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white, along with



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The artist, Max Pechstein is a German painter and graphic artist. He was born on December 31, 1881, in Eckersbach, a suburb of Zwickau in Saxony, Germany. He attended the Academy of Fine Arts, was a member of the artist group “ Die Brücke”, (The Bridge In English), and was one of the early Expressionists artists of his time. One of Max’s more noteworthy paintings, is his painting The Circus.

The Circus is a large scale oil painting on a canvas, that was painted in 1920. Today this painting can be seen in one of Baltimore’s most prominent and well known museums, the Baltimore Museum of Art, as part of the Cone Collection. In this particular work of Max Pechstein, the main focus appears to be a man on top of two horses while holding a lady acrobat, within the confines of a circus ring. In front of them and to the right, there is a circus director standing aside to both of them holding a whip. The two men are both black haired with slightly darker complexioned skin, and wearing tuxedos as well as dress shoes, the male acrobats suit is red, and the directors is black. The lady being held is also black haired, as well as lightly complexioned.

She is wearing an orange dress with what appears to be orange pants and shoes. Additionally, the horses are both colored white, along with orange saddles. Last but not least, in addition to the circus ring, In the background of the painting there is a large crowd of people visible.

Within the crowd there are colors of black, grey, blue, and even some yellow on the far right. Though, despite the fact that there are various colors within the crowd, the colors are not distinctly separated among the people.

The work of art imitates real life through the aspects of facial features, bodily form, and clothing. Overall, these aspects of the painting resemble real life, but just don't quite possess a significant amount of detail. The artist's imitation of real life, was indeed intentional. This is depicted through the fact that Pechstein took the time to paint each little aspect of the painting, in a way that appears lifelike. The people clearly appear to be people with little to no modifications, the clothing appears to be clothing, and even the horses appear to be such. If this were not the case the, these aspects of the painting would appear abstract and clearly different from that of real life.

This is not to mention, that this painting differs in appearance from traditional abstract art. *** In the painting of The Circus, one principle and element relationship that is clearly apparent is variety through the means of shape and form. The painter painted each person of the crowds head with a different shape. This differentiates between each person of the crowd and also creates artistic variety. Additionally, color creates rhythm. In the painting, through out the length of the crowd the colors change and are repeated in a pattern like form. At the top you can see a blue hue, then a grey, then blue again, and this pattern continues up until the beginning of the circus ring.

This makes the colors appear to the viewer as if they are following a visual tempo or beat. This quality depicts the artistic principle of rhythm. Lastly, color/value creates emphasis. Color creates emphasis because the difference of color immediately draws your eyes to the man holding the lady acrobat on top of the horses. The reds and oranges of their clothes appear a lot brighter than the other colors of the painting.

The colors of red orange, and white are stressed, because they appear emphasized when compared to the dull blues, yellows, and grays of the crowd . Even the circus director under them appears fuller in comparison due to his black suit. All of this allows the left-oriented acrobats to serve as the focal point of the photo. In a thematic sense, the overarching theme of the circus gives the painting a more jovial connotation, but the facial expressions of the people within the main focus differ from this. The facial expressions of the lady appear to be serious and possibly even unhappy. This mood is depicted through the man holding her as well, he does not appear to have a smile, or even an indication of a smile. In context, this changes the mood of the painting when analyzed, serious facial expressions make the painting appear somber. In lieu of this, it can still be conceived that the artist was not trying to convey a mood as somber and serious as he did.

The lights colors of the background, the clothing of the people, and the theme show some discrepancies with the somber mood. If he was truly trying to convey a serious and unhappy mood he would have chosen to use duller colors, but he did not. He instead used bright colors such as yellows, reds , blue , greens, and even the white which was fairly light in pigment. In fact the only aspect that does depict this, though strong, is the facial expressions of the people and crowd. Through his painting of The Circus, Pechstein was trying to convey a traditional urban circus, and he proved to be successful in doing so. In the painting, the two aesthetic theories of Imitationalism and Emotionalism are apparent.

Both of these theories are depicted through the facial expressions of the acrobats. Their facial expressions successfully resemble human faces, which deems them indeed similar to lifelike. The shape of their faces, and the curves within their mouth and eyes, are that which would be present on a real human being. In addition to this, the facial expressions also depict emotionalism through the way in which they convey the mood of the people, and of the painting as a whole. The acrobats depict a serious and slightly somber emotion through their facial expressions. The curve of the eyes and mouth make them appear to the viewer as serious, or as if they are unhappy.

Most often straight or only slightly curved mouths convey the emotion of seriousness or unhappiness within art and in the world. Max

Pechstein's art career can be categorized by three distinct periods. The first phase of his career as an artist was closely associated to Max's friendship and participation in the art group Die Brücke. This period lasted until 1912.

The second creative phase took place after his return from the Palau Islands and continued until 1924. Throughout this period, Max's compositions within his art became more balanced, and the colors he used started to become softer. As a result of the war, he was prevented from working from the year 1933 all the way until 1945. After the war, he began to paint again, though a majority were watercolors. Add mor detail In the early 1900's, Pechstein and his fellow Die Brucke artists Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Erick Heckel were extremely enamored with the theme of the the circus.

They saw the theme of the circus as a means to explore the energy and expressive body movements of the skilled acrobats through art. In Pechstein's painting, *The Circus*, he captures this energy and excitement of the circus with strong and sharp diagonal lines and exaggerated poses present through the acrobats. By the means of theme and quality, the viewer is brought right into the circus ring, even closer than the crowd revering the spectacle before them.

A majority of Pechstein's early circus works were simply drawings, etchings, and woodcuts of acrobats in landscape settings. In fact, it was not until the year 1918, that he created works with the theme of an urban circus. This interesting choice may have been inspired by Pechstein's good friend Kirchner. He desired to honor and acknowledge his friend, who had produced a similar painting in 1912 entitled *Bareback Rider at the Circus*, by painting a large-scale oil painting himself. In Pechstein's more private life, he spent many summers either on the shores of the Baltic Sea or in small villages in the province of Pomerania in Central Europe. During this time, he painted and designed windows.

In the year 1926, he even created an array of windows for the International Labor Office in Geneva. For his windows and art, Pechstein received many commendations and prizes, among them ones from the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and from several states in Germany. He was appointed professor at the Prussian Academy and had great success as a teacher. Though, in 1933 when the Nazis took over Germany he encountered minor plights regarding his art career. In 1937, Nazi idealism led his art to be declared "degenerate." The ramifications for this were severe.

Pechstein was prohibited from painting, dismissed from the Prussian Academy, and forced to witness the removal of a majority of his works from the collections of German museums. Fortunately, at the end of World War II, Pechstein was able to gradually return to the art scene, thus rehabilitating his reputation. Over the years, he made significant contributions to the art world through his art, and as a result he was recognized greatly in the art world. In 1945, in West Berlin, he was appointed professor at the school of Hochschule für Bildende Künste, and it didn't stop there. Following that, he was awarded many honors in the decade preceding his death. Some of these were, the Honorary Diploma of Milano and Bordeaux; Medallion of Honor of Vienna, the Garden Club"-award of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, and the Art award of the City of Berlin. Overall, Max Pechstein contributed many a work to the Expressionist Movement of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, however, his contribution to the art world has been overshadowed by his previous fellow Die Brücke artists, that of Kirchner, Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff. To this day, they continue to be regarded as the leading members of Die Brücke, thus providing them collateral recognition for their work.