

# Gabriele Münter





“You have  
probably understood  
that I had always  
been mainly  
a plein-air painter . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Out and About:  
Landscapes and Outdoor Scenes

## Out and About: Landscapes and Outdoor Scenes

“The language of nature is different from the language of art. Only by translating, not by copying, can you get from one language to the other. In addition to literal and loose translation, rewriting is also a legitimate form.”<sup>2</sup> As can be inferred from this programmatic quote, Gabriele Münter’s own concern as an artist was always to find a fitting artistic transcription of nature.<sup>3</sup>

Landscapes and outdoor scenes occupied an important place in her painted oeuvre from the very start. Even early on, they predominated over all other subjects and apparently so inspired Münter that they account for the majority of her paintings.

Her earliest dated painting is a landscape. Titled *Bavarian Landscape*, it was painted in the summer of 1902 during a visit to Kochel with Kandinsky’s painting class from the Phalanx School.<sup>4</sup> The class spent the following summer in Kallmünz in the Upper Palatinate, where Münter painted for the most part small, atmospheric reproductions of the countryside. <sup>Cat. 36</sup> The love affair that by then was developing between her and Kandinsky was complicated by the fact that Kandinsky had already married his cousin, Anja Shemiakina, who had accompanied him to Munich. In May 1904, therefore, anxious to flee this fraught situation, the artists embarked on a series of journeys that would last four years. They first spent four weeks in Holland, where Münter did more drawing than painting. The few paintings with Dutch motifs she did produce were in fact executed in her studio back in Germany after sketches made in situ. <sup>Cat. 39; 40</sup> Münter did not paint much in Tunisia either: although the couple was there from December 25, 1904, to April 5, 1905, she produced only some twenty-five paintings—compared with numerous photographs (about 180 of which have survived) and sketches.<sup>5</sup> Alongside coastal landscapes and views of vast plains dotted with isolated houses, Münter also liked to paint and photograph the narrow lanes and stone arches of Tunisia’s cities.

The artists’ next extended stay was in Rapallo, a little town on the Ligurian coast where they took lodgings in late 1905. There Münter created some twenty paintings of the coast, the beach with boats, and the harbors of Rapallo and neighboring villages. By May 1906 she and Kandinsky were on the road again, this time headed for Paris, where they remained for a whole year. While Kandinsky lived as a recluse in the suburb of Sèvres, Münter rented a room in the bohemian quarter of Montparnasse and there attended a drawing course at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière.<sup>6</sup> Engaging with printmaking was especially important to her during this period, <sup>Fig. A</sup> although she did do some painting as well. We know of some seventy paintings showing the park of Saint-Cloud at various times of the year, as well as countless street scenes of Sèvres and the neighboring suburb of Bellevue with its bourgeois villas.

The painting *In Sèvres (Street in Bellevue)* is a harmonious composition of just a few colors—brown, gray, yellow, green, and blue—which between them convey the soft light of Paris most effectively. <sup>Cat. 51</sup> The park of Saint-Cloud was also the subject of some of the photographs—few in number—that Münter took during her stay in the French capital. The motif of one of them recurs in the oil painting *Park of Saint-Cloud (Etude n°3)*: a view of Paris from the park of Saint-Cloud with the Eiffel Tower just visible in the background. <sup>Figs. B; C</sup> This raises the question of whether Münter perhaps painted it after the photograph. But since the photograph is black and white, and thus would have provided no information about colors, this seems unlikely. It is possible that the artist frequently went for walks in the park of Saint-Cloud—which is very close to Sèvres—and that she chose this motif for both photographs and paintings produced on various days. We know that she had adopted a similar working method during her stay in Kallmünz in 1903.<sup>7</sup>

The Paris paintings are the first to feature the deliberate and extensive use of little dabs of ultramarine, a color that was very important to Münter and

1 Roditi 1960, p. 148.

2 Translated from Gabriele Münter, undated note, MES.

3 Münter sometimes used the term “nature” to mean not just the world of nature but also reality itself.

4 See the chapter “Pre-Painting: Münter’s Early Work,” fig. D, p. 18.

5 A selection of these was exhibited and published in exh. cat. Munich 2007.

6 Isabelle Jansen, “Gabriele Münter in Paris 1906 bis 1907,” in exh. cat. Munich/Bonn/Murnau 2000/01, pp. 39–47.

7 Isabelle Jansen, “Fotografieren oder Malen? Das Wechselspiel zwischen Fotografie und Malerei im Frühwerk von Gabriele Münter,” in exh. cat. Kochel am See 2015, p. 150.

