

The background is a grid of approximately 10x10 squares. The colors are varied, including shades of red, orange, brown, blue, and green. The squares are arranged in a somewhat irregular pattern, with some colors appearing more frequently than others. The overall effect is a textured, abstract composition.

Klee

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“We learn to see what flows beneath.
We learn the prehistory of the visible.
We learn to dig deep and to lay bare, to
explain, to analyse.”

— Paul Klee

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The masters of the Bauhaus (from left to right):
Lyonel Feininger, Vassily Kandinsky,
Oscar Schlemmer, Georg Muche and
Paul Klee in Klee's Bauhaus Weimar studio, 1925.

Biography

1879: On 18 December, Paul Klee is born near Bern, Switzerland.

1886: Klee begins primary school in Bern.

1898: Klee moves to Munich to study painting.

1900: Klee attends Munich Academy. He studies under Franz von Stuck.

1901: Klee travels to Italy.

1902: Klee returns to Munich.

1905: Klee travels to Paris where he sees the works of great artists.

1906: Klee marries Lily Stumpf. Klee exhibits in Munich.

1907: The couple's only son Felix is born.

1909-1910: Klee exhibits in Bern, Zurich, Winterthur and Basel.

1911: Klee meets Kandinsky, Marc and Macke. He joins *Der Blaue Reiter* and is influenced by Cubism.

1912: Klee visit Paris again. He meets Delaunay and is influenced by works of Picasso, Braque, Rousseau and Matisse.

1913: Klee's translation of Delaunay's essay *On Light* is published.

1914: Klee travels to Tunisia.

1916: Klee drafted into the military. He paints very little.

1920: A major retrospective of his works in Munich. He is invited to teach at the Bauhaus, which was then in Weimar.

1922: Klee's paintings are exhibited in Berlin and Wiesbaden.

1924: First American exposition of Klee's works.

KPFA

1926: Klee moves with his family so as to teach at the Bauhaus in Dessau.

1929: Klee works exhibited in Paris, Dresden, and Berlin.

1931: Klee resigns from the Bauhaus, then teaches at the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts.

1933: Klee's work among those called "degenerate" by the Nazis. He is dismissed from the Academy. The Klees return to Bern where they live at his parents' house.

1934: Klee works exhibited in London, the first time in England.

1935: A Klee retrospective exhibition in Bern and Basel. Klee falls seriously ill with what is later diagnosed as scleroderma. His art style changes as he uses thick black lines.

1937: Seventeen of the Klee's works confiscated by the Nazis are included in an exhibit of "Degenerate Art."

1940: A large exhibition of Klee works in Zurich. Klee dies on 29 June in Muralto-Locarno, Switzerland. Commemorative exhibitions are held in Bern, New York and Basel.



In a collection of his writings titled *The Thinking Eye*, Paul Klee once asked his readers to take a “little journey” with him to “the land of Better Understanding.” He was speaking of the technical aspects of art, but the same invitation can be made at the outset of this brief profile of the artist. This book offers a little journey through the highlights of Klee’s fascinating life. It also visits Klee’s art in general, and detours briefly into the fifty-nine representative works of his that are reproduced here.



In the Quarry

1913

Watercolour on paper on
cardboard, 22.3 x 35.2 cm.
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern.





(A complete list of Klee's 8,926 works is in the *Catalogue raisonné Paul Klee*.) The Swiss-born Paul Klee (1879-1940) was one of the most inventive, witty, and imaginative of all artists. He was a master of fantasy, offering thousands of small but impressive works that consistently presented subtle wit and profound insight. His work is rarely mistaken for that of any other artist, yet - unlike many artists who find their niche then repeatedly visit it - each of his paintings has its own identity.



Homage to Picasso

1914

Oil on cardboard, 38 x 30 cm.

Private collection.





He adroitly plays with the viewer's senses, making his art ambiguous, yet nearly always understated. A major influence on the evolution of modern art, even as modern art in Germany was officially condemned, Klee did not subscribe entirely to any of the many movements of his day.



