

# Questions of German-Bohemian Art and New Objectivity\*

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*This essay reviews historiographical issues that arise when one relates New Objectivity painting in Germany with the visual arts of ethnic German visual artists in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. It also discusses potential avenues of inquiry to examine this interrelationship more closely. Readers are reminded of the tortured complications arising in artists' lives, careers, identities, and their wartime and postwar dislocations that separated them from the role of representing states in the postwar period. Apropos New Objectivity, it asks who defined the art of ethnic Germans in Czechoslovakia and how did those definitions relate to the discourse produced and disseminated by Gustav Hartlaub and Franz Roh's trail-blazing positions in Germany. It also asks that more specificity be placed upon defining the sense and scope new realist pictures by ethnic Germans were "modernist," or "avant-garde" in the Czechoslovak interwar context. Finally, the essay suggests an opening through which new realist paintings, prints or drawings might be studied as artifacts involved in the address of audiences whose expectations for art were engrained within local notions and practices of craftsmanship in the highly respected design industries.*

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To introduce the ground-breaking exhibition and catalogue on ethnic German artists groups in interwar Czechoslovakia, *Junge Löwen im Käfig* [Young Lions in a Cage], Anna Habánová referred to "The creations of the German-speaking visual artists from Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia in the Czechoslovakia of the interwar period."<sup>1</sup> Many will recognize the advantages this unwieldy phrase has over the historically limited, politically-freighted phrase *Sudetendeutsche Kunst* that increased in both usage and political poignancy over the course of the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, a dissonance between those two phrases to characterize this field of regional activity in the visual arts remains, and thus merits revisiting to better draw into historical focus the values that attended emergent realist pictorial practices (including New Objectivity) during those decades. An evaluation of the then emerging practices of pictorial New Objectivity in the context of these contested territories and their multiply redrawn borders benefits from understanding how any methodology might resemble the range of related methodologies known as *Kunstgeographie* or "geography of art" as examined historiographically by Thomas daCosta Kaufmann.<sup>2</sup> Whatever methodologies are developed will have the benefit of being able to build upon compilations of artists' life and work, catalogues of artworks, and valuable reconstructions of artist groups, which thanks to the valuable, even monumental scholarship of Anna Habánová and Ivo Habán has largely been attained in this field.

Framing art historical questions in terms of a geography of art, however, raises potential pitfalls that include nationalist and racialist thinking, assumptions of art's tribal character (*Stammescharakter*), or the notion that style arises from a particular stem or tribe of a people (*Volk*) usually keyed to a specific place.<sup>3</sup> Reanimating the geography of art to examine the nexus of German-Bohemian (and -Moravian, and -Silesian) painting in relation to the largely stylistically defined German tendency known as New Objectivity, seems both necessary and advantageous as long as the racial essentialism that underpinned so many of its mid-twentieth century applications in this region can be avoided. Going forward, scholarship on the art of the ethnic German artists of Czechoslovakia in isolation from the contempo-

rary developments of fellow Czech artists and artists from minority ethnic groups in the First Republic will benefit immensely as it is recast within new art historical accounts that accent the interactions between art and artists from all major ethnic groups in the First Republic.<sup>4</sup>

Considering this problem from another perspective, it would be fair to say that art historians seeking to study “*the creations of the German-speaking visual artists from Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia in the Czechoslovakia of the interwar period*” face another obstacle before they even begin. Namely, canons of art that are elevated in art historiography, international museum circuits, as well as the global art market have almost solely been *national* canons. In other words, those canons have been attained and maintained due to their value in giving representation to a nation state. The artworks by the German-speaking artists of these interlinked regions, however, have been untethered from their function of representing extant regions, territories, or nation states since the close of the Second World War. Lacking legitimate claims to represent a nation state – whether that nation state be their former homeland from which they had been violently expelled in 1945 and 1946 (and barred to them by the postwar Czechoslovak and Polish government), or the new country of their postwar residence – after the Second World War these artists and their artworks were severed from doing the job of representing a nation state. Complicating the degrees of their separations from representing a nation or a national culture, in their host countries they were seldom accepted as natives nor were expellee attitudes toward assimilation homogenous. For these and other reasons, ethnic German artists of pre-War Czechoslovakia and their art have languished in public and art historical consciousness. Put differently, whatever efforts to promote their careers and art were undertaken without the backing of the very states they formerly called home (Czechoslovakia, and to a lesser extent Poland). Exclusion from the activities and discourses involved in building a national art in postwar Czechoslovakia was also harsh toward the few modernist artists among them, for their work or reputations remained tethered to the territorial particularities of the former Czechoslovakia instead of the internationalist upswing for modernism after the war. And finally, many of these ethnic German practitioners of new realist art – whether rightly or wrongly – have been (m)aligned with National Socialist Germany and its cultural and racial policies and programs. This is especially the case when artistic projects had enlisted or contributed to *Volks-tümlichkeit* (populist) or *bodenständige* (indigenous, more at: rooted-in-the soil) claims or visual rhetoric during the run up to the War and during the Protectorate.

