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PAUL KLEE

L'IRONIE À L'ŒUVRE

6 APRIL – 1 AUGUST 2016

GALERIE 2, LEVEL 6

KLEE KLEE

#KLEE

**Centre
Pompidou**

PAUL KLEE

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29 March 2016



communication and partnerships
department
75191 Paris cedex 04

director
Benoit Parayre
telephone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 12 87
e-mail
benoit.parayre@centrepompidou.fr

press attaché
Anne-Marie Pereira
telephone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 40 69
e-mail
anne-marie.pereira@centrepompidou.fr

www.centrepompidou.fr

CONTENTS

1. PRESS RELEASE	PAGE 3
2. PLAN OF EXHIBITION AND CIRCUIT	PAGE 5
3. PUBLICATIONS	PAGE 9
4. EXCERPTS FROM CATALOGUE ARTICLES	PAGE 11
5. BIOGRAPHICAL LANDMARKS	PAGE 24
6. INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR	PAGE 27
7. WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN	PAGE 28
8. PRESS VISUALS	PAGE 29
9. PRACTICAL INFORMATION	PAGE 36

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Communication and partnerships
department
75191 Paris cedex 04

director
Benoît Parayre
telephone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 12 87
email
benoit.parayre@centrepompidou.fr

press attaché
Anne-Marie Pereira
telephone
00 33 (0)1 44 78 40 69
email
anne-marie.pereira@centrepompidou.fr

www.centrepompidou.fr

Curator : **Angela Lampe**

Insula dulcamara, 1938, 481 (C 1)
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne

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PRESSE RELEASE
PAUL KLEE
L'IRONIE À L'ŒUVRE
6 APRIL – 1 AUGUST 2016
GALERIE 2, LEVEL 6

The Centre Pompidou is proposing a journey through the work of a singular figure in modernity and one of the 20th century's most iconic artists: Paul Klee. This is the first major retrospective in France since the 1969 exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Featuring two hundred and thirty works loaned by the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern and various major international and private collections, this retrospective casts a fresh look on Klee's work. It sheds light on the way he used irony through an approach originating in the early German Romanticism, consisting in a constant shift between a satire and the affirmation of an absolute, finite and infinite, real and ideal. In this respect, Klee's use of irony is inspired by the philosopher Friedrich Schlegel: «Everything in it must be a joke, and everything must be serious: everything must be offered up with an open heart, and profoundly concealed.» This new approach also explores Klee's relationship with his peers and the artistic movements of his time.

The exhibition is divided into seven thematic sections highlighting each stage in Klee's artistic development: «Satirical beginnings» (the early years); «Klee and Cubism»; «Mechanical theatre» (in line with Dada and Surrealism); «Klee and Constructivisms» (the Bauhaus years in Dessau); «Looking back» (the 1930's); «Klee and Picasso» (Klee's reaction after the Picasso retrospective in Zurich in 1932); and «The crisis years» (marked by Nazi policies, war and illness).

This exhibition is dedicated to Pierre Boulez.

Publications

Three books are published by the Centre Pompidou on the occasion of this retrospective. A 312-page catalogue edited by the curator Angela Lampe, with 300 illustrations, contains new contributions by internationally-acclaimed Klee specialists; a bilingual album in French and English provides an illustrated itinerary of the exhibition, and an anthology, «En souvenir de Paul Klee» («Remembering Paul Klee») presents twenty translated first-hand accounts by contemporary figures close to the artist, including Vassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, his son Felix, and various students.

An international symposium

Organised in partnership with the Goethe-Institut of Paris and the Centre Allemand d'Histoire de l'Art, a symposium on recent research into Klee's work, featuring international specialists, is being held on 19 and 20 May 2016:

- Thursday 19 May, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., and 2.30 p.m. - 7 p.m., Centre Pompidou, Petite Salle, level -1
- Friday 20 May, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., and 2.30 p.m. - 7 p.m., Goethe-Institut, Auditorium, Paris

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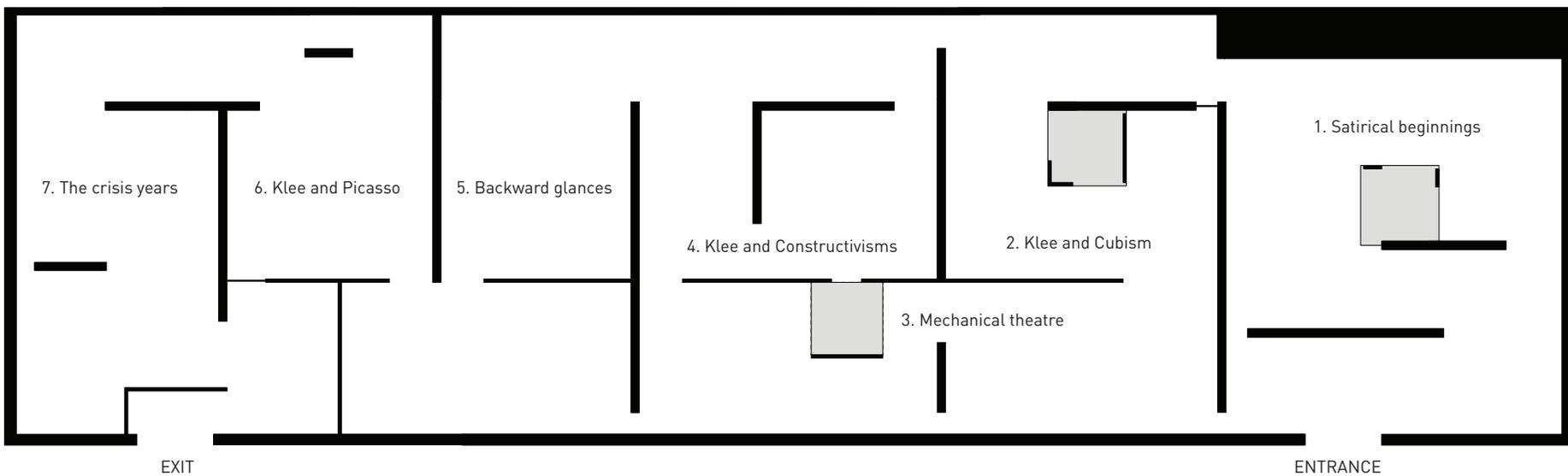


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2. PLAN OF EXHIBITION



EXHIBITION CIRCUIT

Introduction

1. Satirical beginnings

After his studies in Munich, Klee spent the winter of 1901-1902 in Italy. Faced with the grandeur of Antiquity and its Renaissance, the young artist became aware of his own place in history: that of an imitator obliged to continue a now outmoded classical idealism. His solution was satire: a modern mode of expression that could assert both high ideals and a critical view of the state of the world.

« I serve beauty by depicting its enemies (caricature and satire) », he wrote in his diary.

Based on this dialectical inversion central to Romantic irony, Klee began producing essentially graphic works, in which he expressed his often scathing thoughts on relations between the sexes, his relationship to society and his position as an artist. It was also a time when he experimented with techniques, trying out reverse glass painting and exploring plastic forms. This period culminated in the illustrations for *Candide ou l'Optimisme* by Voltaire, a writer much venerated by Klee.

2. Klee and Cubism

Klee discovered Cubism in Munich in late 1911, and a year later during his stay in Paris. From then on, the formal inventions of Cubism nourished his pictorial explorations, often in a dialectical way. Whilst using a prismatic vocabulary, Klee's childlike drawings are nevertheless an ironic representation of the Cubist decomposed figures that he found deprived of all vitality. In the series of watercolours painted during his formative stay in Tunis in 1914, he introduced effects of distance – for example by leaving the vertical bands of white paper that corresponded to the marks left by the elastic bands he used when painting outdoors. This distancing technique was also evident in his highly singular approach, where he cut up finished compositions into two or more parts, turning them into independent works or combining them differently on new supports. Here Klee asserted a creative impulse whose roots lay paradoxically in the act of destruction.

3. Mechanical theatre

At the end of the First World War, Klee's work began to feature the imagery of mechanised figures. Inspired by his experience in aviation maintenance, Klee transformed birds into planes, often in attack formation. He started using oil transfers: an indirect technique that depersonalised the lines of the drawing. The aesthetics of the machine were then much in vogue in Dadaist circles, from Francis Picabia to Raoul Hausmann. Klee's contact with the Zurich Dadaists revived his interest in the representation of machines and equipment, and the effects produced by their mechanisms. As a teacher at the Bauhaus, he began to create hybrid beings, half-human, half-object. Through mechanical simplification, he used the motifs of automatons and puppets to condemn the loss of vitality and the narrowing of inner life brought about by industrial rationalisation, asking ironically « When will machines start bearing children? »

4. Klee and Constructivisms

The new watchword proclaimed in 1923 by Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus («Art and technology: a new unity») marked a turning point for the school. Klee was highly responsive to it. He then embarked upon a tightrope act, seeking a balance between his intuitive approach and the new contemporary dogmas. He took up certain aspects of modernist expression such as the grid, while sidestepping its rigidity. His paintings, structured by squares, in turn evoked musical rhythms, stained glass painting, tapestries, multi-coloured flowerbeds and aerial views of fields. The Bauhaus's move to the modern city of Dessau in 1925 further induced the school's movement towards the use of photographic techniques, ardently supported by its new teacher, László Moholy-Nagy. Klee reacted in his own way: rational aesthetics acted as a foil, enabling him to assert his antagonistic position more firmly. In his view, «laws should only provide a basis for self-fulfilment.»

