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BRILLIANT MINDS

Kitzbühel's artistic master

Walde's artistic and intellectual brilliance

Alfons Walde was an exceptional Austrian artist renowned for exquisite painting. Walde's mastery encompassed seasonal themes, nudes, still lifes and Kitzbühel. Colour, light and mood were significant characteristics in his artistic expression. His art was influenced by the Wiener Secession movement after meeting Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele while studying architecture in Vienna. Walde was an acclaimed graphic designer. His designs promoted the province of Tyrol and Kitzbühel. Museum Kitzbühel celebrates its artistic master with a permanent gallery.

Kitzbühel and Tyrol were important in Alfons Walde's life and art. Walde was born on 8 February 1891 in the Tyrolean village of Oberndorf bei Kitzbühel. He was the son of Franz and Maria Walde. The Walde family moved to Kitzbühel in 1892 when his father accepted the role of school director. Walde attended the K.k. Realschule in Innsbruck between 1903 and 1910. He completed early aquarelle and tempera paintings during this period. He travelled to Vienna to study architecture at Vienna University of Technology in 1910. Robert Oerley, a distinguished Austrian architect supported the young student. The Kunsthandlung Czichna in Innsbruck was the venue for Walde's first exhibition in 1911. Five aquarelle paintings were displayed and demonstrated his exceptional talent. The following year six aquarelle paintings were displayed at the gallery.

Max von Esterle influenced the craftsmanship of young Walde. Von Esterle was an Austrian impressionist painter in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Von Esterle used intricate colours to depict exquisite landscapes. His imperious paintings of Kitzbühel and Arlberg exhibit sophistication and intricacy. *Kitzbüheler Berge* and *Almhütten im Winter* demonstrate the intricate colours appealing to Walde in his early teenage years. Walde developed an impulsive and intense use of colour. Von Esterle assisted the young artist to develop a subtle and sensitive understanding of composition.

The Wiener Secession movement was influential in the development of Walde's expressive style. Walde met Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele while attending university. Klimt and Schiele were members of the movement. The Wiener Secession was established in 1897 objecting to the historicist approach preferred by the Wiener Künstlerhaus. The group consisted of distinguished Austrian painters, sculptors and architects. Walde used black, red and blue to express a compositional style concentrating on landscapes and representing human form. *Frühlingsstimmung (Schwarzsee)* is an excellent example of the three colours and exquisite

composition. He began engraving on paintings using the handle of the paintbrush. Walde held his first exhibition at the Wiener Secession in 1913.

Kitzbüchel was an important subject of Walde's art. The Tyrolean luxury resort provides the locale for paintings examining the themes of winter, summer, spring, autumn and township. *Bergstadt II* celebrates the majesty of winter in the centre of town. White is both elegant and lavish in the painting. It enhances the exquisite stone facade of the Liebfrauenkirche and Pfarrkirche Sankt Andreas. *Winter in Kitzbühel* welcomes winter. White dominates the rooves and meadows. The sunlight on the Wilder Kaiser creates an intricate contrast between white and blue on the mountains. *Kitzbühel im Sommer* accentuates the green pastures and vitality of the town. The town is the centre for life and enjoyment. Walde's paintings celebrate ritual by depicting life through the seasons, the Jahrmarkt festival and citizens pursuing daily tasks.

Winter was a prominent theme in Walde's art and his winter landscapes received the most acclaim. The paintings convey the strong expressive element of his art and reveal a deeper understanding of the subject. The Wilder Kaiser is a prominent mountain near Kitzbühel. It is a significant natural feature of his art. The size and coarse qualities of the mountain provide a contrast to the gentle hills surrounding the town. He used a primordial and amorphous technique with an impeccable sense of mood and balance to create the winter landscapes. His delicate style allows the light to vibrate through the natural features. *Winterlandschaft* provides a fine example of mood, balance and light vibrating across the canvas.

