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Lindenwood University
School of Arts, Media, and Communications

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE BERLIN SECESSION PODCAST

by

Chris Kitamura

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master Arts in Art
History
At
Lindenwood University

May 2021, Christopher Kitamura

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Degree of Master of Arts
at
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ABSTRACT

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE BERLIN SECESSION PODCAST

Chris Kitamura, Master of Art History, 2021

Project Directed by Kelly Scheffer, Adjunct Faculty, Art History and Visual Culture

This project is a podcast series with five of episodes titled “The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession”. By research and design, the podcast can be used as supplemental material to modern art discussions in art history classes, as well as be entertaining to the public audience. This series presents information and education on how the Berlin Secession helped bridge between earlier genres of German art to the modern art of the Expressionists. It discusses the value of specific artists – Max Liebermann, Käthe Kollwitz, and Max Beckmann – within the Berlin Secession and to the greater history of German modern art. The report discusses the research of how the Berlin Secession had influence with the German modern artists around the twentieth century as well as how podcasts are valuable for art history education. It also explains the process of recording and challenges that arose in creating the podcast.

Dedications and Acknowledgments

Thank you to my parents, Bob and Janice, that supported me and greatly helped me through obtaining this degree. Thank you to my committee and committee chair, Kelly Scheffer, who pushed me to do this project well. And thank you, especially, to God who has led me down this path and provided means for me to do it.

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Introduction

I have been captivated by Impressionism since I was a teenager when I first studied art history. French Impressionism, in particular, caught my attention because of the innovation of painting a scene as it naturally appears in the open air. My studies led to some delight in the En Plein Air paintings of California artists. For quite some time the extent of my knowledge of the people who dabbled in the Impressionists style were of the French and the Americans. It was in 2017 that I found a German Impressionist painting in the Musée d'Orsay and I discovered there was an entire group of artists I had no knowledge of, yet fit this genre that had fascinated me. The desire to discover more about German Impressionism brought me to another discovery: The Berlin Secession was a group that contained Impressionists as well as a wide array of other styles at the turn of the century in Germany, yet in my years of art education in both high school and undergraduate levels, I had never heard of this part of German art history. Why had I not heard of them? Why had I not heard of this Secession group which exhibited famous Expressionists in their early days? The goal of my project was to discover the significance of the Berlin Secession and how to explain the history and significance in a format that could be presented to a public audience.

The Berlin Secession is a group of German artists at the turn of the twentieth century who had the desire to showcase various art styles in contrast to the imperial regime (the government controlled exhibitions and art academies) shows that were biased toward one style - Naturalism. The imperial requirements of art looked more toward Naturalism as an art identity and standard of style which came from the admiration Kaiser Wilhelm II had of Renaissance painting and

sculpture.¹ This dictation was upheld by organizations established by Wilhelm – the Verein and the Royal Academy of the Arts.² Secessions across Germany were formed because of the growing dissatisfaction of the way works were chosen for annual exhibitions, which was more subjective to the tastes of the chancellor and Kaiser. These Secessions did have some support from the government and even showed in some exhibitions. The Berlin Secession wanted to take a step further and have their own jury and salon rooms in the exhibitions.³ The Secession rejected Naturalism as a sole form of art and wanted to display a wide range of styles in their own exhibitions.

Many Secession's first artists were practicing Impressionism. Later in the life of the Secession, it expanded to post-Impressionism. Max Liebermann, also the president of the Berlin Secession, was the foremost representative of German Impressionism.⁴ Käthe Kollwitz was mostly a print artist with expertise in drawing, who went from more realistic portrayals to expressionistic forms within her work. She is sometimes mentioned in textbooks⁵, Kollwitz did have membership in the Berlin Secession and had association with Max Liebermann.⁶ Max Beckmann was trained in the French styles of realism and impressionism, but became more of an Expressionist style artist, though he eventually formed his own genre because he did not want to be grouped in with the Expressionists. A piece created by him, *Young Men by the Sea*, was a

¹ Peter Paret, "Art and the National Image: The Conflict over Germany's Participation in the St. Louis Exposition". *Central European History* 11, No. 2 (June, 1978): 173.

² Peter Paret, *The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany* (United States of America: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1980), 35.

³ Paret, "Art and the National Image," 177.

⁴ Alfred Werner, "The Forgotten Art of Max Liebermann." *Art Journal* 23, no. 3 (1964): 215. doi:10.2307/774474.

⁵ Marilyn Stokstad and Michael W. Cothren, *Art History Sixth Edition* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2018), 1040.

⁶ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 21.

tipping point for a conflict within the Berlin Secession because it was rejected for one of their exhibitions. Despite all of this, there is a question of how successful a Secession like this was with their vision for modern art in Germany.

It is an assumption that they were not entirely successful as an exhibiting group since the Berlin Secession is either mentioned little or not at all in textbooks. There are a few sources that address the Berlin Secession, but most are from author Peter Paret. Other sources that discuss individual artists briefly mention their connection to the group. In searches for podcasts covering the Berlin Secession, no results that had come up at the time of this writing. The group is often overlooked in art history survey textbooks, such as *Art History Sixth Edition* by Marilyn Stokstad and Michael Cothren which makes no mention of Impressionism or Post-Impressionism in Germany and picks up with the Die Brucke group forming in 1905. The text briefly mentions Käthe Kollwitz as an early Expressionist.⁷

A group of German artists who are discussed more often are the Expressionists and through organizations such as the Die Brucke. However, their early careers are connected to the Berlin Secession. Since the Berlin Secession is not a well-known piece of German art history, there is a desire by this author to make them more known. It isn't clear why the Berlin Secession is not mentioned in detail in various places, however there are some conjectures as to why. One reason is that it was but one Secession out of many throughout Germany, and other European countries.⁸ It is possible that it is seen as simply another exhibiting group and that was not significant enough to dive into its history. Another is that modern art was a broad movement that started to highlight individual artists rather than whole groups. One of the successes of the

⁷ Stokstad, *Art History Sixth Edition*, 1040.

⁸ Paret, "Art and the National Image," 177.

Berlin Secession feeds into the more individualistic discussion of artists. The Secession helped boost sales of artists through the exhibitions, which meant more popularity and fame for them.⁹ Specific exhibitions would not be discussed at length in sources about artists versus the overall legacy of their portfolio.

The podcast project is a way to try to educate the public on this group of artists who had more influence on art history than is usually considered. Since there are no podcasts available on the subject of the Berlin Secession through a simple search, this podcast can potentially provide more information on these artists to the general public. This podcast series features general summation of the history of the Berlin Secession, including events in German history that helped shape it, and episodes that will focus on key artists within the Secession. The artists that will be focused on are Max Liebermann, Käthe Kollwitz, and Max Beckmann. These artists will provide discussion of some of the success of the group as well as some of the problems that arose. The other reason for using podcast as a medium instead of a thesis paper is my having experience in podcasting and more strength in speaking than writing. There has also been an interest in emerging technology that is accessible to the public.

Podcasting is a medium that is growing rapidly, according to Edison Research. Over half of all Americans are now podcast listeners, and that number has grown by 17% from 2019 to 2020.¹⁰ This statistic helped in determining whether a podcast would be the right medium to use for people to be able to find out and understand the history of the Berlin Secession. Further research from the Edison Research group has shown that podcasts with a topic of history are

⁹ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 246.

¹⁰ “The infinite dial 2021,” *Edison Research*, Last modified March 11, 2021.
<https://www.edisonresearch.com/the-infinite-dial-2021-2/>

26% of the podcast genres listened to.¹¹ That would mean there is an opportunity that a high number of people will come across the podcast.

In research, podcasts have been known to add supplemental value to classroom instruction as well. A podcast covering the Berlin Secession and these artists will help fill the gap for classes in terms of what can be covered in a lecture. An academic approach is taken in research and development of each episode so that it can serve as supplemental material for higher educational institutions. This purpose comes from research that has established podcasts which have served as study aids for students, especially for remote learning purposes.¹² The combination educational content and an entertaining format will help serve the public who will have access to the podcast as well, and ultimately fulfill the goal of providing more awareness of the Berlin Secession.

Sources that have examined success of podcasts have shown certain criteria that makes a podcast more enjoyable for the listener. Sound quality was noted to be important by both Melanie Buffington¹³ and Tom Webster of Edison Research.¹⁴ Webster noted it especially to build an audience for the podcast and that building sound quality was a better investment than

¹¹ Tom Webster, "The Music Industry's Guide to Podcasting," NAMM U Web Broadcast, 54:25. <https://believeinmusic.app.swapcard.com/event/believe-in-music/planning/UGxhbm5pbmdfMjk4MjMx>

¹² Susan Vajoczki, "Podcasts: Are They an Effective Tool to Enhance Student Learning? A Case Study from McMaster University, Hamilton Canada," *Journal of Educational Multimedia & Hypermedia* 19, no. 3 (2010): 352, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=eft&AN=55413880&site=ehost-live>.

¹³ Melanie L. Buffington, "Podcasting Possibilities for Art Education." *Art Education* 63, no. 1 (2010): 15, doi:10.1080/00043125.2010.11519048.

¹⁴ Tom Webster, "The Music Industry's Guide to Podcasting," NAMM U Web Broadcast, 54:25. <https://believeinmusic.app.swapcard.com/event/believe-in-music/planning/UGxhbm5pbmdfMjk4MjMx>

advertising. There was no consensus on an ideal length for episodes.¹⁵ Since there is freedom in regard to length more concentration in recording can be made in how pleasing it can sound as well as putting forth the best content. This requires both recording at optimum levels and carefully editing so that the episode dialogue is smooth.

There are various studies that show the educational value of the podcast for classes and lectures with information that goes deeper than a classroom lecture.¹⁶ The challenge is to produce and record the podcast not in a lecture style. A more conversational style in recording also helps to keep the podcast entertaining while informing the listener.¹⁷ The speaking style of the podcast will be a narrative and let each episode progress as a story rather than a lecture. Though interviews or a co-host were advised by literature, there will not be another person in the podcast and the narrative style will not have it be a lecture.

This series, *The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession*, has the goal of informing the public on the Berlin Secession through these methodologies and media. Research on podcasts itself has revealed that it is a medium that is greatly beneficial for the academic field of art history as a learning tool and supplemental material, as well as for development of teachers.¹⁸ Podcasts as a supplemental material also assist in the growing field of distance learning.¹⁹ This research was also conducted before the recent pandemic during which institutions had been shut

¹⁵ Christopher Drew, "Edutaining Audio: An Exploration of Education Podcast Design Possibilities," *Educational Media International* 54, no. 1 (2017): 53, doi:10.1080/09523987.2017.1324360.

¹⁶ Jaya Ralph and Sonja Olsen, "Podcasting as an Educational Building Block in Academic Libraries," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 38, no. 4 (2007): 274, doi:10.1080/00048623.2007.10721309.

¹⁷ Buffington, "PODCASTING POSSIBILITIES," 12.

¹⁸ Melanie Buffington, "What Is Web 2.0 and How Can It Further Art Education?," *Art Education* 61, no. 3 (2008): 37, doi:10.1080/00043125.2008.11652058.

¹⁹ Vajoczki, "Podcasts," 352.

down for on-campus learning for a duration of time and has resulted in the need for distance learning. With a growing need of supplemental material to assist teachers and distance learning, a podcast on this topic would provide easy access to a general audience.²⁰ This could provide the education for a broader range of people who would be searching for and listening to art history podcasts.

After listening to this series, the general public and students will be able to understand more about the transition between the art styles and genres preceding the Berlin Secession to the Expressionists. Without that understanding, there can seem to be a sharp contrast from the more realistic styles of Naturalism to the more abstract styles of the later Expressionists. The Berlin Secession included these styles along with Impressionism, to show that there was a transition in German modern art.

²⁰ Vajoczki, "Podcasts," 352.

Literature Review

The body of literature does not adequately address the significance of the Berlin Secession and how it shaped artists that exhibited through this group. The majority of sources that have directly discussed the Berlin Secession have been by scholar Peter Paret. Much of his writings are contained in *The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany*. This book details the history of the Secession as a whole and does mention several artists and other key figures. Paret offers an extensive history of the Secession, recounting key events, such as the St. Louis Exposition. In dealing with the artists, it served as biographies of their years in the Berlin Secession and included those that held office in the imperial regime to those that exhibited under the Berlin Secession. *The Berlin Secession* discusses the conflict between the ideals of the government for art and the ideals of the Berlin Secession, as well as how the Secession met their goal of having more art styles accepted within Germany.

Though the book seems to be highly detailed, Paret later wrote other essays that give more detail on specific events of the Berlin Secession. In one example, Paret discusses it as being part of the conflict between the German modernists in the Berlin Secession and the imperial heads of academies more extensively in "The Artist as 'Staatsbürger': Aspects of the Fine Arts and the Prussian State before and during the First World War."²¹ Though there is some overlap with his book, Paret expands on how Naturalism became a viable style for Germany's art culture, which is something that was missing from his book, *The Berlin Secession*. Another essay that shed more light on the conflict between the German government and the Berlin

²¹ Peter Paret, "The Artist as 'Staatsbürger': Aspects of the Fine Arts and the Prussian State before and during the First World War." *German Studies Review* 6, no. 3 (1983): 426, doi:10.2307/1429754.

Secession was “Art and the National Image: The Conflict over Germany’s Participation in the St. Louis Exposition”. Paret describes this situation in which the artists desires to be shown in the St. Louis Exposition and the empire selecting academy artists to be a microcosm of what was happening in Germany.²² The events surrounding the St. Louis Exposition was used by Paret to describe the greater problem in Germany with the Berlin Secession artists trying to have their styles accepted by the imperial mandated chancellors. There was also some overlap between the chapter in his book regarding the Exposition and this essay, but “Art and the National Image” provided more insight on the results of the Berlin Secession challenging the Wilhelm selected artists. Paret explains how the result of the conflict became a greater example of what was happening in the culture in Germany.