5. Backward glances

In his last years at the Bauhaus, Klee began to multiply references to different epochs of the past. Inspired by his travels and the many books and articles he read on the subject, he introduced pictorial elements reminiscent of ancient mosaics, Egyptian civilisation and figures and signs carved on the walls of Palaeolithic caves. The prehistoric dimension in itself was a recurrent component in his imagination: fossils, caves, mountains in the process of forming, primitive plants and animals, sacred stones, undecipherable inscriptions on rocks and such like all allude to the past in varying degrees. Klee used imitation as a method of appropriation. The reproduction of the effects of time on both the object (wear and tear, mould, erosion) and its content imbued his works with a sense of parody. While Klee drew on the repertory of signs produced by «primitive» or non-Western cultures, he was only imitating the principles of their original structure.

6. Klee and Picasso

Picasso represented a particular challenge for Klee. His work dialogued with the Spanish artist's with particular intensity at two periods in his life: at the beginning of his career in around 1912, and above all during the 1930s, after he saw the 1932 retrospective at the Kunsthaus in Zurich. Here Klee discovered Picasso's «Surrealism», particularly his large paintings of female figures and his biomorphic metamorphoses: two new directions that powerfully influenced Klee after the Bauhaus period, and stimulated the work of his final years.

This confrontation was nourished by the publication of numerous articles on Picasso in reviews such as *Les Cahiers d'Art*, to which Klee subscribed. After his first visit to Picasso's Paris studio in 1933, the two artists met up at Klee's house in Bern in 1937. That virtually silent moment revealed the tensions between these two giants of modernity. Their dialogue was imaginary, made up of appropriation and opposition, of secret admiration and critical irony.

7. The crisis years

Hitler's coming to power in 1933 marked the end of Klee's career in Germany and forced him into exile in Bern. He responded with a series of drawings that transposed the country's predominant angst into violent cross-hatching. *Von der Liste gestrichen* [Struck from the list], a self-portrait in the form of a pseudo-Cubist African mask, treats Nazis politics with irony by parodying their own criteria for exclusion. Klee liked to counter terror through a childlike, playful iconography, where signs are transformed into stickmen dancing not in joy but in fear. These figures may well allude to the general physical training encouraged by the Nazis. Their dislocated appearance reflected another source of anxiety for the artist: the serious illness that was beginning to stiffen his bodily movements. In 1935, Klee developed scleroderma, a wasting disease that gradually mineralised his body. As a result, he simplified his graphic language, which now expressed contemporary suffering – both humanity's and his own – with elementary force.

3. PUBLICATIONS

Centre Pompidou publications



Exhibition catalogue

by Angela Lampe

A publication with 312 pages and 300 illustrations, featuring new articles by internationally recognised Paul Klee specialists. Format: 23.5 x 30 cm. Hardback. Price: €44.90.

From his satirical beginnings to his reinterpretation of Cubism, productive exchanges with Dada and inversion of the Bauhaus dogmas to his final years of crisis, throughout his career Paul Klee endeavoured to assert total freedom with regard to the modernisms of his time, readily taking casting an ironic eye on their principles and disrupting their systems. The retrospective staged by the Centre Pompidou Paul Klee takes a completely new look at his entire output through the prism of Romantic irony. This richly-illustrated catalogue contains contributions from leading specialists on Klee and sheds light on the subversive character of his work.



Exhibition album

A bilingual album in French and English illustrates the exhibition circuit with a selection of major works. Format: 27 x 27 cm, 60 pages, 60 illustrations. Price: €9.50.

Who was this mysterious Paul Klee, who hid behind masks and adopted ever-differing postures? The nineteen first-hand accounts of close friends, colleagues, students and exegetes of Klee, including Kandinsky, Feininger, Kahnweiler and Felix Klee, are full of details and stories – some amusing, some moving – which give us a more familiar picture of him as an artist and a man. This book is inspired by the collection published in 1959 by Ludwig Grote under the title *Erinnerungen an Paul Klee*, which the art historian presents as «paths leading to the being». Most of all, it makes a genuine contribution to the history of art, as none of these texts have been published in French before, apart from one.

En souvenir de Paul Klee. Ecrits et entretiens (Memories of Paul Klee: writings and interviews)

A collection of nineteen translated first-hand accounts by people close to the artist, including Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler, Félix Klee and Gabriele Muntér.

Format: 12 x 18.5 cm. paperback, 164 page. Price: €14.90.

Contents of the catalogue (excerpts)

Paul Klee. Irony at work

By Angela Lampe

I. Satirical beginnings

The art of negation. The satirical beginnings of Paul Klee

Gregor Wedekind

Shadow Figures between Being and Semblance - Klee's illustrations for Voltaire's Candide ou l'Optimisme

Stephan Dahme

II. Klee and Cubism

Cubism and the creative act of cutting up with Paul Klee

Osamu Okuda

The visible and legible with Klee. Hoch und strahlend..., 1916

Annie Bourneuf

III. Mechanical theatre

Paul Klee. From Dada to Surrealism

Michael Baumgartner

Walter Benjamin: the most famous collector of Paul Klee, on Angelus Novus, 1920 and Vorführung des Wunders, 1916

Reto Sorg

IV. Klee and Constructivisms

In equilibrium. Paul Klee at the Bauhaus

Cathrin Klingsöhr-Leroy

Klee's chequered paintings. Bildarchitektur rot gelb blau, 1923

Annie Bourneuf

Klee's parodic genres

Charles W. Haxthausen

V. Backward glances

The substance of time

Rémi Labrusse

From the writing of dance to the dance of writing

Regine Bonnefoit

VI. Klee and Picasso

«Scepticism towards the bull». The artistic dialogue of Paul Klee with Pablo Picasso

Christine Hopfengart

Picasso's visit to Paul Klee in Bern in 1937

Testimony of Bernhard Geiser

VII. The crisis years

«The time has come». Paul Klee and the experience of history

Maria Stavrinaki

Klee's output of 1939

Regine Bonnefoit

Grey points. Paul Klee in the introspections of philosophy

Marcella Lista

Timeline drawn up by Marie Merio

Bibliography drawn up by Elisabeth Jobin

4. EXCERPTS FROM CATALOGUE ARTICLES

Paul Klee. Irony at work

By Angela Lampe

There are ancient and modern poems that are pervaded by the divine breath of irony throughout and informed by a truly transcendental buffoonery. Internally: the mood that surveys everything and rises infinitely above all limitations, even above its own art, virtue or genius; externally, in its execution: the mimic style of an averagely gifted Italian buffo.

Friedrich Schlegel

"I am God," Paul Klee claimed at the age of twenty-two. Shortly afterwards, he wrote to his fiancée Lily Stumpf that he could now content himself with "that beautiful thing self-irony." This state of mind endured throughout his life. "He always had a great taste for satire, for irony, for everything that isn't quite serious," his son Felix later remarked. Klee's self-portraits are a striking illustration of this. At the end of the war, at a time when he was questioning his creative identity, Klee produced a series of four caricatural, tongue-in-cheek self-portraits in which he depicts himself in turn as a "thinking," "feeling," "pondering" and "creating" artist. There is a fifth drawing, *Versunkenheit [Meditation]* (1919), of a head of a mystic or Buddha whose large, closed eyes and absence of ears convey a visionary and introverted state. The lithograph he produced from this drawing (*Nach der Zeichnung 19/75 [After the Drawing 1919, 75]* (1919), published full-page the same year in an art review, served as the artist's official portrait from then on. The fact that this face's features also seem to resemble both female genital organs and a bust of Homer in the Glyptothek in Munich reveals the extent to which Klee liked to confuse his image by cloaking it in borrowed postures. For the great literary theorist Peter Szondi, this distance, the detachment shown by "the isolated man who has become his own object," is the first condition of Romantic irony. According to Szondi, the second is the realisation that to aspire to "unity and infinity" in a "riven and finite" world, deprives man of "the power to act." Irony, then, is "his attempt to endure a painfully difficult position by means of a renunciation and an inversion of values." And looking again at this series of self-portraits, one notices that the sheets of paper in front of these artists, Klee's parodic doubles, are all blank.

(...)

The "Paul Klee. Irony at Work" exhibition is the first attempt to reconsider Klee's entire oeuvre in the light of its correspondences with the Romantic concepts of irony. Starting from a negative, pessimist assessment of the status of contemporary art, Klee developed an independent and detached attitude that enabled him to invert this situation. "I served beauty by drawing her enemies (caricature, satire)," he wrote in his diary. Throughout his life, he refined this dialectical strategy, fundamental in the definition of the aesthetic process of Romantic irony, oscillating between affirmation and negation, self-creation and self-destruction. Klee developed an art that incorporates a reflection on its own means and principles and that bears within it the qualities of abstraction and construction. In his view, art should be "a game with the law" or, as he was fond of saying, "a flaw in the system." This exhibition reveals how, in each different period in his life, Klee succeeded in ironically denouncing the dogmas and norms of his contemporaries, from his satirical débuts to the years of exile in Berne. He used the redoubtable weapon of irony to defy the system but also to assert the total freedom that was the very basis of his humanist idealism. For Pierre Boulez, it is Klee's rebelliousness, his way of simultaneously posing "the principle and the transgression of the principle," that is the most important lesson he taught us.