8 Our exhibition features two of these paintings: *The Park of Saint-Cloud (Etude n°3)* and *View from the Window in Sèvres*, Cat. 50; 52.

9 Translated from “Murnau und ich,” handwritten manuscript by Gabriele Münter, Schlossmuseum Murnau, inv. no. 10462.

would henceforth be present in all her paintings. She must have been satisfied with the results of her work, since she decided to submit six paintings to the Salon des Indépendants in the spring of 1907.<sup>8</sup> This event meant a great deal to her, as it was the first time that she had presented her works in public at all.

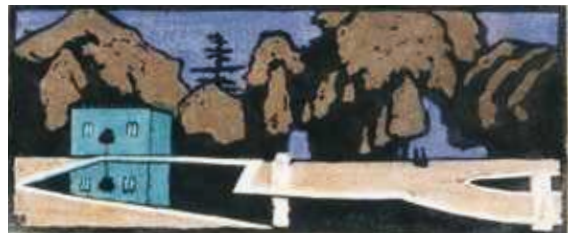
The paintings that Münter created while traveling, starting with the landscapes from Kallmünz, are stylistically similar: all are *impastos* done in Late Impressionist style, while the canvases themselves are generally small (the format of 16 by 25 centimeters being especially common) and often mounted on cardboard by the artist herself.

The year 1908 marked the end of Kandinsky's and Münter's wanderings. They decided to settle down permanently, and it was during their search for a suitable place that they chanced upon the little market town of Murnau on the Staffelsee Lake. While Kandinsky had been there before, in 1904, it was Münter's first visit. Much later, in 1957, she described how captivated she had been right from the start: "I first set foot [in Murnau] during a three-day excursion from Munich to Lake Starnberg and the Staffelsee Lake in June 1908, and was instantly enchanted. The preceding years had taken me to Holland, Tunisia, Saxony, Belgium, the French Riviera, Paris, Switzerland, Berlin, and the Merano region. But nowhere had I seen such an abundance of fine views all in the one place as here in Murnau, between lake and highlands, between rolling hills and moor."<sup>9</sup>

Münter and Kandinsky visited Murnau again in August 1908, spending several weeks there together with Alexej von Jawlensky (1864–1941) and

**A Parc Saint-Cloud, 1907**

Presumably a colored linoleum cut on Japan paper, approx. 12.2 × 26.3 cm | Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München, inv. no. GMS 828