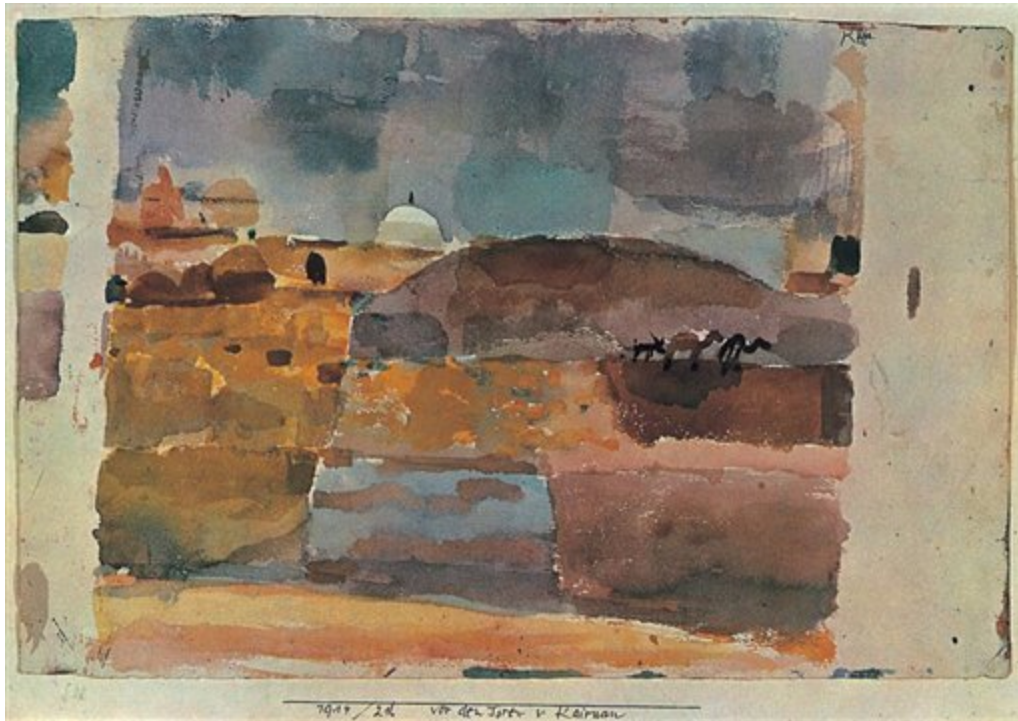
Klee (pronounced as 'clay') was born in Münchenbuchsee, near Bern, Switzerland, on 18 December, 1879.



Before the Gates of Kairouan

1914

Watercolour on paper on
cardboard, 20.7 x 31.5 cm.
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern.



1919 / 28 von der Spitze v. Kairo



His father, Hans, was German and a music teacher at the teacher training college at Bern-Hofwyl. Paul's mother, Ida Marie, received her music education in Stuttgart. His paternal great-grandfather was an organist in Thuringia. His most famous drawing from his earliest childhood is *With the Hare*, done at age five. While he was young, he also drew "devils", which he felt "acquired real presence." Early in his diaries he remembers how the devilish figures frightened him so much that he would run to his parents for comfort.



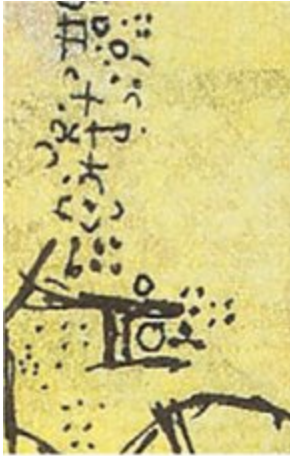
Red and White Domes

1914-1915

Watercolour on Japanese vellum,
14.6 x 13.7 cm.

K 20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein
Westfalen, Düsseldorf.