“Satire in the grand style.” – the beginnings

Klee's artistic débuts were marked by an intense disillusionment – a “humiliation,” even – that prompted a fundamental questioning of his work. During a trip to Italy with his friend the sculptor Hermann Haller after completing his studies in Munich, the young artist became aware that “the thought of living in an epigonic age is almost unbearable.” His discovery of the grandeur of antique culture and its Renaissance opened his eyes to the incongruity of being part of the continuity of a classical idealism that he considered outmoded. He stated this clearly in his diary: “I have now reached the point where I can look over the great art of antiquity and its Renaissance. But, for myself, I cannot find any artistic connection with our own times. And to want to create something outside of one's own age strikes me as suspect. Great perplexity. This is why I am again all on the side of satire.”

Yet this disenchantment was only relative. In a letter to his fiancée Lily, Klee revealed that in Italy he had “again begun to feel some respect for the human mind,” which encouraged him to temper the destructive assault of his satires in order to find a “conciliatory solution.” Satire now appeared to Klee to be a modern means of expression that could define two divergent approaches: on the one hand the affirmation of elevated ideals, and on the other a critical point of view of the state of the world. In his diary Klee explained: “Satire must not spring from an excess of ill will, but ill will from a higher point of view. Ridiculous man, divine God.”

Again the dialectical mode, between affirmation and negation. If certain commentators of Klee's satirical works have established parallels with Aesthetics of Ugliness, the theories published in 1853 by Karl Rosenkranz – a pupil of Hegel, for whom ugliness is not only the absence of beauty but its positive negation – one can just as legitimately see them as an expression of Romantic irony. According to Szondi, the ironic man can only surpass the negativity of his situation by reconciling the relative and the absolute. “By anticipating the future unity in which he believes, he declares this negativity to be temporary, whereby it is both preserved and reevaluated.”

The second series of *Inventionen* [Inventions], the etchings that Klee executed after his trip to Italy, and which he regarded as his first accomplished works, probably best embody the dialectical mode that he had adopted to go beyond an idealising, metaphysically based art whilst remaining in this tradition. The best example of this is the famous etching *Der Held mit dem Flügel* [Winged Hero] (1905), a work which Klee regarded in a letter to Lily as his “most valid on a spiritual level.” By parodying antique sculptures in ruin but also the winged spirits, cherubs and fallen angels dear to his former teacher Franz von Stuck, Klee mocked the conventional models in vogue. But the great stylistic affectedness with which he almost outrageously depicts the comedy and the ridiculousness of this decline nonetheless allowed him to maintain the original message – man's elevation – as a promise “on hold”.

“Destruction for the sake of construction?” – Cubism

Klee discovered Cubism late in 1911 in Heinrich Thannhauser's *Moderne Galerie* in Munich, then, above all, during his stay in Paris in April 1912, when he was confronted with the works of Picasso and Braque. In his drawings, he gradually abandoned depth effects for a new two-dimensionality that allowed him to place figures directly in the picture plane. The small drawing *menschl. Ohnmacht* [Human Helplessness] (1913) is particularly revealing in the way in which Klee enjoyed playing with the prismatic framework developed by the Cubists: in a style close to children's drawing, it is used here both as a means of structuring space (linking different formal elements together) and as a narrative apparatus (a net retaining the captive figures). Regine Prange sees this as an ironic staging – echoed by the title – as if Cubist compositions resulted in a paralysis preventing all freedom of movement. This is precisely what Klee criticised in Cubism: man or animal's loss of vitality as soon as they are integrated into a “heterogeneous pictorial organism,” “thrown where the idea of the picture demands.”

Klee pursued this game with the Cubist system in a series of watercolours painted on his mythical trip to Tunis in April 1914. With August Macke and Louis Moilliet, he spent two weeks in the North African sun where, as legend has it, he discovered the use of colour. Among the thirty works he produced there, a group of four landscape watercolours are particularly noteworthy.

In these pictures he kept the vertical white bands of unpainted paper left by the elastic bands he used to fix the paper to the board (St. Germain b. Tunis [landeinwärts] [Saint-Germain Near Tunis (Inland)], (1914), and Landhäuser am Strand [Country Houses on the Beach], (1914). The fact that Klee, who painted over these bands on the first watercolours he produced during the trip (for example on Hammamet, 1914), decided to leave them here and, furthermore, classified two of these works as "Sonderklasse" – a personal category he used to denote works he intended to keep for himself – shows the importance he attached to this remarkable pictorial procedure. By their negative formation, these unpainted verticals, following the orthogonal grid of the composition, highlight the very principle of painting: the superimposition of layers of colour on a blank ground. De facto, according to Michel Foucault, Klee "makes the very act of painting the deployed, scintillating knowledge of painting itself." Applied prior to the work's execution then removed after its completion, the elastic band, or rather its trace, renders the temporality of the creative process visible. By leaving part of the ground intact, the artist succeeds in representing the medium's intrinsic qualities by its absence. If some have detected Klee's *Witz* in this, one can also see the *modus operandi* of Romantic irony – not solely due to the dialectical reversal that the procedure suggests, but also through the dispelling of the illusionist effect. By introducing this element into the genesis of the work's construction, Klee was denouncing the traditional paradigm formulated by Alberti, that the picture opens a window onto the world. The unique property of Romantic irony is that it transforms the very conditions of the medium into a game, as is the case, for example, in the performing arts. Ludwig Tieck did precisely this in his satirical drama *Puss in Boots* (1797) by having the author comment on his own creation as a fictional character.

The distance that Klee adopts vis-à-vis his own creation is also perceptible in another singular procedure, which consisted of cutting up completed works into two or several parts with scissors. Thanks to the lengthy research begun by Wolfgang Kersten and Osamu Okuda in the late 1980s, we now know of some 140 compositions that were cut up by the artist and which produced almost 300 new works. Klee adopted this 'surgical' technique in 1902 and practised it throughout his life, but more frequently with his contact with Cubist inventions (collage, the explosion of the picture space). Although very discreet about this procedure in his writings, Klee noted this in his diary in 1911: "In many cases I finished off the composition by applying the basic pseudo-Impressionist principle: 'What I don't like, I cut away with the scissors.'" Beyond the self-critical faculty this procedure suggests, Klee's use of it also reveals a creative will that paradoxically has its roots in the destructive act – which, in a sense, is the literal transposition of the famous Schlegelian definition of Romantic irony: a "constant alternation of self-creation and self-destruction." Most of the time, Klee, who gave these fragments a new title and inventory number, made them into autonomous works. The process of division that engendered their creation is thus hidden. Yet from time to time Klee did decide to leave it visible by recombining the fragments in a different order on the same sheet of card, as he did in *Auserwählter Knabe [Chosen Boy]* (1918), which lost its Christ-like connotation in the process. Fragmented and discontinuous, these recomposed works show the irony of the creative gesture, between negation and affirmation.

"When will the machine give birth?" – The Bauhaus

From his débuts at the Bauhaus, Klee showed his detached attitude to the utilitarian and Constructivist ideology that Walter Gropius was trying to impose gradually on the school in Weimar. In response to the new, circular programme diagram that the architect and founder of the Bauhaus proposed as the school's structural basis in 1922, Klee devised his own model, not without a certain ironic detachment. It took the form of a giant globe traversed by a thin dotted line with two minute pennants bearing the words *Propagierung* [make propaganda] and *Verlag* [publishing house]. This sketch in a childlike style brings to light the contradiction between the Bauhaus programme, which defended the ideal of a convergence of the arts for the public benefit, and its putting into practice. The return to a star-shaped model, along the lines of the one imagined the previous year by his colleague Johannes Itten to illustrate his theory of colour, was in itself another act of resistance: the Swiss Expressionist, an admirer of esoteric precepts, was then in open conflict with Gropius.

During the ten years he spent at the Bauhaus, Klee constantly alluded both to daily events at the school and to its emblematic motifs in his work.

Acting as a foil, these often parodic references enabled him to assert his divergent position insistently, based on subjectivity and intuition, two essential qualities that the author of *Schöpferische Konfession* [*Creative Confession*] (1920) ceaselessly defended throughout his time in Weimar and Dessau. One of the famous motifs that particularly interested Klee was the *Signet* (or logo) in the Constructivist style that Oskar Schlemmer created in 1922 to illustrate the school's new rational spirit. Klee used this stylised head in profile several times, for example in the lower right part of the famous lithograph with Nietzschean overtones *Seiltänzer* [*Tightrope Walker*] (1923). It may be less apparent that it also inspired Klee's famous picture *Senecio* (1922). According to Otto Carl Werckmeister, in this clown-like portrait, which in his view "animates" the official logo, Klee was having fun challenging the pathos of the humanist construction so dear to Schlemmer. Klee also included this motif in the oil transfer drawing *Mondspiel* [*Moonplay*] (1923), a depiction of the student protests prompted by the eponymous play by Lothar Schreyer, a scandal that led to Schreyer's departure from the Bauhaus.

