



Artistic Alliances and Revolutionary Rivalries in the Baltic Art World, 1890–1914

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Abstract

In the areas now known as Estonia and Latvia, art remained a field for the Baltic German minority throughout the nineteenth century. When ethnic Estonian and Latvian artists gained prominence in the late 1890s, their presence threatened Baltic German hegemony over the region's culture. In 1905, revolution in the Russian Empire spilled over into the Baltic Provinces, sparking widespread anti-German violence. The revolution also galvanized Latvian and Estonian artists towards greater cultural autonomy and independence from Baltic German artistic institutions. This article argues that the situation for artists before and after the 1905 revolution was not simply divisive along ethnic lines, as some nationalist historians have suggested. Instead, this paper examines how Baltic German, Estonian and Latvian artists oscillated between common interests, inspiring rivalries, and politicized conflicts, questioning the legitimacy of art as a universalizing language in multicultural societies.

Keywords: Baltic art, Estonia, Latvia, multiculturalism, nationalism

Introduction

In the 1860s a visitor of the port towns of Riga or Tallinn would have surmised that these cities were primarily German-speaking areas of Imperial Russia. By 1900, however, one could hear not only German, but Latvian, Estonian, Russian, as well as Yiddish on the streets of Riga

and Tallinn. Indeed, over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Baltic Provinces of Imperial Russia – the area now known as Estonia and Latvia – rapidly industrialized, transforming into bustling multi-ethnic and multi-lingual centres. Despite the diversity of these populations, deeply engrained social hierarchies predicated on ethnic differences maintained the status quo and separated spaces, hampering opportunities especially for newly urbanized ethnic Latvians and Estonians. Urban spaces engendered unprecedented social mobility for Estonians and Latvians, allowing access to what would become slippery terrain in the Baltic cultural realm: the visual arts. Art became a contentious arena of interaction since it was not burdened by the linguistic (and thus ethnic) barriers of literature or choral and folk music, and could therefore speak to diverse audiences. But for an Estonian or Latvian to aspire to become an artist in the years around 1900 meant not only reckoning with an almost exclusively Baltic German tradition, but also rising into the upper echelons of society, thereby breaking with centuries of a racialized social hierarchy.

In the wake of a violent revolution in 1905, Estonian and Latvian artists faced an unprecedented opportunity: to continue to acquiesce to the Baltic German elite, or to boldly assert cultural autonomy alongside their compatriots. This ethnic split would foreshadow nationalist art historians of Latvia and Estonia, who would claim 1905 as a significant turning point wherein native Latvian and Estonian artists ‘[stirred] the provincial Baltic German languor by their freshness, the healthy vigour drawn from the unspoiled reserves of the new peasant nation’.¹ While Latvian and Estonian artists did indeed become increasingly prominent participants in their local arts scene after 1905, art historian Kristiāna Ābele has demonstrated that, at least for Latvian artists of the period, coexistence and cooperation with Baltic German artists actually oscillated between common interests, inspiring rivalries, and politicized conflicts.² Indeed, the success of artists of Estonian and Latvian origins did not displace Baltic German artists, but rather created a multi-vocal network of artists, critics, and patrons, which often transcended the ethnic boundaries seemingly codified by the 1905 revolution. Heeding Ābele’s call to weave a ‘multi-coloured tapestry of a more comprehensive cultural panorama’ of the fin-de-siècle Baltic art world, this essay critically examines how politics and ethnicity intertwined in the reception of artworks of Baltic German, Estonian, and Latvian artists in order to challenge the position of 1905

as an ethno-cultural watershed.³ I aim to elucidate how artists grappled with ethnic differences in an age when deeply engrained racialized hierarchies still wielded power and control over an artist's worth and cultural value in a multicultural society.

In the years leading up to 1905, Baltic Germans undoubtedly exerted the most power in the Baltic Provinces, while indigenous Latvians and Estonians – serfs until the early nineteenth century – slowly achieved autonomy and social mobility only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Political scientist Ivars Ījabs has convincingly argued that a postcolonial reading of the Latvian national movement in the 1860s elucidates how the nascent Latvian intelligentsia assimilated into a Baltic German milieu, selectively emulating (Baltic) German cultural models in order to assert a distinct notion of Latvianness.⁴

Within art history postcolonial and feminist critiques have enriched our understanding of the position of disempowered and oppressed artists within patriarchal, white, heteronormative systems. However, such critiques often paint the 'centre' or 'dominant power' with broad brushstrokes, employing a similarly essentialist framework. Estonian and Latvian artists were certainly disempowered in the nineteenth century, but the insistence upon a 'provincial Baltic German languor' disenfranchises Baltic German artists, as if their influence suddenly dissipated in the wake of 1905. Such rhetoric has continued in 2015. In her recent study on art and Latvian nationalism, Suzanne Pourchier-Plasseraud declares that after 1905 'relations with the Baltic German population were now shattered beyond repair' for Latvian artists.⁵ Even the rhetoric of Baltic museum exhibitions downplays the role of Baltic German artists. In the description of the pioneering exhibition 'The Force of Nature: Realism and the Düsseldorf School of Painting' at KUMU Art Museum in Tallinn curators declared 'although most of [the artists who brought Realism to the Baltic] were Baltic Germans, their works belong to Estonian and Latvian art history because of the authors' origins and local subject matter'.⁶ These instances of 'beyond repair' and 'although' reveal how an exclusionary vocabulary subtly creeps into art-historical writing regarding any hint of ethnic diversity or multicultural cooperation within the Baltic art world.

In contrast, this essay investigates the Baltic case of what art historian Elizabeth Hutchinson has described as 'the complex relationship *among* diverse communities and between these groups and the aesthetic

challenges of the modern world' (emphasis in original) in the years around 1905.⁷ Keeping in mind the different power structures within the multi-ethnic Baltic Provinces, I provide a critical examination of the institutionalization of the fin-de-siècle Baltic art world, analyzing the receptions of artworks in the local Estonian-, Latvian-, and German-language press. By calling into question the presumed ethnic divides of the Baltic art world, this essay does not privilege one vantage point, but rather attends to the intricacies of 'the intrinsic tension between emancipatory and oppressive forces' historian Todd A. Henry finds in transnational colonial spaces.⁸ Similarly I echo art historian Elizabeth Clegg's comparative intraregional approach in her groundbreaking *Art, Design and Architecture in Central Europe, 1890–1920*, elucidating the simultaneity of 'national' distinctions without essentializing them.⁹ What is at stake is not merely recovering the activities of Baltic artists at the turn of the twentieth century, but offering insight into the possibility of art as a universalizing language for the inhabitants of a divided multicultural society at a critical juncture in history.

The Rise of Latvian and Estonian Artists in the 1890s

From the arrival of German crusaders in the 1200s until 1918, the areas now known as Estonia and Latvia were consistently under foreign rule. The one constant in these centuries of change was a racialized social hierarchy, wherein a minority of Baltic Germans maintained power and wealth through feudalism, while indigenous Latvians and Estonians – racially othered as the *Undeutsche* (non-Germans) – toiled as serfs. Baltic Germans preserved their power and privilege into the eighteenth century when the region became a part of the Russian Empire. As such, any understanding of colonialism in the nineteenth-century Baltic Provinces must be considered first through the mediation of local Baltic German power before assuming a top-down hierarchy emanating from St. Petersburg.¹⁰ Art historian Kristina Jõekalda rightly refers to Baltic German cultural hegemony as 'discursive colonialism', which historian Kristin Kopp has explained as 'a historically situated process that repositions a specific relationship between self and Other into colonial categories'.¹¹ As access to fine art was intimately intertwined with privilege in the nineteenth century, the emergence and prominence of

ethnic Estonian and Latvian artists threatened the binaries inscribed by Baltic German cultural dominance.