Summer provided Walde with an opportunity to explore light and perspective in a different season. His mastery of light, perspective and expression created exceptional landscapes. The expert use of colour and composition resulted in art capturing the appropriate mood. *Kitzbühel im Sommer* and *Kaiser Hochalm* beautifully portray the intricacies of summer. The audience experiences Walde's thoughts and glimpse his world through his art. Walde was surrounded by the majesty of Kitzbühel. It provides a sample of Tyrolean culture and custom. The rural environment, Landhaustil architecture, mountainous terrain and social life celebrate the intricate beauty of Kitzbühel.

Nudity allowed Walde to explore the elegance of female beauty. The Wiener Secession movement influenced his decision to place nude subjects in front of a colourful and ornamentally decorated background. After the Second World War, he combined a variety of techniques to portray complex moods subjects expressed and their environment. Walde combined tempera, pastel and oil to create exquisite nude art. It reflected his strong interest in the female form. *Tänzerin* is a beautiful example of Walde's use of ornamental decoration to celebrate feminine beauty. Erotic fantasy is evident in his nude art. It provides an insight into the principles governing his artistry.

Walde's still art reflected his artistic development and evolution. His early flower sketches were influenced by the Wiener Secession movement. The Jugendstil art of Gustav Klimt provided early guidance. He primarily used tempera and improvisation to sensitively express colours. *Die Sonnenblumen* evokes finesse and is compared to Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. He

created oil paintings of flowers later in his life. *Fuchseinstock* is a small oil painting. It reflects his maturity and intricate understanding of colour and composition.

Graphic design remained a significant form of expression throughout Walde's life. Walde intended his art to be available to the public. He designed several posters for Schlechter, Lackner-Schuh, Oberschi and other sporting goods corporations. He won first prize in a competition created by the Landesverkehrsamt (Tyrolean Provincial Traffic Office) in Innsbruck in 1924. His designs were used in numerous marketing campaigns for the province of Tyrol (Tyrol). The *Auracher Kirche, Aufsteig*, designs for the 1933 International Ski Federation world championships in Innsbruck and the poster for the 1954 Hahnenkammrennen alpine skiing race in Kitzbühel are some prominent examples. He designed the Kitzbühel Gams trademark for the luxurious resort.

Walde displayed impeccable versatility and skill using different media and surfaces to beautifully express his art. He created oil paintings on canvas, wood and cardboard. *Bergsommer* is an exquisite oil painting on cardboard. The deep brown timber of the buildings and shadow cast across the buildings by the summer sun attract the audience's gaze. Tempera was used to create paintings on paper and cardboard. He also created watercolour paintings and used pastel. *Liegender weiblicher Akt auf buntem Tuch* is a nude drawing. The naked model appears in front of a colourful cloth to express his strong fascination with the female physique and eroticism.

Museum Kitzbühel is dedicated to Walde's art. The permanent gallery contains sixty paintings and more than a hundred drawings, photographs and graphic designs within an area of 250 square metres. The museum provides the ambience to enjoy the intellectual and artistic beauty of one of the finest artists. *Porträt Petzold Sitzend* is a self-portrait appearing in the gallery. The painting provides an allegory for Walde's artistry. It directs the audience to contemplate and enjoy the allure and intricacies of life. Alfons Walde died in Kitzbühel on 11 December 1958 from a heart attack at the age of 67. The museum celebrates a distinguished artist.

Alfons Walde was an extraordinarily talented artist. He displayed his talent from a young age. Colour, light and mood were prominent characteristics of his painting. Exploring the seasonal themes of Kitzbühel provided the opportunity to examine the intricacies and sensitivities of life. He was influenced by the Wiener Secession movement while studying architecture in Vienna. Eroticism is a significant theme in Walde's nude paintings. Rich colour and ornamental art conveys erotic fantasy and desire. He was also a talented graphic designer and participated in campaigns to promote the province of Tyrol and Kitzbühel.