It is now worth mentioning the oil transfer technique that Klee devised at the end of the First World War and practised until 1925. An indirect method of creation like etching, it consists in placing a sheet of paper blackened with oil or printing ink between a drawing and a blank sheet of paper, then, in most cases, using a pointed metal instrument to trace the drawing, thereby transferring it to the blank sheet. Frequently during this process the pressure exerted by the hand accidentally creates shadowy areas on the reproduced drawing. Thus the mechanism controlling the creative gesture, which Klee preferred to keep secret, produces ghostly lines whose uniform drawing no longer reveals the movement of the hand. This new quality of line was entirely in keeping with the contemporary artistic fascination – notably that of the Dada artists Picabia and Hausmann – for mechanical constructions and the aesthetic of the machine.

Beyond this purely technical aspect, during the war Klee produced a variety of automated figures: birds changing into planes and people into marionettes or dolls. Yet, unlike the Dadaists, Klee was not trying to replace man by machine, but rather to create hybrid beings, both human and object, as illustrated by the programmatic *Metamorphose* [*Metamorphosis*] (1924) – Carl Einstein, for his part, described them as "men-puppets." Again, Klee was creating a dialogue between opposites, whilst stressing by roundabout means and negation the importance of the human being's vivacity and inner life. In other words, Klee was using the motifs of the puppet and the automaton to denounce loss of subjectivity with the aid of mechanical schematization. Thus Adam and Eve find themselves transformed into a grotesque two-headed clown. Unlike Olympia, the beautiful automaton invented and animated by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Klee's puppets do not arouse any feeling of *Unheimlichkeit* [uncanny strangeness], but seem rather to deride the infatuation with machines, which Klee reproached for not having the ability to reproduce themselves. Klee would always remain a humanist idealist.

This attitude can shed light on Klee's often parodic commentaries on the stylised dances that Oskar Schlemmer created for the Bauhaus theatre. Christine Hopfengart proposes that Klee did not appreciate his colleague's work for the stage, while his son Felix recalled that he found it "stereotyped." Even more revealing is his reaction to the photo-collage *Das Figurale Kabinett* [*The Figural Cabinet*] that Schlemmer published in his book *Die Bühne im Bauhaus* (1925). When one compares this composite image with the picture *hat Kopf, Hand, Fuss und Herz* [*Has Head, Hand, Foot and Heart*] (1930), one sees that Klee transformed the theatrical idea of dismemberment of the body into a burlesque pastiche of the German proverb *Weder Hand, noch Fuss haben* [literally, *to have neither head nor foot* – to make no sense] against a Suprematist backdrop.

The Weimar Bauhaus's Constructivist leanings were accentuated in 1923 by the arrival of the Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy. The presence of Theo Van Doesburg, who propagated the dogmas of the De Stijl movement, led Klee to thwart the rigidity of the modernist grid in pictures structured by squares but evoking musical rhythms, stained glass, tapestries, colourful flowerbeds and even fields seen from the air. Then, after its move to the modern city of Dessau, the school took a progressive turn towards the optical technicality advocated by Moholy-Nagy, to whom Klee felt totally foreign. Lyonel Feininger noted to his wife in 1925: "Klee was completely ill at ease yesterday when he talked about Moholy... textbookish spirituality...". Again, Klee's reaction showed a dialectical reversal, by which the artist appropriated technical inventions or theoretical axioms to assert his intuitive approach: the rational aesthetic takes on the role of foil.

This was how he reinterpreted Kandinsky's theories on the appropriate colouring of geometric forms (the square, for example, should be red) in stylised portraits (*Artistenbildnis [Portrait of an Artiste]*, 1927), or he transformed the circles dear to his Russian colleague into an aquarium (*Fische im Kreis [Fishes in a Circle]*, 1926). There are numerous examples of this: the body lying on the ground in one of his analytical drawings (*Nichtcomponiertes im Raum [Uncomposed in Space]*, 1929); to execute playful portraits (*Monsieur Perlenschwein*, 1925) and *Der Maske mit dem Fähnchen [The Mask with the Little Flag]*, 1925), Klee used the spray painting technique recently developed and greatly prized at the Bauhaus for its capacity to produce impersonal-looking surfaces. Finally, his abstract drawings, illustrating his thinking on form, sometimes have surprising sources: for instance, the extraordinary triad of curved lines and forms, which could (also) have been inspired by Laurence Sterne's illustrations for his novel *Tristram Shandy*, the masterpiece of ironic literature published in 1760 – 1767, a 1921 edition of which Klee had in his library. Because in Klee's view "laws should only be underneath in order that flowers may grow from them".

"Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible." – The 1930s

The famous opening sentence of *Schöpferische Konfession*, in which Klee states art's faculty to reveal, encapsulates the essence of the aesthetic project as he conceived it. It can also help us to examine the artist's relationship with one of his favourite themes: time. Although this was a subject that interested Klee from his Expressionist débuts, particularly from the point of view of memory, his questioning of the representation of time past and present haunted his later work from the end of his stay in Germany and during his exile in Berne. From then on, oscillating between diachrony and synchrony, Klee took the standpoint of both archaeologist and commentator of current events. He liked to look both backwards at the remains and traces of past civilisations, and also around him, on what was happening in the art world, in politics and in his own life, which from 1935 was plagued by a long illness.

How to render visible what one cannot see, but merely think, feel or sense?

Klee answers this question by introducing a new means of detachment: Simulacrum. An example of this is the watercolour *Verwittertes Mosaik [Weathered Mosaic]* (1933), one of the series of works on the theme of the mosaic that Klee produced on his return from Ravenna in 1926. *Diana* (1931) is another example. Unlike the latter, depicting the mythological figure Diana, in *Verwittertes Mosaik* the weathered, discoloured mosaic no longer represents anything. It seems to have been so eaten away by mould that it has become an abstract surface, adorned with a cross, a detail suggesting the image of a ruined church, relic of an ancient and mysterious tradition. In his brilliant analysis of this work, Charles W. Haxthausen draws thematic parallels with the aesthetic experience of the aura, about the loss of which Walter Benjamin wrote his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* two years later. By reproducing the effects that time has both on the object and its contents, this watercolour, which one can associate with *alte Bäume [Old Trees]* (1931), is imbued with the sense of irony, or rather parody of which Klee had grown increasingly fond.

This game of simulations continues in other works composed of abstract signs, which Klee now makes the sole subject of the picture. Although he draws on the repertoire of "signs" of "primitive" or non-Western cultures, Klee merely mimes the principles of their initial organisation in order to present the signifying elements in an isolated manner, removed from their context, in *Bilderbogen [Printed Sheet with Pictures]* (1937) whose meaning remains unclear. The extraordinary *Alpha bet I* (1938) also shows that Klee, whilst drawing on writing systems based on the Latin alphabet, Egyptian hieroglyphs and cuneiform script, was primarily interested in the "process of [the] birth of signs – that original moment of oscillation between abstract form, image and meaning." Osamu Okuda has recently stressed the great ambivalence of the symbols used by Klee, drawing on the codes used by brigands and also the automatic writing that André Breton published in the Surrealist review *Minotaure* in 1933.

Some commentators have interpreted these borrowings from ancient civilisations as the flight of an artist attempting to escape the oppression of the Nazi regime. However, this reading does not take into account Klee's receptiveness to events. In 1931, he produced a caricatural portrait of Hitler as a petit-bourgeois table companion, an allusion to the dictator's débuts in Munich.

Klee's response to the seizure of power that put an end his career in Germany two years later was an earthy-toned self-portrait reminiscent of an African mask (von der Liste gestrichen [Struck from the List], 1933), as if he wanted to mock both the foreignness of his art and the fact that it was regarded as degenerate. The primate's face in the drawing dein Ahn? [Your Ancestor?] (1933) functions in the same parodic mode. In the picture *Der Gegenpfeil* [The Counter-Arrow] (1933), painted the same year, Klee returned to the abstract idioms of the modernist grid, opposing the uniformity of the rhythmic rectangles with a humble movement of resistance, of which this non-figurative work is the very embodiment. A similar transposition is at work in the extraordinary series of 1933 drawings. Their characteristic violent hatching seems on the one hand to convey the anxiety reigning over the country, and on the other to parody both committed art as a genre and the Nazi aesthetic ideal. Okuda's enlightening research has shown us the essential role played by Honoré Daumier's caricatures during this period in Klee's life. He returned to them several times over the following years, notably in the masterpiece *Uebermut* [High Spirits] (1939), a parody, amongst other allusions, of the famous lithograph *M. Chose, premier saltimbanque d'Europe* [Mr. What's-His-Name, First Acrobat of Europe] (1833) in which Daumier ridiculed the "Citizen King" Louis-Philippe and his plans to fortify the city of Paris.

This major picture refers to two other models that inspired Klee during his exile in Berne. The first is the great Picasso, against whom Klee had been pitting himself since his Munich years and who gained new importance after he visited the major retrospective of the Spaniard's work at the Kunsthalle in Zurich in 1932. Although Klee was fond of scoffing at his rival in a parodic manner, Picasso also provided him with the formal vocabulary – the breaking up and metamorphosis of the body – that enabled him to transpose sentiments such as anxiety in his treatment of the figures (*Angstausbruch III* [Outbreak of Fear III], 1939). Dismembered, dehumanised, they embody their tragic fate in their very form. Another source of inspiration, perhaps fuelled by the omnipresence of the swastika, remained the universe of abstract signs. Klee metamorphoses them into little men that he playfully makes dance, not with joy but with fear (*Tänze vor Angst* [Dances Caused by Fear], 1938). This simplified, playful iconography also evokes the children's drawings to which Klee was always so attached. Their elemental aesthetic pervades his very late works like a final return to basics. Shortly before he died, he drew himself as two little men whose clumsy, childlike, features visualise the suffering caused by the scleroderma afflicting him, a chronic disease causing the progressive hardening and thickening of the skin and which gradually atrophies internal organs. The economy of formal means thus goes hand in hand with his decreasing physical powers, like one last thumbing of the nose at his failing body.

