously hopeful about the Nazi regime, but soon disassociated himself from it. His almost annual summer holidays in Pomerania provided him with an opportunity to put a little distance between himself and everyday political events. In April 1941 the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts banned him from working. Henceforth he was no longer entitled to any painting materials, which in any case were only available with ration coupons; he was now reliant on friends more than ever. After their Berlin flat was destroyed in a bombing raid in the summer of 1943, Karl and Emy Schmidt-Rottluff moved to his family home in Rottluff in Saxony. They did not return to Berlin until late 1946, after Schmidt-Rottluff had been offered a teaching position at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in the city in 1945.

Max Pechstein (1881–1955)

was to a large extent excluded from the nationalist, conservative circles which championed Heckel and Nolde. Born in the mining town of Zwickau, the painter came from a Social Democratic background. During the Weimar Republic he had supported associations with if anything left-wing leanings, e.g., the November Group, Workers' Council for Art, and Association of Friends of the New Russia. Private letters reveal his rejection of Nazi race ideology. Pechstein was repeatedly labelled Jewish by Emil Nolde and several other figures – at the time a serious objection that required him to prove his "Aryan descent" earlier than others. In the 1930s, Pechstein was financially worse off than Heckel or Schmidt-Rottluff, for example. At the same time, in May 1939 he was the only one to appear in public with a gallery exhibition. After his apartment in Berlin was destroyed, he moved in the spring of 1944 to Pomerania before returning to the city in September 1945. Shortly afterwards he took up a teaching

post at the Hochschule für bildende Künste there, and in 1949 was made a professor.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938)

left Germany during the First World War and settled in Switzerland. In numerous letters after 1933 he repeatedly complained about the remote life in the Swiss mountains. He soon abandoned the hopes he had initially put in the Nazi regime's art policy. Kirchner reacted sensitively to his former *Brücke* colleagues who attempted to adapt to the regime, be it in their landscapes or, worse still, as in the case of Nolde through his autobiography. Although in letters, in particular to his brother Ulrich, he too initially made anti-Semitic statements that conformed with Nazism, from the outset he viewed the developments in Germany and especially their impact on art and culture critically. He always followed the way he was portrayed in public very closely and was deeply offended by the defamation of his works in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition. To what extent this played a role in his suicide in June 1938, as his partner Erna Schilling suggested, is unclear.

Chronology

1933

30 January The Nazis seize power, Reich President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor.

22 March The first concentration camp is established in Dachau. Initially it is primarily used to intern political opponents of the Nazi regime.

10 May The Nazi Student Union organizes book burnings across the country, primarily of works by oppositional and Jewish authors.

15 May The Prussian Academy of Arts formally requests the resignation of Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff, and Kirchner. Nolde and Kirchner refuse, but Schmidt-Rottluff tenders his resignation.

July The dispute concerning the role of expressionism un-

der the Nazi regime reaches its first climax. It takes place in daily newspapers, lectures and exhibitions. Heckel, Nolde and Schmidt-Rottluff, amongst others, are cited as representatives of a 'new German art' by its advocates, including many of the younger Nazis, officials of the Nazi Student Union and employees of the Propaganda and Culture Ministries.

Summer Schmidt-Rottluff spends a working holiday near Leba in Pomerania, as he will do almost every year until 1943. Pechstein and Heckel also mostly spend the summer outside Berlin.

October Pechstein is compelled to defend himself publicly against Nolde's accusations that he is a Jew. The Prussian Academy of Arts mediates between them and confirms Pechstein's "Aryan descent".

1 November The first issue of the magazine *Kunst der Nation* is published. Its goal is to demonstrate the suitability of expressionism as a genuine 'German' art within the Nazi state.

15 November Inauguration of the Reich Chamber of Culture in Berlin; some of the *Brücke* artists are present.

1934

April Pechstein participates in a mural competition initiated by the Nazi leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude*, having learned of it from *Kunst der Nation*.

8–30 April Pechstein exhibition at Galerie von der Heyde, Berlin.

22 April–8 June Heckel exhibition at Galerie Ferdinand Möller, Berlin.

Summer Pechstein retreats to a fishing village on Lake Kosy in

Pomerania for a working holiday. He also spends the summers of 1937, 1938 and 1940–1942 there.

18 August The ‘Call of the Cultural Workers’ is published in the Nazi Party daily *Völkischer Beobachter*. The appeal aims to strengthen loyalty to Adolf Hitler in the cultural scene, too. Heckel and Nolde are among the signatories. They had received a request that they should sign, which raised their hopes of recognition by the regime.

1935

15 March–15 May The opening day of the exhibition *Ausstellung Berliner Kunst (Exhibition of Berlin Art)* at Neue Pinakothek in Munich ends in conflict. Twenty-two works are removed and sent to Goebbels for assessment, including works by the *Brücke* artists.

30 March–27 April Schmidt-Rottluff exhibition at Karl Buchholz’s gallery in Berlin.

15 September Hitler enacts the so-called Nuremberg Laws, thereby establishing a legal basis for the anti-Semitic ideology and enabling even more systematic discrimination and persecution of Jewish citizens – now a legal requirement.

3 October–3 November Heckel exhibition at Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover.

1936

29 March–22 April Pechstein exhibition at Galerie von der Heyde, Berlin.

31 July The exhibition *Malerei und Plastik in Deutschland 1936 (Painting and Sculpture in Germany in 1936)* at Hamburg’s Kunstverein, which opened on 21 July and also presented works by former *Brücke* members, is closed

early on the instructions of Adolf Ziegler, vice president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts.

1–16 August Summer Olympic Games in Berlin.

Late October The modern art department at Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin is closed to the public.

1937

12–13 February Conference of regional heads of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, Schloss Schönhausen, Pankow district, Berlin. Its president Adolf Ziegler, appointed on 1 December 1936, announces stronger measures regarding ‘systematic cultural cultivation’.

16 February–10 March Schmidt-Rottluff exhibition of watercolours at Karl Buchholz, Berlin.

June Factory exhibition with some 20 works by Pechstein at Auto Union AG, Chemnitz.

July First confiscations of modern art in some 30 public collections by a commission specially appointed by the Propaganda Ministry. A selection is sent to Munich to the *Degenerate Art* exhibition. From August 1938 the works considered by the Propaganda Ministry to be ‘able to be sold internationally’ are put into interim storage at Schloss Schönhausen near Berlin.

8 July The Prussian Academy of Arts expels Kirchner, Nolde and Pechstein. Nolde successfully protests and remains a member.

18 July Hitler opens the House of German Art. The *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung (Great German Art Exhibition)*, which is to take place annually here until 1944, is intended to show a panorama of the officially desired artistic production in the new state.

19 July Opening of the propaganda exhibition *Degenerate Art* in Munich with approximately 650 works from public collections, including numerous works by the *Brücke* artists.

1938

26 February The travelling exhibition *Degenerate Art* opens in Berlin and then proceeds to further destinations in Germany and Austria.

31 May The Nazi ‘Law on the confiscation of products of degenerate art’ creates the legal preconditions for the sale of works confiscated as ‘degenerate’.

15 June Kirchner commits suicide in Frauenkirch near Davos, Switzerland.

August–end of The art dealers Bernhard A. Böhmer, Karl Buchholz, Hildebrand Gurlitt and Ferdinand Möller are authorized to sell the artworks seized in the context of the ‘Degenerate Art’ campaign. The intention is that they should be sold abroad for foreign currency, but many of the works remain in their possession.

9–10 November ‘Novemberpogrome’ in Germany. Violent attacks take place on Jewish citizens, organized and directed by the Nazi regime. Synagogues, Jewish shops, graveyards and flats are destroyed. Around 400 Jews are murdered during the night of the pogrom.

1939

20 March The ‘unsaleable remains’, as judged by the Propaganda Ministry, of the artworks confiscated as ‘degenerate’, supposedly some 5,000 works, are burned in the courtyard of the central fire station in Berlin.

14 May–10 June Pechstein exhibition at Galerie von der Heyde, Berlin.

30 June Auction of 125 artworks by Galerie Theodor Fischer at the Grand Hotel National in Lucerne, Switzerland. The works were removed from public collections as 'degenerate' in 1937.

July/August Pechstein sojourns for the first time in almost 20 years in Nida on the Curonian Spit. The trip becomes possible following the reintegration into the German Reich of the Memel region in March of that year, which had been annexed by Lithuania.

August Rosa Schapire, the Hamburg-based art historian, friend and patron of Schmidt-Rottluff, flees to London.

1 September Outbreak of the Second World War. Pechstein experiences the start of the war on the sea voyage from Nida, where he was holidaying, back to Stettin (present-day Szczecin, Poland).

1940

Spring Schmidt-Rottluff stays with the collector and art dealer Hanna Bekker vom Rath in the Taunus hills, as he will also do in 1941.

1941

3 April Schmidt-Rottluff is banned from working by the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts; Pechstein and Heckel retain their membership. Nolde is expelled in August 1941.

22 June The German armed forces attack the Soviet Union.

20 October The mass murder of Jews commences in the gas chambers of the concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

1942

The *Brücke* artists begin to evacuate their works, mostly to places outside Berlin.

September Schmidt-Rottluff spends two weeks working at Gut Kreisau with Helmuth James and Freya von Moltke. The artist subsequently sells some of the watercolours produced during this period to them, despite the employment ban.

Winter The Sixth Army of the German forces is annihilated in the Battle of Stalingrad; the turning point of the Second World War.

1943

Summer Pechstein stores 3,500 artworks at Schloss Moritzburg near Dresden, which subsequently disappears without trace.

23–24 August Schmidt-Rottluff's flat and studio at Bamberger Straße 19 in Berlin are completely destroyed during an air raid. He thereafter moves into his parents' house in Rottluff near Chemnitz.

22–23 November Berlin suffers a particularly heavy bombing raid. Pechstein's studio at Kurfürstenstraße 126 is badly damaged.

1944

30 January Heckel's studio and flat in Emser Straße in Berlin burn down and numerous works are destroyed.

February Bomb damage to Pechstein's flat. He subsequently moves to Pomerania in March.

May Heckel moves to Lake Constance. The Reich Chamber of Fine Arts assists the artist by providing a certificate supporting his search for accommodation.

6 June D-Day; the Allied troops land in Normandy in France.

August Pechstein and his wife are conscripted to work on the 'Pomeranian Wall', a line of fortifications designed to stop the advance of the Red Army.

1945

8–9 May Capitulation of the German armed forces and end of the Second World War. Schmidt-Rottluff is able to return to his parents' house from a neighbouring cellar. He reports that plundering has taken place.

15 May First issue of *Tägliche Rundschau*, the first German-language newspaper to appear after the end of the war.

5 June With the Berlin Declaration 'regarding the defeat of Germany', the four victorious powers assume 'supreme authority'. They divide Germany into four zones of occupation, Berlin into four sectors.

Summer An intensive written exchange begins between the *Brücke* artists and their collectors and fellow artists about the fate of mutual friends and the whereabouts of their works.

6 June–November The Chamber of Artists set up by the Soviet City Commandant in Berlin directs and controls the reestablishment of the art and cultural scene.

3 July The Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany is founded in Berlin as an inter-zone organization. Pechstein becomes a member of the central working committee for Berlin, while Schmidt-Rottluff assumes chairmanship of the local group in Chemnitz.

11 July The Allied Control Council is appointed to regulate public life in the four sectors of the city of Berlin.

21 July–August 1. *Ausstellung der Kammer der Kunstschaffenden* (*First Exhibition of the Chamber of Artists*). Works by the *Brücke* artists are presented in one room as belonging together.

Early August In Nuremberg the Allies set up an International Military Tribunal for the sentencing of war crimes, crimes against humanity and against peace.

2 August–9 September *Ausstellung junger Kunst* (*Exhibition of Recent Art*), Galerie Gerd Rosen, Berlin. Together with other expressionists, the *Brücke* artists are stylized in a sweeping manner as victims of the Nazi regime.

1 October Karl Hofer, the new director of the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Berlin, offers Pechstein a teaching post.

November Schmidt-Rottluff is made an honorary citizen of Chemnitz and is re-admitted to the Academy of Arts.

20 November The first Nuremberg Trials begin at the International Military Tribunal.

December Schmidt-Rottluff accepts Hofer's offer of a teaching post at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Berlin.

1946

10 January The first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) opens in London.

February–April Pechstein exhibition in Berlin; the first location is Admiralspalast in Friedrichstraße, the second the District Offices in Wedding.

3–17 August Together with the Neuruppin Public Education Office, the gallerist Ferdinand Möller shows the exhibition *Freie Deutsche Kunst* (*Free German Art*)

as a continuation of his previous focus on the development of the national style.

25 August–31 October *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*General German Art Exhibition*), Stadthalle Nordplatz, Dresden, with a cross-zone overview of contemporary artistic creativity.

