

## **Les très riches heures du Duc de Berry**

## Sommaire

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 International Gothic Style	3
1.2 Masters of illumination	3
<b>2. LES TRES RICHES HEURES DU DUC DE BERRY</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 January	3
2.2 February	3
2.3 March	3
2.4 April	4
2.5 May	4
2.6 June	4
2.7 July	4
2.8 August	4
2.9 September	4
2.10 October	4
2.11 November	4
2.12 December	4
<b>3. WHAT IS THE TRÈS RICHES HEURES?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. WHO PAINTED THE TRÈS RICHES HEURES?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. WHO WAS THEIR PATRON?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. HOW DID THEY PAINT THE TRÈS RICHES HEURES?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. MEDIEVAL GLOSSARY</b>	<b>5</b>
7.1 Book of Hours	5
7.2 enamel	5
7.3 genre	5
7.4 Illuminated manuscripts	6
7.5 Limburg Brothers	6
7.6 miniature	6
7.7 Paper	6
7.8 Parchment	7
7.9 Woodcut	7
<b>8. LA RENAISSANCE</b>	<b>7</b>
8.1 Germany	7
8.2 France	8
<b>9. EXPRESSIONNISM</b>	<b>8</b>
9.1 Gauguin, (Eugène-Henri-) Paul	9
9.2 Munch, Edvard	10

# 1. Introduction

The original Riches Heures manuscript is stored in the Chantilly museum, but is so degraded that it is no longer available to the public... except for WebMuseum visitors!

## 1.1 International Gothic Style

By the end of the 14th century, the fusion of Italian and Northern European art had led to the development of an International Gothic style. For the next quarter of a century, leading artists travelled from Italy to France, and vice versa, and all over Europe. As a consequence, ideas spread and merged, until eventually painters in this International Gothic style could be found in France, Italy, England, Germany, Austria and Bohemia.

## 1.2 Masters of illumination

The ancient art of book illumination was still the prevailing form of painting in France at the beginning of the 15th century. It reached new heights, however, in the work of the three Limbourg brothers, Pol, Herman, and Jean, exponents of the International Gothic style.

They came from Gelderland, a province of the Netherlands, but worked in France. They were the only other Gothic painters to take such orderly joy as that shown by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the city and its environment, its people, and its rulers. The Limbourg brothers all died suddenly in 1416, probably of the plague.

The Limbourgs' joint masterpiece, Les Très Riches Heures, was commissioned by the wealthy and extravagant manuscript collector, the Duc de Berry. Les Très Riches Heures is one of a genre of 15th-century illustrated prayer books known as "book of hours". The "hours" were prayers to be said at one of seven hours of the day. A book of hours would naturally contain a calendar, and this became the opportunity for a display of the illuminator's talent. Sadly, this particular example was unfinished at the time of the Limbourgs' and the Duc de Berry's deaths.

Each month is marked by an enchanting scene, usually showing appropriate seasonal activities. In August, we see courtly lovers riding to hunt with their falcons, while the great white ducal castle gleams in the distance and the peasant swim happily in the winding stream. The blue upper part of the painting shows an astrological hemisphere. With its mixture of courtly refinement and everyday reality, this miniature is representative of many in the book.

The Garden of Eden was painted separately from the rest of Les Très Riches Heures and inserted into it later. It is a great enclosed circle showing the world as it was intended to remain before Adam and Eve's fall from grace. The whole story of the loss of Eden and human self-will is set graphically before us. Adam and Eve are finally ejected from the lush greenery of Eden unto a dangerous rocky shore. The Limbourgs' consciousness of tragedy is no less acute for being so chivalric in its manner. For all their elegance, they are as aware as all great artists that pain is our human lot.

# 2. Les très riches heures du Duc de Berry

## 2.1 January

The month of giving gifts (a custom which seems to have died out now). Jean de Berry himself can be seen on the right, wearing the brilliant blue robe.

Dans certaines familles, on ne celebrait guere Noel, bien que certains soient catholiques: on donnait un cadeau chaque annee qu'on appelait les etrennes. Ce mot remonte a l'usage Romain de par lequel le patron devait offrir une subsidence annuelle a ses clients. Il est possible que la television ait donne le dessin a la fete de Noel sur l'epiphanie. (comment from mmurphy@ernsty.co.uk)

## 2.2 February

Winter in a peasant village. The inhabitants of a farm are shown warming themselves by the fire, while in the background daily life - cutting wood, taking cattle to the market - goes on as normal.

