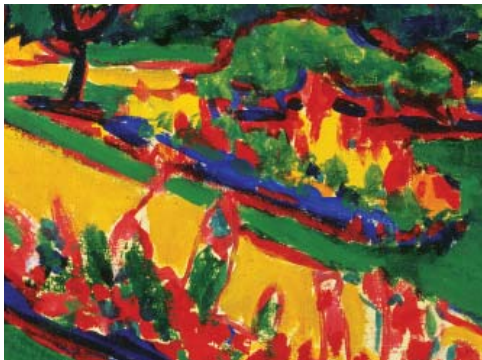


Hot Summer Colors



VISIT THE BMA and find some landscapes that look warm and others that look cool.

Flower Beds in the Dresden Gardens Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

It's a blazing hot summer day in the Dresden Gardens. The walking paths are drenched in sunshine and the flower beds are aflame with red and yellow blooms. The hot pink sky seems to give off its own heat, and even the cool dark fir trees are interlaced with streaks of red.

Is this how the garden really looked when Ernst Ludwig Kirchner visited with his paints and brushes? Probably not. It is true that the city of Dresden in Germany had a Great Garden with walking paths surrounding splendid flower beds. No doubt the citizens of Dresden (such as the woman in the yellow skirt with tall hat and parasol) enjoyed coming out to the public garden to enjoy an afternoon stroll. But the path that the woman walked upon was probably dusty brown rather than gold, and the formal flower beds were probably not edged in bright blue or red. Plants and shrubbery that Kirchner suggested with unruly splashes of color had probably been carefully tended by a gardener.

Why then did Kirchner make the garden look like this? Why did he make some trees thrust upwards like pointed arrows and other trees wriggle as if they could not stand still? Why did he paint the flower petals and leaves with such quick brushstrokes? Apparently Kirchner wasn't satisfied to show how the garden looked to other visitors. It seems that he wanted to use his brush and the most vivid colors on his palette to express the energy of every living flower, bush, and tree in the garden.

Challenge for Students

Compare the "warm" colors in this painting to the "cool" colors in Rockwell Kent's *Artist in Greenland*. (See Art-To-Go archive, January 2009). Write a weather report for each painting. How would the two paintings look if their colors were interchanged? Create your own "hot" landscape of a beach, desert, or city on a 95 degree day.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (German, 1880-1938). *Flower Beds in the Dresden Gardens*. Detail. c. 1910. Oil on canvas. 30½ x 37¼ inches.
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Curt Valentin Gallery, Inc., BMA 1953.33