Artists of Latvian or Estonian origin emerged and became successful as early as the 1860s, including the Latvian Jūlijs Feders (1838–1909) and the Estonian Johann Köler (1826–1899), but the largest wave of such artists appeared in the 1890s. At the time, however, the 1890s hardly seemed like an era of immense change. In 1905 Latvian painter Janis Rozentāls (1866–1916) contended that even in the 1890s ‘there were no artists in the real sense of the word in the whole Baltic region’.¹² Rozentāls later characterized Riga, the booming metropolis and economic centre of the Baltic Provinces, as a place where ‘the most extreme aesthetic poverty’ prevailed and ‘lack of culture reigned in crafts, industry and everyday life’.¹³ The situation did not seem any brighter in the Estonian towns of Tallinn and Tartu. According to art historian Vaike Tiik, ‘only four artists were active’ in Tartu in the 1890s and in Tallinn two of the city’s four prominent artists died between 1894 and 1895.¹⁴

In reality the situation was not as dire. The Estonian sculptor August Weizenberg (1837–1921), for example, was extraordinarily popular at the turn of the century. By the time Weizenberg organized a third exhibit of his works to tour Tallinn, Tartu, Riga, and St. Petersburg in 1887, it was well known that his sculpture *Hamlet* and its pendant *Ophelia* were bought at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1878 (the buyer remains unknown). Writing about Weizenberg’s 1887 exhibit, the newspaper *Virulane* urged its Estonian readers in Tallinn to ‘go see the celebrated works of our compatriot, since the greatest men in the world have gone to see them in many capitals in many countries with a wondrous gaze. Estonians should see these famous works since their creator is a son of our land and sprouted from Estonian soil’.¹⁵ Weizenberg’s critical acclaim both at home and abroad gave local Estonians pride in claiming their own creative might alongside the more visible progress of Baltic German artists.

Art education was limited primarily to drawing schools in the Baltic Provinces, so Baltic artists initially had to look abroad for education in painting, sculpture, and the applied arts.¹⁶ Baltic artists often turned either to St. Petersburg, studying at the Imperial Academy of Arts or the Stieglitz School of Applied Arts and Design, or to Germany, especially to Düsseldorf, where German painters of Baltic origin such as Eduard von Gebhardt (1838–1925) had become prominent professors.¹⁷

By the early 1890s, a significant Latvian presence at the Imperial Academy of Arts coalesced into Rūķis (The Gnome), an artists' collective which sought to cultivate a singularly Latvian visual vocabulary. The group members – including Janis Rozentāls, Johann Walter (1869–1932), Vilhelms Purvītis (1872–1945), and Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939) among others – sought not only to develop a specifically Latvian art, but also to promote an appreciation of art among ethnic Latvians. The latter task was considerably more difficult than imagined. Though serfdom was abolished in the Baltic Provinces between 1815 and 1819, any sort of mobility beyond rural realms for Baltic peasants was severely hampered until the 1860s when new land reforms ushered in new rights and possibilities, such as the ability to elect representatives in governing councils and move to urban centres like Tallinn and Riga.¹⁸

After the 1860s, the ethnic Estonian and Latvian proportions of the urban populations of the Baltic Provinces were continually growing, and both groups became majorities in Baltic urban spaces by 1905. In conjunction with this urbanization came an equally rapid cultural and political modernization of Estonians and Latvians. In 1918 Finnish-Estonian author Aino Kallas observed that, theoretically, an Estonian (or Latvian) once raised in serfdom could suddenly find himself 'clothed in silk and velvet and a fashionable coat and tails, along with his children and grandchildren...listening to the words of the Danish Prince Hamlet in his mother tongue' by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁹ By the turn of the twentieth century, societies such as Rūķis became central to this cultural shift, providing access to art and other forms of high culture for ethnic Latvians (and Estonians).

In 1895, the Riga Latvian Society (Lat. *Rīgas Latviešu Biedrība*), an association founded in 1868 to promote Latvian nationalism, invited members of Rūķis to participate in the Latvian Ethnographic Exhibition. Occurring alongside the All-Russian Archaeological Congress in 1896, the Latvian Ethnographic Exhibition, taking cues from the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibit in Prague in 1895, was the second of its sort in Europe in its time.²⁰ Rozentāls was the main figure in charge of Rūķis's participation and concerned himself specifically with the Art Section, where oil paintings would be exhibited. The 1896 Latvian Ethnographic exhibit was covered extensively in both the Latvian and German language press. One German reporter in *Düna Zeitung* remarked that he was surprised that 'even the Latvians are able to achieve something in

the painting department'.²¹ This arrogant rhetoric was typical, but not universal, among Baltic Germans discussing Latvian (or Estonian) cultural achievements. The Baltic German reviewer did praise some of the works on display and Janis Rozentāls's painting *After the Service* (see Figure 1) specifically elicited admiration.

Similar to most of his fellow Latvian artists, Rozentāls came from a rural background, growing up in the small town of Saldus, about half-way between Riga and the Western Baltic coast. While a student at the Imperial Academy of Arts, Rozentāls often returned home, recording



Figure 1: Janis Rozentāls. *After the Service (From the Church)* (1894). Oil on canvas. Latvian National Museum of Art (Photo: Normunds Brasliņš).

the people and simple quotidian activities of his native town. Saldus and its inhabitants thus became central in *After the Service*, which was Rozentāls's graduation piece from the Imperial Academy of Arts. In Rozentāls's painting, peoples of all social classes stream forth from the village church. In the foreground, an elderly peasant man hobbles along the cobblestone with his pious wife at his side. Near them, a beggar woman and child plead for spare change. Dress distinguishes the women, either in peasant garb wearing headscarves or tight black bodices over billowing white sleeves. Under the tree on the left-hand side, two boisterous young men, wearing their Sunday best, peer over the crowd, perhaps gazing at one of the young maidens floating down the stone stairs.

Rozentāls's painting received high praise specifically for the naturalist representation of the peasants and the artist's excellent command of perspective. Later, in 1904, the people of Rozentāls's paintings struck the art critic Matilde Jureviča-Priedīte. She described the artist's *From the Church* (Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga) a work similar in appearance and theme to *After the Service*, as painted 'so precisely, so lively [...] from the life of one's own nation' that 'here each figure, each face and feature is familiar to us, we can even guess every churchgoer's spirit and character'.²² The peasants of Rozentāls's paintings fostered a feeling of familiarity for Jureviča-Priedīte, a sentiment the reviewer associated with her solidarity with her fellow Latvian people and a desire for the advancement of their culture.

Unlike their Latvian counterparts, Estonian artists were not centrally organized in the 1890s and fewer Estonians trained in St. Petersburg. The Baltic artists who attained acclaim as professors in Düsseldorf were from Estonian areas, so Estonians could make connections with artists and teachers in Germany more easily than in Russia proper. But staunch academicism reigned in German art academies at the end of the nineteenth century, leading many young Estonian art students, who yearned for education in more modern plein-air and Impressionist techniques, to quit their studies. Success at art academies catapulted the careers of many Latvian artists, who often garnered their first awards and critical acclaim with their graduation works. Many Estonians, on the other hand, did not finish state-sponsored academies, and thus lacked the professional contacts facilitated by an academic education. Such difficulties meant that the institutional change in the art scene of Estonian

towns was left to individuals, rather than to the power of collectives or societies as in the Latvian case.

