



**Graphic Art
of German
Expressionism**

**Australia
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of German
Expressionism**

**Institute
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Expressionist graphic art represents as it were the conscious outcome of what German artists have generally mastered almost as a matter of course since the days of Albrecht Dürer, or indeed, since the earliest days of printing: that is, the ability to find in black and white the language of heightened expression, to create in terms of line and space, with a peculiar earnestness and reflective power, often renouncing beauty in the process. Centuries later this still applies in a real sense to the graphic art of Expressionism.

In the painting of this period, which reached its apogee in the years preceding and following the first World War and which still continues to exert an influence decades later, the artists, working in groups or as individuals, have raised the power of pure colour to hitherto unknown intensity. This they did, not so much by way of rebelling against the last refinements of Impressionism, as out of the sheer joy of discovery. And, like the "Fauves", that is, the painters grouped around the young Henri Matisse, they completely ignored the question of truth to nature, of empirical perspective. An intensified palette takes the place of visual likeness. This art knew only that power of persuasion which individualists sometimes exert on meeting a kindred spirit at the supreme moment of inward conviction, lending one another mutual support. So, in painting as well as in their prints, they overstepped all the bounds of convention with untrammelled confidence; they ignored the expected and conventionally acceptable, and created and suffered out of their own passionate being, endured their own self-doubt — only at the last to experience their own downfall as objects of hatred and mockery. The German Expressionist artists, at least most of those to whom the first World War came as a fate and as a testing-time, did not live to see the re-discovery of their work, its rise to a place in world art. Only a few survivors from that generation are still luminaries in our firmament; these too have been able to pursue their spiritual development only on the basis of the values they carved out in earlier years.

Graphic art, or, more precisely, the print: woodcut, etching, and lithograph also, often with the addition of one or more colours, is possibly the true sphere for the artistic genius and the most precious legacy of those artists whose creative qualities are designated in Germany "expressionist". Their pictorial conceptions, viewed more clearly from the historical perspective which we have now attained thanks to an undisputed legacy of genuine masterpieces, are expressed even more clearly in printed form than in their drawings, that is, in the first drafts of the themes which stirred them.

The great inspiration of a new vision passed through them all. In view of this, it is of no importance whether they belonged to the "Blaue Reiter" group or to the artistic community of the "Brücke", or whether,

like Beckmann and others, they remained from the beginning individuals unable to attach themselves to any group, and so painfully hacked out their solitary, patient path of creation, confiding to their diaries perhaps, with a hitherto unexampled fidelity, as had been the custom ever since that great founder of German modernism, Lovis Corinth. To us it seems as if their generation might now at last leave aside anxiety about their reputation. In the pages of these diaries we become familiar with the thoughts and events shared by the individual artists; prophecies are made too that were only to be proved true half a century later.

Thus an age of dawning truth to fact, of painful experience of the world, was presented to this generation of German Expressionists. In consequence their farewell to the beauty of things, to the lovely outward surface of this world, became logically inevitable in face of the events of world history. Time-honoured ideals of pictorial value succumbed beneath the burden of creation. The prestige of the studio declined, the greatness of the academies was put in question, the position of the artist brought into doubt. The gulf between the ordinary citizen and the painter grew deeper, the creative artist sought to shock the viewer, and this power of Expressionist graphic art to shock, already at its height between 1912 and 1918, at least as far as woodcut is concerned, is still an active force. With pitiless hardness they scored forbidding grooves in the softwood blocks, and their etching needle wrote upon the metal plate with like grimness. Even their lithographs dispensed with all the smoothness and polished elegance which this technique had acquired in the last years of the 19th century, particularly in the radiant glow of fin de siècle Paris. The essential thing for Expressionist graphic art is that it should be forceful, a summons, an arresting pictorial manifesto, a sign, often hard to decipher, summary both as to human form and to landscape, posing questions of life. This is as true of Max Beckmann as of Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, of Heckel as of Kirchner, Nolde and many others, whose creative paths are akin.

Never has the woodcut known finer days, at least as far as modern German art is concerned. Max Beckmann, Heinrich Campendonk, Erich Heckel, Feininger, Kirchner, Franz Marc, and Emil Nolde, Pechstein and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff likewise endowed the woodcut with a language at once rich in nuances, always powerful and yet of great simplicity, qualities which raise the art of black and white into the region of lofty spiritual play of question and answer.

Thus it is that none of these artists is disturbed by the fact that he can only dig coarse splinters from his softwood block, so that he never acts the part of artist but only that of conscientious "wood-carver", as in the days of Dürer. On the other hand this simple attitude was not

deliberate, it grew naturally, and is accepted by us nowadays as the particular feature of this art as a whole; it points the way to a very severe art of black and white in which colour is no longer used naturalistically but only added here and there in flat poster style. These colour-woodcuts stand out as the great achievement of the age, especially those of Heckel's early period and some of those by Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner dating from the beginning of his stay in the Swiss mountains.

In these we recognise the genuine old German traditions going back to the woodcut book illustrations and broadsheets of the late 15th century. The Expressionist woodcut also retains something of the character of a broadsheet, or, to put it in more general terms, of the impact of what is immediately legible, even if the formal expression is arbitrarily changed or distorted, as can be seen in Schmidt-Rottluff's "Rosa Schapire", which is none the less the portrait of an esteemed contemporary! Schmidt-Rottluff's prints on religious themes make the white areas float in ghostly fashion round the large islands of black and colour, and draw silent attention to the fact that modern man has achieved a relationship to the art of the South Seas and the primitive as well as to negro art, enabling him to penetrate behind the mask.

These artists' procedure with regard to etching is more subtle, and in lithography likewise, where softenings of tone become possible in the overall pictorial surface, gradations in the various tones of grey, bringing about a refinement of the visual impact. This can only be intensified in the direction of forceful expression by vigorous use of the drypoint, as the end of an etching process. We think of Nolde's precious etchings of the port of Hamburg, made in 1911: at once splendid artistic records and landscape portraits of a working world. Never before or since has such a memorial to the life of the Hamburg basin been set up, and this despite the contributions of Lovis Corinth and Oskar Kokoschka. But Beckmann and Nolde impart the delicate magic of etching in gradations of tone to portraiture and the human form also, and in this way have won an enduring and unique place for themselves.