**B Park Terrace of Saint-Cloud, View of Paris, ca. 1906**

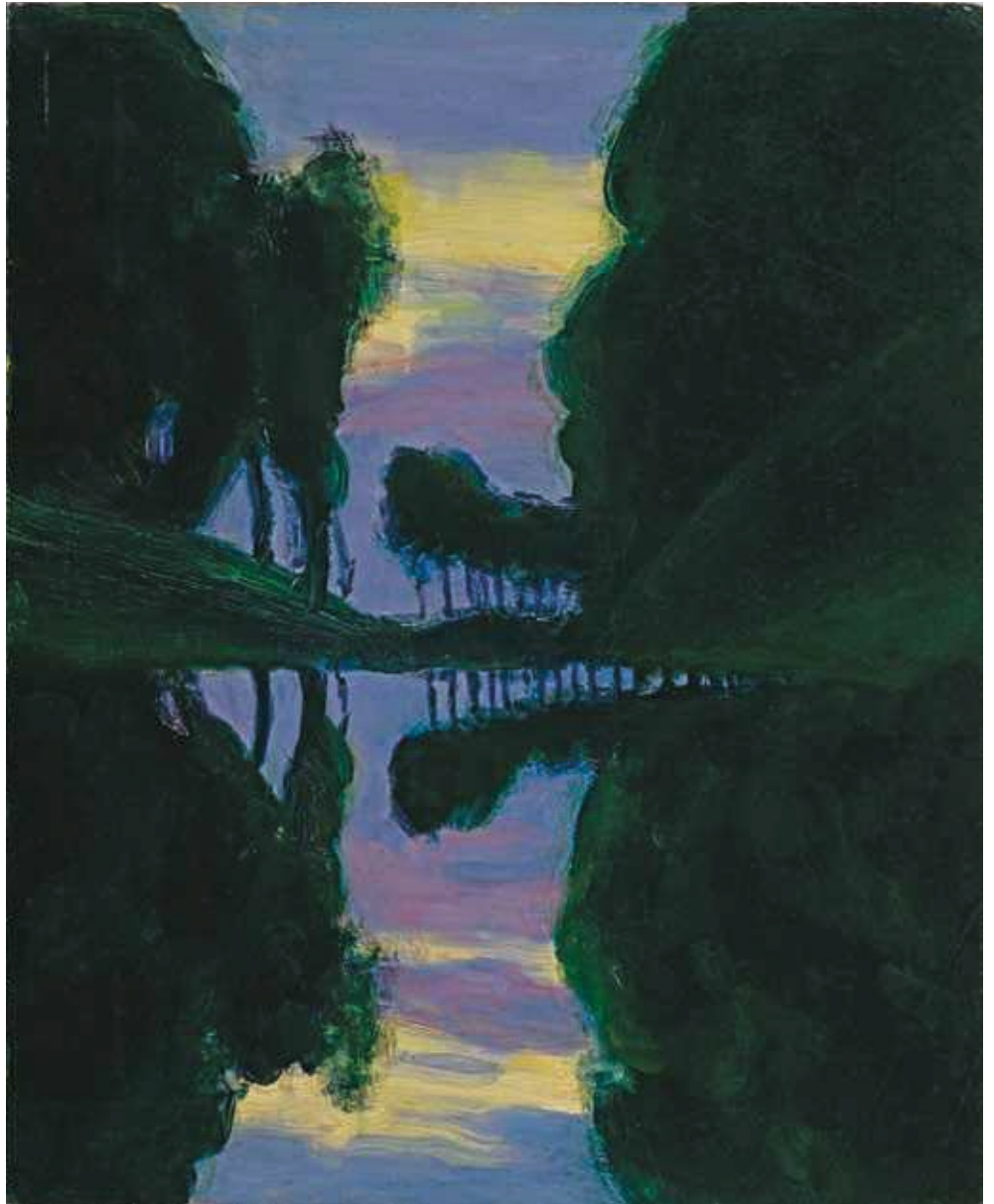
Photograph by Gabriele Münter | Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. 2822



**C Park of Saint-Cloud (Etude n°3) [Park von Saint-Cloud (Etude n°3)], 1906**

Oil on canvas, mounted on cardboard, 22.2 × 34 cm | Private collection





Cat. 39  
**Holland (Edam), 1904**  
Cardboard, 27 × 22 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 440



Cat. 40

**Holland, 1904**

Cardboard, 26.2 × 17.7 cm |

Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 444



Cat. 55  
**From the Griesbräu Window**  
**[Vom Griesbräu-Fenster], 1908**

Cardboard, 33 × 40.1 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 142





Cat. 56

**View from the Griesbräu  
Window [Aussicht vom  
Griesbräu-Fenster], 1908**

Cardboard, 41 × 33 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. P 78Rs



Cat. 77  
**Surburban Houses with  
Baroque Church (Ramersdorf:  
Scheubner-Richterstraße)  
[Vorstadthäuser mit Barock-  
kirche (Ramersdorf.  
Scheubner-Richterstraße)],  
1936**

