

1913 153 Bühnenlandschaft

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The Image as Stage Paul Klee and the Creation of Theatrical Space

Osamu Okuda

"The new theater will once again use masks and stilts. It will reawaken ancient images and require megaphones. Sun and moon will move across the stage, promulgating their sublime wisdom."
Hugo Ball

Paul Klee frequently composed his images as theatrical spaces containing depictions of characters and props. In particular, he employed the curtain as a motif, which lent a theatrical gesture or quality to his pictures. Through the use of specific examples, the following will explain how Klee's notion of the image as stage developed and changed. First, we will focus on the Cubist, theatrical compositions of 1913–14. Second, we will explore the curtain as motif and the many ways Klee used it, even during his later years in exile in Switzerland. We will end with 1939's *Uebermut* (High spirits), since it can be considered the artist's most important theatrical work involving the stage curtain as a theme.

Theatrical Landscape

Klee was known to have created three works, each from different periods, under the title *Bühnenlandschaft* (Stage landscape). The earliest, *Bühnenlandschaft*, 1913, 153 (fig. 1), is less well known than the two later compositions, a painting known as *Bühnenlandschaft*, 1922, 178,¹ and a pastel, *Buehnen-Landschaft*, 1937, 212. Klee drew the first *Bühnenlandschaft* "from the time when he was first turning human figures into abstract puppets."² This theatrical landscape, which contains no human figures, is one of the many drawings Klee composed in a Cubist style in 1913; most of them, *Der Geist auf der Höhe* (The spirit on the heights), 1913, 151, or *Garten der Leidenschaft* (Garden of passion), 1913, 155, for example, also include "abstract puppets."

Most likely behind the whole idea of presenting the Cubist, relief-like landscape in the form of a stage lies Klee's experience with the reforms at the Münchner Künstlertheater (Munich Artists' Theater). On June 23, 1908, the painter attended the opening performance at founder Georg Fuchs's theater: Goethe's *Faust*.³ In the July 1912 issue of the Swiss magazine *Die Alpen*, Klee reported on the cultural scene in Munich, writing euphorically about a performance of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's mystery play, *Jedermann* (Everyman) at the Hoftheater (Court Theater):



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1 Paul Klee
Bühnenlandschaft (Stage landscape),
1913, 153
Pen on paper on cardboard, 5.6 x 7.3 cm
Location unknown

2 Paul Klee
bunte Menschen (Colourful people),
1914, 52
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 20.3 cm
Private collection, USA

3 Paul Klee
Auf dem Dach (On the roof), 1914, 53
Watercolor and pen on paper
on cardboard, 9.5 x 13/14 cm
Kunstmuseum Bern, on permanent
loan from a private collection

“I do not want to miss a rare opportunity to give a satisfactory report about an event at the Hof Schauspiel. Ever since the Künstlertheater’s *Faust*, the powers that be seemed to have been hemmed in by inhibitions.”⁴ This is probably evidence enough that Klee had been following the contemporary theater scene in Munich with great interest—especially the development of the Künstlertheater.

One of the special features at the Künstlertheater was the so-called relief stage: “The entire stage is not as deep as it is wide (about 6 to 10). We don’t want a fourth-wall stage, a panorama; instead, we want the best possible spatial design for human bodies in motion: it will unify them rhythmically and at the same time, encourage sound to move toward the audience. So it is not comparable to the three-dimensional painting, but rather, to the two-dimensional relief.”⁵ Yet another, more important aspect of the relief stage was the active role played by the audience, since the conditions of space on this type of stage were not fixed, as they were with a traditional proscenium theater. Rather, they always had to be supplemented and created by the audience, in an appropriate way: “On the proscenium stage—as in any sort of panorama and panoptic—the eye is deceived and duped; our stage, like any work of art, takes advantage of the creative power of the eye in order to achieve the effect of three-dimensional form and distance.”⁶ Interestingly enough, this concept of the stage is related to Klee’s later ideas; in his essay for Kasimir Edschmid’s anthology *Schöpferische Konfession* (Creative Confession), he wrote the following: “The audience’s essential task is also time oriented. The audience takes in the visuals piece by piece, and in order to be ready for a new piece, it has to abandon the old one.”⁷

The relief stage can be regarded as the theatrical equivalent to the relief in Jugendstil: it aimed for an anti-naturalistic, symbolic, theatrical art. So it is possible that the Künstlertheater, as Peg Weiss proposes, might have influenced Vasily Kandinsky’s concept for his stage composition, *Der gelbe Klang* (The Yellow Sound).⁸ Keeping this in mind, the point of Klee’s *Bühnenlandschaft* might have been that he was attempting to combine that period’s con-

cept of stage design with the latest avant-garde visual language, Cubism; for, after some initial skepticism, Klee (unlike Kandinsky) tried exploring Cubism in 1913, with productive results.