6 September–13 October The exhibition *Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. 50 Aquarelle aus den Jahren 1943–1946* (*Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. 50 Watercolours from 1943–1946*) is held at Städtische Kunstsammlung zu Chemnitz, Schlossberg-Museum.

Autumn The start of the questionnaire campaign by art historians Christian Töwe and Hans Wentzel regarding the development and activities of the *Brücke* artist group between 1905 and 1913.

8 October The Soviet Military Administration in Germany is authorized to investigate and return artworks confiscated as a result of the Nazi 'Degenerate Art' campaign within the Soviet occupation zone.

20 November Schmidt-Rottluff returns to Berlin.

21 December 1946–January 1947 The exhibition *Wiedersehen mit Museumsgut* (*Reencountering Museum Holdings*) is held at Schlossmuseum Berlin. Works by the previously defamed *Brücke* artists are shown with the aim of bringing about their rehabilitation.

1947

10 February The peace treaties between the victorious powers and Germany's European war allies Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Romania and Hungary are signed in Paris.

1947 Start of acquisitions for a Gallery of the Twentieth Century in Berlin by Ludwig Justi and Adolf Jannasch.

March Over the following months Kurt Reutti from the Berlin municipal authorities secures approximately 1,300 works from the 'Degenerate Art' campaign from the estate of Bernhard A. Böhrner in Güstrow and from Ferdinand Möller in Zermützel.

5 June US Secretary of State George C. Marshall presents the *European Recovery Program*. The so-called Marshall Plan aims to prevent the spread of Communism and create a uniform economic order in Europe. Under pressure from the Soviet Union, the East European countries do not participate.

1948

21 June The Deutsche Mark is introduced in West Germany.

Autumn Schmidt-Rottluff visits his student Erika Bausch von Hornstein in Neu Kaliß, where 60 of his watercolours were stored. While there he paints numerous new watercolours showing motifs from the demolished factory and the surroundings.

1949

24 June 1948–12 May 1949 The Berlin Blockade. Just a few days after the currency reform in the Western occupation zone, Soviet troops block all access routes to West Berlin. They also restrict gas and electricity supplies.

8 May The Federal Republic of Germany is founded and the Basic Law adopted.

7 October The German Democratic Republic is founded in the area of the Soviet occupation zone.

The Art Public until 1937

Although exhibitions of modern art still took place after 1933, their number could hardly be compared with those held during the Weimar Republic, which had a highly active contemporary art scene. The Berlin galleries of Ferdinand Möller, Karl Buchholz, Karl and Josef Nierendorf as well as Otto von der Heyde were of especial importance for the former *Brücke* artists. However, many other art dealers who had supported modernism prior to 1933 were obliged to retreat from public life; a large number emigrated abroad.

After 1933, galleries and art associations primarily showed landscapes and still lifes by the *Brücke* artists. Most of these more recent works, which tended to be closely oriented on nature, could hardly be termed expressionist. In summer 1933 Kirchner commented: 'Over there [i. e., in Germany], exhibitions of modern painting are often held to convert the Hitlerians, but without success, even though the tamest works are selected, for example only small, incidental landscapes I painted. Such a pity.' Admittedly, many of the presentations received positive press coverage, but simultaneously Nazi papers such as *Das Schwarze Korps* or *Völkischer Beobachter* continued to polemicize against modern art and its network.

Erich Heckel at Galerie Ferdinand Möller, Berlin, 1934

Between 28 April and 8 June 1934, Galerie Ferdinand Möller held a Heckel exhibition featuring works from the previous three years; a total of 21 oil paintings, 23 watercolours and 8 prints were shown. The artist commented with satisfaction: 'The exhibition at Möller opened on Saturday, and many calls reveal a positive response.' Press comments were also very positive. In one review the writer praised: 'Heckel has gradually distanced himself ever further from the more or less revolutionary

youthful *Brücke* and has come close to the right wing, where the academics are seated.' This exhibition was followed in 1935 by solo shows in Krefeld and Hanover, which presented Heckel as 'a painter of German landscapes'.

1 Max Pechstein, *Kutter zur Reparatur (Cutters in Repair)*, 1933, oil on canvas, private collection

The painting was exhibited in April 1934 as part of a presentation of 41 works by Pechstein at Galerie von der Heyde, Berlin. In April 1936 Heyde held a further solo show by the artist with 40 watercolours and several drawings.

2 Erich Heckel, *Schneesmelze im Erzgebirge (Snow Melting in the Ore Mountains)*, 1931, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1966 donated by the artist

Exhibited both at Galerie Ferdinand Möller in spring 1934 and in the exhibition *Das Bild der Landschaft (The Landscape Image)* at Hamburger Kunsthalle in autumn 1934.

3 Erich Heckel, *Annweiler*, 1933, tempera on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1966 donated by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

Exhibited in April and June 1934 in Heckel's solo show at Galerie Ferdinand Möller

4 Erich Heckel, *Pfalz-Landschaft (Palatinate Landscape)*, 1933, watercolour, Brücke-Museum, 1970 donated by Sidi Heckel

Possibly exhibited at Möller's gallery in April 1934 as *Pfälzer Landschaft (Palatine Landscape)*

5 Erich Heckel, *Frauen am Wasser (Women at the Water)*, 1933, watercolour and opaque paints, Brücke-Museum, 1966 donated by the artist

Possibly exhibited at Möller's gallery in April 1934 as *Badende (Bathers)*

6 Erich Heckel, *Dünen am Watt (Dunes on the Mudflats)*, 1933, watercolour, Brücke-Museum, 1966 donated by the artist

Possibly exhibited at Möller's

gallery in April 1934 as *Heide am Watt (Heath on the Mudflats)*

7 Erich Heckel, *Brücke in Limburg (Bridge in Limburg)*, 1933, watercolour on pencil, Brücke-Museum, 1970 donated by the artist

Possibly exhibited at Möller's gallery in April 1934 as *Limburg a. d. Lahn (Limburg on the Lahn)*

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff at Karl Buchholz, Berlin, 1935

In March and April 1935, Karl Buchholz presented 35 watercolours by Schmidt-Rottluff in his exhibition space. The show received several positive reviews, for example, *Berliner Tageblatt* praised it as 'refreshing' and referred to earlier reviews on the travelling exhibition *Neuere Deutsche Kunst (Recent German Art)* of 1932. Even then, 'the strong personality, rock-hard form, expressive colour' had been positively highlighted – ascriptions that after 1933 were designed to make his art appear suitable for the National Socialist cause.

8 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Angler auf der Brücke (Fisherman on the Bridge)*, 1934, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, 1975 donated by the artist

Exhibited in spring 1935 in the exhibition space of Karl Buchholz

9 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Seerosen II (Waterlilies II)*, 1934, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, 1973 donated by the artist

Exhibited in spring 1935 in the exhibition space of Karl Buchholz

Figural Depictions of the 1930s

In particular the figural pictures and portraits by the expressionists were strongly criticized by the National Socialists. The formally reduced *Brücke* art, partly inspired by objects from ethnological museums, had no interest in naturalistic depictions or idealization. In order to avoid giving grounds for criticism as far as possible, from 1933 onwards museum directors replaced large numbers of figural pictures from their collection presentations with landscape paintings and still lifes by the same artists. It was hoped that a 'moderate' expressionism would increase public acceptance. And the *Brücke* artists themselves also evidently responded to the altered expectations: their figural paintings from the 1930s appear increasingly naturalistic – a move away from the radically simplified style of the *Brücke* years. This development had already begun in the early years of the Weimar Republic and after 1933 presumably became stronger partly as a result of the controversy surrounding expressionism. Not least of all, artists needed to be able to exhibit their works in public and find buyers for them.

1 Max Pechstein, *Junge mit Schneebällen und drei Nelken* (*Boy with Snowballs and Three Carnations*), 1937, oil on canvas, private collection.

Pechstein's large-format portrait shows the artist's 11-year-old son wearing shorts and a short haircut reflecting the fashion of the time. Compared with his earlier portraits, it seems very naturalistic and recalls the style of New Objectivity.

2 Erich Heckel, *Jungen am Strand* (*Boys on the Beach*), 1934, triptych, tempera on canvas, Nachlass Erich Heckel, Hemmenhofen

How compatible was modernism with the art favoured by the National Socialists? Even though Heckel had long since moved away from his early

expressionist style, the three-part work poses precisely this question.

Like Pechstein's design for the mural *Das Symbol der Arbeit* (*The Symbol of Work*), Heckel's triptych also revealed thematic and stylistic associations with works from the Weimar period. For example, in 1928 Heckel created a mural design for the Fountain Room of Museum Folkwang in Essen. Its subject – 'Die jungmännliche Bewegung (Spiel und Sport)' (Young Masculinity in Action: Play and Sport) – was supplied by the then director Ernst Gosebruch. Heckel returned to the motif in 1934. Both the subject and the form of the representation made a work along these lines seem suitable as contemporary 'German' art for the new state. However, unlike Pechstein, Heckel avoided an explicit visualization of Nazi symbolism. In 1936 Essen-based industrialist and art collector Ernst Henke hung the triptych – together with numerous paintings by Nolde and other representatives of expressionism – in his villa. Given that, according to Gosebruch, Henke was 'very close to the Nazi Party', several artists (including Nolde) loaned him works for safekeeping to prevent them from being confiscated.

3 Erich Heckel, *Zwei Brüder* (*Two Brothers*), 1937, tempera on canvas, Nachlass Erich Heckel, Hemmenhofen

Heckel's self-portrait *Zwei Brüder* (*Two Brothers*) addresses both his art and his family situation: the piece shows the artist with an earlier work on his left and his brother Manfred, who had died the previous November, on his deathbed on his right side. Subsequently, the artist created several works in his memory.

Images of Germany

As of 1937, Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff created landscape paintings and images of places that could be deemed to meet the romanticized image of Germany propagated by the Nazis. Schmidt-Rottluff portrayed deserted cityscapes featuring romanticist or gothic buildings like Limburg Cathedral or a chapel in medieval Dinkelsbühl. It would have been possible to link them thematically to officially acceptable landscape ideals, but after summer 1937 Schmidt-Rottluff was no longer able to exhibit his works in public.

While the artist's depiction of a motorway bridge is rather unusual, it does show an achievement of the time. In his letters Schmidt-Rottluff comments enthusiastically on his trips through Germany by car. In other words, it was not only historical buildings that inspired him. The new motorway bridges were planned before 1933, but were now celebrated as an achievement of the National Socialist regime. Even in the later years of the Weimar Republic, nationalist-reactionary activists criticized *Brücke* art, especially the portrayals of people. One of them was the architect and race ideologist Paul Schultze-Naumburg, who debased expressionism by using terms such as 'unnaturalness' and 'degeneration'. As early as 1928 in his book *Kunst und Rasse* (*Art and Race*) he juxtaposed portraits by Schmidt-Rottluff with photos of people with disabilities.

Early Condemnation

The attacks from the reactionary camp were also directed at the acquisition policy of art museums. At the time, the so-called 'purging' of collections was called for, which essentially meant censoring and removing modern works of art from museums. The organization of regional, so-called 'shame exhibitions' lent weight to this call. Such exhibitions were to present disparaged works of modern art as examples of cultural decline. As a result, the tone in the public art debate intensified. The defamations in the early years of the Nazi era paved the way for the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in 1937.

1 Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kampf um die Kunst*, (Nationalsozialistische Bibliothek, no. 36) Munich 1932, p.40–41. *Kampf um die Kunst* was published in 1931 as the 36th issue of the Nationalsozialistische Bibliothek series by the Nazi Party publishing house based in Munich, and was sold for the very affordable price of 1 Mark. What we see here is the accusation of imitation combined with a rejection (for reasons of racial ideology) of objects from non-European cultures, which were disparaged as not being of equal quality.

Brücke-Museum is aware of the racist content of this publication and wishes to expressly distance itself from it. With this presentation, we aim to portray the inhuman argumentation used by the Nazis.

2 Erich Heckel, *Badende mit Tuch* (*Bather with Towel*), 1913, Maple, Brücke-Museum, 1986 acquired from Charlotte Specht, née Sauerlandt using funds from the estate Martha Lemke

Schultze-Naumburg instrumentalized not only works by Schmidt-Rottluff, but also repeatedly depictions of Heckel's wooden sculptures. Figural depictions inspired by non-European

objects in ethnological museums, such as *Badende mit Tuch* (*Bather with Towel*), became a target for the argumentation levelled at modernism by the nationalist-reactionary camp both on account of their non-naturalistic form and because they were deemed to be immoral. Seen from today's perspective, art-theoretical interpretations based on race ideology appear absurd. At the time, they were widely circulated.

3 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Grünroter Kopf* (*Green-red Head*), 1917, alder wood, painted in red and green, Brücke-Museum, 1971 donated by the artist

While he was stationed in Lithuania, Schmidt-Rottluff created a large number of sculptures, such as *Grünroter Kopf*. He collected the wood for them locally. The nationalist-reactionary camp derided such sculptures as 'negroid'; in part because appropriating formal language deemed to be foreign did not correspond to its self-understanding of a genuinely 'German' art.