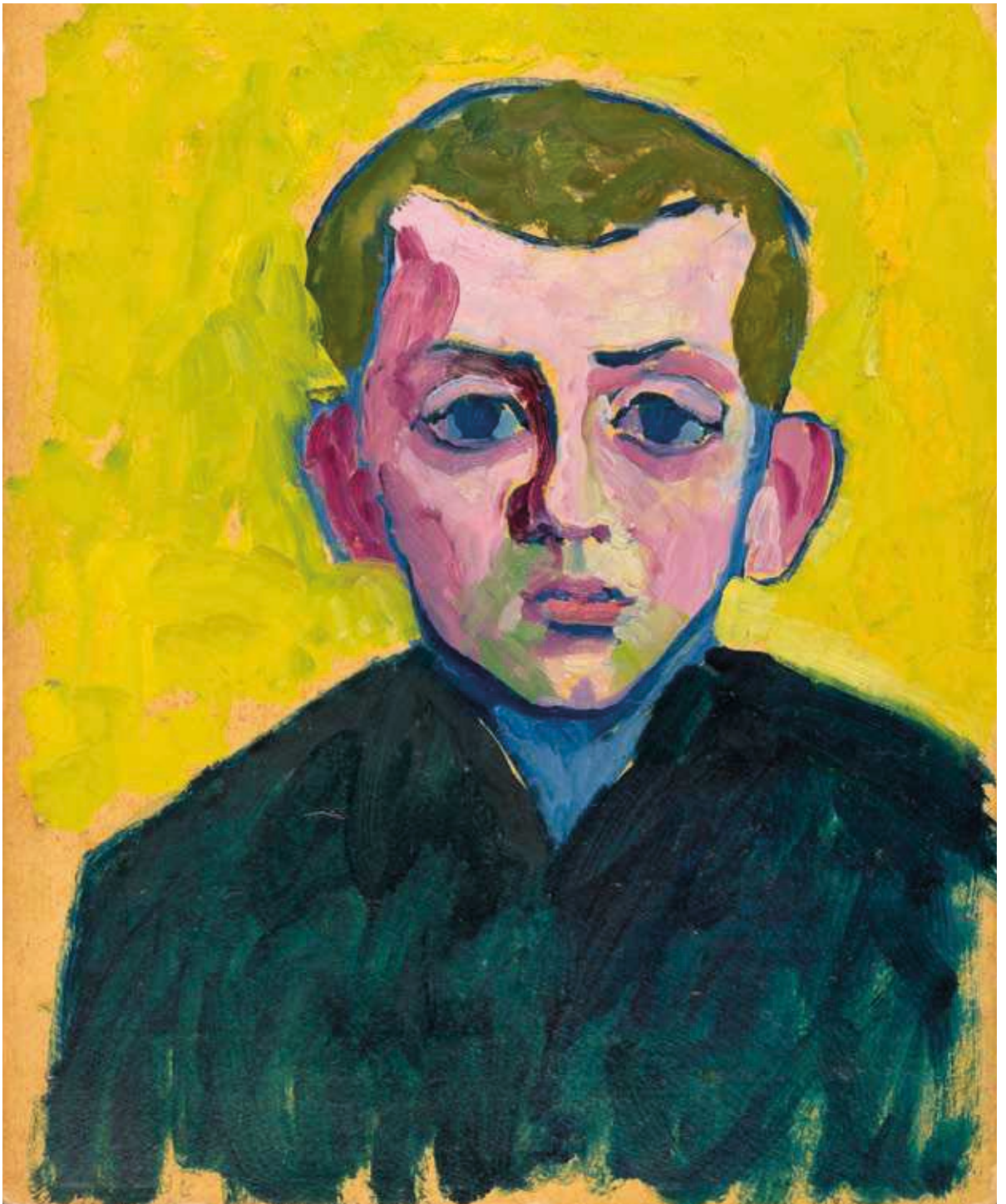
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 41 cm |  
Galerie Ludorf, Düsseldorf