Turning to the intersections of German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) art and New Objectivity, which questions and issues are most valuable to revisit? This essay ad-

resses four: 1) How has German-Bohemian art and particularly its realisms been refracted and distorted through decades of interpretation and misinterpretation? 2) Who defined German-Bohemian art in Czechoslovakia and how did those definitions relate to the discourse unleashed by Gustav Hartlaub and Franz Roh’s trail-blazing positions? 3) In what sense were the new realist pictures “modernist,” and what did “modernist” mean for ethnic Germans in interwar Czechoslovakia? 4) And finally, were the new realist artworks produced imagining a public whose expectations for art were bound up with notions and practices of craftsmanship? To put a finer point on this last question: to what extent did expectations about the artistic products of painters and graphic artists hew to those held for designers and craftsmen in local industries and workshops? Asked differently, how (if at all) did artists, as well as craftsmen and artisans in the handicrafts, differentiate themselves from the other?

This essay examines each of these four questions, and elaborates additional related questions as well. In most cases, answers remain elusive and even inadequate, awaiting further empirical research and textual or visual analysis.

1. How was the actually existing German-Bohemian art and particularly discussion attending its realist productions distorted at the time, and how was it distorted again later through decades of wartime and postwar interpretation and misinterpretation? This question derives directly from Christian Fuhrmeister’s recent essay on Nazi art in Germany: *Die (mindestens) doppelte Zurichtung der ‚gewordenen Kunst‘* / (At least ) a double distortion of the ‘art produced.’<sup>5</sup> Following Fuhrmeister’s formulation, this field also needs to reckon with the broad conceptions still held about German-Bohemian (-Moravian and -Silesian) art, and ask whether they are adequate. As with the postwar reception of Nazi art that often remained blind to the extent moderately modernist work was “actually produced” for and under the Third Reich, it is essential to recognize how historiography and international diplomacy overwhelmed the reception of the art and careers of its ethnic German practitioners from Czechoslovakia. For Nazi art, Fuhrmeister defines two phases of distortion, the first being the difference between the “actually produced art” versus what was claimed about it during the Third Reich. The second (longer) phase has been defined by the difference between the “actually produced art” and its decades-long postwar reception. In short, German-Bohemian art too will benefit from clarifying how it was distorted during the 1920s and 1930s, but also through the multiple distorting lenses of the postwar era.

Thanks to the almost encyclopedic *Junge Löwen* book on the ethnic German artists groups and other documentary research publications of the Habáns,<sup>6</sup> we are closer to understanding what Fuhrmeister calls “the actually



1 – Karl Kaschak, **Portrait of the Writer Emil Merker**, 1925. Regensburg, Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie

existing production” of these artists. In Anna Habánová’s 2013 review of the literature and sources she casts the major (negative) factor undermining the postwar reception to have been the loss of these artists’ more or less lifelong creations upon the brutal expulsion of Germans at the end of World War II. She also mentions the postwar bias against realism, but without mentioning the hegemony modernist abstraction achieved in the West during the 1950s and after.<sup>7</sup> But much still remains to be addressed and reconstructed about the careers and reputations of these artists during the

postwar years. And the history of these interrupted careers must be assessed within the contexts of the varied cultural politics of each postwar nation where these ethnic German artists of the First Republic survived, displaced from their homeland. This question might also be framed as: what did the cultural politics of rebuilding a German-Bohemian (or -Moravian, -Silesian) artist-expellee’s career and reputation entail after the Second World War? In which countries and places could one publically speak of the loss of one’s ethnic German homeland in the former First Czechoslovak



Republic, or was such an identity better suppressed in the public realm? In short, what were the politics attending efforts to rehabilitate the artist's career of a Bohemian, Moravian, or Silesian of German ethnicity elsewhere? Further evidence might be culled by consulting scattered postwar sales records about the trajectories of these artists. In short, comparative studies of artists' postwar careers and voices that either fell into silence or emerged into the limelight of various publics after the Second World War would be illuminating. Along these lines it should be recalled that many of these accounts will necessarily reckon with trauma, oppression, loss, and suppression, as with much historical work on so many others in mid-twentieth century Europe and its artworld who suffered. Coming to terms with the long occluded memories, stories, histories, and bodies of artwork will also begin to reintegrate their stations within art history.