Despite these differences and initial difficulties, professional Estonian painters did emerge in the 1890s and were occupied with the same concerns as their Latvian brethren, namely the representation of peasants. In the summers between 1896 and 1899, the twin artist brothers Paul Raud (1865–1930) and Kristjan Raud (1865–1943) alongside Estonian sculptor Amandus Adamson (1855–1929) travelled around the islands off the Estonian coast, especially on the Pakri Islands and Muhu. Paul Raud, who had studied art in Düsseldorf, debuted at an exhibition in his hometown of Rakvere in Northern Estonia in 1894. Unlike his brother Kristjan, Paul Raud was well integrated into Baltic German circles and made his initial earnings primarily as a portrait painter of noble Baltic German families. While on their sojourn through the Estonian islands, Adamson and the Raud brothers were particularly enthralled with rural islander life, creating portraits articulating the encounter between peasant villagers and cosmopolitan artists. Whereas Rozentāls's peasants are decisively detailed, Paul Raud's images of Estonian islanders demonstrate the latter artist's command of fluid Impressionist brushwork. In Raud's *Old Muhu Man* (see Figure 2), simple, delicate strokes just barely suggest the man's belt and the slight folds of the man's boots. With his mouth open ever so slightly, the old man could be telling folktales or singing folk songs of primeval Estonia. Through subtle variations of contour and pigment, Raud rendered his peasant figure as a sage guardian of his primordial homeland.²³ Portraits such as Raud's *Old Muhu Man* became models for other Estonian artists to emulate. In the early twentieth century images of the island of Muhu and its singular culture would become a synecdoche of Estonian identity for artists such as Ants Laikmaa (1866–1942) and Oskar Kallis (1892–1917). Though their representational means differed, Rozentāls and Raud demonstrated through their works that ethnic Latvians and Estonians were gaining control of their own image in the late 1890s. Commenting on the Latvian Ethnographic Exhibit, one Latvian reviewer mentioned that 'Latvians hardly knew their painters up to now, some could not even imagine that we have quite a few young talented painters'.²⁴ Rūķis's participation in venues such as the Latvian Ethnographic Exhibit ensured that, as one Baltic painter would later note, 'art is finally coming to terms with the people!'²⁵



Figure 2: Paul Raud, *Old Man from Muhu* (1898). Oil on canvas. Art Museum of Estonia (Photo: Stanislav Stepashko).

Growing Multiculturalism in the Baltic Art World, 1890–1904

While institutions such as the Latvian Ethnographic Exhibit were seminal in the initial display of art by Rūķis artists, the main exhibition venues were facilitated by the Riga Art Society (Ger. *Rigaer Kunstverein*). Founded in 1871, the Society had dissipated by 1890 and was revitalized primarily under the aegis of the physician and art lover Roedrich von Engelhardt (1862–1934) in 1893. The Society brought a stream of

high-profile exhibitions of famous international artists, including Arnold Böcklin, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and Anders Zorn. Baltic German artists also became active in the Society, and the presence of Baltic German painter Gerhard von Rosen (1856–1927), among others, strengthened the Society's focus on promoting local Baltic artists independent of their ethnic origin. In the aftermath of the revolution, Rosen would emerge as a seminal figure in the conception of a unified Baltic art. In December 1898, the Society opened the first Riga Art Society Salon in a rented apartment. While museums existed in Jelgava (Kurland Province Museum) and Tallinn (Estland Province Museum), plans to build an art museum in Riga, the largest city in the region, were consistently delayed and would not see completion until 1905.²⁶ The premiere exhibition of the Salon featured works by Baltic Germans from all three Baltic Provinces, including Bernhard Borchert (1863–1945), Oskar Hoffmann (1851–1912), Oswald von Sass (1856–1913) and Rūķis members Vilhelms Purvītis and Johann Walter. Out of all the exhibitors, it was Walter and Purvītis who outshined their contemporaries. For the Latvian critic Teodors Zeiferts, the lyrical evening landscapes of Purvītis and Walter were clearly 'views into a Latvian world' and reflected Latvian 'wisdom and work', the source for new art.²⁷ Zeiferts was not unaware of the thorny issue of connecting Walter's paintings with Latvian identity. According to his name, Walter seemed to be Baltic German, but in reality his father was a Germanized Latvian merchant originally from the estate of Bērzmuiža, while his mother hailed from the German Kurau family in Riga.²⁸ Walter's mixed identity prompted Zeiferts to ask in his review of the 1898/1899 Riga Art Society Salon, 'Is the artist Walter a Latvian or a German? What does that mean? Namely it means that an interest in art has awoken in the people'.²⁹ Between 1898 and 1905, the Salon would nurture this nascent interest in art, becoming a versatile exhibition venue which would promote contemporary Baltic German artists such as Paris-based Alice Dannenberg (1861–1948) alongside patriotically-inclined Latvian artists including Rihards Zariņš, Jūlijs Madernieks, and, of course, Janis Rozentāls. Exhibition records and criticism mention that artists from Estonian areas also participated in such exhibits, but who these participants were and the amount of Baltic Germans and Estonians among them awaits further research.

Riga, in all its might and splendour in the late nineteenth century, was undoubtedly the economic and cultural hub of the Baltic Provinces.

For artists living in Estland or Northern Livland, however, the cities of Tallinn and Tartu were also art centres in their own right. Perhaps in an effort to balance the regional-cultural scale, the Tartu-based Baltic German painter Reinhold von Moeller (1847–1918) initiated discussion on the creation of the Society of Travelling Exhibitions (Ger. *Verein zur Förderung des Kunstinteresses durch Wanderausstellungen*) in 1899. Founded officially (in Riga) in 1900, the Society of Travelling Exhibitions brought the wealth of Riga-based exhibits throughout the entire Baltic Provinces, not only to the larger cities of Tallinn, Tartu, Liepāja, and Jelgava, but, just as importantly, to Koknese, Majori, the Estonian-Latvian border town of Valga/Valka, Pärnu and Haapsalu. The main aim of the Society of Travelling Exhibitions was, quite simply, to disseminate a love of art among inhabitants of the provinces who would otherwise have little, if any, access to art, a love the Riga Art Society was already fostering. The artworks at these exhibitions in the smaller towns were by no means inferior to those regularly on display in Riga or Tallinn. As one commentator in *Baltijas Vēstnesis* noted regarding an exhibition in the small town of Koknese in 1904, ‘This first art exhibition in the countryside turned out to be surprisingly wide-ranging and comprehensive in regard to the paintings; it is richer and more versatile than many painting exhibitions in the cities’.³⁰

These travelling exhibits also exposed Estonian artists to contemporary Latvian painting, undoubtedly a significant encounter for Estonian artists who saw similar aspirations and critical success among their Latvian colleagues. That Latvian art emerged as a cohesive entity in the midst of Baltic German cultural dominance and was accessible to Estonians before Estonian art collectives came into being is a fact which has received little attention, but likely exerted a strong influence on Estonian painters. In fact, around 1910, a younger generation of Estonian painters, including Villem Ormisson (1892–1941) and Konstantin Süvalo (1884–1964), would cultivate a dazzling neo-impressionist painterly idiom not in Tallinn, Tartu, Düsseldorf, or St. Petersburg, but rather in Riga under the aegis of Vilhelms Purvītis and Janis Rozentāls – an important artistic encounter transcending Baltic German cultural dominance.

In 1903 the Estonian painter Ants Laikmaa, perhaps enthused by the success of Latvian artists in Baltic German circles (a notion he certainly commented on later in his career), called for the establishment

of an Estonian art society which would 'serve all of the people, fulfil the needs of art, and open the world of art to our people with excellent exhibitions'.³¹ In direct response to Laikmaa's call to arms, the young Estonian writer Gustav Suits (1883–1956) lamented that the very notion of Estonian art was strange, despite the success of contemporary Estonian authors and composers.³² Indeed, Suits's reaction seemed to confirm Laikmaa's desire to form an art society in the first place. In fall 1903 Laikmaa opened his studio atelier for students in Tallinn. Laikmaa's atelier has been heralded as the first Estonian-founded art school, but the school was more significant for the fact that Laikmaa opened his atelier to all aspiring artists, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or income. Since Laikmaa even paid course fees for the poorer students, Baltic German baronesses could be working side by side with working-class Estonian boys.³³ The extent to which this egalitarianism would last, however, was soon to be tested.

1905: United or Forever Fragmented?