Colorful People

Throughout 1914, Klee continued developing methods of two-dimensional design in Cubist style: this led to a closer relationship between figure and background, as can be seen in the composition *Die hoffnungslosen* (The hopeless ones), 1914, 58. However, an important work in this direction has been completely overlooked in the literature on Klee until now. There is a watercolor, formerly known as *Circus Volk*, which had been part of David Thompson’s famous Klee collection, but due to a missing description, it was labeled “unidentifiable.” In my opinion, however, this watercolor is the same work Klee recorded in his oeuvre catalogue under the title *bunte Menschen* (Colourful people), 1914, 52 (fig. 2).⁹ Since the watercolor has not (yet) been identified with one-hundred-percent certainty, the following analysis must be regarded as a hypothesis for further investigations.

Various semi-human, hard-to-define figures are crowded into a wide, tentlike space. Their warm colors (yellow, orange, and brown) distinguish them from the dark background, which is dominated by blue and green. Since the puzzlelike color surfaces overlap here and there—next to and over each other—it is somewhat difficult to precisely distinguish the figures from the background, in terms of color and shape. A few animal-like, mostly unidentifiable, amorphous creatures are shown either lying around or floating on the right-hand side. The red-headed, demonic figure below seems to be directing, or reacting to, these chaotic constellations of figures. Faced with so much chaos, a yellow figure flees toward the left, where the human figures, in contrast to the right side, seem to stand in clearer relationships to each other.

In order to gain a better understanding of this theatrical composition, we need to consider the historical context of the creative



4 Pablo Picasso
Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.), 1907
Oil on canvas, 245 x 235 cm
The Museum of Modern Art, New York



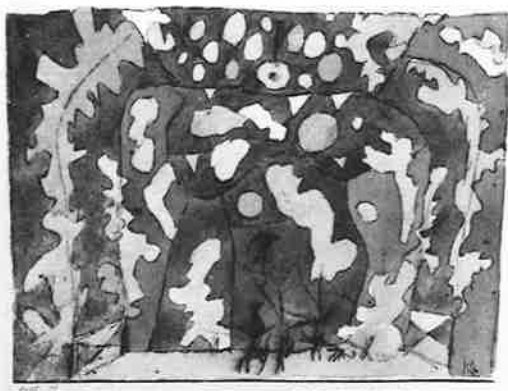
5 Felix Klee's puppet theater, ca. 1924

process. Klee probably painted *bunte Menschen* from May through June of 1914, after his return from Tunisia.¹⁰ In March of the same year, author and dramaturge Hugo Ball created a daring new plan for Munich's Künstlertheater, mentioned above. In an article, published two months later, he wrote, "We need to try something new and productive, no longer a reform, but a break with tradition... We were thinking of a 'theater of new art,' of Expressionism, if you will."¹¹ That meant, "we thought of *The Bacchae* by Euripides, of *The Tempest* by Shakespeare... of *Chiushingura* (a Japanese play), of *Elektra* by Hofmannsthal (set in Haiti or 'Catagonia'), of Kandinsky's *Der gelbe Klang*." According to Ball, Klee—along with Kandinsky, Franz Marc, or Arnold Schoenberg—would be responsible for the sets.¹² After the project for the Künstlertheater failed, Ball planned to publish a collection of texts about the theater, including set designs, under the title *Expressionistisches Theater*. Kandinsky, Marc, Thomas von Hartmann, and others were asked to contribute. According to Ball's 1927 book, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit (Flight Out of Time)*, Klee was supposed to contribute "designs" for *The Bacchae* by Euripides.¹³ Although there is no documentation to prove that Ball and Klee were in contact at this time, it is probable that Ball contacted him after he returned from Tunisia.¹⁴ Klee therefore likely agreed to Ball's idea, although it is not known who suggested the Euripides play.¹⁵ Moreover, in July, just before the outbreak of World War I, Ball conceived six matinees for the Kammerspiele (Studio Theater) in Munich, which he himself would direct. Klee was supposed to work on the "Japanese matinee," which would involve costumes, acrobatics, a lecture by Margarethe Leonore Selenka, music, and other performances.¹⁶ In his diary for 1914, Klee noted: "I would desire to put on a lot of historical theater: I would loosen periods of time from their epochs; it would make laughable confusion."¹⁷ This note implies that he might have worked on Ball's theatrical project. Returning to Euripides' play: *The Bacchae* is based on the arrival of the Asiatic god Dionysus in Greece, and the resistance toward him that arose.¹⁸ The colors in *bunte Menschen*, especially on the left-hand side of Klee's watercolor, are suitable for this story,

since the Bacchae—the followers of Dionysus—also came from the Orient. The chaotic scene on the right-hand side obviously depicts a Dionysian ritual: an animal being torn limb from limb and then eaten in a frenzied orgy of consumption.¹⁹ The ceiling of the tentlike "stage" in *bunte Menschen* recalls Robert Delaunay's proto-Cubist design for the Gothic church space in the series *Saint-Séverin*, 1909–10. Klee was familiar with Delaunay's new way of depicting space through the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition in 1911–12 at the Moderne Galerie Thannhauser in Munich.