2. Which voices in Czechoslovakia defined German-Bohemian art, and how did this discourse relate to that of Hartlaub and Roh's? Well-known by now are the endeavors of the curator-director Gustav Hartlaub and art historian-critic Franz Roh in establishing the terminology, with somewhat different meanings, that defined New Objectivity for painting in Germany around 1924–1926.<sup>8</sup> Their efforts developed in the aftermath of the public discussion of emerging new realisms as early as 1919 in the pages of Paul Westheim's *Das Kunstblatt*. The obvious question for our concerns is who championed New Objectivity in Czechoslovakia, and how did those writers' definitions of this new movement – purported, for example, to supersede Expressionism and abstraction, and turn toward classicism or socially critical or cynical verism – emulate or depart from the foundational texts published in Germany by these and other German art historians, critics, and artists? In short, what discursive criteria – if any – were developed for a new kind of pictorial representation called New Objectivity in Czechoslovakia? To begin to answer this question, identification and compilation of texts published in German and Czech in the First Republic addressing New Objectivity is still needed.

One of the most basic questions to ask of artworks resembling German New Objectivity is whether the new realist paintings or drawings of the German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) artists of the twenties and thirties fit the rubric “New Objectivity” at all? Or, do they instead continue well-rehearsed codes dating back to the mid-nineteenth century? When the work of Erwin Müller, Paul Gebauer, or Ernst Neuschul is considered, or for that matter the figurative canvases of Karl Kaschak, [Fig. 1] Oskar Just, [Fig. 2] Roman Dressler, or Herbert Seemann,<sup>9</sup> how are we certain each was not repeating or continuing the realisms of the nineteenth century instead of complying with the practice of New Objectivity that may be understood as a knowing or deliberate overloading of mimetic codes?

And how are we to recognize paintings or drawings that appropriate or cite elements from photography or photo-based imagery? And in the case of Neuschul in the 1930s, to what degree is New Objectivity in play if his paintings are reworking the pictorial formulas of recent Socialist Realist painting. [Fig. 3]

An additional, but thorny question, first raised and popularized by Benjamin Buchloh in the early 1980s, is what relationship, if any, does the emergence of new realisms during the 1920s involve a turning away from the experiments of the avant-garde, and instead lay the groundwork for German National Socialism that also rejected Expressionism and abstraction in favor of life-like pictures, however idealized?<sup>10</sup> Examination of the work and career trajectories of German-Bohemian painters provides an opening to consider and perhaps correct the misunderstood generalizations about the proximity of New Objectivity with German National Socialist art.

One final advantage the study of German-Bohemian art offers, is to test the transnational character of New Objectivity typically considered exclusively German. In this respect, and following my recent Los Angeles County Museum of art essay on the transnational character of New Objectivity, one should recall that in addition to artists exhibiting across the Czech-German border, there were German-Bohemian art students, as well as students from completely different countries, who studied with recognized German practitioners of New Objectivity, and moved between Czech and German lands between the wars.<sup>11</sup>

3. In what ways were new realist paintings of German-Bohemian artists modernist? And what did the modern constitute for German-Bohemians (-Moravians, -Silesians) in interwar Czechoslovakia?