Overall, the sources by Paret helped to gain an understanding of the struggle of the Berlin Secession to be recognized by the German government as modern artists. Paret argued that “the secession was regarded as revolutionary...for going against the traditional tastes of much of educated society, for denying the authority of the emperor and bureaucracy in the realm of aesthetics, and for doing so with some success.”²³ The tone of this quote from Paret is one that is shown throughout his writing on the Secessionists. Paret’s extensive writing on the Berlin Secession has made him a common source among other literature.

German Modernism, by Walter Frisch, supplies the background of the changing culture of Germany during the time of the artists. It refers to Paret’s extensive writings as a “distinguished”²⁴ background. The note appears in reference to the cultures of several cities in

²² Paret, “Art and the National Image,” 183.

²³ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 165.

²⁴ Walter Frisch. *German Modernism: Music and the Arts*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 8.

Germany, including Berlin. However, where this text by Frisch differs from Paret is providing the broader history of modernism in Germany incorporating Friedrich Nietzsche as developing a philosophy of art that lent itself to having Realism/Naturalism be the foremost style of the German culture.²⁵ Frisch makes one mention of any Secession, and that of the Vienna Secession in relation to Max Klinger.²⁶ It serves as an example of the difficulty of finding sources that discuss the Berlin Secession in detail and context of the history of Germany. Klinger was also brought up in Paret's *The Berlin Secession* as someone that sided with Secession leadership and other artists in favor of French art sales in Germany during a time that a protest arose because of these sales overtaken German art sales.²⁷ Cross-references of artists like Klinger have provided a path to research on the Berlin Secession through specific participating artists since there has not been a large amount of literature that discusses the significance of the group in depth. Artists that had key positions in leadership of the Secession, artists that were in key events involving the Secession, or were mentioned several times in Paret and Frisch's writings supplied sources that provided more insight into the Berlin Secession's history.

Max Liebermann was the first artist examined, and was a natural subject to research because of his position in the Berlin Secession and how much he was mentioned in Peter Paret's writings. Liebermann was one of the founders of the Berlin Secession and held the position of president through several elections up until 1910.²⁸ He was also a prominent artist and advocate of Impressionism.²⁹ Max Liebermann's artistic life influenced the Berlin Secession for better or

²⁵ Frisch, *German Modernism*, 23-34.

²⁶ Frisch, *German Modernism*, 93.

²⁷ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 189.

²⁸ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 216.

²⁹ Carolyn Kay, "The Petersen Portrait: The Failure of Modern Art as Monument in Fin-de-Siecle Hamburg." *Canadian Journal of History* 32, no. 1 (April 1997): 58. doi:10.3138/cjh.32.1.56.

worse. One of the greatest strengths for the Berlin Secession was his role in the art academies that were under governmental jurisdiction.³⁰ This role connected him to other artists, as was the case with Käthe Kollwitz, as explained by Peter Paret.³¹ His prominence in the academy helped to establish his status as a prominent artist within the Berlin culture.

An author who had been cited by Frisch in *German Modernism* and who had written extensively on Max Liebermann was Françoise Forster-Hahn.³² Her work provided insight into the reputation of Max Liebermann. It was a reputation that some historians and gallery owners of the time seemed to perpetuate in their own writings, like Julius Meier-Graefe had done as discussed Forster-Hahn's essay "How Modern is Modern?".³³ Paret had a similar accounting of Liebermann's career as well.³⁴ Liebermann was regarded by some authors, for example Mitchell Frank, as being the most avant-garde of modern German art with Impressionism as the emerging style.³⁵ There has also been an assertion by Alfred Werner that Liebermann was the best example of German Impressionism, which served to support that Liebermann was the most famous German Impressionist within Germany as also discussed by Forster-Hahn and Paret.³⁶

³⁰ Peter Paret, "Triumph and Disaster of Assimilation: The Painter Max Liebermann," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2008): 138, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40753457>.

³¹ Peter Paret, "Triumph and Disaster of Assimilation: The Painter Max Liebermann," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2008): 138, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40753457>.

³² Frisch, *German Modernism*, 8.

³³ Françoise Forster-Hahn, "How Modern is Modern? Max Liebermann and the Discourses of Modernism," *Max Liebermann and International Modernism: An Artist's Career From Empire to Third Reich*, ed. Marion Deshmukh, Françoise Foster-Hahn, and Barbara Gaehtgens (United States of America: Berghahn Books, 2011), 143-155.

³⁴ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 54-56.

³⁵ Mitchell Frank, "Painterly Thought: Max Liebermann and the Idea in Art." *RACAR (Revue d'Art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review)* 37 (2): 47-59. <http://ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/login?url=https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aft&AN=87597860&site=ehost-live>.

³⁶ Werner, "Forgotten Art," 215.

The question brought up after reading through Liebermann's praise as an artist is why was there conflict between his leadership and younger artists in the Secession, as brought up by Paret in *The Berlin Secession*.³⁷ Paret points out that many of the younger artists were known as Expressionists both during and after the Berlin Secession's lifetime. However, there has also been a lack of literature discussing any significance of the conflict between Liebermann and the artists, which ultimately resulted in his resigning from position of president of the Secession. Paret does not even expand much on if this had any influence on how the Expressionists proceeded. There are implied results in sources such as Helen Boorman's "Rethinking the Expressionist's Era." Expressionists, and in particular the Die Brücke group, embraced youth and desired freedom from "older powers" as pointed out by Jay Clarke.³⁸ Boorman contributed to this idea that the Expressionists wanted to rebel against the status quo of political and cultural systems.³⁹

Some literature focuses on discussions of the differences between Liebermann's ideals for art and the ideals of the Expressionists. Mitchell Frank's essay "Painterly Thought: Max Liebermann and the Idea in Art" discussed Liebermann's philosophy of art and provided more support into how it contrasted the younger artists' more abstract styles. Forster-Hahn have made this connection by pointing out differences between Liebermann's philosophy and the Expressionists' philosophies of art.⁴⁰ There are examples of Liebermann being praised for his work and a disconnect with the Expressionists who frequently had conflict with his position as

³⁷ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 200.

³⁸ Clarke, "Neo-Idealism," 32.

³⁹ Helen Boorman, "Rethinking the Expressionist Era; Wilhelmine Cultural Debates and Prussian Elements in German Expressionism," *Oxford Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (1986): 3. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lindenwood.edu:2048/stable/1360412> .

⁴⁰ Forster-Hahn, "How Modern," 143.

president of the Secession frequently.⁴¹ Some of the explanation was discussed in subject matter differences between artists.⁴² Expressionists showed more urbanism, whereas Liebermann had subjects that were more in line with landscapes of Naturalism. Values of the Expressionists were something that Liebermann did not like either, as discussed by Marion Deshmukh.⁴³

What this contrast has shown is that there was significant tension between the artists in the group. In his book, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Robert Jensen spends a chapter on the tension in terms of whether they accomplished their desires for a more open support of art.⁴⁴ Jensen has pointed out that the Secession tried to be avant-garde and a “free, democratic forum where new talent of various characteristics could be expressed.”⁴⁵ His conclusion is that they were not as open as they had set out to be. It is something that Paret implies as well when he discusses the end of the Secession and the reasons for the demise. A difference between Paret’s writing and Jensen’s is that Paret discusses how the artists did find common ground with the German government in the end.⁴⁶ Jensen’s writings, then, seem focused on the tension and conflict between the Expressionists and Liebermann and, at least, implied by his thoughts on how non-democratic the group was.

Another area of literature that would often come up discussed the ethnic heritage of Max Liebermann and how it influenced his art. Impressionism, and really any non-Naturalistic art,

⁴¹ Clarke, “Neo-Idealism,” 33.

⁴² Deshmukh, “Politics,” 168.

⁴³ Deshmukh, “Politics,” 177.

⁴⁴ Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 168.

⁴⁵ Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 189.

⁴⁶ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 200-234.

was viewed as foreign in Germany.⁴⁷ Sources often point out how Liebermann's Jewish heritage was also seen as foreign. The tension between Liebermann's ethnic heritage and German citizenship contributed to how the Berlin Secession was viewed.⁴⁸ Henry Thode, an art historian during Liebermann's time, illustrates the sentiments of some Germans: "There is nothing decidedly German in him."⁴⁹ The quote by Thode, used in Mitchell Frank's "Max Liebermann: Assimilation and Belonging," summarizes the approach to Jewish artists during this time in Germany. Peter Paret took further steps in discussing how Liebermann's ethnic heritage made him an interesting choice for president of the Secession in "Triumph and Disaster of Assimilation: The Painter Max Liebermann" and is that example of how literature will point to art that was not from the Naturalism genre was seen as foreign.⁵⁰ These discussions provided another perspective on why the Berlin Secession was regarded as an outside group according to the imperial academies.

An essay by Paret that gave some detail on the xenophobia in Germany was "Triumph and Disaster of Assimilation: The Painter Max Liebermann." It helped in piecing together how views of Jewish artists veiled the Berlin Secession as being foreign art. This was because of Max Liebermann's heritage and the detail of anti-Semitism described in the essay.

⁴⁷ Veronica Grodzinski, "The art dealer and collector as visionary: Discovering Vincent van Gogh in Whilhelmine Germany 1900-1914." *Journal of the History of Collections* Vol. 21, No. 2 (2009): 222-223.

⁴⁸ Paret, "Triumph," 138-140.

⁴⁹ Mitchell B. Frank, "Max Liebermann: Assimilation and Belonging," *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 45, no. 2 (2020): 104.

⁵⁰ Paret, "Triumph," 138.

Carolyn Kay described it as a way for Germany to move onto the world stage, which is a description contained within a narrative of Max Liebermann.⁵¹

Besides the Expressionists, Käthe Kollwitz was mentioned by Paret as having disagreed with the influence of French art in the Berlin Secession, and even the overall market in Germany. Kollwitz had a dislike of Matisse and other Impressionistic art. She signed a manifesto against French art, Impressionism in particular, which was the style Liebermann held close to.⁵² She signed a manifesto that protested the sales of French art because German art sales were down, and later regretted the action. Paret points this out as an example of “how difficult it was for some early members of the secession to tolerate the newest art.”⁵³ Her career was expressed as being unique and exemplary, which brought up the question of how she was perceived in her time. Within the Berlin Secession if she had the Expressionistic style that was not appealing to the leaders of the Secession.⁵⁴ Any of the incident of signing the manifesto is mostly mentioned by Paret. So, despite this incident, authors focus on how her life was reflected in her art, like mother and children images or those that give a perspective on social plights.

However, Käthe Kollwitz was connected to Liebermann before the Berlin Secession through art academies and having her work juried for exhibitions. One such exhibition helped spur her membership in the Berlin Secession. Kollwitz’s series of Expressionistic pieces known as “The Revolt of the Weavers” was considered for receiving a prize, and was submitted by

⁵¹ Carolyn Kay, “The Petersen Portrait: The Failure of Modern Art as Monument in Fin-de-Siecle Hamburg,” *Canadian Journal of History* 32, no. 1 (April 1997): 59, doi:10.3138/cjh.32.1.56.

⁵² Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 188.

⁵³ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 189.

⁵⁴ Diane J. Radycki. "The Life of Lady Art Students: Changing Art Education at the Turn of the Century." *Art Journal* 42, no. 1 (1982): 11.

Liebermann for that selection, according to Peter Paret.⁵⁵ However, her subject matter was in conflict with the Prussian Minister of Culture who held similar views to Kaiser Wilhelm II, which had more focus in an essay on Max Liebermann by Peter Paret.⁵⁶ The social justice subject matter and style of art was an ongoing conflict.

This theme of social justice was seen in her art before and after World War I. Authors, like Michelle Vangen⁵⁷ and Ingrid Sharp,⁵⁸ have shown that the social compositions have been the most influential beyond Germany. Both the *Weaver's Revolt* (1897) and *The Peasants' War* (1908) have been inspirations for Russian films.⁵⁹ Jean Schaefer has shown that themes of socialism as well as living in East Germany was the source of criticism from America, though her work was able to be shown there.⁶⁰ In this source by Schaefer there is discussion of how a more biographical commentary of Kollwitz has been done than an analysis of her work.⁶¹

Some of the more biographical literature does provide insight into how she was viewed as a female artist. Kollwitz had a unique take on female imagery, in symbolism of motherhood, and how it reflected German culture and sentiment through art.⁶² Emotions of Germans were

⁵⁵ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 21.

⁵⁶ Paret, "Triumph," 138.

⁵⁷ Michelle Vangen, "Left and Right: Politics and Images of Motherhood in Weimar Germany," *Woman's Art Journal* 30, no. 2 (2009): 26.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605296>.

⁵⁸ Ingrid Sharp, "Käthe Kollwitz's Witness to War: Gender, Authority, and Reception," *Women in German Yearbook* 27 (December): 101, doi:10.5250/womgeryearbook.27.2011.0087.

⁵⁹ Julia Sutton-Mattocks, "Cycles of Conflict and Suffering: Aleksandr Dovzhenko's Arsenal, and the Influence of Käthe Kollwitz and Willy Jaeckel." *Studies in Russian & Soviet Cinema* 10, no. 1 (2016): 38. doi:10.1080/17503132.2016.1144279.

⁶⁰ Jean Owens Schaefer, "Kollwitz in America: A Study of Reception, 1900-1960," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1994): 31. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1358492>.

⁶¹ Schaefer, "Kollwitz in America," 33.

⁶² Michelle Vangen, "Left and Right: Politics and Images of Motherhood in Weimar Germany." *Woman's Art Journal* 30, no. 2 (2009): 25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605296>.

conveyed through imagery of mothers and children, which has been viewed as being distinctive of female imagery but more of a commentary by Kollwitz on the state of the nation instead of a reflection of a female artist.⁶³ Stewart Buettner compared her work to Paula Modersohn-Becker and argued for their influential iconography, and even pointed out that Kollwitz “refined it.”⁶⁴ The iconography does come from a personal reflection because of the loss of a child in World War I. She expresses her grief in the imagery of etchings like *Mother with Dead Child*.⁶⁵ These descriptions of motherly images by Buettner and comparison to Modersohn-Becker showed her distinctness from other artists in the Secession.

