

COMPOSITION

The arrangement of the elements within a work of art.

The composition is the interplay between the subject, foreground, background, and other elements in the artwork.

(Interplay means the way in which two or more things have an effect on each other).



In this woodcut, four horses nestle together to form a harmonious composition. The shape of each animal fits into the other, like pieces in a puzzle. A member of Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), Franz Marc made many images of animals as symbols of spiritual renewal, rebirth, and inner peace. The cool green and blue hues express the artist's vision of a spiritual connection to nature: "I am trying to heighten my feeling for the organic rhythm in all things, trying to establish a pantheistic contact with the tremor and flow of blood in nature, in animals, in the air—trying to make it all into a picture..."¹



George Grosz's paintings, from both before and after World War I, depict German society in the throes of violent destruction. Grosz had a mental breakdown and was discharged from the army as "permanently unfit" the year he made this painting. Glass, bricks, and people fly through the air in a city rent by an apparent bomb attack. A bird's-eye view shows chaos unfolding as buildings pinwheel around the centre of impact. The composition is disorienting, but the colour reverberates outward in vibrant and geometric plumes, lending structure and beauty to an otherwise riotous scene of destruction.