The tsar's army attacked peaceful protestors on a cold January Sunday on the streets of St. Petersburg, underneath the windows of the Imperial Arts Academy, unknowingly fuelling the flames of revolution. Karl Burman (1882–1965), a promising Estonian architecture student at the Academy, later recalled how art students had taken the keys of the Academy and took advantage of the unstable moment. Known provocateurs were expelled immediately and the next morning students encountered guards blocking the doors to the Academy.³⁴ In solidarity with the unrest, young Estonian art students Jaan Koort (1883–1935), Konrad Mägi (1878–1925), and Nikolai Triik (1884–1930) boycotted their lectures at the Stieglitz School. All three students were expelled in March. Triik spent the rest of the year at Laikmaa's atelier school in Tallinn. Koort moved to Paris while Mägi went to Helsinki and later Oslo via Paris. While Triik, Koort and Mägi openly protested the tsarist government, other Estonian artists were more reserved in their politics. When workers' strikes swept the Tallinn factory where Laikmaa's student Aleksander Uurits (1888–1918) was working part time, Laikmaa strongly encouraged the young aspiring artist to focus on his studies and avoid uprisings as much as possible.³⁵

In the Latvian areas, the situation was already more intense. German antagonism was much higher in the Latvian areas than Estonian ones

since there was stronger economic development, especially in Riga, where class differences were more sharply felt.³⁶ Moreover, there were almost three times as many Germans in the Latvian areas as in the Estonian ones. In the summer of 1905, the newspaper *Dienas Lapa* published a polemical article by Teodors Zeiferts entitled, 'Baltic Germans and Latvian Culture', proclaiming:

It is said that [Baltic Germans] admire the Latvian artists Purvītis and Rozentāls very much. Pardon me! Purvītis is even more admired by the French who awarded him the highest prize. If a widely acclaimed artist emerges, should Germans not recognize him precisely because of this [acclaim] in order not to show their stupidity?³⁷

Zeiferts's fiery piece declaring his anti-German stance stood at odds with some of his earlier writings on the multicultural status of Riga's art scene. Just a few years earlier Zeiferts had declared that the Baltic Provinces were home to 'many people, yet one land [...] and art can make what is incomprehensible about the lives of one people understandable to another'.³⁸ According to Zeiferts, in the wake of 1905 Latvian artists like Rozentāls and Purvītis needed to remove themselves completely from German circles that only superficially appreciated the artists' distinctively Latvian art. Zeiferts's rhetoric suggested an intractable binary between Germans and Latvians, with which Rozentāls's continued affiliation with Baltic German artists seemed incommensurate since Baltic Germans were seen as collaborators with the tsarist regime. Earlier in the year, however, Rozentāls had signed a petition for Latvian cultural autonomy, clearly displaying his allegiances with his fellow Latvians.

Purvītis's place in this ethno-political debate was considerably more polemical. The fact some Baltic Germans called Purvītis *unserer Landsmann* (our compatriot) was, at least for Zeiferts, indicative of Baltic Germans attempting to steal Latvian culture for themselves. Between Zeiferts's initial praise of Purvītis's skills and indisputable Latvianness in 1899 and the revolutionary turmoil of 1905/06, Purvītis had become the most famous artist in the Baltic region. Purvītis exhibited with Sergei Diaghilev's *Mir Iskusstva* (*World of Art*), a circle of the Russian Empire's premiere Art Nouveau and Symbolist artists, attained a bronze medal for his painting 'The Last Rays' at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, and even exhibited in Munich with the Secession.

In January 1905, the widely-read British Arts and Crafts magazine *The Studio* ran an article on the artist, particularly admiring his views towards nature, since, according to critic Mary Illyne, Purvītis saw beauty ‘in the seemingly uninteresting peasant’s cottage of his native Kurland, in the solitary tree growing on the hillside, [and] in the pale moonlight of a winter landscape’.³⁹ Critics like Zeiferts would have immediately tied Purvītis’s interest in the ‘seemingly uninteresting peasant’s cottage’ to the artist’s Latvian peasant origins – a clear expression of Purvītis’s solidarity with Latvian nationalism.⁴⁰ Illyne, on the other hand, called Purvītis a ‘Russian painter’. Yet there was one more ethnonym the artist’s landscapes evoked: Baltic. Baltic German critic Julius Norden felt that Purvītis’s landscapes ‘epitomise the very soul of the native scenery for every son of the Baltic *Heimat*’, emphasizing, as Zeiferts once did, the ability of art to bridge the ethnic divides of the multicultural Baltic Provinces.⁴¹ Purvītis himself remained distant from the phenomenon, famously declaring, ‘I recognise only the personal element, require only personalities, and leave it up to history to make the national out of it!’⁴² To the dismay of many Latvians, Purvītis left Riga and took up a position at a private drawing school in Tallinn in 1906.

Throughout the raging debates around Purvītis’s ethno-political allegiances (or lack thereof), violence in the Baltic Provinces reached its peak. In September, however, the Riga art scene was preoccupied with the opening of the Riga City Art Museum, designed by the architect and budding art historian Wilhelm Neumann (1849–1919).⁴³ Finally the Baltic region had its own professional museum dedicated solely to the visual arts.⁴⁴ Rozentāls, Borchert and Rosen, three of the most active artists in Riga at the time, were at the helm of the organizational committee for the opening exhibit, collecting artworks from 48 different artists, including Ants Laikmaa, Jūlijs Madernieks, Vilhelms Purvītis, Kristjan Raud, and Paul Raud (he exhibited *Old Muhu Man*, among other works). The Baltic Artists’ Painting Exhibition, as it was called, took place from September 1905 to January 1906 – in the heart of revolutionary turmoil. After seeing the exhibit, Friedrich Moritz declared that local artists, ‘despite unfavourable conditions, adverse times and often insufficient public interest’, were still actively exhibiting daring and creative works.⁴⁵

While art exhibits seemingly promoted multicultural unity in the Baltic Provinces, the threat of violence, clearly based on national lines, was real and suggested otherwise. Agitated Latvians and Estonians took

to the countryside, ransacking Baltic German manors, burning them down, and, in some cases, even murdering Baltic Germans. The destruction of property was extensive, rioters destroying many paintings in the process, and the anti-German violence was widespread and unexpected (see Figure 3). The mass violence across the Baltic Provinces had, one Baltic German woman noted, ‘shaken [Baltic Germans] from their carefree idyll’.⁴⁶ For Camilla von Stackelberg, a schoolgirl in Cēsis during the revolution, the trauma of the violence left ‘a feeling of anxiety which I could not master for years and which forever altered my perception of the Latvians’.⁴⁷ The Baltic German painter Carl von Winkler, then in Dresden, confessed similar sentiments to his family:

Had [Estonians] ... unlike Latvians, acted with self-possession in this critical time, it would become a binding medium for further coexistence of the two nations and one could approach both social and political equality in a really brotherly spirit, without suspicion and arrogance ... and a new life could begin. But now – one has sown so much bitterness that will burst into hate and disdain.⁴⁸



Figure 3: Nikolai Königsfest. Interior View of Ojasoo Manor after the 1905 Uprising (1905). Photograph on silver gelatin paper (Estonian History Museum).