There are similarities to how the Berlin Secession was perceived within Germany and how Kollwitz was perceived in places outside of Germany, which is not something that is discussed in any of the sources reviewed. The Berlin Secession has been described as a foreign influence and not presented in national exhibitions because of it. Kollwitz specifically has been perceived as politically foreign in America due to her German citizenship and emotional socialist leaning subject matter.⁶⁶ Literature that discussed Kollwitz often compared her to other artists during her time. Ingrid Sharp points out that her perspective and expression is thought of as different than other wartime artists, but that it is a strength of Kollwitz’s.⁶⁷ Stewart Buettner explained how critics would, at times, dismiss her art as too sympathetic or sentimental, which would have her art dismissed though Expressionists would employ emotionality in their work.⁶⁸ Other critics described her as being “the voice of the silence of the sacrificed” which was a way

⁶³ Stewart Buettner, "Images of Modern Motherhood in the Art of Morisot, Cassatt, Modersohn-Becker, Kollwitz," *Woman's Art Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 17, doi:10.2307/1358300.

⁶⁴ Buettner, "Images," 20.

⁶⁵ Buettner, "Images," 18.

⁶⁶ Schaefer, "Kollwitz in America," 32.

⁶⁷ Sharp, "Käthe Kollwitz's," 90.

⁶⁸ Buettner, "Modern Motherhood," 20.

of saying that she shed light on social ills in the German nation, as explained in McCausland's writing.⁶⁹ These comparisons support Peter Paret's account of the Kollwitz signed manifesto condemning French art because these authors have pointed out her art was not as well received as others.

However, since her start with the Berlin Secession came at the heels of having the *Weaver's Revolt* pieces rejected by an imperial exhibition, sources that discussed how her art with social themes was viewed by the Secession and the public needed consideration. No literature was clear in this, but the implications were in how her war iconography and working-class compositions represented the emotional responses of the German population. Paret was the one that explained her conflict with French art, but that was something that could be connected in authors, such as Schaefer⁷⁰ and Sharp⁷¹, saying that she has been overlooked at times. It gives more support to say the diversity of styles in the Berlin Secession were in conflict with each other.

A particular event of a rejection of an artist's work has been discussed in more than one source as being one of the deciding issues over Liebermann's leadership. Max Beckmann's *Young Men by the Sea* was the catalyst for the downfall of the Berlin Secession since younger artists in the group, like Beckmann, felt overlooked, as indicated by Françoise Forster-Hahn.⁷² In the chapter "Toward Expressionism" of Peter Paret's book *The Berlin Secession*, it is assumed that Beckmann was defended by Secession executive, Walter Leistikow.⁷³ It is also pointed out in this chapter that older members of the Secession felt that the younger members did not offer

⁶⁹ McCausland, "Kollwitz," 20.

⁷⁰ Schaefer, "Kollwitz in America," 33.

⁷¹ Sharp, "Käthe Kollwitz's Witness," 88.

⁷² Forster-Hahn, "Modern," 143.

⁷³ Paret, "*The Berlin Secession*," 200.

anything worthwhile in new art.⁷⁴ Literature, such as Paret's and Forster-Hahn's, links Beckmann to the Expressionists because of references of "younger artists" within the Secession. Because of this connection and his piece being one of the causes of the Berlin Secession's tension, examination of Max Beckmann was a logical area of research for how the Secession was significant toward development of artists.

Various sources would compare and contrast Beckmann's style with Expressionists. According to Marcel Franciscono, Beckmann used compressed space and exaggerated proportion that was similar to Expressionists.⁷⁵ Catherine Clinger describes how Beckmann used Renaissance-like repetition and distortion which were other elements that were also found in the *Die Brücke* style of Expressionism.⁷⁶ One dissimilar trait is pointed out by author Karen Wilkin, which is "that fragmentation and heightened color are equivalents for violence, is completely absent from Beckmann's art, no matter how brutal his imagery. So is the Expressionists' self-conscious desire to shock."⁷⁷ Though this does not seem to be entirely the case.

There were sources that gave examples of some shocking scenes that Beckmann depicted in work that was not long after the Berlin Secession had its informal end. Marcel Franciscono's "The Imagery of Max Beckmann's *The Night*" and Ute Tellini's "Max Beckmann's 'Tribute' to Rosa Luxemburg" argue that the shocking scenes of violence is a key to the rest of Beckmann's work. Tellini used the background of Beckmann's marriages as possible reason for his use of

⁷⁴ Paret, "*The Berlin Secession*," 208.

⁷⁵ Marcel Franciscono, "The Imagery of Max Beckmann's *The Night*," *Art Journal* 33, no. 1 (1973): 19, Accessed February 5, 2020. doi:10.2307/775666.

⁷⁶ Catherine Clinger, "Theory of the Ridiculous: Jean Paul, Max Beckmann, and Dostoevsky's *Donkey*," *Art History* 33, no. 3 (2010): 517, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8365.2010.00736.x.

⁷⁷ Karen Wilkin, "Is Max Beckmann Likeable?" *New Criterion* 22, no. 1 (2003): 27, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=pwh&AN=10760335&site=ehost-live>.

violence with female subjects even using some psychoanalysis to explain it.⁷⁸ Franciscono explains that Beckmann's "grotesque exaggeration of brutality and pain, above all the dreamlike peculiarities of its details, make it obvious that Beckmann meant in some sense to paint us an allegory of the human condition"⁷⁹ not as much to do with a specific view of women which Tellini believed. Tellini also did not cite other pieces by Beckmann to support the psychoanalytical connotations about *Martyrdom*. These are sources that contradict the argument of Wilkin that Beckmann had less to do with the Expressionists' desire to shock.

Catherine Clinger discussed that Liebermann did not agree with the type of subjects the Expressionists chose.⁸⁰ In researching Max Beckmann, it seems he sided with the Expressionists in type of subject and style, which adds to the event of his *Young Men* having been rejected for a Secession exhibition. Catherine Clinger was the only one to directly compare Expressionists with Beckmann and gives a convincing argument he sided with the style of Expressionism;⁸¹ however, there is no conclusive evidence where Beckmann sided in the Secession in terms of dominant style. It is implied that he did not agree with the leadership of the Berlin Secession because of his piece being rejected and sources explaining his style and subject matter being different than the more popular styles the jury desired for the Berlin Secession. Barbara Buenger brought up that Beckmann had more association with political writings and his art seemed to be reacting to philosophies of the time.⁸² These seem to be the themes and iconography of his pieces, which doesn't necessarily fit with other prominent styles in the Berlin Secession.

⁷⁸ Ute L. Tellini, "Max Beckmann's "Tribute" to Rosa Luxemburg," *Woman's Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1997): 24, accessed January 8, 2020. doi:10.2307/1358547.

⁷⁹ Franciscono, "Imagery of Max Beckmann," 18.

⁸⁰ Deshmukh, "Politics," 168.

⁸¹ Clinger, "Theory of Ridiculous," 517.

⁸² Barbara C Buenger, "Max Beckmann's Ideologies: Some Forgotten Faces," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 467, Accessed January 8, 2020. doi:10.2307/3051138.

The literature available, which does connect him to Expressionists and explains conflict with leadership in the Berlin Secession, does show Max Beckmann as a sort of missing link. Since his painting, *Young Men*, was rejected and the event brought up in sources it seems that he holds some significance in the history of the Secession. Paret's literature is the only one that directly links him to any cause and effect for the Berlin Secession, but these other sources do discuss connection to the Expressionists' history, which Paret had also discussed was the problem within the Berlin Secession's ongoing evolution of dominant style.

In addition to researching the significance of the Berlin Secession, there was also a need to research the significance of podcasts in the field of art history. In research for podcasts in the field of art history, the closest sources discussed podcasts used for art education and museum studies. Melanie Buffington conducted studies with podcasts in art education that found it was a useful way for students to engage more in learning about art pieces.⁸³ Though the majority of the use of podcasts was linked to younger students and in the fine arts, there were elements of art history used.⁸⁴ Her documentation served as a comparison to other research of podcasts in academic settings because these studies had the most to do with art, including discussions on the impact of podcasts in the field of education. Her conclusion with podcasts is that they can build connection between art and the student.⁸⁵ Then in "Web 2.0," Buffington explains that some of the reverse is true where a teacher can become more prepared to research or explain through producing a podcast.⁸⁶

⁸³ Buffington, "Podcasting Possibilities," 16.

⁸⁴ Buffington, "Podcasting Possibilities," 14.

⁸⁵ Buffington, "Podcasting Possibilities," 13-14.

⁸⁶ Buffington, "Web 2.0," 40.

Other sources had similar conclusions about the use of podcasts for educational settings. One of those conclusions was made by Jaya Ralph which is that the style of learning is changing for the current and future generations and this change allows podcasts to accompany more traditional methods.⁸⁷ Ralph's conclusions were based on the changing styles of learning for the current generation and future generations and not experimental studies like Buffington had conducted. It does add to Buffington's findings because it broadens the use of podcast to higher education of all forms, including English as Second Language. Susan Vajoczki seems to expand on both Ralph and Buffington's arguments with an examination as to whether students benefited from podcasts to retain more information in studying. The result was that there was better retention of course material with the added help of podcasts which was explained through a survey discussed in Vajoczki's essay.⁸⁸ The survey asked students if podcasts had helped them and almost 60% agreed that it did.

Though many of these sources praised the use of podcasts, a concern brought up by Christopher Drew was whether students would attend a lecture if a podcast with similar information was available.⁸⁹ A conclusion on this matter by Drew was to have the podcast be integrated into the curriculum, but not the primary means of information nor an optional addendum.⁹⁰ Vajoczki did have a similar concern, since she found that there was a drop in

⁸⁷ Ralph, "Podcasting As," 273-274.

⁸⁸ Susan Vajoczki, "Podcasts: Are They an Effective Tool to Enhance Student Learning? A Case Study from McMaster University, Hamilton Canada," *Journal of Educational Multimedia & Hypermedia* 19, no. 3 (2010): 352, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=eft&AN=55413880&site=ehost-live>.

⁸⁹ Christopher Drew, "Edutaining Audio: An Exploration of Education Podcast Design Possibilities," *Educational Media International* 54, no. 1 (2017): 50, doi:10.1080/09523987.2017.1324360.

⁹⁰ Drew, "Edutaining," 60.

attendance with the introduction of podcasts.⁹¹ It has also been indicated that podcasts cannot take the place of reading material for classes either, but can augment this type of studying.⁹²

The consensus between many authors is podcasts should be supplemental material or an addendum. However, there was not a consensus on exact methods to produce the podcasts as supplemental material. Drew added that a website to guide students through podcasts as supplemental material would be helpful as well.⁹³ Rebecca Reynolds notes that introducing another speaker into the podcast can make it more like supplemental material instead of a lecture, even⁹⁴ Another way that it can be supplemental material is to be an adjunct to a museum visit, which was brought up by not just Reynolds,⁹⁵ but also John Toth⁹⁶ and Matthew Partington.⁹⁷ Reynolds and Toth also mention that students have benefits in using podcasts for museum education which connects to what many authors, like Buffington and Ralph, discussed with podcasts being supplemental material for classes. Overall, the literature gave support of podcasts being used to enhance learning and especially in the context of teaching history. This, then, translates to using podcasts in *art* history for the same benefit.

⁹¹ Vajoczki, "Effective Tool," 352.

⁹² Ralph, "Podcasting As," 275.

⁹³ Drew, "Edutaining," 59.

⁹⁴ Rebecca Reynolds, "Museum Audios for Design Students: Auditory Wallpaper or Effective Learning Support?" *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* 9, no. 2 (2010): 164. doi:10.1386/adch.9.2.151_1.

⁹⁵ Reynolds, "Museum Audios," 342.

⁹⁶ John Toth, "The Virtual Teaching Artist: An Aesthetic Approach to Designing a Museum Podcast." *Teaching Artist Journal* 9, no. 4 (2011): 217. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=eric&AN=EJ948108&site=ehost-live>.

⁹⁷ Matthew Partington, "Ceramic Points of View: Video Interviews, the Internet and the Interpretation of Museum Objects," *Journal of Design History* 19, no. 4 (2006): 336. Accessed January 29, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/4123018.

Methodology

Qualitative study is the type of research conducted for the project and each episode. This type of research was chosen in order to interpret literature that discussed the Berlin Secession. In addition, there is research on the impact that podcasts can have on art history. It is taking sources that have evidence of what podcasting has done in the areas of art history and art history education and coming to a conclusion about furthering efforts of podcasting for art history. Through the postmodern method in research three particular artists were found to provide more analysis on the significance of the Berlin Secession. The three artists are Max Liebermann, Käthe Kollwitz, and Max Beckmann.

Research on Max Liebermann took on a postmodern approach because of the incidents of artists having conflict with his leadership of the Berlin Secession. The approach was taken in contrast to the method of the literature used. Since the main focus of the project was the influence of the Berlin Secession and artists were connected to its legacy, literature would praise Liebermann as an artist and discuss the conflict between him and younger artists but would not discuss how this helped dismantle the Secession. Therefore, an approach that was able to interpret the artist's full influence on the Berlin Secession and other artists was needed.

In literature discussing Käthe Kollwitz, the majority had a feminist methodology. Authors like Sharp, Buettner, Schaefer, and McCausland discussed that her influence is greater than what others have pointed out. The approach in research was to take a feminist approach and to discuss the impact of her art in Germany and how the Berlin Secession may or may not have showcased her art. The feminist methodology served as an approach to show that there were ways that she was overlooked as an artist, and especially during her own lifetime.