## 2.3 March

The year's first farm work, sowing and ploughing and suchlike. The chateau in the background is that of Lusignan, one of the Duc's favourites.

## **2.4 April**

The arrival of spring, hope and new life - the grass is green and a newly betrothed couple are exchanging rings in the foreground, accompanied by friends and family. The chateau is another one of the Duc's, that of Dourdan.

## **2.5 May**

The May jaunt, a pageant celebrating the "joli mois de Mai" in which one had to wear green garments known as livrée de mai. The riders are young noblemen and women, with princes and princesses being visible. In the background is a chateau thought to be the Palais de la Cité in Paris.

## **2.6 June**

Harvest time - the peasants are mowing the meadow in unison, with the Hotel de Nesle, the Duc's Parisian residence, in the background. The building on the right is the Chapelle Royale, which is unchanged to this day. (thanks to b.royan@stirling.ac.uk)

## **2.7 July**

More of the harvest; the sheep are being shorn and the hay is being reaped. The chateau behind them is that which formerly stood on the Clain at Poitiers.

## **2.8 August**

The month of hawking; the nobles, carrying falcons, are going hunting while in the background peasants are harvesting and swimming in the river. Behind them is the Chateau d'Etampes.

## **2.9 September**

Probably the most famous of the calendar images. The grapes are being harvested by the peasants and carried into the beautifully detailed Chateau de Saumur.

## **2.10 October**

Tilling and sowing are being carried out by the peasants, in the shadow of the Louvre - Charles V's royal palace in Paris.

## **2.11 November**

This is the only calendar image executed by Colombe; the Limbourgs painted only the zodiacal tympanum above it. The picture shows the autumn acorn harvest, with a peasant knocking down throwing sticks to knock down the acorns on which his pigs are feeding.

## **2.12 December**

In the forest of Vincennes, fabled for its game, a wild-boar hunt has caught a boar which is being torn apart by the boarhounds. In the background is the Chateau de Vincennes, long a residence of French royalty.

## **3. What is the Très Riches Heures?**

The Très Riches Heures is the classic example of a medieval book of hours. This was a collection of the text for each liturgical hour of the day - hence the name - which often included other, supplementary, texts. Calendars, prayers, psalms and masses for certain holy days were commonly included.

The pictures in this exhibition are from the calendar section of the Très Riches Heures. This was painted some time between 1412 and 1416 and is arguably the most beautiful part of the manuscript; it is certainly the best known, being one of the great art treasures of France. In terms of historical and cultural importance, it is certainly equal to more famous works such as the Mona Lisa, marking the pinnacle of the art of manuscript illumination.

(Text from Chris Owen)

## **4. Who painted the Très Riches Heures?**

The Très Riches Heures was painted by the Limbourg brothers, Paul (Pol), Hermann and Jean. They came from Nimwegen in what is now Flanders but were generally referred to as Germans. Very little is known about them; they are believed to have been born in the late 1370s or 1380s and were born into an artistic family, their father being a wood sculptor and their uncle being an artist working variously for the French Queen and for the Duc de Bourgogne.

They seem to have followed in their uncle's footsteps and by 1402 had entered into the service of the Duc de Bourgogne as artists. By 1408 they had entered the service of Jean, Duc de Berry, one of the most notable (and richest!) art lovers in France. They are known to have executed several other pieces of work apart from the Très Riches Heures but most of these, with the major exception of the Très Belles Heures, seem to have been lost. In around February 1416 all three Limbourg brothers died before the age of thirty, apparently killed by an epidemic.

## 5. Who was their Patron?

Jean de Berry was one of the highest nobles in 15th-century France - his brothers were King Charles V, the Duc d'Anjou and the Duc de Bourgogne, and his nephews were King Charles VI and the Duc d'Orleans. He was inevitably involved in politics as a result of his position and was identified with the Armagnac anti-Burgundian faction, as a result of which his property was attacked on several occasions by pro-Burgundian mobs. (On one such occasion, in 1411, his Chateau de Bicetre was burned to the ground, destroying many of the works of the Limbourgs). In 1416 he died, apparently broken-hearted at the destruction of the French monarchy at Agincourt the previous year.