The apparent childishness, almost crudeness of his late style is therefore deceptive. Klee's recourse to it was an ultimate dialectical reversal of his critical situation. He tempers, neutralises it, according to Greenberg, in order to "reappropriate it with tenderness." In his seminal *Primitivism in Modern Art*, Robert Goldwater's provides us with a lucid analysis with which to conclude: "In Klee's world, too, apparently childlike means are made to convey oblique adult comments, but with Romantic irony and a certain intellectual wit and detachment." From his satirical débuts to his difficult late years, Klee never gave up this *modus operandi*.

«Scepticism towards the bull»*

The artistic dialogue of Paul Klee with Pablo Picasso

By Christine Hopfengart

Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso are often considered as opposite poles in 20th century art. «Mediterranean rooted in reality» and «romantic spirituality», «extravert» and «introvert» are all labels supposed to encapsulate the creativity typical of each artist. Klee's poetry and his liking for satire and irony contrast with Picasso's theatricality, sensuality and pathos. Klee's activity as a teacher and self-critical thinking had no equivalent in Picasso; on the other hand, Picasso's active participation in the artistic life of his time finds no echo in Klee. And while Picasso began his career as a child prodigy gifted with extraordinarily precocious maturity, it took Klee a long while to find a pictorial language that satisfied his high standards – in himself and his art alike.

Despite their many differences, Klee and Picasso were considered early on as fundamental revolutionaries of the art of their time, and of equal importance. «Today, two great artists are the representatives of this [...] art: Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee,» wrote Wilhelm Uhde, who from 1921 was one of the first in Paris to pave the way for Picasso and support him. «They both strive to reach far beyond the appearance of things, which they consider incidental; they capture them in their ideal state and recreate them in their own way.» After the Second World War, Klee and Picasso very simply became the embodiment of modern art. Public opinion assimilated them to such a degree that in 1945, to prevent any confusion, the *Daily Mail* in London felt it necessary when announcing an exhibition on Paul Klee to entitle its article «Not by Picasso, but...»

The challenge of Picasso

For the other artists of his generation, Picasso represented a disproportionate challenge. While he had already attracted attention with his «Blue» and «Rose» periods, Cubism made him a leader of the international avant-garde between 1910 and 1913. Though his reputation certainly suffered a few setbacks in the following years, Picasso continued to establish himself as an outstanding figure in the history of art with each different phase of his career. His influence on his contemporaries even became an artistic phenomenon in itself. «A whole new era has begun with Picasso's new discoveries,» wrote Will Grohmann, a major voice in art criticism, while his British colleague Clive Bell, seeing the Spanish painter's numerous epigones, roundly rebuked his imitators: «A pack of hungry followers has been eyeing the young master as he made clearer and ever clearer the nature of his last [discovery]. To this pack he throws hint after hint. And still the wolves pursue. You see them in knots and clusters all along the road he has travelled, gnawing, tugging at some unpicked ideas. Here is a crowd of old laggards still lingering and snuffling over "the Blue period." A vaster concourse is scattered about the spot where the nigger's head fell. [...] While, round the trunk of Cubism, is a veritable sea of swaying, struggling, ravenous creatures. The howling is terrific.»

Klee: the fear of being influenced; fascination and resistance

Klee had a fundamentally problematic relationship with possible models and any influence they might have on his art. His ideal was to achieve the greatest possible independence and individual authenticity. «I am my own style» was his unequivocal watchword for his approach when he started out as an artist. But in fact, Klee could not be as original and free of antecedents as he would have liked. It is clear that he reacted fully to some of his contemporaries and various historical models: he was interested in Goya, James Ensor and Van Gogh when he was young, and later in Kandinsky, Robert Delaunay and Matisse, while during the Twenties, he was involved in the aesthetic discussions of the Bauhaus. While capable of generous admiration for certain artists of the past, Klee frequently expressed distance and reservations towards his contemporaries, aside from a few instances of admiration.

Picasso also represented a particular challenge for Klee. He saw «the Spaniard» not only as a competitor, but as a superior power he preferred to avoid so as not to fall under his influence.

According to Will Grohmann, Klee was reticent about seeing Picasso's exhibitions throughout his life, and told one of his acquaintances at the Bauhaus that he had to constantly watch out that «Picasso's style did not infiltrate [his own] against [his] will». Despite this aspiration to independence, in some respects Klee's work evinces a substantial imprint of his confrontation with Picasso. Klee conducted this dialogue with particular intensity at two moments in his career: at the very beginning, in around 1912, and in the Thirties. The discovery of Cubism acted upon him like an essential leaven, while Picasso's «surrealism» impregnated his work after the Bauhaus period and simulated the work of his last years. It is significant that Klee was always aware of this ascendancy and thought about it a great deal, going as far as to make this «influence» the explicit theme of some of his works, including *Influenz* (1932) and *Influenz* (1938). The result was a psychological and artistic tension: an imaginary discussion consisting of appropriation and opposition, secret admiration and critical irony.

First impressions: Picasso as «a friend of Schwabing»

When he discovered Picasso's work for the first time, Klee was living in Munich, in a somewhat fraught situation. His work and diary entries show him making slow, step-by-step progress, because he was so intensely focused on observing himself. Though he reaped a few successes, he also went through moments of despair. He oscillated between realism and imagination, without at this point finding a balance between these two poles of artistic creativity. This was the context in which Klee discovered the «legendary Spaniard», whose exhibitions were celebrated as major events. In Munich alone, he had at least three occasions to see his work in 1912: firstly during the second Blaue Reiter exhibition, consisting exclusively of works on paper, then in the Blaue Reiter Almanac, and finally, in the autumn, in the newly-opened rooms of the Neue Kunst Gallery, which Hans Goltz inaugurated with an overview of the very latest art works of the period. Klee could boast with a certain satisfaction that he himself had taken part in both exhibitions and publication. He expressed his pride in his diary: «Picasso, Derain, Braque, friends of Schwabing – nice idea!».

The shock he experienced in contact with these works and the feeling of belonging to this international avant-garde circle filled Klee with such excitement that he decided «to take another look at Paris and see what was going on». For over two weeks, he went to museums and galleries there, and visited artist in their studios. He was able to see works by Picasso at the art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's gallery and the salon of critic and collector Wilhelm Uhde. It seems that never before or afterwards in his life had Klee absorbed new impressions with such intense curiosity. Yet he instantly denied any direct influence in what he saw: «I have come back from Paris with all kinds of powerful impressions,» he wrote in a letter to Alfred Kubin. «But no matter how much I esteem I have learned to feel for these new movements, I realise that I must seek less, and devote myself even more than I have until now to constructing something personal.»

(...)

The 1932 Picasso exhibition in Zurich

And yet by the early Thirties, this period of respite was over. Picasso entered the scene with the new works of his «surrealist period» and a major retrospective staged in Paris and Zurich in turn brought him considerable success. His most recent pieces – compositions with figures of an angst-ridden, aggressive energy, monumental representations of sitting and lying women, and still lifes submerged y large, flat areas of colour – enthralled even the most knowledgeable connoisseurs.

These paintings also made a powerful impression on Klee when he saw the exhibition at the Kunsthau on 7 October 1932. He wrote in a letter to his wife: «The Picasso exhibition was further confirmation, and his latest, highly colourful paintings were a great surprise. [...] The formats are mostly bigger than you imagine. Many of the Badewitze [bath jokes] gain through their delicate painting. In short: he's the painter of the day.»

If we analyse these few sentences more closely, we find that behind his apparent approval, Klee has a very ambiguous reaction to what he has seen. In particular, when he says that Picasso is «the painter of the day», he acknowledges him as a leader, it is true, while accusing him of kow-towing to fashion and the prevailing mood.

And yet we cannot ignore the influence of these new works by Picasso on Klee's work during the next few years. In 1932, he began to produce pieces inspired by these impressions. In doing so, Klee was perfectly aware how Picasso's ascendancy had infiltrated his works. In his watercolour *Influenz* (1932), he has made this problem the very substance of his composition, as the influence is treated here in the guise of a kiss, and of fertilisation.

Large formats

But the most decisive influence Picasso had on Klee when he visited the Kunsthaus was through his very large formats. They led him to fundamentally rethink the size of his paintings, and encouraged him to «risk the large format». He was all the readier to do so as he had already been chewing over the question for several years. Klee had been wondering what size he should work in from when he was a student, and Hannes Beckmann, one of his pupils at the Bauhaus, recounts that he would often start his classes with an analysis of the formats chosen by the students. The artist even expressed this concern in letters to his family. «I have tried to transpose what I have recently produced in watercolour into a larger format,» he wrote to his wife in 1930. «Of course, it is not a very rapid or amusing process. But perhaps it will work, perhaps, despite the numerous difficulties.» After seeing Picasso's large-scale works in Zurich, Klee immediately reacted with pictures that were not only far larger than his previous works, but also developed a compositional structure based on large coloured areas: works like *arabisches Lied* [*Arab Song*] (1932), *Maske Furcht* [*Mask of fear*] (1932), *Gartenfigur* [*Garden Figure*] (1932), and above all *Dame Daemon* [*Lady Demon*] (1935), which he first created in a medium-sized format before turning it into a large-scale work suitable for a museum.