When members of the Latvian intelligentsia signed a petition in support of greater rights and cultural autonomy, a Baltic German reporter in *Rigascher Rundschau* replied: 'The very existence of 200 petitioners (artists, journalists), who probably all evolved from the peasant class, is enough to conclude that the fate of the Latvian peasants must not be so bad, if so many sons of peasants were able to acquire a high or the highest education'.⁴⁹ The patriarchal and borderline racist attitude held by this *Rigascher Rundschau* writer was not unusual among the Baltic German elite. It perhaps comes as no surprise, then, that the 'tsar's loyal Germans', as Anders Henriksson has termed them, were not going to give into anti-German violence without a fight.⁵⁰

Indeed, the Russian government reacted harshly to Baltic revolutionaries, who constituted more than half of the executions in the entire empire. Notably, Ants Laikmaa's brother Bernhard was among those executed. Bernhard Laipmann had organized a memorandum on behalf of Estonian peasants for Bernhard Uexküll, a manor owner in the town of Vigala.⁵¹ Punitive troops imprisoned the artist's brother and later executed him. Laipmann soon became memorialized as a martyr for the Estonian revolutionary cause and became the primary subject matter for Estonian art and literature evoking the terror of 1905.⁵² Tallinn experienced its own variant of 'Bloody Sunday' on 16 October when punitive troops from St. Petersburg – encouraged by desperate loyalist Baltic Germans – murdered protesters in cold blood at the city's New Market (Est. *Uus Turg*). The following day, 17 October, Tsar Nicholas II issued the 'liberalizing' October Manifesto in the hopes of placating revolutionaries across the empire. Reeling from the unspeakable violence at the New Market, Tallinners and other Estonians saw the tsar's actions as too little too late. In turn, the Baltic art world experienced mass emigration and demographic shifts. Johann Walter fled to Dresden. Ants Laikmaa sought refuge in Helsinki, where a considerable Estonian expatriate community was developing.⁵³ Janis Rozentāls also moved to Finland, as he had married a Finnish opera singer, Elli Forsell, in 1903. Perhaps most polemical, however, were the actions of Vilhelms Purvītis – the artist who found himself constantly embroiled in the debates engendered by the revolution. When Purvītis fled to Tallinn, some Latvian nationals considered the artist's move a betrayal to his fellow Latvian countrymen, who had sacrificed themselves in the name of Latvian cultural

and political autonomy in the revolution. Yet Purvītis's career and reputation was dependent on Baltic German patronage and he had no interest in sacrificing his main source of income.

The 1905 revolution shook the Russian Empire, but it was quickly quelled with fire and sword. In light of revolutionary chaos, the unity presented at the Riga City Art Museum seemed like a façade. With many prominent Baltic artists fleeing the area and the ethnic schisms seemingly insurmountable, was Carl von Winkler right about the imminent failure of attempts at a 'new life'?

Baltic Artists Between the Revolution and the Great War: Divided We Fall?

British art historian Jeremy Howard has argued that the 1905 revolution created 'forks in the path', ultimately leading to the establishment of two major artists' groups divided along ethnic lines in Riga in 1910: the Baltic Artists' Association (*Baltischer Künstlerbund*) and The Society for the Promotion of Latvian Art (*Latviešu mākslas veicināšanas biedrība*). According to Howard, 'artists who had previously exhibited together soon found it apposite to show separately'.⁵⁴ In some ways, the post-1905 environment became, if not more exclusionary, more separated. The Riga City Art Museum, under the influence of Wilhelm Neumann, dedicated solo shows almost primarily to Baltic German artists and the Riga Art Society, which monopolized control of the museum and admitted that its membership was overwhelmingly German. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, Purvītis's relocation to Tallinn and Walter's to Dresden meant that Rozentāls was one of few Latvian artists with significant experience in organizing large art exhibitions in Riga. As late as 1908, Woldemar von Mengden, in his report on the activities of the Riga City Art Museum, wrote that the consequences of 'the bad years of 1905 and 1906' stimulated an 'almost complete lack of will to cooperate among local active artists'.⁵⁵

The divided stance between Germans and Latvians/Estonians in the post-1905 environment seemed especially true in the Estonian case. Estonians' first exhibition opportunities often arose among Baltic German circles, such as Paul Raud's debut in Rakvere in 1894. One of

the most transformative changes in the post-revolutionary era was the emergence of the collective Noor-Eesti, or Young Estonia – a group of university students all under the age of twenty-five, who sought to liberate a nascent Estonian high culture from centuries of Baltic German and Russian cultural dominance. In the premiere Noor-Eesti album, Estonian critic Gustav Suits famously declared ‘Let us be Estonians, but let us also become Europeans!’, emphasizing the need to depart from a narrow Baltic worldview in lieu of a more pluralistic view of European high culture. Through experiencing the diversity of Europe, Noor-Eesti posited, the distinct characteristics of Estonian culture could emerge, permitting Estonian high culture to blossom. The unstable state of affairs back home was just the catalyst facilitating the possibility for many Estonian artists to travel abroad. In search of continuing their education, artists including Triik and Mägi studied briefly in places like Helsinki, Oslo, Paris, and Berlin. It was precisely through experiencing Europe, or as Suits had declared in 1905, ‘becoming European’ (Est. *eurooplaseks saamine*), that the pioneers of the Estonian art world first reached their creative potential.

In the meantime, Laikmaa developed his plans for an Estonian Art Society and, with the help of Kristjan Raud, started planning exhibitions. The Vanemuine theatre in Tartu, designed by the Finnish architects Armas Lindgren (1874–1929) and Wivi Lönn (1872–1966), was designated as a ‘temple of Estonian art’.⁵⁶ The theatre derived its epithet in part from the fact that its opening day coincided with the debut of the ‘First Exhibition of Estonian Artists’ in the building of the Society of Estonian Literati (Est. *Eesti Õpetatud Selts*) in 1906. Just as importantly, the theatre derived its name, Vanemuine, from the god of music in Estonian and Finnish mythology. The music of Vanemuine’s *kannel*, a zither-like instrument similar to the Finnish *kantele* and Latvian *kokle*, creates all sounds and voices in nature. In Estonian art Vanemuine is always represented with his *kannel* and he has become a symbol of the primordial connection between Estonians and their folk songs.⁵⁷ The Vanemuine theatre, then, had a specifically Estonian connotation – a fact observed by international visitors in the town. Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1934), the Finnish painter who attained critical international acclaim with his frescoes of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, expressed interest in decorating the theatre with episodes from the Estonian national epic

Kalevipoeg. Gallen-Kallela's contributions were not at odds with the Estonian nature of Vanemuine, but rather a logical extension budding from the building's original Finnish architects. Nevertheless, Gallen-Kallela never realized the project because he feared that *Kalevipoeg* was not available in German and potentially alienated Tartu's Baltic German population (the epic was actually published in instalments both in Estonian and German between 1857 and 1861).⁵⁸

The fact that the Vanemuine theatre was decidedly a centre of Estonian culture did not halter Baltic German art activity in the town. In fact, Rein Loodus has argued that Baltic German art exhibits began 'to take a clear step forward' after the dust began to settle in 1906.⁵⁹ One exhibit in Tartu in 1908 organized by the local Tartu German Society included the latest works by Janis Rozentāls, Gerhard von Rosen, Carl von Winkler, popular Tartu portrait painter Elsbeth Rudolff and Eva Margrete Borchert-Schweinfurth. The star of the Tartu show, much like the debut exhibition of the Riga Art Society Salon in 1899, was now Tallinn-based Vilhelms Purvītis, whose landscapes and views of Tallinn 'enchanted' exhibition visitors.⁶⁰ Purvītis's and Rozentāls's continued association with German art societies travelling throughout the Baltic Provinces revealed that perhaps the ethnic divide written about on both sides was not as irreparable as often suggested.

At the same time, it is important to note that if critics contended that Baltic German and Estonian or Latvian art were indeed growing in different directions, the reason was not always tied to ethnicity. In 1909, Noor-Eesti sponsored the third exhibit of Estonian artists, which premiered in Tartu. Baltic German critic Arthur Behrsing (1873–1929) was positive about the Estonian exhibit, remarking that 'although Estonian art has no past, it certainly has a future'.⁶¹ Behrsing also detected a different current in Estonian art that was missing in Baltic German art – Estonian artists were divorced from using mimetic colour schemes and painted almost exclusively with acidic, contrasting colours. No other painter epitomized these colours in their works more than Konrad Mägi, who had sent his latest paintings to Estonia from Norway (see Figure 4). Behrsing considered Mägi to be 'a veritable conductor of colour' who blended polyphonic colours of excess 'into a harmonious whole with just the flip of a baton'.⁶² What is more, the *Stimmungsmalerei*, or mood painting so typical in Baltic German art, especially landscape painting by Gerhard von Rosen and Carl von Winkler, was, at least for Behrsing,