In the sphere of line lithography, Klee, in about 1920, produced delicately woven prints which show an affinity to his pen drawings and even include water-colour effects. Similarly Kandinsky in his series "Little Worlds", using various techniques, successfully applied his inventions as a painter to graphic art. In these graphic exercises he and Klee left the world of objects as far behind as it was possible to do. The visionary Otto Mueller, who dreamed of Arcadian meadows peopled by gipsy maidens and youthful female nudes, contrived to embody his new and individual vision only in the domain of lithography, often

combining its effects with diluted tones of colour. His gipsy series was acclaimed in the decade 1950–1960 in the great print auctions as a special and perhaps unique achievement in graphic art.

As we enumerate the various methods and spheres of interest we are reminded of the non fortissimo, now pianissimo passages of a concert whose dominant theme is a certain power of graphic language, whether it be the case of the more observant Beckmann or the extravaganzas of Schmidt-Rottluff, the lyrical animal legends of Franz Marc, or Nolde's pointillist fantasies. To a certain extent all these prints are related, even those of Christian Rohlf and of Max Pechstein, who produced his most important work before the first World War, whilst the brilliant draughtsman and writer, Kirchner, scaling ever higher the peaks of healing and, ultimately, of despair – he ended his life by his own choice in Switzerland in 1938 – becomes the first great storyteller of his own life. This egocentric concentration even leads him to the attempt to translate Picasso's personal inventions into the language of a German Expressionist.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff is the most uncompromising of this generation of ardent and individually creative Expressionists who poured themselves out to the full up to the early twenties of this century, thereafter fading into shadows of themselves, continuing in some cases without any real change in style and so without realising what was occurring. He surpasses the others in hardness and sharpness of contrast, but at the same time introduces into this form of print a gem-like quality, enduring and giving evidence of creative resolution. Unless he has grown up in the realm of German art, the spectator may well be alienated by this even now; in any case he cannot hope for understanding at first glance.

The graphic art of Expressionism concerns mankind in our day too. It summons us to fulfil our pictorial visions, even in the case of Feininger, to re-live our destiny, to read with new eyes the phenomenon of man, a group of houses, a motif with dizzy linear pattern, with perspective, drawing us into it. Cities change, become anonymous, Biblical subjects and fantastic themes take on new form, and, where the dreams of the artist take shape, as in Paul Klee's lithograph of 1922: "The Witch with the Comb", where animals, hobgoblins, the exotic come into the realms of pictorial art, a new picture comes into being, the art of our century acquires a new dimension. Many later developments can only be explained from this starting-point.

The language of the print remains a disciplined one. Whether the invention is a shorthand note composed of strokes, an enigmatic form standing out on a black ground and fading back into darkness, or whether a form rises before us completely filling the painting or print, as is often the case in Beckmann's etchings, or whether we must interpret

anew the situation of man or the human countenance, the record is always compelling, to the point that the spectator's imagination is fully engaged. This is still true now, when this graphic art has long been accepted among the classics of modernism, when it is known and acknowledged, having long since passed beyond the stage of daring innovation.

Horst Keller

Max Beckmann

Born 1884 in Leipzig;
died 1950 in New York.
1925—1933 Professor at the
Städelsche Art Institute
in Frankfurt am Main.
1947—1949 Lecturer at the
University of St. Louis (Mass.) and
1949—1950 at the
Brooklyn Museum Academy.

- 1 Gesellschaft
Company
1915
Etching
- 2 Selbstbildnis von vorn,
im Hintergrund Hausgiebel
Self-portrait, full-face;
gable in background
1918
Etching
- 3 Landschaft mit Ballon
Landscape with balloon
1920
Etching
- 4 Frau mit Kerze
Woman with candle
1920
Woodcut
- 5 Der Ausrufer
(Selbstbildnis Circus Beckmann)
The Announcer
(Self-portrait, Beckmann Circus)
1921
Etching

- 6 Schießbude
Shooting gallery
1921
Etching
- 7 Selbst im Hotel
Self-portrait in the hotel
1922
Lithograph
- 8 Frauenbad
Women bathing
1922
Etching
- 9 Strand
Beach
1922
Etching
- 10 Holzbrücke
Wooden bridge
1922
Etching
- 11 Zwei Tanzpaare
Two couples dancing
1923
Etching

Heinrich Campendonk

Born 1889 in Krefeld;
died 1957 in Amsterdam.
1926–1933 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Düsseldorf.
1935–1957 Professor at the
"Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten"
in Amsterdam.

12

Halbakt mit Katze
Half nude with cat
1912
Colour woodcut

13

Zwei Akte mit Pferd
Two nudes with horse
1918
Woodcut

14

Interieur mit zwei Akten
Interior with two nudes
1918
Woodcut

15

Sitzender Harlekin
Seated Harlequin
1922
Woodcut

16

Sitzender weiblicher Akt mit Blume
Seated female nude with flower
circa 1925
Woodcut

Otto Dix

Born 1891 in Gera;
died 1969 in Singen/Hohentwiel.
1927–1933 Professor at the
Dresden Academy of Art.

17

Straße
Street
1920
Etching

18

Porträt des Dirigenten Otto Klemperer
Portrait of the conductor Otto Klemperer
1923
Lithograph

19

Mahlzeit in der Sappe
Dinner in the trenches
1924
Etching

Lyonel Feininger

Born 1871 in New York of
German parentage;
died 1956 in New York.
One of the founders
of the "Bauhaus".
Taught at the "Bauhaus"
in Weimar and in Dessau.
1933—1936 in Berlin.
1938—1956 in New York.

20

Werft
Dockyard
1918
Woodcut

21

Segelschiffe
Sailing-ships
1919
Woodcut

22

Dorfkirche
Village church
1919
Woodcut

23

Dorf
Village
Woodcut

24

Benz
1919
Woodcut

25

Auf der Quaimauer
On the quay wall
1921
Woodcut

26

Spaziergänger
Walkers
1921
Woodcut

George Grosz

Born 1893 in Berlin;
died 1959 in Berlin.
1933—1959 lived in the U.S.A.

27

Friedrichstraße
Friedrichstrasse (Street in Berlin)
1918
Lithograph

28

Krach
Crash
1921
Lithograph

29

Am Kanal
By the canal
Lithograph

Erich Heckel

Born 1885 in Döbeln (Saxony);
died 1970 in Radolfzell.
One of the founders
of the "Brücke".
1949–1955 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Karlsruhe.