A new figuration

Apart from the large formats, Picasso's works with human figures also stimulated Klee considerably. Although these were the chief theme in the Spaniard's work, the human figure had only hitherto played a secondary role in Klee's artistic world. Under the aegis of Picasso's large pictures of women, he now took over this motif and gave it a place it had never yet occupied in his repertory.

To familiarise himself with this unknown subject, he obviously needed to base it on something concrete. And shortly after seeing Picasso's exhibition, Klee bought himself a dummy in order, as he wrote, «to take advantage of 'nature's aid' in the figurative from time to time. He dressed it in his own gloves, bought it some stockings and even thought about finding it a wig to make it more realistic.

During the Thirties, Klee painted a large number of pictures with human figures. As well as *Dame Daemon*, we can mention paintings like *Nympe im Gemusegarten* [*Nymph in the kitchen garden*] (1939) and *Brustbild Gaia* [*Bust of Gaia*] (1939). They all enabled him to acknowledge Picasso's ascendancy, and show that Klee borrowed his themes of the «seated woman» and «lying woman», while giving them his own personal touch. For example, his *Dame Daemon* - in contrast to Picasso's women - does not express a feeling of sensuality, but is an artificial figure bordering on caricature with its old-maidish look. It is part of Klee's personal tradition: an ironic vision of the human being that had marked his work from the outset. Likewise, the play Picasso made with the physiognomy - those altered faces whose various features are endlessly recombined, where the artist did not shrink from the most violent deformation - also opened up a huge imaginative world for Klee.

The staggered eyes and distorted noses now became part of his own pictorial vocabulary, although he did not yield to Picasso's aggressiveness and formal radicalism. Klee, on the contrary, used distortion to represent certain psychic moods, such as pain, the state of being in love, fever or confusion. He particularly liked creating double figures, vastly amplifying their psychological complexity at the same time, as in *Zwillinge* [*Twins*] (1930), *Namens «Elternspiegel»* [*Called «Mirror of the parents»*] (1933), and *ein Doppel-Schreier* [*A double screamer*] (1939).

In truth, this type of distortion was not exactly new in Klee's work. When we look back at his previous faces, we can see that many were already artificial constructions, like *Die Maske mit dem Fahnenchen* [*Mask with a Little Flag*] (1925). In fact, this might explain why, on seeing Picasso's surrealist inventions, many observers claimed that these «new eccentricities» were inspired by Klee's work.

Face-to-face meetings

No matter how strong – if ambivalent – Klee's fascination with Picasso may have been in artistic terms, it seems that their face-to-face meeting were, in complete contrast, a disillusionment. The first took place in 1933 in Paris, in Picasso's studio; the second in 1937 at Klee's house in Bern. We know little about the 1933 meeting. A note in Klee's diary only gives us the date and time – «26 Oct. Galerie Simon, 2 p.m. at Picasso's».

The second meeting between the two artists took place on 28 November 1937. Unlike the first meeting in Paris, the one in Bern was well-documented in an account by Bernhard Geiser, who accompanied Picasso that day. Picasso had gone to Bern for personal reasons, and made the most of his visit to walk around the old city, ending his brief stay in the town by going to see Klee in his studio. Not a lot was said at this meeting, and even when Klee showed his works to his visitor, they did not speak. We learn that Picasso spoke to his colleague about it in mysterious terms, comparing Klee with «Pascal - Napoleon». Nor do we know much about Klee's reaction, except that this visit preoccupied him a great deal. So it is hardly surprising to discover a large number of references to Picasso once again in his last creative period, from 1938 to 1940: an extremely productive phase. Above all, we see that while he certainly still found plenty to stimulate him in his fellow artist, he now had a more critical attitude to «the Spaniard» as regards not only his work but his personality as well. Starting with the programmatic «double portrait» *Skepsis dem Stiergegenüber* [*Scepticism towards the bull*] (1938), we see Klee entering into opposition with Picasso, adopting a critical irony towards his work and his way of living.

Influence. Further risk of contamination

This time, as well as this personal contact, there was a source of artistic stimulation that triggered a new and final episode in Klee's confrontation with Picasso between 1938 and 1940: the issues devoted to the Spanish painter in 1938 by the review *Cahiers d'Art*, compiled in a thick volume. Here, in over a hundred pages, a broad selection of the paintings and drawings produced by Picasso since 1926 were published in the form of magnificent full-page reproductions. In the studio in Bern to which Klee had withdrawn after leaving Germany, this publication must have produced the same effect of contamination as the Picasso exhibition in Zurich six years earlier. Apart from the series of works Klee already knew, precisely because he had seen them at the Kunsthaus, we can assume that it was above all the twenty-one drawings from a sketchbook of 1927 (the «Cannes sketchbook») that gave him yet another «great surprise», as well as the most recent heads and figures from 1938, with their exaggerated distortions and endless transformations of the human face.

Since Cubism, no other aesthetic formula of Picasso's probably had such a powerful impact on Klee as his principle of metamorphosis. In hundreds of pencil drawings and large format paintings, Klee then produced a series of variations on the distortion of the human body as various fragments, which are broken up in endlessly renewed layouts, or dissolve linearly to form new constellations. This type of representation became the main pattern for Klee's final figures – as for example *unterbrochene Metamorphose* [*Interrupted metamorphosis*] (1939), *Liebeslied bei Neumond* [*Love song to the new moon*] (1939), *Angstausbruch III* [*Explosion of fear III*] (1939) and *Fama* (1939).

Likewise, Picasso's extraordinarily expressive portraits of women inspired in Klee a whole series of works in a similar genre, like *Mephisto als Pallas* [*Mephistopheles as Pallas*] (1939) and *bôses mueti* [*Evil Mother*] (1939). Even the «mangeurs de glace», where the Spaniard's pencil strokes transform the innocent summer pleasure of eating ice cream into a martial, devouring gesture, suggested several variations to him – for example, *hungriges Mädchen* [*Hungry Girl*] (1939).

With all these close connections, it is hardly surprising that Klee once again took up (in similar circumstances) the theme of «influence», commenting on it, as he had already done six years earlier, through a self-reflective work that expresses a programme: *Influenz* (1938). Instead of the gentle watercolour kiss of 1932, the new drawing illustrates a violent offensive that literally blasts into the face of the smaller creature on the left and seems to smash its head in. Despite its caricatural aspect, this ill-treated head is not unlike Klee's own face, while the figure on the right is defined by an angular contour resembling Picasso's surrealist heads and extends polyp-like tentacles towards the figure opposite.

(...)

* The notes in the catalogue are not reproduced in this text.

Klee's Parodic Genres*

By Charles W. Haxthausen

(...)

In a brilliant essay from 1950, Clement Greenberg became the first – and has remained one of the few – commentators to recognize Klee's penchant for parody. He pointed out how much of Klee's art is engaged in the parodying of «literary» and pictorial art in general. [...] The pictorial in Klee's notion of it comprises every system of making marks on a surface that mankind has ever used for the purpose of communication: ideographs, diagrams, hieroglyphs, alphabets, handwriting, blueprints, musical notation, charts, maps, tables, etc., etc. All these he includes in his parody. And then more, much more. For the parody of the pictorial is but a core around which he wraps layer on layer of a parody that aims at all commonly held verities, all current sentiments, messages, attitudes, convictions, methods, procedures, formalities, etc., etc.

In contrast to Bakhtin, who associated parody with ridicule, Greenberg did not regard Klee's parody as «nihilistic» or «subversive»; it was «never bitter». Klee rejects the world, wrote Greenberg, «then when he has rendered it harmless by negation, he takes it fondly back».

Greenberg's comments on parody were prescient, for at that time it was generally understood as Bakhtin had understood it, namely as a mode in which one work mockingly imitates another work. More recently, in separate studies Margaret Rose and Linda Hutcheon have argued for a broader and more flexible understanding of this mode. Recalling the original Greek meaning of the word, Rose treats parody as a special form of imitation. *Parados* is the name one gave to a singer who imitated another; *parode* was a song sung in imitation of another song. According to Rose, it is not mockery or ridicule but humor that is essential to parody, along with the element of metafiction or «double coding», namely the imitation of codes and conventions of another work of art. Accordingly, the referent of Klee's Kl. *Dünenbild* is not an actual landscape, as it was in the earlier *Dünenlandschaft*; it is rather a type of pictorial artifact that represents a landscape. I should add that this is a category of parody that Rose does not consider in her work, which includes a subsequent book that examines visual art; for her the target of parody is always a specific work, and it is here that I find Bakhtin's point about a particular genre as the object of parody more applicable to Klee.

