

III.
 Encountering the Avant-garde:
 Behne, Sturm, and Expressionist Culture

We who live today have the rare and great fortune to live during a great revolution, not only of art, but of the whole intellectual and *spiritual orientation*. . . . All around us there stirs and grows a new art-Expressionism.¹

- Adolf Behne, February 1914

The German Avant-garde Before World War I

Behne's career-long commitment to the artistic avant-garde was not apparent at the outset of his career. His architectural studies, his art history training, and his earliest articles in Friedrich Naumann's reform-oriented journal all pointed to a conventional bourgeois career and intellectual direction. His teaching in populist *Volkshochschulen* and regular columns in several Socialist journals after his doctorate suggested more progressive ideas and political sympathies, but in the context of Wilhelmine Germany gave little indication of his future calling. Through somewhat fortuitous encounters with a few experimental painters, radical gallery owners, and fringe literary figures in 1911, Behne was exposed to the art and ideas that would

¹ Behne, "Expressionismus," *Allgemeiner Beobachter* 3, no. 20 (Feb. 15, 1914): 273, emphasis in original; also in Behne, *Zur neuen Kunst* (1915), p. 12-13; and cited in Charles W. Haxthausen, "A Critical Illusion: 'Expressionism' in the Writings of Wilhelm Hausenstein," in *The Ideological Crisis of Expressionism*, ed. O.K. Werckmeister and Rainer Rumold (1990), pp. 176-177.

launch him on a path to champion the avant-garde and on his work to become one of the most important and original art and architecture critics of early twentieth century in Europe.

Behne's intellectual and professional reorientation in 1912 led him to exude a sense of exhilaration and optimism for the revolutionary times. He wrote a year later: "We who live today have the rare and great fortune to live during a great revolution not only of art but of the whole intellectual and *spiritual orientation*. The time in which we live so unassumingly and matter-of-factly, will appear to a later generation as particularly great, great like the epoch of early antiquity, like the beginning of the Renaissance! . . . We can experience this [same] joy in a young, vibrant and fresh, art all around us today. All around us there stirs and grows a new art--Expressionism."²

Behne was far from alone in expressing such sentiments of this unique and self-conscious cultural moment in the history of modern art and architecture. Kandinsky waxed in 1912, "A great era is beginning . . . the spiritual awakening, the emerging inclination to regain lost balance. . . . We are standing at the threshold of one of the

² "Wir, die wir heute leben, haben das seltene und große Glück, einen wichtigen Umschwung nicht allein in der Kunst, sondern der ganzen *geistigen Verfassung* miterleben zu dürfen. Die Zeit, in der wir jetzt so selbstverständlich und alltäglich leben, wir einer späteren Generation als ganz besonders groß erscheinen, groß wie die Epoche der frühen Antike, wie die Zeit der beginnenden Renaissance! . . . Und diese Freude an einer jungen, herben und frischen Kunst können wir heute in reichem Maße erleben! Rings um uns wächst und regt sich eine neue Kunst --der Expressionismus." Behne, "Expressionismus," *Allgemeiner Beobachter* 3, no. 20 (Feb. 15, 1914): 273, emphasis in original; also in Behne, *Zur neuen Kunst*, p. 12-13; and cited in Haxthausen, "Critical Illusion," pp. 176-177.

greatest epochs that mankind has ever experienced, the epoch of Great Spirituality."³ Behne's friend Bruno Taut exclaimed the same year, "It is a joy to live in our time! . . . An intensity, a nearly religious fervor has gripped all the artists, and they will not be satisfied with subtle changes. . . . Something tangible must happen now."⁴

Recently christened the "half-time of modernity," the years immediately preceding World War I marked a definitive step in the march from the advent of modernism in the nineteenth century into the cultural experiments of the "golden twenties" of the Weimar Republic after the war.⁵ Berlin was beginning to establish itself as a center of the German, and indeed pan-European art world. The new movements in art from across Europe came together in controversial exhibitions and collections, and for the first time German artists were jockeying to create a compelling new art for the modern world. The branches of art and culture which had fossilized as distinct disciplines now cross-fertilized and sparked innovations. Ideas flowed freely from painting to poetry, music, the applied arts, and architecture, and back again. Although Germany's political and establishment culture was dominated by the ultra-conservative tastes of the Kaiser, many artists saw a world verging on "the new," with potential for

³ Kandinsky, Über das Geistige in der Kunst (1911), translated in Rose-Carol Long, German Expressionism (1993), p. 45.

⁴ Taut, "Eine Notwendigkeit," Der Sturm 4, no. 196/197 (Feb. 1914): 174; translated with slight variations in Rose-Carol Washton Long, German Expressionism (1993), pp. 124-126; and in Timothy O. Benson, Expressionist Utopias (1994), pp. 282-283.

⁵ Klaus-Jürgen Sembach, 1910: Halbzeit der Moderne (1992), and chapter 1 above.

great change in every aspect of modern culture.

Artistic Expressionism not only accelerated Behne's career as a free-lance art critic, but also helped generate his fundamental philosophy about art. The movement's emphasis on personal experience and its focus on expressing the inner-most essence of life, rather than on representing mere outward appearance, would remain central to Behne throughout his career. Behne's well-rounded traditional education, his training in both art and architecture, his early interests in experimental theater, film, and literature, his passion for cultural innovation, and ability to write engagingly about it all drew him to the formative phases of Expressionism, a movement many feel was defined more by critics and intellectuals than by artists. He sought out the new in the arts and realized for the first time the power of criticism, publishing, and the press to affect, indeed guide, artistic developments. Although the forms, artists, and movements that Behne promoted would change often and even radically over time, his concern with the inner values of art remained constant as he moved from art to architectural criticism, from pre-war Expressionism to post-war *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity), from defining functionalism in his famous book Der moderne Zweckbau (The Modern Functional Building, 1926) to criticizing an architecture that he felt had become over-rationalized a few years later. In all of his criticism, the lived, human experience remained the central reason for creating art. For Behne all art, especially architecture, was at its core social, a means of expressing one's self to others and living free from outer, material constraints. Art provided a means to get reveal the inner-

truths of life and the cosmos. A closer look at Behne's earliest engagement with Expressionist painting is essential to understand the underlying convictions about art that he maintained throughout his career, especially in his well known later architectural criticism.

Avant-gardes: "Battle for Art" and Sturm.

On November 15, 1911, in the midst of writing his rather traditional dissertation on Tuscan Gothic church ornamentation, Behne published a surprising commentary titled "The Battle for Art."⁶ In this short book review Behne condemned the chauvinistic anthology Protest deutscher Künstler (Protest of German Artists) recently published by the landscape painter Karl Vinnen. Vinnen and his authors had attacked German modern art for being overly dependent on cosmopolitan French precedent.⁷ In inflammatory prose, they accused German critics and gallery owners of colluding to import French art to the detriment of many German artists. This French influence, they

⁶ Adolf Behne, "Im Kampfe um die Kunst," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 2, no. 4 (Nov. 15, 1911): 77-81.

⁷ Karl Vinnen, ed., Protest deutscher Künstler (1911), was published by the reform-minded though often conservative Eugen Diederichs. Vinnen was a minor Worpswede landscape painter, but achieved great notoriety through this publication, arguably altering the course of modern art with it, a statement in itself about the power of words and the press within the art world. Sections of the book are translated in Washton Long, German Expressionism, pp. 3-13, 38-41, though she translates the Vinnen's title as "The Struggle for Art," which does not adequately describe the bellicose nature of the vocabulary and criticisms during these years. On Vinnen's book and the ideological and artistic battles it ignited, see Peter Paret, The Berlin Secession (1980), pp. 182-199; and Ron Manheim, 'Im Kampf um die Kunst': Die Diskussion von 1911 über Zeitgenössische Kunst in Deutschland (1987), in Dutch, with German summary.

claimed, had led to the "degeneration" of young German artistic talents. Quoting from the hastily organized counter-publication, Im Kampfe um die Kunst (The Battle for Art) organized by the still relatively unknown Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, Behne lamented that most German critics, including Vinnen, were all too eager to kill the artistic youth. The critics were willing only to illuminate artistic sources, never to reward novelty or innovation.⁸

He then defended the young artists whose new work was coalescing in Berlin under the term "Expressionism." Despite the varied formal approaches and national origins, Behne argued that these young, so-called Expressionists represented the wave of the future. For Behne, they had initiated the first movement away from realism and naturalism since the Renaissance. He praised them for breaking the progression towards ever greater imitation of outer appearances. Instead these artists expressed what Behne called "the being, the innermost essence, the deepest soul, the eternal, the essential of a thing in a special format that contains and combines all."⁹

With this short article Behne jumped into the heated battle to define modern art in Germany. His celebration of an Idealist sense of "artistic essence" rather than the depicted content or formal style of the paintings, would become one of the hallmarks of his subsequent art and architectural criticism. The fact that he was simultaneously

⁸ Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, eds. Im Kampfe um die Kunst. Die Antwort auf dem Protest (1911), was published by the more liberal Samuel Piper in Munich.

⁹ "Will man das Sein, das innerste Wesen, die tiefste Seele, das Bleibende, Wesentliche eines Dinges in einer Bezeichnenden Formel, die alles enthält und zusammenfaßt, ausdrücken"; Behne, "Im Kampfe um die Kunst," p. 80.

working on academic historical research for his dissertation and engaged in public fight for modern art in a populist, non-professional magazine, and that he was writing about both architecture and art, foreshadowed the catholic, productive, and influential career that would follow. By defending the young experimental artists, Behne immediately aligned himself with a group of painters around Kandinsky and Marc with which he became intimately associated.

Several months later, in March 1912, Behne continued his defense of modern art in Naumann's weekly newspaper Die Hilfe with a review of two early Expressionist art exhibits that had recently opened in Berlin: the third exhibit of Berlin's "New Secession," featuring prints from the "Die Brücke" (The Bridge) group of artists from Dresden, and the inaugural exhibit of Herwarth Walden's Sturm Gallery, exhibiting primarily works from the "Blauer Reiter" (Blue Rider) group from Munich.¹⁰ Behne bemoaned the empty galleries, and argued that both groups were defining new ground for modern art with exciting, innovative work. He was disappointed at the way the public and many critics completely misunderstood and ignored this new art, which had broken away from imitation of nature. He wrote that these works restored painting to its fundamentals: "a working with colors, with lines, with light and dark, a filling of a particular surface made of paper, wood, or canvas."¹¹ For Behne the stripping away of

¹⁰ Behne, "Die neue Sezession," Die Hilfe 18, no. 13 (Mar. 28, 1912): 207. Both exhibits opened on Mar. 12, 1912. On the artists represented in the exhibits see Donald Gordon, Expressionism: Art and Idea (1987), pp. 93, 101. On Naumann and Die Hilfe see chapter 2 above.

¹¹ "Die Malerei . . . ist ein Arbeiten mit Farben, mit Linien, mit Hell und Dunkel, sie ist das Füllen einer gegebenen Fläche aus Papier, Holz, oder Leinwand"; Behne, "Die

all excess was "straightforward" (*sachlich*) and "ethical."¹² It represented a desire to grasp the "thing itself," and embodied the simple and pure core of art and experience. A week later, though the exhibits had closed already, Behne's review was republished in Walden's important avant-garde journal Der Sturm, "because of [the review's] fundamental importance."¹³

Walden and Sturm: Historical Development

No one was a greater promoter and publicist of this turn to modern art in Berlin than Herwarth Walden, who had founded a multi-faceted propaganda enterprise "Der Sturm" (The Storm), with which his name became synonymous.¹⁴ [Figure 3.1] It was in

neue Sezession," p. 207.

¹² On *Sachlichkeit*, see the discussion below. The reference to ethics was a common aesthetic judgment, part of the reform movement that sought "truth" and honesty in art. See, for example, Josef August Lux, "Kunst und Ethik," Der Sturm 1 (1910). It is somewhat paradoxical that in the late nineteenth century critics and criticism were seen as inherently unethical because critics passed judgments based on few actual qualifications. See Beth Irwin Lewis, Art for All? (2003).

¹³ "Trotzdem beide Ausstellungen schon geschlossen sind, wird dieser Beitrag wegen seiner prinzipiellen Bedeutung veröffentlicht," editorial postscript to Behne, "Zwei Ausstellungen," Der Sturm 3, no. 107 (Apr. 1912): 19-20, here 20.

¹⁴ When asked "What is *Der Sturm*?" August Stramm, the avant-garde poet and abstract "word artist" whom Herwarth Walden made into one of the Sturm's rising stars, replied: "*Der Sturm* is Herwarth Walden"; quoted in Lothar Schreyer, "What is *Der Sturm*?" in The Era of German Expressionism, ed. Paul Raabe (1965), p. 193. The best sources on Walden, the Der Sturm journal, and related enterprises are Barbara Alms and Wiebke Steinmetz, eds. Der Sturm (2000); Freya Mülhaupt, ed., Herwarth Walden 1878-1941. Wegbereiter der Moderne (1991); Volker Pirsich, Der Sturm. Eine Monographie (1985); and Georg Brühl, Herwarth Walden und 'Der Sturm' (1983); and Nell Walden and Lothar Schreyer, eds., Der Sturm. Ein Erinnerungsbuch (1954).

Walden's gallery that Behne first acquainted himself with modern art and artists.

Behne's fresh interpretations and keen arguments promoting the Sturm artists soon led him to into Walden's inner circle, where he was regarded as one of the principal

"Sturm-theorists." The unparalleled importance of Walden in jump-starting Behne's career and of the Sturm in promoting a culture of modern Expressionist art in Berlin

warrants further discussion. Walden, the pseudonym of Georg Lewin, was from

a prosperous Jewish family in Berlin. He trained as a musician but soon turned to

journalism and the promotion of modern art. As a young man in Berlin, he founded

exclusive art clubs and salons for poetry readings and cultural discussions, including on

architecture. He tried several times to establish a literary magazine, and served brief

stints as editor of Das Magazin, and Morgen, and of the theater journals Der neue Weg

and Das Theater. In each of these ventures the radical Walden was eventually

dismissed as "too modern" and overly progressive.¹⁵

In March of 1910 Walden finally succeeded in creating a lasting venue for his

own voice when he began publishing Der Sturm, a journal in which Behne published

some of his earliest theoretical statements outlining a new art and architecture. Within

months of its founding, Der Sturm had become the most important avant-garde art

publication in Germany and it soon gained an international reputation.¹⁶ [Figure 3.2]

The journal was unlike any other art and cultural periodical, full of provocative critique,

¹⁵ On Walden (1878-1941), see especially Mülhaupt, Herwarth Walden.

¹⁶ The name of the magazine, as well as Walden's own pseudonym, were invented by his first wife, the important Expressionist poet Else lasker-Schüler. See Mülhaupt, Herwarth Walden, p. 7.

and printed on large, inexpensive newsprint.¹⁷ The tone and content derived in part from the journalism of Karl Kraus and his famous Viennese periodical Die Fackel, which raged against the evils of capitalism and materialist society and their negative impact on literature and art. Walden and his circle were fighting against what they perceived to be a culture of decadence and fickle fashion, of excess and materialism. He saw straightforward objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*) and belief in a new intellectual "Idealism," as the only salvation.¹⁸ Since Berlin, unlike Munich, Vienna or Paris, for the most part still lacked serious intellectual critics of the increasingly bourgeois Secession and

¹⁷ Publication began weekly, and very cheap at 10 pfennig, to encourage buyers, then from April 1913 bi-weekly, and monthly after July 1914 because of World War I, with slightly increasing prices. Walden had an extraordinarily optimistic 30,000 copies printed of the first issue, though subsequent issues varied at 3,000-4,000. The journal was under constant financial duress, leading often to very poor quality printing, and irregular publishing intervals. The most complete documentation on Der Sturm is Pirsich, Der Sturm; on the circulation numbers see p. 79.

¹⁸ Peter Sprengel has postulated that Walden's *Sturm* enterprise was indebted to ideas related to *Sachlichkeit* as it was discussed in architecture. In 1905 Walden had invited the famous Berlin architect Alfred Messel to lecture on modern architecture at his Association for Art (Verein für Kunst). Messel refused, but wrote back some brief comments on the topic that may have influenced Walden. Messel lamented the emphasis on style in recent architecture, and that the further development of a "healthy art [of architecture]" depended on the fact "dass bei der Betrachtung und Beurtheilung der Bauten die innerliche Eigenart des Werkes und die Schönheit seiner Formensprache in den Vordergrund gestellt [werden. . . Alles] lässt sich in die Worte zusammenfassen: 'Einfachheit' und 'Sachlichkeit'"; Alfred Messel letter to Walden (Oct. 12, 1905), *Sturm-Archiv*, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin, hereafter abbreviated as SBPK. Sprengel proposes that five years later, when Walden started Der Sturm under the influence of Kraus, he transferred a similar aesthetic of *Sachlichkeit* to literature and art, fighting against the stylized, ornamental flair of the *feuilleton* journalism and Art Nouveau and Secessionist art. Adolf Loos, famous for his critique of ornament and Art Nouveau in a manner very similar to Messel, was one of the first voices that Walden published in his new journal; Sprengel, "Von der Baukunst zur Wortkunst. Sachlichkeit und Expressionismus im *Sturm*," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte (DVjg) 64, no. 4 (Dec. 1990): 680-706.

Jugendstil movements, Walden resorted to using some of his modernist literary and artistic friends in Vienna, including Kraus and Adolf Loos, whose essays appeared in the first issue of Der Sturm.¹⁹ Subsequent issues included writings by Paul Scheerbart, Alfred Döblin, and Walden's flamboyant first wife Else Lasker-Schüler, alongside a host of new poetry, literature, music, and criticism created by the artists of Berlin's burgeoning "café culture," such as those frequenting the vibrant Café des Westens.²⁰

A year after the establishment of Der Sturm, Fritz Pfemert founded the competing anti-bourgeois Die Aktion in 1911. This journal focused on the work of the new Expressionist or "Activist" avant-garde literary figures in the circle around Kurt Hiller, and was much more radical in its political stance than Walden's Der Sturm.²¹

[Figure 3.3] Hiller did not shy away from openly attacking the government and its policies or publishing provocative critiques of the establishment. Behne's more

¹⁹ Adolf Loos, "Vom armen reichen Man," Der Sturm 1, no. 1 (Mar. 3, 1910): 4; Loos, "Der Sattlermeister," Der Sturm 1, no. 3 (Apr. 1910): 20; Loos, "Damenmode," Der Sturm 1, no. 22 (1910): 171; Loos, "Tristan in Wien," Der Sturm 1, no. 27 (1910): 216; Loos, "Über Architektur," Der Sturm 1, no. 42 (1910): 334.