With investigating Max Beckmann, reception theory was the methodology used. Researching Beckmann was in order to find connection between the rejection of his work in the Berlin Secession and if there was any impact on his career. Reception theory allowed the work of the artist and the literature to explain connections, then interpret them based on what was known about the Berlin Secession and other artists surrounding Beckmann. Since there was a key piece of art that incited an incident, analyzing the work was needed as well and to see if it provided any clues to why it was rejected by an exhibition jury. The same process was done for a piece with the same title but produced several years later.

Qualitative research was done in how podcasts can be significant in the field of art history. The reason for this type of methodology was due to needing to find results of studies with podcasts as tools in education. This type of research resulted in interpretation for how the medium can be a valuable tool in art history. This method also uncovered standards for podcasting in the educational field which was also interpreted to fit in the specific field of art history education.

In producing the podcast, recording was conducted using Apple GarageBand on a Mac Mini using a professional Shure SM-58 microphone. Each episode was first recorded in one take to ensure consistent tone and volume. Editing was conducted by listening to an episode and checking for any long gaps or unclear sentences. When either of those was found, the recording software allowed for manipulation of the recording to close the gap or re-record one sentence for better clarity. Editing was also done according to feedback from the committee after they listened to episodes and discussed when more or different information was needed. Part of the editing process after the feedback was recording additional content for the episodes that provided what was needed. The process of submitting to a committee, receiving feedback, and editing is

not common to podcasts. However, peer review is important in conveying information and arguments that can be used in academic settings.

Conclusions

Through researching the Berlin Secession and significant artists, it was found that there was connection between the progress of German modern art and this group of artists. This finding fulfilled the initial desire to investigate what, if any, influence there was from the Berlin Secession with modern German art. Many artists that were part of the Secession gained prominence above imperial academy members because of the popularity through Secession exhibitions. Art that was deemed foreign by some in Germany gained acceptance through the Secession exhibitions, which was a goal of the Secession as discussed by Paret⁹⁸ and Jensen.⁹⁹ Max Liebermann became president of the Prussian Art Academy following World War I and his departure as president of the Berlin Secession.¹⁰⁰ Through leading the academy he was able to bring a broader acceptance of artistic styles into the academy. Since some of the members of the *Die Brücke* Expressionist group had been connected with the Berlin Secession it is implied that there were some influences from events in the Secession.¹⁰¹ The members of the group had been vocal about how pieces had been rejected by the Secession jury. The manifesto had also included that they desired to be free of “long-established older powers”¹⁰² which another implication from Liebermann being an older and longtime leader of the Berlin Secession.

There is clear evidence of influence from the Berlin Secession upon the Expressionists. Ernst Kirchner was a member of the Secession who had pieces rejected by the Secession jury towards the end of the group’s life based¹⁰³ based on disagreements with the subject matter and

⁹⁸ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 200-247.

⁹⁹ Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 168-189.

¹⁰⁰ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 233-234.

¹⁰¹ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 207-208.

¹⁰² Clarke, “Neo-Idealism,” 32.

¹⁰³ Jay A. Clarke, "Neo-Idealism, Expressionism, and the Writing of Art History," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 28, no. 1 (2002): 27, doi:10.2307/4113049.

“indecenty.”¹⁰⁴ It was after this that he, and a few other Expressionist artists, formed the Die Brücke and eventually the Expressionist movement.

However, evidence of the influence over modern German art was primarily expressed through writings of Paret and Jensen. Some essays that cover individual artists have mentioned the Berlin Secession as it pertains to membership. Forster-Hahn was an author that greatly mentioned Julius Meier-Graefe,¹⁰⁵ which was a great influence for the Berlin Secession and German art during that lifetime, and his influence was expanded on in Paret’s book.¹⁰⁶ An example such as this shows that there is evidence that connections were made between artists, critics, and gallery owners which made up the arts culture in Germany during this period. These connections greatly imply that the Berlin Secession served as a transition period between the Realism genre to the Expressionists. This implication served satisfying because of the original investigation into German Impressionism, which seemed to be unknown because of not being brought up in previous classes and textbooks. This project has been to help show that there were more artists in Germany at the turn of the century that are worthy of study than has previously been given.

Knowledge and experience in software is needed to edit with fine detail. It is recommended to not enter this type of project without prior skills in the area of audio recording. The reason is that the time needed to research, and record would not allow for learning new skills and equipment. Another option in undertaking a podcast project would be to recruit someone that has knowledge in audio editing to help record and edit the episodes. However, there would

¹⁰⁴ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 209.

¹⁰⁵ Forster-Hahn, “How Modern,” 147-148.

¹⁰⁶ Paret, *The Berlin Secession*, 208-209.

still need to be equipment obtained that can produce good sound quality and to interface with a computer system.

Since the podcast was produced within an academic program, scripts were adapted from research papers produced for various classes. Scripts were written in a form that could easily be read while recording. The adaptation from research papers was in order to provide scholarly insight into the subjects of the podcast. Academically researched scripts provide a better resource as supplemental material for educational. If the podcast has been well-researched it can be as viable and valuable as a lecture and accompany a class lecture as an additional source. This was concluded from researching podcasts value in the field of art history and as a supplemental educational material.

There were challenges that arose in creating a podcast. One challenge came from the need to explain more background of common art genres. Such knowledge is common for anyone in the field of art history, but not common for the general public that would be listening sporadically. The challenge was in giving enough information throughout an episode that satisfies the need, but does not detract from the main subject of the episode or series overall. This challenge was overcome by going back over notes and sources that were accumulated in research to find sufficient information to provide more background. Another similar challenge was in providing a description of artwork with visual cues for an auditory audience. The solution to this problem was in listening to podcasts that had similar methods and adapt it to my own style. It was also accomplished in exercising formal analysis skills learned in the past.

The podcast serves as a foundation for future projects. The episodes created through the project are a beginning of expanding into a podcast that explores little known artists. It also will maintain a place of adjunct material for lectures because it will be recorded in a library as a

thesis project. This allows the podcast to be searchable through a library database that will be open to student researchers. However, the next steps of this project will allow expansion into examining more artists of the Berlin Secession and to expand into other German art secessions. The episodes and series also serve as a format to explore other periods of art history with artists that do not have any podcasts examining them. For example, one idea is to explore Japanese American artists from the World War II era. Though there is no formal group that contains these artists, these episodes on the Berlin Secession still serve as a format to record any future episodes. The format includes featuring artists that share a common theme and were within the same time period. The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession was a project made in hopes of educating an audience on a subject that is not well-known. That is an endeavor that can continue with many other topics from art history, and that can now be accomplished due to the experience of creating this project.

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Appendices

The podcast episodes can be found at <https://berlinsecessionlife.podbean.com/>

The Berlin Secession Episode 1 Script

“Secessions are social and institutional processes, sometimes caused by aesthetic considerations, and always accompanied and affected by them. In the nineteenth century, they were basically incidents in the struggle over the control of major exhibitions, which had come to assume a crucial role in the life of the European artist”

This quote is by Peter Paret, the foremost expert on the Berlin Secession having written several articles and a book titled *The Berlin Secession*.

Like the quote points out, secessions were a major force of the art world in the nineteenth century.

For German modern art, it helped shaped artists and eventually other movements.

The Berlin Secession, in particular, contained some famous artists like Ernst Kirchner, Emil Nolde, Max Beckmann, and Kathë Kollwitz.

But, I have to ask, have you heard of the Berlin Secession before this podcast?

To be honest, I had not heard of this group until I came across specific artists in a couple of museums.

I was captivated by their work and began to dive into some research.

What I found was this Secession has connection to some of the more known art movements in German modern art.

Welcome to the first episode of a limited series podcast called *The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession*.

I will be examining the group of artists around the turn of the 20th century, as well as examining a few key artists from the Secession.

Before discussing the artists and how the Secession led to some art movements in Germany, I'm going to discuss the life and times of the Berlin Secession.

First, what was going on in Germany?

Germany was part of the Prussian-German empire under and emperor known as Kaiser Wilhelm or William II.

Despite the Kaiser sounding like a dictator, this emperor was not according to Oliver Haardt, a professor at Cambridge.

The Reich - as the government was called - was a hybrid constitutional and empire system. He was appointed as kaiser and had ruling powers acknowledged by other countries.

As Haardt puts it “the creation of the imperial office was part of Bismarck’s attempt to secure the power of the Prussian monarchy by means of a constitutional hegemony over Germany.”

In other words, take over the area of Germany through annexing it governmentally.

With the Kaiser was a Chancellor and several Ministers of government departments.

So, the emperor did not have quite the power that we expect with an empire.

Instead, it was similar to how we have a president and a cabinet, and the influence the president has over those various cabinet positions.

The secretaries of the various cabinet positions will have similar ideals as the president, and the result was the same with the Kaiser’s appointees.

It wasn't just the government that was under the Kaiser's control, but culture as well. Under his cultural regime was the Royal Academy of Arts and the Verein Berliner Künstler, a private association of artists.

Though I say he dictated the arts culture it was typically through hand picked heads of these groups.

These heads were the ones that tended to pick and choose both art and artists.

Anton Von Werner was over the Royal Academy and the Verein during some of the time that the Berlin Secession artists were members.

Von Werner and the Kaiser had similar agreements in how art should be produced.

Some of this came about from a shared distaste of a painting by Munch.

Most likely this painting was the famous Scream that is very well-known even today.

You have most likely seen either it or various homages of an abstract human figure with hands on the side of its head looking like it is screaming loudly.

Around the figure are vibrant colors of oranges, yellows, and some reds in the sky, and the more cooler color palette in the landscape.

In any case, Munch's style did not fit the Kaiser's taste of art.

Wilhelm II did have a certain philosophy when it came to the arts.

According to Peter Paret, "He believed in eternal aesthetic truths, which, he thought, were exemplified in sculpture by the ancients, and in painting by the masters of the Italian Renaissance."

The Italian Renaissance depicted ideal forms in both composition and human figures.

This meant realistic portrayals, but with proportions that were of an ideal golden ratio.

It was influenced by ancient sculptures of Greek and Roman art.

If these were the influences for Wilhelm II's art philosophy it means that styles that appealed to him were of realistic paintings and sculptures, not compositions that were toward the abstract, like Munch's.

The tastes of the German ruler did extend to Anton Von Werner as well.

Impressionism, which was a blossoming art movement in France, was not something liked by both Wilhelm II and Von Werner.

Impressionism did come about from the realistic genres.

However, its style was more abstract.

The focus was on quick brush strokes that were like sketches, or what was known as incomplete paintings.

The aim of the Impressionist artist was not to portray a scene exactly like it looked, but what the light and colors were doing in that scene.

It also was to portray feelings from this as well.

Germany was at a pivotal time in the late 1800s.

Besides administering a philosophy of art, the Kaiser and Germany was trying to create a National Identity of culture.

"...Germans saw contemporary art as a cultural force that contributed to the formation not only of individual self-understanding, but also of national values and identity." - Paret, Assimilation,

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher and art critic, was shaping the culture both before and after the turn of the twentieth century.

According to author Walter Frisch in *German Modernism*, Nietzsche brought up that artists are actually scientists as well.

Science is the “regulator” for an artistic “power-source”.

German modernism was pushing for Germany to be a top power in the world with all facets of culture being up to date and the best.

Art was not on the forefront of it all at first, and that connection between science and art helped Germans think through modernizing art.

The push was for Naturalism to be the art of Germany.

Naturalism was used as a term much more in Germany, though it is the same genre as Realism.

Naturalism, projecting what was true to nature in realism, would both convey the scientific and creative mind of the artist.

Since there began to be a push for more science and modern cultural advances, art reflected the realistic.

Though it sounds like all was well with Naturalism being the national art movement, and synergy between all forms of art, all was not well.

Part of the reason for Realism/Naturalism to be the main genre for the nation comes from some writings saying that Germany should be comparable to a cultural power like Classical Antiquity was.

The country was very closed off to outside influence.

Naturalism was seen as having originated in Germany.

Though Walter Frisch points out that Naturalism had its roots in France.

Naturalism is another name for the genre Realism.

The main idea of Realism, or Naturalism, was to depict a scene as it is, without any fictitious elements.

Fictitious elements could even be construed as not showing the right elements of a person, like removing dirt from a farmer’s hands in a portrait.

It’s about accuracy, and there can be style differentiation of artists, but they all wanted to be as realistic as possible.

It is this situation that the Berlin Secession begins to form.

The Berlin Secession had artists influenced by other countries.

As some of these artists began to adapt their style to others, and mostly France at that, the Imperial led shows began rejecting their work.

Impressionism was on the rise with the German artists, but it did not fit this new royal led National Art identity.

Impressionism was an outside source and that was something that should not be in a German art identity.

Nothing of the outside was to have influence over art.

Unfortunately, one of these outside sources seen by the Kaiser was Jewish artists that may have even been born and become citizens of Germany.

One thing that was not held by Von Werner and had by the Imperials was the anti-semitic attitudes.

This meant that Von Werner allowed for more Jewish artists into the Academy and the Verein, and later became part of the Berlin Secession.

Artists that took on outside influences were having their work rejected in the national exhibitions.

This gave way for them to band together to jury and exhibit according to a new art philosophy. This philosophy was to be more inclusive of outside influences.

Among the founding members were Max Liebermann and Paul Cassirer.

Liebermann was an artist that was part of the Verein, and became president of the Secession.

Cassirer was a prominent art dealer.

Walter Leistikow, another influential artist was secretary of the Secession.

The Berlin Secession started with a series of meetings in 1898.

May 2nd was regarded as the founding day.

The main reason for the founding was to split with Verein and hold exhibitions that would provide a broader sense of art.

Among that broader sense was to have Impressionism on display, which is directly rejected by the Verein.

This genre was what the Berlin Secession artists drew some inspiration from.