4 Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse*, 1935 (1 Edition Munich, 1928), p. 106–107.

The connection made between art and race ideology is also evident on this page: portraits by Schmidt-Rottluff and Modigliani are juxtaposed with photos of people with physical deformities. The image at the top left shows the woodcut *Selbstbildnis* (*Self-Portrait*) from the year 1919.

5 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Bildnis Emy* (*Portrait of Emy*), 1919, woodcut, Brücke-Museum, bequest of Rosa Schapire to the Galerie des 20. Jahrhunderts, 1967 transferred to the Brücke-Museum

In his pamphlet *Kampf um die Kunst*, Schultze-Naumburg sought amongst other things to discredit the painting *Emy*. The woodcut *Bildnis Emy* (*Portrait of Emy*) from 1919 shows a similar view of the painter's wife, Emy Schmidt-Rottluff.

6 Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kampf um die Kunst*, (Nationalsozialistische Bibliothek, no. 36) Munich 1932, p. 10. *Kampf um die Kunst* (*The Struggle over Art*) was the title of a lecture given in 1931 by Paul Schultze-Naumburg on behalf of the Militant League for German Culture in various German cities. His comments aimed to defame modern art by comparing it with canonical artworks of the late gothic or the German renaissance. Once again, as in *Kunst und Rasse* (*Art and Race*) he used the portraits of Schmidt-Rottluff to illustrate his point. This page shows the painting *Emy*, a portrait of the artist's wife.

7 Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse* (Munich, 1928), p. 98–99.

In the book, which was published as early as 1928 and reprinted in large numbers after 1933, the inhuman dimension of Schultze-Naumburg's art ideology becomes evident: amongst other things, he juxtaposes paintings by Nolde (top), Picasso (bottom left) and Schmidt-Rottluff (bottom right) with photographs of people with disabilities. His aim was to discredit the artists and consequently also the subjects as 'unnatural' and 'un-German'.

8 Wolfgang Willrich, 'Beispiele von drei Entarteten' (sheet with examples of three degenerates): Heckel / Schmidt-Rottluff / Nolde', 1933, bpk / Zentralarchiv, SMB

In this sheet from 1933, the painter and reactionary art activist Wolfgang Willrich denounces the recognition of the three painters Heckel, Nolde and Schmidt-Rottluff, which partly took place under the Nazi regime. The grouping already reveals the main outlines of the kind of collage that he later published in his 1937 book *Säuberung des Kunsttempels* (*Purging of the Art Temple*).

Max Pechstein at Auto Union AG, Chemnitz, June 1937

In light of the unclear official stance towards modern art, it is remarkable that both Schmidt-Rottluff and Pechstein had the opportunity for solo exhibitions during the first half of 1937: Schmidt-Rottluff exhibited early in the year at Galerie Karl Buchholz in Berlin, while Pechstein also showed two paintings and 17 watercolours in June 1937 – shortly before the opening of the *Degenerate Art* exhibition – in one of the so-called factory exhibitions at Chemnitz-based Auto Union AG. Factory exhibitions had been organized in large numbers from 1934 onwards by the Nazi Party's leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude*. Their exhibition programme, which included works by *Brücke* artists, was testament to efforts to present the ideals of the Nazis' 'renewal movement' through a tempered kind of modernism.

1 Max Pechstein, *Am Mühlengraben* (*At the Mühlengraben*), 1935, watercolour, private collection.

Probably exhibited at Auto Union AG in Chemnitz in June 1937

2 Max Pechstein, *Häuser am Wasser* (*Houses on the Water*), 1935, watercolour

Probably exhibited at Auto Union AG in Chemnitz in June 1937

The *Degenerate Art* Exhibition, 1937

The *Degenerate Art* exhibition opened in Munich on 19 July 1937. Selected modernist paintings and sculptures were chaotically presented and mocked with polemic commentary – strategies designed to manipulate visitors (for many of whom this was their first encounter with modern art). The day before, Hitler had opened an exhibition at Haus der Deutschen Kunst in Munich, a museum built under his aegis. The *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*Great German Art Exhibition*) was composed solely of works to his taste. Staging both exhibitions at the same time served to cement the simple categories of 'characteristic' and 'degenerate' art. Hitler was able to secure broad approval for his measures; since the seizure of power, local politicians in various places were only too keen to pillory modern works in their museums by organizing so-called 'Schreckenskammern' or chambers of horrors. However, the rejection of expressionism did not begin as late as January 1933, but accompanied the movement from the very start.

Moreover, the expression 'degenerate' had a longer history. As early as the late 19th century the co-founder of the Zionist World Organization, Max Nordau, used the term (originally from biology) in his publication *Entartung* (*Degeneration*) to disparage what was then the modern art of the *fin de siècle*. In the Weimar Republic era, when primarily expressionist artists received government support and collections of modern art were established in many public institutions, the attacks from reactionary circles such as the Militant League for German Culture intensified. Alfred Rosenberg, the latter's founder, was an early follower and disseminator of National Socialist convictions and later became known as Hitler's 'chief ideologist'.

1 Wolfgang Willrich, *Säuberung des Kunsttempels. Eine kunstpolitische Kampfschrift zur Gesundung deutscher Kunst im Geiste nordischer Art*, Munich 1937, p. 22, collage with works by various artists, including the former *Brücke* painters Max Pechstein, Emil Nolde, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Otto Mueller

The book *Säuberung des Kunsttempels* (*Purging of the Art Temple*) by Wolfgang Willrich, published in early 1937, formed a pseudo-scientific basis for the 'Degenerate Art' campaign. In his 'art-political polemic for the recovery of German art in the spirit of the Nordic style', Willrich expanded a campaign against new German art that had been ongoing since the 1920s: In multiple collages he presented works he labelled 'degenerate', denouncing the purchasing policies of German museums as he did so.

2 Julien Bryan, *Tour through the exhibition Entartete Kunst in München, 1937*, film, b/w, without audio, 2:26 min © Framepool RS GmbH

In the summer of 1937, the American documentary filmmaker Julien Bryan spent seven weeks travelling through Nazi Germany in order to gather footage of the situation on the ground on behalf of the American weekly show *March of Time*. Although the Propaganda Ministry had placed strict limitations on him, he was still able to create a multifaceted portrait of the National Socialist state. He filmed not only everyday life, but also propaganda events such as the Nuremberg Rally, and he drew attention to the anti-Semitism within Germany. Furthermore, he was able to produce snippets of footage from the propaganda exhibition *Degenerate Art* in Munich. The film shows a longer, unpublished excerpt from Bryan's raw material on the propaganda exhibition.

3 Exhibition guide *Entartete Kunst* (*Degenerate Art*), 1937

The cover features an illustration of Otto Freundlich's sculpture *Großer Kopf* (*Der neue*

Mensch) (*Large Head [The New Human]*) from 1912. The Jewish sculptor from Pomerania was probably murdered on 9 or 10 March 1943 at the concentration camp Lublin-Majdanek or in Sobibor.

4 Opening of the exhibition *Degenerate Art* with Adolf Ziegler on 19 July 1937 in Munich. Presse-Illustrationen Heinrich Hoffmann, published in: *Das 12 Uhr Blatt. Neue Berliner Zeitung* (20 July 1937), Archiv Pechstein

The photograph shows the president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, Adolf Ziegler giving his opening speech at the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich in 1937. Hanging on the partition wall in the background are Pechstein's painting *Ehepaar* (*Married Couple*), 1917, (removed from Kunstmuseum Breslau [present-day Wrocław, Poland]) and Schmidt-Rottluff's *Akt Frau mit Armbändern* (*Nude, Woman with Bracelets*), 1912 (removed from Hamburger Kunsthalle).

Attack on Modernism: The Nazi Campaign 'Degenerate Art'

Confiscations

Summer 1937 marked the start of an unparalleled act of iconoclasm: Following Hitler's decree, Propaganda Minister Goebbels ordered the removal and confiscation of modern art from German museums, something that was done in two phases. Four years after the National Socialists had seized power at the end of January 1933, the process of 'bringing into line' they initiated on a political, economic and social level was almost complete and Hitler's popularity had peaked. It was this position of security that made it possible to have modern art removed from public collections. A commission composed by the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts and headed by its president, painter Adolf Ziegler, travelled to over 100 museums and on behalf of the German Reich confiscated some 21,000 artworks as so-called 'Degenerate Art'. Subsequently, modernist works vanished almost completely from public institutions until the end of the Second World War. Many collections have still not recovered from the iconoclasm.

The *Brücke* Artists and the campaign against 'Degenerate Art'

Although the former *Brücke* artists were not unfamiliar with the repeated criticisms of modern art, the opening of the *Degenerate Art* exhibition on 19 July 1937 came as a surprise to them. The extent and public defamation of their works in Munich was on a different scale than the previous regional 'shame exhibitions'. It seems the artists knew nothing beforehand about this hastily organized show. Yet many of their works were on display in Munich: eight paintings by Heckel, 24 by Kirchner, 15 by Mueller, 33 by Nolde, six by Pechstein and 20 by Schmidt-Rottluff. In addition, numerous prints by each artist and several sculptures were also presented. After

opening in Munich, the travelling exhibition was showcased in an adapted form over the course of 1938 in Berlin, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, Salzburg and later on in other cities.

A number of paintings found their way into *Brücke*-Museum's expanding collection, works that had before 1937 been in public art collections and as part of the state-ordained 'Degenerate Art' campaign had been confiscated and sold. Some of the paintings, such as Heckel's *Drei Frauen vor roter Uferwand* (*Three Women Against a Red Cliff*), had already been presented in early so-called vilifying shows. Schmidt-Rottluff's *Römisches Stilleben* (*Roman Still Life*), Nolde's *Verspottung* (*Derision*), Mueller's *Drei Akte in Landschaft* (*Three Nudes in the Landscape*) and Kirchner's paintings *Sich kämmender Akt* (*Nude Combing her Hair*) and *Im Cafégarten* (*In the Café Garden*) were presented from July 1937 as part of the *Degenerate Art* show and some were showcased at the subsequent travelling exhibition of the same name. Almost all the paintings were stored temporarily at Schloss Schönhausen in the north of Berlin and were then handed over to dealers to sell abroad. Kirchner's *Im Cafégarten* (*In the Café Garden*) and Mueller's *Drei Akte* (*Three Nudes*) were sold in summer 1939 at the Galerie Fischer auction in Lucerne.

5 Erich Heckel, *Drei Frauen vor roter Uferwand* (*Three Women Against a Red Cliff*), 1921, oil on canvas, *Brücke*-Museum

The painting was exhibited as early as spring 1933 in one of the first so-called vilifying shows, the exhibition *Kultur-bolschewistische Bilder* (*Cultural Bolshevik Paintings*) at Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim. In August 1937 it was confiscated and stored at Schloss Schönhausen prior to being sold. In 1941 it was acquired by art dealer Ferdinand Möller as part of a barter agreement from the Reich Propaganda Ministry. The painting survived the Second World War in Möller's summer house in Zermützel near Neuruppin north of Berlin.

1922–1937 Städtische Kunsthalle
Mannheim

1937–1941 German Reich/Reich Propa-
ganda Ministry, Berlin

1941–1956 Ferdinand Möller, Berlin/
Zermützel/Cologne

1956–1977 Rosemarie Baumgart-
Möller, Bergneustadt

1977 donated by Rosemarie Baumgart-
Möller to the Brücke-Museum

**6 Otto Mueller, *Drei Akte in Landschaft*
(*Three Nudes in the Landscape*), ca. 1919,
distemper on hessian, Brücke-Museum**

The painting was confiscated in
1937 from Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
in Krefeld and subsequently shown
in the exhibition *Degenerate Art*
in Munich, Berlin, Leipzig, Düs-
seldorf and Salzburg. After stor-
age at Schloss Schönhausen it was
selected by Swiss gallery owner
Theodor Fischer for the auction
of 125 confiscated artworks on 30
June 1939 in Lucerne.

1927 Galerie Dr. Goldschmidt -
Dr. Wallerstein, Berlin

1928–1937 Kaiser Wilhelm Museum,
Krefeld

1937–1939 German Reich/Reich Propa-
ganda Ministry, Berlin

1939 Theodor Fischer, Lucerne:
auction Paintings and
Sculpture by Modernist
Masters from German
Museums

1939–1953 Joseph Pulitzer Junior,
Saint Louis/USA (bought
at auction via the Pierre
Matisse Gallery, New
York)

1953–1987 Saint Louis Art Museum
(gifted by Joseph
Pulitzer Jr. and Louise
Vauclain Pulitzer)

1987 Christie's London

1987–1989 Private ownership

1989 Acquired from a private
seller through the agency of
Galerie Michael Haas, Berlin,
using funds from the Deutsche
Klassenlotterie Berlin

**7 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Römisches Still-
leben (Roman Still Life)*, 1930, oil on canvas,
Brücke-Museum**

The painting was created in 1930
during a scholarship in Rome, was
removed from the Berlin National-
galerie collection in 1937, and
from August 1937 until October
1938 was shown in the travel-
ing exhibition *Degenerate Art*.
It was stored at Schloss Schön-
hausen before being purchased by
Berlin-based book and art dealer
Karl Buchholz, who sold it that
same year to a buyer in Finland.