Cat. 78

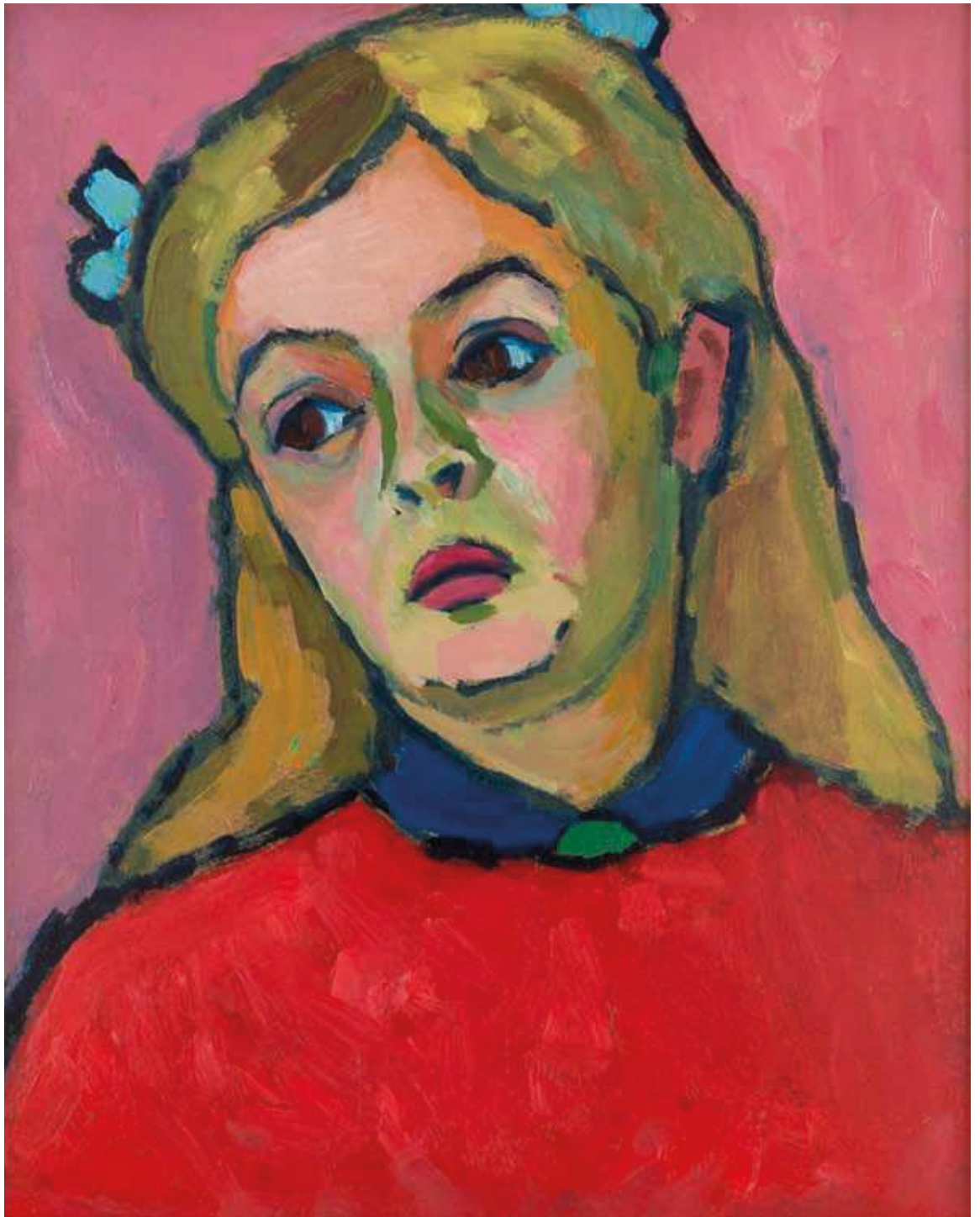
**Miss Ellen on the Grass  
[Fräulein Ellen im Gras], 1934**

Textile support, 47.5 × 65 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. V 96



Cat. 90  
**Head of a Young Boy**  
**(Willi Blab) [Knabenkopf**  
**(Willi Blab)], 1908**

Cardboard, 39.8 × 33.1 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. P 99



Cat. 91  
**Head of a Young Girl**  
**[Mädchenbildnis], 1908**

Oil on board, 40.6 × 33 cm |  
Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (USA).  
Mildred M. Bohen Collection,  
inv. no. 1983.11



Cat. 106  
**Still Life on the Tram  
(After Shopping)**  
[**Stilleben in der Trambahn  
(Nach dem Einkauf)**], ca. 1912