Another split between the Verein and the Secession was that the Verein did not allow women to be active members.

The Berlin Secession had a decent number of female artists, like Kathë Kollwitz.

The Berlin Secession actually opened a salon with Paul Cassirer being one of the administrators. Now, salons are not hairstyle locations with art in them.

Salons are the formal process and organization of exhibiting art with a jury of selectors.

So, salons connected to the imperial academies were more selective of Naturalistic art, whereas the Berlin Secession salon had juries that were open to more styles.

Max Liebermann delivered a speech about the purpose of the Berlin Secession at the opening.

He said:

“In selecting works for our exhibition, talent alone, whatever its style, was the determinant...We do not believe in a single, sacred direction in art. Any work, whatever its style, that expresses feelings honestly seems to us to constitute art. Only craftsmanlike routine and the superficial production of those who regard art as a cow to be milked are excluded on principle.”

To summarize - the vision of the Berlin Secession was to allow for a broad range of art with an emphasis on craftsmanship, not profit.

Though Impressionism was a driving force of inspiration there were other genres on display.

The German “national art identity” of Naturalism had some works to be seen at this salon.

Art Nouveau was another.

Surprisingly, Impressionism was few in comparison to these others.

According to Peter Paret, The first exhibition “was a conspicuous social and political success.”

Visitors supporting the salon saw that it was important in the German art world.

The group also sent a few artists out of their membership for a traveling exhibition to other parts of Germany.

But, there was still criticism.

Some of that, of course, being from the imperial heads of art.

Still, the group felt that everything was a success enough to head toward another goal: The St. Louis Exhibition.

This exhibition was part of the St. Louis Exposition in 1904.

It ended up being an eventful time for the artists.

The conflict between the Imperial view of art and the Berlin Secession view of art became heated during this time.

The German government even had conflict within themselves in dealing with the Exposition.

They would face economic hardship at sending an artist to the exhibition portion.

Yet, they did not want to be seen as a lesser nation if they didn't send someone.

Wilhelm II was somewhat involved, but he also had Count Posadowsky-Wehner, who was a secretary of the interior help organize the exhibits of art.

The Secession believed they were on the forefront of art and should have a representative from their group go for all of Germany.

Even the leadership of the Exposition was more in favor of the Secessionist styles more than Naturalism.

French was more in fashion in the US at that time, and the German Secession styles reflected more of that taste than the formal German academy styles.

Germany selected out of the academy art, however.

Their portion was considerably smaller than other nations, especially in comparison to France's.

This led to artists from the Berlin Secession setting up a show outside of the Exposition.

For St. Louis and America, it was not seen as anything much.

For Germany it was seen as being divisive, moreso than just holding exhibitions as the Berlin Secession.

It was greatly fueling a fear of modern art.

It also, unfortunately, fueled more anti-Semitic attacks.

These attacks were directed at not just the Berlin Secession, but other secessions as well.

It was because of the secessions having foreign influence, Jewish artists, and even Jewish leadership like Max Liebermann of the Berlin Secession.

Anti-semitic attacks were aimed at the Secession because Liebermann was the president

The St. Louis Exposition became a microcosm of an ongoing tension in Germany.

Despite this, artists in the Berlin Secession were gaining notoriety.

By 1906 it had grown to 75 regular members and 5 honorary members.

Leistikow, Cassirer, and an associate, Paul Kalckreuth, purchased a gallery for the Secession.

Artists that displayed at shows there made sales that allowed them to make a living from their art.

French art was becoming more popular, and this made the French inspired styles of the Secession more liked as well.

Some of the main criticism with the Berlin Secession and the artwork that came from the group was that it caused more foreign works to be bought instead of German works.

The ethnic group that received the most backlash to this sentiment was the German-Jewish people group.

It was all linked together, the anti-foreign attitude and the anti-Semitic attitude.

Jewish patrons were seen as linked to French Impressionism.

Author Veronica Grodzinski wrote “Paul Cassirer’s marketing of French Impressionism...became the focus of serious criticism, much of it patently xenophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-modernist.”

It was a trying time for the Berlin Secession.

There was hatred with the artists, though mostly from the ruling powers.

Their art was becoming popular, but xenophobia was on the rise.

Anti-Semitism, in particular, got connected to the group of artists, though not all of them in the Secession were Jewish.

The Berlin Secession faced great criticism and did not have respect from Wilhelm II until a major event drew attention from the rulers away from everything else.

World War I drew in all of Germany including the artists into various roles.

The Berlin Secession was not the same after the war.

But, before discussing the effects of the war, I will be diving into three prominent artists that came directly out of the Berlin Secession.

Next episode will look at the president of the Berlin Secession, Max Liebermann.

His main influence of French Impressionism helped motivate the exhibitions.

Yet, did he truly fulfill the vision of the Berlin Secession and make it a success?

That will be coming in the next episode of The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession.

Max Liebermann Episode 2 Script

Among the leaders of the Berlin Secession, one that was many times elected to head the group was Max Liebermann.

He was a founding member of the Berlin Secession and was the most known and popular German artist out of this group of Modern Artists.

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In 1873, Max Liebermann first went to Paris and was exposed to the Barbizon school.

The Barbizon school was an art academy in France that was the premier school for artists.

Landscapes typically came out of it at this time, but it was still influential for aspiring artists.

From his travels to Holland, Frans Hals, a 17th century portrait painter, and Jozef Israëls, a contemporary to Liebermann that used more of a romantic style, were artists that influenced him as well.

Around 1890 he started to develop an Impressionistic style.

This meant focusing more on how light changed over time, or influenced a scene.

It also meant loose and quick brush strokes to give that impression of a scene instead of being more precise in realistic detail.

This came a bit from the idea of sketching a subject with paint and then making a more finished product at a studio.

Instead these were paintings done outside among the subject.

Though he took on an Impressionistic style, the effects of light on objects and correlating colors was not something that he adapted to his Impressionistic work.

Active scenes of markets or people in motion along shores became the subjects after his debut in the Impressionistic style.

(Samples of work and formal analysis - 10 minutes)

The artistry of Liebermann came from the roots of both Naturalism and Impressionism.

It was French Impressionism in particular that inspired Liebermann's modern work and move to create a Secession.

Of course, this clashed with the regime of Wilhelm II who disliked Impressionism.

The problem with Impressionism was not necessarily the style, but where it came from.

Germany was trying to establish a National Identity that was not like the other European countries.

They wanted their own art, music, and literature that would set them apart.

Max Liebermann and other artists like him believed that a modern art movement for Germany could be birthed from the French.

However, Naturalism had more roots in Germany, even though there are authors that believe German Naturalism had French influence. - Mitchell Frank

A philosophy of the time was that "content means nothing, execution everything." - Paret, "Prussian State" 426

The execution of art was dictated by the imperial academies.

The Berlin Secession was established to hold a broader influence of style.

Liebermann was the most prominent member, and commonly elected as president of the Secession.

Julius Meier-Graefe was both the author of History of Modern Art, which was about German art history, as well as an organizer of exhibitions.

He was a figure well-known in the German art world and was considered an expert at the time.

In his writings, he uses Liebermann's work as evidence that German Impressionism came from the Romantic and Naturalistic periods of Germany rather than just French Impressionism. An exhibition organized by Meier-Graefe showed the development from romanticism to modern works of art like Liebermann's

It is of note to consider that Liebermann was an advisor for the Centennial Exhibition he was part of, though more behind the scenes than directly.

It brings into question just how prominent Liebermann was aside from his close connections with exhibitors and gallery owners.

It does make sense that he would want his reputation bolstered and network with critics and gallery owners to advance his career.

Some of this had to do with his ethnic heritage.

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Max Liebermann was a German-Jew artist.

He was born July 20, 1847, in Berlin

His family had not been in Berlin long before that.

It was only 1823 that his grandfather came from West Prussia.

The family was very active in Jewish welfare organizations.

During the time that he lived in Germany there was some anti-Semitism that led to great criticism of his work.

The working class depictions of labor in a naturalistic style were present in his early career of the 1870s.

This style was more out of trying to be a German artist, not just a German-Jewish artist.

(Samples of work)

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Liebermann associated more with German culture than Jewish culture.

He and his wife would celebrate Christmas, as part of the assimilation to German culture, and Hanukkah.

It was a combination of being a Jew and focusing on French styles that made him an outsider in the German art world.

However, Liebermann saw himself as a very German artist.

He was about the nature of the German modern art world at the time and would even write about it. - Forster-Hahn, 143

There were some, like Wilhelm von Bode, director of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, that considered Liebermann to be "the most German painters among living artists". - P. 153

However, many criticized remarks made like this because Liebermann was a Jew.

From formal criticism, some felt that his paintings displayed nothing remarkably new.

One painting by Liebermann called *The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple* caused a stir.

[Figure 1]

It depicts a young Jesus, almost in the center foreground of the painting with several figures around him.

He is shown with back almost turned to the viewer, but with profile in view.

He is facing a seated, dark haired man on some stairs with hand clutching his chin listening intently on the boy-Jesus.

Jesus looks in mid-speech according to his hands raised at his chest level.

A dark clothed figure on the right has garments that depict a rabbi.

The other figures do have costume that is of Jewish descent, which does show Liebermann's roots.

It also shows the influence of Realism, portraying the costume as more accurate.

However, the faces look more European than of the more Middle Eastern descent that would have been in Jesus' time.

The style sits somewhere between Realism and Impressionism.

There are details that convey an attempt at a realistic portrayal of the scene, yet there is some looseness to it that makes it seem like Impressionism did have some influence over it.

Peter Paret has even pointed out, in "Triumph and Disaster of Assimilation," that there was a transitional period from Naturalism in early paintings to a "less finished style" and from there to Impressionism. - Assimilation p. 135

Many critics thought the boy looked ugly, and even Kaiser Wilhelm II said this was a very controversial piece.

The Catholic Centre Party was another that did not like the painting, pointing out how a Jewish artist was painting Jesus.

The reactions made Liebermann declare to never paint another religious painting.

The painting, itself, was not displaying anything meant to be controversial.

Figures are accurate to both having a German naturalistic look and having some historical accuracy.

It was seen as being too Jewish, despite the Biblically historical accuracy of it depicting the inside of a Jewish Temple.

Its controversy had more to do with the artist who painted it and not the painting itself.

In publications like Kunst und Künstler, it was thought that Liebermann's background couldn't be separated from his work.

Others, like art historian Ludwig Justi, found Liebermann to be more of a representative of cosmopolitan Berlin culture.

This type of culture included intellect, wit, observation, and appreciation of craftsmanship.

There was an emerging culture that embodied both Jew and German during the period before WWI.

However, some notes of Jewish heritage appeared in his work.

One such was Kitchen Still-Life which had Liebermann painting his family and cooking a chicken with a red tag indicating kosher meat.

Eventually, following WWI he became the president of the Prussian Academy of Arts from 1920-1932.

It was when the Nazis took over Germany that he was stripped of this position and having his work in museums and collections.

This was because of his status as a German Jew.

Kathe Kollwitz was one of those that attended his funeral as being one of the few who were non-Jewish.

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Part of the reason for bringing up Liebermann's Jewish heritage and the antisemitism he faced is that it fed into view of Secession, which Liebermann was so closely linked with/identified heavily with.

Those viewing the Secession saw the art as outside art not just because of a different style than the imperial standard, but also because of viewing its leader as an outsider.

A quote from Henry Thode, an art historian during Liebermann's time showed the sentiment of division of who was considered a German artist: "There is nothing decidedly German in him." - Frank, 104

Others criticized Liebermann's style aside from his heritage.

It was viewed as commercial rather than avant-garde.

Brieger-Wasservogel said about the Berlin Secession that it was "not an artistic but purely commercial venture, hiding behind big words about art,...headed by a businessman painter and a very sharp art dealer." - P. 153

Mitchell Frank has a whole essay about Liebermann's heritage and how he viewed it in terms of being a German artist called "Max Liebermann: Assimilation and Belonging."

In it he describes how Liebermann's desires were for the German populace to see him as distinctly a German painter.

But, there was enough anti-Semitism in Germany that he was seen as too much of an outsider.

Author Alfred Werner has said that "Liebermann had done for his country what Millet had done for France or that he was for Germany what Renoir was for France" which means highly influential and on the forefront, especially in the emerging modern art.

But try as he might, he wasn't fully accepted into the society before World War I.

Since the Berlin Secession was under his leadership, he had a battle with the sentiments of the German public because he was trying to put forth art forms that were seen as foreign.

His Judaism was seen as foreign.

His art was seen as foreign.

But, he had such a sense that Impressionism was the next step in the evolution of art in Germany.

Those that were anti-Semitic in Germany would not be viewing this art well or viewing the Berlin Secession well because both were associated with Max Liebermann.

This was greatly shown in the reactions to Liebermann's Twelve Year Old Jesus painting.

But, the Berlin Secession began to grow and exhibit well.

There was still criticism from the outside, though it was starting to go down.

Instead, there was some arguments within the Berlin Secession against its leader as the success of the exhibitions grew.

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It wasn't just the outside that was criticizing Liebermann's leadership, however.

There was conflict over Liebermann's leadership from within.

A point of contention came with a piece of art from Max Beckmann, Young Men by the Sea

This piece was rejected from one of the salons of the Secession.

The style itself didn't seem to fit with the more Impressionistic style of Liebermann.

Yet, the Secession was trying to be inclusive of various styles.

The problem was with what the Berlin Secession, and Max Liebermann, set out to do.

Liebermann wanted a broader selection of art - some freedom in styles that would not be subjected to the imperial sternness he was accustomed to.

In fact, at the opening of the first exhibition, Liebermann says in his speech:

"In selecting works for our exhibition, talent alone, whatever its style, was the determinant...We do not believe in a single, sacred direction in art. Any work, whatever its style, that expresses feelings honestly seems to us to constitute art."