30

Fränzi liegend
Fränzi recumbent
1910
Colour woodcut

31

Stehendes Mädchen
Girl standing (Fränzi)
1911
Colour woodcut

32

Stralsund
1912
Woodcut

33

Krummer Kanal in Ostende
Crooked canal in Ostend
1915
Woodcut

34

Gerader Kanal
Straight canal
1915
Woodcut

35

Mädchen am Meer
Girl by the sea
1918
Woodcut

36

Frauen am Strand
Women on the shore
1919
Woodcut

37

Kopf
Head
1919
Woodcut

38

Männerbildnis (Selbstporträt)
Portrait of a man (Self-portrait)
1919
Colour woodcut

39

Drei Frauen am Wasser
Three women by the water
1923
Woodcut

40

Zwei Sitzende
Two seated figures
1923
Woodcut

Wassily Kandinsky

Born in Moscow 1866;
died 1944 in France at Neuilly-sur-Seine.
Together with Franz Marc
founded the "Blauer Reiter" group.
1920–1921 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts in Moscow.
1922–1933 Professor at the "Bauhaus"
in Weimar and Dessau.
1933–1944 lived in Neuilly-sur-Seine.

- 41** Klänge I
Tones I
1913
Colour woodcut
- 42** Klänge II
Tones II
1913
Colour woodcut
- 43** Kleine Welten VIII
Little worlds VIII
1922
Woodcut
- 44** Kleine Welten XII
Little worlds XII
1922
Etching
- 45** Komposition mit Schachbrett (Orange)
Composition with chessboard "Orange"
1923
Colour lithograph

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Born 1880 in Aschaffenburg;
died 1938 in Davos.
One of the founders
of the "Brücke", 1905.

- 46** Ehepaar Müller
Herr Mueller and his wife
circa 1910
Woodcut
- 47** Pirnaischer Platz in Dresden
Pirnaischer Platz, Dresden
1910
Lithograph
- 48** Fehmarnmädchen
Girls from Fehmarn
1912/13
Woodcut
- 49** Autostraße im Taunus
Motor-road in the Taunus
1915
Woodcut
- 50** Am Zoo
Near the Zoo
1915
Lithograph
- 51** Kopf Kohnstamm
Head of Kohnstamm
1916
Lithograph
- 52** Schlankes Mädchen vor offener Zimmertür
Slender girl in front of an open door
1917
Woodcut

- 53** Schnitter zu Berge gehend
Reapers going up the mountain
1917
Woodcut
- 54** Bildnis Frau R. B.
Portrait of Frau R. B.
1917
Woodcut
- 55** Sitzende mit Negerplastik
Seated woman with negro carving
1919
Woodcut
- 56** Das Mittagessen der Bauern
The peasants' midday meal
1919
Woodcut
- 57** Kopf einer Tänzerin (Nina Hardt)
Head of a dancer (Nina Hardt)
1920
Woodcut
- 58** Zwei Hirten
Two shepherds
1920
Colour lithograph
- 59** Reiterin
Rider
1931
Woodcut

Paul Klee

Born 1879 in Münchbuchsee near Bern;
died 1940 in Muralto-Locarno.
1921–1930 Professor at the "Bauhaus"
in Weimar and Dessau.
1931–1933 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Düsseldorf.
After 1933 in Bern.

- 60** Auslöschendes Licht
Light going out
1919
Lithograph
- 61** Herzkönigin
Queen of Hearts
1921
Lithograph
- 62** Die Heilige vom inneren Licht
The saint of the inner light
1921
Colour lithograph
- 63** Hoffmanneske Szene
Scene from Hoffmann
1921
Colour lithograph
- 64** Die Hexe mit dem Kamm
The witch with the comb
1922
Lithograph
- 65** Seiltänzer
Rope-dancer
1923
Lithograph

Oskar Kokoschka

Born 1886 in Pöchlarn a. d. Donau.
Lives in Switzerland.
From 1918–1924 Professor at the
Dresden Academy.

66

Emmy Heim
1916
Lithograph

67

Die Schauspielerin Hermine Körner
The actress Hermine Körner
1920
Lithograph

68

Ruth II
1922
Lithograph

69

Ruth III
1922
Lithograph

Franz Marc

Born in Munich, 1880;
killed in the first World War, 1916.
In 1911, together with Kandinsky,
founded the “Blauer Reiter” group.

70

Tiger
Tigers
1912
Woodcut

71

Trinkendes Pferd
Horse drinking
1913
Woodcut

72

Pferd und Igel
Horse and hedgehog
1913
Woodcut

73

Schöpfungsgeschichte I
The story of the Creation I
1914
Woodcut

74

Schöpfungsgeschichte II
The story of the Creation II
1914
Colour woodcut

Otto Mueller

Born 1874 in Liebau;
died 1930 in Breslau.
Member of the "Brücke" group.
1919–1930 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Breslau.

- 75** Stehender Knabe und zwei Mädchen
Boy standing and two girls
1917
Lithograph
- 76** Dünenlandschaft III (Föhr)
Dune landscape III (Föhr)
circa 1920
Lithograph
- 77** Drei Mädchenköpfe
Three girls' heads
1921
Lithograph
- 78** Mädchen auf dem Kanapee
Girl on the sofa
1922
Lithograph
- 79** Sitzende und zwei liegende Mädchen im Gras
Girls, one seated and two lying in the grass
circa 1922
Lithograph
- 80** Zigeunerkinder vor der Hütte
Gipsy children outside their hut
1927
Colour lithograph
- 81** Zwei Zigneunermädchen im Wohnraum
Two gipsy girls in their living-room
1926/27
Colour lithograph

Emil Nolde

Born 1867 in Nolde (Schleswig);
died 1956 in Seebüll.
Member of the "Brücke".

- 82** General und Diener
General and servant
1906
Woodcut
- 83** Akt in Vorderansicht
Nude, front view
1908
Etching
- 84** Hamburg, Landungsbrücke
Hamburg, landing-stage
1910
Etching
- 85** Hamburg, Binnenhafen
Hamburg, inner harbour
1910
Etching
- 86** Die Heiligen Drei Könige
The Three Magi
1913
Colour lithograph
- 87** Südsee-Insulaner
South Sea Islander
1915
Colour lithograph
- 88** Kerzentänzerinnen
Dancers with candles
1917
Woodcut

89

Blonde Frau
Fair-haired woman
1917
Woodcut

90

Ältere Herren
Elderly men
1926
Colour lithograph

Max Pechstein

Born 1881 in Zwickau,
died 1955 in Berlin.
Member of the "Brücke".
1945–1955 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Berlin.

91

Bildnis Alfred Hess
Portrait of Alfred Hess
1919
Woodcut

92

Selbstbildnis mit Pfeife
Self-portrait with a pipe
1921
Woodcut

93

Zwiesprache
Conversation
1920
Colour woodcut

94

Bäuerinnen beim Melken
Peasant women milking
Woodcut

95

Zwei Fischer
Two fishermen
Woodcut

Christian Rohlf

Born 1849 in Niendorf (Holstein),
died 1938 in Hagen.

