Expressionism

Introduction to Process of Abstraction
2D Design
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Synopsis

• Expressionism emerged simultaneously in various cities across Germany as a response to a widespread anxiety about humanity’s increasingly discordant relationship with the world and accompanying lost feelings of authenticity and spirituality. In part a reaction against Impressionism and Academic Art, Expressionism was inspired most heavily by Symbolist movements in late nineteenth century art.
Synopsis

• Several Artists proved particularly influential to the Expressionism Movement, encouraging the distortion of form and deployment of strong colors to convey a variety of anxieties and yearnings. The classic phase of the Expressionist Movement lasted from approximately 1905 through 1920 and spread throughout Europe. Its example would later inform Abstract Expressionism, and its influence would be felt throughout the remainder of the century.
Key Ideas

• The arrival of Expressionism announced new standards in the creation and judgment of art. Art was now meant to come forth from within the artist, rather than from a depiction of the external visual world, and the standard for assessing the quality of the work became the artist’s feelings rather than an analysis of the composition.
Key Ideas

• Expressionist artists often employed swirling, swaying, and exaggeratedly executed brushstrokes in the depiction of their subjects. These techniques were meant to convey the turgid emotional state of the artist reacting to the anxieties of the modern world.
Key Ideas

• Through their confrontation with the urban world of the early twentieth century, Expressionist artists developed a powerful mode of social criticism in their serpentine figural renderings and bold colors. Their representations of the modern city included alienated individuals—a psychological by-product of recent urbanization.
Beginnings

• The roots of Expressionism can be traced to certain Post-Impressionist artists like Edvard Munch and Gustav Klimt. These artists, in response to new technologies and massive urbanization, took their efforts and reflected on the psychological impact of these developments. By moving away from a realistic representation of what they saw toward an emotional and psychological rendering of how the world affected them, they helped bring a movement that spurred several other movements in art, including Abstract Expressionism. Fauvism, and Neo-Expressionism.
What is there to do with a landscape once a tank has plowed through it? – Anselm Keifer