ART HISTORY

Paul Klee
1879-1940

Expressionist & Bauhaus Artist
Castle and Sun

By Paul Klee (Swiss), Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1928
Oil on Canvas
Private Collection

Klee's work focused on shapes and had a childlike quality.
Paul Klee a Swiss-born painter, printmaker and draughtsman of German nationality, was originally associated with the German Expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter, and subsequently taught at the Bauhaus, the widely influential German art school of the interwar period. Klee's diverse body of work cannot, however, be categorized according to any single artistic movement, or "school." His paintings, which are at times fantastic, childlike, or otherwise witty, served as an inspiration to artists of the 20th century.

Klee was fundamentally a transcendentalist who believed that the material world was only one among many realities open to human awareness.

Klee was a musician for most of his life, often practicing the violin as a warm-up for painting. He naturally saw analogies between music and visual art. He even compared the visual rhythm in drawings to the structural, percussive rhythms of a musical composition.

Klee challenged traditional boundaries separating writing and visual art by exploring a new expressive, and largely abstract or poetic language of pictorial symbols and signs. Klee greatly admired the art of children, who seemed to create free of models or previous examples. In his own work he often strove to achieve a similar untutored simplicity, often by employing intense colors inspired by an early trip to North Africa, and by line drawing in the unstudied manner of an everyday craftsman.
Senecio
(the Latin word meaning “Old Man”)
Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1922
Oil on Canvas

Self-Portrait
Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1909
The Notebooks of Paul Klee in two volumes (The Thinking Eye and The Nature of Nature), which bring together his essays on modern art and lectures he gave at the Bauhaus school in the 1920s. The critic Herbert Read described these books as “the most complete presentation of the principles of design ever made by a modern artist – it constitutes the Principia Aesthetica of a new era of art, in which Klee occupies a position comparable to Newton’s in the realm of physics.”
“Art does not reproduce what we see; rather, it makes us see.”

“The painter should not paint what he sees, but what will be seen.”

“Children also have artistic ability, and there is wisdom in there having it!”
Hammamet with Its Mosque

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1914
Watercolor and graphite on paper mounted on cardboard
9 X 9”

Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

From his inspired trip to Tunisia where he said he discovered color or color discovered him.
In the Style of Kairouan

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1914
Watercolor
16 X 24”

First abstract painting after visiting Tunisia.
Tale à la Hoffmann

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1921
Watercolor, graphite, and transferred printing ink on paper bordered with metallic foil, mounted on cardboard
16 X 13”

Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY
Red Balloon

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1922
Chalk & Oil on Muslin
12 X 12”

Guggenheim Museum, NY
**Fish Magic**

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1925
Collage, muslin fabric, canvas, black paint

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Like our scratchboard artwork. The black paint was scratched through to reveal objects underneath.
Cat and Bird

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1928
Oil on Canvas
15 X 21”

Museum of Modern Art, NY
Highway and Byways

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1929
30 X 26”

Museum Ludwig, Cologne
Paul Klee was a musician as well as an artist and based this artwork on the waltz rhythm – 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3.
Ad Parnassum

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1932
Oil on Canvas
39 X 49”

Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland

This painting is considered Klee’s greatest masterpiece.
**Insula Dulcamara**

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
1938, 35 X 69”
Charcoal On Newsprint, pasted over Burlap

The largest painting by Klee, the symbols & signs create a dreamlike affect. It means “Bittersweet Island” and was created in his last years.
Puppets

Expressionism (Der Blaue Reiter) & Bauhaus Art
Various Years
Sculpture, Mixed Media

Paul Klee created many hand puppets.