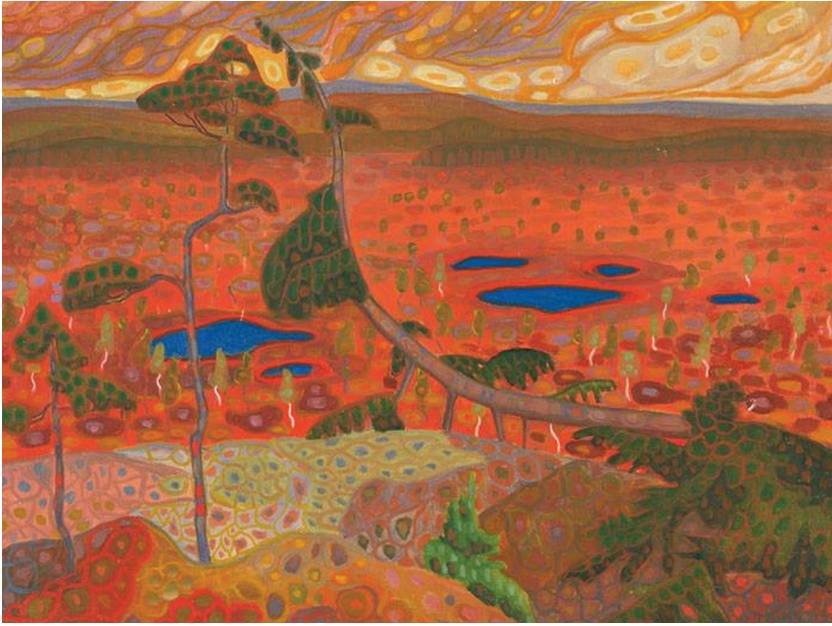


Figure 4: Konrad Mägi, Norwegian Landscape with Pine (1908–1910). Oil on canvas. Art Museum of Estonia (Photo: Stanislav Stepashko).

noticeably missing in Estonian artworks. Behrsing noted pivotal stylistic divergences between Estonian and Baltic German artists, a difference explained in part because the main artists of both groups came from different generations. The younger group of Estonian artists which Noor-Eesti promoted in their desire to ‘become European’ were thus more up-to-date with the latest trends on the continent after 1905 than their older Baltic German colleagues.

Coexistence and Cooperation in the Baltic Art World, 1906–1914

The divergence of art scenes in the Baltic Provinces along ethnic lines was not only a result of emboldened Latvian and Estonian national consciousness in the cultural realm. One of the most important -yet under-emphasized- effects of the 1905 revolution on the Baltic art world was the rise of Baltic German nationalism. The 1905 revolution drastically



Figure 5: Bernhard Borchert, *Knights of the Order* (1911). Oil on canvas (Private Collection).

changed the ways many Baltic Germans perceived themselves in relation to the increasingly urbanized Estonians and Latvians. Before the 1905 revolution, Baltic German identity was primarily based on class and social status, with weak ties to ethnic background. However, in her pivotal essay ‘Being Baltic, Baltic Germans, Estonians’, Ea Jansen has charted the increasingly ethno-political dimension of the term ‘Baltic’ in nineteenth-century Baltic German circles.⁶³ Thus, while the ‘Baltic’ (regional) part of Baltic German identity had developed alongside the Estonian and Latvian national awakenings from the 1860s onwards, the ‘German’ (national) dimension assumed more significance after the 1905 revolution. Indeed, once Baltic Germans realized their privileged livelihood was in danger after the tumultuous events surrounding 1905, Baltic Germans rallied to preserve German identity in a suddenly unstable society.

An intriguing case regarding Baltic German nationalism emerges in a recently discovered copy of the painting *Knights of the Order* (see Figure 5) by the Riga-based Baltic German painter Bernhard Borchert.⁶⁴ Borchert’s painting is unusual for a variety of reasons, most notably in its status as a rare example of colossal history painting in fin-de-siècle

Latvia. Eduards Kļaviņš has suggested that Borchert's painting is difficult to read since we do not know much about the artist's political affiliations.⁶⁵ We do know that Borchert trained in St. Petersburg at the genesis of Rūķis and that he and his artist wife Eva Margarethe Borchert-Schweinfurth were particularly close to Janis Rozentāls and Elli Forsell.⁶⁶ In fact, one of the most famous photographs of Baltic art history shows Borchert alongside Purvītis and Rozentāls, admiring Rozentāls's monumental frescoes of Latvian mythological figures soon to adorn the walls of the newly rebuilt Riga Latvian Society building in 1910.⁶⁷

Despite Kļaviņš's hesitations, I would like to suggest that the knights in Borchert's painting are indeed Baltic German. As such, it is possible to read the painting as an image regarding the German colonization of the Baltic Provinces in the 1200s. Knight imagery was a particularly prevalent theme in Baltic German poetry, especially in the years around 1905. Literature scholar Liina Lukas has called this phenomenon Baltic German 'colonial poetry'.⁶⁸ Lukas emphasizes that fin-de-siècle Baltic German 'colonial poetry' did not necessarily set up clear binaries between enlightened Christian Germans and pagan Estonian and Latvian barbarians. In a similar manner, Borchert's painting also elides these binaries, instead occupying a more liminal space in the matrix of cultural identities in the Baltic Provinces. In the painting Borchert's knights are not marching off triumphantly in battle nor do they seem hell-bent on conquest. Instead, the knights on horseback exchange conversations and quietly travel through a forest of soaring pines at twilight. Given the visual prominence of the forest at twilight, a motif with particularly mystical dimensions in Northern European painting in the second half of the nineteenth century, it seems that the immersive nature of Borchert's scene is just as important as the knights who travel through it.

Further details suggest that Borchert's painting is not pro-German at the systematic exclusion of Estonians and Latvians. While the extant version is dated to 1911, Estonian-language exhibition reviews comment on a painting by Borchert with the same name as early as 1904, thus predating any of the post-1905 'irreversible' schisms among ethnic groups in the Baltic region.⁶⁹ Moreover, through the size of the painting, Borchert is able to monumentalize a specifically Baltic German history – the arrival in the Baltic region – thereby celebrating Baltic

German, as opposed to a specifically exclusionary ‘German’ culture.⁷⁰ Such a reading suggests that Borchert’s painting *Knights of the Order* could represent an example of Baltic German National Romanticism, a benign version which peacefully coexisted alongside its Latvian and Estonian counterparts.

Borchert was not the only Baltic German to eschew exclusionary Baltic German nationalism. Gerhard von Rosen published a thought-provoking article in 1907 entitled, ‘Does Baltic art exist?’ Rosen’s article was an extensive overview of the development of an art scene in the region and he concluded that ‘the unification of the powers of all native artists is the foundation of the genesis of an actual Baltic art’.⁷¹ But Rosen’s desire for unification did not remain mere rhetoric. In 1906 the Riga City Art Museum commissioned Rosen and Purvītis to paint lunettes adorning the second floor of the museum with landscapes depicting the Baltic region. Between 1907 and 1908 Purvītis painted three lunette landscapes: an autumnal scene of castle ruins in Koknese, an evocative evening cityscape of the town of Jelgava, and, his signature, a winter landscape of the artist’s native Kurland. Rosen, originally from Rakvere in the province of Estland, painted a cityscape of Tallinn, a view of Riga, and a lunette depicting a rocky Estonian shoreline. Depicting landscapes from all across the region, the lunette landscape paintings were commissioned in accordance with Wilhelm Neumann’s desire to ensure the Riga City Art Museum as the premiere art centre for all three Baltic Provinces. Since Neumann seems to have favoured Baltic German artists (most solo exhibitions at the museum were overwhelmingly focused on Baltic Germans), it remains ambiguous if the cooperation between Purvītis and Rosen was indicative of multiethnic inclusivity or exceptional exploitation. Regardless of Neumann’s ethno-political allegiances, the very creation of a series of landscapes together by Rosen and Purvītis reinforced the notion that such works were just as evocative of home for Latvians as for Estonians and Baltic Germans.