²⁰ On the values of the "café culture" see Henry Pachter, "Expressionism and Café Culture," in Passion and Rebellion, ed. Stephen Bronner and Douglas Kellner (1983), pp. 43-54; Ernst Blass, "The old Café des Westens," in The Era of German Expressionism, ed. P. Raabe (1974), pp. 27-33; and Walden's satirical article decrying the journalists swarming through the Café des Westens and the press more generally: Walden, "Der Sumpf von Berlin. 'Spezialbericht': Café Größenwahn," Der Sturm 2, no. 82 (1911): 651-652, republished in Mühlhaupt, Herwarth Walden, pp. 44-47.

²¹ Activism was a political stance that fused Nietzschean ideals with pacifist Socialism, and stood in many ways opposed to Expressionism. Among its most well known advocates included Kurt Hiller, the theater critic Alfred Kerr (and the novelist Heinrich Mann. On Die Aktion, see Gerhard Hense, in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, Deutsche Zeitschriften des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts (1973), pp.365-378; and Iain Boyd Whyte, Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism (1982).

mainstream, Socialist inclinations, as well as his belief in the autonomy of art must have inhibited him from writing for Hiller's Die Aktion, though he did publish two short reviews in the political journal during the war.²²

In part through their competition, the two journals helped define and then champion Expressionist art and literature. In part a reaction to the political and literary focus of Die Aktion, but also reflecting Walden's own primarily artistic interests, Der Sturm increasingly included visual arts, art criticism, and original prints by artists such as Oscar Kokoshka, Max Pechstein, and many of the most well-known German Expressionists. At the end of February 1912, to compete with Die Aktion but also with Paul Cassirer's very successful gallery of "modern"--primarily Impressionist--art, Walden spontaneously invited Kandinsky, Marc, August Macke, and the Blue Rider group to exhibit their work in a rented villa in Berlin's Tiergarten.²³ A few weeks later, Walden's first exhibit opened, and with it the "Sturm Gallerie," which would become one of the leading galleries of modern art in Berlin. A month later in April 1912, Behne

²² Behne published only two minor book reviews in Die Aktion, in 1916, the middle of World War I, perhaps to earn some much needed money. Behne review of Hermann Bahr, ed., Expressionismus (1916), in Die Aktion 6, no. 33/34 (Aug. 19, 1916): 473-476; and Behne review of Alfred Döblin, Die drei Sprünge des Wang Lun (1916), in Die Aktion 6, no. 45/46 (Nov. 11, 1916): 631. At least one attempt to publish another article, possibly on soldier cemeteries or mass graves, was rejected by the editor Franz Pfemert in Jan. 1917; see Pfemert letter to Behne (Jan. 18, 1917), Nachlaß Adolf Behne, SBPK.

²³ See the letter from Franz Marc to August Macke from Mar. 1, 1912 about suddenly being invited by Walden. Excerpt reprinted in Peter Sprengel, "Institutionalisierung der Moderne: Herwarth Walden und Der Sturm," Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 110, no. 2 (1991): 272. On the competition with Cassirer, Brühl cites a letter from Loos to Walden, from Oct. 4, 1909, inquiring whether Cassirer might be interested in exhibiting the work of Kokoshka. Brühl, Der Sturm (1983), p. 33.

wrote his first article--a short, positive review of the artists and their cause for change--in the accompanying issue of Der Sturm.²⁴

Walden's increasing focus on art and art criticism in 1912 was accompanied by an increasingly international orientation, and by extension to the artists and ideas to which Behne was exposed.²⁵ Walden forged connections to like-minded editors and similar galleries, magazines, and movements all over Europe. In the second Sturm exhibit Walden introduced German audiences to Italian Futurism, while Der Sturm published the first translations of various Futurist manifestoes. Later exhibits brought to Berlin the works of Picasso, Braque, and the "French Expressionists," as well as the first one-man show of the Russian Kandinsky. As a result of a growing interest in revealing international trends and experiments, Walden featured artists from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, America, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland. Accompanying the exhibits, Der Sturm published criticism by the Italian Futurist provocateur Marinetti and the French poet Apollinaire, theoretical pieces by French painters Fernand Léger and Robert Delauney, as well as the Czech Cubists, to name only a few. All together Walden created 170 exhibits promoting modern art in Germany between 1912 and 1928.²⁶ The success of the gallery and the contacts it provided Walden reinforced the

²⁴ Behne, "Zwei Ausstellungen."

²⁵ See Pirsich, Der Sturm; and Robin Lenman "The Internationalization of the Berlin Art Market 1910-1920 and the Role of Herwarth Walden," in Künstlerischer Austausch - Artistic Exchange, vol. 3, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens (1993), pp. 535-542; and generally Timothy Benson, ed., Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930 (2002).

²⁶ Pirsich, pp. 671-690.

importance of Der Sturm as the leading venue for the international artistic avant-garde in Germany. In just a few short years the Sturm enterprise went from upstart literary review to a multi-media propaganda machine, what one author has called the "corporate identity" of the avant-garde in Germany.²⁷

Der Sturm: Focus on Art Criticism

Der Sturm both promoted modern art and acted as a revolutionary force fighting against the corrupting forces within modern industrial culture. As with so many of his bohemian friends and young painters and critics such as Behne, Walden worked tirelessly from the magazine's inception against what he considered two principal evils: the increasing commercialization of culture and its trivialization when culture was popularized by the "wrong" agents.

The single biggest target in his essays was art critics who published in the popular press: those writers that wanted to, in his words, "play at being mediators

²⁷ See Barbara Alms, "Der Sturm - Corporate Identity für die internationale Avantgarde," in Alms and Steinmetz, Der Sturm, pp. 15-34; and Pirsich, Der Sturm, p. 62. Constant financial pressures convinced Walden to search for ever more "profit centers" to add to the Sturm enterprise. He turned gallery openings into sumptuous annual "Sturm-balls," with much sought after tickets. He expanded his publishing house to include books, postcards, art reproductions, original prints, and sumptuous portfolios. The success of his gallery convinced Walden to begin a series of traveling exhibitions after 1913, both within Germany and throughout Europe. In 1916 Walden started a series of "Sturmabende," salon-style discussions for intellectuals, as well as the Sturmschule, an art school. In 1917 Walden and Lothar Schreyer started a theater company, the experimental Sturmbühne, complete with its own journal, the Sturmbühne.

between art and the people."²⁸ Walden and his accomplices accused the press of succumbing to commercial pressures. They lamented that the press was more intent on selling advertisements and achieving the greatest possible readership than on maintaining the quality of the news reported or culture printed. As a result, they felt the masses were being influenced and educated about art by unqualified and misguided journalists.²⁹ Borrowing a term from his Viennese friend Kraus, Walden accused the press and its critics of a "de-literarization" (*Entliterarisierung*) of culture, a steady reduction in the quality of literature in the public sphere, especially in the newspapers.³⁰ Behne had also complained about the decreasing quality of published criticism on art in newspapers or journals and the ill-effects these texts had on the public's understanding of art.³¹

Attacking journalists and the art press on the first page of the first issue of Der Sturm, Walden flared: "We have decided to publish our journal ourselves. In this way we hope that in place of journalism and the *feuilleton* (!) will come Culture and Art."³²

²⁸ Trust [pseud. of H. Walden], "Die Sittenmädchen," Der Sturm 1, no. 17 (1910): 136. On Walden's and Der Sturm's relation to the press see Pirsich, Der Sturm, pp. 605-617.

²⁹ J. Adler, "Guten Morgen, Pioniere," Der Sturm 3, no. 140/141 (Dec. 1912): 243.

³⁰ Kraus' term is used several times in the first year of Der Sturm, for example in Trust, "Die Sittenmädchen," p. 136; Trust, "Der Klügel," Der Sturm 1, no. 17 (1910): 295; and cited in Pirsich, Der Sturm, p. 605. Walter Benjamin also expresses similar concerns in Benjamin, "The Newspaper," republished in Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings, vol.2, edited by Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (1999), pp. 741-742.

³¹ See chapter 1; Behne, "Populäre Kunstbücher" (1911).

³² [Walden], Der Sturm 1, no. 1 (Mar. 3, 1910): 1.

For Walden and other Sturm critics such as Joseph Adler, the *feuilleton* was the most dangerous part of journalism. He felt that *feuilleton* writers deluded themselves into thinking they were carriers of culture and made great proclamations about art, but in reality "had not the slightest idea what art and literature actually was."³³ Walden complained that true artists and literary figures were excluded from publishing in the mainstream press, which included only "kitschers" and "confection-poets."³⁴ Instead of dilettante critics, he wanted artists and other authorities to speak for themselves.³⁵ Otherwise, he felt the press would better only relaying factual information, excluding all cultural criticism.³⁶ Although Behne would be one of the Sturm's most faithful critics before the end of World War I, as his writing became more socially engaged after 1917, he increasingly attacked Walden's often purely form-based approach to understanding art. After 1918 Behne himself became the target of Walden's pointed attacks.

After the Sturm Gallery opened in 1912, Walden's attacks on the press became

³³ Trust, "Die öffentliche Meinung," Der Sturm 1, no. 39 (1910): 311. Although the *feuilleton* is akin to our "Arts & Leisure" section, it can include essays and reviews on any of the arts, reflections on contemporary life and issues, serialized novels, as well as observations on more technical subjects such as science and technology. Although expertise in subjects is clearly important, the *feuilleton* features a preponderance of literary figures and cultural critics. Excluded is factual information or other pure news reporting, as well as all politics.

³⁴ Bimini, "Faule Ostereier," Der Sturm 1, no. 6 (1910): 45; Trust, "Konfektionsdichter" Der Sturm 2, no. 101 (1912): 804. Quoted in Pirsich, Der Sturm 608. Also Trust, "Kunstkritiker mit und Ohne," Der Sturm 2, no. 90 (Dec. 1911): 715-716.

³⁵ Pirsich, Der Sturm, p. 62, 605.

³⁶ Trust, "Der Klügel," p. 295; Trust, "Das Sittenmädchen," p. 136. Quoted in Pirsich, Der Sturm, pp. 606, 608.

more and more self-serving. Intent on defending his own enterprise and the artists he supported, and modern art more generally, he used his magazine increasingly to respond to critical attacks on his own gallery. Walden's second wife, Nell Walden, later recalled a flood of negative reviews, what she called befuddled, "ignorant" attacks after nearly every *Sturm* exhibit.³⁷ Walden responded by dedicating an inordinate amount of space in his journal, often most of the issue, to rebuttals and angry exchanges with art critics. He condemned "the Berlin Press," specific newspapers, particular reviews, and individual critics. The most reprehensible critics, were those who threatened to spread a different understanding of what constituted modern art; they included Fritz Stahl (pseud. of Sigfried Lilienthal), the leading art critic for the esteemed Berliner Tageblatt, which Walden called "one of the most evil institutions of Northern Germany"³⁸; Karl Scheffler, the staunch defender of Impressionism and the Secession and publisher of Germany's leading art journal, Kunst und Künstler³⁹; and Paul Westheim, a contemporary of Behne's who published the progressive and influential Das Kunstblatt

³⁷ Nell Walden and Schreyer, Der Sturm.

³⁸ On Stahl and Berliner Tageblatt "Von den schönen Künsten," Der Sturm 4, no. 158/159 (May 1913): 18-20, and countless other critiques. See also K. Hiller, "Fritz Stahl," Der Sturm 3, no. 108 (May 1912): 27; as well as an unpublished lecture by Matthias Schirren, "Fritz Stahl und die Kunstliteratur der frühen zwanziger Jahre," at the symposium "Architektur und Assimilation: Die jüdischen Baumeister Berlins," at the Freie Universität Berlin, on Sept. 13, 2003.

³⁹ On Scheffler see, for example, Walden, "Kritiker. Der feine Herr Scheffler," Der Sturm 4, no. 188/189 (Dec. 1913); and R. Kurtz, "Offener Brief an Herrn Karl Scheffler," Der Sturm 4, no. 180/181 (Oct. 1913): 106-107; as well as Peter Selz, German Expressionist Painting (1974, orig. 1957).

after 1917.⁴⁰ Walden often reprinted large sections or many fragments of the derisive reviews and then responded with biting sarcasm. He pointed out the most trivial of factual errors, accused critics of being "thoughtless," old fashioned, or ill informed, and even commented in detail on their writing style and word choice.⁴¹ He ridiculed with particular zeal the provincial press, where he felt critics were "half-witted," liable to be more conservative, and often had very different ideas on what constituted modern art.⁴²

Though far from perfect, Walden was remarkably prescient in selecting those who would become influential modern artists and critics. He was one of the first in Germany to appreciate Loos' criticism and invited him to lecture at the gallery and publish in Der Sturm.⁴³ In the 1911 scandal surrounding the design of the so-called "Looshaus" on the Michaelerplatz, Walden publically defended Loos. After hosting one of the earliest solo exhibitions of Kandinsky's work, Walden was one of the first to defend the young Russian artists against harsh anti-modern criticism. When the Hamburg art critic Kurt Küchler described Kandinsky as an arrogant young

⁴⁰ Walden attacks Westheim as early as "Maler-Kritiker," Der Sturm 3, no. 105 (Apr. 1912): 4-5, but the most serious attacks on Westheim came after the war. They began with "Der Fall Westheim," Der Sturm 11, no. 4 (1920): 61; and continue with a series of fifteen letters by Rudolf Blümner beginning with Blümner, "Briefe an Paul Westheim. Zur Geschichte des Sturm und des deutschen Journalismus," Der Sturm 11, no. 7/8 (1920): 100ff. On Westheim, see Lutz Windhöfel, Paul Westheim und Das Kunstblatt (1995).

⁴¹ Trust, "Gedankenloses," Der Sturm 2, no. 104 (Mar. 1912): 827-828.

⁴² Walden, "Warnung an die Provinzialpresse," Der Sturm 1, no. 22 (July 28, 1910): 176.

⁴³ On the Looshaus, see Trust [pseud. Of Herwarth Walden], "Schönheit, Schönheit. Der Fall Adolf Loos," Der Sturm 2, no. 70 (July 1911): 556.

"monomaniac" with "silly theory," "fudging" works of "smudged colors" and "tangled lines" that could only be labeled as inconsequential "idiotism," Walden put his publicity machine to work at Kandinsky's request.⁴⁴ He organized and then quickly published several pages of rebuttals by prominent critics, professors and gallery owners as well as a long list of signatures of support, including Behne's.⁴⁵ A few months later, in reaction to the hostile critical reaction to the Sturm's famous Erster Deutsche Herbstsalon (First German Fall Salon) of 1913, Walden published the flyer "Appeal Against Art Critics."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Kurt K uchler, "Kandinsky," Hamburger Fremdenblatt (Feb. 13, 1913). Walden republished the article so that friends of modern art would have first hand access to the vicious critique; Der Sturm 3, no. 150/151 (Mar. 1913).

⁴⁵ Walden's defense was launched at Kandinsky's request, and included a thorough defense of Kandinsky's art to counter the negative review; see "F ur Kandinsky," Der Sturm 3, no. 150/151 (Mar. 1913): 277-279, with addenda 3, no. 152/153 (Mar. 1913): 288, and 4, no. 154/155 (Apr. 1913): 5-6; as well as Magdalena Bushart, Der Geist der Gotik und die Expressionistische Kunst (1990), pp. 89-90; M. Strauss, "Kandinsky and 'Der Sturm'," Art Journal 43, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 31-35. Behne later took K uchler to task personally for his remarks in "Ein Wort zum Futurismus," Allgemeiner Beobachter 3, no. 18 (Jan. 15, 1914): 249, that Futurism was academic and arbitrary, nihilist in its trickery, and forced to extremes because only the loudest voices were heard in these bizarre times; see Behne, "'Expressionismus,'" Allgemeiner Beobachter 3, no. 20 (Feb. 15, 1914): 273-274.

⁴⁶ Walden's "Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon" was named after the "Salon d'Automne" in Paris, which had been started in 1903 by Franz Jourdain. Walden's Herbstsalon featured 75 artists from 12 countries, and 366 works, and was the first true overview of European avant-garde art, including Russian Cubo-futurism, Czech Cubism, German Expressionism, Italian Futurists, and French Fauves. On the exhibit and its critics, see M.-A. von L uttichau, "Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon, Berlin 1913," in Stationen der Moderne, ed. Eberhard Roters (1988), pp. 130-140; and M.-A. von L uttichau, "Erster deutsche Herbstsalon," in Die Kunst der Ausstellung, ed. Bernd Kl user and Katharina Hegewisch (1991), pp. 131-153. The reaction to the exhibit was on the whole very hostile. On the Walden's reaction, see "Nachrichtung," and "Die Presse und der Herbstsalon," both in Der Sturm 4, no. 182/183 (Oct. 1913): 114-115. This material was also published in a slightly different format as a widely distributed leaflet: "Aufruf gegen Kunstkritiker," recently reprinted in part in Alms, "Der Sturm," p. 28; and

[Figure 3.4] It included a "Lexicon of German Art Criticism" listing some of the offensive expressions found in critiques of the exhibit, including K uchler's venomous language. On a separate page Walden juxtaposed a long series of excerpts from reviews in newspapers all across Germany highlighting--often out of context--the contradictory opinions and insults critics had made, and thereby emphasizing the subjective, incompetent nature of the criticism.