However, the Secession seemed subject to being under Liebermann's ideals of Impressionism, not the idea of a "whatever its style" showcase.

Younger artists were starting to feel left out.

There were other reasons for the clash.

Liebermann was known to not like Expressionism.

Expressionists in the Secession felt that he was too authoritarian.

There was a sense that he was too entrenched in German art society and that his popularity among critics and curators made him feel like he could be authoritarian.

The subject matter between artists even conflicted.

Liebermann did have some cityscapes in his portfolio, but the Expressionists had more depicting the underside of the urban.

There is also evidence of his taste of subject matter in an open letter to support exhibiting *The Trench* by Otto Dix in an Academy setting.

In this letter, Liebermann does express that he does not like the extreme violence, but supported the honesty that Dix expresses about World War I. - Paret Assimilation p. 142

Even though Liebermann did end up displaying a work of art with a subject he did not like, it still gives support to the arguments that it was reason for not selecting certain works in the Berlin Secession.

Liebermann and the Berlin Secession set out to be different from the imperial mindset of art.

They wanted to expand what was avant-garde in the German art world.

Instead of welcoming new styles that were different than his, it could have caused him to see that his criteria were best.

It led the Expressionists to form their own society.

His influence may have downplayed anyone else's opinions within the Secession and did not allow for other forms of art than Impressionism.

There are some historians and authors (like Peter Paret) that blame the Expressionists for dissolving the Berlin Secession.

However, it does seem like Liebermann had some conflict with younger artists, and it contributed to the dissolving as well.

Liebermann spoke about, at the first exhibition, that the Secession was to be open to all art forms.

He didn't seem to uphold that according to artists.

His desire to not be like the Wilhelmine imperial academies didn't seem to succeed.

It is hard to say what drove the style of leadership he demonstrated.

There are some that point to pride.

The pride might have come from fame with critics, gallery owners, and some historians.

The pride could have also come from his expanse into the French Impressionism field.

This also brings into discussion his vision and passion to bring the French style to the German world.

French style and Impressionism were seen as an outside influences.

Liebermann's style was outside of what was considered "German".

He also was considered an outsider because of his Jewish descent.

It has been pointed out by some authors, like Peter Paret and Mitchell Frank, that the German sentiments toward Jewish outsiders was what brought some hostility toward the Berlin Secession.

Could the Secession been more successful without the leadership of Liebermann?

That is hard to say considering there were so many factors.

What is interesting, though, is that Liebermann ostracized some young artists' style. He, himself, experienced being an outsider artist but seemed to set up the same culture within the Berlin Secession.

It's hard not to see some hypocrisy in this.

I wouldn't say it's only Liebermann's fault, nor is it conclusive evidence that his views were the reason for the breaking up of the Secession.

But, it certainly shows it contributed.

It's unfortunate to have an artist that strived to fit in with a culture, only to make other artists feel excluded in return.

In continuation of this series, next episode will feature an artist that did not subscribe to the Impressionist style that Max Liebermann was so fond of.

She also did not fit with the rest of the imperial led Naturalism style.

Just who is this artist and where did she fit in with German modern art?

Find out next time in The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession

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Mitchell Frank has pointed out that, though he was a champion of Impressionism, he eventually made more of a career out of portraiture.

A quote from Henry Thode, an art historian during Liebermann's time showed the sentiment of division of who was considered a German artist: "There is nothing decidedly German in him." - Frank, 104

Käthe Kollwitz Episode 3 Script

Welcome to The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession.

I am your host, Chris Kitamura.

I have been going through some of the history of the group of artists that were part of the Berlin Secession.

The Berlin Secession exhibited art around the turn of the twentieth century in Germany.

Their motivation for this was because the exhibitions and academies at the time were run by the imperial government.

This caused the selections to be very narrow.

Basically, whatever did not fit the tastes of the governmental leaders was not selected.

Last episode I discussed one of the founders of the Berlin Secession, Max Liebermann.

He helped start this group that would exhibit much broader styles of art.

However, he had specific tastes as well that did clash with some of the artists within the group.

This week I'm looking at an artist that didn't conform to either the German academy style nor the style that was popular with the heads of the Berlin Secession, like Max Liebermann.

There was, however, a connection with Max Liebermann of the Berlin Secession that brought her in as a member.

Max Liebermann was a jury selector for the Berlin art exhibition.

His selection in 1898 was for "The Revolt of the Weavers" by Käthe Kollwitz.

Though others felt that it was worthy of the merit, the Prussian Minister of Culture did not feel that it deserved the prize because of the political implications of the subject matter.

Her name was omitted from the list that went up to the emperor of Germany, Kaiser William II. - Paret, Assimilation p. 138

The Weavers is a series of etchings by Kollwitz produced around 1897.

These were the pieces of art that were submitted for merit.

Etching is a printmaking technique in which a block is carved into, like a drawing.

Then ink is applied to the block and it is printed onto paper.

Kollwitz employs this technique with some realistic details for a block drawing.

Line hatching and cross-hatching is used to give details of shading throughout the plates.

One plate and print, called The Riot, could have been the cause of the particular political uproar.

[Figure 2]

The composition features a group of men and women in laborers' clothing.

They are converging on a large gate with ornate ironwork.

Beyond it looks like a grand villa.

The people are trying to pound on the gate, with a few in the foreground gathering stones from the pathway.

One child is being taken by the hand by, what is assumed, is the child's mother.

It appears as though the child is wiping away tears.

It is a piece that has a lot of emotion in it.

It is also implied that there is political upheaval.

Having done some etching myself, it isn't always easy to get great detail in it, and Kollwitz shows off her skill in the way of getting accurate perspective and detail into this print.

It is a fairly realistic portrayal of the mob, though with some expression of emotion that is seen in some slightly exaggerated poses.

It is, of course, that Kathä Kollwitz is the focus today

She was an early member of the Berlin Secession and the most prominent female artist from the group.

Kollwitz had formal training as an artist.

Though it wasn't common for a woman to be in art school during her time, she was able to attend a special Verein (ver-ine) School.

The Verein (ver-ine) was the association of German artists during this time.

Unfortunately, these schools were not as intensive as art schools for men.

Still, she excelled in artistry despite the lack of availability.

It was there at the special Verein school that she pursued drawing

This technique was stronger than her skills as a painter.

Eventually she taught figure drawing because of these skills.

All of this was around 1898.

It's been pointed out by J. Diane Radycki that she and Paula Modersohn-Becker are two female artists not from non-artistic backgrounds, [and] not linked with any celebrated male artist."

This means that they achieved status by their own merit in their times.

Often, before their time, women artists were associated with men either by being a relative and learning art from them or having to go through another artist who had prominence.

Part of what makes Kollwitz a great female artist is that she brought innovation to symbolism of motherhood.

Stewart Buettner has said that "Käthe Kollwitz also developed a conception of the mother and child that had profound philosophic connotations."

Some of this comes from being a mother of a German soldier.

She also used her art to bring reflection on what was happening in the German culture during her time.

As Michelle Vangen has put it "The focus on motherhood during the opening decades of the twentieth century was in part the result of an upsurge of nationalistic sentiment following Germany's unification in 1871,"

There was a changing sentiment among women and families.

Women were starting to not insist on their roles being about motherhood.

The relationship was sometimes strained between families.

Motherhood was beginning to be seen as a choice and not a natural purpose by women, as the thought had long been before Kollwitz's time.

The result is that Kollwitz brought new philosophic connotations to the image of mother and child that weren't there before.

It incorporated new ideals while adding a new connection.

Several etchings by Kollwitz conveys a psychological connection between the mother and child.

Many of these psychological connections deal with loss and were done in response from her loss of losing son Peter in World War I.

And these connections were in relationship to how the country viewed both the war and women's roles.

The most well known of these types of images is Mother With Dead Child which was produced in 1903. **[Figure 3]**

This is an etching, though with some differences in production from the Weavers prints.

There is more use of shading with almost an ink wash.

Hatching is still present, though it is done more for the form of the figures than to convey detail like in the Weavers prints.

In the picture is a lifeless older child being held by the mother figure.

“Held” is probably a term that doesn’t even begin to describe what the position actually is.

The mother has her arms firmly wrapped around the body.

Her legs are crossed, a bit contorted, and one is supporting the body of the child.

The mother is hunched over with her face slightly covered by the shoulder and neck of the child.

She is also much darker in shading of light.

The emotionality of this is clearly seen through the pose of the figures and the lighting in the composition.

Because this is a black and white print it makes it more ominous to not have color present.

It is a piece that shows not only the evolution of Kollwitz’s style, but also her greater expression of emotion, while keeping true to her skill of figure drawing.

Though this image was from a personal loss, it did also reflect what was happening in parts of Germany.

East Prussia was having a high infant mortality rate, and this was known by Kollwitz.

Mothers were required to work within a few days of giving birth, and several poor conditions in factories made death of children ever present.

Michelle Vangen has explained that Germany had a decline in population and this sentiment of motherhood was to help to counter the effects of industrialization.

Kollwitz used the image of mother and child to represent more than just that relationship.

It might have started from German unification, but it ended up being that her art represented something deeper in the minds of Germans.

It was politically charged and worked for the general public, not just to be an expression of relationship between parent and child, but to show the sentiments of an industrialized population.

Author Ingrid Sharp has explained that her images of mother and child stood for the whole country.

It was a symbol of the grief of both men and women over the war, not just mothers.

Kollwitz was not trying to be just an artist of mothers and children, but represent the German population that wasn’t always heard or seen.

Some of the strongest images did come out of reaction to World War I.

As Sharp had said, she did showcase images that represented the postwar era of Germany, but she also went through a process of stances during the war.

She has been compared to Otto Dix as bringing a different type of artist for Germany during the war.

Otto Dix produced paintings and prints mostly depicting the brutality of World War I.

Dix did serve in the war, whereas Kollwitz stayed at home.

Even though she didn’t serve in the war, her reaction was more of how the rest of the nation reacted.

Kollwitz, at first, supported the war.

Some of it had to do with her son, Peter's, desire to serve in the war.

But, throughout the war's course, her stance changed.

Late in the war she did not believe it was right.

Yet, she had a feeling of betrayal of Peter and his ideals with this thought because Peter had wanted to go to war.

Her expression of art was not in full support of the war, yet not being completely against it either.

But, by 1920 it went to fully being against the war.

The Parents, a memorial that took 18 years to complete, was a reflection on WWI and her stance on it.

It also wasn't just her emotion she was expressing, but the whole country's that she was trying to represent.

Many art historians like Sharp and Buettner, recognize the images created are out of observation of those around her as well.

It is that she uses the personal image of a mother and child instead of the use of soldiers like Dix had done.

Even though it is personal, it is also much more observant of the nation's state.

Ingrid Sharp puts it well saying:

Although Kollwitz's voice is no less authentic than Dix's, and her desire to bear witness no less strong, her claim to authority in telling her story is undermined by a view of war that privileges frontline combat. I have argued that Kollwitz should not be viewed primarily as a sorrowing woman who found consolation in—and offers consolation through—her art, because this interpretation masks not only her achievement as an artist but also one of the key aspects of her testimony. - Sharp, 101

Dix is seen as expressing more authentic representation because it is more in line with expectations.

But, it is Kollwitz's ability to channel the emotions of the country that make her art as more representational of the population's than Dix's.

It is interesting that Kollwitz's art has been deemed too sensitive or feminine, even though it resonated with a lot of the German culture at the time.

The sensitivity claimed by critics were in light of using images of mother and child or the expressionistic style that conveyed grief within the etchings.

Some of her wartime images also showed suffering within the cities partly caused by the war.

Kollwitz's sympathy with the working class and expressing socialist ideas created tension between various powers.

Her name being omitted from the prize in Berlin in 1898 shows there was some resistance toward her subjects of social justice in art.

Her sympathy toward the working class was seen before and after the war.

This subject matter didn't sit well with the imperial heads that oversaw art academies and exhibitions.

It is implied that her subject matter was what kept her from being more prominent in the imperial German art world.

But, being a female artist could have been another.

Like I said before, there were separate art schools for women.

Women also were not offered many positions within art academies as well. Nonetheless, Kollwitz joined the Berlin Secession shortly after her work was not included on a list for the imperial art exhibition in 1898.

And, her friendship with Max Liebermann could have spurred the membership on as well.

There is evidence of some conflict she had with being in the Berlin Secession.

Liebermann and others who were leading the Secession greatly adhered to the French influence of Impressionism.

There was some bias toward the art style.

If you are wanting to know more of what that bias was about, please go back and listen to the episode on Max Liebermann.

Kollwitz signed a manifesto that circulated which was against Impressionism and its influence.

Later on, she did regret the signing as expressed in a letter to her other son, Hans:

“I walked upstairs to the French collection, and as soon as I entered the first room — the one with the marvelous bust by Rodin — my heart sank at the thought that I had signed Vinnen’s protest. For here I saw once again French artists represented by good examples of their work, and I said to myself that German art simply needs the Latin infusion.”

She does feel that French art showed something more than German art.

The protest did come about because sales of foreign art were exceeding German art at the time.

Kollwitz’s signing of the protest could indicate a difference between her portfolio and others within the Berlin Secession, particularly those that heavily were influenced by French Impressionism.

One of those influenced was Max Liebermann.

Her style didn’t fit the imperial academies and it didn’t fit in with some of the prominent members of the Berlin Secession.

But, it could have fit more with some of the younger members of the Secession.

It is interesting that Kollwitz isn’t always mentioned with Expressionists even though she would have had a little bit of contact with them because of the Berlin Secession.

Kollwitz did convey emotionality through her figures having some exaggeration in her drawings. Her style is not completely Expressionistic, but there are some similarities.

Perhaps part of why her work was not always grouped with Expressionists is that her art was not necessarily considered avant-grade.

Where Expressionists did want to convey more emotion in their work, Kollwitz had more of an agenda of being a voice for those who were suffering in Germany and used emotion to achieve this.

