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Museum and Gallery Listings

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ART

Museums and galleries are in Manhattan unless otherwise noted. Full reviews of recent art shows: nytimes.com/art.

ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER: 'THE UNEXPECTED NEW: LATE PAINTINGS' The German Expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner is best known for his riotous Berlin street scenes, all sharp elbows and clashing colors. His later paintings, created after a move from Germany to Davos, Switzerland, and a long recovery from a nervous breakdown, appear less strident. Some 20 of these works, made between 1921 and 1935, are on view in this exhibition at the Michael Werner gallery.

From the relative isolation of the Swiss Alps, Kirchner seems to be channeling Matisse in the patterned tablecloth of "Wine Glass" (1927-29) and Picasso in the conjoined bodies of "Singer at the Piano" and "Eaters" (both 1930). Kirchner's flattened, curvilinear forms also betray a less avant-garde influence, that of the turn-of-the-20th-century Jugendstil decorative arts movement.

Perhaps in deference to the beauty of the Swiss landscape, Kirchner's palette is more subdued than in his earlier paintings. In the most vibrant works, like "Two Nudes in the Forest," left, pink and orange brush up against blue, green and lavender.

The paintings were nevertheless too modern for the Swiss public; they received damning press, and several were rejected by museums. The exhibition's title is inspired by a comment from Kirchner to his brother: "The unusual new always shocks people at first." (Through June 14, Michael Werner, 4 East 77th Street, Manhattan, 212-988-1623, michaelwerner.com.) KAREN ROSENBERG