

Press release  
Zurich, 24 May 2012

**Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Adrian Zingg. Precursor of Romanticism'**

**From 25 May to 12 August 2012 the Kunsthhaus Zürich presents Switzerland's first museum exhibition devoted to the work of Adrian Zingg (1734-1816). Zingg is one of the most important representatives of landscape between the European Enlightenment and Pre-Romanticism in Dresden. He explored the countryside around Dresden and produced numerous views of what has since become known as the Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. His large-format sepia plates influenced an entire generation of artists, right through to Caspar David Friedrich, while his choice of motifs and interpretation of landscape left its mark on souvenir production in the early days of tourism.**

Born in St. Gallen, Adrian Zingg served his apprenticeship with Johann Rudolph Holzhalb in Zurich and Johann Ludwig Aberli in Berne. After spending seven years as collaborator of Johann Georg Wille in Paris he moved to Dresden, where he remained active for five decades. His most important graphic works are to be found in Dresden's Collection of Prints, Drawings and Photographs and in the Albertina, Vienna. The 100 works assembled for the exhibition include loans from the Dresden State Art Collections, the Albertina, Vienna, the Museum of Prints and Drawings of the National Museums in Berlin, the Department of Prints and Drawings of the Kunstmuseum Basel and the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen.

FROM THE ALPS TO FRENCH LANDSCAPE

The exhibition, designed by curator of the Department of Prints and Drawings Bernhard von Waldkirch, guides visitors through six sections. The first consists of biographical works, chiefly portraits of Adrian Zingg in courtly surroundings and making nature drawings with his pupils; they include the celebrated full-length portrait of his friend Anton Graff, a court painter in Dresden. The second is devoted to Zingg's apprenticeship in Switzerland and Paris. His time in Berne was informed by his discovery of the Alps. Thereafter, Zingg moved to Wille's internationally renowned studio in Paris. Here he learnt the French method of landscape engraving, which led to his appointment as a teacher at the newly established Academy of Art in Dresden. Images of huts and ruins testify to the influence of François Boucher, Jean-Baptiste Oudry and Hubert Robert, copies of whose works were widely admired.

THE ARTIST AS DISCOVERER OF THE SAXON AND BOHEMIAN SWITZERLAND

The third section deals with Zingg's time in Dresden. After moving from Paris in 1766 he remained active in the German city until his death in 1816, working as a teacher at the Academy and running a highly successful studio. Zingg's 'Studies for Landscape Artists' offer an insight into the training of his pupils, and also

served as a source of motifs for the foregrounds of his large-scale landscapes. Drawing-excursions into the area around Dresden were a favourite exercise. Alongside some celebrated townscapes, at the heart of this section are the large sepia plates depicting Saxon castles – apparently a major commission from Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen. This is the first museum exhibition to pay tribute to Zingg as an artistic discoverer Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. Zingg popularized the region as a destination for international artistic and scholarly tourism and established a type that achieved canonical significance in landscape painting through the works of Caspar David Friedrich und Ludwig Richter.

### A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN

The fourth and fifth sections consist of selected works by Zingg's pupils that reveal his influence as a teacher and head of a studio; they include pieces by Carl August Richter, Johann Gottfried Jentzsch, Christoph Nathe, as well as the Swiss Johann Conrad Rordorf and Conrad Gessner, son of the painter and poet of idylls Salomon Gessner of Zurich. Zingg was an astute and successful businessman. Using his technique of outline etching, mostly with a brown wash, that he adopted from Aberli and subsequently refined, he created a facsimile-like process that produced deceptively authentic imitations of his sepia drawings which could be copied many times over, thus making them available to a wider audience.

### COMPARISON WITH CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH AND OTHER SUCCESSORS

The sixth and final section looks at Zingg's 19th-century successors, with a particular emphasis on the relationship to the Romantic conception of landscape. A comparison of the nature studies and two sepia plates by Adrian Zingg and Caspar David Friedrich reveals direct connections that have never before been examined in an exhibition. Like Zingg, Caspar David Friedrich had reproductions of his sepia plates made, occasionally in colour. Academic practice, however, blunted the thrill of innovation and discovery into a 'Zingg mannerism' that was vehemently rejected by the young Pre-Romantics. The overview ends with works by Ludwig Richter and early brochures for the incipient tourist trade.

### COOPERATION AND PUBLICATION

The exhibition has been organised in association with the Collection of Prints, Drawings and Photographs of the Dresden State Art Collections. The concept was devised by the curators Dr. Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick and Dr. Claudia Schnitzer in collaboration with Bernhard von Waldkirch. The lavishly illustrated, 280-page publication based on recent research and published by Sandstein Verlag contains scholarly essays by W. Busch, A. Fröhlich, P. Kuhlmann-Hodick, B. Maaz, T. Pfeifer-Helke, C. Schnitzer, S. Weisheit-Possél and B. von Waldkirch. It is available from the Kunsthaus shop and booksellers for CHF 42.

The Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) and the Kunsthaus Zürich will be staging a colloquium on 'Science, Sentiment and Business' on 14 and 15 June ([www.sik-isea.ch](http://www.sik-isea.ch)). Excursions through 'Saxon Switzerland' will start from Dresden on 23 June and 22 September, led by the photographer and author Frank Richter. Further information can be found at [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch).

### END OF THE THREE-PART SERIES ON LANDSCAPES AROUND 1800

This exhibition marks the end of the Kunsthaus Zürich's three-part series on the invention and popularization of a pre-modern conception of landscape in drawing and printed graphics around 1800. The first two parts, staged in 2010, were 'Idyll in an Obstructed Landscape. Drawings and Gouaches by Salomon Gessner (1730-1788)' and 'Carl Wilhelm Kolbe (1759-1835). Giant Herbs and Monster Trees.' The achievements of these pioneers were long overshadowed by the Golden Age of landscape painting in the 17th century north and south of the Alps. It was not until the emergence of a modern sense of 'vernacular landscape', where the relationship between man and environment becomes visible, incorporating not only topography but also perceptual psychology, art theory and the natural sciences as well as sociocultural, economic and technical aspects, that the landscape genre could embark on its triumphant progress through the 19th century.

We wish to thank the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung for their support.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich. Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch). Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Whitsun 26–28 May: 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Admission incl. collection: CHF 15 / 10 (concessions). Children and young people up to the age of 16 free of charge.

Public guided tours: 31 May and 2 August with curator Bernhard von Waldkirch, 10 June and 5 July with Myriam Schlesinger. Private guided tours: +41 (0)44 253 84 84.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by ground line), [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch). Magasins Fnac: sales points in Switzerland: Rives, Balexert, Lausanne, Fribourg, Pathé Kino Basel, [www.fnac.ch](http://www.fnac.ch); France: Carrefour, Géant, Magasins U, 0 892 68 36 22 (EUR 0.34/min), [www.fnac.com](http://www.fnac.com); Belgium: [www.fnac.be](http://www.fnac.be).

### NOTE TO MEDIA

Illustrations are available at [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch) > Information > Press. Further information: Kunsthaus Zürich, Kristin Steiner. [kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch](mailto:kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch), tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13.