Cardboard, 50.2 × 34.3 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. S 44



Cat. 107  
**The Blue Blouse (Mrs. Oscar  
Olson) [Die blaue Bluse  
(Frau Oscar Olson)], 1917**

Textile support, 40.7 × 54.9 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. P182



Cat. 120  
**Holy Spirit dove, southern  
 Germany, mid-19th century**

From Münter's and Kandinsky's collection  
 Softwood, colored, diameter: max. 36 cm,  
 D: 8 cm | Gabriele Münter- und Johannes  
 Eichner-Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. D 19



Cat. 121  
**"Kasperltheater"  
 (puppet theater) from the  
 Erzgebirge region, ca. 1900**

From Münter's and Kandinsky's collection  
 Softwood, colored, H: 9 cm, W: 7.9 cm,  
 D: 3.2 cm | Gabriele Münter- und Johannes  
 Eichner-Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. HP 45





Cat. 122

**Pentecost Still Life**  
**[Stilleben Pfingsten], 1934**

Cardboard, 38.1 × 46.2 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. S 50



Cat. 168, 169, 170, and 171

**Aurélié, 1906**

1 linoleum cut on machine paper,  
19 × 17.9 cm, inv. no. GMS 791

3 colored linoleum cuts on Japan paper,  
inv. no. GMS 792: 21 × 18.9 cm, inv. no.

GMS 793: 18.7 × 17 cm, inv. no. GMS 794:

18.7 × 17 cm | Städtische Galerie im  
Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München





Cat. 172  
**Kandinsky and Erma Bossi**  
**[Kandinsky und Erma Bossi],**  
**ca. 1910**

Oil on cardboard, 48.9 × 70.5 cm | Princeton University Art Museum. In loving memory of Frank and Peggy Taplin, inv. no. 2012-21



Cat. 173  
**Kandinsky and Erma Bossi  
at the Table (After the Meal)**  
**[Kandinsky und Erma Bossi  
am Tisch (Nach Tisch)], 1912**

Textile support, 94.6 × 125 cm |  
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und  
Kunstbau München, inv. no. GMS 780



Cat. 180

**Woman in Thought II  
[Sinnende II], 1928**

Textile support, 95 × 65 cm | Gabriele  
Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung,  
Munich, inv. no. P 6