He was the medieval world's greatest connoisseur of the visual arts, with a particular fondness for jewels, castles, works of art and exotic animals. He ordered the building of a number of castles and filled each with specially commissioned works of art, including tapestries, paintings, and jewels. He is reputed to have owned 1,500 dogs. Among his extraordinarily varied collection were chateaux such as Saumur and Bicetre, rubies weighing up to 240 carats, a collection of ostriches and camels and - most importantly from our point of view - a magnificent collection of books. He owned astronomical treatises, mappa mondes, and a large number of religious books: 14 Bibles, 16 psalters, 18 breviaries, 6 missals and no less than 15 Books of Hours, including of course the Très Riches Heures.

## 6. How did they paint the Très Riches Heures?

The Limbourgs used a wide variety of colours obtained from minerals, plants or chemicals and mixed with either arabic or tragacanth gum to provide a binder for the paint. Amongst the more unusual colours they used were vert de flambe, a green obtained from crushed flowers mixed with massicot, and azur d'outreme, an ultramarine made from crushed Middle Eastern lapis-lazuli, used to paint the brilliant blues. (This was, of course, extremely expensive!)

The extremely fine detail which was the characteristic feature of the Limbourgs needed extremely fine brushes and, almost certainly, lenses. Later additions to the Très Riches Heures carried out by the late 15th-century artist Jean Colombe were carried out in a rather less delicate way. The calendars, however, were mostly painted by the Limbourgs; only November includes a substantial amount of Colombe's work.

## 7. Medieval Glossary

### 7.1 Book of Hours

A prayer book used by laymen for private devotion, containing prayers or meditations appropriate to certain hours of the day, days of the week, months or seasons. They became so popular in the 15th century that the Book of Hours outnumbered all other categories of illuminated manuscripts; from the late 15th century there were also printed versions illustrated by woodcuts. The most famous Book of Hours and one of the most beautiful of all illuminated manuscripts is the Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry (Musée Condé, Chantilly), illuminated by the Limburg Brothers for Jean de Berry.

### 7.2 enamel

A smooth, glossy material made by fusing glass to a prepared surface, usually of metal. The term is also applied to any object made with, or decorated by, this material. The study of enamelling belongs mainly to the history of jewellery and the decorative arts, but in the Middle Ages enamel was sometimes used for major works, notably Nicolas of Verdun's Klosterneuburg Altar.

Today the word 'enamel' is loosely used of any glossy protective covering such as durable paint or varnish applied to the surface of objects made from metal, wood, etc.

### 7.3 genre

Term in art history and criticism for paintings depicting scenes from daily life. It may be applied to appropriate art of any place or period, but most commonly suggests the type of domestic subject-matter favored by Dutch 17th-century artists. In a broader sense, the term is used to mean a particular branch or category of art; landscape and portraiture, for example, are genres of painting, and the essay and the short story are genres of literature.

## 7.4 Illuminated manuscripts

Books written by hand, decorated with paintings and ornaments of different kinds. The word 'illuminated' comes from a usage of the Latin word *illuminare* in connection with oratory or prose style, where it means 'adorn'. The decorations are of three main types:

- miniatures or small pictures, not always illustrative, incorporated into the text or occupying the whole page or part of the border;
- initial letters either containing scenes (historiated initials) or with elaborate decoration;
- borders, which may consist of miniatures, occasionally illustrative, or more often are composed of decorative motifs. They may enclose the whole of the text space or occupy only a small part of the margin of the page.

Manuscripts are for the most part written on skin, parchment, or vellum. From the 14th century, paper was used for less sumptuous copies. Although a number of books have miniatures and ornaments executed in outline drawing only, the majority are fully coloured. By the 15th cent. illumination tended more and more to follow the lead given by painters, and with the invention of printing the illuminated book gradually went out of fashion. During the 15th and 16th centuries, illuminations were added to printed books.

## 7.5 Limburg Brothers

Limburg (or Limbourg) Brothers, Netherlandish manuscript illuminators, Herman, Jean (Jannequin), and Paul (Pol), all three of whom died in 1416, presumably victims of the plague or other epidemic. Pol was probably the head of the workshop, but it is not possible to distinguish his hand from those of his brothers.