There were critics that claimed she was not avant-garde because of these emotional pieces.

They would say her work was too sympathetic or too sentimental, which disqualified her to be known as avant-garde.

Kollwitz’s ability to express great emotion in her work has been something authors now will often cite as a strength of her art.

Romain Rolland puts well how to perceive Kollwitz’s social art: ““The work of Käthe Kollwitz is the greatest poem of this age in Germany, a poem reflecting the trials and suffering of humble and simple folk. This woman with her great heart has taken the people into her mothering arms with somber and tender pity. She is the voice of the silence of the sacrificed.””

The membership with the Berlin Secession could be another reason for not much visibility.

She did have a prominent place as a teacher in an academy.

Yet, she didn't always fit with styles that were more prominent within the Secession and even German culture during there time.

Her work reached into other countries.

Though there were some mixed results.

Russian artists and filmmakers have used her work as inspiration for their Expressionistic styles.

Though she had art shown in the US, she was not always received well.

One reason is that she was in a communist controlled nation.

Ideas expressed in her art were seen as coming from communism, and not an individual artist.

She had also stayed in Germany during Hitler's regime, though her ideals were not in line with the Nazis.

Nonetheless it is sometimes a reason why she is not more highly regarded.

My interpretation of what all these examples are saying is that she had a late start for her work to be considered within Germany, then had mixed reactions from other countries not because of the work itself but because of the nation she came from.

This could have been another way that her work and artistry was not considered more highly.

And it could have been within the Berlin Secession itself.

Without consideration from both the imperial academies and the Berlin Secession, her work wouldn't have much exposure.

These ideals were also not always perceived well in other locations.

Back in the first episode I discussed how Germany wanted to establish a national cultural identity.

At the time of this development, Expressionism wasn't quite there yet, but starting to become a style.

I wonder if Kollwitz had more popularity if there would have been some style and a national art identity more akin to her.

Kollwitz showcased the emotions and plight of the Germans during her lifetime through art.

She even lived it having been held back from art academies for being a woman and then for still living in Hitler controlled Germany.

Her art was a symbol of the German people and the expression of their feelings of war and being part of a working class.

Historians now recognize her art as being avant-garde, one of them being Peter Paret, author of the book The Berlin Secession.

Kollwitz has been known, but not well known enough.

Along with the German Expressionists, she also was advancing Modern Art in Germany to be great and to become a great art identity.

Modern Art in Germany was to symbolize the national identity.

Critics, though, didn't think her art was avant-garde, usually because of the subject matter or being too emotional.

All of this seems to point that she had some more influence than is often given credit for.

Though she can be heard of at times, she perhaps is not heard of enough.

Going back to some earlier episodes, it's hard to say if being part of the Berlin Secession had any part of that.

Max Liebermann was not well liked as leader towards the end of the Secession's run.

She had expressed criticism toward Impressionism at one point, and Liebermann was one of those following the Impressionist ways.

Could some of this mean she didn't get as much attention within the Secession's showings, despite her friendship with Liebermann?

I would say there's no real evidence to say, but just speculation on my part.

As far as the protest I mentioned earlier, Kollwitz later wrote a letter to her son expressing regret for having signed the protest to get French art out of the country.

In the letter she recognizes French artists as being gifted painters and that German artists "lack a sense of color."

Another speculation is not having been a part of the formed Expressionist groups.

I would imagine some of the younger artists did not attend.

So, my speculation is of being more aligned with Liebermann's art and mentality, even though her style did not fit the Impressionist ideals he had.

It could have kept her from venturing further with the more socialistic Expressionists and their groups.

And it could have been on her part or on theirs, or just something that naturally happened.

Again, all theories on my part.

But, there is an odd separation from her having some Expressionist art and even some similar values in subject matter, yet not being part of any of these young art movements like Die Brücke.

It doesn't make her any less of an artist, however.

She has wonderfully emotional pieces that can give insight into the German nation during her lifetime.

It is that reason alone that makes her an artist worth considering more for any kind of study.

As I continue in The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession the next episode will look at a pivotal artist to the Secession.

This artist had a piece that was known as the catalyst for the end of The Berlin Secession.

Who was this and what art piece was this?

Find out on the next episode of the Life and Times...

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References referred to in this episode can be found in the show notes.

Max Beckmann Episode 4 Script

Around 1905 a young artist submitted a painting to the Berlin Secession for an exhibition. The work was rejected by the Secession jury, though there was nothing inherently wrong with it. Because of the rejection, other young artists that were members of the Berlin Secession started to feel that the leadership was too biased.

The young artist did not intentionally want to cause this kind of stir when he submitted the work, but ended up being part of the cause of the downfall of the Secession.

This artist was Max Beckmann.

Welcome to another episode of The Life and Times of the Berlin Secession.

I am your host, Chris Kitamura, and I will be discussing Max Beckmann.

The painting I mentioned before is called *Young Men by the Sea*. **[Figure 4]**

It would have been done when Beckmann was about 21.

The composition has dominantly yellow color palette.

The young men from the title are mostly five figures in the foreground that are nude in poses that seem like a figure drawing study.

The scene seems to be a common day at the beach as the figures seemed relaxed and in that type of pose around the sand.

Two of the figures are sitting among the six and are closest to the viewer in the foreground.

In the distance are more who are approaching the sea or swimming in it.

Beckmann's *Young Men by the Sea* could be classified as more Post-Impressionistic.

The human figures seem elongated and slightly abstracted.

The exaggeration can also be reminiscent of the emerging Expressionist style.

Brush strokes are loose and fast, which is most likely from Impressionist influence.

The light depiction shows atmospheric depth.

Also the contrast of color is darker, almost moody with the sky almost black, and the sea as well.

Was the sky this dark? Possibly, but most likely not in stark contrast to other colors.

It is not too clear why the Berlin Secession leadership was not pleased with the piece.

But, younger artists in the group were not pleased with the rejection.

These younger artists formed Expressionist groups away from the Berlin Secession.

What is of particular note is that before painting *Young Men* he spent time in Paris to study painting technique there.

It does explain the Post-Impressionistic style of the painting submitted.

You would think that having French influence would be enough to have his piece be exhibited by the Berlin Secession since their leaders were greatly influenced by that country as well.

But, it was not enough of a reason.

It is probable that Beckmann crossed path with the younger Expressionists in the Berlin Secession.

It would mean that there were some things that he cared for in his own art from that group, even though he didn't align himself with Expressionism.

Marcel Franciscono points out that the Die Brücke style was something that Beckmann adopted into his expressionistic work.

Die Brücke was an Expressionist group that had a number of artists, one of those was Emil Nolde.

Nolde had been most displeased with the Berlin Secession, especially after Beckmann's piece was rejected.

The group's tendency often had street scenes and employed non-natural color.

The style that Beckmann copied which was similar to the group was having compressed space and exaggeration of figures.

Something that both Die Brücke and Beckmann copied was repetition and distortion taken from the Renaissance era.

These elements of style are where it seems to end for similarities between Beckmann and Expressionism.

As Karen Wilkin has pointed out, "the quality essential to the work of the Expressionists, that fragmentation and heightened color are equivalents for violence, is completely absent from Beckmann's art, no matter how brutal his imagery. So is the Expressionists' self-conscious desire to shock." - "Is Max Beckmann Likeable?" p. 27

However, there might be some evidence that Beckmann desired to bring some kind of emotional response in his work and particularly post-WWI.

Beckmann served as a medical orderly and was dismissed while serving in WWI for mental and physical exhaustion.

Like so many others in the war, his outlook on fighting changed.

By 1916 he had grown frustrated with the war, which had replaced any enthusiasm he previously had.

It wasn't necessarily after the war where his sentiments changed.

Author Barbara Buenger wrote: "One cannot always determine when and where Beckmann himself departed from expressions of general war distress or war-weariness to produce more explicit anti-war criticism, but his tone increasingly sharpened from the autumn of 1915 on."

Some of these sentiments were submitted to various publications both in writing and art.

His submissions were not meant to cause condemnation for those that would print it.

Beckmann took on a semi-anonymous commentary on the war itself.

This is important because of how it manifested in his art during and after serving in the war.

He desired to not bring attention in a way of causing problems for publishers, but still to bring a certain view to light.

This was something that seemed to carry on after the war.

The art that was produced after the war has been classified as New Objectivity.

It does have some Expressionistic qualities to it as well.

One departure from Expressionists was his subject matter.

Post World War I at least one series centered around the political climate of Germany.

One piece, The Martyrdom, depicts Rosa Luxemburg. **[Figure 5]**

She was a controversial political figure, and still is controversial to this day.

Her political ideals led to a controversy that eventually incited violence against her.

The Martyrdom depicts an act of violence, but it is a sexual act of violence.

It is peculiar that Beckmann depicts the killing of Luxemburg in this way since her assassination was not a crime of sexual violence.

Ute Tellini is an author that claims that Beckmann's use of sexual violence seems to be from his view of women.

It's a bit of a psychoanalytic claim where Beckmann's images convey some subconscious fear of women.

Tellini says it is a reason, for Beckmann, to use a female in a composition about revolutionary wartime evil instead of depicting a male, who would commonly be shown in images that were commenting on war and revolutions.

The artist didn't have a smooth history with relationships with women.

Max Beckmann married a woman he met in art school.

Together they had a son, Peter.

But, following World War I, Beckmann and his wife separated.

He later married a woman he affectionately called "Quappi".

Though it is possible for some Freudian symbolism in *Martyrdom* because of his failed first family, it does not seem consistent given much of the other work of this time.

//

The Night is another piece that does have a sexually violent crime, but isn't centered on the female figure, and there are other activities happening in the composition. **[Figure 6]**

Instead it seems to be commenting on something where all of these pieces fit together.

There are five figures in the composition that are featured prominently; two women and three men.

The painting has a woman in the lower third of the composition with her back facing the viewer and legs spread.

Her only coverings are something that looks like a corset that is open in the back.

She is bound to a wood pole.

The rest of the picture is busy with various props of tables, wood pieces, hats and people.

One person in the almost entire left third looks like he is being hung by the neck with a white and red scarf.

A man with a bandage around his head, smoking a pipe, is holding onto his arm.

Parts of the piece use red in stark contrast to the surroundings, like the scarf or the stockings of the woman.

Blue colors are also present, though subdued to almost have whatever it colors fade into the background.

Author Marcel Franciscono has said that Beckmann's "grotesque exaggeration of brutality and pain, above all the dreamlike peculiarities of its details, make it obvious that Beckmann meant in some sense to paint us an allegory of the human condition."

From his standpoint, it doesn't seem to be just about women but all people.

Both *Martyrdom* and *The Night* are in a series of images that are about political figures.

That, then, seems to show that the brutality is supposed to comment on the politics of the time, not if Beckmann had a fear of women.

The reason for the possible political commentary was that these scenes and poses were repeated which, again, is a similarity to the Expressionists.

Barbara Buenger explains that "meetings of small groups of artists and intellectuals for discussions or readings had long been a prominent feature of Berlin artistic life, and had

frequently been depicted as a representative activity by Expressionists such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (keershner) and Ludwig Meidner (meidnar).” - Buenger, 467

Beckmann engaged in conversations with peers in the art world about the politicization of Germany’s War and after.

Beckmann portrayed prominent figures from discussion groups that took place around Berlin in Ideologists from his Hell series.

Evidence from Beckmann’s oeuvre, such as the Hell series, have had some scholars like Christian Lenz conclude that he had much skepticism and sarcasm toward politics.

The images serves as a device for interpreting rather than a deeply personal reflection of his subconscious.

If there were any commentary, Buenger explains, it is that “Beckmann, then thirty-four, more consistently and plainly addressed issues of the artist’s relation to society than any other of the pictorial artists. He said that the horror of the past four years had made him recognize the greed and superficiality of the prewar materialism.” - Buenger 467

Beckmann did recognize the economic downturn that was taking place and hoped that decline of business or through a communistic way that there would be a return to a “love of things for their own sake,” though the communistic way was not exactly what he desired.

The group that Beckmann depicted in the series was not one he was associated with, but had some desire to be.

Barbara Buenger does point out that he doesn’t necessarily agree with them but doesn’t disagree with them either.

Which makes his disassociation make some sense.

Beckmann served as observer through his art.

His observations seemed to be from groups of intellectuals and political figures.

It did differ from Expressionists that were much more about emotion.

Beckmann did have exaggeration and distortion of figures, like many Expressionists, and some scenes were certainly shocking.

But, the scenes did appear shocking according to an agenda.

He certainly had contact with the Expressionists in the Secession but seemed to splinter away from the group in his own art.

He didn’t seem to want to join any group of artists.

He resigned from the Secession and didn’t join any Expressionist group.

He moved around as the Nazis took power in Germany, and his moving was more because of the Nazi threat rather than having that spirit of travel.

Though he desired to go back to Germany he never did.

From Berlin he moved to Paris.

From Paris to Amsterdam.

Then finally he emigrated to St. Louis, Missouri where he taught at the School of Fine Arts at Washington University.

During his career he gravitated toward the intellectuals, according to Marek Dominczak.

This meant that many of his subjects were inspired by authors, philosophers, or political figures.

These appeared in the series of images he made following World War I which contained The Martyrdom and The Night.

Max Beckmann is a prime example of how diverse the art styles were in the Berlin Secession. But, his history with the group also shows the inconsistency with how the Secession formed to allow the diversity of art styles and didn't follow through.

Beckmann didn't necessarily get along with all the Expressionists as far as agreeing on style and subject either, though.

His success is seen as various pieces and career highlights happened after World War I, including eventually going to the US to teach art.

As far as the history with the Secession, he is most notable for having a piece rejected by the jury and being part of the group that brought up the need for change within the Secession.

Though he didn't directly get involved in having the leadership change in the Berlin Secession, there was some sentiment toward this from Beckmann.