Reflections on the intersections of modernism, avant-garde, and New Objectivity point to several issues when German-Bohemian art and the discourse around it is examined. The nature of the difficulties emerges if one considers the claim made by the Prager Secession in 1929 that these artists were “*der Avantgarde der Heimat*” (the avant-garde of the homeland).<sup>12</sup> Scholarship that accepts this self-serving assertion at face value or otherwise is misguided. One does not have to think long about the range of art produced to recognize that there was no “avant-garde” artistic practice among German-Bohemian artists. Certainly there were numerous diehard modernists: think Maxim Kopf, Mary Durus, Richard Fleissner, Willi Nowak, and several others, most of whom were affiliated with the Prague Secession. But one should hesitate before accepting the claim of the existence of any avant-garde in the German-Bohemian, -Moravian, -Silesian orbit. Definitions of avant-garde have always included some sense of being ahead of the tastes of the masses. Definitions of the historical avant-garde also include artist-practitioners opening up pipelines of communication or brokering channels



2 – Oskar Just, **Portrait of Emmi Prade**, 1926. Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz, Isergebirgsmuseum

of address with audiences who belong to marginalized and/or impoverished groups outside of, but with, the established bourgeoisie and the artworld. Judged by either criteria, the Prague Secession for all of its modernist diversity was not an avant-garde organization.

This question of whether there was an avant-garde among the visual artists of the German-Bohemians was also

raised, although not explored, by Anna Habánová when she cleverly adapted the question asked by Pavel Liška of Prague-German and German-Jewish architects to apply to visual artists, asking “*Waren die deutschsprachigen bildenden Künstler der jungen, Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts geborenen Generation aber wirklich alle konservativ?*” (“Were the German-speaking visual artists of the end-of-the-19th-century-born



young generation really all conservative?") In reformulating the question, Habánová places all new German-Bohemian art in one of two broad categories, conservative or avant-garde. Were one to plot the range of artistic production of these indigenous ethnic German artists one clearly would see that their production ran the gamut from aesthetically conservative to committed, middle-of-the-road modernist artists, including those of the Prager Secession. Whereas some of the architects discussed by Liška were indeed part of an avant-garde (and international) movement, and several well and not so well known Czech (and foreign) artists in Czechoslovakia by the mid-1920s pursued avant-garde practices (along Dada, Surrealist, and Constructivist lines), these practitioners did not hail from indigenous German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) circles.

Recognition of the extreme scarcity of any avant-garde practice among Bohemian-German visual artists is a crucial preliminary to begin an examination of the locus and status of New Objectivity painting among Bohemian-German visual artists in the Czech lands. This is particularly important, as New Objectivity itself was a critical category that included a range of practices from the aesthetically "conservative" (or "traditional") to the seemingly modern and occasionally timely. Furthermore, such paintings were informed by political or social positions that spanned positions from the political right and the left.

This is especially necessary to stress, if only because the assumption often appears in *Junge Löwen* and elsewhere, that if only more art historical analysis of these artists were conducted, more reconstruction of their group dynamics, more analysis of their artworks' themes and styles, a more progressive modernism, comparable to other post World War I avant-gardes, perhaps the likes of Duchamp, Moholy-Nagy, Rodchenko, Kandinsky, Hannah Höch, Devětsil, Toyen, Teige, Dada, Surrealism, etc. would be revealed. Moreover, a further assumption appears to subtend such claims, namely that the field of German-Bohemian artistic production will be a better, more highly-regarded one if the artwork, practices and projects of its constituents could be classified as avant-garde. Thus, both claims 1) that there was an avant-garde, perhaps even an avant-garde group (regardless of how one defined "group") of ethnic-German artists between the world wars in the Czech lands, as well as 2) the assumption that the art historical project of reanimating such an (absent) avant-garde practice makes the field of German-Bohemian art in the twenty-first century a more attractive or worthy one to be studied, need to be dismissed. When approaching New Objectivity in the Czech lands, challenging and dispelling this very assumption is crucial.

3 – Ernest Neuschul, **Unemployed**, 1931. Moscow, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

Like others before her, Habánová has also distinguished between the occasional modernisms of German-Bohemian artists and notes the hegemony of artistic dialogues with modern French art. She adds the important point that interpretation of German-Bohemian art would also benefit from understanding the web of connections it held with modernist art from Germany, Italy, and Austria.<sup>13</sup> As key as these nationally-differentiated transmissions may be, connecting them may not reveal much about the nature of the modernism of these artworks or their ideologies.