Although there is no corresponding scene in *The Bacchae*, Klee's *bunte Menschen* seems to reflect, in terms of composition, the basic thematic of Euripides' piece—that is, the confrontation between Dionysian irrationalism and the rationalism of Pentheus, King of Thebes. Most likely, Klee's use of Cubism's analytical visual language in the orgiastic Dionysian scene on the right is not without irony. Surprisingly enough, the constellation of figures and the intersection of figure and background on the left-hand side recall Pablo Picasso's legendary *Les Femmes d'Alger* (fig. 4). The figure on the left edge of the picture, as well as the figure in the background, lifting the curtain, are special indications that Klee's theatrical composition was inspired by Picasso's painting.²⁰ Klee had been using Cubist technique in various ways since 1913, and at the time he painted *bunte Menschen*, he had a good overview of how Cubism had developed up to that point. For this composition, obviously done in connection with Ball's project, Klee probably found a model in Picasso's earlier, pre-Cubist work—which was just as theatrical—and freely adapted it to fit his own Cubist spatial designs.

Starting in 1916, Klee began looking for more ways to create figure/background relationships inside a space without depth, especially as he worked on building a puppet theater for his son, Felix. Felix later said that the first stage, made in 1916 (which has not survived, nor was it documented in photographs), consisted of little pictures that "were taken from the 'Blaue Reiter.'"²¹ As Christine Hopfengart surmises, "Possibly Klee cut up a copy of the *Der Blaue Reiter* almanac or a subscription advertising



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6 Paul Klee
kleines Bühnenbild (Small stage set),
1916, 11
Pen and watercolor on paper
on cardboard, 15.2 x 17.8 cm
Location unknown

7 Paul Klee
Gestirne über bösen Häusern (Stars
above evil houses), 1916, 79
Watercolor on primed linen
on cardboard, 19/20 x 21.2 / 22.2 cm
Private collection, Switzerland

pamphlet, pasting together his collage from this pictorial material.”²² A 1924 photograph shows us what the puppet theater later made by Felix looked like (fig. 5). About it, Hopfengart writes, “It is interesting to note that Klee used the same elements in his stage setting of the village landscape and in the design of the stage border as he did in the garments of several puppets, namely the patchwork application of pieces of fabric. The stage and figures are thus closely interconnected optically, making it no doubt difficult for the audience to separate the two areas. It can be concluded that Klee saw the puppet theater from his perspective as a painter.”²³

Unlike the situation in 1914, Klee was able to realize some artistic work for the theater—even though it was not public—in the form of the puppet theater he made for his son in 1916. In selecting and putting together the material, he probably remembered his work for Ball’s theater project: more precisely, the “designs” for Euripides’ *The Bacchae*. The watercolor *kleines Bühnenbild* (Small stage set), 1916, 11 (fig. 6), is also probably reminiscent of the theatrical composition *bunte Menschen* from 1914.

The amorphous figures, which were members of the Dionysian cult in that picture, now float, transformed and decorative, in an almost symmetrically constructed, shallow theatrical space.

Curtain I

In 1916, when Klee made his first hand puppets for Felix, he also made the first artificial landscapes with curtains, which hang in folds from the top edges of the images.²⁴ The evening scene in the watercolor *Gestirne über bösen Häusern* (Stars above evil houses), 1916, 79 (fig. 7), is the first example of this kind of stagelike landscape with delicate curtains. In the following year Klee then drew (*Bühnenlandschaftartig*) ([In the manner of a stage landscape]), 1917, 19 (fig. 8), which is definitely a reprise of the 1913 *Bühnenlandschaft* mentioned above, but this time, the wide curtain was pulled up. In his watercolor *Trauerblumen* (Mourning flowers), 1917, 132, dated the same

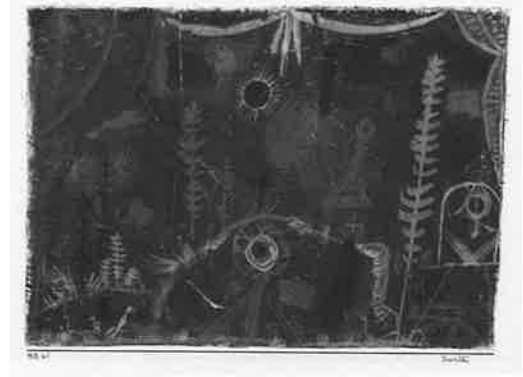
year, Klee used the curtains to create a theatrical “visual puzzle” (Geelhaar). A single tear dripping from an eye is probably the metonym for tragedy. Also, the “mourning flowers” hanging from the stage ceiling above display more or less physiognomic features: the viewer discovers eyes and tears, perhaps also a mouth. The flowers are crying as they look at us, the audience watching the tragedy.²⁵