They were born in Nijmegen, nephews of Jean Malouel, and Herman and Jean are first documented in the late 1390s apprenticed to a goldsmith in Paris. In 1402 Jean and Pol were working for Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and after Philip's death all three Limburgs worked for his brother Jean, Duc de Berry, remaining in his service until their deaths and holding privileged positions at his court, which moved with him around France from one magnificent residence to the next. He was, indeed, one of the most extravagant patrons and collectors in the history of art, and the Limburgs illuminated two manuscripts for his celebrated library: the *Belles Heures* (Met. Museum, New York, c. 1408) and the *Très Riches Heures* (Musée Condé, Chantilly), which was begun c. 1413 and left unfinished at their deaths; it was completed by the French illuminator Jean Colombe (c. 1440-93?) about seventy years later.

The *Très Riches Heures* is by common consent one of the supreme masterpieces of manuscript illumination and the archetype of the International Gothic style. Its most original and beautiful feature is the series of twelve full-page illustrations of the months--the first time a calendar was so lavishly treated--full of exquisite ornamentation and beautifully observed naturalistic detail. The miniatures are remarkable, too, for their mastery in rendering space, strongly suggesting that one or more of the brothers had visited Italy, and they occupy an important place in the development of the northern traditions of landscape and genre painting.

## 7.6 miniature

A very small painting, particularly a portrait that can be held in the hand or worn as a piece of jewellery. The word is applied to manuscript illuminations as well as portraits and derives from the Latin *minium*, the red lead used to emphasize initial letters, decorated by the miniator.

Since the 17th century, the term has been applied to all types of manuscript illustration on account of a mistaken etymology: the word was connected with 'minute' (small). What we today call a 'miniature' was called *historia* in the Middle Ages and the portraits painted by Hilliard and others were named 'limnings' or 'pictures in little' by the Elizabethans. They were painted on vellum or occasionally on ivory or card, and in the 17th and 18th centuries there was a vogue for miniatures done in an enamelling technique. The portrait miniature developed from a fusion of the traditions of medieval illumination and the Renaissance medal and flourished from the early 16th century to the mid 19th century, when photography virtually killed it as a serious art form.

## 7.7 Paper

A tissue of vegetable fibres used for writing, drawing and printing on. It is an oriental invention carried from the Far to the Middle East by the Turks during the Dark Ages. In Europe, it is first traceable in the 12th century, among the Moors in Spain, where it was made as well as imported. It was known in Southern Italy at much the same time. France, southern Germany, and Switzerland had well-developed industries in paper by the end of the 14th century. White paper was first made in England in 1495, but not on a large scale until the 18th century. Until 1800, European paper was made entirely of rags pulped in water, and drawing-paper of the best quality is still made by hand in the traditional way. Writing-papers, less expensive drawing-papers, and some book papers are machine-made of a mixture of cotton, hemp, esparto, and wood, with a good deal of china clay added to make them smooth and opaque, size to make them non-

absorbent, and starch to make them stiff. Cheaper papers are machine-made wholly of wood. Oriental papers made of bamboo, rice straw, and mulberry bark are imported for artists' use.

## 7.8 Parchment

Writing material made from the skin of sheep or calf, less frequently pig, goat, and other animals; it has also been used for painting, and occasionally for printing and bookbinding.

Pliny says that it was invented in the second century BC in Pergamum; hence the term 'parchment' from the Latin *pergamena*, 'of Pergamum'. Skin had been used as a writing material before this, but the refined methods of cleaning and stretching involved in making parchment enabled both sides of a leaf to be used, leading eventually to the supplanting of the manuscript roll by the bound book. Vellum is a fine kind of parchment made from the delicate skins of young (sometimes stillborn) animals.

Paper began to replace parchment from about the 14th century, but parchment is still used for certain kinds of documents, and the name is often applied to high-quality writing paper.

## 7.9 Woodcut

The technique of making a print from a block of wood sawn along the grain (the term is also applied to the print so made). It is the oldest technique for making prints and its principles are very simple. The design is drawn on a smooth block of wood (almost any wood of medium softness can be used) and the parts that are to be white in the print are cut away with knives and gouges, leaving the design standing up in relief. This is then inked and pressed against a sheet of paper.