- 96** Drei Köpfe
 Three heads
 1912
 Woodcut
- 97** Großer weiblicher Akt
 Large female nude
 1913
 Woodcut
- 98** Katze
 Cat
 1913
- 99** Rückkehr des verlorenen Sohnes
 Return of the Prodigal Son
 1916
 Woodcut
- 100** Tänzerin
 Dancer
 circa 1916
 Colour woodcut

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff

Born 1884 in Rottluff
near Chemnitz (Saxony); lives in Berlin.
One of the founders
of the "Brücke".
Since 1947 Professor at the
Academy of Fine Arts
in Berlin.

- 101** Sächsische Landschaft
 Landscape in Saxony
 1910
 Lithograph
- 102** Stralsunder Türme
 Towers in Stralsund
 1912
 Woodcut
- 103** Die Schwestern
 The sisters
 1914
 Woodcut
- 104** Mädchen vor dem Spiegel
 Girl in front of mirror
 1914
 Woodcut
- 105** Melancholie
 Melancholy
 1914
 Woodcut
- 106** Drei am Tisch
 Three people at table
 1914
 Woodcut
- 107** Die Heiligen Drei Könige
 The Three Magi
 1917
 Woodcut

108 Mädchen aus Kowno
Girl from Kovno
1918
Woodcut

109 Maria
1918
Woodcut

110 Christus und Judas
Christ and Judas
1918
Woodcut

111 Christus und die
Ehebrecherin
Christ and the
woman taken in adultery
1918
Woodcut

112 Christus flucht dem Feigenbaum
Christ curses the fig-tree
1918
Woodcut

113 Emmaus
1918
Woodcut

114 Bildnis
Portrait
circa 1919
Woodcut

115 Große Prophetin
Large prophetess
1919
Woodcut

116 Heuernte
Hay-harvest
1921
Woodcut

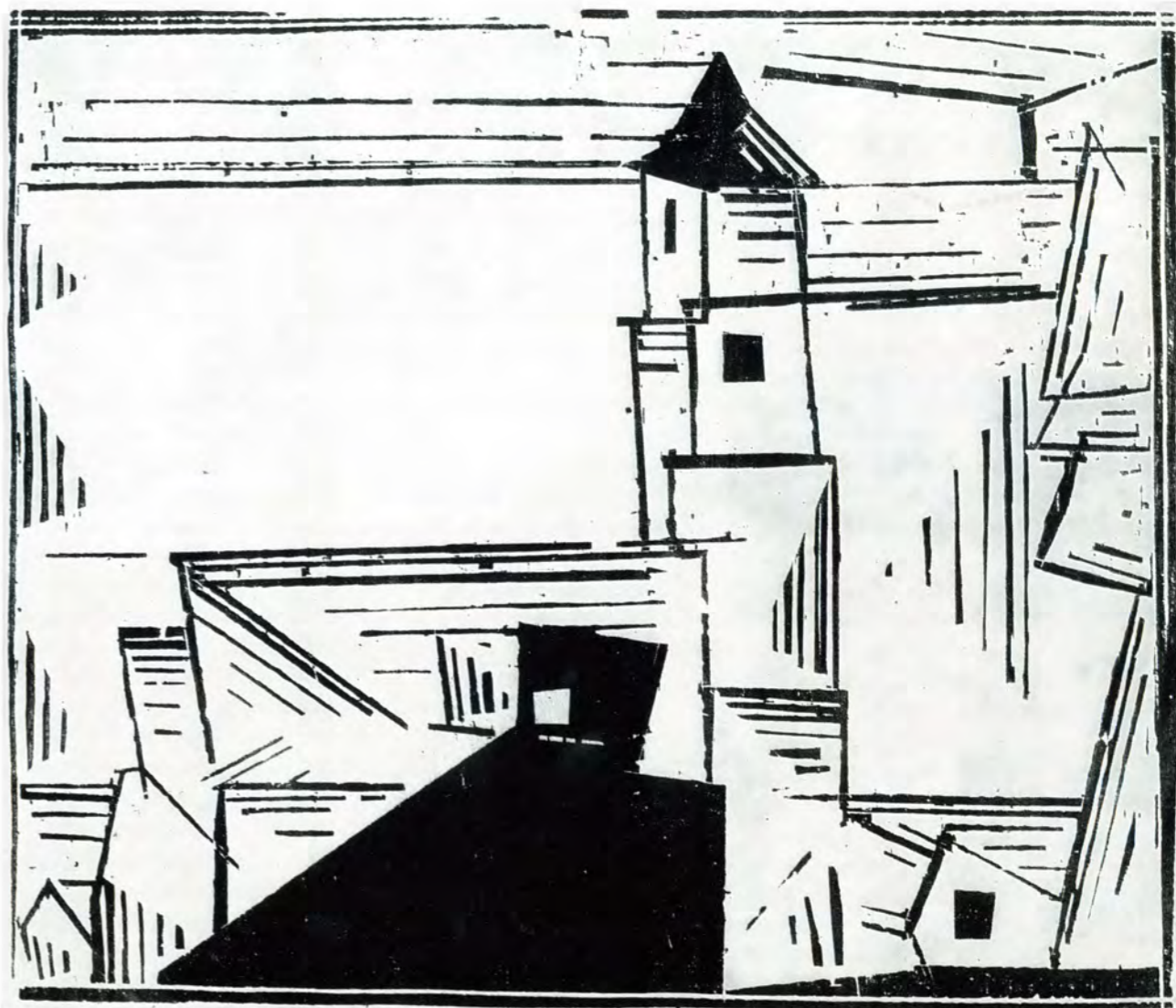
117 Die Lebensgeschichte
Life-story
1922
Woodcut