Among the many compositions from 1918 that feature a curtain, it is easiest to imagine the watercolor *Einsiedelei* (Hermitage), 1918, 61 (fig. 9) as a theatrical set. Referring to the eye as a motif in Klee’s works, Glaesemer wrote: “Above the center of a simply drawn landscape draped with curtains like the wings of a puppet theater hangs a black sun surrounded by a halo of light rays. The dark heavenly body lends to the fairy landscape with its romantically glowing, deep blue colors the brooding appearance of a ‘hermitage.’ At the same time, however, it resembles the eye of some mysterious force of nature.”²⁶ In the meanwhile, Klee had begun using the curtain not only in landscapes, but also for theatrical scenes such as *Theater der Tiere* (Theatre of the animals), 1921, 212 (fig. 10), or *Gruppe aus einem Ballett* (Group of ballet dancers), 1923, 84, as well as for pictures of plants, which were like still lifes, such as *Purpuraster* (Purple aster), 1919, 179, or portraits, like *Adam und Evchen* (Adam and little Eve), 1921, 12, and *Der grosse Kaiser, zum Kampf gerüstet* (The great emperor, armed for battle), 1921, 131 (ill. p. 109). A painting titled *Orakel* (Oracle), 1919, 98 (fig. 11) was his first depiction of figures surrounded by a curtain. A Star of David, a silver moon, a cross, a few trees, and a few other objects can be seen in the background. These are all symbolic, and it is possible to interpret the constellation they form as an “oracle.” Klee was obviously alluding to Marc Chagall’s 1912 painting, formerly known as *On dit* (It is said, fig. 12).²⁷ Chagall’s painting features a rabbi sitting at a table, while on the right-hand side of the wall behind him hangs a Torah curtain with a Star of David; in the upper left corner, a menorah can be seen. The two props are probably there to underscore the rabbi’s authority.²⁸ Instead of Chagall’s rabbi, however, a female figure, most likely

8 Paul Klee
[Bühnenlandschaftartig] [[In the man-
ner of a stage landscape]], 1917, 19
Pencil on paper on cardboard,
19.2 x 14.4 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern



9 Paul Klee
Einsiedelei (Hermitage), 1918, 61
Watercolor and gouache on primed
linen on cardboard, 18.4 x 25.9 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern



a seer or prophet, is the oracle in Klee's picture. Klee turned the menorah into the curtain on the left. The Star of David above the seer no longer symbolizes a real curtain; instead, like the other forms in the background, it is a symbolic manifestation in an indeterminate, mysterious space, whose surrounding curtains make it look like a kind of stage. The image is of a theatrical, oracular place, where things unknown are heralded through symbols. This also transforms the oracle scene into a metaphorical representation of Klee's art—art “as a projection out of the over-dimensional, ancient ground, an allegory for generation, premonition, secret.”²⁹

In 1924, Klee turned the curtain into the theme of his artistic work: for instance, by taking an original composition such as a textile object and then cutting it up into six pieces to make a wide *Wandbild* (Mural), 1924, 128, and five little *Vorhang* (Curtain) pictures, 1924, 129; 129a; 129b; 129c; and 129d.³⁰ Later, Klee actually employed the pattern of a rhythmically structured network of lines taken from these “textile” works as motifs for curtains in paintings such as *Stilleben* (*Töpfe, Frucht, Osterei, Gardinen etc.*) (Still life [pots, fruit, easter egg, curtains etc.]), 1927, 18, and *Attrappen* (Traps), 1927, 295.

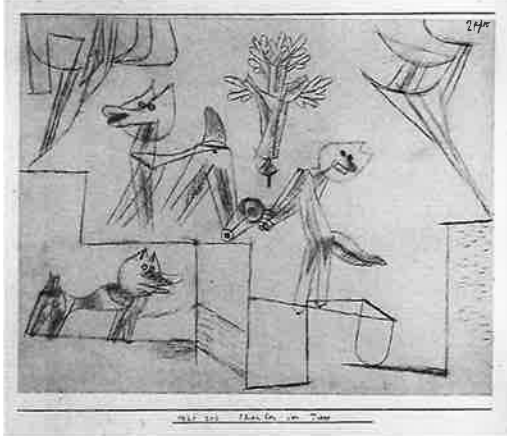
Among his works from the Düsseldorf period (1931–33), the drawing *Haus-Revolution* (House revolution), 1933, 94 (fig. 13) is pertinent to this theme. The revolutionary scene obviously referred to the (cultural) political debates of the spring and summer of 1933, in which the term “(national socialist) revolution” was key. Klee drew curtains above right and left, creating a theatrical framework. Here, we can see how Klee, despite the hurried style characteristic of chalk drawing, regarded the troubled era as a play, from a distant perspective.³¹