Walden's propaganda for modern art was by all accounts very successful, promoting and defending many of the now canonical figures of modern art. In the long run, however, the competitiveness, the viciousness, and the personalized nature of his rebuttals probably hindered his program.⁴⁷ Walden's nearly manic efforts to uncover, publicize, and then control the newest artists through his journal, gallery and larger Sturm enterprise gradually developed into a overt concern for monetary value that contradicted some of his own Idealist principles and eventually led to his demise. His focus on critics, the reviews, and the press, rather than on the art itself at times derailed his efforts to get back to the authenticity of artistic expression, not the parvenue opinions of dilettantes and theorists.⁴⁸ This eventually drove many artists away and

in Roland M arz and Anita K uhnel, eds., Expressionisten. Die Avantgarde in Deutschland 1905-1920 (1986), pp. 123-124. An original is in the Ludwig Hilberseimer Archive at the Art Intitute of Chicago. See also Pirsich, Der Sturm, pp. 611-612.

⁴⁷ On the negative side effects of Walden's attacks, see Pirsich, Der Sturm, pp. 614-617.

⁴⁸ Ernst Bloch, in the Expressionism debates, accused Luk acs of using secondary information, including much from Der Sturm, and not the actual work of visual artists to create his position that Expressionism was irrational, proto-fascist product of capitalism in its flight of fancy. See Charles W. Haxthausen, "Modern Art After 'The

created many powerful and influential enemies, including Behne after World War I.⁴⁹

Expressionist Art Theory]]

Behne's ascent as a critic paralleled the Sturm's rise to prominence. Behne produced positive reviews of the very first Sturm exhibit as well as of many of the succeeding exhibits in various popular and professional journals, and soon became a personal friend of Walden's.⁵⁰ Through Walden's circle, Behne began absorbing and exploring more intensely both ideas about what constitutes good criticism and theories of "Expressionism," of which he would become one of the leading exponents.

The origin of the term "Expressionism" is a complex one that reaches back into the nineteenth century.⁵¹ Few artists ever designated themselves as "Expressionists."

End of Expressionism': Worringer in the 1920s," in Invisible Cathedrals: The Expressionist Art History of Wilhelm Worringer, ed. Neil H. Donahue (1995); and Whyte, Bruno Taut.

⁴⁹ In 1918 Walden even sought to lay exclusive claim to Expressionist art and the artists involved. See Wolf Dieter Dube, The Expressionists (1972), p. 19.

⁵⁰ Behne's friendship with Walden is documented primarily in Walden's personal guest books (visits on Sept. 26, 1913, Dec. 31, 1914, etc.) and in the correspondence in the Sturm Archiv, Nachlaß Walden, SBPK; see Brühl, Der Sturm, p. 331.

⁵¹ The term "Expressionism" and its relationship to the movement it defines is a complex and controversial one, with an extensive bibliography. On the term Expressionism see Haxthausen, "A Critical Illusion" pp. 169-173; Ron Manheim, "'Expressionismus' - Zur Entstehung eines Kunsthistorischen Stil- und Periodenbegriffes," Zeitgeschichte für Kunstgeschichte 49, no. 1 (1986): 73-91, cites all the previous discussions of the subject; Gordon, Expressionism, esp. chapter 5, "Art Criticism"; Marit Werenskiold, The Concept of Expressionism (1984); Geoffrey Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism (1974); Victor H. Miesel, "The Term Expressionism in the Visual Arts (1911-1920)," in The Uses of History, ed. Hayden

Unlike Naturalism or Surrealism, Expressionism was not a movement in the strict sense of the word. It lacked a body of self-conscious and self-critical writing activities resulting in consciously formulated programs. It was, rather a syndrome of thoughts and feelings, a *Weltanschauung*. The movement gave rise to certain techniques and certain themes, such as "the clash of generations" and a wide-spread revolt against materialism and positivism. It sought mystical access to permanent values, not merely to record what was there, even non-visual ideas. Herbert Read defined Expressionism as reproducing not the objective reality of world, but the subjective reality of feelings that objects and events arouse.

Unlike many of the modern art movements that it embraced, including Cubism and Futurism, Expressionism was primarily the invention of critics and associated gallery owners, not artists.⁵² The term became the glue that held together a body of disparate visual attributes that shared some underlying ideas. Used in 1903 by the French critic Auguste Hervé to designate a circle of painters around Matisse, the term was subsequently used in varying contexts and always as an antipode to the dominant style and theory of "Impressionism." The germanized version of the French word *expressionistes*, rather than the Germanic *Ausdruck* (expression) first assumed

White (1968), pp. 135-151, and the now outdated Donald Gordon, "On the Origins of the Word Expressionism," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 29 (1966): 368-385.

⁵² Unified Expressionism is fundamentally a construct, or, as Charles Haxthausen has argued, even an "illusion" without historical basis outside of the art critics who invented it; see Haxthausen, "A Critical Illusion." See also Joan Weinstein, "The Novemberrevolution and the Institutionalization of Expressionism in Berlin," in Twentieth Century Art Theory, ed. Richard Hertz and Norman Klein (1990).

prominence for the German art scene in April of 1911, in reference to a room of French Post-Impressionist paintings labeled "Expressionists," at the 22nd exhibit of the Berlin Secession. By the 1912 Sonderbund Exhibit in Cologne, the first extensive survey of European modern art in Germany, critics were regularly using the term to include German artists. By the time the literary and cultural critic Gustav Fechter authored the first monograph on Expressionism in 1914, the movement was identified by many critics, including Behne, as a particularly German style of art, a trend that increased with the nationalism of World War I.⁵³

Behne first used the term "Expressionism" in his November 1911 article "The Battle for Art," where he defended the young moderns from nationalistic attacks. Much like Walden, he understood Expressionism as a much broader and diverse movement than we consider it today, encompassing almost all the new ideas in art from Cubism and Fauvism to Futurism and Expressionism. Behne's use of the term developed out of

⁵³ On the Sonderbund exhibit, Wulf Herzogenrath, ed., Frühe Kölner Kunstausstellungen (1981), pp. 240-270; Peter Selz, German Expressionist Painting (1957), pp. 240-249. Paul Fechter saw Expressionism as the German counterpart to French Cubism and Italian Futurism, all seeking to counter Impressionism; Fechter, Expressionismus (1914); Dube, The Expressionists, p. 19; Selz, German Expressionist Painting, pp. 256, 349n13. Behne, for example, identifies Franz Marc's Expressionism as "German. . . as German as the writings of the old [Gothic] mystics," a clear reference to Worringer; Behne, "Der Maler Franz Marc," Pan (Mar. 28, 1913): 618. For more on Behne's nationalism, see Magdalena Bushart, "Der Expressionismus, ein deutscher Nationalstil?," Merkur 45, no. 5 (May 1991): 455-462, where she refers to the 1980 Guggenheim exhibit that reaffirms that "Expressionism of the early twentieth century is a style and a sensibility specifically German"; cf. "Preface," in Expressionism. A German Intuition 1905-1920, ed. Joachim Neugroschel (1980), p. 12; and Rose-Carol Washton Long, "National or International? Berlin Critics and the Question of Expressionism," in Künstlerischer Austausch - Artistic Exchange vol. 3, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens (1993), pp. 521-534.

his study of art history at the university, where he had become familiar with the theoretical works of Gottfried Semper, Conrad Fiedler, Adolf von Hildebrand, Theodor Lipps, Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin, and especially Wilhelm Worringer. During the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, these historians and theorists had been responsible for changing the nature of art history and art criticism, and eventually art itself.⁵⁴ They redirected art scholars' attention away from the subject-matter and cultural context of painting and art, and towards its formal and aesthetic qualities.⁵⁵

Much of this theory can be traced back to Kant's Critique of Pure Judgment, which isolated art as an autonomous system by focusing on perception, and in the

⁵⁴ The following analysis is based in part on lectures by Alan Colquhoun at Columbia University in spring 1994; Eleftherios Ikononou and Harry Francis Mallgrave, eds., Empathy, Form, and Space. Problems in German Aesthetics 1873-1893 (1994); David Morgan, "The Idea of Abstraction in German Theories of the Ornament from Kant to Kandinsky," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 50 (Summer 1992): 231-242; Francesco Dal Co, "Projects, Words, Things," chapter 2 in Figures of Architecture and Thought (1990); Michael Podro, The Manifold of Perception (1972); Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 17, no. 3 (March 1959): 287-310. Paul Zucker contrasts this "aesthetic" line of theorizing form in art and architecture with the work of the practicing architects of the modern movement, who he claims focused more on functionalism and tectonics and all but ignored these ideas on form, space and abstraction; Zucker, "The Paradox of Architectural Theories at the Beginning of the Modern Movement," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (hereafter SAH) 10, no. 3 (1951): 8-14. A more focused discussion on the relation to Expressionist painting is in Selz, German Expressionist Painting, chapter 1; and Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism, pp. 47-64. While Perkins is insightful about the changing nature of art history and art criticism, he disputes my idea that art itself was also affected.

⁵⁵ According to Mundt, what united critics of modern art was their common "ability to discuss the merits of a work of art without regard to its subject matter. This capacity distinguishes the modern critic from his colleagues of a hundred years ago"; Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," p. 287.

process dismissed content.⁵⁶ At mid-century Semper emphasized among other things the role that materials and techniques played in the development of form in art, and in the applied arts in particular.⁵⁷ Continuing the march away from content, Fiedler developed a theory of "pure visibility" late in the century that claimed that art was a totally visual activity, the "development of the intuitive consciousness," where "the content of the work of art is nothing but the design (*Gestaltung*) itself."⁵⁸ Art, he insisted, expanded the visible world around us, making the feelings of life visible.

Fiedler's theory was popularized and put into practice by the Neo-classical sculptor Hildebrand, who sought to create an orderly design method based on principles of classicism, in opposition to what he considered the "apparent chaos" of Impressionism.⁵⁹ In his very influential book The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture, which Behne had reviewed in 1911, Hildebrand too claimed that art is solely "a problem of visual manifestation."⁶⁰ Distinguishing between a visual form

⁵⁶ Immanuel Kant, Critik der Urtheilskraft (1790) translated as Critique of Judgment, translated and introduction by Werner S. Pluhar (1987) sec. 11, pp. 43-51, pp. 221, 170-195.

⁵⁷ On Semper, see most recently Winfried Nerdinger and Werner Oechslin, Gottfried Semper 1803-1879 (2003); and Harry Frances Mallgrave, Gottfried Semper. Architect of the Nineteenth Century (1996).

⁵⁸ Fiedler, quoted in Selz, German Expressionist Painting, pp. 4-5. On Fiedler, see Ikonomou and Mallgrave, Empathy, Form, and Space; and the anthology Konrad Fiedler, On Judging Works of Visual Arts (1957).

⁵⁹ Impressionism, of course, was itself developed as a means of focusing on perception, light, color and technique, though often in a more positivist, scientific rather than the creative, emotional manner.

⁶⁰ Adolf von Hildebrand, Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst (1893,

(*Daseinsform*) and an essential form (*Wesensform*), he developed what he called an "architectonic method," by which all artists could bring order, unity and monumentality into human perception of forms.

In Munich, Lipps articulated a related theory of empathy that explained how artistic forms were conceived by artists in large part as a reaction to the psychic enjoyment that artists and viewers received when perceiving the forms.⁶¹ At around the same time, Riegl countered what he considered Semper's deterministic and materialistic arguments by focusing his attention on the *Kunstwollen* of artists that expressed the artistic spirit of the age.⁶² Over time the focus shifted ever further from the art object to the subjects, both the artist while creating the artwork, and the viewer, who could experience similar feelings when observing the art work. Riegl's arguments ascribing to artists the power to shape culture through form were intoxicating to modern architects such as Behrens and Gropius who sought to change culture through their artistic achievements.⁶³

The new focus on form and the will of the individual artist in art theory and

subsequent editions 1907, 1913) translated as The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture (1907). Behne had reviewed Hildebrand's book in [Behne], "Zur Einführung in die Literatur über moderne Kunst," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 13 (Apr. 1, 1911): 309-311. See also below.

⁶¹ On Vischer, Lipps, and empathy, see Ikonomou and Mallgrave, Empathy, Form, and Space, esp. pp. 17-29, 89ff.

⁶² On Riegl see Margaret Iversen, Alois Riegl. Art History and Theory (1993); and Margaret Rose Olin, Forms of Representations in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art (1994); and the essays in Richard Woodfield, ed., Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work (2001).

⁶³ See chapter 5.

history was accompanied by an increasing interest in an exoticized East, the mystical, and the occult. The East served as an escape from the materialism of the West, and the illumination of ancient and widespread precedents validated some of the more radical ideas of modern art. Serious historical and theoretical investigation and eventually popular interest moved from the limited canon of Western classicism to include transitional movements, regional styles, ethnic and folk art, as well as Asian and what Behne termed "so-called primitive" art.⁶⁴

In his influential dissertation Abstraction and Empathy (1908) and his Form in Gothic (1911), Worringer had followed earlier historians such as Riegl in interpreting variations in artistic form through time and across the world not as signs of artistic cycles or levels of artistic dexterity and talent, but rather as the will and intent of the artist (*Kunstwollen*).⁶⁵ With somewhat circular logic, Worringer argued that since form

⁶⁴ Behne, "Im Kampfe um die Kunst," p. 80. See also Behne, "Das Können in der primitiven Kunst," Kunstgewerbeblatt 27, no. 3 (Dec. 1915): 44-45. Worringer wrote extensively about the "primitive" and mystical quality of the Gothic, and identified "primitive" man as being a hypothetical state "before all experience, tradition and history," in Formprobleme der Gothik (1911), translated as Form in Gothic (1954), p.13. Kandinsky had referred to "our sympathy, our spiritual relationship with the primitives," in Über das Geistige in der Kunst (1911), translated as Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1914), p. 1. This was clearly part of a European wide fascination with "Primitivism," seen in painters such as Gauguin and Picasso. See Jill Lloyd, German Expressionism. Primitivism and Modernity (1991); the groundbreaking MoMA exhibition and catalogue William Rubin, ed., 'Primitivism' in Twentieth-Century Art (1984); and Jack D. Flam and Miriam Deutsch, Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History (2003), which contains a translation of the famous art critic Carl Einstein's seminal book Negerplastik (1915).

⁶⁵ See Worringer, Abstraktion und Einfühlung: ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie (1908), translated as Abstraction and Empathy: a Contribution to the Psychology of Style (1914); as well as Worringer, Formprobleme. Good summaries of Worringer's writings and his influence on Expressionist theory can be found in Donahue, Invisible

was derived from artistic will, one could in turn read and interpret the artist's will from the forms, and with it the forces and era that had spawned this will. Formal and stylistic particulars were seen to reflect both the psychological disposition of the artist, and the historical epoch.

In response to Lipps' empathy theory, on Riegl's *Kunstwollen*, as well as his own fascination with the psychological and mystical, Worringer defined two predominant poles in art: the "abstract" (Archaic, pre-Socratic Greek, Byzantine, Egyptian, Oriental) and the "empathetic" or naturalistic art (classic Greece, Renaissance, Realism).⁶⁶ Against the positivist naturalism and organic, flowing forms that came from a desire, or "empathy" to see things reproduced in a natural and familiar way (e.g., the classical style), Worringer championed the a-perspectival abstraction drawn from intuition and the jagged geometry of Eastern and "primitive" art. He hypothesized that the artists who created this abstraction transcended agoraphobic anxiety about modern chaos and confusion by creating spiritual clarity, order and the truth out of the "thing itself."⁶⁷

Cathedrals; Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism; and Bushart, Geist der Gotik, pp. 46-50.

⁶⁶ Peg Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich (1979), p. 159n.25, argues that Worringer's definition of "abstract," which he equated with an existential state of loneliness, was antithetical to the more purely formal definition which developed out of naturalism in the Jugendstil circles around Lipps, August Endell and Obrist in Munich. As will be described in greater detail below, Behne's ideas about abstract form combined the two.

⁶⁷ See Worringer, Abstraction and Empthay; and Worringer, Form in Gothic; and Worringer, "Entwicklungsgeschichtliches zur modernsten Kunst," in Im Kampfe um die Kunst, pp. 92-99; republished in Der Sturm 2, no. 75 (Aug. 1911): 597-598, partially translated in German Expressionism, pp. 9-13. Even within the naturalism, Worringer was careful to distinguish between mere copying or imitation of nature, which he did not consider art, and nearly all other forms of representing nature, which

Using racial and national characteristics, he called for a new German or Northern art, alive and mystical, related to the spirit of the Gothic cathedrals and stained-glass painters who synthesized the two approaches. This synthesis of abstraction and naturalism, of the intuitive and the rational, of fantasy and objectivity, presaged the Expressionist ethos. In Worringer's theory, art went from being a process of imitation of the natural world, to a process of creating an autonomous, independent object, from a focus on objective, external appearances, to a search for the intuitive, emotional world of artistic creativity and the perception of forms.

Behne claimed Worringer's new method represented "the logical application of Kantian principles to art history," by "moving the focus of research from the objects being perceived, to perception itself." It was an objective "method that sees all facts of art merely as arrangements of certain *a priori* categories of artistic sensibility, and a method by which these form-creating categories of the soul are the real problems to be investigated."⁶⁸ The focus, Behne explained, was on "aesthetics" and "beauty," rather than on the "correct" imitation or stylistic tendencies. The leap from art historical analysis to a program for contemporary art was not difficult from here. In Kandinsky's

implied a willful attempt by the artist to come close to the beauty and spirit of nature. See Worringer, Abstraction and Empathy. Behne reiterates this point in his review of Worringer's book; Behne, "Moderne Kunstbücher" Die Tat 5, no. 9 (Dec. 1913): 937-938.