118 Soest
1923
Woodcut



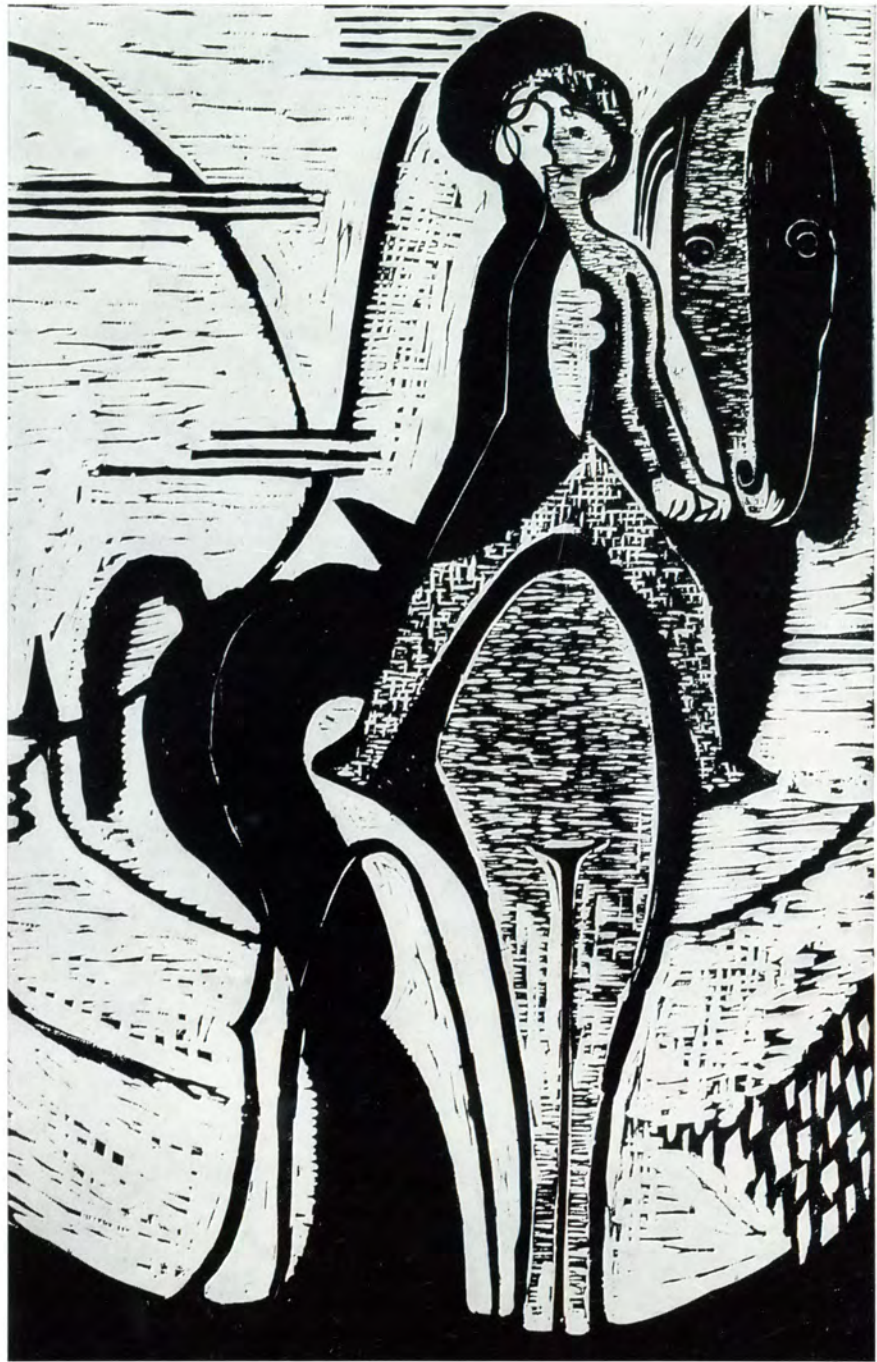