A case in point might be to recall an example of the exhibition of Paul Klee whose work occupied a place in the ranks of the avant-garde and who exhibited at the Prague Secession in 1931 as one of the group's numerous solo exhibitions of the work of foreign avant-garde artists. Leaving aside the all-important distinction between the contemporary art of Prague (by Czech and foreign artists), and that of the outlying regions, one still must ask who among the German-Bohemian artists practiced anything like Klee's (or for that matter any of the above listed avant-garde artists)? It is helpful to acknowledge that throughout the twenties and thirties none of them did. With that in mind, let us recall Klee's often-cited statement in his famous Jena speech of 1924: "*Uns trägt kein Volk.*" ("We are not sustained by a people.") The closing claim of his speech registered the frustration he and his Bauhaus colleagues had arrived at as they worked to instill progressive art and design appreciation among the regional and national population in Germany. At the same time, ethnic German artists across Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, were less bent on challenging or internationalizing regional or national tastes, but were instead cultivating their and their art's rootedness in a territory and attuning it to the tastes of indigenous people. As pictures by Klee and others in the modernist avant-garde were designated and defamed as *bodenlos* (rootless), there are too few exceptions amid the art of German-Bohemians that were not *bodenständig* (rooted-in-the-soil).



Another equally crippling assumption held about German-Bohemian art (one reigning in many leading art museums today worldwide) is to entirely dismiss it as a regionally distinctive variant of *völkisch* (folk or popular) art. While the production of the German-Bohemian artists was never in alignment with the radical fringes of Weimar modernisms or the international avant-gardes, many of its practitioners were stylistically modern and contemporary in their own way. After all, such moderate modernisms were widespread fare in modern art galleries from New York to Vienna during the interwar years, and there were, as noted, robust ethnic German contingents of moderate modernists in interwar Czechoslovakia.

The legacy of modernism in the West owes much to the institutionalization of the modernist avant-gardes (i.e. Museum of Modern Art, documenta, etc.) and the maintenance of exclusive definitions of modernism well into the 1970s. Documenta in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1955 cultivated another definition of exclusive, international modernism that neglected the former modernisms of the Federal Republic of Germany's expelled neighbors immediately across the then tightening Iron Curtain. During the long Cold War, little appetite existed for the complexities of careers like those of Mary Duras or Maxim Kopf, and even less for a painter the likes of Franz Gruss, Paul Gebauer, Karl Wagner, or Franz Hartl. In that political culture, which throughout the fifties increasingly reserved the highest claims for non-objective abstraction,

German-Bohemian art and artists were largely suppressed and silenced.

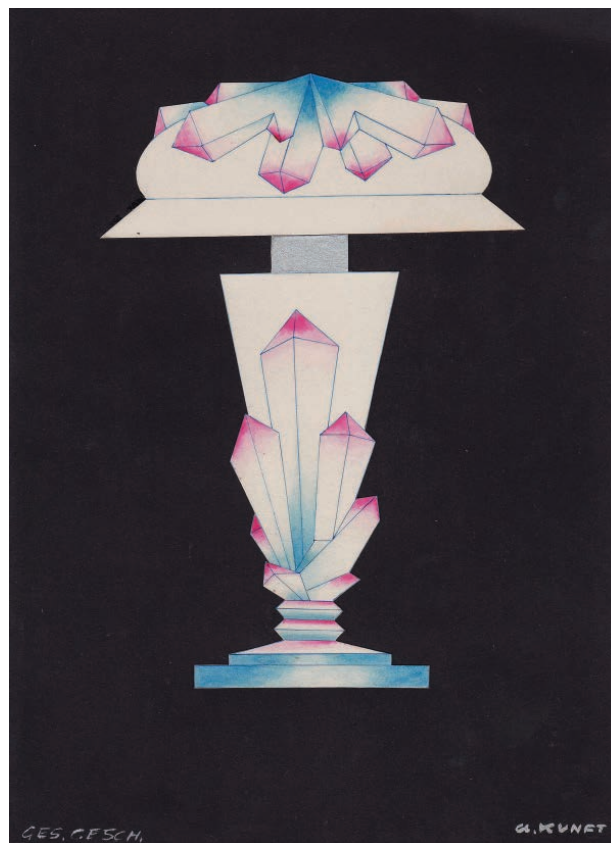
4. The last big question I have of German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) art with bearing on its new realisms is the relationship of pictorial practices, i.e. painting, drawing, and printmaking, to craftsmanship? Craftsmanship was (and remains) loaded with a myriad of cultural and economic values. These values include national and regional pride, values particularly strong in the regional territories of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The economic stakes in the German dominated artisanal industries of the border regions were sharply elevated in public consciousness amid the deteriorating economy unleashed with the economic crisis of late 1929.