1932–1937 Nationalgalerie Berlin
(Kronprinzenpalais)

1937–1939 German Reich/Reich Propa-
ganda Ministry, Berlin

1939 Buch- und Kunsthandlung
Karl Buchholz, Berlin

1939–1973 Otto Ehrich, Helsinki/
Finland, Vitemölla/Sweden
(and other places)

1973 Galerie Günther Franke,
Munich

1973 Acquired from Galerie
Günther Franke by the State of
Berlin

**8 Emil Nolde, *Verspottung (Derision)*,
1909, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum,
Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung**

The painting was confiscated in
1937 from the Museum der bil-
denden Künste in Leipzig. From
May to October 1938 it was pre-
sented as part of the *Degener-
ate Art* exhibition in Leipzig,
Düsseldorf and Salzburg. Subse-
quently it was stored at Schloss
Schönhausen until the end of
1940.

1921–1937 Museum der bildenden
Künste, Leipzig

1937–1940 German Reich/Reich
Propaganda Ministry,
Berlin

1940–1943 Buch- und Kunsthandlung
Karl Buchholz, Berlin

1943–1945 Karl-Heinz Brandt,
Gramzow and 1945: Ros-
gartenmuseum, Konstanz
(stored for Buchholz)

1945–1948 Marie-Louise Buchholz,
Überlingen

1948–1951 Karl Buchholz,
Bogotá/Columbia

1951–1961 Theodor Heuberger,
São Paulo/Brazil

1961 Stuttgarter Kunstkabinett
Roman Norbert Ketterer,
auction

1961–1981 Frankfurter Kunstkabinett
Hanna Bekker vom Rath

1981 Acquired from Frankfurter
Kunstkabinett Hanna Bekker vom
Rath by the Karl and Emy Schmidt-
Rottluff-Stiftung

**9 Emil Nolde, *Jägers Haus auf Alsen*,
(*Jäger's House on Alsen*), 1909, oil on
canvas, Brücke-Museum**

The painting was confiscated in
1937 from Hamburger Kunsthalle
and stored at Schloss Schönhausen
from 1938 until 1940.

1919–1937 Hamburger Kunsthalle

1937–1940 German Reich/Reich Propa-
ganda Ministry, Berlin

1940 Hildebrand Gurlitt,
Hamburg

1940 Bernhard A. Böhmer,
Güstrow

ca. 1946–1979: Edgar and Greta
Horstmann, Hamburg/Munich

1979 Acquired by art dealer Rain-
er Horstmann, Hamburg, from Greta
Horstmann using funds from the
Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin

**10 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Artistin (Artiste)*,
1910, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum**

The painting was confiscated in
1937 from the holdings of Jenaer
Kunstverein and from summer 1938
stored at Schloss Schönhausen.
Ferdinand Möller acquired the
piece from the Reich Propagan-
da Ministry as part of a barter
agreement in March 1940. Until
1997 it remained the property of
the gallery owner and his heirs.

1917–1937 Kunstverein Jena
(bequeathed by Botho
Graef, Jena)

1937–1940 German Reich/Reich Propa-
ganda Ministry, Berlin

1940–1956 Ferdinand Möller, Berlin/
Zermützel/Cologne

1956–1997 Angelika Fessler-Möller,
Maienfeld/Switzerland

1997 Acquired from Angelika Fessler-Möller using funds from the Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin

11 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Selbstbildnis (Self-Portrait)*, 1914, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum

The painting was removed from Hamburger Kunsthalle on 4 July 1937. After being stored at Schloss Schönhausen it was initially intended to be sold internationally. Gallerist Ferdinand Möller acquired the work through a barter agreement from the Reich Propaganda Ministry. Like Heckel's *Drei Frauen vor roter Uferwand (Three Women Against a Red Cliff)* Möller also transferred this painting to Zermützel near Neuruppin, where it survived the Second World War.

1921–1937 Hamburger Kunsthalle
1937–1940 German Reich/Reich Propaganda Ministry, Berlin
1940–1950 Ferdinand Möller, Berlin/Zermützel/Cologne
1950–1983 Ferdinand and Ilse Ziersch, Wuppertal

1983: Purchased from Ilse Ziersch using funds from the Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin

12 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Im Cafégarten (In the Café Garden)*, 1914, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum

This work was presented in the specially installed 'chamber of horrors' at Städtisches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe in Halle between the end of 1935 and July 1937. Subsequently, it was transported to Munich for the exhibition *Degenerate Art*. After storage at Schloss Schönhausen it was sold at auction on 30 June 1939 by Swiss gallery owner Theodor Fischer in the Grand Hotel National in Lucerne.

1924–1937 Städtisches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Halle/Saale

1937–1939 German Reich/Reich Propaganda Ministry, Berlin
1939 Theodor Fischer, Lucerne: auction Paintings and Sculpture by Modernist Masters from German Museums
1939–1965/66 Ernst Schlager, Basel (purchased in Lucerne)
1965/66 Galerie Änne Abels, Cologne

1966 Purchased from Galerie Änne Abels by Deutsche Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst e.V. (Kunstverein Berlin) using funds from the Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin

The paintings *Im Cafégarten (In the Café Garden)* and *Sich kämmender Akt (Nude Combing her Hair)* were sold to Halle in 1924 along with 22 other works from the Frankfurt collection of Ludwig and Rosy Fischer. Rosy Fischer died in 1926. It was stipulated in the purchase contract that she would receive a pension and after her death this would also be paid to her sons until 1944, yet owing to Nazi persecution the commitments of the contract were not met until the agreed time. The family received compensation after the war.

13 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Sich kämmender Akt (Nude Combing her Hair)*, 1913, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum

From 1935 to July 1937 the painting was presented at Städtisches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe in Halle in a separate room known as a 'chamber of horrors'. Shortly afterwards it was shown in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich, and until the end of 1938 as part of the travelling exhibition in Berlin, Leipzig, Düsseldorf and Salzburg. After being stored at Schloss Schönhausen, Ferdinand Möller acquired it from the Reich Propaganda Ministry as part of a barter agreement.

1924–1937 Städtisches Museum für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Halle/Saale

1937–1940 German Reich/Reich Propaganda Ministry, Berlin
1940–1956 Ferdinand Möller, Berlin/Zermützel/Cologne
1956–1970 Maria Möller-Garny, Cologne
1970 Auction by Kornfeld und Klipstein, Bern (purchased by Kunsthandlung Kornfeld itself)
1971 Acquired from Kornfeld und Klipstein using funds from the Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin.

'Exploitation'

At the start of 1938, Hermann Göring considered selling some of the confiscated artworks. Goebbels wrote in his diary: 'We want to try to earn some money with this rubbish.' Aside from an auction in Lucerne in neutral Switzerland on 30 June 1939, four art dealers were authorized to sell the confiscated works, namely the book and art dealer Karl Buchholz, Berlin; gallerist Ferdinand Möller, Berlin; sculptor Bernhard Alois Böhmer, Güstrow/Berlin; and art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt, Hamburg. Sales were to be completed in foreign currency to persons living abroad. The aim was to put an end in Germany to the artworks' alleged regime-critical stance. All four art dealers ignored this order and sold works to private German collectors such as Josef Haubrich, a lawyer in Cologne, or Bernhard Sprengel, a chocolate factory owner in Hanover.

The Fates of the Jewish Collectors and Patrons

The situation of the *Brücke* artists must also be considered against the background of the Nazis' persecution of Jewish collectors of their work and Jewish patrons. Here, we wish to acknowledge them and their commitment to *Brücke* art. Important figures who died prior to 1933, such as the Frankfurt gallerist Ludwig Schames, are not included.

Alfred Flechtheim (1878–1937), Berlin/Düsseldorf, art dealer and collector, including of *Brücke* art, 1933/34 emigrated via Paris to London.

Robert Graetz (1878–1942?), Berlin, entrepreneur and collector of works by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Max Pechstein, deported in 1942, murdered in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Gottfried Heinersdorff (1881–1941), Berlin, Head of the Art Institute for Stained Glass, Lead Glazing and Mosaics, oversaw production of Max Pechstein's glass images, emigrated to France in 1937, died of natural causes there.

Thekla Hess (1884–1968), Erfurt, collector of expressionist artworks, most significantly *Brücke* artists (initially with her husband Alfred, who died in late 1931), emigrated to London in 1939.

Ella (1891–1965) and Hans (1885–1949) Heymann, Berlin, collected works by Max Pechstein, emigrated to New York in 1936/37.

Ismar Littmann (1878–1934), Breslau (present-day Wrocław, Poland), lawyer and collector of works by Max Pechstein, Erich Heckel and Otto Mueller, among others, banned from his profession in 1933, suicide.

Rosa Schapire (1874–1954), Hamburg, art historian, patron and friend of Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, emigrated to London in 1939.

Hugo Simon (1880–1950), Berlin/Seelow, banker, politician and collector of works by Max Pechstein, among others, emigrated in 1933, first to Paris, then later to Brazil.

Herbert Tannenbaum (1892–1958), Mannheim, art dealer and collector, emigrated in 1937, first to Amsterdam and then to New York in 1947.

Victor Wallerstein (1878–1944), Berlin, art historian, art dealer and collector of works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, among others, emigrated to Italy in 1936, where he died, probably of natural causes, in Florence.

Paul Westheim, (1886–1963), Berlin, journalist, art critic and collector of works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Erich Heckel, among others, emigrated in 1933, first to Paris, then later to Mexico.

Rosa Schapire

Even before the Nuremberg Race Laws were passed in September 1935, many Jewish patrons of the *Brücke* artists had been forced to flee Germany. The reprisals inflicted meant that they would soon no longer be able to live freely within Germany. Whilst the public defamations of modern art were directed first and foremost at the artworks themselves, it was generally only indirectly through friends and acquaintances that the *Brücke* artists experienced just what it meant to be persecuted anti-Semitically in the Nazi regime.

Art historian and collector Rosa Schapire – already a 'passive' member of the group by 1907 – was one of the of the *Brücke* artists' most committed patrons. She brokered sales of *Brücke* works to collections, galleries and museums. Schapire was one of the first women to promote and fight for women's rights in Germany: As early as 1897 she published the essay 'Ein Wort zur Frauenemanzipation' ('A Word on Women's Emancipation') in the socialist journal *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.

A bundle of artist postcards testifies to the regular exchange she kept up with the *Brücke* artists. To Schmidt-Rottluff in particular, she was a close friend, and

during the course of their friendship he painted a series of portraits of her and produced jewellery and furniture for her. In 1924 Schapire compiled a catalogue of Schmidt-Rottluff's printed graphic works. When the Nazi regime began to remove modern art from museums, Schapire openly criticized the move in 1935. In 1937 her portrait in Schmidt-Rottluff's woodcut formed part of the *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich.

As a Jew, she inevitably feared for her life in the National Socialist state, and in 1939 she fled to London. She left a large proportion of her property in storage at the port of Hamburg. The Nazi authorities ordered its seizure and the contents were auctioned off, including parts of Schapire's first-rate art collection. In Britain too, she continued to promote German expressionism, which was no easy undertaking in the post-war period. In 1953 she organized the first Schmidt-Rottluff exhibition in Britain at Leicester Museum.

'I arrived in London on 18 August 1939, and exactly two weeks later the war began... The Nazis had stolen everything from me, so I came here with precisely ten marks – we were entirely unable to get anything else out of Germany. The only thing I was able to salvage from my entire estate was my great Schmidt-Rottluff collection.'

Rosa Schapire, 1948

1 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Bildnis Rosa Schapire (Portrait of Rosa Schapire)*, 1911, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1964 donated by the artist

The portrait from 1911 shows Schmidt-Rottluff's friend Rosa Schapire. Having been stored in the basement of the artist's Berlin home, it survived the war, although the house was destroyed. Schmidt-Rottluff found it there when he returned to the ruined city in November 1946. The artist never sold the piece; in 1964 he gifted it to Brücke-Museum.

2 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff to Rosa Schapire, 16 August 1939, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung
Brücke-Museum has a number of letters written by Karl

Schmidt-Rottluff to Rosa Schapire. While the two kept up lively correspondence after 1945, just five letters written by Schmidt-Rottluff have survived from the first few years after Schapire fled to London, i.e. from 1939 until the end of the war. The striking thing about them is how reservedly and generally the artist expresses himself, possibly because he was worried their correspondence might be monitored.