⁶⁸ "Der großen Akzentverschiebung des Forschens von den Gegenständen des Erkennens auf das Erkennen selbst, entspräche auf kunstwissenschaftlichen Gebiete eine Methode, die alle Kunsttatsachen nur als Formungen gewisser apriorischer Kategorien des künstlerischen Empfindens betrachtet, und der diese formbildenden Kategorien der Seele das eigentliche Problem der Forschung sind"; Behne, quoting Worringer's Formprobleme der Gotik, p. 11, in Behne, "Kunst und Milieu," Die Gegenwart 42.4, no. 39 (Sept. 27, 1913): 619.

anthology The Battle for Art, Worringer urged "we want once again for art to have a suggestive power that is more potent than the suggestive power of the higher and more cultivated illusionism that has been the fate of our art since the Renaissance."⁶⁹

Although Worringer's books were historical inquiries, the lessons for contemporary art were many, and the critics and artists of the movement immediately identified his ideas as relevant.

In parallel to these historical and theoretical developments, the turn-of-the-century reform movement in the applied arts rejected the use of historical ornament in favor of increasing formal abstraction and an approach to design that sought both objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*) and free artistic creativity. The Munich Jugendstil designer Hermann Obrist pleaded in 1901 for an "expressive art" (*Ausdruckskunst*) that "harmoniously" combined "fantasy" with a "strict, logical, constructive . . . functional" approach manifested by the "purist . . . or engineering type."⁷⁰ His colleague August Endell was developing a theory of abstraction with an emphasis on pure line, color and form.⁷¹ As early as 1898 Endell had defined an abstract "Formart," an approach to art

⁶⁹ Worringer, "Entwicklungsgeschichtliches zur modernsten Kunst," cited in W. Altmeier, "Die bildende Kunst des Deutschen Expressionismus im Spiegel der Buch- und Zeitschriftenpublikationen zwischen 1910 und 1925," (Diss. 1972), p. 127-128.

⁷⁰ Hermann Obrist, "Zweckmässig oder Phantasievoll?," (Nov. 1901) in Obrist, Neue Möglichkeiten (1903), pp. 125-129. In introducing another of Obrist's essays, the editor of the important journal Der Kunstwart called Obrist one of the most serious artistic spirits of the day, who wanted nothing more than to combine a heartfelt fantasy with a clear focus on the object (Sache); Avenarius, in Obrist, "Neue Möglichkeiten in der bildenden Kunst," Der Kunstwart 16.2 (Apr. 1903): 18.

⁷¹ August Endell (1871-1925), the son of an architect, was a student of Lipps, who was teaching in Munich at the time. Both he and Obrist were part of a vibrant

"which excites the human soul only through forms, forms that are like nothing known, represent nothing and symbolize nothing, an art which works through freely found forms, as music does through free sounds."⁷² Eventually this focus on pure materialist "form" shifted to a focus on the mental and emotional *Geist* (spirit) contained in and emoted by those forms.⁷³ As a result, subsequent scholars, theorists, and artists, including Behne and many Expressionist artists, no longer saw art primarily as representation, but rather as a metaphysical presentation of an artist's will and emotions in pure forms.

culture milieu that was instrumental in propelling Kandinsky towards a pure abstraction; Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich, pp. 8-10 and chapter IV and XI; Eugene Santomaso, "Origins and Aims of German Expressionist Architecture" (Diss. 1972), p. 58-80. On Endell, see Helge David, "August Endell: The Spirit and the Beauty of the City," in Whyte, Modernism and the Spirit of the City, pp.85-93; Helge David, ed., Vom Sehen. Texte 1896-1925; Karl Scheffler, Die Architektur der Großstadt (1913; republished 1998), pp.187-193.

⁷² August Endell, "Formkunst," Dekorative Kunst 1, no. 6 (Mar. 1898): 280; also quoted in Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich, p. 167n28, with a slightly different translation on p. 25.

⁷³ This new emphasis on *Geist* is seen in the theories of Worringer and Kandinsky, discussed in further detail below. The contrast with earlier ideas can be seen even in the title of Hildebrand's Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst versus Kandinsky's Über das Geistige in der Kunst. Weiss, in Kandinsky in Munich has explored the difficulty of translating the German term *Geist* as well as related term *geistig*, *Geistige*, and even *Durchgeistigung*, a word fundamental to understanding the mission of the German Werkbund. *Geistig* is more ambiguous, and less supernatural or occult than implied in the English word "spirit." It combines intellectual, emotional, and transcendent qualities, and is opposed above all to the material, corporeal or physical. The *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities) are thus contrasted to the *Sozialwissenschaften* (social sciences) and *Naturwissenschaften* (natural or physical sciences).

Expressionism

Behne's Embrace of Expressionism

Behne was quickly swept up in these new theoretical trends, and by Worringer's ideas in particular. In both his historical studies and his criticism he promoted an intuitive rather than an intellectual approach, highlighting the "artistry" over content or style of artworks.⁷⁴ What mattered to him was understanding the essence and the process of creating art, not the philological tracing of movements or styles. Following Worringer, Behne argued that art since the Renaissance, in contrast to the more mystical and "organic-lively" art of the Gothic, had become increasingly superficial, excessive in its focus on rationality and appearances, a trend he felt had culminated in Impressionism.⁷⁵ Both Worringer and Behne believed a new art was needed to counter this tendency and championed instead an intuitive, abstract art that corresponded to modern man's experience of the world.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Behne, "Populäre Kunstwissenschaft," Wissenschaftliche Rundschau 1, no. 11 (Mar. 1, 1911): 247-250. Weiss, Kandinsky in Munich, pp. 7,10,133, and passim, has shown how much of this turn towards intuition and pure art was also developed in the *Kunstgewerbe* and Jugendstil movements, particularly in Munich around the turn-of-the-century. She argued that they stimulated the imagination, promoted planar forms, inner necessity, honesty in the use of artistic media, and reverence for works of art in themselves, without reference to the real world. The contemporaneous Symbolist art suggested that condensed, abstracted images could purvey profound significance, while symbolist theater suggested that pure color, light, sound, movement could increase dramatic effects.

⁷⁵ The Socialist critic Max Raphael had written earlier in Der Sturm that the New Secession artists did not want to give a glimpse of the fleeting as the Impressionists had done, but to evoke the enduring and eternal; Raphael, "Die neue Malerei, Neue Sezession," Der Sturm 2, no. 58 (Apr. 1911): 463, summarized in Long, German Expressionism, p. 4.

When Behne first encountered contemporary art in Walden's gallery and read theoretical essays by the artists exhibited there, he saw before him the translation of these ideas to canvas and paper. Since both Behne and Walden interpreted "Expressionism" as an attitude and experience, not a style or type, they subsumed many different types of post-Impressionist art under the term, including Fauvism, Cubism (Analytic, Synthetic, and Czech), and Futurism. Neither man was interested in differentiating these movements, since they hoped to create a single Sturm identity for modern art.⁷⁶ Unlike Worringer, Behne and Walden refused to be constrained by *a priori* principles (*Begriffe*), styles or types. To them Expressionism included all modern art of quality.⁷⁷ As Walden succinctly explained it, "We call the art of this century Expressionism, in order to distinguish it from that which is not Expressionism."⁷⁸ The art historian Charles Haxthausen has even suggested that the term "Expressionism" functioned in German art criticism for a decade or so as the term "modernism" would later function in the discourse on twentieth century avant-garde culture.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Alms, "Der Sturm, Corporate Identity."

⁷⁷ Behne wrote often of his contempt for *Begriffe*; see, for example, Behne, "Zur neuen Kunst" Der Sturm 5, no. 1 (Apr. 1914): 2; and Behne, "Prinzip oder Takt?," Die Glocke 3, no. 29 (Oct. 20, 1917): 116-119, where he wrote "Hüten wir uns vor den Begriffen," p. 119.

⁷⁸ Walden, "Kunst und Leben" Sturm (1919) as quoted in Selz, German Expressionist Painting, p. 256. In 1918 Walden defined Expressionism even more narrowly, as those artists associated with his Sturm gallery. See Dube, The Expressionists.

⁷⁹ For a similar pan-European attitude about Expressionism in the work of Hausenstein, see Haxthausen, "A Critical Illusion." Haxthausen's excellent analysis notes that for Hausenstein, like Behne, Expressionism was not just the name of a

As a result, Behne's use of stylistic terms is vague and sometimes contradictory. In a review of the 1913 Herbstsalon, for example, he discussed Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism almost interchangeably. Both Cubism and Futurism were defined in relation to "simultaneity," one of the central hallmarks of Expressionist poetry.⁸⁰ By 1914, however, he had begun to differentiate Expressionism from Cubism more explicitly. In a review of a Picasso exhibit, he characterized the artist's turn-of-the-century representational paintings as "sentimental," and his first successes with Cubism around 1907-1908 as "Expressionist." Behne discerned a profound change in Picasso's most recent work from 1913, which he saw as totally formal, and labeled "Cubist."⁸¹ In his Sturm lecture on "German Expressionism" given at the end of the year, Behne explained the overlapping nature of the terms: "Expressionism represents the goal. Modern art wants to be an art of expression. Cubism represents the language to which many, but not all, Expressionists resort. Futurism represents a name for the emotional

coherent art movement, but a theory of the avant-garde: not Renato Poggioli's individualist, experimental avant-garde, but Peter Bürger's anti-bourgeois individualism; see Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde (1984) and Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde (1968). After the war Hausenstein became quite conservative, while Behne moved further to the left.

⁸⁰ Behne, "Der erste deutsche Herbstsalon," Dresdner neueste Nachrichten (Sept. 28, 1913). On simultaneity see Däubler, Der neue Standpunkt (1916) ; and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, "Bruno Taut and Paul Scheerbart's Vision: Utopian Aspects of German Expressionist Architecture." (Diss. 1973), chapter IV, esp. pp. 356ff.. The Neo-Pathetiker friends of Walden's were considered to have invented the idea of "simultaneity" in poetry. Walden later became a strong supporter of the formalist "word-art" of poets such as August Stramm.

⁸¹ The exhibit took place in the "Neue Gallerie" in Berlin. Behne, "Pablo Picasso," Zeit im Bild 12.1, no. 2 (Jan. 8, 1914): 97-98; and Behne, "Picasso-Ausstellung," Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten (Jan. 4, 1914).

whirlwinds that played the role of instigator."⁸² In subsequent articles Behne began increasingly to favor the term "Cubism" over "Expressionism," seeing Cubism not only as a formal language, but also as an attitude, a euphoric feeling of being amidst a rushing whirlwind of life, much as Expressionism had been early on.⁸³ This change was in part motivated by the nationalism of war, during which the term "Expressionism" was increasingly used to describe only German painters, and primarily those that Behne associated with an older generation of modern artists such as Pechstein that still favored realism. For Behne, "Cubism" signified a more dynamic, pure and trans-national attitude to form and expression in art.

Despite the variety of artists and approaches gathered under the Sturm banner, Wassily Kandinsky stood out for Behne as the central figure defining the new modern art. In his book Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the Spiritual in Art, 1911) and his essay "Über die Formfrage" ("On the Question of Form") in the Blue Rider Almanac (1912), Kandinsky had elaborated what Behne considered the key concept of Expressionism: "inner necessity" (*innere Notwendigkeit*). [Figure 3.5] Kandinsky had defined it as "the impulse felt by the artist for spiritual expression."⁸⁴ Reacting against

⁸² Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," Der Sturm 5, no. 17/18 (Dec. 1914): 115; translated in Long, German Expressionism, pp. 60-63.

⁸³ Behne, "Biologie und Kubismus," Der Sturm 6, no. 11/12 (Sept. 1915).

⁸⁴ Kandinsky, Über das Geistige in der Kunst, translated as Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 26, n.1; excerpts of the book also appeared in Kandinsky, "Formen- und Farbensprache" Der Sturm 3, no. 106 (April 1912): 11-13; see also Kandinsky, "Über die Formfrage," translated as "On the Question of Form," in The Blue Rider Almanac, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc (1974), pp. 147-187; and Kandinsky, "Malerei als reine Kunst," Der Sturm (Sept. 1913). Bushart has found Behne's personal copy of The

the "nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game," he had sought refuge in a more spiritual realm.⁸⁵ For Kandinsky, the inner need of the artist comprised three mystical elements, which was expressed in every true art work. First was the artist's own individual personality. Second was the spirit of the age, or style, which would change over time. Third was an element of pure artistry, which he considered constant and universal in all art. All three were vague and hard to define, but it was in part the ambiguity which allowed so many different artists to gather under the banner of Expressionism, and also required critics to expound on the theory and explain it to the public. In the chapter "About Painting," and in much of his essay in the Almanach, Kandinsky elaborated on this last element, postulating intricate emotional and spiritual meanings for certain colors and shapes that he considered "objective."⁸⁶

Behne had expressed a similar formalist theory of painting. Within months of the release of Kandinsky's book, Behne argued that the essence of a painting must be derived "from the thing itself," that painting was "a working with colors, with lines, with light and dark, a filling of a particular surface made of paper, wood, or canvas."⁸⁷

Blue Rider Almanach in the art library of the F.U. Berlin, with a date of Sept. 4, 1912, and heavy underlining in the essay by Kandinsky; see Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus" p. 70n29, and 70n36. Good summaries of Kandinsky's aesthetic theory appear in Selz, German Expressionist Painting, chapter 18.

⁸⁵ Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, pp. 23ff.

⁸⁷ Behne, "Die neue Sezession" p. 207. Kandinsky's Über das Geistige in der Kunst was published in Dec. 1911; while the Blue Rider Almanac came out in May 1912,

For Behne, the new art was not a representation or imitation of anything, certainly nothing in nature or the visible world.⁸⁸ Instead, this new art was an expression through the process of artistic creation of an artist's inner experience of specific ideas and things. The resulting color and lines were "symbols" that together recreated (*Gestalten*), not represented, the inner essence of the experience.⁸⁹

Some historians have claimed that Behne's formalist approach and his insistence on the autonomy of art went further than Kandinsky's own position. Magdalena Bushart has even argued that Behne's position was unique in pre-War Europe.⁹⁰ Whereas Kandinsky's "inner necessity" demanded a close correlation of color and line to the spiritual and inner psychological needs of the artist, and Franz Marc wrote about how the *zeitgeist* delivered the symbols for abstract art, Behne insisted that colors and

too late to have influenced Behne in this article.

⁸⁸ "In formaler Beziehung haben die Bilder Franz Marcs mit der Natur nicht das geringste zu tun"; Behne, "Der Maler Franz Marc," p. 618.

⁸⁹ Continuing with his analysis of Marc's paintings, he writes "Keine Form, die irgendeiner Form der Natur anders als ganz von ungefähr zu vergleichen wäre, aber die Existenz, die Seele der Kreatur, das bewegte Wunder eines Waldes ist hier *gestalten*, nicht nachgeahmt. . . Der Geist des Malers ist gerichtet auf das *Innere* der Natur, und dieses Innere der Natur *gestalten* er durch die Erschaffung von Symbolen. Der Künstler ist wieder ein Schöpfer, ein Bildner und Gestalter." Behne, "Der Maler Franz Marc," p. 618, emphasis in original.

⁹⁰ Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 18. Bushart also cited as a possible source a definition of non-abstract, "pure painting" by Behne's friend Curt Herrmann, a board member of the New Secession through whom Behne met several modern artists. See Hermann, Im Kampfe um die Kunst (1911); cited in Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 70n33, 70n36.

lines provided no direct equivalent for experience or psychological states.⁹¹ He postulated that art was a pure play of forms almost completely devoid of outside references. Here Behne's formalist ideas recall the "pure visibility" of Fiedler, who was also one of the first to introduce the idea of "inner necessity" into art.⁹²

But Behne wanted it both ways. Caught up in Expressionism's spiritual rebellion against the materialism of the age, he saw art as simultaneously as an intuitive, experiential, even spiritual venture, as well as a play of visible and material forms. True art, for Behne, was neither about imitation of nature nor wilful abstraction, but rather about human expression without recourse to non-artistic ends. In other words, he saw art as a direct translation of contemporary life into aesthetic form. He

⁹¹ "Der Expressionist geht . . . von seinem inneren Erlebnis. Dafür kann er mit den Farbtöpfen der Palette kein direktes Equivalent finden. Die Freude, die Furcht, die Zärtlichkeit, die Hingabe--sie haben keine Farbe"; Behne, "Franz Marc," Dresdner neueste Nachrichten (Mar. 27, 1913). Marc had written several important theoretical pieces on his work and Expressionist art in Pan in 1912, including "Die neue Malerei," Pan 1 (1911); and Marc, "Die konstruktiven Ideen der neuen Malerei," Pan 2 (1912): 527-531.

⁹² Fiedler wrote: "Artistic activity begins when man, driven by inner necessity, grasps with the power of the mind the entangled multiplicity of appearances and develops it into a configured visual existence"; quoted in Selz, German Expressionist Painting, p. 5. Riegl also used the term "innere Notwendigkeit" when defining the term Kunstwollen; Alois Riegl, Spätromische Kunstindustrie (1901), p. 22. Detlef Mertins claims that Behne implicitly derived his ideas of *Gestaltung* from Fiedler, who was reintroduced through Hermann Konnerth's popular Die Kunsttheorie Konrad Fiedlers (1909); see Mertins, "Anything but Literal: Sigfried Giedion and the Reception of Cubism in Germany," in Architecture and Cubism, ed. Eve Blau and Nancy Troy (1997), pp. 244n19; also quoted in Mertins, "Transparencies Yet to Come: Sigfried Giedion and Adolf Behne," A + U 97, no. 10, no. 325 (Oct. 1997): 16n25. As Anthony Alofsin has explored in depth, however, similarity of ideas should not necessarily be interpreted as influence, especially in the modern era; Alofsin, Frank Lloyd Wright--the Lost Years, 1910-1922 (1993). My research has not uncovered any specific evidence of this, though Behne was clearly very familiar with Hildebrand, and no doubt knew Fiedler's work.

considered the Expressionist art in Walden's gallery an articulation of lived experience rather than sensory impressions; it was generative not imitative, Idealist not realist, oriented to the future not the past. This new art, he felt, valued the subjective as opposed to objective, inner feelings as opposed to outer forms, eternal values rather than fleeting appearances, inner truth rather than external reality.⁹³ Although Behne's ideas on art and the artists he promoted changed many times throughout his career, his desire to see life translated into art remained a constant throughout his career.

