

Topic Page: [Ernst, Max, 1891-1976](#)

Definition: **Ernst, Max** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

German painter and sculptor, founder of Cologne Dada (1919), later influential in surrealism. Ernst was a prolific innovator and developed ways of adapting collage, photomontage and other pictorial techniques. His most important works include *L'Eléphant Célèbes* (1921). Ernst left the surrealist movement in 1938 and lived in New York (1941-48), where he collaborated on the periodical *VVV* with André Breton and Marcel Duchamp.

Summary Article: **Ernst, Max**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

German artist, a major figure in Dada and then surrealism. He worked in France 1922–38 and in the USA from 1941. He experimented with collage, photomontage, and surreal images, creating some of the most haunting and distinctive images of 20th-century art. His works include *The Elephant Celebes* (1921; Tate Gallery, London) and *The Temptation of St Anthony* (1945; Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg).

Ernst was born in Brühl, near Cologne, and studied philosophy at Bonn. He first exhibited in Berlin in 1916. In 1919 he was a leading figure in Dadaist demonstrations in Cologne, and going to Paris in 1920 he helped André Breton and Paul Eluard in founding the surrealist movement. He became one of its leading visual exponents, creating fantastical images using 19th-century illustrations, and painting bizarre figures, often half animal, and elaborate, dreamlike landscapes. He invented the technique of **frottage** (rubbing colour or graphite on paper laid over a textured surface), a technique he saw as akin to surrealist automatic writing. In his sculpture, he was influenced by primitive art. He worked in a variety of media, producing a 'collage novel', *La Femme cent têtes* (1929), working on films with Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel, and designing sets and costumes for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. In 1938 he left the surrealist group after a disagreement with Breton and in 1941 settled in New York, where he became an important figure in the development of American art. He returned to Paris in 1953.

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