Conclusion

1905 has served as a convenient turning point for Baltic art historians because the Russian Empire’s first steps towards democracy, belated as they may have been, galvanized Estonian and Latvian artists towards

greater autonomy and eventual independence from Baltic German cultural institutions. However, I hope to have demonstrated that the ‘provincial Baltic German languor’ looming over the fin-de-siècle Baltic art world is a fallacy which elides multicultural cooperation and competition among the region’s artists. Baltic German influence did not decline but rather worked in concert with the increased opportunities and critical acclaim for artists of Latvian and Estonian origins throughout the early twentieth century. Within a short period of time, power relations drastically shifted among the various ethnic groups of the region. If Baltic Germans still dominated the region in the early 1890s, cultural hegemony over the area became ever more egalitarian and representative of the local population by World War I. After Estonia and Latvia declared independence in 1918, both states created and enacted laws protecting the cultural autonomy of the region’s minorities, including Jews, Russians, and Baltic Germans – the most progressive laws of their sort in Europe at the time. Earlier clashes and collaboration among the artists of the region undoubtedly laid part of the groundwork for continued multiculturalism well into the interwar era.

Notes

- 1 Kristiāna Ābele, ‘The Picture of the Period 1890-1915 in Latvian Art Historical Writing: Ethnocentric Distortions and Ways to Correct Them’, *Kunšteaduslikke Uurimusi* 21:3/4 (2012) 12.
- 2 Kristiāna Ābele, ‘Tautieši un novadnieki. Nacionālais jautājums un teritoriālā identitāte Latvijas mākslas dzīvē 19. gs. beigās un 20. gs. sākumā’ in Daina Lāce (ed.), *Māksla un politiskie konteksti*. (Rīga, 2006) 39–63.
- 3 Ābele, ‘Ethnocentric Distortions’, 29.
- 4 Ivars Ījabs, ‘Another Baltic Postcolonialism: Young Latvians, Baltic Germans, and the Emergence of the Latvian National Movement’, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42:1 (2014) 88–107.
- 5 Suzanne Pourchier-Plasseraud, *Arts and Nation: The Role of Visual Arts and Artists in the Making of Latvian Identity, 1905–1940* (Amsterdam, 2015) 49. Receiving little discussion or analysis, Baltic German art functions abstractly as a foil to the development of a national Latvian art

- in Pourchier-Plasseraud's study, continuing nationalist narratives many scholars, most fervently Kristiāna Ābele, strive to dismantle.
- 6 Tiina Abel, 'The Force of Nature. Realism and the Düsseldorf School of Painting,' <http://kumu.ekm.ee/en/syndmus/the-force-of-nature-realism-and-the-dusseldorf-school-of-painting/> accessed 03 July 2015. It is important to note here that Tiina Abel's scholarship has been absolutely fundamental in charting a history of nineteenth-century Baltic German artists and that this exhibition was part and parcel of this important paradigm shift. What I aim to highlight here is how, perhaps subconsciously, art historians feel compelled to explain why Baltic German artists are included rather than simply including them.
 - 7 Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890–1915* (Durham and London, 2009) 10.
 - 8 Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Berkeley, 2014) 8.
 - 9 Elizabeth Clegg, *Art, Design and Architecture in Central Europe, 1890–1920* (New Haven and London, 2006) 4–6.
 - 10 Russification reforms swept the empire in the 1880s, attempting to replace Latvian- and Estonian-language education and high culture with Russian. Baltic historians have rightly argued that the cultural impact of Russification is difficult to determine in the Baltic Provinces. Moreover, the Russian immigrants who moved to the Baltic Provinces in the second half of the nineteenth century came from working-class backgrounds. Those with an interest in art education would have sought opportunities back in Russia proper. Edward C. Thaden (ed.), *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914* (Princeton, 2014).
 - 11 Kristin Leigh Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space* (Ann Arbor, 2012) 82–83, quoted in Kristina Jõekalda, 'Baltic Identity via German Heritage? Seeking Baltic German Art in the Nineteenth Century', *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 23:3/4 (2014) 102.
 - 12 R. [Janis Rozentāls], 'Rīgas jaunā mākslas muzeja atvēršana un Baltijas mākslinieku izstāde II', *Vērotājs* 11:1 (1905) 1383–1384.
 - 13 Janis Rozentāls, 'Baltijas mākslinieku izstāde', *Latvija*, 21 February 1909.
 - 14 Vaike Tiik, 'Eesti kunstielu XIX. ja XX. sajandivahetusel', *Kunst* 1 (1966) 1.
 - 15 *Virulane*, 29 June 1887.
 - 16 Elise von Jung-Stilling's Drawing School was founded in Riga in 1873 and only for women until it became co-ed in 1895. On Jung-Stilling's school, see Eduards Kļaviņš (ed.), *Art History of Latvia. The Period of*

- Neo-Romanticist Modernism, 1890–1915*. Part 4 (Rīga, 2014) 34–36; and Jeremy Howard, *East European Art: 1650–1950* (Oxford, 2006) 112–113. On art education in nineteenth-century Tallinn and Tartu, see Rein Loodus, *Kunstieliu Eesti linnades 19. sajandil. Uurimusi Eesti kunstist ja kunstielust* (Tallinn, 1993) 63–64 and 138–140, respectively.
- 17 Artists of Baltic German extraction often trained in different centres around Germany, where their families already had connections. On Estonian connections to the Düsseldorf Academy, see Mai Levin, 'Düsseldorf-Estland: die Modernisierungsbewegung in der religiösen Kunst um 1900', in Bettin Baumgärte (ed.), *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre international Ausstrahlung 1819–1918* (Düsseldorf, 2011) 240–249.
 - 18 On the nineteenth-century reforms affecting Latvians, see Andrejs Plakans, *The Latvians: A Short History* (Stanford, 1995) 85–87. Toivo Raun addresses the Estonian case in *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford, 1987) 44–80.
 - 19 Aino Kallas, *Nuori-Viro. Muotokuva ja suuntaviivoja* (Helsinki, 1918) 12. Quoted in Mirjam Hinrikus, 'Decadent Modernism and the Imprint of Taine in Aino Kallas', *Young Estonia. Portraits and Trajectories* in Leena Kurvet-Käosaar and Lea Rojola (eds) *Aino Kallas: Negotiations with Modernity* (Helsinki, 2011) 74.
 - 20 A similar ethnographic exhibit did occur the same year in Budapest, celebrating the millennial of the Hungarian state, see Rebecca Houze, 'Home as a Living Museum: Ethnographic Display and 1896 Millennial Exhibition in Budapest', *Centropa* 12:2 (2012) 131–151.
 - 21 'Die lettische ethnographische Ausstellung', *Düna-Zeitung*, 7 August 1896.
 - 22 Matilda [Matilde Jureviča-Priedīte], 'Baltijas mākslenieku gleznu izstāde Majoros', *Vērotājs* 10:1 (1904) 1281–1287. Quoted in Kļaviņš, *Art History of Latvia*, 95.
 - 23 My reading of Paul Raud's *Old Man from Muhu* is indebted to Jeremy Canwell, 'Modern Translation: Estonian Art from the National Awakening to the Brezhnev Era', (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 2013) 69.
 - 24 'Latviešu etnogrāfiskā izstādē. II', *Latviešu Avīzes*, 4 September 1896.
 - 25 H. Laipmann [Ants Laikmaa], 'Kunstkäsitöö näitus', *Teataja*, 15 December 1904.
 - 26 On the Kurland Province Museum, see Elita Grosmane, 'Piemirsts fenomens Latvijas kultūras vēsturē: Kurzemes Provinces muzejs', in Rūta Kaminska (ed.), *Pilsēta. Laikmets. Vide* (Rīga, 2007) 99–107. On the Estland Province Museum, see Tõnis Liibek (ed.), *Eestimaa Provintsi muuseum ja muuseumitraditsiooni algus Eestis* (Tallinn, 2013).