Anti-Semitic Statements by Schmidt-Rottluff, made in the Early Stages of the First World War

After 1933, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's letters give no reason to assume that he viewed the Nazi regime positively or that he held anti-Semitic sentiments. However, there are several statements he made during the period of the First World War that echo the anti-Semitic war propaganda of right-wing groups. His anti-British sentiments and his conviction that the war was led by some for purely financial interests were closely tied to anti-Semitic ideas. In an undated letter to art historian Willhelm Niemeyer in late 1914, he describes Jews as a financial power and Social Democrats as agitators who both posed a 'new threat in the country'. And in a further letter, presumably from early 1915, he writes: 'My fear of Jewry was only all too justified: here in B[erlin] it has already become tangible. These Jews here publicly demonstrate their great conviction that they will wield political power after the war, too. But I think the German god will spare us that fate and bring their cause to nothing.' There are no such statements in his letters of later years, at least not known up to this point.

Both letters stem from the estate of Schmidt-Rottluff scholar Gerhard Wietek (1923-2012) and are today housed at Landesmuseum Oldenburg.

'Dear Ro,
... I don't have much to report at the moment, summer remains just as confusing as the whole year began—the best thing to do is not to undertake anything, not to make any plans. We might be here until mid-September, maybe not, we don't really have a steady footing yet.'

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff to Rosa Schapire, letter dated 16 August 1939

3 Rosa Schapire, *Karl Schmidt-Rottluffs Graphisches Werk*, Berlin 1924.

Schapire compiled the first catalogue raisonné of Schmidt-Rottluff's prints in 1924. It remains an important reference work on Schmidt-Rottluff's art to this day.

Pechstein's Situation

Pechstein articulated his rejection of Nazi race ideology in numerous letters, for example in his correspondence with George Grosz, who emigrated to the United States as early as 1932. Admittedly, Pechstein also had acquaintances who felt positively about National Socialism, for example, art historian Eduard Plietzsch and his wife Mica, the godmother of his son Mäki. But Pechstein himself was critical of the Nazi regime from the beginning. As early as 1933 he lamented the departure of two Jewish collector friends of his. And in spring 1933 he too had to defend himself against the claim that he was a Jew. Emil Nolde, among others, denounced him to an official at the Propaganda Ministry and Pechstein was obliged to prove his 'Aryan descent' earlier than would normally have been the case.

1 The president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts to Max Pechstein, 6 March 1941, Landesarchiv Berlin, A Rep. 243-04, no. 6563, file on Max Pechstein, sheet 532 Pechstein's correspondence with the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts demonstrates that as the Second World War progressed, everyday life became increasingly difficult for artists, even those who like Pechstein were themselves members of the Chamber.

2 Christmas celebrations at Eduard (Ede) and Mica Plietzsch's, with Max Pechstein, his wife Marta and son Mäki, ca. 1940, Archiv Pechstein

From around 1939 Plietzsch, an expert on Dutch painting, amongst other things, was involved in assembling plundered and confiscated artworks for the planned 'Führermuseum' in Linz and for Hermann Göring's private collection. He and Pechstein also remained good friends during the Nazi era. After returning to a destroyed Berlin in late September 1945, the artist lived with Plietzsch and his wife in Meinekestraße for several weeks.

3 Max Pechstein, congratulatory letter for Mica Plietzsch, 19 February 1937, Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg, Altonaer Museum für Kunst und Kulturge-schichte, photo: Archiv Pechstein

The wife of art historian and art dealer Eduard Plietzsch, the godmother of Pechstein's son, was a staunch Nazi. This double portrait is addressed to her as a congratulatory gesture. Pechstein himself features, wearing his painter's smock; his ten-year-old son is depicted in a Hitler Youth uniform.

'Last Saturday my friend Prof. Freundlich [...] left; he has a position in Istanbul. My friend Finckelstein is already in England and will be moving there permanently next year. My spirits are sinking, quite apart from the attacks that I have to suffer personally.'

Max Pechstein to the collector Robert Langstadt, who later himself also emigrated, 2 November 1933

'Well, wonderful, they've now admitted that I'm not a Jew. If I were, it wouldn't matter to me. For me the person is what counts, and I won't let them deny me my Jewish friends, whom I have found to be reliable and good; in contrast to the purely Aryan art dealer [referring to Wolfgang Gurlitt], who unscrupulously cheated me out of the profits from the work of my hands.'

Max Pechstein to the Swiss collector Walter Minnich, 13 November 1934

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in Switzerland

'My wife was in Frankfurt and Berlin before Christmas. She saw a lot of good things about the new regime. It will ultimately succeed. We are very isolated and lonely here at the moment. Almost all our acquaintances have left. We often long to return to the Reich, but I am not yet healthy enough for that.' This is how Kirchner described the situation on 2 February 1935. He had already left Germany for Switzerland during the First World War and after 1933 observed events in Germa-

ny from a distance. Kirchner's feelings for the country of his birth and his new home country of Switzerland were always ambivalent. On the one hand, he felt very much at home in Switzerland and until the mid-1920s ruled out ever returning to Germany. On the other hand, as a German he remained somewhat of an outsider and was also occasionally subject to animosity, as he related in January 1938: 'They accuse me of being too German. Laughable. Is being German something to be ashamed of? I was born in Germany, became well-known, sold [my art]. I thank my country by remaining German.' The defamation of his works in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition hit him especially hard, if we are to believe the letter his wife Erna wrote following his suicide on 15 June 1938: 'K. suffered intolerably from his defamation in Germany. On top of that, he felt himself in a vacuum here in Switzerland.' Collectors and artists, among them the *Brücke* painters, were shocked when they learned of Kirchner's suicide. Initially, the majority of Kirchner's works from his Swiss years remained in Switzerland after his death.

1 Erich Heckel, *Erinnerung an E.L.K. (Remembering E.L.K.)*, 1944, watercolour, Brücke-Museum, 1971 donated by Siddi Heckel

In 1944, roughly six years after Kirchner's death, Heckel produced this portrayal of his former *Brücke* colleague in front of mountain scenery with the cottage known as 'Im Wildboden'.

2 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Schafherde (Herd of Sheep)*, 1938, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1970 donated by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

This work was Kirchner's last painting; it is reported to have still been on his easel at the time of his death. The background of the painting shows the artist's home in his Wildboden house.

Retreat into Private Life

At the end of November 1936, Schmidt-Rottluff wrote to the gallerist Möller: 'You yourself are familiar with the momentary situation, where we unwanted painters have almost been pushed entirely to the private sphere.' With a view to the biographies of the artists during the Nazi regime, this retreat was retrospectively sometimes described as an 'inner emigration' and illustrated by means of the *Brücke* painters' landscapes from the years after 1933. Were the extended stays of the painters really the result of a politically motivated stance? And could the watercolours produced in these periods automatically be termed 'resistant' works?

As early as the 1920s, those *Brücke* artists still living in Berlin, namely Heckel, Nolde, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff, were in artistic terms more interested in nature and less in the city and modern life. Since the start of their careers, extended stays away from the cities were of central importance to them. But letters show that it was particularly beneficial for the artists to escape the situation in Berlin with all the conflicts it involved after 1933. The stays in the countryside were a possibility to take a step back spatially and intellectually and to focus on their work. In his *Memoirs* (written in 1945-46), Pechstein describes how he had crawled 'like a wounded beast to a small hut on the wonderful, large Lake Kose' during the Nazi years, 'where I could summon up my strength far from all else'.

Max Pechstein on the Baltic coast

In Pechstein's memoirs (written in 1945-46), he describes extended stays in a simple hut on Lake Kose as an inner retreat from political affairs, but he did not try to connote his artistic work from this period as politically motivated or 'resistant' in any way. In contrast to Schmidt-Rottluff's landscape works, whose later interpretation was closely linked to the knowledge of the political oppression at the time, art histo-

rians did not interpret Pechstein's paintings as 'metaphors of resistance'. Yet there are numerous parallels in the selection of their artistic motifs. Independently of one another, the two artists spent almost every summer at the lakes close to the Baltic coastal resort of Leba in Pomerania. They had, however, no contact to one another, and if they happened to meet they went out of each other's way.

The painting *Aufgezogene Keitelkähne (Fishing Boats on Land)* is not associated with Pechstein's time in Pomerania, but rather with his final stay in Nida on the Curonian Spit. The trip had been made possible in summer 1939 – the first after almost twenty years – following the reintegration of the Memel region (previously annexed by Lithuania) into the German Reich in March 1939.

1 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Heiliger See (Sacred Lake)*, 1936, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

On a work with a similar motif, *Lebasee mit Revekol (Lake Leba with Revekol)* at Museum Folkwang in Essen, Gunther Thiem wrote in 1989: 'It is a mirror of the inner condition of the artist: calm before the storm of provocations of the 'zeitgeist that broke out in all their fury in 1937.'

2 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Mondlicht (Moonlight)*, 1938, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, 1975 donated by the artist

In 1989 Gunther Thiem stated: 'The watercolour thus presents an image of nocturnal peace, while the painting lets us sense the threatening nature of the night. An attitude to life is expressed in this motif from 1938.'

Erich Heckel on Lake Constance

Heckel moved to Lake Constance in 1943, after his studio had been bombed out. Unlike Schmidt-Rottluff and Pechstein, he did not return to Berlin after the war, but

remained in Hemmenhofen until his death in 1970. He had previously been introduced to the area on the occasion of a visit of his friend, the art historian Walter Kaesbach, in 1935. From September 1936 he spent two months in Wangen on the Lower Lake. The works presented here date from those two years: they provide an impression of his aesthetic at the time, based on close observation of nature and reticent in the use of colour. He also created landscapes during his annual stays on Flensburg Firth (until 1943) and in Austria (1940–1943).

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's Stays in Pomerania

After 1933, Schmidt-Rottluff's works were repeatedly associated with his inner distance to the regime, the defamation of his works and being banned from exercising his profession as of April 1941. Yet the readings presented in captions from 1980s and 1990s exhibition catalogues differ starkly from the interpretations that circulated between 1933 and 1937. The retrospective art-historical narrative interprets the works as resistant and political, while the pro-modern reviewers in the first years of National Socialism emphasize what they consider to be the 'German' qualities of the works. The question of how these contradictory readings can be harmonized with one another leads to a critical reflection on context-dependent readings of art.

3 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Entwurzelte Bäume (Uprooted Trees)*, 1934, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1985 acquired from the Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

In 1984, Leopold Reidemeister posed the following rhetorical question with regard to the painting: 'Are the "uprooted trees" from 1934 symbolically intended? Is it the artist himself who feels uprooted?'

4 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Fischerbucht (Fishing Bay)*, 1937, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

On the occasion of a Schmidt-Rottluff retrospective in 1992–93,

the following interpretation was proposed: 'With the motif of Lake Leba, he seems to want to express defiance against the dictated art taste of the period.'

5 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Brücke mit Eisbrechern (Bridge with Cutwaters)*, 1934, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, 1964 donated by the artist

The bastion against the elements shown here was interpreted as an 'expression of active resistance', according to the founding director of Brücke-Museum, Leopold Reidemeister. Similarly, the Schmidt-Rottluff expert and friend of the artist Gunther Thiem described the painting as a 'metaphor of resistance'

Schmidt-Rottluff's Situation in the 1940s

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the conditions for artistic production changed fundamentally. Materials were in short supply and finally only allocated on the basis of ration coupons. The war had a dramatic impact on artists' everyday lives in Berlin. After 1943, there was the added fear of night-time bombing raids, the destruction of homes and studios. A professional ban was imposed on Schmidt-Rottluff in April 1941 that strongly affected his work as an artist. With no official permission to sell his works, his meagre income shrank even further. He was no longer able to obtain art materials, as these required ration coupons, for which, with no chamber membership, he was no longer eligible. 'As far as the material goes, things are getting more and more complicated, so that I don't really dare waste it by getting to work', the artist wrote in July 1942. He was prohibited from exhibiting, publishing and selling works. However, several sources suggest that he did not fully comply with the professional ban. Little is known about how thoroughly the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts checked that artists really did not exhibit, sell or publish their works.

Professional bans

1941 marked a turning point for Schmidt-Rottluff: The Reich Chamber of Fine Arts subjected its members to renewed scrutiny. The reviewing of members' professional and political suitability resulted from legislation passed by the Reich Chamber of Culture on 1 November 1933. In a letter to the Reich Main Security Office dated 7 March 1941, the president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts set out the consequences of a negative review as follows: 'In such a case, the individual named above would no longer have the right to be active in the realms for which my chamber is responsible.' After an examination of selected current works Schmidt-Rottluff (and incidentally also Emil Nolde) had to surrender his membership book in April 1941. By contrast, Pechstein's review was

positive: He continued to be a member of the chamber, even though this barely had a positive influence on his poor financial situation.

'The viewing of the recent original works submitted shows that you are still far from the cultural ideas of the National Socialist state.'

