

German Expressionism consisted of a number of related creative movements in Germany before the First World War that reached a peak in Berlin during the 1920s. These developments in Germany were part of a larger Expressionist movement in north and central European culture in fields such as architecture, dance, painting, sculpture, as well as cinema. This article deals primarily with developments in German life. Expressionist cinema before and immediately after World War I.

Start of German Expressionism in Films - It is said that in the history of films, German expressionism filmed the reality of daily life. The films and the art of the expressionist period represented the gruesome truth that the people of Germany dealt with. The period of expressionism is also called Weimar period in the film history that captured the emotions and sufferings of the broken nation and its people. As an extension of Avant-Garde movement, German expressionism started with the influence in art and painting where the “expression” was used as a style to narrate their society.

Style of German Expressionism - Germany as a nation crumbled in the World War, the economy and the livelihood of the people came to great suffering. The films from other countries were banned in 1916 and this led to German Expressionism. The films made were surreal, distorted with heavy shadows to make the story look gloomy and depressing. The movement expressed the depression in the people’s minds caused by the war.

Dominant characteristics of Expressionism

1. Expressionism used mise-en-scene and heavy atmosphere
2. Long shadow effects
3. Artificial sets with realistic details
4. The details in the sets bring forth the emotional, that stirs audience mind
5. Camera set in unexpected angles gives audience a different perception
6. Aims in evoking mystery, hallucinations and extreme emotional stress
7. Slow pace than other regular movies

End of German Expressionism - German expressionism came to an end in 1923 with political barriers and forced ban, it was named that expressionism was degenerated art for film making in Germany. However the German expressionists moved to Hollywood where expressionism continued with the influence of Hollywood glamour and culture. It is considered that the main reason for the fade away of Expressionism was the gradual disinterest in the topic

Among the first Expressionist films, *The Student of Prague* (1913), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *From Morn to Midnight* (1920), *The Golem: How He Came into the World* (1920), *Destiny* (1921), *Nosferatu* (1922), *Phantom* (1922), and *Schatten* (1923) were highly symbolic and stylized.