

Franz Marc

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August Macke

Portrait of Franz Marc, 1910

Oil on paper, 50 x 39 cm

Neue Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin

Authors: Klaus H. Carl and Franz Marc

Layout:

Baseline Co. Ltd

61A-63A Vo Van Tan Street

4th Floor

District 3, Ho Chi Minh City

Vietnam

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Everyone who shapes and organises life searches for the right foundation; the rock on which to build. This foundation has only rarely been found within tradition - oft proven to be illusory and fleeting. Great painters do not search for their subjects from amongst those who have been lost to the sands of time, but they instead explore the real and deep focus of their own time. Only in this way can they create their own technique and style of painting.

— Franz Marc



Biography

- 1880 Franz Marc was born on the 8th of February in Munich.
- 1894-1899 He studied at the Luitpold Gynasium and graduated with a diploma.
- 1899 Served in the military. Also enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Munich.
- 1900 Began to study painting.
- 1901 Marc travelled with his brother Paul to Venice, Padua, and Verona.
- 1902 Completed *plein air* painting near Kochel (Bavaria), including *Peat Moss Huts at Dachau*.
- 1903 Marc travelled, following an invitation of a fellow student to Paris, returning through Brittany and Normandy. Saw Manet, Monet, and Renoir at the Galerie Durand-Ruel.
- 1904 Moved into his first independent studio in Munich (Kaulbachstraße 68) and moved again at the end of the year (Schellinger Street 33). Painted *Indersdorf*.
- 1905 Painted *The Dead Sparrow* and *Little Horse Study*.
- 1906 Visited Greece and Mount Athos. Painted *Two Women on the Hillside*.
- 1907 Journeyed again to Paris and found himself greatly impressed with the works of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin.
- 1908-1909 Marc spent time in Tolz (Bavaria) and was influenced by the works of Van Gogh. Painted *Larch Trees* and *Deer at Dusk*.

Fr Marc

- 1910 Encountered art dealers Brakl and Thannhauser, as well as August Macke. In the autumn, Marc participated in the second exhibition of the New Artists' Association at the Galerie Thannhauser in Munich. Painted *Nude with Cat*, *Grazing Horses* and began *Dog Lying in the Snow*.
- 1911 Marc was made a member of the New Artists' Association in Munich, as well as their third Chairman. Produced *Deer in the Snow*, *Blue Horse I*, *The Steer*, *Monkey-Frieze*, *Donkey-Frieze*, *Blue-Black Fox*, and *Little Blue Horses*.
- 1912 Encountered the artists of *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), as well as Paul Klee. Travelled to Paris with Auguste Macke where they visited Robert Delaunay, a participant of the Second Exhibition of The Blue Rider group. Painted *Girl with a Cat*, *Red Deer*, *The Little Blue Horse*, *The Tiger*, *Three Animals (Dog, Fox, and Cat)*.
- 1913 Marc participated in the preparation for the First German Autumn Salon. Produced *The Tower of Blue Horses*, *Foxes*, *Animal Fates*, *The Mandrill*, *Painting with Cattle*.
- 1914 Took part in the Expressionist exhibition in Dresden. Moved to Ried. Marc volunteered for World War I from the start, 1st of August. Painted *The Birds*, *Deer in the Forest*, *Fighting Forms*, *Broken Forms*.
- 1914-1916 Began what would become his famous sketchbook, as well as the final version of *Tyrol*.
- 4 March 1916 Franz Marc was mortally wounded by shelling in Braquis near Verdun.
- 1916 Retrospective at the New Munich Secession.
- 1937 Marc's art was banned on the grounds that it was "Degenerate Art"



Germany at the end of the 19th Century – the Imperial Period

Germany, the victor of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1871, was ruled by Emperor William I (1797-1888). From his time as Crown Prince, hence before his enthronement as Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, he was nicknamed “Prince of Grapeshot”; an unflattering name brought about because of his alleged participation in the suppression of the 1848/1849 Revolution, caused by Johann (Max) Dortu (1826-1849) who was later executed for “treason”.



Portrait of the Artist's Mother

1902

Oil on canvas, 98.5 x 70 cm

Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich





In his official duties, William I, who had reluctantly accepted the position of German Emperor, was supported by Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898). The chancellor was compelled to spend a considerable amount of time on the Socialist Act (the German Anti-Socialist Law which was passed in order to curb the dangerous strength of the Social Democratic Party), thus giving reason for his dismissal in 1890 under William II. The British satirical magazine *Punch* of the 29th of March 1890, under the headline of the famous cartoon "Dropping the Pilot" hit the nail on the head.