On the Three-Dimensional

Before we trace the further development of the curtain as motif in Klee's work during his years of exile in Switzerland, let us briefly look at the theoretical aspects of the way he dealt with

space. In a lecture that he probably gave around 1931 or 1932 at the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie, he said the following: “The dimensional aspect of our planes is imaginary; for the painter, it frequently signifies a conflict: he does not want to deal with the third dimension in an illusionary way. If everything stays very flat, it might, under certain circumstances, be a good carpet. If it doesn't remain flat, then we come to the formal problem of the third dimension. It is a basic creative system, the way one increases a space. We do this through the artistic means of the stage set. This way, one can give the impression of smaller and larger dimensional planes. Next to each other, behind each other, overlapping, intertwining.... Even putting one row next to another and one behind speaks for the presence of a suggestion of back/front. Boundary effects are also dimensional.”³² The curtain along the edge of the image designates the foremost level. At the same time, the curtain marks the boundaries of the image and draws the viewer inside its space. However, this does not necessarily mean that Klee saw the visual space in general as a stage. Yet he also talked about the visual space as a “little arena,”³³ so it is logical to think that he regarded it at least as a place where something happens or is put on display—that is, as a stage, in an expanded sense.

Klee's understanding of the image as a reflection of the audience must also be mentioned: “Anyone viewing the work should imagine that he has his own reflection in front of him, in the work,” and “this conceptual reversal [from left and right] gains significance, e. g., in the space of the play, where people who are real are opposite us, reflecting us. The director's script therefore has to decide whether ‘left’ means to the left of the audience or to the left of the stage.”³⁴ This visual notion of Klee's is closely related to the physiognomic perception of the characters. “And form, each combination, will have its own special, constructive expression; each form, its own face, its physiognomy. The object-like images look at us, cheerfully or severely, more or less tense, comforting or terrible, suffering or smiling. They regard us from all of the contradictions on the psychic-physiognomic dimension they might possibly reach, right up to tragedy and comedy.”³⁵



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11

10 Paul Klee
Theater der Tiere
(Theatre of the animals), 1921, 212
Pencil on paper on cardboard,
22.4 x 28.3 cm
Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

11 Paul Klee
Orakel [Oracle], 1919, 98
Oil on paper on cardboard, 33.8 x 19 cm
Location unknown

Curtain II

The curtain motif recurs again and again in the works Klee produced while in exile, even though it is often reduced to a symbol. It still had the same function that it had in the earlier theatrical space works, which was to mediate between the fictional space of the image and the space outside it. In the later works, however, the curtain is often transformed into other motifs, such as trees or human and animal figures. And sometimes the symbolic forms in the upper corners are no longer recognizable as curtains, but are instead formal cornerstones that mark the boundaries of the composition. Below the curtains, other figures and things are portrayed: circus artistes, musicians, children, dolls, animals, and plants, as well as abstract shapes and fragmentary symbols appear on stage. A pastel, the *Buehnen-Landschaft* (Stage-landscape), 1937, 212, is, on the one hand, probably a recollection of earlier theatrical landscapes, but on the other, it is a programmatic image serving as a model setting for scenes to come.

The symbolic curtain is also present in the major dramatic work Klee did while in exile, a panel painting titled *Uebermut* (High spirits), 1939, 1251 (ill. p. 167). Wolfgang Kersten's publication on this painting summarized: "Klee still pursued the precarious goals of modern art in critical times, using symbolic figures from the theater and the world of the circus—actors, jugglers, acrobats, and tightrope walkers.... In 1939, after the start of World War II, he once again questioned the aim of his art. In this context, he again took up the figure of the tightrope walker and created the painting *Uebermut* as an allegory for his life as an artist. The historical troubles and the memory of his own development as an artist were of equally significant weight."³⁶

In our context, it is important to note that Klee used the simple symbolic curtain in the upper right of the green surface to underscore the drama of the scene, and so, accordingly, he also placed a small animal—a dog or a deer—as an "observer inside the image" on the stage, in the left foreground. As shown above, Klee had previously presented various objects, including political