The origins of woodcut are obscure (the principle was employed in fabric printing in the Middle East at least as early as the 5th century AD), but woodcut as we know it appeared in Europe in the early 15th century; the earliest dated print is perhaps the *St Christopher* (1423) by an unknown artist in the John Rylands Library, Manchester. It was much used as an illustrative technique in the early days of printed books, but in the 16th century it lost ground to line engraving, which could produce much subtler effects.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, however, there was a major revival of interest in the woodcut as a medium of original artistic expression, artists such as Munch, Gauguin and the German Expressionists realizing the potential of the rugged boldness that is characteristic of the technique. The coloured woodcut, using different blocks for each colour, was particularly popular in Japan.

# 8. La Renaissance

## 8.1 Germany

German art of the 15th century was dominated by many local, independent schools. Largely based on the Gothic INTERNATIONAL STYLE, German art received important influences from the Netherlands that intensified as the century progressed. The painter-sculptor Hans Multscher displayed a typically German blend of Gothic conventions, naturalistic observation, and a strange fascination with brutal aspects of human behavior. In Basel the painter Konrad WITZ created a severe and impressive style indebted to van Eyck; whereas the reputed pupil of Rogier van der Weyden, the painter-engraver Martin SCHONGAUER, emerged, through his graphic work, as an incredibly refined draftsman, eventually to serve as a model for Albrecht DURER.

The Renaissance in Germany is dominated by the great genius of Durer, both a painter and engraver. His astonishing and unequalled performances in woodcut and engraving permanently transformed the graphic arts and greatly enhanced their potential. Durer's fascination with the world, his curiosity about the fundamental principles and theories that governed nature, and his desire to express its various beauties in ideal, monumental form, were features shared with Italian artists. It was in fact through his two visits to Italy, and contact there with such figures as Giovanni Bellini, that Durer was stimulated to develop his unique style.

The art of Durer's contemporary Mathias Grunewald, most fully represented by the multipaneled *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1515; Musee d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France), is by contrast filled with high-pitched expressive power conveyed through agonized human forms, and brilliant, piercing color schemes. The visionary and irrational aspect of Grunewald's art, rooted in the medieval world, is one of many echoes of the past that were to repeat themselves many times in the subsequent development of German art. Both Durer and Grunewald had to contend personally with the spiritual and intellectual foment caused by the Protestant Reformation, which, although of profound religious and social consequence, produced no characteristic form of artistic expression.

So personal had been Durer's involvement with southern Renaissance ideals, that no established school or tradition developed in his wake. The DANUBE SCHOOL--whose principal members, Lucas CRANACH the Elder, Albrecht ALTDORFER, and Wolf HUBER, reflected an extraordinary awakening of interest in landscape painting--was a loose grouping of masters. Despite their fascinating diversity they shared a common sympathy for miniaturizing anticlassical tendencies derived from late Gothic art.

Hans Holbein the Younger, a painter of great talent and insight, was originally a member of the Augsburg school, a rival in importance to that in Nuremberg. He later practiced in Basel, and finally in England as court painter to Henry VIII, developing in the process a psychologically penetrating precise style of portraiture that paralleled in many ways work being done simultaneously in Italy and France.

## 8.2 France

In the 15th century the art of France, like that of Germany, came increasingly under the influence of the Netherlandish school. The painter Jean FOUQUET and the anonymous master responsible for the celebrated Villeneuve Pieta (c.1460; Louvre, Paris) were also aware of contemporary Italian art. By introducing elements of clarity and stability in their work, they achieved a unique combination of formal weight and factual and portraitlike design.

At the beginning of the 16th century Italian styles became extremely popular in France because artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto CELLINI, Francesco PRIMATICCIO, Rosso Fiorentino, and Niccolo dell'Abbate (c.1512-71) were employed there by Francis I. Features of Italian Renaissance style were adopted at first by French artists in a rather superficial manner, producing effects of fascinating disquiet alongside native forms of medieval origin, in such hybrid structures as the Chateau de BLOIS (1515-20), which incorporates Italian decorative architectural elements with the medieval-style architecture.

Architecture burgeoned with the construction of the massive and luxurious Chateau de CHAMBORD and Chateau de Fontainebleau. The court workshop established at the Chateau de Fontainebleau became an important center, known as the school of Fontainebleau. In its exaggerated elegance and complex fantasies combining sculpture, painting, and architecture, the school of Fontainebleau represented a high point in the development of Mannerism.