The way he went about explaining his outlook on World War I through anonymous drawings and writing in magazines could have started before and is why there is no aggressive outcry when *Young Men* was rejected by the Secession jury.

In my opinion, the rejection had more to do with not just his emerging style that was like Expressionism, but also that he might have started to use subject matters that were more political.

Since the opening speech of the Berlin Secession emphasized talent, and that a wide range of talent was the deciding factor of the jury's selections...

Then Beckmann's style and politically emphasized subjects didn't fit.

Young Men by the Sea wasn't political in any way, but the style wasn't, perhaps, talented enough to fit into the exhibition.

It is interesting that a painting in his later years was also called *Young Men by the Sea*.

This seems to be an updated version of the first and this new version was produced in 1943.

[Figure 7]

It is about a third of the size of the first, but features poses of the same young men on the left side.

In the first is an elongated figure playing a recorder-like instrument.

In the second painting is a very similar figure about in the same place as the first *Young Men*. Three other figures surround this musician with the same poses, including one seated with his back turned to the viewer.

The major differences are that this is more abstract, more Expressionistic in style.

The figures are painted much simpler with more solid lines to emphasize each one.

Each young man has different complexions now, and varying sizes and styles.

They are still exaggerated in dimensions, though.

The color palette is expanded and the sky is not dark anymore.

I bring up this painting because, to me, it illustrates that there could have been a real point of contention with the first painting.

Beckmann felt compelled to redo this former painting in his late year style.

It shows that he did evolve from that earlier Post-Impressionistic art to a more Expressionistic portrayal of people.

Despite the rejection of his first version of *Young Men by the Sea*, he revisits it as if to say it didn't matter because he grew in style anyway.

That first piece doesn't seem to be a failure, but needed to be updated to what he became as an artist.

And I think it shows the progression of his career and that the tension in the Berlin Secession did not stop him in any way.

Next episode will expand on that change and discuss the final years of the Berlin Secession.

Did they ultimately bring about good for art in Germany?

Find out on the next Life and Times of the Berlin Secession.

If you have not done so already, please like and subscribe to this podcast.

References brought up in this episode will be in the show notes.

Wilkin, Karen. 1999. "Max Beckmann & the School of Paris." *New Criterion* 17 (8): 17.
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Berlin Secession II Episode 5 Script

I have been looking at the Berlin Secession, which was a group of artists around the turn of the 20th century that exhibited together.

Their cause was to showcase broader talents and styles than what was exhibited by the government.

The government with Kaiser Wilhelm II leading, felt that Realism, or Naturalism, was the best style for the German cultural identity.

Art styles that were emerging around this time was seen as foreign, and not suitable.

Many of the artists that had started the Berlin Secession were using these styles.

The Berlin Secession's first president, Max Liebermann, delivered a speech at the first exhibition describing the vision of any talent regardless of style can exhibit.

And there was a broad style, yet some of that created tension even within the Secession.

Some artists were too different from the leadership.

But, they all united for the St. Louis Exposition.

They had been growing in success despite the German government denying letting them exhibit at the St. Louis Exposition.

The Exposition was for all the world to display art, and the Kaiser did not want any artist from the Secession to be there officially.

So, the Berlin Secession staged their own exhibition nearby the St. Louis event.

The chasm between Kaiser Wilhelm II's taste and the style of the artists was becoming wider.

But this chasm favored the Secession.

Following the St. Louis Exposition the artists from the Berlin Secession saw great commercial success.

According to Peter Paret, the royal academies that the Secession fought against lost much of their influence over art culture in the nation.

Xenophobia was on the rise as well, and only heightened by this tension.

But another tension between longtime members and newer members started not long after the St. Louis Exposition.

As discussed in previous episodes, there was a sense that Max Liebermann did not favor Expressionist style or their subject matter.

Max Beckmann seemed to be of particular focus on both sides because his art was rejected by the jury of Secession executives.

Peter Paret uses the example of Kathë Kollwitz's signing of the French art protest as something that shows "how difficult it was for some early members of the secession to tolerate the newest art."

So, even though there was more of a blame on the leadership of the Berlin Secession, there were some lines drawn between artists within the group.

There really seemed to be two sides within the Secession: Those that sided with the Impressionist styles, and those that felt like the style range should be wider.

Along the side of the Impressionists were some outside figures.

Julius Meier-Graefe, who was both gallery owner and art critic, praised Liebermann and the German Impressionists.

His influence helped propel a lot of the French style German artists more and more.

Walter Leistikow, one of the long time executives of the Secession, defended the younger artists. Paret argues that he was the one that helped calm down both sides of the Secession, and his death in 1908 made things more stressful.

Emil Nolde was the more outspoken member that criticized Liebermann and other leadership and parted from the Secession at one point.

He wrote open letters complaining about selections and reviews from the juries before leaving, though.

Later he would be the one to incite the protest letter about French art that Kollwitz had signed as well.

The in-fighting became greater and greater that there needed to be a change.

Liebermann was seen as biased and almost dictatorial in his leadership.

Corinth was elected president in 1910 after Liebermann stepped down having been president for 12 years.

The first exhibition by the Secession under Corinth did include more expressionist artists like Wassily Kandinsky.

The Berlin Secession continued to have success with its exhibitions.

Many of the artists made a lot of sales with their work throughout Germany.

Some were making a living off their art.

But, there was one event that changed the whole nation of Germany.

World War I officially started on July 28, 1914.

It would last until November 11, 1918.

Many artists were on the frontlines of the war and suffered in some way from it.

Max Beckmann submitted drawings to publications to show the experience of being a soldier in the battles.

Kathë Kollwitz, though not on the frontlines, had a son killed in battle. - Paret WWI

Max Liebermann took up an activist stance and produced art in favor of imperial victories. -

Deshmukh German Impressionist

Meier-Graefe was captured by Russians during the war.

It seemed to greatly thrust artists deeper into whatever they were doing in terms of styles.

Kollwitz took on more emotionality in her works because of reflection of her son being killed.

Beckmann's subjects were of certain political philosophies that were coming about from the results of the war.

These styles and subject matters would still not fit in with the more Impressionistic styles of the leadership.

The Berlin Secession didn't have a formal end.

It could be regarded as 1917 when in various writings there was suggested that a different art age that had begun in Germany.

Following the breakup of the Secession, some artists continued their careers.

The Prussian Academy of Arts had Liebermann as its president in 1920.

And even he started to include the Expressionists during his tenure.

Kollwitz became the first female professor in the Prussian Academy.

Liebermann remained head of the Academy until 1933 with the rise of the National Socialists in Germany.

This group was the basis of the Nazis, and with their anti-semitic attitude led Liebermann to resign from the Academy.

It seemed that, though, the Secession did help to bring about a new era of art for the German nation, it could not stifle the xenophobia that plagued it in those decades.

The Berlin Secession held a wide range of art styles.

Liebermann represented the very influential French styles that included Impressionism.

Kollwitz used art as an agenda, helping people see the plight of the lower classes through expressionistic drawings.

Beckmann was a younger artist, more influenced by experimentation and trying to push toward Expressionism, though not explicitly.

The Berlin Secession has a double-edged success.

It was able to bring about change for art in Germany.

But, it faced the same narrow selection of art within their own exhibitions.

It might have seemed like the art movement was trying to shake up the whole imperial government, but was not their intent.

Peter Paret writes, "In this sense the secession can be taken to exemplify both a social attitude and missed opportunity. Few Germans wanted to destroy the imperial system, but many wanted to liberalize it and open it up, just as the secession wanted to take part in the Saint Louis Exposition." - 239

The Berlin Secession did have success for individual artists, but faced so many challenges it has mixed results as a whole.

As Paret pointed out, some of that didn't have to do with anything that the Secessionists did but had to do with the consequences of the war.

Some of it was a greater problem with the outlook of the German people toward any foreign influence, which was perpetuated by the Kaiser himself.

There was a fear to modernism in Germany, though they moved toward it.

The feeling was that the foreign modernizing would create upheaval in the political systems.

What is ironic is that the Secession suffered from biases within.

Some artists felt overlooked because their styles did not fit the tastes of the leadership.

Nolde was one that felt such tastes led to the whole art market being too flooded with foreign art and that German artists were not getting their due.

The incidents of artists like Nolde and Beckmann to have their pieces rejected has led author Robert Jensen to conclude that "In reality, the Secession was never free or democratic, nor was it supportive of younger talent."

This was despite Liebermann, in his opening speech of the first exhibition, saying "In selecting works for our exhibition, talent alone, whatever its style, was the determinant."

So, in terms of success, was the Berlin Secession successful?

From the standpoint of its goal as said by Liebermann in that first exhibition, barely.

And that was only in its last few years.

In terms of changing the mindset of Germans toward a broader art style, yes it was successful.

In some ways it was indirect.

The Secession did catch the attention of Berlin citizens who were on the forefront of culture. It showed that there was evolution of art that can be avant-garde.

Though some in the Secession didn't want it shown, Expressionism was an art form that was able to be showcased through the Secession where it was rejected by the formal imperial academies.

This style was the most prevalent despite the president, Max Liebermann, being a staunch Impressionist.

Even Julius Meier-Graefe wanted more Impressionism and Post-Impressionism to become the national art identity.

Expressionism became the movement that took off instead.

And that still fulfilled the desire for change in art from the Realism genre to whatever was next.

The imperials wanted Realism or Naturalism to stick around for a great while.

That did not succeed at all.

And that was due, in great part, to the Berlin Secession.

Illustrations



Figure 1. Max Liebermann, *Twelve-Year-Old Jesus at the Temple*, 1879, oil on canvas, 149x130 cm

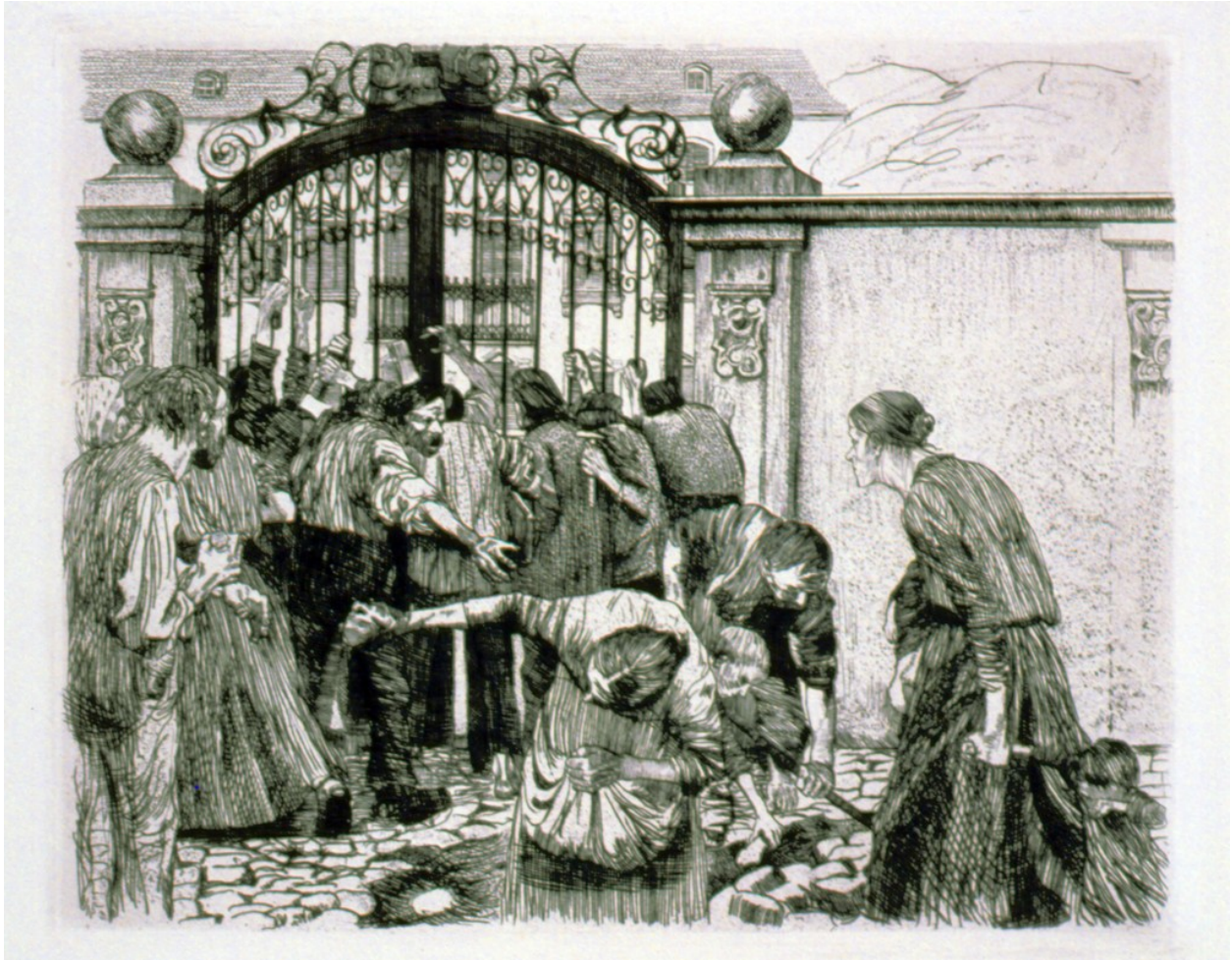


Figure 2. Käthe Kollwitz, *The Riot*, 1897, Etching



Figure 3. Käthe Kollwitz, *Woman With Dead Child*, 1903, Etching



Figure 4. Max Beckmann, *Young Men by the Sea*, 1905, oil on canvas



Figure 5. Max Beckmann, *The Night*, 1918-1919, oil on canvas



Figure 6. Max Beckmann, *The Martyrdom*, 1919, lithograph



Figure 7. Max Beckmann, *Young Men by the Sea*, 1943, oil on canvas