figures like Kaiser Wilhelm II, in his "theatrical sets." And among the hand puppets that Klee made for his son, Felix, there are political figures like the *Bärtiger Franzose* (Bearded Frenchman) (1919), wearing a Phrygian cap, or the *Deutschnationaler* (1922). So it is not entirely unlikely, as Max Huggler supposes, that, while working on *Uebermut*, Klee had in mind the most contemporary personage of the time, namely Hitler.³⁷ It is possible that he discovered the model for his tightrope walker in Honoré Daumier's famous lithograph, *M. Chose, premier saltimbanque d'Europe* (Mr. Thingamabob, leading tightrope walker of Europe), dated 1833 (fig. 14).³⁸ Daumier's print refers to the plan of King Louis-Philippe to erect a system of detached forts around Paris that would secure the military presence in case of uprisings. The monarch, depicted as a pear with arms and legs, walks a tightrope from the city hall in Paris to the fort, and on the way—which leads him away from the time of the July Revolution, symbolized by the Hôtel de Ville (City Hall) on the right side—he loses his top hat and cockade, the symbol of his middle-class royalty. In his picture, Klee transformed this attribute into the little figure below left, hanging upside down from a rope curving toward the back of the picture. Its head is also a cockade. Klee will have recalled that, in 1922, he put an actual German Empire cockade in the cap of the *Deutschnationaler* hand puppet he made for his son.³⁹ In Daumier's lithograph, the rope is attached to a signpost that says "*forts détachés.*" Klee adapted this post for his painting, although he left out the writing. And he probably made the little figure on the unicycle on the right-hand side of the tightrope out of Daumier's cannon on wheels in the fort. In addition, the body of the overly daring tightrope walker, pointing upward in Klee's painting, does bear some resemblance to Daumier's pear. The abyss between the Hôtel de Ville and the fort, above which the rope is suspended, corresponds to the dark section below the rope on the left-hand side of Klee's painting.

Although Klee adopted a few motifs and props from Daumier's lithograph, the arena in his work is not a specific place. Klee moved the scene to a timeless, imaginary "theatrical landscape."



12 Marc Chagall
On dit (It is said), 1912
Oil on canvas, 132 x 93 cm
Private collection, Switzerland

13 Paul Klee
Haus-Revolution (House revolution),
1933, 94
Chalk on paper, 20.9 x 32.8 cm
Private collection, Switzerland



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13

Eliminating the narrative elements made the statement of the visual motif ambiguous. This ambiguity requires the viewer's active participation. It should be noted that Klee's protagonist—unlike Daumier's—has nothing to orient him on his path. He only seems to be able to keep his balance with the help of aimless, dramatically exaggerated balancing movements.

As the history of the reception of this painting shows, *Uebermut* added an artistic and historical dimension to Klee's way of creating a theatrical space. The allusion to Daumier's political caricature enriched the (art-)historical dimension of the theme of the tightrope walker. By connecting his avant-garde painting to the modern tradition, in which Daumier's socially critical art had been established since 1900, Klee may perhaps have wanted to look at his art from an enduring, future-oriented perspective, particularly in light of his precarious situation as a "degenerate" German artist exiled in Switzerland. So it is understandable that *Uebermut* was one of the seven works that Klee classified as a "design" for the retrospective held in February and March 1940 at the Kunsthaus Zürich, which presented the work he had done since 1935, while in exile. The special drama of the composition probably lies in the fact that the symbolic curtain in the upper right not only marks the transition between the inside and the outside, but also conveys the notion of past and future.

I would like to thank Rudolf Altrichter and Reto Sorg for their kind assistance.

- 1 For more on this painting, see Wolfgang Kersten, "Hoch taxiert: Paul Klees Ölbild 'Bühnenlandschaft' 1922, 178. Versuch einer historischen Einordnung," in *Meisterwerke I. 9 Gemälde des Deutschen Expressionismus*, exh. cat. Galerie Thomas, Munich, pp. 112–21; Rolf Bothe, "Paul Klee: Bühnenlandschaft 1922.178," in *Aufstieg und Fall der Moderne*, exh. cat. Schlossmuseum, Weimar (Ostfildern-Ruit, 1999), pp. 294–95.
- 2 Jürgen Glaesemer, *Paul Klee: Die farbigen Werke im Kunstmuseum Bern* (Bern, 1976), p. 325; English from Jürgen Glaesemer, *Paul Klee: The Colored Works in the Kunstmuseum Bern*, translated by Renate Franciscono (Bern, 1979), p. 314.
- 3 See Klee 1988, no. 821 (Munich, June 23, 1908).