By the mid-16th century a number of highly talented French masters made their appearance, among them the architect Philibert DELORME, who reasserted a classical style based on measure and proportion. The painter Francois Clouet developed a highly polished and sensuous style of court portraiture, and during the last decades of the century Germain Pilon produced sculptures that represent the highest achievements of the French Renaissance.

## 9. Expressionism

Movement in fine arts that emphasized the expression of inner experience rather than solely realistic portrayal, seeking to depict not objective reality but the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse in the artist.

Expressionism, artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse in him. He accomplishes his aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy and through the vivid, jarring, violent, or dynamic application of formal elements. In a broader sense Expressionism is one of the main currents of art in the later 19th and the 20th centuries, and its qualities of highly subjective, personal, spontaneous self-expression are typical of a wide range of modern artists and art movements. Expressionism can also be seen as a permanent tendency in Germanic and Nordic art from at least the European Middle Ages, particularly in times of social change or spiritual crisis, and in this sense it forms the converse of the rationalist and classicizing tendencies of Italy and later of France.

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Artistic and literary movement born in the early years of the XXth century. Unlike Impressionism, its goals were not to reproduce the impression suggested by the surrounding world, but to strongly impose the artist's own sensibility to the world's representation. The expressionist artist substitutes to the visul object reality his own image of this object, which he feels as an accurate representation of its real meaning. The search of harmony and forms is not as important as trying to achieve the highest expression intensity, both from the aesthetic point of view and according to idea and human critics.

Expressionism assessed itself mostly in Germany, in 1910, (München, Dresde, Berlin), as heir of a national trend related to Grünewald: the Wallraf-Richartz museum, in Köln, has the richest collection of this era. As an international movement, expressionism has also been thought of as inheriting from certain medieval artforms and, more directly, Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh and the fauvism movement. Gustave Moreau was already saying not to believe to the reality of what he touched or saw, but instead to his own interior perception; expressionism has been holding this theory to its extreme application.

The most famed German expressionists are Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, Lyonel Feininger, George Grosz, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, August Macke, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein; the Austrian Oskar Kokoschka, the Czech Alfred Kubin and the Norwegian Edvard Munch are also related to this movement. During his stay in Germany, the Russian Kandinsky was also an expressionism addict.

Painters as varied as Georges Rouault, Henry de Waroquier, Marcel Gromaire, Edouard Goerg have also been qualified of "French expressionists". Other members were, in Belgium, James Ensor, Permecke, Van der Bergue, Servaes were seen as disciples of Jérôme Bosch and Bruegel, the Dutch Leo Gestel, the Danish Sørensen, the British Lyall Watson. Among the members of the Paris school, Soutine, Pascin and Modigliani have been attached to expressionism.

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1921; Forme d'art faisant consister la valeur de la représentation dans l'intensité de l'expression. L'expressionnisme s'est d'abord manifesté dans la peinture par réaction contre l'impressionnisme. L'expressionnisme allemand, flamand. Rouault, Ensor, Munch, Kokoschka, Soutine, représentants célèbres de l'expressionnisme.

Le terme nouveau d'expressionnisme est venu du mot «expression» pris dans son sens classique de «représentation des passions». Si l'on se réfère à la proposition de Diderot, «on a de l'expression avant d'avoir de l'exécution et du dessin», il ne faut pas s'étonner que le terme «Expressionismus» ait été proposé par la critique allemande, il y a cinquante ans, pour qualifier en général toute peinture, mais particulièrement celle où la représentation des sentiments humains passe avant la résolution des problèmes purement plastiques... C'est un retour à une forme sentimentale de Romantisme.

-- M. Raynal, la Peinture moderne.

Par ext. L'expressionnisme au théâtre. L'expressionnisme allemand est une réaction contre l'observation naturaliste. Certaines théories dramatiques de Diderot annoncent l'expressionnisme. L'expressionnisme dans la mise en scène.

-- L'expressionnisme au cinéma.

Dans les jours troublés qui suivirent la défaite, l'expressionnisme envahit la rue berlinoise, les affiches, le théâtre, la décoration des cafés, les boutiques et les étalages (...) Les films doivent devenir des dessins rendus vivants, proclamait alors Herman Warm (...) L'horreur, le fantastique et le crime dominant l'expressionnisme qu'on aurait pourtant tort de considérer comme une transition entre le Grand-Guignol et la terreur américaine à la Frankenstein (...) Sur le plan technique, l'expressionnisme évolua sans perdre son principe : une vision subjective du monde (...) L'emploi expressif de la lumière devint la marque du cinéma allemand, expressionniste ou non.