The president of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts to Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 3 April 1941

1 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Zwiebeln (Onions)*, ca. 1940, ink and coloured chalks, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Paprikaschoten (Peppers)*, ca. 1940, ink and coloured chalks, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

In the early 1940s, painting with dry colours assumed central importance for Schmidt-Rottluff. Given the shortage of materials during the war and ultimately due to his professional ban from spring 1941 onwards, he does not seem to have produced any new oil paintings until 1945. Instead, Schmidt-Rottluff realized his motifs in soft pastels. This technique proved to be ideal for artwork in this time of crisis, as it required fewer materials and, being small in format, also saved space. The works in coloured chalk on paper that previously sold at lower prices than paintings appreciated in value during the period in which Schmidt-Rottluff's work was defamed. Art historian Gunther Thiem later coined the term 'unpainted pictures' for the pastels, inspired by the myth of Nolde's 'Ungemalte Bilder' ('Unpainted Pictures'), which were said to have been produced in secret: the term unpainted also applied in the sense that Schmidt-Rottluff later produced many of his pastel motifs in oil.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff in Kreisau

In September 1942, Schmidt Rottluff was invited by jurist Helmuth James von Moltke and his wife Freya von Moltke to their estate in Kreisau, Silesia (present-day Krzyżowa, Poland). For two weeks he painted watercolours of the local landscape, some of them for his hosts. The works were to serve the couple as a means of remembering the area, as Helmuth James von Moltke was already convinced at this stage that Germany would lose the war and subsequently the eastern provinces and that they would have to leave Kreisau. From 1942, the Moltke family estate was the centre of the Kreisau Circle meetings, one of the resistance movements against the Nazi dictatorship. Schmidt-Rottluff was unaware of this. Freya von Moltke later recalled: 'Naturally, he was aware of our oppositional attitude towards the Nazi dictatorship and shared it. But he knew nothing of my husband's political activities.' After his stay, Schmidt-Rottluff decided to store two crates of his early works on the Kreisau estate. Silesia had not been bombed prior to 1944 and so the artist hoped his paintings would survive the war there. As such, he was all the more disappointed when he later heard of their destruction. According to Freya von Moltke, the paintings were destroyed during the Soviet occupation of the estate after the end of the war. Helmuth James von Moltke was arrested by the Gestapo on 19 January 1944 and executed on 23 January 1945 at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin.

'... my entire life, beginning back in school, I have fought with rigorous consistency against a spirit of restriction and violence, of superiority and a lack of respect for others, of intolerance and the absolute, which exists in the Germans and which found its expression in the National Socialist state.'

Helmuth James von Moltke, farewell letter to his sons Caspar and Konrad, 11 October 1944

War Years 1939–1945

With the onset of bombing raids and the destruction of their apartments and studios in 1943, the former *Brücke* artists moved to the country for good: Heckel relocated to Lake Constance, Schmidt-Rottluff to his home village of Rottluff in Saxony, and Pechstein to Leba in Pomerania. Kirchner had emigrated to Switzerland as early as 1918.

‘We now have been presented with a new catastrophe: our Berlin flat has been entirely destroyed. Everything burned. The cellar is supposed to still be intact. But we know nothing else.’

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff to the museum director Friedrich Schreiber-Weigand, from Leba, Pomerania to Chemnitz, 27 August 1943

‘For the past four weeks, we have been living without light, gas, or water ... in a building in ruins in the middle of a field of rubble that was left by attacks on the 22nd and 23rd. Early Christmas presents, but now we don’t need any others. We had it all, fire storms, bombs bursting into fragments, raining ashes and sparks with oxygen deficiency. I drove the women from the cellar through the flames before they utterly collapsed. For thirteen hours ... I was underway putting out fire bombs; I was taken to an eye doctor the next morning at 9:30 am because I could no longer see. I was able to prevent our studio building from burning, but not stop the demolition bombs. But we are still alive, and that alone is a miracle!’

Max Pechstein to his childhood friend, the painter Alexander Gerbig, 22 December 1943

‘Apartment and studio were burned out on 30 January. When we finally could go up after the heavy attack, there was nothing left to save. We were able, with the greatest effort, to keep the building and the cellar as well up to the third floor standing until seven o’clock the next morning when the firemen arrived. ... Since exploding bombs and air mines were dropped very nearby on the 30th, we can consider ourselves very lucky to still be alive.’

Erich Heckel to the collector Klaus Gebhard, 4 February 1944

1 Max Pechstein, list of deposited works, August 1943, journal, private collection

As of 1943, Pechstein tried to get his works to safety. He moved boxes of oil paintings and works on paper from his home; some survived the war, others were destroyed. Shortly after the end of the war the Red Army almost completely destroyed a set of 3,400 drawings and watercolours, as well as 59 paintings which in June 1943 he had sent to Prince Ernst Heinrich von Sachsen at Schloss Moritzburg near Dresden. During the night of 22–23 November 1943, Pechstein’s studio was also badly damaged by bombs – after his home was destroyed the artist moved to Pomerania in March 1944.

2 Regional head of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, certification for Erich Heckel, 6.6.1944/31.7.1944, Landesarchiv Berlin, A Rep. 243-04, Nr. 3154, file on Erich Heckel

With his move to Lake Constance, the artist bade farewell to Germany’s political centre for good. Heckel’s ‘inner emigration’, which is often mentioned in literature, was primarily a consequence of the destruction of his Berlin workplace. He did after all get help with his move from the regional headquarters of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts. In June 1944 it issued certification that he had been bombed out of his home, together with a request for him to be given assistance in his search for accommodation.

After the War

In Europe, the Second World War ended in early May 1945 with the unconditional surrender of the German army. The post-war years were determined by an alliance of the victorious powers, the Soviet Union, the USA, Great Britain, and France, which through military governments were the highest authority in the state. Accordingly, Germany was divided up into four occupation zones and Berlin into four sectors. The war and the rigid Nazi art policy had changed the earlier life of the *Brücke* artists immensely. The traces they had left in the Weimar Republic were blurred, their works removed from public institutions, their homes, together with their studios and paintings, bombed. Half of all buildings had been destroyed during the Allied air raids on Germany. In Berlin in fact only one quarter of the apartments were left undamaged. When Pechstein returned to the city in September 1945, all he found was ruins. His studio and apartment on Kurfürstenstraße had been destroyed. Karl and Emy Schmidt-Rottluff returned to Berlin in November 1946. It was not until March 1947 that they gained access to the basement of their old home on Bamberger Straße, where unexpectedly they came across numerous undamaged works, among them sculptures that can now be found at Brücke-Museum, for example *Blauroter Kopf* (*Blue-Red Head*). Unlike Schmidt-Rottluff and his wife and Pechstein, who returned to Berlin, Erich and Siddi Heckel remained at Lake Constance, where they had gone to escape the bombing in May 1944.

1 Max Pechstein, *Zerstörtes Berlin (The Ruins of Berlin) II, III, IV, VI, VII*, 1945, private collection

Pechstein captured the extent of the destruction in several drawings.

Exhibition continues in Kunsthaus Dahlem

‘The basements were still smouldering everywhere, and the stench of decaying bodies hung over the ruins in the streets. Water was still dripping here and there from the pipes. At the top of the road on the corner of Nettelbeckstraße there was a big crater from where a lake extended from Nollendorfsplatz to far beyond Lützow Platz (Herkules-Ufer). Impassable and deadly, as the cables in it were still live. Things looked just the same in front of the zoo at Elefantenportal. The apocalyptic knights had charged as far as Moabit, across the entire Tiergarten district – and this was 1943.’

Pechstein in a letter to artist Robert Langstadt, who had emigrated to Toronto, Canada, 1 November 1946

2 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Straße im Morgenlicht* (Street in the Morning Light), 1945 (1948), watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, 1964 donated by the artist

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Zerstörung* (Destruction), 1947, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

In 1948 Schmidt-Rottluff was able to visit his student Erika Bausch von Hornstein in Neu Kaliss. She had hidden 60 of her teacher’s watercolours in the machine foundations of her husband Viktor Bausch’s paper factory. She managed to save the works shortly before the Red Army disassembled the factory in 1946 for it to be transported to the Soviet Union. During his visit, Schmidt-Rottluff produced numerous watercolours of the crumbling façades of the factory buildings. The seas of ruins represented a new genre, both in the work of Schmidt-Rottluff and in that of his former *Brücke* colleague Pechstein.

3 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Blauroter Kopf* (Panischer Schrecken) (Blue-Red Head [Panic Horror]), spruce wood, coloured blue and red, Brücke-Museum, 1971 donated by the artist.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Trauernder* (Grieving Man), 1920, poplar wood, coloured green, Brücke-Museum, 1971 donated by the artist.

In April 1947, Schmidt-Rottluff was unexpectedly able to recover his sculptures *Blauroter Kopf* (Blue-Red Head) and *Trauernder* (Grieving Man) together with other wooden figures – they had survived intact in the cellar of his burned-out apartment building in Berlin at Bamberger Straße 19.

„Karl already told you that we are currently going through and clearing the basement of Bamberger Straße. It was strange to see the pictures which we thought were lost again, especially the ones from the walls of our living room and Karl’s sculptures. The carpets were still in their wrappers and part of the boxes were still locked. We still hope to make some discoveries.

Emy Schmidt-Rottluff to Rosa Schapire, 30 March 1947

4 Erich Heckel, *Stilleben mit Ikat* (Still Life with Ikat), 1949, tempera on press plate, Brücke-Museum, permanent loan from the estate Erich Heckel

In January 1944, Heckel’s studio in Emserstraße in Berlin was destroyed by a fire bomb. In the painting *Stilleben mit Ikat* (Still Life with Ikat) the artist features those personal objects that survived the war.

Kunsthhaus Dahlem

Continuation / Part 2
(Part 1 in Brücke-Museum)

Given its history, Kunsthhaus Dahlem is particularly suitable as the venue of the second part of the *Escape into Art?* exhibition. The building was constructed from 1939 to 1942 by architect Hans Freese under the supervision of Nazi architect and Reich Minister of Armaments and Munitions Albert Speer. It was intended as a studio for sculptor Arno Breker in the context of an overall plan for government studios. Soviet troops used it for a short while in 1945, after which it was the seat of the US military administration. A year later the building was handed over to the State of Berlin. In 1949, the sculptor Bernhard Heiliger moved into the east wing of the building; he lived and worked there until his death in 1995. From the early 1970s onwards, the German Academic Exchange Service used the building to house art scholarship holders.

Focussing on post-war modernism and sculpture, Kunsthhaus Dahlem opened in June 2015.

The Politicization of Art and Culture after 1945

After the end of the Second World War, artists faced enormous structural challenges: Germany was divided up into four occupation zones and, under the control of the Allies, busy with the reconstruction of the country and the denazification of the population. Great Britain, France, the USA and the Soviet Union placed great importance on culture in the creation of a democratic state. Accordingly, the art scene came to life again throughout the country. The first exhibitions, frequently with works by the former *Brücke* artists, were being held again only a few weeks after the surrender. The aim behind the re-education by the Allies was to overcome the Hitler regime by rehabilitating the artists the Nazis had banished from public life. Even before Erich Heckel, Max Pechstein, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff were able to position themselves, they were being celebrated as heroes of the resistance against the Nazis, as was the Party member Emil Nolde. The artists were now over 60 years old; none of them was thinking of a radical new beginning. They fell in with the role of victim they had been assigned and witnessed the canonization of their life work as a contribution to international modernism. On the other hand, there was no critical reflection from their part on their perception of themselves as specifically 'German' expressionists, nor did they make any attempt to disassociate themselves from earlier endeavours for official recognition under the Nazi regime. As protagonists of the policy of remembrance, the manner in which *Brücke* art was perceived became closely associated with the narrative of defamation.

In July 1945, the Soviet military administration appointed Karl Hofer director of the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Berlin, which was to be re-established. The painter had clearly voiced his opposition to the Nazi Party prior to 1933, but certainly came close to Nazi art ideals with its nationalist leanings and the call for an essentially 'German' style. Nonetheless, in 1937 several of his works were confiscated from

public institutions. As the new director, Hofer offered Pechstein, Schmidt-Rottluff, and Heckel teaching posts for painting. Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff accepted, while Heckel on the other hand was sceptical about the direction the new West Berlin university was going in, closely associated as it was with political interests of the day; in 1949, he took on a teaching post at the university in Karlsruhe.

'In January Prof. Ehmsen, Hofer's deputy, was here. He tried to get me to take on an official position in Berlin. But even if my studio here is not ideal and has now been unusable for many weeks, nonetheless I find my personal freedom too valuable to give up.'

Erich Heckel to the collector Klaus Gebhardt, 24 February 1947

1 Max Pechstein and the art historian Adolf Jannasch, 1 January 1947, photo: Charlotte Willot © ullstein bild

As of 1945, Adolf Jannasch not only penned numerous articles in art magazines; in his role as head of the Fine Arts Department in the Berlin Senate he also played a pivotal role in the institutionalization of expressionism. In 1955 he was appointed head of the Galerie des 20. Jahrhunderts in West Berlin.