Publishing, the Press, and Expressionism

Coupled with his friendship with Walden, Behne's ability to articulate a clear and sympathetic vision for the new theory of art brought him increasingly into the Sturm fold, despite publishing relatively few pieces in Der Sturm.⁹⁴ His close identification with the Sturm enterprise and its art soon led to his dismissal from Naumann's more conservative Die Hilfe. Naumann considered Behne's views on modern art too radical, and disdainfully wrote to Behne: "I can recall that . . . I declared your article on Max Pechstein to be unsuitable. . . . This article could of course appear in any journal which is not focused on coherently shaping the minds of its readers."⁹⁵

⁹³ Behne, Zur neuen Kunst (1915), passim, esp. pp. 18-23.

⁹⁴ Behne contributed only nine articles to Der Sturm from April 1912 to November 1916; see bibliography.

⁹⁵ "Ich [habe] . . . in der Redaktionskonferenz Ihren . . . Aufsatz über Max Pechstein für ungeeignet erklärt. . . . Dieser Aufsatz kann selbst verständlich in jeder Zeitschrift erscheinen, die auf eine zusammenhängende Meinungsbildung ihrer Leser kein Gewicht legt . . . wenn in einem Aufsatz die beabsichtigte Entfernung von der

Naumann maintained that for two decades he and fellow editor Theodor Heus had been bent on promoting Naturalism ("*naturforschende Malerei*"), and it would be too big a jump to print an article that promoted the "purposeful distancing from the most truthful re-presentation of appearances." As a consequence, Naumann rejected all further articles by Behne.

It did not stall Behne. That same fall he was elected to give the first official tour through Walden's "Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon," alongside Apollinaire, Marinetti, and Hausenstein "in order to teach and win over the public" to the cause of Expressionism.⁹⁶ In November 1914 Walden published Behne's first book, Zur neuen Kunst (Towards a New Art), a compilation of earlier articles that had appeared in Der Sturm and elsewhere, as part of the "Sturm-Books" series.⁹⁷ [Figure 3.6] In December 1914 Behne was given the honor of presenting the introductory lecture to the exhibit on "German

möglichst getreuen Wiedergabe der Erscheinungen. . . "; F. Naumann letter to Adolf Behne, (Apr. 30, 1914), Berlinische Galerie, Nachlaß Behne, BG-Ar 10/94, 12. See also letter from Die Hilfe to Behne (May 3, 1913), BG-Ar 10/94, 2; and Behne, "Max Pechstein," Die Hilfe 19, no. 9 (Feb. 27, 1913): 139, the article that caused the riff.

⁹⁶ Behne mentions his tours in Behne, "Der erste deutsche Herbstsalon," Dresdner neueste Nachrichten; Behne, "Der erste deutsche Herbstsalon," Die Tat 5.2, no. 8 (Nov. 1913): 842; and Behne, "'Der erste Deutsche Herbst-Salon'," Die Neue Kunst 1 (Dec. 1913): 225.

⁹⁷ Behne's Sturm articles were collected, with changes and additions, in the book Zur neuen Kunst (1915), volume 7 of Walden's "Sturm-Bücher," and the only one dedicated to art theory rather than the actual publication of poetry, or other literature. A second edition was published in 1917, and the book was included in the anthology Adolf Behne, Architekturkritik in der Zeit und über der Zeit hinaus, ed. Haila Ochs (1994), pp. 41-53 (cited as Ochs, Architekturkritik hereafter).

Expressionists."⁹⁸ His writings and lectures quickly became something of an unofficial "Sturm-theory," articulating and clarifying Walden's own views that at times seemed not to go far beyond a simple *l'art pour l'art* approach.⁹⁹ Although Behne was soon recognized as one of the principal "Sturm-theorists," not all Sturm artists felt he deserved the position.¹⁰⁰

Behne was by no means beholden to Walden or Der Sturm, nor did he write exclusively for them. He felt an obligation towards a broader public, including those who were critical, confused or even offended by the new art and its departure from all that was familiar. In frustration Behne concluded that "the public is estranged from the new form[s]."¹⁰¹ Interestingly, however, Behne also acknowledged that the public in recent years had become more receptive to innovation and novelty. A general insecurity about all of modern life, he claims, had resulted in a public that was less smug, less sure about its reactions, less confident in laughing or dismissing the new,

⁹⁸ Behne's lecture was published as "Deutsche Expressionisten."

⁹⁹ Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus" p. 18.

¹⁰⁰ On Behne's role as early "Sturm-Theorist," especially his influence on Walden and his book Einblicke in die Kunst (1917), see Pirsich, Der Sturm, p. 64. Bushart cited several letters by the Sturm artists Adolf Knoblauch that say that Behne was lucky to have fallen into the role. Alfred Döblin also was critical of Behne, see Bushart, "Kunst-Theoretikus," p. 73n76 and n79.

¹⁰¹ Behne, "Bruno Taut," Pan 3, no. 23 (Mar. 7, 1913): 540. Behne claimed the public tended to interpret the new art using preconceived categories without looking closely at the art; Behne, "Zur neuen Kunst." Such demeaning generalizations about the lay public were the norm: art critics had long blamed a philistine or ignorant public for failing to understand new art. See B.I. Lewis, Art for All?.

and more willing to wait until it had been fully evaluated.¹⁰²

The solution for connecting the people to the radical forms of Expressionism, he concluded, was unprecedented publicity and supportive commentary to convince the public of its worth and modernity. As a result, artists increasingly looked beyond their small group exhibits and manifestoes for support. They needed big-city critics and gallery owners to decode and promote this art to the public in order to realize their own pedagogic goal of creating a new German art and culture, and to change the public conception of taste, spirit, and nation.¹⁰³ With the establishment of Walden's journal and other related enterprises after 1910, the publicity of modern art had switched almost completely from small artists' groups with limited means, to big city art dealers and professional journals and the mass media that had much more extensive resources.¹⁰⁴

The result was a quantitative explosion in the publicity surrounding Expressionist art, particularly exhibitions and publications, just as Behne was launching his career. Few movements in art and literature may be said to have been accompanied by so much contemporary theoretical writing and by such a diversity of publications as

¹⁰² Behne, "Fortschritte in der Kunstkritik," Kunstgewerbeblatt 24, no. 3 (Dec. 1912): 46.

¹⁰³ Bushart, Geist der Gotik, p. 57. Behne talks about the artists desire to be understood in Zur Neuen Kunst, p. 17. Although many Expressionist artists such as Kandinsky and the Blue Rider group began their careers working in rural conditions, they became increasingly dependent on, and eventually moved to the metropolis.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon, Expressionism, p. 101.

Expressionism.¹⁰⁵ It ranks among the most self-conscious art movements in history.

Although the artists themselves wrote a great deal, the lion's share of the intellectual work was done by what one historian has called a set of "'pure theoreticians', a band of knight-errant Doctors of Philosophy or Law, who neither painted or wrote, but explained."¹⁰⁶ This band of critics and their myriad of publications dominated the artistic scene, often overshadowing or recasting the actual art produced.¹⁰⁷

Expressionism was a modern art movement shaped and even created by critics and the press. As Shearer West recently noted, "The unity of such a 'spiritual' style was achieved through the agency of dealers, newspapers and magazines."¹⁰⁸ Through Behne's role as semi-official Sturm critic after 1913, as well as his invention of a concept of "Expressionist" architecture in 1912 that will be discussed in the next chapter, Behne would play a defining role as well. His ideal of a scholar-critic discussed above was a fundamental part of why Expressionism became so popular and important.

¹⁰⁵ The 18 thick volumes of Paul Raabe's Index Expressionismus (1972) cover the hundreds of published periodicals and books, including much on Expressionist art, though the voluminous index of hundreds of journals is dedicated exclusively to literary and artistic Expressionism, and does not tackle the journals devoted to art and architecture or the general cultural publications. See also Paul Raabe, "Illustrated Books and Periodicals," in German Expressionist Prints and Drawings, vol. 1, ed. Stephanie Barron (1989), pp. 115-130; and Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism, with a good bibliography of the rich array of theoretical texts on art from the period.

¹⁰⁶ Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Perkins and Gordon both feel that critics tried to group many artists into a single group called "Expressionism," and historians have continued the practice, but in reality the artists did not feel much shared spirit, not should their work be grouped. See Perkins, Contemporary Theory of Expressionism; and Gordon, Expressionism.

¹⁰⁸ Shearer West, Visual Arts in Germany 1890-1937 (2000), p. 84.

An enormous increase in the output of mechanically reproducible graphic work by German artists also fueled the explosion of publications around Expressionism. Some of the most important expressionist art works were found not in gold frames on the walls of homes or museums, but in periodicals, books and posters. The Expressionist movement was not built by a few artistic giants, but by scores of competent artists who together reinvigorated the arts of drawing, wood-block prints and many other forms of art on paper published in journals such as Der Sturm.¹⁰⁹ Their art, both originals and reproductions in magazines, was thus surprisingly affordable, allowing for and encouraging a whole new type of collector, including young people such as Behne, and even working-class citizens. Expressionism became an art "for and by the people."¹¹⁰ Behne began collecting prints and inexpensive paintings early on, both buying them and receiving them as gifts sometimes in return for articles he wrote on certain artists.

Behne took advantage of the publishing explosion to jump start his career. He wrote over 160 articles in his first four years as a critic, over 430 by the "end" of Expressionism in late 1920.¹¹¹ After engaging with Der Sturm in 1912 he began to

¹⁰⁹ Raabe, "Illustrated Books and Periodicals." Worringer saw the hand-carved woodblock print was seen as an especially "Germanic" art form, appropriate for the expressive character of these artists and the art they sought to make.

¹¹⁰ See Kai Gutschow, "Expressionism as Democratic Art: Adolf Behne's Criticism of Art For and By the People," unpublished MS for the session on "Art and Democracy," at the College Art Association, Boston, Feb. 2006.

¹¹¹ See bibliography for a complete list of published articles. Hausenstein and Worringer declared the end of Expressionism in late 1920. In late 1920 the USPD split.

publish articles in a greater variety of publications. Despite his training in architecture and art history, he had shied away from the professional art press before the war.¹¹² Instead his contributions were largely published in both prestigious cultural journals and popular magazines, their very subject matter marking Behne's developing stature as a seminal artistic avant-garde critic.¹¹³ His frequent articles in Socialist journals were a sign of his increased interest in Socialism and the working class.¹¹⁴ By publishing articles in the *feuilleton* section of Germany's major mass-circulation newspapers, Behne was reaching out to the classes ignored by the elitist press.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Out of a total of approximately 275 articles from before World War I, Behne wrote only nine articles in Der Sturm, eleven in Fritz Hellwag's Kunstgewerbeblatt, seven in the upstart cinema journal Bild und Film, six in Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration, and two in the short-lived Die neue Kunst (see bibliography). On the professional art journals see Lutz S. Malke, ed., Europäische Moderne. Buch und Graphik aus Berliner Kunstverlagen 1890-1933 (1989); Maria Rennhofer, Kunstzeitschriften der Jahrhundertwende in Deutschland und Österreich 1895-1914 (1997).

¹¹³ In the spring of 1913 he began publishing in Alfred Kerr's Pan, Theodor Heuß's März, Die Gegenwart, Diederichs' Die Tat, and the Preußische Jahrbücher. On these important cultural journals, see Fischer, Deutsche Zeitschriften; and Fritz Schlawe, Literarische Zeitschriften 1910-1933 (1973). Pan was first published by Paul Cassirer, but gradually taken over by Kerr, who turned towards ever more avant-garde and anti bourgeois material. Die Tat was part of Diederichs' National-Social reform program.

¹¹⁴ He wrote 45 articles in the Arbeiter-Jugend between June 1912 and November 1918; and over a hundred as regular columnist for the Sozialistische Monatshefte between April 1913 and February 1933. See chapter 1 above for more on both journals and Behne's political involvement and affiliations.

¹¹⁵ The latest research shows that Behne published a series of articles in the Dresdner neueste Nachrichten, then one article each in the Kölnische Zeitung, the Frankfurter Zeitung, the Socialist daily Vorwärts, the Hamburger Fremdenblatt, Hamburger Nachrichten, and Berliner Tageblatt, and in the spring of 1914 a series of articles in the Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung on East Prussian architects. On the

Articles in popular magazines point to his desire to educate the masses about the new art.¹¹⁶

The reasons for this breadth of publishing were many. Money was always an issue. By the end of 1913 Behne was supporting himself, a wife and child, with a combination of freelance writing and teaching.¹¹⁷ [Figure 3.7] As Behne's wife Elfriede Schäfer Behne recalled years later, though times were often tough, "the family cherished intellectual things at the expense of material ones," preferring to buy books, theater tickets and trips, rather than other fancy things.¹¹⁸ Behne dedicated his life to the cause of criticism, literally living off of his ability to publish as widely as possible. His

history and ideology of these newspapers see Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, ed., Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts (1972); Peter de Mendelsohn, Zeitungsstadt Berlin (1959); Karl Schottenloher and Johannes Binkowski, Flugblatt und Zeitung 2 vols. (1922, revised ed. 1985); Otto Groth, Die unerkannte Kulturmacht. Grundlegung der Zeitungswissenschaft 8 vols. (1928) revised edition (1960).

¹¹⁶ When Wissenschaftliche Rundschau was taken over by Die Umschau in 1913, Behne switched too, and also began publishing in the popular magazines Allgemeiner Beobachter, Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte, and the illustrated Zeit im Bild. For general remarks about the significance of such popular and illustrated magazines, see K. Schottenloher, Karl and J. Binkowski, Flugblatt und Zeitung. Ein Wegweiser durch das gedruckte Tagesschriftum, vol. 2 (1922), revised edition (1985).

¹¹⁷ Although not fully verifiable, Behne taught continuing education classes from the summer of 1912, up until 1933, and then again after 1945.

¹¹⁸ Elfriede Wilhelmine Adelheid Schäfer (June 16, 1883 - May 7, 1960), was the second of four children and only daughter of railroad engineer Karl Schäfer (who died when Elfriede was 6) and Anna März. From age 17 on she worked as a nanny in Hessen, then Berlin, then the French Riviera, before becoming a Kindergarten teacher in Berlin and marrying Behne on June 5, 1913. She continued to work as a teacher while, raising the Behne's two daughters, Karla (Dec. 1, 1913 - Mar. 3, 1966) and Julia (July 11, 1921 - ?). See family anecdotes recorded by Behne's wife Elfriede in Dec. 1942, Box 8, Folder 70, Nachlaß Behne/Wirsig, Rep. 200 Acc.3860, Landesarchiv Berlin.

criticism was not beholden to an employer, clients or even a single journal. This fact alone begins to distinguish Behne from other well known architectural critics such as Behrendt, a Prussian government official in Berlin, and Platz, Director of the Building Department in the city of Mannheim.

Avant-garde journals such as Walden's Der Sturm paid notoriously little, if anything. Their authors wrote for the cause of modern art, and to support their artist friends.¹¹⁹ Newspapers and some popular magazines, on the other hand, paid handsomely, by the line. Other journals paid by the page, or per article. As a result, Behne often shopped articles around in search of better commissions, balancing his concerns for the money with those for prestige or circulation.¹²⁰ He frequently published the same article or some slight variation of it, or a combination of two or more articles in several different journals or newspapers to insure additional income, as well as to address different readers or emphasize important points.¹²¹ Writing a regular

¹¹⁹ Pirsich gathered evidence, including a letter from Behne to Walden from Aug. 22, 1915, to claim that Walden probably paid no commissions during the first few years, except for a complementary issue of the journal in which one's article was published. Die Aktion also paid nothing for contributions. There is no record whether Behne received any payment for his book Zur Neuen Kunst, though correspondence with Walden does acknowledge many complimentary copies, which he gave away to friends, and to reviewers. Walden's Sturm enterprise was always notoriously short of money, especially after World War I; see Pirsich, Der Sturm, pp. 75-77, 168.

¹²⁰ In November 1912, for example, Behne tried in vain to publish an article on Bruno Taut in Karl Scheffler's prestigious Kunst und Künstler before settling in March 1913 on publishing an article in Alfred Kerr's Pan. See below for further examples.

¹²¹ An added reason for republishing articles was the writing process itself. Behne wrote easily, in a fluid prose that probably did not need much revision. Undoubtedly he believed it was more important to publish in quantity than achieve perfection. The catchy turn-of-phrase for which he achieved some notoriety even in his

column such as the one Behne had in the Sozialistische Monatshefte and later in Die Weltbühne, provide some steady income. After the war Behne's reputation landed him jobs as salaried art editor from 1919 to 1922 for the daily newspaper Die Freiheit, the official party organ of the Independent Socialist party, and the communist Die Welt am Abend, a paper owned by the Willi Münzenberg press agency from 1924 to 1932, assuring some financial stability.

Beginning in 1915, when Behne was called up for military duty, and again in the late 1920s when illness and convalescence often made work impossible, his wife Elfriede also published extensively, under both her maiden and married names.¹²² She later acknowledged having written many of Behne's articles during the inflation period in order to bring in money.¹²³ She also composed much of the correspondence that

own day, however, came only with some practice and repetition. Behne developed his arguments over time, working out ideas from one article to the next. The more he wrote, the more he advanced and clarified his ideas. Once he got an idea down successfully, however, he was not shy of republishing it, often. The books were developed from many earlier articles, many passages copied directly.

¹²² Behne's sick phases are documented in short postcards and comments in countless letters he wrote to friends and colleagues. See, for example, the 181 letters in correspondence between the Behnes and the slightly younger painter Walter Dexel and his wife, at the Getty Research Institute Archives, excerpts of which appear in W. Witt, Hommage à Dexel (1890-1973) (1980), pp. 87-108. See the bibliography below for a list of Elfriede's publishing.

¹²³ Elfriede's work appeared primarily in the working-class journals, including Arbeiter-Jugend, Die Lesestunde and Wohnungswirtschaft. She mentions writing for Behne in her family remembrances written in Dec. 1942, in Box 8, Folder 70, Landesarchiv Berlin. Such collaboration was certainly not unique, and may even have seemed natural among the colleagues and friends who often worked and socialized in large groups. There were a number of husband and wife teams inspired each other in the arts and often collaborated; such as the Waldens, the Gropius', the Moholy-Nagys, the Mendelsohns, and the Behrendts, to name just a few.