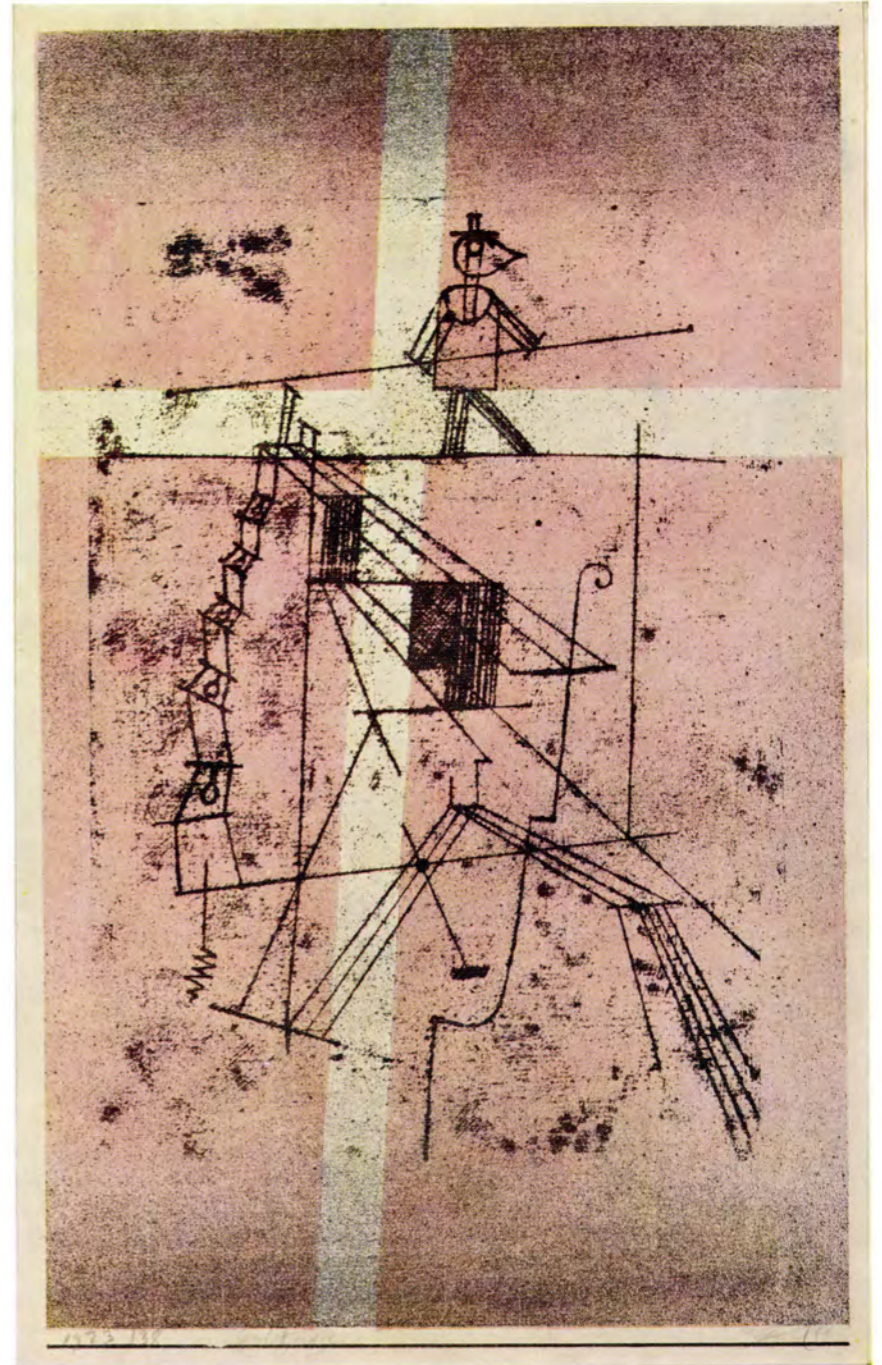
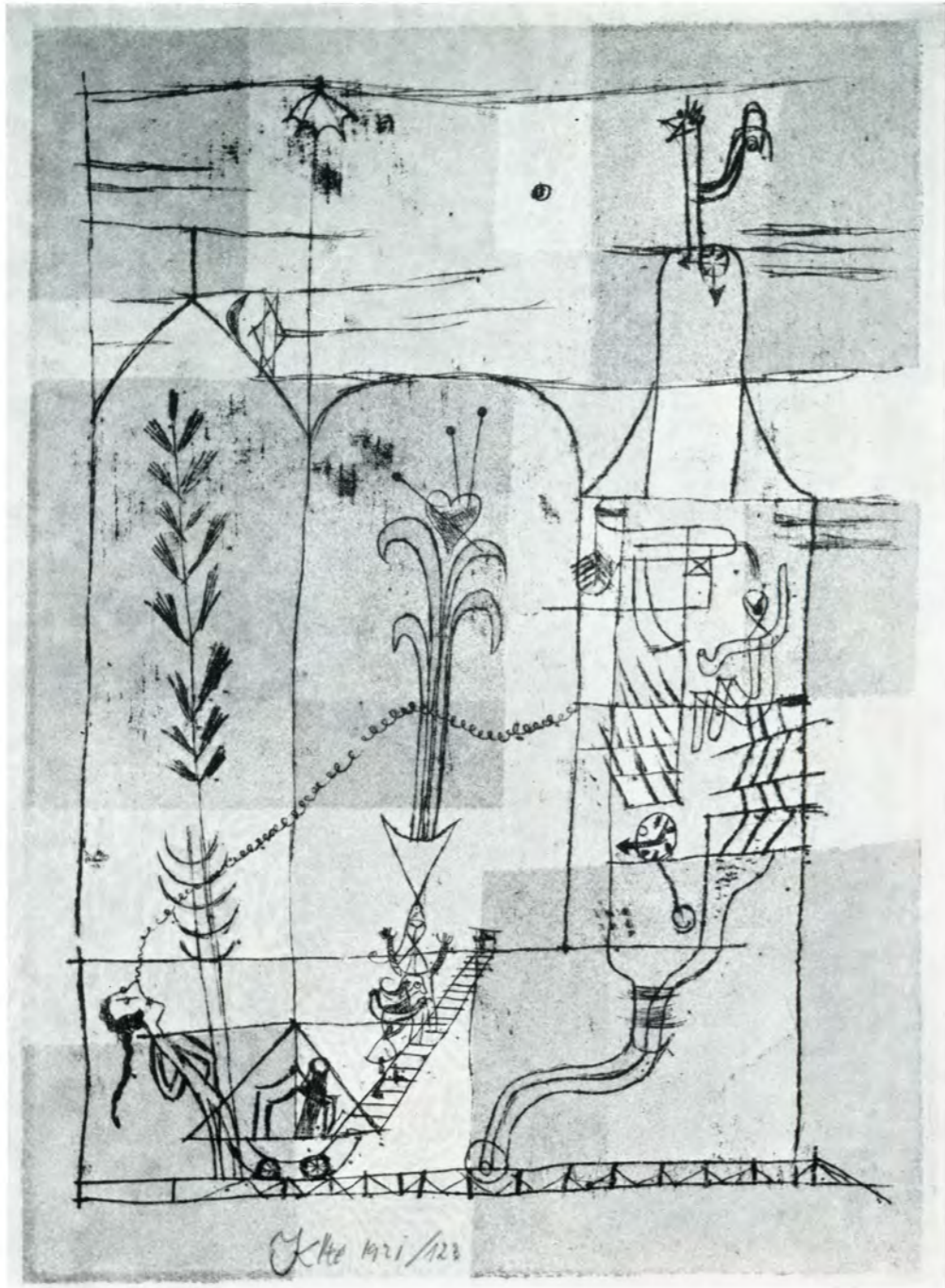