Klee's art is rich in these double codings – images of images, artifacts that parody other artifacts. In the case of Kl. *Dünenbild* the title designates the content of the image, but there is a significant body of works by Klee in which the title denotes only the type of artifact, without reference to the motif or ostensible subject of the work. And this title is a lie. But it is a lie that wittily discloses its own mendacity. A few examples. *Wandbild aus dem Tempel der Sehnsucht* ∟ *dorthin* ∟, like Klee's other parodic artifacts, is not a representation of a fresco in an architectural space, it is offered rather as an exemplification of one, ludicrously reduced to the size of a hand-held object, 26,7 by 37,5 centimeters. I see it as a humorous send-up of Bauhaus ideals – specifically those of the director Walter Gropius and Bauhaus master Oskar Schlemmer and their «Sehnsucht zur Wand», a longing for a revival of wall painting serving the reintegration of the arts and crafts with architecture in the anticipated «Tempel der Zukunft». (In keeping with this goal wall painting was the only painting taught at the Weimar Bauhaus). Klee's «fresco», however, is a business-as-usual portable and marketable art object. Here the medium (oil transfer and watercolor on plaster ground on gauze) and the modest dimensions of the actual work humorously belie the medium denoted by the caption. Yet Klee evokes fresco with his plaster ground, even as he subverts it by its support, the flimsy «wall» of irregularly cut muslin.

A contemporaneous work, *Bild aus dem Boudoir*, attests to painting's historical trajectory from the sacred to the banal, from its religious function in a temple or church to its status as a commodity for the bourgeois domicile. Here, again, Klee's title denotes not the identity of the picture's strange motif or indecipherable subject but its status and function as an artifact. The title of another watercolor from the same year, *Populäre Wandmalerei*, also disregards the image, in this instance an abstract human figure. The title may be intended as a comment on the fate of older, monumental art in an era of cultural tourism. «Popular» connotes trivialization, as in, «Michelangelo's Last Judgment is popular with tourists».

As Hegel famously wrote of our modern response to historical religious images: no matter how much we may admire them, «es hilft nichts, unsere Knie beugen wir nicht mehr».

In the remainder of this essay I will focus on a particular class of Klee's parodies, what I call, with a nod to Bakhtin, parodic genres. In terms of their motifs they are indeed genres, but their parody resides in the fictive aspect of their specificity, of fictive sites in landscapes or cityscapes, or fictive persons in portraits. As with the previous examples, Klee's titles are the instrument in that fictionalizing act; it is the performative word that endows the image with its fictive status. There are several hundred examples of these, scattered throughout Klee's oeuvre throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The richest of them are in the genres of landscape, cityscape, and portraiture. It is to these that I now turn.

Klee's art abounds in landscape imagery, and even in his maturity there are a few works, like the Baltic dune landscape, that are based on specific sites and even bear place names. But the vast majority of his landscapes are invented. Within this group there is a small number that fall into the category of what I call fictive landscapes. Of course, insofar as they are products of fantasy most of Klee's mature landscapes might be considered as such. What sets these fictive landscapes apart is the inclusion of a fictive proper name in their titles, as in *Das Tempelviertel von Pert* or *Gewölk über BOR* (1928). In other instances Klee uses initials to suggest specificity, as in *Land Haus Thomas R* or *Landschaft bei E.* (in Bayern). This recalls a convention of nineteenth-century fiction such as we find in *Heinrich von Kleist's* story, «*The Marquise of O*». It takes place in the Italian city of M.; the widowed marquise is the daughter of Herr von G.; the Russian officer who rapes and impregnates her while she sleeps is Count F. For both Klee and Kleist, this is invention masquerading as discretion.

(...)

*** The notes in the catalogue are not reproduced in this text.**

5. BIOGRAPHICAL LANDMARKS

1879

Born on 18 December in Münchenbuchsee, near Bern, into a family of musicians.

1886-1896

Studied in Bern. Klee started to learn the violin at the age of 7, and spent his spare time drawing.

1898

Klee started a diary. Moved to Munich. After failing his exams at the Fine Arts Academy for inadequate drawing technique, attended Heinrich Knirr's private school.

1899

Met his future wife, the pianist Lily Stumpf.

1900-1901

Klee attended Franz von Stuck's classes at the Academy for a term. He became secretly engaged to Lily, who came from a bourgeois family in Munich, before returning to Bern.

1901-1902

Went on a six-month study tour of Italy. Disappointed by his training, Klee turned to satire, and decided to embark on a self-taught artistic education on his return to Switzerland.

1903

He began his *Inventions*: 11 caricatures engraved on zinc and copper.

1905

Two-week stay in Paris. First reverse glass paintings.

1906

The *Inventions* were shown at the Munich international Secession exhibition. He married Lily in the autumn, and the couple moved to Munich.

1907

Birth of their son, Felix, on 30 November.

1910

First solo exhibition in Switzerland, at the Kunstmuseum in Bern.

1911

Klee began to draw up an inventory of his works. First solo exhibition in Germany at Heinrich Thannhauser's gallery. Met August Macke, Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc.

1912

Klee joined the Blaue Reiter, and took part in the group's second exhibition at Hans Goltz's gallery. Second stay in Paris: visited Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's gallery and met Robert Delaunay.

1913

Translated Delaunay's essay «La Lumière» for the review *Der Sturm*. First exhibition in the eponymous gallery. Probably saw Picasso's exhibition at the Thannhauser gallery.

1914

Two-week stay in Tunisia with Macke and Louis Moilliet.

1916

Klee was called up in March and transferred to the flying school in Gersthofen, a long way from the front, where he was able to continue his art work.

1917

Successful exhibition with Georg Muche at the Der Sturm gallery. He took part in the three first exhibitions of the Dada gallery in Zurich.

1919

Rented a studio in Schloss Suresnes, a small castle in Munich. The Staatliche Graphische Sammlung of Munich bought five *Inventions*. He signed a contract with Goltz, who from then represented him.

1920

Major retrospective at the Goltz Gallery with 371 works. His «Creative Credo» and illustrated version of *Candide* were published. Leopold Zahn and Hermann von Wedderkopp published the first monographs on Klee.

1921

Third monograph by Wilhelm Hausenstein. Klee exhibited his work for the first time in America at the 14th exhibition of the Société Anonyme in New York. Took up a teaching job at the Bauhaus, in charge of reverse glass painting and the theory class on colour. He began to write his «Contributions to a Theory of Pictorial Form».

1923

First exhibition in a German museum, at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin.

1924

First solo exhibition in America, at the Société Anonyme. Gave his famous lecture on modern art at Jena. Creation of the «Blue Four» group, consisting of Klee, Feininger, Kandinsky and Jawlensky. Dissolution of the Weimar Bauhaus in December.

1925

The Bauhaus moved to Dessau. Klee broke his contract with Goltz and established contact with Alfred Flechtheim. Publication of the Pedagogical Sketchbook in the «Bauhaus book» (Bauhausbücher) collection. Three exhibitions in Paris in the autumn: «Paul Klee» at the Galerie Vavin-Raspail, «La Peinture surréaliste» at the Galerie Pierre and «L'Art d'aujourd'hui».

1926

Moved to Dessau with the Kandinskys, where they lived in one of the double houses built by Walter Gropius for the teachers.

1928

Exhibition at the Flechtheim Gallery in Berlin. Klee published «Precise experiments in the realm of art» in the Bauhaus review. Travelled for four weeks in Egypt.

1929

Exhibitions for the artist's 50th birthday, notably at the National Gallery and the Flechtheim gallery. A monograph on him by Will Grohmann was published by Cahiers d'Art.

1930

Monograph exhibition at the newly-opened Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA). Publication of René Crevel's book, Paul Klee.

1931

Klee broke his contract with the Bauhaus and took up a teaching post at the Dusseldorf Academy of Art. Exhibition at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, in Dusseldorf. The third annual issue of the Bauhaus review was dedicated to him.

1932

The Bauhaus closed in Dessau, and opened again for a few months in Berlin. Klee saw the Picasso retrospective at the Kunsthaus in Zurich.

1933

The Klees' house in Dessau was searched by the Nazis. They moved to Dusseldorf. Klee went to Paris: he signed a contract with Kahnweiler, met up with Kandinsky again, and visited Picasso. Left for exile in Switzerland.

1934

First British exhibition at the Mayor Gallery in London, and first exhibition at the Kahnweiler Gallery in Paris.

1935

Major retrospective at the Kunsthalle in Bern. The first symptoms of scleroderma appeared. Klee stopped work completely for six months.

1936-1937

Participation in various exhibitions: «Cubism and Abstract Art» at the MoMA, the «International Surrealist Exhibition» in London, «Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism», presented in various American cities, and «Origines et développements de l'art international indépendant» at the Musée du Jeu de Paume. The exhibition entitled «Degenerate Art», which opened in Munich in 1937, contained 17 works by Klee. On 27 November, Picasso visited him in his studio.

1938

In America, Karl Nierendorf, I.B. Neumann and Curt Valentin shared Klee's market between them, bringing a number of works confiscated in Germany into American collections. Participation in the MoMA's exhibition on the Bauhaus.

1939

Georges Braque visited him. Applied for Swiss nationality. Went to see several exhibitions: Picasso, Braque, Gris, Léger, Borès, Beaudin, Vinès in Bern, and Chefs-d'œuvre du Musée du Prado in Geneva. With 1,253 works listed, this was the most productive year in his career.