Behne had with artists and publishers. Although many of the articles published under Elfriede's name were clearly her own inspiration, including pieces on toys and classrooms related to her work as a nursery school teacher, others followed Behne's topics, ideas and style very closely, including articles on art historical figures. There must have been close collaboration in their work. Perhaps Behne even used her name occasionally to publish in more venues under a different name, much as when he used a pseudonym early in his career.

Circulation numbers were key. The avant-garde magazines were printed in very low numbers, their importance in the history books far outweighing the few hundred copies that were often printed. But, as Behne's correspondence attests, these journals were re-circulated extensively among friends and colleagues, and Behne both borrowed and loaned specific issues. The most popular, more mass-market journals had circulations of around 5,000-10,000, while some newspapers had circulations of over 100,000, with three editions a day. Their readers, however, certainly did not read as much or as intensely as the readers of subscription journal readers.¹²⁴

Behne's enormous output corresponded well with the anti-elitist, anti-bourgeois platforms of the Expressionists and Socialist movements, which sought to reach out to the working-class and the broader public in order to inspire efforts to create a more universal, collective culture. These artists' impassioned rebellion against the academy, the Secession, the bourgeois establishment and industrial capitalism led them to more

¹²⁴ Die Gegenwart had a circulation of 30,000 before war; see Schlawe, Literarische Zeitschriften, p. 65.

popular art forms such as print graphics, word-art, and poetry. The art historian Barbara Wright has even gone so far as to claim that writing about art in journals and newspapers was, for many critics and artists, a form of politics, part of a prevalent neo-Kantian philosophy that promoted art and ethical action as a way to oppose the wanton materialism of the dominant culture and the pettiness of regular politics.¹²⁵

Expanding "Expressionism" to Other Disciplines

Behne's most important contribution to the discourse of modern art and architecture before the War was not the theoretical definition of a new art, but rather the expansion of his Idealist vision of what constituted Expressionist thought to other cultural production and intellectual fields. Although the term "Impressionism," had long been used to describe non-artistic endeavors such as philosophy, the term "Expressionism" until 1912 had been used almost exclusively in reference to painting and literature to denote an art that focused on inner essence rather than external appearances, such as "Impressionism."¹²⁶ Similar to the art historians Riegl, Worringer, and Wölfflin, however, Behne believed that the spirit of an age manifested itself in

¹²⁵ Barbara D. Wright, "Sublime Ambition: Art, Politics and Ethical Idealism in the Cultural Journals of German Expressionism," in Bronner and Kellner, eds., Passion and Rebellion, pp. 82-112. Whereas Worringer, Behne, and much of the first generation of pre-War Expressionists were often influenced in their vision of better society by the occult, mystical tracts, or non-Western art, the post-war generation was increasingly inspired by the working-class utopian experiment in Russia and the personal belief that art was a form of politics that could provide benefits for all.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Richard Hamann, Der Impressionismus in Leben und Kunst (1907), where he describes Nietzsche's philosophy and literary style as "Impressionist."

equivalent ways in all media. Riegl, for example, had written: "Basic laws are common to all . . . media, as is the *Kunstwollen*, which rules them all; but these laws cannot be recognized with the same clarity in all media."¹²⁷ In his quest to define art as an autonomous discipline without outside references, Behne did not believe that any field expressed or directly represented a zeitgeist or a universal *Kunstwollen*. Rather, he felt that the new art of Expressionism merely "interacted with the zeitgeist" and had much in common with other contemporary intellectual and spiritual endeavors.¹²⁸

In an analysis of the paintings of Franz Marc from late March 1913, Behne addressed Worringer's call for a new art when he argued that Marc's abstracted, strong forms were giving expression to "a new age of intuition, of metaphysics, of synthesis." He proclaimed: "We live in a new age, and we can even call it an 'Expressionist' age."¹²⁹ Later that fall Behne began to expound on this new age in an in-depth critique of Taine's "milieu theory" of art history that marked a key turning-point in the development of Behne's ideas.¹³⁰ As Behne saw it, Taine's art history sought to use positivist scientific principles to focus on exterior values of race, technique, artist's biography, and contextual atmosphere as the primary determinants of art. In the process Taine all but ignored the fantasy, color sense, perceptual qualities, and other

¹²⁷ Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, translated as *Late Roman Art Industry* (1985), p. 15, and cited in Schwartz, *The Werkbund*, p. 22.

¹²⁸ Behne, "Der Maler Franz Marc," *Pan*, p. 617.

¹²⁹ Behne, "Der Maler Franz Marc," p. 617. See Worringer, "Entwicklungsgeschichtliches."

¹³⁰ Behne, "Kunst und Milieu."

"psycho-physical" inner values that Behne felt were key to the artistic process. Behne claimed that Taine's ideas, "like Charles Darwin's theory of evolution," were deterministic "children of the materialist, positivist nineteenth century," an epoch then drawing to a close. It was becoming clearer to Behne that the new era was based on other principles: "today we go from the inner to the external; in all areas we stand under the sign of a new inner and spiritual reality. . . . In place of Impressionism is coming Expressionism."¹³¹ The new spirit, he felt, was most clearly visible in painting, but it could be found in other disciplines as well. Behne wrote that Taine's context-focused milieu theory was "Impressionist" in comparison to Wölfflin's study of the inner essence of forms, which he labeled an "Expressionist" art history. Similarly, in literature Behne claimed that the psychological novels of Heinrich Mann were "Expressionist" compared to the "Impressionist" work of his "less able" brother Thomas Mann.¹³²

Behne expanded his analysis beyond the arts when in the same article he characterized the ideas of the theoretical biologist Jacob van Uexküll as "Expressionist."¹³³ Much as contemporary artists, critics, and philosophers, the biologist

¹³¹ "Der Weg geht heute wieder von innen nach außen; wir stehen auf allen Gebieten im Zeichen einer neuen Innerlichkeit und Geistigkeit. . . . An Stelle des Impressionismus, stellt sich der Expressionismus," Behne, "Kunst und Milieu," p. 599.

¹³² Behne repeats this claim in several articles: first in "Kunst und Milieu," p. 599-600; then "Impressionismus und Expressionismus," in the appropriately named section of the Berliner Tageblatt: Der Zeitgeist n.39 (Sept. 29. 1913): 1, which was republished as part of Behne, Zur neuen Kunst, p. 27-28; and in Ochs, Architekturkritik, pp. 41-53.

¹³³ Behne first mentions Uexküll (1864-1944) in September 1913 in "Kunst und Milieu," the same year as Uexküll's book Bausteine was published, and refers to his ideas in many essays after that. His most in-depth analyses, however, were written during the war: "Deutsche Expressionisten," (Dec. 1914); and "Biologie und Kubismus"

Uexküll was fighting against the materialism of his age. In biology, Behne claimed, such a materialism was represented by Darwin's soulless and deterministic theory of evolution. Following Uexküll, Behne also became critical of the monistic, inductive theories of Ernst Haeckel expressed in his popular books Kunstformen der Natur (Artforms of Nature, 1899) and Kristallseelen (The Souls of Crystals, 1917).¹³⁴ [Figure 3.8] In the former, Haeckel analyzed and illustrated in exquisite, lurid detail a wide range of invertebrate organisms as the embodiment of pervasive, universal patterns and order. In the latter Haeckel used crystals to argue for the oneness of all material and spiritual forces, claiming that all objects, both animate and inanimate, had a soul. In the pure, prismatic arrangements of crystals, for example, he saw a near Nietzschean "will" and "desire." Haeckel's books and ideas were very influential, including among many Art Nouveau and Secession artists searching for a beauty and order in nature.¹³⁵ Even Behne had used Haeckel's drawings to illustrate a point in the Arbeiter-Jugend that beauty in nature leads naturally to our enjoyment.¹³⁶ [Figure 3.9] But after reading

(Sept. 1915), which both appeared in Der Sturm, partially as a response to Uexküll's rejection of Behne's assertion that his ideas were related to Expressionist art.

¹³⁴ Ernst Haeckel, Kunstformen der Natur (1899); and Haeckel, Kristallseelen. Studien über das anorganische Leben (1917). On Monism and Expressionism, see Santomaso, "Origins and Aims," pp.113ff.

¹³⁵ On Haeckel (1834-1919) see Pehnt, Architektur des Expressionismus 3rd ed., pp. 32-33. Haeckel himself had anticipated that his drawings and ideas would be appealing to artists. Illustrations from his books can be found in many surveys of Art Nouveau art, including Paul Greenhalgh, ed., Art Nouveau, 1890-1914 (2000), p.54.

¹³⁶ [Behne], "Von der Schönheit in der Natur," Arbeiter-Jugend 5, no. 3 (Feb. 1, 1913): B.44-45, where he uses the Kantian argument that beauty in nature leads to enjoyment.

Uexküll, Behne followed the biologist in accusing Haeckel and his "monistic" theory of over-simplifying the essence of life and nature by seeing everything beholden to a single root explanation.

Insisting that nature was more than a random "survival of the fittest" or a "dance of atoms," Uexküll had set out to explain the non-physical, "unseen," "wondrous" and inner spiritual aspects in all living creatures.¹³⁷ Rather than define life in such a way that "organisms are just machines," he began to break down life into a complex set of inter-relating and inter-acting spheres of influence and perceptions. In books such as Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere (The Outer and Inner World of Animals) and Bausteine zu einer biologischen Weltanschauung (Building Blocks towards a Biological Worldview), Uexküll concluded that every organism lives in a unique "surrounding world" (*Umwelt*), which is determined by the specific way each animal was physically configured to interact with it and what sensory stimulations it responded to.¹³⁸ The sum of all possible stimuli was its "sign-world" (*Merkwelt*), while the sum of all possible responses or actions to the sign-world was its "effectual world" (*Wirkungswelt*).¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Jacob von Uexküll, Bausteine zu einer biologischen Weltanschauung, ed. F. Gross (1913), pp. 23, 55ff., "Das Unsichtbare in der Natur."

¹³⁸ Uexküll, Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere (1909); Uexküll, Bausteine.

¹³⁹ Uexküll is often mentioned as one of the fathers of semiotics and the science of signs. See his Theoretische Biologie (1920), translated as Theoretical Biology (1926), and the Estonian website www.zbi.ee/~uexkull/ for a list of publications on Uexküll. Uexküll's terms, *Wirkungswelt* and *Innenwelt*, also relate to aesthetics and art history, note for example Hildebrand's idea of "Wirkungsform" and "Daseinsform"; see Ákos Moravánsky, Die Erneuerung der Baukunst. Wege zur Moderne in Mitteleuropa, 1900-1940 (1988), p. 344.

Corresponding to this focus on the perception and interaction with the physical world, Uexküll also defined an inner world (*Innenwelt*) of instinct and intuition which directed and oriented the organism. He added to this the special position that man has in this whole system, insisting that reality can only be defined by the sensibility and subjective perception of each individual person. Throughout his writings, detailed empirical descriptions of animal behavior, from plankton to humans, was interlaced with metaphysical speculation and explanation.

Behne recognized immediately the similarities of his own ideas on a new art with Uexküll's Idealist, almost vitalist conception of nature that focused not on forms but on perception and a subjective interaction with the world. The key link was the concept of the "organic" that had been used in much Expressionist art literature, including Worringer's. It referred not to the curved forms of organisms, but rather to an organizational and functional principle whereby all parts grow together to form a whole that is greater than the sum of its distinct parts, where every part is functionally inter-dependent on the other, such that no piece could be removed without destroying the whole. In Uexküll's biology, Behne saw the concept of "organic" explained in a manner that could be applied to many fields, including art and architecture.¹⁴⁰ In an article directed towards the educated, Sturm Gallery audience, Behne argued,

"Every artwork that is worthy of the name is an organism. An unorganic artwork is a contradiction in terms. Creating organically is the essence of

¹⁴⁰ For example Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. On the use of the word "organic" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as Behne was using it, see Caroline von Eck, *Organicism in Nineteenth-century Architecture* (1994).

all artistic work, and the gift of letting mental things grow organically is what distinguishes an artist . . . from a non-artist. The essence of the organic is twofold: purposiveness in relation to a distinct goal, and lively activity as a product of coordinated functions. The goal of an expressionist picture . . . [is] the expression of an experience."¹⁴¹

Behne discerned in Uexküll's writings an "Expressionist" attention to the inner essence of life rather than on mechanistic or "Impressionist" physical form. For Behne, Uexküll offered literal proof of the Expressionist proclamation that "art and life are related . . . that art is identical to life."¹⁴² Quoting Uexküll, Behne wrote that art, like life, is an "event" (*Geschehnis*), a "creation" (*Schaffung*), an "autonomous" process, not a set of forms determined by materials, stylistic tendencies or other extrinsic values.¹⁴³ In contrast to things such as machines that are "made" or intellectually "calculated," art "arises" and "grows from the inside out," like organisms. The artist is an "instinctual animal," a mere vessel for this creative process, with greater spiritual and psychic inter-

¹⁴¹ "Jedes Kunstwerk, das den Anspruch auf diese Bezeichnung erheben kann, ist ein Organismus. Ein unorganisches Kunstwerk ist ein Widerspruch in sich selbst. Organisch schaffen, ist das Wesen der künstlerischen Arbeit, und die Gabe, geistige Dinge organisch wachsen zu lassen, ist das, was den Künstler, im weiteren Sinne, vom Nicht-Künstler unterscheidet. . . . Zweierlei gehört zum Wesen des Organischen: die Zweckmäßigkeit in Rücksicht auf ein bestimmtes Ziel und die lebendige Tätigkeit in zusammengreifenden Funktionen. Das Ziel des expressionistischen Bildes haben wir erkannt in dem Ausdruck eines Erlebnisses"; Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," p. 114.

¹⁴² Behne, "Biologie und Kubismus," p. 70.

¹⁴³ Uexküll writes: "Das Wesentliche am Tier ist nicht seine Form, sondern seine Umformung, nicht die Struktur, sondern der Lebensprozeß, 'Das Tier ist ein bloßes Geschehnis'; Uexküll, *Bausteine*, p. 29. Also: "Die Gestalt eines Hauses oder eines Tieres ist nämlich nicht bestimmt durch Eigenschaften des Baumaterials, sondern lediglich durch seine Funktion"; Uexküll, *Bausteine*, p. 40. See Behne, "Expressionisten." Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* had written famously in the third moment of his Analytic of the Beautiful: "Schönheit ist Form der Zweckmäßigkeit eines Gegenstandes, sofern sie ohne Vorstellung eines Zwecks an ihm wahrgenommen wird."

connection to the plans, organization, and constructions of the world we live in.¹⁴⁴

Responding to Uexküll's architectural metaphors that all organisms are "built," "like a house," according to "building plans," Behne proclaimed that "Art is a *geistig* organism," with each form, like an organ or a "room," carefully linked though a "strong composition," and related to all the other forms of the artwork through "function" (*Funktion*). The result was a unified whole from which no pieces could be removed. Behne felt that the final purpose for both nature and art was beauty. Uexküll, borrowing explicitly from Kant, maintained that the "recognition of purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) in our surroundings is beauty," while Behne insisted that the "young artists" (Expressionists) make beauty the central focus of their efforts.¹⁴⁵

Although Behne repeatedly invoked Uexküll's "Expressionist" mindset, the biologist for his part seemed skeptical about being associated with the art movement. After visiting an exhibit of Futurist art at the Sturm gallery in the summer of 1914, Uexküll published a small piece in the prestigious journal Neue Rundschau comparing the new art to what he called the outdated monistic scientific theories that reduced all

¹⁴⁴ Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," p. 114; and Behne "Biologie und Kubismus," p. 69, for this and the following. Uexküll's prose is replete with architectural metaphors, though Behne does not focus or quote them much.

¹⁴⁵ Uexküll: "Die Erkenntnis der eigenen Zweckmäßigkeit in einer zweckmäßigen Welt ist für das menschliche Leben von der allergrößten Bedeutung, denn die Überzeugung der eigenen Zweckmäßigkeit ist Glück und die empfundene Zweckmäßigkeit in der Umwelt ist Schönheit," in Bausteine, p. 139. Behne: "Die jungen Künstler dagegen stellen in den Mittelpunkt ihres Schaffens den Dienst der Schönheit," "Biologie und Kubismus," p. 69.

matter to identical "shards" (atoms) and "ignored all mysticism."¹⁴⁶ At the opening lecture to the Sturm exhibit "Deutsche Expressionisten" in December 1914, Behne sought to correct Uexküll's misunderstanding, and correlated in some detail Uexküll's theoretical biology with ideas on modern art.

Although Uexküll's critique in the summer had no hint of nationalism, Behne's response six months into World War I included aspects of wartime jingoism when he proclaimed Expressionism to be German. In explaining the name of the exhibition, "German Expressionism," Behne announced: "Not much needs to be said about the term 'German'. Just this: with respect to the painters shown here, Campendonk, Franz Marc, and Kokoshka, I would urge you to think not so much about other painters born in Germany, . . . but rather about the painters of *our* Gothic, such as the creators of the Strasbourg stained glass . . . or later spiritual descendants such as Mathias Grünewald. 'German'--that means . . . impetuous presentations, the urge to fantasy, and the reign of the spirit."¹⁴⁷ He defined Expressionism as "nothing but the love of expression . . . the expression (*Ausdruck*) of an experience." In reality, however, he saw this art as a grounded reawakening of timeless tendencies in true art. He also lamented that

¹⁴⁶ Uexküll, "Das genetische Prinzip," Neue Rundschau 25/I (1914): 156-157.