- 4 Paul Klee, "München," in *Die Alpen*, 11, July 1912, pp. 681–82, quoted in Klee 1976, p. 104 (see note 2). For more on the production of *Jedermann*, see Richard Elchinger, "Jedermann. Ein Mysterienspiel von Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Erste Aufführung im Hoftheater am 30. Mai," in *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* 65:275 (June 1, 1912), p. 1.
- 5 Georg Fuchs, *Die Schaubühne der Zukunft* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1905), p. 47. Interestingly enough, Max Littmann, the architect who designed the Künstlertheater in Munich, wrote that "the relieflike theatrical set... had an effect upon the overwhelming effect of Sada Yacco's troupe, for with every movement, it directly reminded one of Egyptian and Persian reliefs." (Max Littmann, *Das Münchener Künstlertheater*, Munich, 1908, p. 9). Japanese actress and dancer Madame Sada Yakko and her troupe made a strong impression on Klee during the performance he saw in 1902 at the Teatro Pergola in Florence, during his travels in Italy. Klee wrote in his journal: "Bit by bit, the poses develop and always seem to last for long moments." (Klee 1988, no. 403, pp. 137–38, Florence, April 1902).
- 6 Georg Fuchs, *Die Revolution des Theaters: Ergebnisse aus dem Münchener Künstler-Theater* (Munich and Leipzig, 1909), p. 117.
- 7 Paul Klee, essay in the anthology *Schöpferische Konfession* (1920), reprinted in Klee 1976, pp. 118–22, here p. 120.
- 8 See Peg Weiss, *Kandinsky in Munich: The Formative Jugendstil Years* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 92–103.
- 9 The paper was taken off the original mat and attached to a new one. Someone else then edged it in light-blue watercolors. In terms of style and color, the watercolor closely resembles *Auf dem Dach* (On the roof), 1914, 53 (fig. 3). Myriam Weber, restorer and paper specialist at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, assisted in examining this work, for which I am very grateful.
- 10 Until now, evidence shows that the two watercolors *in der Einöde* (In the desert), 1914, 43, and *Rote u. weisse Kuppel* (Red and white domes), 1914, 45, were painted at the beginning of April or May, after the journey to Tunisia. In the oeuvre catalogue, an entry dated July 1914 records that the works up to no. 118 had been sent. See Wolfgang Kersten and Osamu Okuda, *Paul Klee: Im Zeichen der Teilung, Die Geschichte zerschnittener Kunst Paul Klees 1883–1940* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 51.
- 11 Hugo Ball, "Das Münchener Künstlertheater (Eine prinzipielle Beleuchtung)," in *Phöbus* 1 (May 2, 1914), pp. 68–74, here p. 72.
- 12 See Ball, 1914, p. 73 (see note 11). Vladimir von Bechthejeff, Erich Mendelsohn, and Alexander von Salzmann were also supposed to work on the project.
- 13 See Hugo Ball, *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* [1927], edited by Bernhard Echte (Zürich, 1992), p. 20. For more on Ball's project for the Munich Künstlertheater and the accompanying publication, *Expressionistisches Theater*, see Andreas Hüneke, "Hinter einem schwarzen Vorhang tanzende Gedanken. Pläne des 'Blauen Reiters,'" in *Der Blaue Reiter*, edited by Christine Hopfengart, exh. cat. Kunsthalle Bremen (Cologne, 2000), pp. 27–33; Erdmute Wenzel White, *The Magic Bishop: Hugo Ball, Dada Poet*, (Columbia, 1998), pp. 63–79.



14 Honoré Daumier
M. Chose, premier saltimbanque
d'Europe
(Mr. Thingamabob, leading tightrope
walker of Europe), in: "Le Charivari,"
August 31, 1833, LD 161

