

# ACTIVITIES

## Discussion

- How do you think this piece was made? What clues are there in the work?
- Why do you think Kirchner chose Woodcut printing? What could he achieve with this technique?
- The Nazis labelled Kirchner's work as 'degenerate'. Hitler said that:

*"Works of art' that are not capable of being understood in themselves but need some pretentious instruction book ... will never again find their way to the German people."*

Why do you think Expressionism caused such strong reactions? Do you think any type of art should be banned?

## Making Comparisons

- Find other examples of printmaking in the exhibition, such as those by Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff. How have they approached mark-making and quality of line?

## Follow Up

- Using lino or Polystyrene tiles try to create a print of a river or lake scene. Change the lines to see how it changes the rhythm and energy of the print.
- Create a poem, short story or script to describe what is happening in Sailing Boat off Fehmarn
- Artists are still censored and prosecuted today. Research recent cases of art censorship – do you agree with the decisions?
- Download a podcast at: <http://www.open2.net/ethicsbites/art-censorship-morality.html>, and read about a case in Turkey at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/26/turkey.humanrights>



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*'There is no greater joy than watching the printer's roller the first time it moves across the woodblock... and observing whether the desired effect has come about'*

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

# Ernst Ludwig Kirchner SAILING BOAT OFF FEHMARN





## About The Artist

Kirchner was one of the founders of the artist's group 'Die Brücke' or 'The Bridge'. He is seen by many as the greatest artist of German Expressionism.

Die Brücke wanted to move away from traditional artist expression, and create a bridge to new modes of expression.

They aimed to create art that expressed what the artist felt about the world and not just to show the outward appearance of things.

Kirchner's paintings used vivid, contrasting, non-representational colours. He enjoyed painting the people he saw on the streets of Berlin, sometimes exaggerating their characteristics, using bold colours and angular forms. Kirchner tried to capture the inner experience of city life.

Kirchner enlisted in the German army during WWI, but suffered a nervous breakdown and was discharged. His work was branded as 'degenerate' by the Nazis, and in 1937 over 600 of his works were confiscated by the Nazis and either sold abroad or destroyed. One of his most famous paintings 'Street Scene' was finally returned to the daughter of its former Jewish owner in 2006. Kirchner committed suicide in 1938.

## About The Artwork

Sailing Boat off Fehmarn captures a time when Kirchner travelled in search of unspoilt nature. He regularly visited the Baltic Island of Fehmarn.

Kirchner revived the art of woodcraft printing, where an image is carved into a block of wood, ink is then applied to the surface and the image is printed. This magnificent woodcut shows Kirchner's wife and other figures in a boat with great black sails as it moves past the distant shoreline. This print is on thick oriental wove paper and shows his mastery of the medium. The woodcut allows Kirchner to work in a way that is simple and direct, and yet there is energy in his marks. He became one of the 20th century's greatest printmakers.