Consider the 1926 painting *Glashütte Květná* [Glass Factory Květná] by Alfred Kunft. [Fig. 4] The dynamic and colorful composition depicts the interior of a glass workshop, with eight male glass workers each on task at their stations that encircle a furnace. Light streams in from two elevated windows, one well above the wooden roof beams, bathing the interior space in a cathedral-like light. Labor is shown as a harmonious, coordinated, human activity with each worker absorbed in a stage of the glass manufacturing process. Crystalline deformations of the composition enhance both the modernist (vaguely cubist) and spiritual, almost sacral character of the depicted workplace in which each figure and object is clearly delineated.

Alfred Kunft was no disinterested observer of factory work in the Moravian or Bohemian glass industry. He was a designer of modernist, cut glassware, and received awards for same at the 1925 Paris exhibition. [Fig. 5] A founding member of the most forward regional German artists group, the *Oktobergruppe* (1922–1930?),<sup>14</sup> Kunft's design practice was embedded in Czechoslovakia's regional economies of production, exhibition, and distribution. In Kunft's canvas light breaking in from the outside world literally illuminates the finely tuned laboring male bodies. In the modern Czech art glass industry after World War I, the Květná workshop (founded in 1794) was perhaps only second to Riedl where Kunft had also been employed from 1925–1928 at their Polaun factory (near Gablonz, Northern Bohemia). In picturing one of Czechoslovakia's most storied art glass fabrication operations – the Glassworks Květná was renowned for mouth-blown crystal and since the 1890s for etched glass and modernist designs and modern processes – Kunft's painting pays homage to the artisanal production of Květná, and to the marriage of tradition and modernist design impulses that then characterized the Květná works and its operation.<sup>15</sup> It is curious that Kunft went out of his way to reference not his own Northern Bohemian locale, rather the historical Květná factory in Strání at the southeastern edge of Moravia on the Slovakian border. This affirmative representation of it opens

4 – Alfred Kunft, *Glassworks Květná*, 1926. Regional Gallery Liberec





5 – Alfred Kufthür, **Designs for Glass Products**. State Chateau Velké Březno, National Heritage Institute

his provincial, modernist pictorial practice onto the larger world. Hardly a disinterested commemoration, this monumental canvas marries the regional modernism of Kufthür's own collaborative professionalism in the *Oktobergruppe* and *Metznerbund* with the flourishing of collaborative labor in this internationally renowned factory for modern glassware and luxury goods.

Thinking about Kufthür's picture along these lines gives way to at least two distinct avenues of investigation. First, we might ask to what degree German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) artists emulated the studio practices, studio arrangements of crafts practitioners (furniture production, musical instrument manufacture, ceramics, glass, book-design, etc.)? While documentation of such relations may be sparse and even less of actual existing artists' ateliers, representations both visual and textual of the art and design studios of the interwar years may be revealing. Most obviously, these may be found in the illustrated press or in archives with holdings of historical photographs. Secondly, representations of workshops or ateliers may be found in narrative descriptions, published or otherwise. Comparing these visual and narrative representations of artistic work and worksites with those of craftsmen may well illuminate the connections and public expectations for how new re-

alist art, including New Objectivity, was invested (or not) with the highly charged values of craftsmanship.

Such an inquiry may produce additional knowledge regarding the degree to which painters and other visual artists modeled their practices – socially, institutionally, or rhetorically – upon the more established and economically consequential practices of the various handicrafts so renowned in these regions. Such crafts-based practices were pillars of regional economies and the national economy, and also infused with ethical values that pervaded realms beyond those of art and/or design. The relationship is especially apt when considering new realisms and New Objectivity, often characterized by veristic, mimetic pictures involving exceptional eye-hand coordination. Following Richard Sennett who relates professional craftsmanship to the more widespread human value of doing things well, and to established cultures of perfectionism,<sup>16</sup> we do well to ask how such values as *tüchtig* (competent), *fleißig* (industriousness), but also *die Freudlosigkeit* (joylessness) and other qualities specific to New Objectivity derive from a local culture grounded in economies and ethics of craftsmanship. For example, did the grip with which a woodcarver held his chisel, or the muscle memories informing glassblowers' long rehearsed bodily movements, inform the grip on