Art Exhibitions 1945–1949

A Selection

1945

July–August 1. Ausstellung der Kammer der Kunstschaffenden (*First Exhibition of the Chamber of Artists*) Berlin [group exhibition including Heckel, Kirchner, Mueller, Pechstein, Schmidt-Rottluff]

August–September Ausstellung junger Kunst (*Exhibition of Recent Art*), Galerie Gerd Rosen, Berlin [group exhibition including Heckel, Kirchner, Mueller, Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff]

October–November Deutsche Kunst unserer Zeit (*German Art of Our Time*), Städtisches Museum, Überlingen [group exhibition including Heckel, Kirchner, Mueller, Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff]

December 1945 – January 1946 Ausstellung bildender Künstler (*Exhibition of Fine Artists*), organized by the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany with the support of the Chamber of Artists, Berlin [group exhibition including Pechstein]

December 1945 – January 1946 Ausstellung Berliner Künstler (*Exhibition of Berlin Artists*), Staatsoper/Admiralspalast, Berlin, organized by the Berlin municipal administration, Department of Public Education [group exhibition including Pechstein]

1946

February–March Max Pechstein, Staatsoper/Admiralspalast, Berlin, organized by the Berlin municipal administration, Department of Public Education (March–April 1946 Wedding district office)

March Befreite Kunst (*Liberated Art*), Schlösschen, Celle, [group exhibition including Heckel, Nolde, Pechstein, Schmidt-Rottluff]

April–May Wilmersdorfer Kunstausstellung: Auf befreiten Schwingen... Malerei, Graphik, Plastik (*Wilmersdorf Art Exhibition: On Liberated Wings... Painting, Prints, Sculpture*), Department of Fine Art, Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, Berlin [group exhibition including Pechstein]

April–June Befreite Kunst (*Liberated Art*), Kunstverein Braunschweig [group exhibition including Heckel]

May–June I. Deutsche Kunstausstellung der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone (*First German Art Exhibition of the German Central Administration for Public Education in the Soviet Occupation Zone*), Zeughaus, Berlin [group exhibition including Pechstein]

August Freie Deutsche Kunst (*Free German Art*), Karl-Marx-Haus, Neuruppin, Department of Public Education and Galerie Ferdinand Möller [group exhibition including Schmidt-Rottluff, Kirchner, Heckel, Mueller, Pechstein]

August–October Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung (*General German Art Exhibition*), Stadthalle, Dresden [group exhibition including Heckel, Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Mueller, Pechstein]

September Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. 50 Aquarelle aus den Jahren 1943–1946 (*Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. 50 Watercolours from 1943–1946*), Städtische Kunstsammlung zu Chemnitz, Schlossberg-Museum, Chemnitz

October–November Meister des Expressionismus (*Masters of Expressionism*), Galerie Bremer, Berlin

[group exhibition including Heckel, Kirchner, Mueller, Pechstein, Schmidt-Rottluff]

December Wiedersehen mit Museumsgut, Erste Schau seit 1940 aus Beständen der Berliner Kunstmuseen (*Reencountering Museum Holdings. The First Show Since 1940 Featuring Works from the Berlin Art Museums*), Schlossmuseum, Berlin [group exhibition including Kirchner, Heckel, Mueller, Pechstein]

Late 1946/early 1947 Sammlung Haubrich (*The Haubrich Collection*), museums of the City of Cologne in the old university, Cologne [group exhibition including Heckel, Pechstein]

1947

May Moderne deutsche Kunst (*Modern German Art*), Kunstgebäude, Tübingen [group exhibition including Heckel, Pechstein]

May–June Expressionistische Malerei (*Expressionist Painting*), Städtisches Museum, Wuppertal [group exhibition including Hecke]

July–August Max Pechstein, Städtisches Museum Zwickau, Zwickau

November Erich Heckel. Werke aus 4 Jahrzehnten (*Erich Heckel. Works from Four Decades*), Galerie der Jugend, Hamburg

1948

February Erich Heckel. Werke aus 4 Jahrzehnten (*Erich Heckel. Works from Four Decades*), Kunstverein Köln

April Erich Heckel, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld

May–June Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Aquarelle (*Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Watercolours*), Haus am Waldsee, Berlin

September–November *Sammlung Hagemann* (*The Hagemann Collection*), Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt [group exhibition including Heckel]

Winter *Erich Heckel, Emil Nolde, Christian Rohlf's und Karl Schmidt-Rottluff* (*Erich Heckel, Emil Nolde, Christian Rohlf's and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff*), Museum Folkwang, Essen [group exhibition including Heckel, Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff]

1949

May–July *Deutsche Malerei und Plastik der Gegenwart* (*Contemporary German Painting and Sculpture*), Staatenhaus, Cologne [group exhibition including Heckel, Pechstein]

June–July *Berliner Neue Gruppe. Erste Ausstellung* (*Neue Gruppe Berlin. First Exhibition*), Zehlendorf Art Department, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin [group exhibition including Pechstein, Schmidt-Rottluff]

July–September *Moderne Abteilung* (*Sammlung Haubrich*) (*Modern Department* [*The Haubrich Collection*]), art collections of the City of Düsseldorf and Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne [group exhibition including Pechstein]

2 'Die erste Kunstausstellung der Kammer' (*'The First Art Exhibition of the Chamber of Artists'*), in: *Berliner Zeitung*, 28 July 1945, bpk / Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – SPK, Zeitungsabteilung © DuMont Mediengruppe GmbH & Co. KG

In Berlin the Red Army had forced the Germans to surrender on 2 May 1945. Subsequently, the Soviet occupying power took over re-establishing administrative authority. On 6 June 1945, it set up the Chamber of Artists. This was the successor body to the Nazi Reich Chamber of Culture and was to be the future professional association of active artists.

Its main duty hardly differed from that of the Nazi organization: It too was intended to steer and control the development of art with regard to its intellectual and political direction. As early as the summer of 1945 it organized the first exhibition, featuring works by Heckel, Kirchner, Mueller, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff, among others. Even if their works were now officially recognized and seen in a positive light, the political instrumentalization of their art continued.

3 Erich Heckel, *Blick von der Wasserkuppe* (*View from Wasserkuppe*), 1934, watercolour and coloured chalks, Brücke-Museum, 1970 donated by Siddi Heckel

The watercolour *Blick von der Wasserkuppe* (*View from Wasserkuppe*) was displayed from 3 to 17 August 1946 in the exhibition *Freie Deutsche Kunst* (*Free German Art*) at Karl-Marx-Haus in Neuruppin. The Neuruppin Department of Public Education and the gallerist Ferdinand Möller organized the exhibition.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff exhibition in Chemnitz in 1946

One of the first defamatory exhibitions with works by *Brücke* artists was staged in 1933 in Chemnitz. The new cultural authority established there after 1945 hastened to redeem the city's Nazi past. Cultural education work aimed at denazification with a socialist maxim played a major role in the Soviet occupation zone. Schmidt-Rottluff, who had attended school with Heckel in Chemnitz, was adulated as a dissident. He was appointed president of the local branch of the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany and was made an honorary citizen of the

town. In autumn 1946, he was granted an extensive exhibition at Schlossberg-Museum featuring 50 watercolours from the previous three years. Schmidt-Rottluff was able to realize the show with Friedrich Schreiber-Weigand, the director of the Städtische Kunstsammlung, who in 1933 had been dismissed but who had now been reinstated. Through his representations of the countryside in the region, the artist deliberately attempted to appeal to all sections of the population in the spirit of the socialist idea.

4 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Augustmorgensonne* (*Morning Sun in August*), 1944, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, 1975 donated by the artist

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Mühle im Striegistal* (*Mill in Striegistal*), ca. 1944, watercolour and ink, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

Both watercolours were showcased in the exhibition *Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Aquarelle aus den Jahren 1943–1946* (*Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. Watercolours from 1943–1946*) at Städtische Kunstsammlung zu Chemnitz im Schlossbergmuseum.

'This sun seems to be the epitome of all suns that ever shined on this earth. It stands above a landscape that could have looked just like this millions of years ago. It is not reminiscent of a Sunday stroll, but forces us to allow the feeling of the landscape to rise within us.'

Otto Jäger, painter and collector from Chemnitz, in the 1946 exhibition catalogue

'Art is like agriculture; the farmer plants his field each year with the same care, but how the harvest turns out is not entirely up to him. Art has to be worked on honestly and respectfully.'

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 'Wege und Aufgaben der deutschen Kunst' ('Ways and Tasks of German Art'), 1946

Losses and Recreations

The works by *Brücke* artists we are familiar with nowadays only make up part of their actual oeuvre. When their Berlin dwellings and studios burned down in 1943-44, Heckel, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff lost numerous works, letters, catalogues and photos of their output. For this reason, searching for their works was one of the first activities they engaged in, and it continued for years. They frequently came to realize that major works had been destroyed. Adopting and painting earlier motifs and representations anew was an attempt to process the losses artistically.

‘Oh my friend, you cannot imagine how many of my own works I have lost. Now that I am in the process of studying the few works which were saved for an exhibition in February, I am becoming aware of just what is missing. Entire years have disappeared. And so have the most important paintings Apart from 59 paintings, and 76 watercolours I had stored my entire life’s work of drawings at Schloss Moritzburg. 3,400 sheets, of which 120 were saved!!! Few, fewest, even fewer.’

Max Pechstein to the writer Herbert Eulenberg, 20 January 1946

5 Max Pechstein, *Gelbe Tulpen (Yellow Tulips)*, 1909, oil on canvas, whereabouts unknown, photo: Pechstein archive

The 1909 painting *Gelbe Tulpen (Yellow Tulips)* had belonged to the Berlin insurance agent Hans Heymann, whose collection was confiscated by the Nazis in 1941. In 1948, Pechstein painted a series of nine vases with sunflowers which closely resemble this early picture in terms of composition. By returning to what was for him an important source of inspiration during his early *Brücke* days, Pechstein seemed to want to reaffirm himself. These paintings doubtless attest to the influence of Vincent van Gogh. They evoke the double meaning of the sun-

flowers as the bearers of hope for a new beginning, whilst the cut flowers echo the vanitas motif in their rapid perishability.

Links to the period before 1933

Heckel likewise repainted numerous of his earlier and destroyed works, including landscapes and circus scenes, motifs favoured by Kirchner and Heckel during the *Brücke* period. Yet whereas the early depictions reflected the rapid motion of the artists and the sensational moments of the performances, in the 1920s Heckel transformed his scenes into static groups with a tragic and uncanny aspect to them. It was these portrayals that Heckel returned to after 1945.

‘A strange new form of work [repainting destroyed pieces], which shows with increasing clarity as it progresses just how final a formulation was found, that changes attempted at the beginning correct themselves again.’

Erich Heckel to the artist Lyonel Feininger, 17 July 1946

Museum Concepts of Reconstruction

Even though the Allies were able to quickly realize temporary exhibitions, the reconstruction of modern art collections in museums required considerably more time and effort. In the Soviet occupation zone official orders were issued to restore the art museums. Consequently, early examples were primarily to be found in the eastern zone of Germany. That changed when in 1946 the lawyer Josef Haubrich gifted his collection of expressionist art, including numerous pieces by the *Brücke* painters, to the City of Cologne. Indeed,

West Germany suddenly boasted the best of German modern art collections. Shortly before, art historian Leopold Reidemeister had been appointed acting head of Cologne’s Städtische Museen. He integrated the donation into Wallraf-Richartz-Museum as a symbol of ‘redress’ towards the artists defamed under the Nazi regime.

6 Max Pechstein, completed questionnaire, part of a letter to Christian Töwe, 10 February 1947, formerly Krüger archive, Berlin

In 1947, in the context of a Cologne research project on the *Brücke* artist group, art historian Christian Töwe sent questionnaires to the artists still living, their relatives, friends, collectors and gallerists. The aim was to replace the documentary material lost in the war. The intensive exchange of information about the period between 1905 and 1913 led to a revival of the old networks and the spotlight was placed on *Brücke* art in the past. Heckel enthusiastically participated in the surveys and consequently returned to an artistic examination of his former *Brücke* colleagues. Tellingly, in a series of four large-scale lithographs, he portrayed only those members whom Kirchner had selected in 1925 for his painting *Eine Künstlergemeinschaft (Die Maler der Brücke) (A Community of Artists [The Brücke Painters])*.

7 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Blockadestilleben (Blockade Still Life)*, 1948, oil on canvas, Brücke-Museum, Karl und Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung

24 June 1948 until 12 May 1949, West-Berlin faced the so-called Berlin Blockade (of West Berlin) by the Soviet Union. In its isolated position, the city lost direct and continuous contact with the latest art developments in West Germany and Western Europe. Schmidt-Rottluff complained bitterly that he was ‘simmering in his own juices’, and captured the situation in his *Blockadestilleben (Blockade Still Life)*.