-- Georges Sadoul, Histoire d'un art, le cinéma.

## 9.1 Gauguin, (Eugène-Henri-) Paul

(b. June 7, 1848, Paris, Fr.--d. May 8, 1903, Atuona, Hiva Oa, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia), one of the leading French painters of the Postimpressionist period, whose development of a conceptual method of representation was a decisive step for 20th-century art. After spending a short period with Vincent van Gogh in Arles (1888), Gauguin increasingly abandoned imitative art for expressiveness through colour. From 1891 he lived and worked in Tahiti and elsewhere in the South Pacific. His masterpieces include the early *Vision After the Sermon* (1888) and *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897-98). [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1994]

Although his main achievements were to lie elsewhere, Gauguin was, to use a fanciful metaphor, nursed in the bosom of Impressionism. His attitudes to art were deeply influenced by his experience of its first exhibition, and he himself participated in those of 1880, 1881 and 1882. The son of a French journalist and a Peruvian Creole, whose mother had been a writer and a follower of Saint-Simon, he was brought up in Lima, joined the merchant navy in 1865, and in 1872 began a successful career as a stockbroker in Paris.

In 1874 he saw the first Impressionist exhibition, which completely entranced him and confirmed his desire to become a painter. He spent some 17,000 francs on works by Manet, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, Renoir and Guillaumin. Pissarro took a special interest in his attempts at painting, emphasizing that he should 'look for the nature that suits your temperament', and in 1876 Gauguin had a landscape in the style of Pissarro accepted at the Salon. In the meantime Pissarro had introduced him to Cézanne, for whose works he conceived a great respect---so much so that the older man began to fear that he would steal his 'sensations'. All three worked together for some time at Pontoise, where Pissarro and Gauguin drew pencil sketches of each other (Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre).

In 1883-84 the bank that employed him got into difficulties and Gauguin was able to paint every day. He settled for a while in Rouen, partly because Paris was too expensive for a man with five children, partly because he thought it would be full of wealthy patrons who might buy his works. Rouen proved a disappointment, and he joined his wife Mette and

children, who had gone back to Denmark, where she had been born. His experience of Denmark was not a happy one and, having returned to Paris, he went to paint in Pont-Aven, a well-known resort for artists.

- Les Alyscamps, Arles, 1888 (170 Kb); Oil on canvas, 91 x 72 cm (35 7/8 x 28 3/8 in); Musee d'Orsay, Paris
- Still Life with Three Puppies, 1888 (140 Kb); Oil on canvas, 88 x 62.5 cm (34 3/4 x 24 5/8 in); The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- The Swineherd, Brittany, 1888 (180 Kb); Oil on canvas, 74 x 93 cm (29 x 36 1/2 in); Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Vision After the Sermon, Jacob Wrestling with the Angel

Here, he stopped working exclusively out-of-doors, as Pissarro had taught him, and generally began to adopt a more independent line. His meeting with van Gogh, the influence of Seurat, the doctrines of Signac, and a rediscovery of the merits of Degas---especially in his pastels---all combined with his own streak of megalomania to produce a style that had little in common with the thoughtful lyricism of the work of his erstwhile mentor Pissarro. Monet confessed to a liking of his Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (1888; National Gallery of Scotland), which he saw at the exhibition Gauguin organized in 1891 to finance his projected excursion to places where he could live on 'ecstasy, calmness and art'; the proceeds amounted to 10,000 francs, some of it coming from Degas, who bought several paintings. There were still evident in these new works traces of pure Impressionism, and of the very clear influence of Cézanne (as in the Portrait of Marie Lagadu, 1890; Art Institute of Chicago)---a fact pointed up by a Cézanne still life owned by Gauguin which is shown behind her---but basically this period marked the parting of the ways between Gauguin and Impressionism.