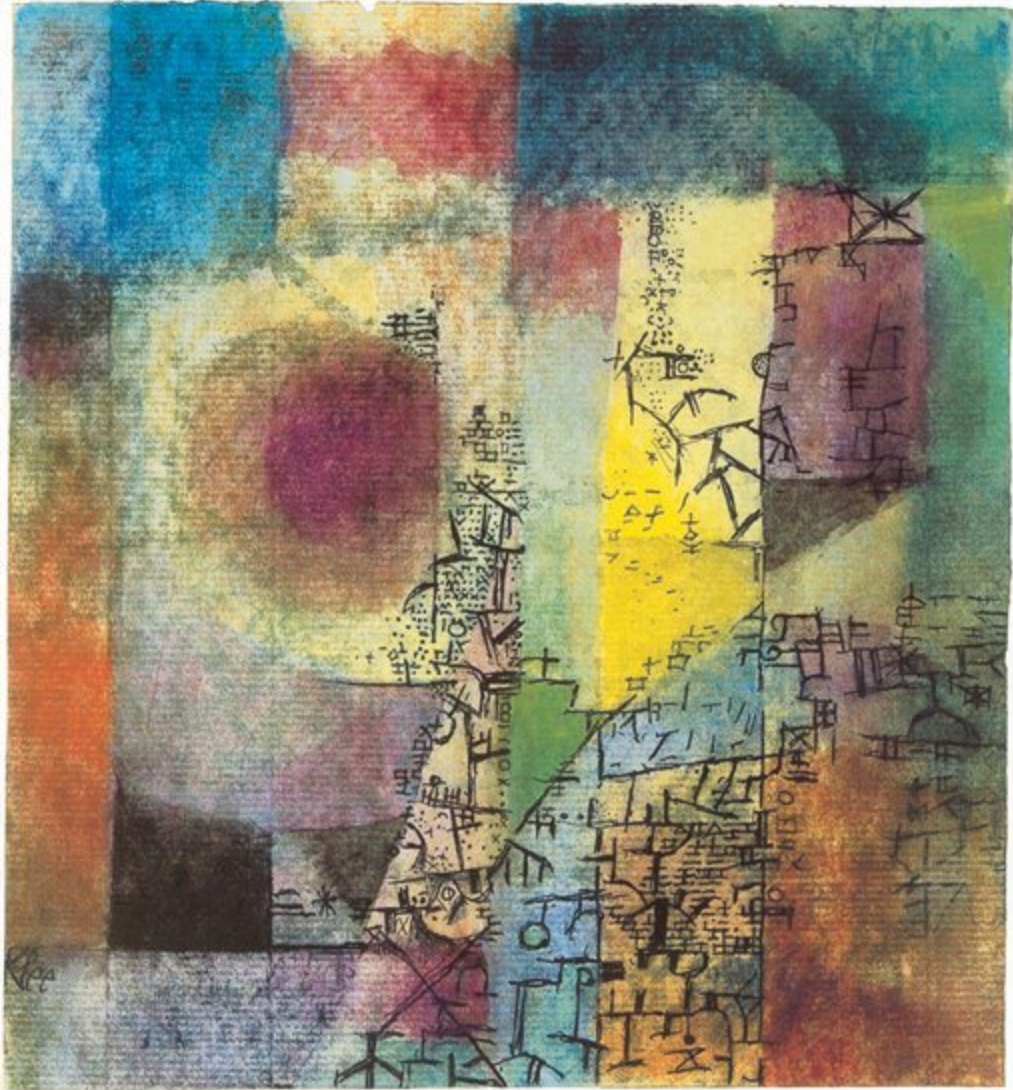


However, the first signs of young Paul Klee's artistic temperament were expressed not in visual art, but in music. The family supported the young man's efforts to master the violin, which he played from age seven in 1886 until he was forced by poor health to give up playing in 1935. Like the great Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), he would play violin for an hour before each painting session. He likewise drew every day, as did Picasso and Matisse.

Untitled

1914

Watercolour and ink on Ingres paper, 17 x 15.8 cm.
Kupferstichkabinett,
Kunstmuseum, Basel.





He played violin in chamber groups and in the local municipal orchestra even while he was still in school. However, the group was admittedly unpolished. Pablo Casals (1886-1973), the great Spanish cellist, heard the orchestra play in January, 1905. Afterwards he was reported to have said, in French, that it would be “terrible” to play with the orchestra.



Even though Klee had a fine musical background, in 1898, at age twenty, he decided to study art, not music, at the Munich Academy.



View of a Harbour at Night

1917

Gouache and oil on paper coated with chalk and glue, 21 x 15.5 cm.

Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg.



1977 K6

LV52





However, throughout his life, music was essential. He was also a music critic for publications. In his diary, Klee often documented opinions on the concerts or operas he attended during his travels in Italy, France, and Germany.

Around 1925, while at the Dessau Bauhaus, Klee met the composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963). The artist apparently befriended the young composer and liked his chamber music.



Warning of the Ships

1917

Ink and watercolour
on paper on cardboard,
24.2 x 15.6 cm.

Graphische Sammlung,
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.



1917. 208.

Wassermann, der Sch. 16



By then Hindemith had written a piano concerto and several songs, as well as over twenty major works for strings, including three of his six works titled *Chamber Music*.

Evidence of the permanent influence of music on Klee would run throughout his diverse oeuvre. Works showing direct reference to music include drawings in the “Eidola” series, such as the drawing of a pianist, or the works about kettle drummers. Several of his titles have music-related titles, such as *Heroic Fiddling* or [*Heroic Strokes of the Bow*](#) (1938).



Dittlsam

1918

Ink and watercolour on paper,
26.5 x 16.5 cm.

Musée d'art moderne et
contemporain, Strasbourg.