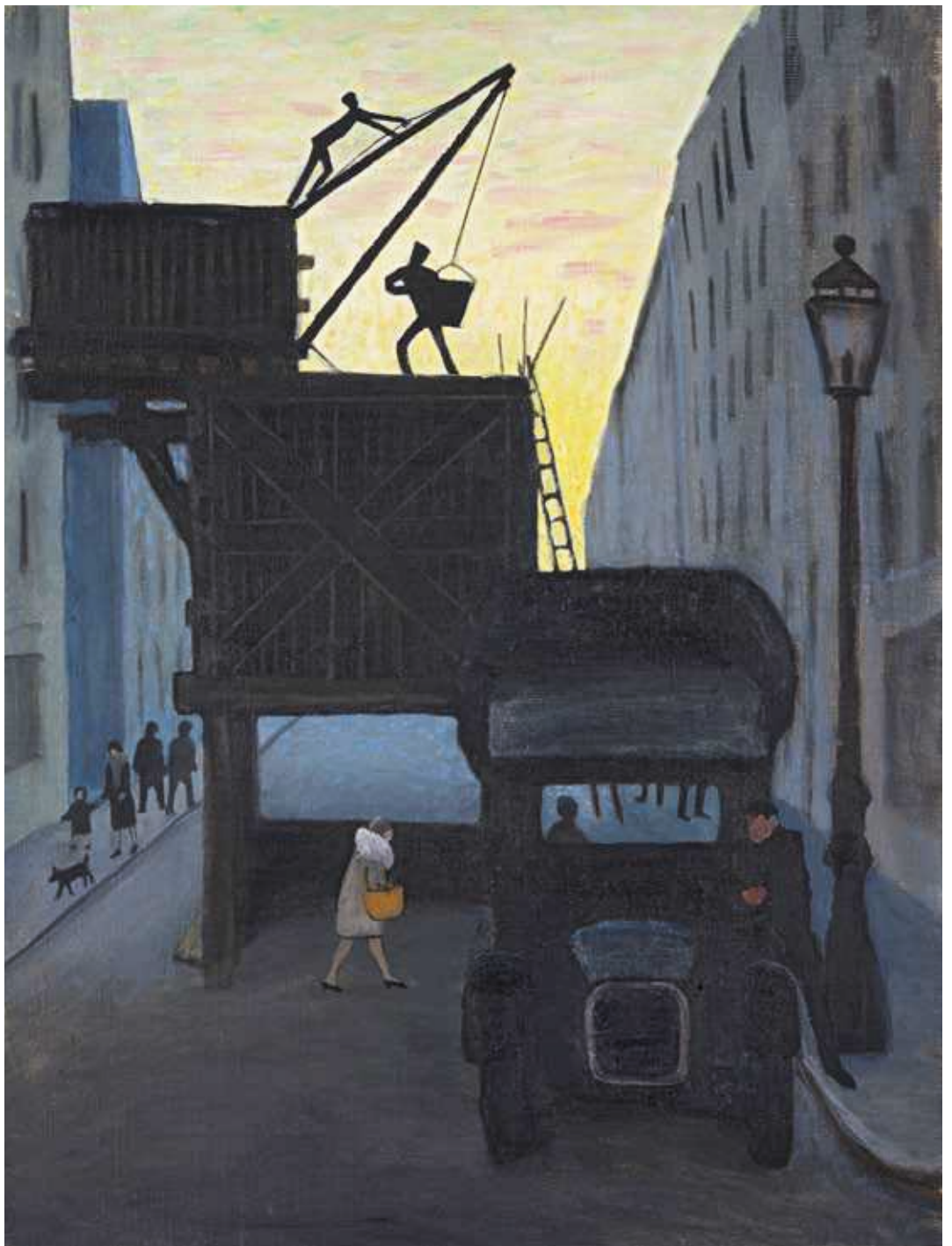


Cat. 181  
**Still Life on a White Tablecloth**  
**[Stilleben auf weißem Tisch-**  
**tuch], ca. 1926–30**

Cardboard, 50 × 70 cm | Gabriele Münter-  
 und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, Munich,  
 inv. no. S 8

Cat. 182  
**Still Life with Books and Fruit**  
**[Stilleben mit Büchern und**  
**Früchten], ca. 1926–30**

Cardboard, 51.2 × 70 cm |  
 Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
 Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. S 7



Cat. 185  
**Scaffolding [Baugerüst], 1930**

Textile support, 61.2 × 46.6 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. V 8





Cat. 186  
**Still Life with Red Salad  
Servers [Stilleben mit  
rotem Besteck], 1930**

Cardboard, 55 × 38.1 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. S 31



Cat. 190  
**Harvest in Upper Bavaria  
(Field Work near Dettendorf) [Ernte in Oberbayern  
(Feldarbeit bei Dettendorf)],  
1942**

Textile support, 60,3 × 73,5 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 19



Cat. 191  
**Study with Three Laborers  
 (Road Workers II) [Studie  
 mit drei Arbeitern (Straßen-  
 arbeiter II)], 1935**

Cardboard, 45.1 × 33.1 cm |  
 Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
 Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 321

Cat. 192  
**Excavation Work  
 [Erdarbeiten], 1935**

Cardboard, 33.1 × 41.1 cm |  
 Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
 Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. V 32

Cat. 193  
**Wall Breakers  
 [Mauerbrecher], 1935**

Cardboard, 45.1 × 33.1 cm |  
 Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
 Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. L 299





Cat. 206  
**With Two White Arrows**  
**[Mit zwei weißen Pfeilen], 1952**

Textile support, 41.6 × 33.5 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. V 121



Cat. 207  
**Abstract (Middle Light Blue,  
Oval) [Abstrakt (Mitte hellblau,  
oval)], 1954**

Cardboard, 44.9 × 32.9 cm |  
Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-  
Stiftung, Munich, inv. no. V 20