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- 14 In a letter to Ball dated April 18, 1914, Franz Marc recommended Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Klee, August Macke, Schoenberg, Anton von Webern, and Alban Berg for the project. The letter has been published in *Hugo Ball (1886–1986): Leben und Werk*, edited by Ernst Teubner, exh. cat. Wasgauhalle Pirmasens (Berlin, 1986), p. 80. Klee might also have heard about Ball's theater project when he visited Marc in his new house in Ried, during Pentecost (early June 1914). It is known that Marc did two tempera paintings for Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 1914.
- 15 According to Lenz Prütting, Georg Fuchs was planning in the summer of 1914 to put on "in the fall of the same year, some 'Dionysian plays' at the Künstlertheater. He wanted to translate and adapt Euripides' *The Bacchae* for this....*The Bacchae* would be designed by Engels, Passeti, and Diez." (Lenz Prütting, *Die Revolution des Theaters: Studien über Georg Fuchs*, dissertation, Munich, 1974, pp. 349 and 455). It is not clear what the association was between Fuchs's plan and Ball's idea.
- 16 Margarethe Lenore Selenka (1860–1923) translated Japanese plays. See Erdmute Wenzel White, "'Mein expressionistisches Theater.' Hugo Ball und 'Chūshingura.' Ein klassisches Stück der japanischen Edo-Zeit," in *Hugo Ball Almanach* 29 (2005), pp. 114–76, p. 162.
- 17 Klee 1988, no. 929; English from Klee 1964.
- 18 See Wiebrecht Ries, *Griechische Tragiker zur Einführung* (Hamburg, 2000), p. 155.
- 19 An amorphous creature also floats above right in the watercolor *Auf dem Dach* (On the roof), 1914, 53. Its title in the oeuvre catalogue is *(Tag-Gespenster) auf dem Dach* ([Day-ghost] on the roof). Both animal-like creatures might also have something to do with the Dionysian cult. They might refer to a scene in Euripides' play, in which Agave, the mother of Pentheus, trapped in her madness, asks for her father and son: "Where is my old father? Call him here! / Where is my son, Pentheus? He should take a ladder / Set it against the house, fix this lion's head / Way up there, high on the palace front. / I've captured it and brought it home with me." (Euripides, *The Bacchae*, lines 1211–1215, translated by Ernst Buschor, in Euripides, *Ausgewählte Tragödien*, vol. II, edited by Bernhard Zimmermann, Zürich and Düsseldorf, 1996, p. 827). Klee probably also used motifs from the cult of Dionysus in drawings such as *Größenwahn* (Megalomania), 1914, 81, and *Grausamkeit* (Cruelty), 1914, 84. Typically for him, Klee first gave the latter the title *Mysterium der Grausamkeit* in the oeuvre catalogue, and then crossed out the word "Mysterium." He was most likely referring to the mysterious bestiality of the cult.
- 20 Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* was first reproduced in 1910 in an article by Gelett Burgess, "The Wild Men of Paris" (in *The Architectural Record* [New York], 27, pp. 400–14, fig. p. 408, "Study by Picasso"). Klee might have seen this magazine at Heinrich Thannhauser's Moderne Galerie in Munich, where he went to see a large Picasso exhibition in February 1913, featuring 114 works. For the figures in the watercolor *Die hoffnungslosen* (The hopeless ones), 1914, 58, he probably alluded to Picasso's Cubist figures in *Dryad*, dated 1908 (The Hermitage, Saint Petersburg), which is also printed in Burges's article (see Burges, p. 403). Klee was probably also familiar with André Salmon's book, *La jeune peinture française* (Paris, 1912), which mentions Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (pp. 41–45).
- 21 Felix Klee, "Paul Klees Marionetten," in *Theater, Bühne, Bild*, exh. cat. Kunstwoche Künz (Wabern, 1983), pp. 112–13, here p. 113.
- 22 Christine Hopfengart, "Zwittergeschöpfe: Klees Handpuppen zwischen Kunst und Kasperltheater," in *Paul Klee: Handpuppen*, edited by Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (Ostfildern, 2006), pp. 8–31, here p. 15.
- 23 Hopfengart 2006 (see note 22), p. 13.
- 24 See Glaesemer 1976 (see note 2), p. 325.
- 25 For more on this see, Dorothea Richter, *Unendliches Spiel der Poesie: Romantische Aspekte in der Bildgestaltung Paul Klees* (Weimar, 2004), pp. 62–63.
- 26 Glaesemer 1976 (see note 2), p. 45; English from Glaesemer 1979, p. 43.
- 27 *On dit* was shown in 1914 at the Galerie Der Sturm, at Herwarth Walden's in Berlin, and remained there. Klee probably saw the painting in January 1917 during a visit to Walden's gallery and his private collection. See Klee 1988, no. 1043.
- 28 See Karoline Hille, *Marc Chagall und das deutsche Publikum* (Cologne, 2005), p. 87.
- 29 Paul Klee, Pädagogischer Nachlass, PN 17a 20/49, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern.
- 30 See Kersten and Okuda 1995 (see note 10), pp. 188–89.
- 31 For more on this drawing, see Osamu Okuda, "Bildtotalität und zerstörerischer Werkprozess bei Paul Klee," in *Totalität und Zerfall im Kunstwerk der Moderne*. Edited by Reto Sorg and Stefan Bodo Würffel (Munich, 2006), pp. 163–82, here pp. 169–71.
- 32 Quoted in Petra Petitpierre, *Aus der Malklasse von Paul Klee* (Bern, 1957), p. 22.
- 33 Petitpierre, p. 29 (see note 32).
- 34 Paul Klee, Pädagogischer Nachlass, PN 1, M1/8 and M1/9, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern.
- 35 Paul Klee, "Vortrag Jena," facsimile reproduced in *Paul Klee in Jena 1924. Der Vortrag*, edited by Thomas Kain et al, vol. 10: *Minerva. Jenaer Schriften zur Kunstgeschichte* (Jena, 1999), pp. 11–46, here p. 35 (fol. 12 r).
- 36 Wolfgang Kersten, *Paul Klee. Übermut: Allegorie der künstlerischen Existenz*, third revised edition (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), p. 8.
- 37 See Max Huggler, *Paul Klee: Die Malerei als Blick in den Kosmos* (Frauenfeld and Stuttgart, 1969), p. 200.
- 38 Seven years before, Klee was inspired by Daumier's picture to create the drawing *Krabbel-Frucht* (Crawling fruit), 1933, 119. For more on this, see: Osamu Okuda, "Versuch über Honoré Daumiers sichtbaren Einfluss auf Paul Klee," in *Paul Klee 1933*, exh. cat. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Edited by Pamela Kort (Cologne, 2003), pp. 228–41, here p. 237. In a 2003 conversation, Wolfgang Kersten pointed out to me that, in accordance with my hypothesis, Daumier also created a work like Klee's *Übermut*. My thanks to Mr. Kersten for the information.
- 39 See Osamu Okuda, "Deutschnationaler," in *Paul Klee: Handpuppen*, edited by Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (Ostfildern 2006), pp. 122–23.