

Franz Roh, “Post-Expressionist Schema“ (1925)

Abstract

Franz Roh (1890-1965) was an art historian, critic and collage artist who wrote reviews for *Das Kunstblatt* and other publications in the 1920s. His book *Nach Expressionismus – Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei* [*Post-Expressionism – Magical Realism: Questions of Contemporary European Painting*] was published in 1925 and remains his best-known work to this day. In it, he examined the artistic styles in European painting since Expressionism. In this excerpt from his book, Roh schematically contrasts the stylistic characteristics of Expressionism with those of the post-Expressionist styles.

Source

Expressionism

ecstatic objects
 many religious themes
 the stifled object
 rhythmic
 arousing
 excessive
 dynamic
 loud
 summary
 obvious
 close-range image
 forward moving
 large size
 monumental
 warm
 thick coloration
 roughened
 like uncut stone
 work process preserved
 leaving traces
 expressive deformation of objects
 rich in diagonals
 often acute-angled
 working against edges of image
 primitive

Post-Expressionism

plain objects
 few religious themes
 the explanatory object
 representative
 engrossing
 rather strict, purist
 static
 quiet
 sustained
 obvious and enigmatic
 close- and long-range image
 also flowing backward
 large size and many-columned
 miniature
 cool to cold
 thin layer of color
 smoothed, dislodged
 like polished metal
 work process effaced
 pure objectification
 harmonic cleansing of objects
 rectangular to the frame
 parallel
 fixed within edges of image
 civilized

Source: Franz Roh, "Post-Expressionist Schema" (1925), in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, edited by Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg. © 1994 Regents of the University of California. Published by the University of California Press, p. 493. Reprinted with permission of the University of California Press.

Source of original German text: Franz Roh, *Nach-Expressionismus – Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei*. Leipzig: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1925, p. 119–20.

Recommended Citation: Franz Roh, "Post-Expressionist Schema" (1925), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:document-3899>> [March 16, 2026].