- 27 Teodors Zeiferts, 'Pēdējas Rīgas Mākslas biedrības izstādes nozīme', *Mājas viesis*, 8 January 1899.
- 28 Johann Walter's ethnic identity has been a particularly thorny issue in Latvian art history. Kristiāna Ābele's illustrious monograph on the artist views Walter's oeuvre holistically, including both his works related to Latvia and his later success in Germany; Kristiāna Ābele, *Johans Valters* (Rīga, 2006). For a more concise overview on Walter in English, see Kristiāna Ābele, *Johans Valters – Johann Walter* (Rīga, 2014).
- 29 Zeiferts, 'Pēdējas Rīgas Mākslas biedrības izstādes nozīme'.
- 30 K., '1. mākslas izstādes atklāšana Koknesē', *Baltijas Vēstnesis*, 28 June 1904.
- 31 Laikmaa, 'Ūleskutse', *Teataja*, 17 November 1903.
- 32 Gustav Suits, "'Kujutawast kunstist' Eestis ja Kalewipoja piltidest'", *Linda*, 11 December 1903, 918–923.
- 33 On the intersections of upper-class Baltic German female artists and Estonian working-class students, see Bart C. Pushaw, 'Uuendus ja ükskõiksus: naiskunstnikud Eestis 19. sajandi lõpus ja 20. sajandi alguses – Innovation and Indifference: Women Artists in Fin-de-Siècle Estonia', in Merike Kurisoo and Kersti Koll (eds), *Naiskunstnik ja tema aeg – A Woman Artist and Her Time* (Tallinn, 2014) 39–82.
- 34 Kristi Burman, *Paul Burman: Living and Existential Space* (Umeå, 2002) 45–46.
- 35 Alfred Waga, *Aleksander Uurits* (Tallinn, 1938) 8.
- 36 Toivo U. Raun, 'Violence and Activism in the Baltic Provinces during the Revolution of 1905', *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 10 (2006) 48–59.
- 37 Teodors Zeiferts, 'Baltijas vāciešu un latviešu kultūra', *Dienas Lapa*, 23 July 1905; Teodors Zeiferts, 'Mākslinieks Purvītis un vācieši', *Dienas Lapa*, 23 July 1905.
- 38 Zeiferts, 'Pēdējas Rīgas Mākslas'.
- 39 Mary Illyne, 'A Russian Painter. W. Pourvit', *The Studio* 142 (1905) 285–290.
- 40 Art historians have long emphasized Purvītis's peasant origins. A common narrative in his biography tells of the artist's embarrassment at wanting to draw and sketch at the Jauži farmstead where his family lived. This peasant origin, common for the majority of ethnic Latvian and Estonian artists in the 1890s, became central to emphasizing such artists' rootedness with their natural (and national) environment in later nationalist histories of art in the region. On this aspect of Purvītis's biography in English, see

- Dace Lamberga, 'Vilhelms Purvītis – Life and Art', in Aija Brasliņa et al., *Vilhelms Purvītis, 1872–1945* (Riga, 2000) 56–57.
- 41 Quoted in Ābele, 'Ethnocentric Distortions', 15.
- 42 Anonymous [Vilhelms Purvītis], 'Zur Zuschrift: Der neue Künstlerverein und die radikale Petition der lettischen Intelligenz', *Düna-Zeitung*, 23 August 1905. Quoted in Ābele, 'Ethnocentric Distortions', 15–16.
- 43 On Neumann, see Jõekalda, 'Baltic Identity via German Heritage?', 79–110.
- 44 The Estland Province Museum was most successful as a venue for local artists to display their works and foster an art exhibition culture in Tallinn. Nevertheless, the Estland Province Museum was not dedicated solely to the visual arts, also collecting ethnographic material, scientific curios, and preserved specimens of local flora and fauna. Liibek, *Eestimaa Provintsi muuseum*, 92–113, 136–145.
- 45 *Art History of Latvia*, 87.
- 46 Anders Henriksson, 'Minority Nationalism and the Politics of Gender: Baltic German Women in the Late Imperial Era', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 23:3 (1996) 217.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ābele, 'Ethnocentric Distortions', 16.
- 49 *Rigasche Rundschau*, 27 April 1905. Quoted in Katja Wezel, 'Loyalty, Minority, Monarchy: The Baltic German Press and 1905', in Felicitas Fischer von Weikersthal et al. (eds), *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspectives: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas* (Bloomington, IN, 2013) 223.
- 50 Anders Henriksson, *The Tsar's Loyal Germans: Riga's German Community, Social Change and the Nationality Question, 1855–1905* (Boulder, CO, 1983).
- 51 Ants Laikmaa estonianized his name from Hans Laipmann to Ants Laikmaa in the 1930s, an era when the trend was customary in the newly independent Republic of Estonia.
- 52 Peep Pilak, 'Bernhard Laipmann. 1905. aasta kangelane kunstis ja elus', *Eesti Päevaleht*, 14 January 2006. <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/kultuur/bernhard-laipmann-1905-aasta-kangelane-kunstis-ja-elus?id=51028112> accessed on 27 January 2015.
- 53 A significant amount of the Baltic intelligentsia settled temporarily in Helsinki, where repressions were less severe because of the status of Finland as an Autonomous Grand Duchy within the Empire. On the activities of the

- Estonian intelligentsia in Helsinki, see Seppo Zetterberg, *Kultuurisillad ja revolutsioonituuled: Helsingi eesti kogukond 20. sajandi alguses* (Tallinn, 2013).
- 54 Jeremy Howard, 'From the Stieglitz Forward: The Snaking Progress of Latvian Applied Art, ca. 1900–1914', *Centropa* 4:3 (2004) 274.
- 55 'Kunstverein', *Düna-Zeitung*, 5 November, 1908, Quoted in *Art History of Latvia*, 135.
- 56 Karin Hallas-Murula has investigated the intersections of modern Finnish and Estonian culture in the realm of architecture in her book *Soome-Eesti: Sajand arhitektuurisuhteid* (Tallinn, 2005). On Lindgren and Lönn's Vanemuine project in Estonia, see pp. 26–32.
- 57 Aivar Pöldvee, 'Kuidas 'sunnitati' eestlastele Vanemuine?' *Postimees*, 06 April 2013, accessed 26 February 2014. <http://arvamus.postimees.ee/1189870/aivar-poldvee-kuidas-sunnitati-eestlastele-vanemuine>.
- 58 Hallas-Murula, *Soome-Eesti*, 29–31.
- 59 Loodus, *Kunstieli Eesti linnades*, 63.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Arthur Behrsing, 'III. Estnische Kunstausstellung (Spritzenhaus)' *Revalsche Zeitung*, 31 December 1909.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ea Jansen, "Baltlus", baltisakslased, eestlased', *Tuna* 2 (2005) 35–44.
- 64 This information was conveyed to the author in a conversation with Kristiāna Ābele on 28 May 2014.
- 65 Kļaviņš, *Art History of Latvia*, 239.
- 66 Eduards Kļaviņš, 'Das Künstlerpaar Borchert und die erste Generation der Gemeinschaft 'Rūkis'', in Brigitte Hartel and Bernfried Lichtnau (eds), *Kunst im Ostseeraum: Malerei, Graphik, Photographie von 1900 bis 1920* (Frankfurt, 1995) 75–86.
- 67 These murals are significant accomplishments in Latvian art history, but they have been discussed elsewhere in English. See Howard, 'Latvian National Romanticism and Art Nouveau: Origins and Synthesis' in Elita Grosmane (ed.), *Romantisms un Neoromantisms Latvijas mākslā* (Rīga, 1998) 144–147 and Inta Pujāte, *Janis Rozentāls* (Rīga, 2014) 98–101.
- 68 Liina Lukas, *Baltisaksa kirjandusväli, 1890–1918* (Tallinn-Tartu, 2006) 119–122.
- 69 'Piltide näitus Bürgermusses', *Postimees*, 13 April 1904.
- 70 On the tension between the 'German' and the 'Baltic' nature of Baltic German art, see Jõekalda, 'Baltic Identity via German Heritage?', 93–98.

71 Gerhard von Rosen, 'Gibt es eine baltische Kunst?', *Rigaer Tageblatt*, 10 March 1907.

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