1940

Exhibition of recent works at the Kunsthaus in Zurich. Klee's health suddenly deteriorated, and he died on 29 June in Locarno, a few days before he was granted Swiss nationality.

6. INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

«PAUL KLEE - Regards nouveaux»

What's new in research on Paul Klee?

This seminar presents an overview of the innovative themes that have stood out in news about the artist over the past few years. From connections with Jean-Luc Godard to recent discoveries about his work *Angelus Novus*, 12 international specialists present their recent findings.

Organisers:

Angela Lampe, curator at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou

Jean-Pierre Criqui, head of the Centre Pompidou «Parole» («Spotlight on») programme

Barbara Honrath, director of the Goethe-Institut Paris

Thomas Kirchner, director of the Centre Allemand d'Histoire de l'Art

Godehard Janzing, assistant director of the Centre Allemand d'Histoire de l'Art

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Free admission within the limit of available seats

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and the Centre Allemand d'Histoire de l'Art (Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte)

- Thursday 19 May 2016 - Centre Pompidou, Petite Salle, 11.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2.30 – 7.00 p.m.

Osama Okuda, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern: «*The book*» of Paul Klee and Hans Bloesch

Gregor Wedekind, Universität Mainz: *Sexuality and art. The truths of Paul Klee*

Annie Bourneuf, University of Chicago: *Klee's Angelus Novus and its insert*

Charles W. Haxthausen, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts: *Languages of Art: Klee and Kandinsky at the Bauhaus*

Regine Prange, Universität Frankfurt am Main: *Metapicture. The early films of Jean-Luc Godard*

Fabienne Eggelhoffer, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern and University of Southern California, Los Angeles: *The ironic eye cast on paranormal phenomena by Polke and Klee*

- Friday 20 May 2016 - Goethe- Institut Paris, Auditorium, 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2.30 – 5.30 p.m.

Maria Stavrinaki, Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne: *Paul Klee: prehistoric writing*

Marie Kakinuma, Universität Zurich: *Paul Klee's two-sided works*

Wolfgang Kersten, Universität Zurich: *The quality of art and the art of quality: Klee's Klees*

Michael Baumgartner, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern: *Paul Klee: from Dada to Surrealism*

Marcella Lista, Centre Pompidou: *Abstraction as a transition towards life: the figure and its double, with Klee and Schlemmer*

Reto Sorg, Robert Walser-Zentrum, Bern: *The principle of movement with Klee, Carl Einstein and Robert Walser*

7. WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

Discovering materials, diverting unusual objects, making play with forms and colours, inventing a portrait gallery to express what is not visible, with a humorous, poetic touch. During the workshop, children carry out various experiments to become familiar with the themes and visual vocabulary of the artist before discovering a number of works in the exhibition.

In collaboration with the Kindermuseum Creaviva of the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern.

Workshop: «De curieux personnages» («Curious figures»)

FOR CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 5 / FOR FAMILIES / FROM 16-04 TO 30-04 / EVERY DAY EXCEPT TUESDAYS / 3 TO 4.30 P.M. / ATELIER DES ENFANTS

Workshop: «Le petit théâtre de la vie» («The little theatre of life»)

FOR CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 10 / FOR FAMILIES AT THE WEEK-END / CHILDREN ON THEIR OWN DURING THE WEEK / FROM 16-04 TO 30-04 / EVERY DAY EXCEPT TUESDAYS / 2.30 TO 4.30 P.M. / ATELIER DES ENFANTS

- WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN ON THEIR OWN*: €10 PER CHILD / CONCESSIONS €8

- WORKSHOPS FOR FAMILIES*: DUO: €10, FOR ONE CHILD AND ONE ADULT / €8 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON / CONCESSIONS €8

«Exhibition Week-ends»

Saturdays of 21 May, 4 June and 18 June

Sundays of 22 May and 19 June

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«WORKSHOP» TICKETS ALSO PROVIDE ACCESS THE SAME DAY TO THE GALERIE DES ENFANTS AND THE MUSEE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE

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HUGO ERFURTH

Portrait de Paul Klee, 1922

Photograph - 28,5 x 22, 2 cm

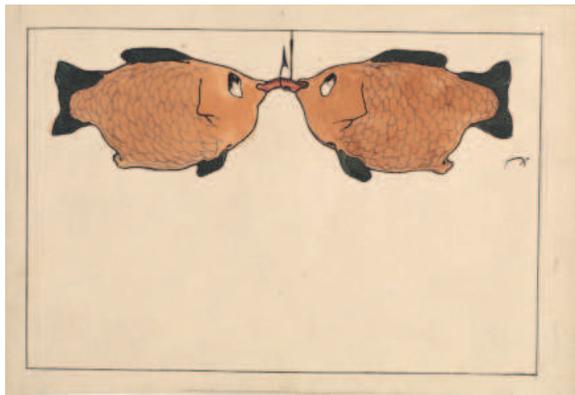
Centre Pompidou, musée national
d'art moderne, Dist. RMN-GP

Legs de Mme Nina Kandinsky en 1981

Photo : Georges Meguerditchian,

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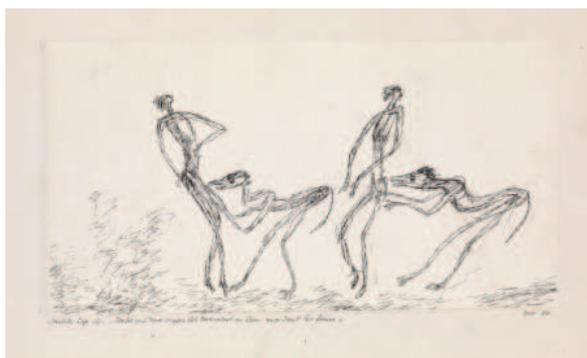
PAUL KLEE
Ohne Titel (Zwei Fische, ein Angelhaken, ein Wurm)
Sans titre (*Deux poissons, un hameçon, un ver*), 1901
Pen and watercolour on card
16,2 x 23,2 cm
Collection privée, Suisse
En dépôt au Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Der Held mit dem Flügel
Le Héros à l'aile, 1905
Etching
25,7 x 16 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Verkommenes Paar
Couple mauvais genre, 1905
Reverse glass painting
18 x 13 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



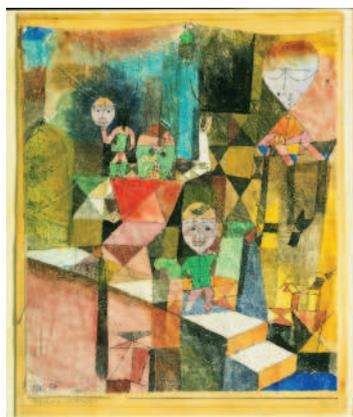
PAUL KLEE
Candide, chapitre 16:
Tandis que deux singes les suivaient
en leur mordant les fesses, 1911
Pen on paper on card
12,7 x 23,6 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Kamelskopf
Tête de chameau, 1915
Statuette in plaster
13.5 x 8 x 8.5 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
(Lustig?) [Lachende Gothik] [(Drôle?) [Gothique joyeux]], 1915
Watercolour and pastel on paper, metallic paper borders on card
28,9 x 16,5 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
© 2016. Digital Image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



PAUL KLEE
Vorführung des Wunders
Présentation du miracle, 1916
Gouache, pen and ink on prepared fabric, mounted on card
29,2 x 23,6 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
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PAUL KLEE
Angelus novus, 1920
Oil and watercolour on paper on card
31,8 x 24,2 cm
The Israel Museum, Jérusalem

(Work presented for two months)



PAUL KLEE
Landschaft bei E. (in Bayern)
Paysage près de E. (en Bavière), 1921
Oil and pen on paper on card
49,8 x 35,2 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Bild aus dem Boudoir
Image tirée du boudoir, 1922
Copy in oil and watercolour
on paper on card
33,2 x 49 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
(Jugendlicher) Schauspieler=Maske
[Masque de (jeune)=comédien], 1924
Oil on canvas on card nailed to wood
36,7 x 33,8 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection
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PAUL KLEE
von der Liste gestrichen
Rayé de la liste, 1933
Oil on paper on card
31.5 x 24 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne
Donation Livia Klee



PAUL KLEE
Der Schöpfer
Le Créateur, 1934
Oil on canvas
42 x 53.5 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Dame Daemon
Dame Démon, 1935
Oil and watercolour on prepared hessian
canvas on card
150 x 100 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Tänze vor Angst
Danses sous l'empire de la peur, 1938
Watercolour on paper on card
48 x 31 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Insula dulcamara, 1938
Oil and colour glue paint on paper on
hessian canvas
88 x 176 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
URCHS aus dem heroischen Zeitalter
Urchs de l'époque héroïque, 1939
Chalk on paper on card
42 x 29,6 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Liebeslied bei Neumond
Chant d'amour à la nouvelle lune, 1939
Watercolour on hessian canvas
100 x 70 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
La Belle jardinière, 1939
Oil and tempera on hessian canvas
95 x 71 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Übermut
Exubérance, 1939
Oil and colour glue paint on paper on
hessian canvas
101 x 130 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne



PAUL KLEE
Angstausbruch III
Explosion de peur III, 1939
Watercolour on prepared paper on card
63.5 x 48.1 cm

9. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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