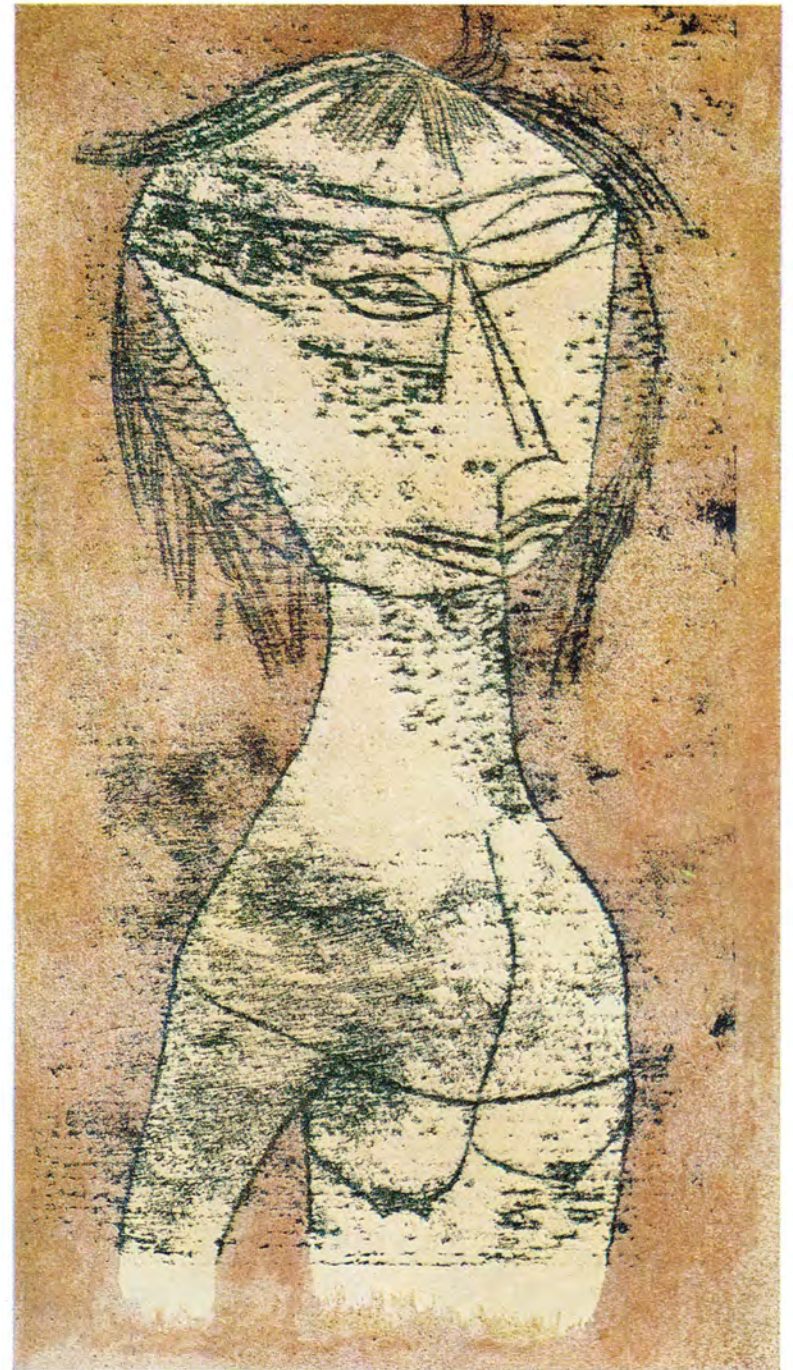
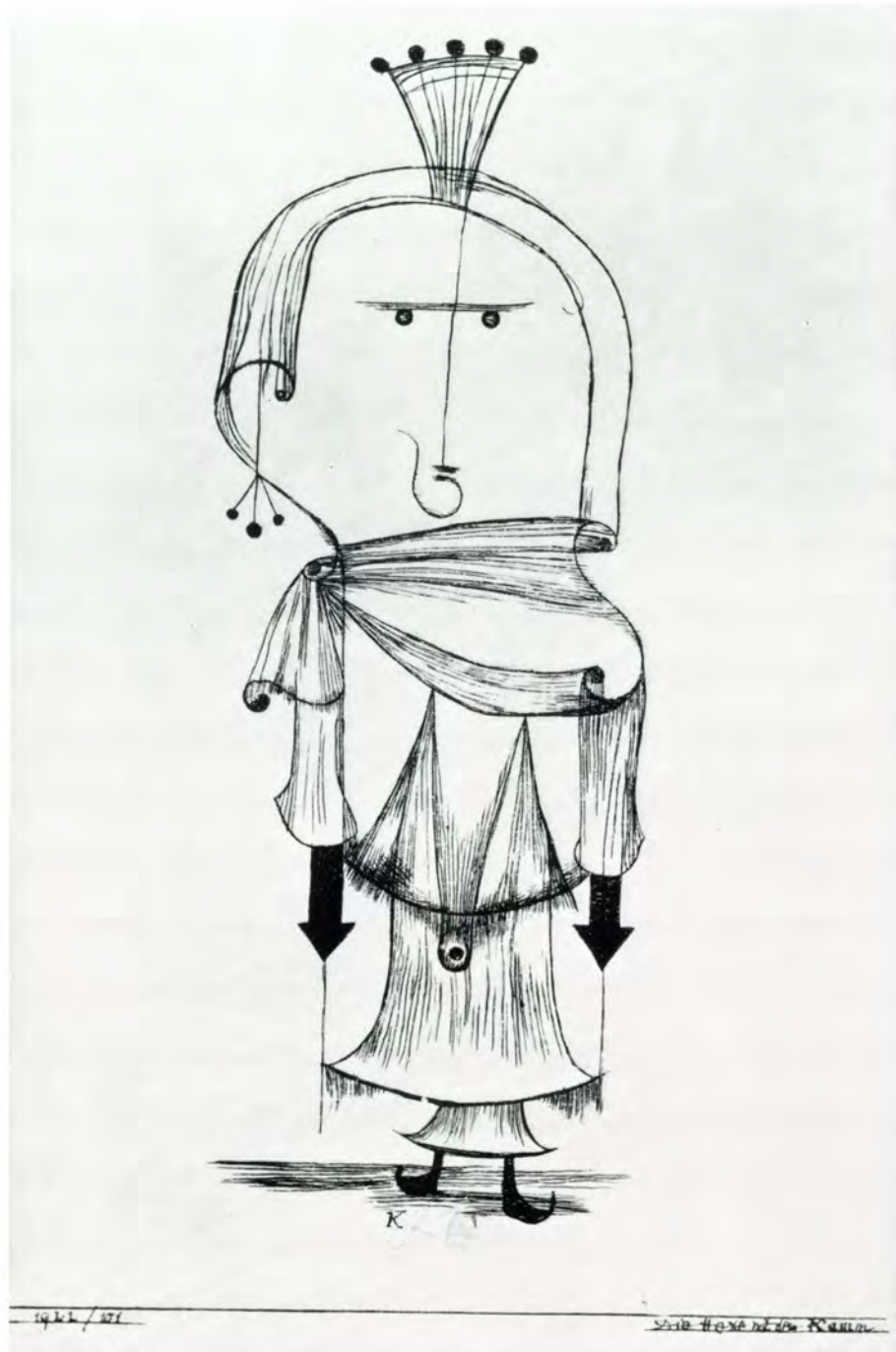