the pencil or paint brush of an ethnic German artist painting or drawing? Or did the relationship to craftsmanship in the canvases of Kunft and others in Czechoslovakia hew more along the lines of art historian Andrew Hemingway's recent characterization of German-American "Precisionist" painter Stefan Hirsch? "For him [Hirsch], craft skills stood as a principle of quality in a civilization dominated by quantitative values and commercialism."<sup>17</sup> Put differently, did the German-Bohemian (-Moravian, -Silesian) artists of New Objectivity and their critical supporters share in the operations and values of craftsmanship? My formulation of this question betrays my hunch that more often than not the answer was usually yes. That said, the overarching question remains: exactly how were the pictorial arts intertwined across the regions with the handicrafts in the values of craftsmanship? The answer to that question will need to be worked up on a case-by-case basis. Inasmuch as the painters pursued new realist, even New Objectivity practices, finer points will need to be placed upon the scope of pictorial New Objectivity in interwar Czechoslovakia.

In conclusion, from the point of a critical art history of 2018 and beyond, this essay has suggested that the entire range of the production of German-Bohemian, German-Moravian, and German-Silesian artists merits study: from the most politically and pictorially progressive, to the most reactionary and conservative. Yet, as discussed above, the art of ethnic Germans from these regions has run afoul of artworld headwinds that have excluded or privileged certain styles, techniques, genres, and nationalities of artists, over others (i.e. modernism, socialist realism, Sudeten German art, etc.) in favor of a more fulsome inventory of the actually existing (and once extant) bodies of artwork. In 2018, the need remains for a more ample sociology of the art, artists and their artists' associations, one that examines the entire range of aesthetic production, regardless of the politics of the artist or their pictorial aesthetics, in relation to historically changing valuations of their practices. Taking stock and analyzing the intersections and dialogues many of these artists' bodies of work have with German New Objectivity offers but one critical line of inquiry to pursue.

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## Poznámky

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Habánová, Gibt es eine deutschböhmisches Kunst?, in: Anna Habánová (ed.), *Junge Löwen im Käfig: Künstlergruppen der deutschsprachigen bildenden Künstler aus Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (exh. cat.), Liberec 2013, pp. 12–13; "die [...] Schaffen der deutschsprachigen bildenden Künstler aus Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien in der Tschechoslowakei der Zwischenkriegszeit."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*, Chicago 2004, pp. 1–13, 68–106.

<sup>3</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann (note 2), pp. 74–91. Kaufmann offers an astute review of historians of art and architecture who developed these related methodologies. Those from the interwar period include August Grisebach, Alfred Stange, Paul Pieper, Karl Maria von Swoboda, Wilhelm Pinder, Hans Weigert, Erich Bachmann, Heinrich Gerhart Franz, and Dagobert Frey.

<sup>4</sup> This more diverse, less isolationist approach informed the earlier art historical projects: Hana Rousová, *Lücken in der Geschichte 1890–1938 Polemischer Geist Mitteleuropas – Deutsche, Juden, Tschechen* (e), Prag – Regensburg 1994; and Jana Brabcová (ed.), *Lücken in der Geschichte Almanach der Beiträge aus den Symposien der Gesellschaft für Tschechische und Deutsche Kunst und Kunstgeschichte die in den Jahren 2004–2009 im Rahmen des Festivals Mitte Europa in der Eger stattgefunden haben*, Eger 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Fuhrmeister, Die (mindestens) doppelte Zurichtung der 'gewordenen Kunst', in: *Artige Kunst Kunst und Politik im Nationalsozialismus. Compliant Art and Politics in the National Socialist Era* (exh. cat.), Bielefeld 2017, pp. 103–117.

<sup>6</sup> Most recently, see Anna Habánová, *Dějiny Uměleckého Spolku Metznerbund. Die Geschichte des Kunstvereins Metznerbund 1920–1945* (exh. cat.), Liberec 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Habánová (note 1), pp. 15–16.

<sup>8</sup> Most recently these have been reexamined by Stephanie Barron and Sabine Eckmann (edd.), *New Objectivity. Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic 1919–1933* (exh. cat.), Los Angeles 2015). On this topic, see Stephanie Barron, *New Objectivity: German Realism after Expressionism*, pp. 15–26; and Christian Fuhrmeister, Hartlaub and Roh: Cooperation and Competition in Popularizing New Objectivity, pp. 41–50.

<sup>9</sup> For reproductions of such paintings, see Habánová, (note 6), pp. 242–245.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression: Notes on the Return of Representation in European Painting, *October* 16, Spring 1981, pp. 39–68.