- Le Christ jaune (The Yellow Christ), 1889 (160 Kb); Oil on canvas, 92.1 x 73.4 cm (36 1/4 x 28 7/8 in); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- M. Loulou, 1890 (130 Kb); Oil on canvas, 55 x 46.2 cm (21 5/8 x 18 1/8 in); Barnes Foundation, Merion, PA

Gauguin's art has all the appearance of a flight from civilisation, of a search for new ways of life, more primitive, more real and more sincere. His break away from a solid middle-class world, abandoning family, children and job, his refusal to accept easy glory and easy gain are the best-known aspects of Gauguin's fascinating life and personality. This picture, also known as Two women on the beach, was painted in 1891, shortly after Gauguin's arrival in Tahiti. During his first stay there (he was to leave in 1893, only to return in 1895 and remain until his death), Gauguin discovered primitive art, with its flat forms and the violent colors belonging to an untamed nature. And then, with absolute sincerity, he transferred them onto canvas.

- Femmes de Tahiti [Sur la plage] (Tahitian Women [On the Beach]), 1891 (150 Kb); Oil on canvas, 69 x 91 cm (27 1/8 x 35 7/8 in); Musee d'Orsay, Paris
- Spirit of the Dead Watching, 1892 (130 Kb); Oil on burlap mounted on canvas, 72.4 x 92.4 cm (28 1/2 x 36 3/8 in); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- Arearea (Joyousness), 1892; Musée d'Orsay, Paris
- Portrait of the Artist with the Idol, c. 1893 (80 Kb); Oil on canvas, 43.8 x 32.7 cm (17 1/4 x 12 7/8 in); McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, TX
- Portrait de l'artiste (Self-portrait), c. 1893-94 (210 Kb); Oil on canvas, 46 x 38 cm (18 1/8 x 15 in); Musee d'Orsay, Paris
- Paysannes bretonnes (Breton peasant women), 1894 (160 Kb); Oil on canvas, 66 x 92 cm (26 x 36 1/4 in); Musee d'Orsay, Paris
- Nave, Nave Moe (Miraculous Source), 1894; Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
- The white horse

## 9.2 Munch, Edvard

(b. Dec. 12, 1863, Løten, Nor.--d. Jan. 23, 1944, Ekely, near Oslo)

Norwegian painter and printmaker whose intense, evocative treatment of psychological and emotional themes was a major influence on the development of German Expressionism in the early 20th century. His painting *The Cry* (1893) is regarded as an icon of existential anguish. [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1994]

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Munch, Edvard (1863-1944). A gifted Norwegian painter and printmaker, Edvard Munch not only was his country's greatest artist, but also played a vital role in the development of German expressionism. His work often included the

symbolic portrayal of such themes as misery, sickness, and death. *The Cry*, probably his most familiar painting, is typical in its anguished expression of isolation and fear.

- *The Scream (or The Cry)*, 1893; 150 Kb; Casein/waxed crayon and tempera on paper (cardboard), 35 7/8 x 29"; Nasjonalgalleriet (National Gallery), Oslo

Munch was born on Dec. 12, 1863, in Loten, Norway. He grew up in Christiania (now Oslo) and studied art under Christian Krohg, a Norwegian naturalistic painter. Munch's parents, a brother, and a sister died while he was still young, which probably explains the bleakness and pessimism of much of his work. Paintings such as *The Sick Child* (1886), *Vampire* (1893-94), and *Ashes* (1894) show his preoccupation with the darker aspects of life.

Munch traveled to Paris in 1885, and his work began to show the influence of French painters--first, the impressionists, and then the postimpressionists--as well as art nouveau design. Like many young artists Munch reacted against conventional behavior, and in 1892 he took part in a controversial exhibit in Berlin. His circle of friends included several writers, one of whom was the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Munch designed the sets for several of Ibsen's plays.

Between 1892 and 1908, Munch spent much of his time in Paris and Berlin, where he became known for his prints--etchings, lithographs, and woodcuts. After 1910 Munch returned to Norway, where he lived and painted until his death. In his later paintings Munch showed more interest in nature, and his work became more colorful and less pessimistic. Munch died in Ekely, near Oslo, on Jan. 23, 1944. He left many of his works to the city of Oslo, which built a museum in his honor.

- *Puberty*, 1895; Oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm (59 5/8 x 43 1/4 in); Nasjonalgalleriet (National Gallery), Oslo
- *Death in the Sickroom*, c. 1895; Oil on canvas, 59 x 66 in; National Gallery, Oslo
- *The Dance of Life*, 1899-1900 (120 Kb); Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 75 in; National Gallery, Oslo
- *The Dead Mother*, 1899-1900 (130 Kb); Oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 35 3/8 in; Kunsthalle, Bremen