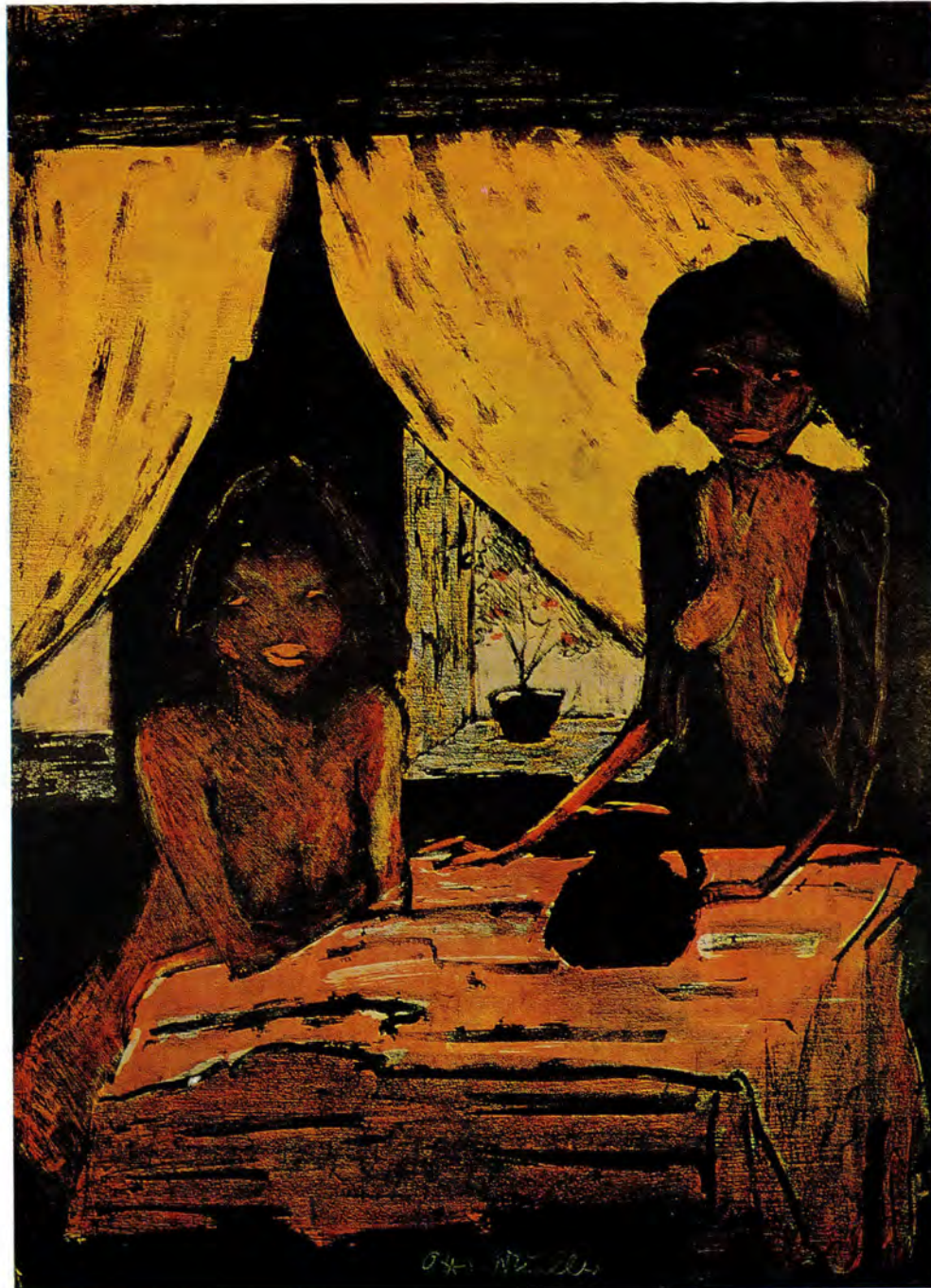




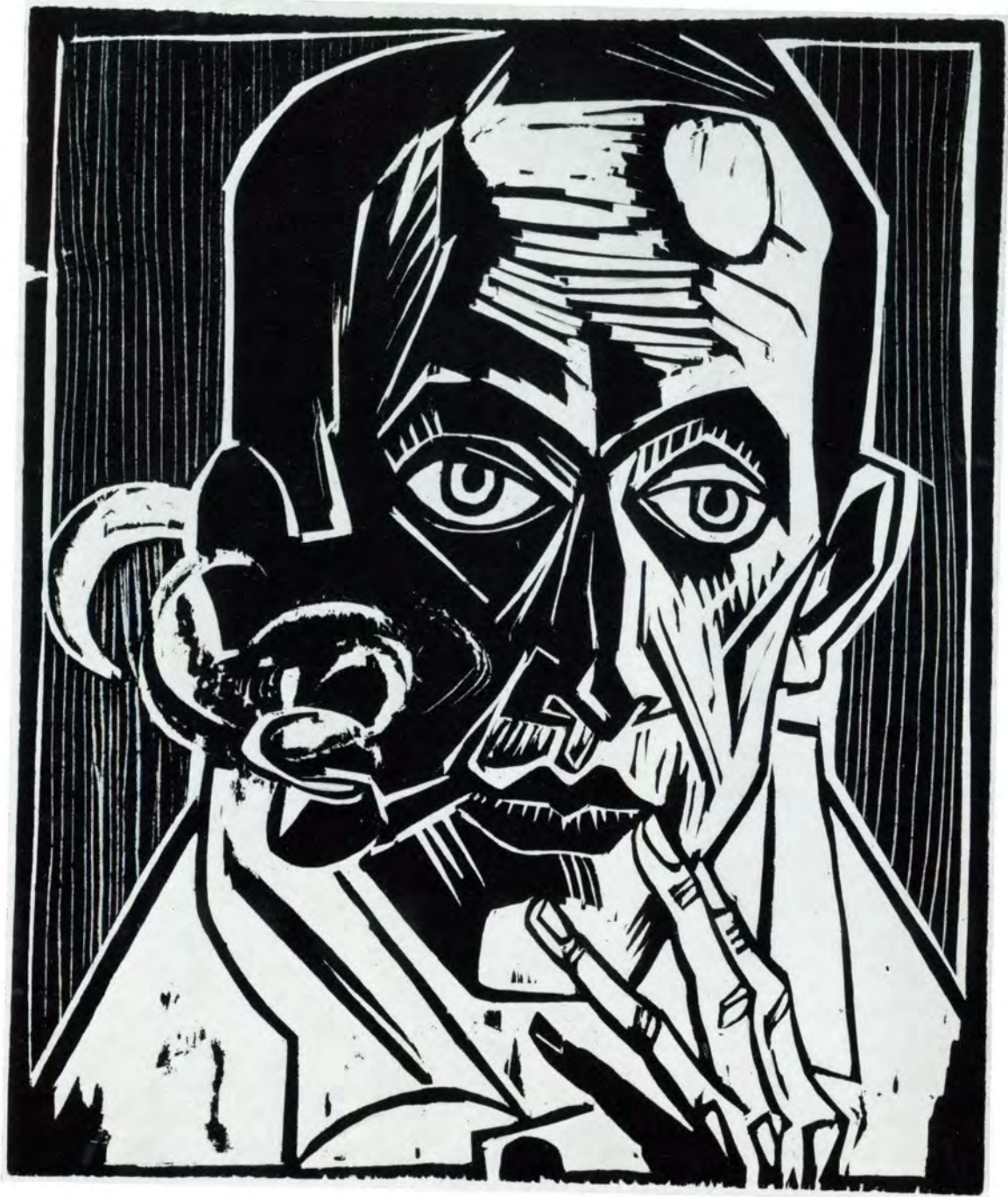


















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