Glossary

This glossary contains terms and topics which we as the exhibition team consider important and wish to explain: foreign words as well as specialist terms used in the historical context plus vocabulary that the Nazis created and employed to support their ideology. Moreover, we present topics that illustrate how we in the museum work today and the stance we have taken. They are explained by people from different backgrounds who helped prepare the exhibition content or who advised us from a critical standpoint; the names and roles of the authors are noted in each case. Quoted German material has been translated.

As a museum, we aim to shed light on complex contexts and issues. To this end it is in part necessary in this exhibition to repeat terms invented or used to spread Nazi ideology in the NS-period. We wish to distance ourselves from this inhuman attitude and illustrate this by the conscious use of quotation marks in the wall texts. Brücke-Museum is an open institution for a diverse public and condemns all forms of discrimination.

Anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic

Anti-Semitism refers to socially established perceptions of an externally constructed Jewish collective. The potency of these fictions is evident in the dissemination of anti-Semitic attitudes, public debates, and may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. In addition, the state of Israel, which is understood in this context as a Jewish collective, may be the target of such attacks. Anti-Semitic statements frequently contain the accusation that Jews are operating a conspiracy against humanity and are responsible for 'things not running right'. Anti-Semitism takes verbal, written and pictorial form as well as other types of activity; it makes use of negative stereotypes and implies negative characteristics. — Excerpt from the working definition of anti-Semitism of the European

Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) with additions by the Verein für Demokratische Kultur in Berlin e.V., 2004/2014

Professional ban (painting ban)

Only members of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts were permitted to work as artists, meaning allowed to publish, exhibit and sell works. Key membership criteria were 'racial descent' and artistic suitability in line with Nazi ideology. In 1941, for example, following an official review of selected works Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's and Emil Nolde's artistic 'reliability' for the Nazi state was revoked and they were requested to return their membership books. They were prohibited from exhibiting and selling works without express permission, which equated to a professional ban. Sweeping 'painting bans' were not issued, however; mentions of painting bans became more frequent in the post-war period, but did not correspond to the historical realities. — Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

Confiscation, confiscate

As a rule, this refers to the seizure of an object against the will of its owner. The artworks removed from public collections as of July 1937 on behalf of the German Reich are generally associated with this term. Yet contemporary researchers increasingly tend to replace it with the word deaccession (Latin: de = away from, accedere = to enter, to access). Because given the fact that most of these were works that were already publicly owned by local authorities, towns, or the government, the term confiscation is not quite accurate. Neither is it always clearly discernible that their removal took place against the will of the museums. Many of the museum directors had assumed their posts only as of 1933 – following the dismissal of their predecessors who had built up the collections of modern art. — Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

Deportation, deport

Deportation means that people are taken away from their place of residence against their will and forced to live elsewhere. The Nazis deported political opponents and people whom they did not consider to be 'Aryan' – they were taken to concentration and extermination camps – women, men and children. Prisoners in concentration camps had to do forced labour and often died of exhaustion and hunger. In extermination camps they were murdered shortly after their arrival. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits violence against children in article 19. Article 6 states that every child has a right to life and survival. — Veronika Nahm, Head of Exhibitions and Education, Anne Frank Zentrum Berlin, 2009

'Degenerate Art'

It was in the late 19th century that modern art and cultural movements were first derided as pathological 'degeneration'. In the 1920s, this defamatory trend was increasingly to be witnessed among reactionary circles parallel to the flourishing of the avant-garde art scene. In the Third Reich the term was part of the fixed vocabulary of the propaganda machine and with the defamatory exhibition Degenerate Art was systematically employed in the fight against modern art. The reduction to the word 'degenerate' had the effect of decoupling the evaluation criteria from art-historical terminology and linking it with *völkisch* (nationalist/racist) categories by means of a term from evolutionary biology. — Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

History

That which we experience, document, hand down – photos, films, letter or interviews: the present quickly becomes the past. Historians and also museums evaluate sources in order to reconstruct history from them. It is by no means identical with the past. History is always a construction by the people providing the memories or conducting the research. As such, recounting and researching history is a

creative activity at the interface between past and present. History and art history are therefore certainly not purely preservative disciplines in the museum domain, but ones that engage in explaining, updating and interpreting. (Hi)stories are written. — Daniela Bystron, Curator of Outreach, Brücke-Museum, 2019

Gleichschaltung [bringing into line], gleichgeschaltet [brought into line]

a) Political Gleichschaltung: annulment of political and organizational pluralism by means of adapting the organizational structures of existing bodies and institutions to the Nazi Führer principle; b) inner Gleichschaltung: adapting thoughts and actions to the Nazi worldview; c) outer Gleichschaltung: political Gleichschaltung without simultaneous adjustment of thoughts and actions to the Nazi worldview.

The expression Gleichschaltung was proposed by Hans Frank and transferred from the specialist terminology of electrical engineering into the political realm in 1933 and made part of law by Reich Minister of Justice Gürtner with the formulation of the laws for the 'Gleichschaltung of the States with the Reich'. It quickly became a very frequently used buzzword: 'Even the smallest newspapers wrote the word at least 20 times a day on each of their meaningless pages and brought everything, absolutely everything into line from the largest party to the ridiculous allotment garden club.' Its use was primarily restricted to the years 1933 and 1934, but it saw something of a revival after the annexation of Austria. — Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, in: *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*, 2007

Room to manoeuvre

In times of dictatorship, personal and professional freedoms are often greatly restricted. It is all the more interesting for us to ask which options the *Brücke* artists still had during the Third Reich and how they managed within the newly created structures and with the restrictions imposed upon them. The individual artists actually found themselves in very different positions – as such we cannot offer static depictions of them, but they are closely

related to the relevant developments in art policy, history and personal circumstances.

— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

'Inner emigration'

The retreat of the *Brücke* painters into their own private sphere in the years of the Nazi regime has in biographical accounts of their lives repeatedly been linked to the term 'inner emigration'. This vague description of the everyday realities of artists who remained in Germany is frequently associated with a kind of intellectual distancing, if not even a certain resistance. In the case of Heckel, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff, their retreat to the country, a consequence of the destruction of their homes and studios in Berlin, was likewise termed an 'inner emigration'. Whether and to what extent their periods of residence outside the political centre of Berlin were also politically motivated is most likely to be gleaned from their private correspondence.

— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

Jews, Jewish

When we talk about Jews during the Third Reich, one thing must be clear: It was irrelevant for the Nazis whether or not a person themselves claimed to be Jewish. They didn't ask people which religion they observed. For the Nazis, Jews were all the people whom they defined as such. Secondly, it is important to understand that for the Nazis Judaism was not a religion, but a race. The Nazis did not assume that all people are equal, but subdivided people into races. They decided that there were superior and inferior races. For them, Judaism was the lowest race. They claimed it was responsible for everything that was evil in the world and that it wanted to destroy the 'Aryan' race. This image constructed by the Nazis had nothing to do with reality. When we read Nazi texts or view Nazi images we must be very careful not to consider them reality. Today we know that all people are equal and that human races do not exist. Discrimination against other people owing

to their religion is prohibited. See on this article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

— Veronika Nahm, Head of Exhibitions and Education, Anne Frank Zentrum Berlin, 2009

'Nordic expressionism'

It was under the term 'Nordic expressionism' that some of the Nazi Party members sought as of 1933 to defend this style of art from a nationalistic perspective. Emil Nolde and Ernst Barlach, as well as Erich Heckel and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, for example, were considered down to earth and genuinely 'German' owing to their rural origins or their references to German gothic art. At the same time, the term clearly marks a distinction to Rhenish and South-German expressionism, whose abstract-leaning art had barely any supporters in the Nazi regime. Opponents of modernism attacked the labelling of the artists as 'Nordic', claiming it was a cover-up tactic.

— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

'Racial science'

In the Third Reich, the subject 'racial science' was taught at schools. The Nazis did not assume all people are equal and instead subdivided people into races. To this end they defined certain rules according to which they classified people. And they also specified that there are superior and inferior races. They named one of the races the 'Aryan' race, and called the people they assigned to this race 'Aryans'. The Nazis considered this to be the most superior race. Jews, for example, were among the 'non-Aryans'. Today we know that all people are equal and that human races do not exist. See on this article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Unfortunately, that does not mean that today all people enjoy the same rights. This unequal treatment is called 'racism'.

— Veronika Nahm, Head of Exhibitions and Education, Anne Frank Zentrum Berlin, 2009

Racism, racist

Racism is often defined in a very narrow sense in Germany (e.g. limited to Nazism or open violence). Yet beyond that, racism is a global balance of power, which was consolidated over the past 500 years as the dominant structure and manifests itself on a personal, structural, institutional and social level. Racism affects non-white members of society, i.e. Muslim or Jewish people, People of Colour, Black people and people with migratory backgrounds. They are exploited, excluded, disadvantaged and discriminated against. White people, in contrast, benefit structurally from racism. Racism is generally linked to other power structures, e.g. class, nationality or gender. When several of these power structures converge, the discrimination and/or exploitation increases. In contrast, white privileges are perpetuated by white structures and networks. Although it has been scientifically proven that human races do not exist, white discourses shapes our knowledge, our behaviour and the way we view our world.
— glocal e. V., 2019

Reich Chamber of Fine Arts

The Reich Chamber of Fine Arts was one of a total of seven departments of the Reich Chamber of Culture, which Joseph Goebbels founded in September 1933 to enable state control of the cultural scene. As a prerequisite for the exercise of artistic activities, initially all those involved with art (from artists to art dealers to postcard sellers) were granted membership of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts. Representatives of undesired art genres were to be retrained with a view to a new German state art. Members with Jewish backgrounds were systematically barred from the Chamber as of 1935 with the enactment of the Nuremberg Race Laws.
— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

'Purging of the museums'

The call for the 'purging of the museums' likewise reflects the biologically influenced vocabulary of the Nazis and is closely related to ideas of the 'cleansing of the body of the people'. After 1933, reactionary

art activists increasingly called for modern artworks, which had generally only been acquired since 1919, to be removed from public collections again. The calls became more vehement in the course of 1936: On 2 April 1936, the SS magazine *Das Schwarze Korps* ran the article: 'Kronprinzenpalais in Need of a Purge!'; in the autumn some newspapers even called for confiscations of privately owned modern art.
— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

Language

Language is not neutral. It always reflects an attitude and a perspective. Language, words and notions change over time, meaning they are dependent on socio-political contexts. Terms for the same issues are used differently depending on the user's stance or how s/he views the world or people. New governments or systems, such as National Socialism, also invented new concepts to support their structures and their power base. In this exhibition Nazi terms are used to draw our attention to historical issues, but are set apart by 'quotation marks'. Brücke-Museum wishes to expressly distance itself from their in part racist and inhuman content.
— Daniela Bystron, Curator of Outreach, Brücke-Museum, 2019

'Zero Hour'

In May 1945, the former Brücke artists – detached from the knowledge about all those things that had previously determined their lives as artists – found themselves in a kind of connectionless time bubble, a situation that was also termed 'zero hour', from which German post-war society began to re-establish itself supposedly ab ovo. Although historians quickly debunked such a fundamental caesura as a platitude, the question remains as to how Heckel, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff came to terms with the situation, especially as the metaphor of 'zero hour' was certainly recognized as a phenomenon felt by the population at the time, whose present was shaped above all by chaos.
— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, 2019

Condemnation

Outlawing, exclusion, banning, prohibition, proscription, condemnation, denunciation — Duden, 2018

'Exploitation'

In the context of the Nazi 'Degenerate Art' propaganda campaign the term 'exploitation' meant using the confiscated art profitably. Hermann Göring suggested selling some of the works that Joseph Goebbels had had removed as 'degenerate' from public institutions in 1937 on the back of two decrees by Hitler. They would be sold abroad in exchange for foreign currency. Subsequently, a 'Commission for the exploitation of products of "degenerate" art' was set up and a law enacted in May 1938 governing the sale of works that were able to be 'exploited', or sold, internationally. Selected auctioneers and art dealers were authorized to sell these artworks.
— Meike Hoffmann, Freie Universität Berlin, and Aya Soika, Bard College Berlin, 2019

Knowledge

There is no such thing as objective knowledge, or absolute truth. Knowledge is always a selection of information that follows a certain narrative, a certain goal. Constructivist theories doubt that knowledge and reality correspond, but rather assume that people construct reality subjectively themselves depending on their experiences and (prior) knowledge. The information we as authors have compiled for you in this exhibition is thus a selection. It is one form of the story. In this exhibition you will find various formats and media with differing intensities and methodologies: in the space itself you can view the interplay of works and texts as a narrative, the catalogue offers a discerning art-historical perspective, and in the accompanying programme we invite you to participate in discussions and an exchange of views.
— Daniela Bystron, Curator of Outreach, Brücke-Museum, 2019

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