¹⁴⁷ "Ueber den Begriff 'Deutsch' braucht gewiß nicht viel gesagt zu werden. Nur so viel: es wird sich empfehlen, in Verbindung mit den hier vertretenen Malern, mit Campendonk, Franz Marc, Kokoshka, nicht so sehr an Ludwig Knaus und Paul Thumann zu denken, die unlegbar *auch* in Deutschland geboren sind, als vielmehr die Maler unserer Gotik, etwa an die Schöpfer der Straßburger Glasfenster . . . oder um einen großen Geistesverwandten späterer Zeit zu nennen, an Mathias Grünewald. 'Deutsch'--das bedeutet hier . . . Leidenschaftlichkeit der Darstellung, Drang der Phantasie, Herrschaft des Geistes;" Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," p. 114; also translated with variations in Washton Long, German Expressionism, p. 61.

Expressionism was increasingly being seen by critics as merely an attention-grabbing fashion or simply as "naked formalism, lifeless aestheticism." Behne insisted that such assessments could not be further from the truth, claiming that expressionism was a pure art that emerges out of an inherent "inner richness of forms . . . leaving out everything that could prevent the direct realization of colors, forms and lines."¹⁴⁸

Behne later tried to sell a greatly expanded version of this Sturm lecture on Uexküll to Rene Schickele's highly respected pacifist journal Die weißen Blätter, but ended up publishing it as "Biologie und Kubismus" in Walden's Der Sturm in September 1915, and again in Diederich's Die Tat in November 1917.¹⁴⁹ Ambivalent about the growing German nationalism during the war, Behne all but left out the increasingly nationalistic term "Expressionism," and instead focused on "Cubism," which he considered "the Idealism of modern art."¹⁵⁰ Although Cubism too was

¹⁴⁸ Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," p. 114. It is interesting to note that the historian Iain Boyd Whyte has (undeservedly) labeled Behne as "ever susceptible to the fashion of the moment," thus corresponding to the "popular" opinion about Expressionism; I.B. Whyte, Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism (1982), p. 91.

¹⁴⁹ In a letter to Walden from Nov. 23, 1914, Behne claims he wrote "Biologie und Kubismus" in November 1914, even before "Deutsche Expressionisten" was published. In a letter from Aug. 22, 1915, Behne complained that he was being rejected in publishing this piece in Schickele's Die weißen Blätter, that he had wanted to publish in Der Sturm all along "were it not for the evil mammon." Both letters in Behne Nachlaß, SBPK.

¹⁵⁰ Behne, "Deutsche Expressionisten," p. 114; Behne, "Biologie und Kubismus," p. 71. Mertins, "Anything but Literal," pp. 222-224, claims this emphasis on Cubism was motivated by Behne's discovery of the theory of Czech Cubism, especially Josef Capek's essay "Moderne Architektur" in Der Sturm 5, no. 3 (Dec. 1914): 18ff, and a conscious turn away from Expressionism, towards a more "constructive" Cubism that would eventually lead Behne to modern architecture. A close reading of all of Behne's texts from the era, however, reveals very little change in theory, or even terminology,

increasingly criticized as a "cold, intellectual method," Behne insisted it was born of feelings and emotions. He saw in Uexküll's explanation of life as a cacophony of overlapping stimuli and perceptions a model for what Expressionist artists of all types were presenting in their work. Cubism in particular, he felt, was the "visual exploration of the feeling of life. . . . The Cubist painter is in the middle of all things, they surround and encircle him, their abundance enthralls him, their incessantly moving, mysterious, autonomous life is intoxicating. [His work is] no positivist result, no explanation, no moral, use or lesson, but instead glorification, amazement, and adoration."¹⁵¹ Behne argued that Impressionism, and in fact all art since the Renaissance, had tried to escape life through the use of linear perspective and station points outside the world picture of the subject. Cubism and the new modern art, on the other hand, revealed in the

and no references to Czech Cubism. The change in emphasis is more likely due to the criticism the term Expressionism was increasingly subject to, the pacifist nature of Schikele's journal that would have demanded minimal jingoism with which the term was increasingly associated after the begin of the war in August 1914, Behne's flexible use of terms (*Begriffe*) within the Expressionism family, and a direct response to Uexküll's trouble with Futurism, which Behne saw as closely related to Cubism. See also Moravánsky, Erneuerung der Baukunst, pp. 152ff., cited in Simone Hain, "'Ex oriente lux'. Deutschland und der Osten," in Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani and Romana Schneider, eds., Moderne Architektur in Deutschland 1900 bis 1950. Expressionismus und Neue Sachlichkeit (1994), pp. 133-134; Vladimír Slapeta, in Czech Cubism: Architecture, Furniture, and Decorative Arts, ed. Alexander von Vegesack (1992); and Irena Zantovska Murray, "The Burden of Cubism: The French Imprint on Czech Architecture, 1910-1914," in Blau and Troy, Architecture and Cubism, pp. 41-57. On the exchange between Berlin and the East, see Timothy O. Benson, ed., Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930 (2002), esp. pp. 34-67; as well as Vladimír Slapeta, "Prag - Wien- Berlin," in Jiri Svestka and Tomáš Vlček, eds. 1909-1925 Kubismus in Prag. Melerie, Skulptur, Kunstgewerbe, Architektur (1991), pp. 86-90

¹⁵¹ Behne, "Biologie und Kubismus," p. 71.

dynamic, overlapping series of subjective worlds of which all organisms are a part. Cubism tried to recreate this dynamic feeling through its a-perspectival composition of forms that expressed feelings of simultaneity, multiplicity, and animation.¹⁵²

Behne's preoccupation with defining Expressionism, both diachronically in opposition to the Impressionist and Renaissance worldview that preceded it, and synchronically in relation to other contemporary disciplines and cultural endeavors in a clear and enlightening manner, represents precisely what he himself had called for in his early demand for new scholar-critics to promote a new discourse of art. This ability to show the relations between different movements and ideas, to sense common denominators, to fashion clearly understood and memorable models of interpretation that would be understood by a broad, lay public, would remain one of Behne's hallmarks as a critic.

Despite the power and originality of Behne's comparative, critical interpretations, he clearly drew from many authors, artists and theories that were circulating in the café culture and journals of the day. Some, such as Worringer and Kandinsky, were openly discussed. But most, including Fechner and Fiedler, are impossible to identify definitively.¹⁵³ Others, such as Nietzsche or Simmel were sources

¹⁵² For Behne's negative views on perspective and Cubism's embrace of a more wholistic world, see also Behne, "Stilbemerkungen zu moderner Kunst," Neue Rundschau 27.1, no. 4 (Apr. 1916): 553-560. Behne, "Nähe und Ferne" Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration 39 (Dec. 1916): 207-211.

¹⁵³ On Fechner, see Matthias Schirren, "Allbeseelung, Phantastik und Anthropomorphisierung. Die Lehre Gustav Fechners," in Kristallisationen, Splitterungen. Bruno Tauts Glashaus, ed. Angelika Thiekötter and et al. (1993), pp. 76-78.

so common in his day that they warranted little more than a reference or an aphoristic quote.

One interesting example in the context of Behne's interpretation of Uexküll is the French philosopher Henri Bergson, whose name Behne cited in the above-mentioned article on Expressionism. Bergson, who was born in 1859, the same year as Darwin's Origin of the Species was published, was most celebrated in Germany for his almost Nietzsche-like "Lebensphilosophie," that encouraged a more intuitive grasp of being, and encouraged people to celebrate the irrational side of life. In his 1907 book L'Évolution, published in a German translation in 1912 by Diederichs, Bergson too criticized at length the mechanistic sensibility of Darwin's thought. Unlike Uexküll, he accepted evolution as a scientifically established fact. But Bergson criticized the philosophical interpretations that had been given of Darwin for failing to see the importance of duration and hence missing the very uniqueness of life. He proposed that the whole evolutionary process should be seen as the endurance of an *élan vital* (vital impulse) that is continually developing and generating new forms. Evolution, in short, is creative and generative, not mechanistic.¹⁵⁴ Although Behne only mentioned Bergson's name, he clearly had a greater interest and acquaintance with these ideas

¹⁵⁴ See Henri Bergson, L'Évolution créatrice (1907), published in translation as Schöpferische Entwicklung (1912) by Diederichs; and as Creative Evolution (1911). On the relation of the Sturm group to Bergson see Anita Beloubek-Hammer, "Der STURM von Herwarth Walden--Kampfplatz der internationalen Avantgarde für die 'Kunstwende'," in Alms and Steinmetz, Der Sturm, pp.39-40. On Diederichs relation to Bergson, see Stark, Entrepreneurs of Ideology, p. 68. Behne refers enthusiastically to Bergson's ideas in "Kunst und Milieu"; in the review "Der erste Deutsche Herbstsalon," DieTat; as well as in Zur neuen Kunst.

through the reform culture promoted by Diederichs and the constant search for philosophical underpinnings for a creative, intuitive lifestyle that was threatened by the industrial metropolis.

Behne's engagement with Expressionist art beginning in 1911 was instrumental in helping him find a definition of art that was true to his values and the time. The fluid exchange between artists from all the arts that characterized this cultural moment pushed Behne to move beyond a narrow stylistic or medium-oriented sense of what constituted good art. Through the ideas of philosophers such as Bergson and Nietzsche, through his engagement with biologists as divergent as Darwin and Uexküll, through his engagement with the theoretical writings of Kandinsky and the novels of Heinrich Mann, Behne came to understand that an appropriate modern art was at its core the same in every medium. His training in both art history and the practice of architecture soon allowed him to make the jump from his convictions about modern painting to defining a new architecture for the modern world.

Chapter 3 Illustrations



Figure 3.1. Portrait of Herwarth Walden, 1918. Source: Freya Mühlhaupt, ed. Herwarth Walden, 1878-1941 (1991), n.p.

Umfang acht Seiten Einzelbezug 75 Pfennig

DER STURM

WOCHENSCHRIFT FÜR KULTUR UND DIE KÜNSTE

Redaktion und Verlag: Berlin-Halensee, Katharinenstrasse 5 Fernsprecher Amt Pfalzburg 3524 / Anzeigen-Annahme ... durch den Verlag und sämtliche Annoncenbureaus ...	Herausgeber und Schriftleiter: HERWARTH WALDEN	Vierteljahrsbezug 1,50 Mark / Halbjahrsbezug 3,— Mark / Jahresbezug 6,— Mark / bei freier Zustellung / Insertions- preis für die fünfgespaltene Nonpareillezeile 60 Pfennig
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JAHRGANG 1911 BERLIN DEZEMBER 1911 NUMMER 90

Inhalt: TRUST: Kunstkritiker mit und ohne: Der Mann mit den Stimmungsbildern / Der Mann ohne Geistesvermögen / OSKAR BAUM: Die Rettung / PAUL ZECH: Gedichte / ELSE LASKER-SCHÜLER: Briefe nach Norwegen / KURT HILLER: Der träumerische Schaffner / TRUST: Theater und Varieté: Die neue Oper / Wintergarten / Passagetheater / J. A.: Kunst, Demokratie und Presse / Beachtenswerte Bücher / OSKAR KOKOSCHKA: Porträt



Kunstkritiker mit und ohne

Der Mann mit den Stimmungsbildern

Es gibt in Berlin einen Herrn, der einen schwunghaften Handel mit Stimmungsbildern in den Provinzen Deutschlands betreibt. Sie sind zwar nicht gemalt, aber dafür auch nicht geschrieben. Alles, was ein Greis auf dem Herzen hat und selbst in der Berliner Presse nicht mehr unterbringen kann, gibt er der Provinz ab. Den Lesern der Provinzzeitungen muß klar gemacht werden, daß die Ansichten, die ihnen als Berliner Stimmungsbilder vorgemalt werden, von „Kollegen“ fabriziert sind. Die Kollegen besitzen den Ehrgeiz, die Waren ihres Bazargeschmacks mit der „Marke“ Kunst zu versehen. So ein Stimmungsbild beginnt gewöhnlich mit Weltanschauung. Etwa: „Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst“. Der ganze Ernst des Lebens wird besprochen. „In den vertraulichen Sitzungen der Budgetkommission — folgschweren Zusammenprall mit Frankreich — daß man dort auf das letzte, das entscheidende Wort wartet! (auf das Wort hat wartet man vergebens) — Ein Kampf hat begonnen, der kaum je zuvor stattgefunden! (diesmal fehlt hat aus malerischen Gründen). Noch sind ja nicht alle Schatten verschwunden und dürfte es demnächst — das Geläut der Weihnachtsglocken.“ Nach soviel Ernst des Lebens sorgt nun die Kunst für die Heiterkeit des Stimmungsbildners. „Wer dessen teilhaft werden will, für die kleine Gegengabe von einer Mark, der richte seine Schritte nach einem nahe der Potsdamer Brücke gelegenen Eckhause, aus dessen einem Fenster eine große blaue Fahne hängt mit der Aufschrift „Neue Sezession“. Der Aufzug führt uns im Nu nach dem zweiten Stockwerk, und nun möchte ich den verknörsteltesten Pessimisten sehen, der nicht, wenn er auch nur einige Schritte durch dieses Zimmer gemacht, vergnügt schmunzelt und alsbald in die ungezwungenste Heiterkeit ausbricht. Was diese Wände an schreiender Farbenwildheit, an Klexen und Punkten, die Menschen, an Strichen und Kreisen, die Landschaften darstellen sollen, aufweisen, ist unbeschreiblich. Einige große Leinwandflächen sind nur mit Grün, Blau, Gelb, Rot bedeckt, wirr durcheinander, was es bedeuten soll, bleibt jedem selbst überlassen.“

Also der Stimmungsbildner ist kein Pessimist.

Oskar Kokoschka: Porträt
 Professor Levin Ludwig Schilcking / Jona

Figure 3.2. Cover of *Der Sturm* 4, no. 90 (Dec. 1911), with one of the numerous attacks on provincial art critics published in the journal, alongside a portrait sketch by Oskar Kokoschka.

Die Aktion

WOCHENSCHRIFT FÜR POLITIK, LITERATUR, KUNST
VII. JAHR. HERAUSGEGEBEN VON FRANZ PFEMFERT NR. $\frac{1}{2}$

INHALT: Hans Richter: Widmungsblatt für die AKTION (Titelbild) / Ludwig Bäumer: Jahreswende 1916 / Otokar Březina: Prolog / Franz Werfel: Substantiv und Verbum / Georg Tappert: Zeichnung / Max Elskamp: Abschied / Gathmann: Wir / Menachem Birnbaum: Halluzinatorische Observation 2: Erotik / Franz Werfel: Die neue Hölle / Christian Schad: Zwei Zeichnungen / Wilhelm Klemm, Ootfried Benn, Kurd Adler, Max Herrmann (Neisse): Gedichte / Hieronymus Stürghk: Zwei Silvester-Poemata / Hans Richter: Däubler / Mynona: Grotteske / Albert Ehrenstein: Traum / Japanischer Holzschnitt / Franz Pfemfert: Herrn Theodor Wolff vom „B. T.“ / Kleiner Briefkasten / Ich schneide die Zeit aus / Erich Gehr: Landschaft



VERLAG, DIE AKTION, BERLIN-WILMERSDORF

HEFT 50 PFG.

Figure 3.3. Cover of *Die Aktion* 7, no. 1/2 (1917). The journal was much more politically confrontational than *Der Sturm*, and focused mostly on poetry and literature, though in competition also increasingly also published artistic work.

Aufruf gegen „Kunstkritiker“



Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon
Internationale Gemäldeausstellung
75 Potsdamer Strasse 75
Eckhaus Potsdamer- und Pallasstrasse

Die Herren sind sich nicht ganz einig: Der Wert der Kunstkritik oder eine Gegenüberstellung

Frankfurter Zeitung
Es wird die Vorstellung erweckt, als ob es in dieser Ausstellung etwas zu sehen gäbe in den Entwicklungsstadien. Nie war eine Präsentation anmassender, nie weniger begründet.

National-Zeitung
Es ist heute keine Frage mehr, dass die Kräfte, die hier an der Arbeit sind, bestimmt sind, Anregungen und Ausgangspunkte für die Wege zu geben, die die Kunst der Zukunft einschlagen wird.

Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung (Herr Robert Breuer)
Erschalle Leute werden mit dieser Ausstellung sehr schnell fertig sein; es gibt da gar kein Problem, es gibt nur Bedauern und Lachen.

Herr Fritz Stahl
Gegen die Zumutung, diese Patrikerien als Kunst auch nur negativ zu behandeln, gibt es keinen ersten Protest mehr. Wir lachen.

Vorwärts (Wieder Herr Robert Breuer)
Man braucht mir die Zeit all dieser tollwütigen Pinselstrichen zu lesen, um zu wissen, dass es sich hier wirklich nicht um Malerei, sondern um Kaffeestrasenliteratur handelt.

Deutsche Tageszeitung
Hier aber sind die Talentlosen in Rebe und Glied aufgepackt.

Vossische Zeitung
Man sieht, es lohnt nicht den Besuch.

Pan
Nun, dachte ich, kann niemand mehr in 55 Minuten ein bestimmtes Bild begreifen, auch Werke von der Tiefe eines Delaunay in einer Salton täuschend nachmachen.

Herr Fritz Stahl über Kandinsky 1912
Der Reiz bleibt rein optisch und wird im Vergleich mit dekorativen Arrangements durch die Gewaltsamkeit der wirklichen Linien überdies gestört. In dieser Wirkung steht aber der Aufwand eines grossen Bildes in lächerlichem Kontrast. Das kann man auf einem Lappchen Papier erreichen.

Leipziger Tageblatt
Chagall verliert über eine Glut der Farbe und einen Schwung der Phantasie, die mitreissen, selbst wenn man sich umgarn solchen Schwärmerien hingibt.

B. Z. am Mittag
Die Tierbilder von Franz Marc gehen einen Schein weiter zu leidenschaftlichen Kompositionen, die Phantastisches mit grossem Griff erblicken.

Berliner Börsencourier
Alfred Kubin macht seine dämonisch-metaphysischen Zeichnungen ohne jeden Nachdruck.

BC-ner Börsencourier
Plötzlich sieht man ein paar indische und japanische Bilder, die alle Futuristen beschämen.

Leipziger Tageblatt
Paul Klee zeigt Zeichnungen, die sich in dem Tiefen der Kinderzeichnungen geschult haben.

Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung
Roussou, aus dessen bis uns kindliche väterlicher Mauer eine feine soziale Verfassung spricht.

Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten
Der Tag, an dem der erste deutsche Herbstsalon eröffnet wurde, darf als historischer Datum gelten. Es hat etwas Ueberwältigendes, allüberall Kämpfer und Vertreter der neuen Prinzipien am Werke zu sehen.

Hamburger Nachrichten
Es ist in der Tat grober Unfug, diese Unsumme von Lächerlichkeiten, von tödlichen Schmierereien... Man glaubt aus der Gemäldegalerie eines Irrenhauses zu kommen.

Vorwärts (Derselbe Herr Robert Breuer)
Es ist eine Kunst der Extreme... Es wäre dennoch eine schwere Befangtheit, sie, wie das Meier-Galle tat, für toll und diletantisch zu erklären.

National-Zeitung
Daher sei man vorsichtig, ehe man neue Kunstformen verurteilt, oder gar bespöttelt, wie es vielfach leider Sitte ist.

Hamburger Nachrichten
Weiter heisst es „Komposition“... Dann wieder Kontraste oder „Mystisches Bild“ oder „Improvisation“, zuweilen auch bloss Bild 1, Bild 2, Bild 3. Man spürt, wie schwer es den Malern geworden ist, ihren Bildern Bezeichnungen zu geben.

Volkzeitung
Täuschungen sind ausgeschlossen. Diese „Jüngsten“ sind keine Revolutionäre; gereift und abgeküht, aber reichlich exzentrisch sind die Meisten.

Volkzeitung
... Ausstellung ist das weitaus Interessanteste, was man in der letzten Zeit an Kunstausstellungen sehen konnte.

Vorwärts (immer wieder Herr Robert Breuer)
Oder Herr Delaunay. Er zeigt uns die Sonne in vier verschiedenen Fassungen. Aber was er gibt, sind Schützen-scheibchen, wie frankose Dorfburschen sie fälschen.

Herr Fritz Stahl über Kandinsky 1913
Ich empfinde bei dem Anblick solchen Bildstückes (von Kandinsky) einen so angenehmen und befriedigenden Genuss, dass es mir genug als Kunstwerk wäre... Er (Kandinsky) ist ein Genie der Farbe.

Vossische Zeitung
wo solche Scherze zu sehen waren, wie Marc Chagalls einer schönen alten Miniatur schlecht nachgeknistetes Kreuzigungsbild.

Hamburger Nachrichten
... ebenso unverstänglich wie... die apokalyptischen Wölfe von Franz Marc.

Berliner Lokalanzeiger
Alfred Kubin, jenem bekannten Diaboliker, der zu einer immer vertiefteren Form gelangt.

Leipziger Tageblatt
Bedauerlich sind dagegen die Proben der indischen und chinesischen Malerei, die man hier sieht.

Berliner Börsencourier
Paul Klee ist derjenige, der das Gerücht von den „Maas- und Monte-Zeichnungen“ verursacht hat.

Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung (Schon wieder Herr Robert Breuer)
Roussou, ein harmloser ehrlicher Dilettant.

Nicht das Publikum ist die Masse. Die Kunstkritiker sind es. Arm an Phantasie, Kenntnis, reich an Schimpfwörtern sind sie über den Ersten Deutschen Herbstsalon hergefallen, denn auch nicht einer von ihnen länger als eine Stunde betrachtet hat. In einer Stunde glauben diese Herren vierhundert neue Bilder fassen zu können, denen sie fassungslos gegenüber standen. Sie taten, was Geschlagene häufig tun: sie schimpfen.

Man lasse sich durch die Treibereien der Kritikermasse nicht abhalten, den Ersten Deutschen Herbstsalon anzusehen. Hier haben keine „Jüngsten“ ausgestellt, wie die liebe Phrase der Kritiker lautet, keine „ringenden Talente“. Hier haben Künstler ausgestellt, Männer, die jahrelang, jahrzehntelang der Kunst dienen, die in der Kunst nicht eine photographische Nachahmung der Natur sehen, sondern ein seelisches Erlebnis, das sie mit den Mitteln ihrer Kunst, mit Farbe und Form, ausdrücken.

Wir wenden uns hiermit an die Öffentlichkeit, nicht um ein paar Mark mehr zu haben. Wir wollen, dass diese Ausstellung gesehen wird, um der grossen Kunst willen, die hier gezeigt ist. **Wie wertlos die Meinung der sogenannten Kunstkritiker ist, ersehe man aus der nachstehenden Gegenüberstellung.** Über die Ausstellung und über die einzelnen Künstler findet man die schärfsten Widersprüche. Die Aufstellung könnte beliebig erweitert werden. Ebenso sei hier ein Teil des „kritischen“ Kampfmaterials wiedergegeben.

Die Kunst muss vor solchen Kritikern geschützt werden!

Der Sturm
Herwarth Walden

Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon Der Sturm

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Lexikon der deutschen Kunstkritik

Zusammengestellt aus Zeitungs-Berichten über den Herbstsalon

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- Grössendünkel - Negerhäuptling im Zylinder - Säugling im Frack - Neueste Kunsterkrankung - Prass von Talentlosigkeit - Managernaturen - Bastardtalente - Banause - Verworfenheit der Psyche - Wahnwitzige Gebilde der Phantasie - Moden ohne Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten - Hohlheit der technischen Spielereien - Umgekehrte Philistersele - Gemalter Wahnsinn - Bluff - Unsumme von Lächerlichkeiten - Bildschmierereien - Gemäldegalerie eines Irrenhauses - Neue Wahnsinnsuniformen - Züchtung des Allerhässlichsten - Taumler aus Unfähigkeit - Kitschideen - Kaspertheater - Sensationsgier ästhetischer Roués - Panoptikumspektakel - und so weiter

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DER STURM - DIREKTION HERWARTH WALDEN

Figure 3.4. "Aufruf gegen "Kunstkritiker" published as a leaflet by Der Sturm. Source: Ludwig Hilberseimer Papers, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, The Art Institute of

Chicago.



Figure 3.5. Wassily Kandinsky, preliminary and final design for book cover of Über das geistige in der Kunst (1910). The preliminary design featured much more prominently the central concept of art as a pyramid that Taut took over, with a single genius at top, and the masses below. Source of preliminary design: Kai Buchholz, Rita Latocha, et al, eds. Die Lebensreform volume 1 (2001), p. 352.

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Zur neuen Kunst
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VII

Zur neuen Kunst

Adolf Behne

Zweite Auflage

Verlag Der Sturm / Berlin W 9
1917

Figure 3.6. Titlepage of Adolf Behne, Zur neuen Kunst Sturm Bücher, no. 7 (1915, 2nd ed. 1917).



Figure 3.7. Adolf Behne with his wife Elfriede Schäfer Behne, and their daughter Julia, ca. 1921. Source: Landesarchiv Berlin, Sammlung Behne / Wirsig., Rep. 200, Acc. 3860, Nr. 96/26.

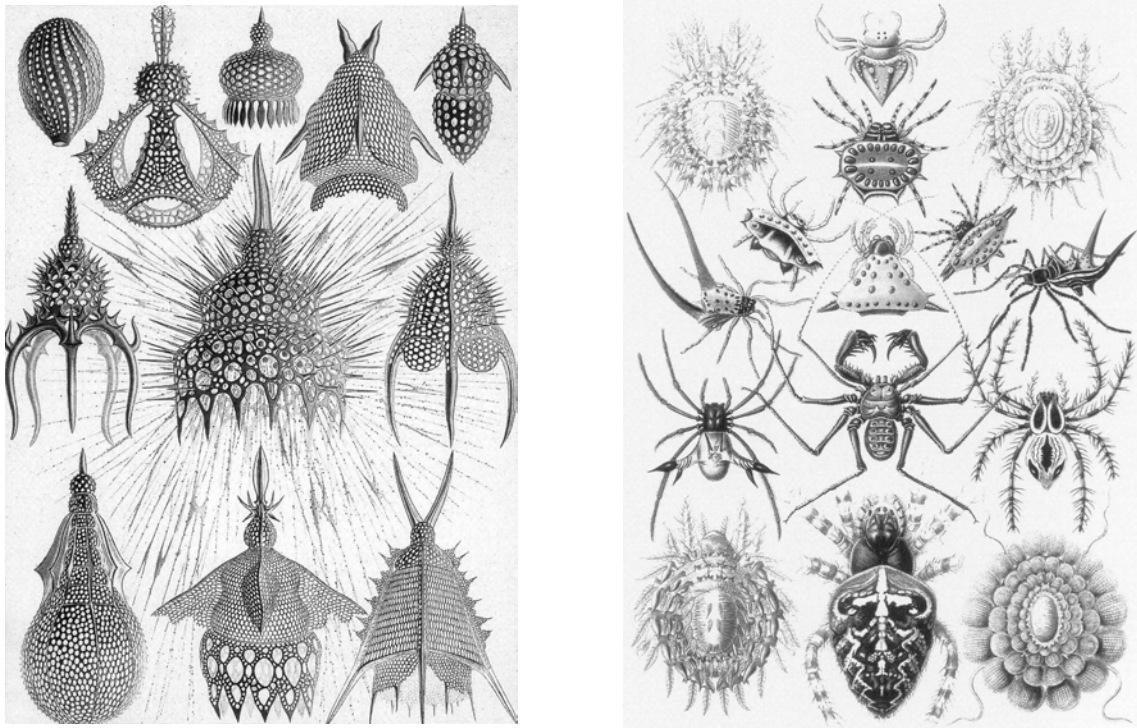


Figure 3.8. Invertebrates (*Flaschenstrahlige*) and Spiders, from Ernst Haeckel, *Kunstformen der Natur* (1899). Source: Kai Buchholz, Rita Latocha, et al, eds. *Die Lebensreform* volume 1 (2001), pp. 185, 261.

Von der Schönheit in der Natur.

Von Adolf Bruno.

Der Sommer, unsere eigentliche, rechte Wanderjahreszeit in der freien Natur, ist vorbei. Wir haben mit offenen Sinnen und offenem Herzen die Schönheiten der Natur in uns aufgenommen. Nun ist es Winter. Wir denken an unsere Fahrten zurück, erinnern uns des Schönen und Eindrucksvollsten und tauschen mit den Kameraden unsere Gedanken über das Gesehene aus. Dazu ist der Winter ja die geeignete Zeit! Er gibt uns willkommene Gelegenheit, das Aufgenommene durch Nachdenken zu vertiefen, aus ihm zu lernen, so daß wir über den augenblicklichen Genuß hinaus einen dauernden Gewinn für unsere Einsicht davontragen. Denn sind unsere Augen im nächsten Sommer erst recht geschärft für die unendlichen Schönheiten, die die Natur uns schenkt.

Zu einem solchen innerlichen Vermerten Curer Natureindrücke möchte ich im folgenden etwas Anregung geben.

Sch sprach eben von den „unendlichen“ Schönheiten, die uns die Natur schenkt. In der Tat sind die Schönheiten der Natur so zahlreich, so mannigfaltig, und gleichzeitig so mächtig auf unser Empfinden einwirkend, daß man es wohl verstehen kann, wenn viele Menschen behaupten, die Natur sei überall und immer schön. Aber das schießt doch über das Ziel hinaus! Denn „Natur“ ist ja schließlich letzten Endes alles. Also müßte auch alles „schön“ sein, und es existierte überhaupt nichts Unschönes. Das ist nun offenbar nicht der Fall. Auch ein verwesender Kadaver ist „Natur“, aber kein Mensch von unmittelbarem Empfinden wird sich dazu verstehen können, ihn schön zu finden. Ein verwesender

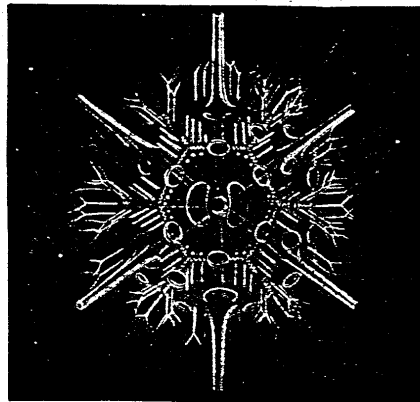


Abb. 1. Echinoidea echinoidea (Gaedel).

Kadaver ist, sobald wir nicht unser Empfinden mit Gewalt Inebeln, etwas Häßliches. Also, wenn auch die Natur einen unerlöschlichen Schatz an Schönheiten darbietet, an Farbenwundern des Sonnenunterganges, an Formwundern der Schneefristalle und der Bergesketten, an Bewegungswundern der Meereswellen und der höchst entwickelten Säugetiere, so ist sie doch nicht immer und überall schön. Und das ist auch gar nicht sonderbar. Die Natur ist ja doch ein Zusammenwirken der verschiedensten, mannigfaltigsten und verwickeltsten Kräfte. In ihr arbeiten die Schwerkraft, die Kräfte chemischer Anziehungen und Abstoßungen, die Kraft der Vererbung, die Kräfte des Hungers und der Selbstbehauptung, der Zuneigung und des Hasses und andere Kräfte mehr. Aber daß eine von diesen Kräften der Drang nach Schönheit sei, kann niemand behaupten, oder wenigstens nicht beweisen.

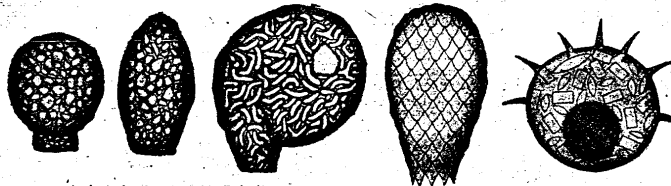


Abb. 2. Gehäuse von Diatomeen. Die Diatomeen sind Amöben, Wechselstierchen, einzellige Organismen, die auf der untersten Stufe des organischen Lebens stehen.

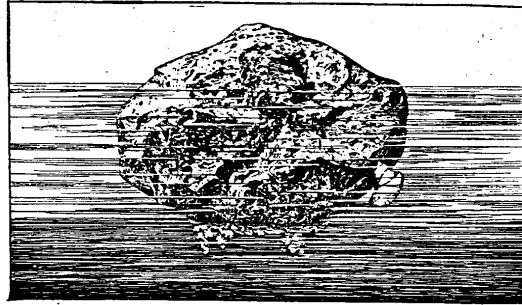


Abb. 3. Bimsstein, mit jungen Korallenkolonien besetzt.

Wir Menschen finden die Spitzenreihe der Dolomiten schön, aber niemand glaubt doch, daß diese Berge sich nach einem Gesetze der Schönheit so geformt haben.

Denken wir einmal auch das Folgende durch! Ein Maler schafft vor unseren Augen ein Bild. Wir sehen ihn die Umrisse der Körper, der Bäume, der Häuser festlegen, sehen ihn die Farben mischen und mit dem Pinsel auftragen. Nachdem das Bild fertig ist, zeigt es uns der Maler, und wir sagen, daß es sehr „schön“ sei. Ist es hier auch so wie bei den Dolomiten, daß nämlich die Entstehung und der Vorgang, nach welchem das Bild fertig wurde, ohne eine bestimmte Absicht auf Schönheit geschah? Ganz und gar nicht! Gerade das Gegenteil ist der Fall. Vom ersten Pinselstrich an hatte es der Maler ganz bestimmt und ganz bewußt auf Schönheit abgesehen. Er hat die Farben ausgewählt, die Striche gezogen, immer danach, wie sie ihm am schönsten erschienen; gerade die Schönheit und nichts anderes ist von Anfang bis zu Ende sein Ziel gewesen. Wenn nun also sein Werk wirklich schön geworden ist, so brauchen wir uns nicht weiter zu verwundern. Wie überall, wo ein bewußter und bestimmter Plan durchgeführt wird, hängt der Erfolg nur von der Begabung, dem Fleiß und der Ehrlichkeit des Planenden ab.

Diefer Vergleich der Entstehungsart der Dolomiten und eines Gemäldes wird Euch besonders klarmachen, daß die Schönheit in der Natur tatsächlich nicht etwas Selbstverständliches ist. Vielmehr ist die Schönheit in der Natur eine Erscheinung, die wert ist, einmal streng und aufmerksam durchdacht zu werden, sie ist das, was der Gelehrte ein „Problem“ nennt. Aber deshalb nicht verzagt; auch wir können schon einmal dem Dinge etwas auf den Leib rücken.

Wer von uns hat nicht schon mehr als einmal am Himmel eine Wolke gesehen, die irgend einem Tiere, einem Gegenstande, oder gar einer bestimmten Person ganz erstaunlich ähnlich war? Oder ist beim Durchschreiten eines dämmerigen Waldes nicht unwillkürlich vor einem Wachholderbäumchen erschrocken, das genau wie ein lauerner Mensch ausah? Wie ist es damit? Sind diese Wolken und Gebüsch von irgendeiner Kraft absichtlich, gar bewußt so gestaltet worden, daß sie uns an Bestimmtes erinnerten, daß sie uns erschreckten? Nicht im mindesten! Nach wenigen Minuten waren die Wolken total verändert; und derselbe Wachholderbusch glich am hellen Tage einem Menschen so wenig wie ein Kirchturm oder wie ein Felsstück. Diese Eigenschaften der Wolken und der Bäumchen waren nichts als Zufall.

Nun, wenn die Dolomiten schön sind, ohne daß doch eine Kraft sie mit Zielbewußtsein schön erschuf, danken sie es nicht etwa auch nur dem Zufall? Ist nicht etwa die ganze Schönheit in der Natur nur ein Zufall?

Ganz so einfach ist unser „Problem“ noch nicht gelöst! — Ihr seht hier einige Abbildungen, die uns wohl auf die richtige Spur führen werden. Abbildung 8 zeigt ein Stück Bimsstein, der im Wasser treibt und mit kleinen Kolonien von Korallentieren besetzt ist. Fraglos ein Stück „Natur“! Enthält nun dieses Stück

Figure 3.9: [Behne], "Von der Schönheit in der Natur," Arbeiter-Jugend 5, no. 3 (Feb. 1, 1913): B.44-45.