Cottage on the Dachau Marsh

1902

Oil on canvas, 43.5 x 73.6 cm

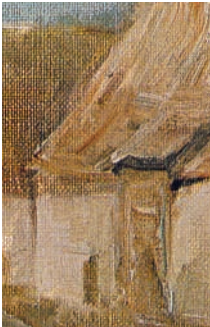
Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See





The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of the 10th of October 1878 reported on a session of the Reichstag:

“Today’s meeting of the Reichstag, in which the debate on the second reading of the Socialist Act, had its start. It turned out to be one of the stormiest and most passionate meetings we have ever witnessed in the Leipziger Strasse. Today’s meeting can be described as a duel between Bismarck and Sonnemann. Probably never before was a more serious and unjustified, or more far-fetched accusation thrust into the face of an



Indersdorf

1904

Oil on canvas, 40 x 30.5 cm
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich





elected representative as happened today on the part of the Chancellor towards the deputy of Frankfurt from the stands of the Reichstag – charging him with treason, albeit veiled, which is punishable under the penal code with imprisonment. [...]”



In spite of further heated debates, this bill, which corresponded to a ban of the Socialist and Social Democratic parties, was finally adopted in the autumn of 1878 and it remained in force until 1890.

Due to the social hardship that affected most of the workers, it had become an urgent need to



Small Horse Study II

1905

Oil on cardboard, 27 x 31 cm

Property of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See





counterbalance the negative effects. As an efficacious “sedative”, health insurance was introduced in 1883, thereafter followed by accident insurance a year later, and finally, in 1889, old-age insurance became part of the social legislation.

A further focus of Bismarck’s policy was, as from around the mid-1880s, the initial and half-hearted operation of the colonial policy. After all, Germany was amongst the major powers of Europe (along with Britain, France, and Russia) who had already ruled, for quite a time, over colonies. Finally in 1884 and 1885, Bismarck was able to acquisition the colonies of Togo,

The Dead Sparrow

1905

Oil on panel, 13 x 16.5 cm

Sammlung Erhard Kracht

Stiftung Moritzburg - Kunstmuseum
des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle





Cameroon, German East Africa, and German South-West Africa. The latter two were initially acquired by two private entrepreneurs. This meant that Germany took part in the race for African colonies, which in the long run would ultimately be deemed unsuccessful.

Another key element after the victory in the Franco-Prussian War was the culture struggle between the Empire and the Catholic Church under Pope Pius IX (1792-1878). The main issue was the separation of church and state, and to which, as a result, we owe the introduction of civil marriage.

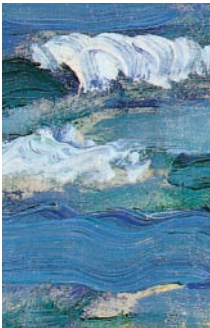
For the French, their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War proved costly; they were obliged, after all – besides

Two Women on the Hillside

1906

Oil on canvas, mounted on cardboard, 15.5 x 24.7 cm
Property of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See





the loss of Alsace and Lorraine departments – to pay on top of what they already owed, five billion francs in war reparations. This amount supported Germany's post-war economy significantly. No time was wasted in using the increase in finances for not only replacing previous lost military equipment, but also buying new inventions and developing existing technology.

These technical innovations promoted industrialisation and hence the urbanisation and transformation of Germany into a country of immigration for workers from Eastern countries. The innovations were mainly (the following list is not absolutely complete) the electric streetcar (Siemens), the world's first line of which was

Woman in the Wind by the Sea

1907

Oil on cardboard, 25 x 16 cm

Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See





inaugurated in 1881 in Berlin; the introduction of electric street lighting in Nuremberg and Berlin (1882); and the steam turbine developed in 1885 by Carl Gustaf Patrik de Laval (1883, Switzerland) and Parsons (1884, Britain); and the first (three-wheel) petrol car built by Carl Benz. In the same year, the Viennese chemist Auer von Welsbach developed his approach of gas lighting for mass production, Otmar Mergenthaler invented the Linotype typesetting machine for printing houses (1886), Emil Berliner applied for a patent for the record as a successor of the gramophone (1887), and later, for more comfortable transportation in the Benz automobile, the Scottish veterinarian John Boyd Dunlop

Sheaves of Grain

1907

Oil on canvas, 78.74 x 58.42 cm

Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Iowa City





invented air-filled tires in 1890, which was, however, initially only designed and used for bicycles.

As the most important inventions then, as well as today, were primarily designed for a military operation rather than a civilian one, the American Hiram Maxim developed the machine gun as a successor of medieval guns in 1885. The Maxim Gun was employed during the colonial wars against the less skilled and prepared natives, who were generally only armed with shield and spear. It was also successfully used in World War I.

In 1897, on the basis of electromagnetic waves, as detected by Heinrich Hertz, Guglielmo Marconi

Jumping Dog “Schlick”

1908

Oil on cardboard, on wood, 54.5 x 67.5 cm
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich





invented wireless telegraphy. The late 1800s were thrilling and exciting years.

In contrast to his early years, towards the end of his reign “Prince Grapeshot” William I was quite popular amongst the people. This was despite four assassination attempts made on him – two of which wholly failed, the first attempt had slightly wounded his neck, and only the third attempt severely injured the Prince in the head; his life probably saved due to his spiked helmet, widely regarded as a symbol of Prussian militarism. Bismarck primarily utilised this attack to enforce the above-mentioned Socialist laws in the Reichstag. William I died after a short illness on the 9th of March 1888.

Large Lenggries Horse Painting I

1908

Oil on cardboard, 104.8 x 206 cm

Private collection