Explain the ways in which one work is associated with German Expressionism

Kirchner’s ‘Franzi in front of a chair’ is an example of early work from the Die Brucke group of German Expressionist artists. At this point, Kirchner was working with Heckel, Nolde and Schmidt-Rottluff by the lake at Moritzburg. This work reveals the aims of the group to be “a bridge to the future” and to challenge German bourgeois complacency by disrupting ideas of beauty. Young Franzi is positioned to the front left of the canvas in a cropped, asymmetric composition. Her face is roughly painted in lurid green tones creating significant unease in the viewer. This is further heightened by the complementary red used to mark out her lips and eye sockets. Her dress, necklace and the carved chair behind her show the importance of primitive artefacts to the group who were fascinated by the raw power and simplification of these works. The harsh angularity of the black lines – seen particularly in the chair arm and in her hair - reveal the Germanic Gothic roots of this group and mark out their work from the earlier (and influential) French Fauve painters. The background of the work gives little away in terms of narrative or setting – again emphasising the socio-political aims of the group. Instead it is marked out in rough patches of green and orange with bare canvas showing through to emphasise their aim of sincere spontaneity.