<sup>11</sup> Keith Holz, German New Objectivity Painting and its Nationalist Baggage, in: Barron – Eckmann (note 8), pp. 90–103.

<sup>12</sup> *Prager Sezession, III Ausstellung Der Vereinigung Bildender Künstler Prager Sezession 1929*, p. 10. Discussions of this group are found in: Keith Holz, *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague and London: Resistance and Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*, Ann Arbor 2004, pp. 71–72, 301; and in: Ivo Habán, *Prager Sezession: Ein deutscher Traum im multikulturellen Prag*, in: Habánová, *Junge Löwen* (note 1), pp. 118–151.

<sup>13</sup> *Prager Sezession 1929* (note 11), p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Habánová, Die Oktobergruppe, in: Habánová, *Junge Löwen* (note 1), pp. 80–93.

<sup>15</sup> Glassworks Květná, <http://www.crystalite.org/about-us/>, accessed 23 December 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New Haven 2008, and Fiona MacCarthy, (review) *The Guardian*, 8 February 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Hemingway, *The Mysticism of Money. Precisionist Painting and Machine Age America*, Pittsburgh 2013, p. 61.

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## RÉSUMÉ

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### Otázky německočeského umění a nová věcnost

Keith Holz

Studie apeluje na historiky umění, aby pokračovali ve zkoumání širokého spektra umělecké produkce německočeských, německomoravských a německoslezských umělců: od těch umělecky a politicky progresivních až k těm nejvíce tradičním a konzervativním. Esej upozorňuje na to, že umění německého etnika a umělci z těchto regionů narazili na „protivítr“ v poválečném uměleckém světě, tj. setkali se s estetickými hodnotami, které vylučovaly určité styly, techniky, žánry a národnosti umělců, zatímco privilegovaly jiné (tj. modernismus, socialistický realismus, sudetoněmecké umění atd.). Dnes je zapotřebí mnohem rozsáhlejší a vyváženější sociologie umění, umělců a uměleckého společenství, která bude brát v potaz rozsah zájmů umělců nebo jejich obrazovou estetiku, a navíc bude schopná zasadit je do rámcového kontextu historicky se proměňujících hodnot těchto praktik. V této souvislosti jsou považovány střety a dialogy mnoha děl těchto umělců s německou novou věcností za hlavní linii výzkumu.

Po přezkoumání historiografických otázek, které se objevují v souvislosti s malbou německé nové věcnosti a s vizuálním uměním německých umělců v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku, tato esej navrhuje využít takové způsoby bádání, které by prozkoumaly tyto vzájemné vztahy podrobněji. Mimochodem ještě k nové věcnosti – ptá se, kdo definoval obrazové praktiky Němců v Československu a jak se tyto definice vztahují k diskurzu vytvořenému Gustavem Hartlaubem a průkopnickému postavení Franze Roha v Německu. Také nabádá k tomu, aby se více vymezila definice obrazů nového realismu vytvořených Němci jako „modernistických“ či „avantgardních“ v meziválečném československém prostředí. Nakonec studie nabízí příklad toho, jak mohly být obrazy nového realismu vnímány, a to jako artefakty vyvolávající u diváků očekávání toho, že budou zakořeněny v místních teoriích a v řemeslné praxi vysoce respektovaného designového průmyslu. A do jaké míry se německočeští (-moravští, -slezští) umělci nové věcnosti a jejich kritičtí stoupenci podíleli na provozování a hodnotách řemesla? Za tímto účelem se esej zabývá malbou ve sklářské huti Květná (1926) od malíře a návrháře skla Alfreda Kunfta. Analýza naznačuje možné kroky vedoucí k zohlednění toho, zdali umění nového realismu – včetně nové věcnosti – bylo (nebo nebylo) povýšeno díky vysoce ceněnému řemeslu.

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*Snímky:* 1 – Karl Kaschak, **Portrét spisovatele Emila Merкера**, 1925. Řezno, Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie; 2 – Oskar Just, **Portrét Emmi Pradeové**, 1926. Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz, Isergebirgsmuseum; 3 – Ernest Neuschul, **Nezaměstnaný**, 1931. Moskva, Státní muzeum výtvarných umění Alexandra Sergejeviče Puškina; 4 – Alfred Kunft, **Sklářská huť Květná**, 1926. Liberec, Oblastní galerie; 5 – Alfred Kunft, **návrhy skleněných výrobků**. Národní památkový ústav, Územní památková správa v Praze