

Press release

Zurich, 4 July 2013

## Kunsthaus Zürich presents 'Félix Vallotton. Precious Moments'

**From 5 July to 15 September, the Kunsthaus Zürich will be showing some 50 paintings by Félix Vallotton in an exhibition entitled 'Precious Moments.' With half of the works coming from a private collection and the other half from storage at the Kunsthaus, this temporary dialogue is a revelation.**

It is no secret that the Kunsthaus Zürich holds a very important collection of paintings by Félix Vallotton, including key works such as the once-scandalous 'Bain au soir d'été' (1892/93). The 2007 exhibition 'Idyll on the Edge' brought together many of his finest pictures – and some of his most strikingly unconventional. Much less well known is that, in addition to the works accumulated by the Kunsthaus through a combination of selective purchases and gifts, Switzerland is also home to a second, equally important private collection of Vallottons. Until now, its full extent has been concealed from the public, the couple who assembled it preferring to remain anonymous.

### LANDSCAPES, INTERIORS, PORTRAITS

For visitors to the historic galleries of the Moser building, the attraction of seeing the Kunsthaus holdings complement and enrich this probably unique private collection is immediately obvious. As in a retrospective, every theme of Vallotton's art is represented: the fleeting embraces of lonely hearts, landscapes bereft of people, discreetly disguised adultery, magically lit beach scenes, dreamy gazes, nude card players. This sensitive and ironic observer, who depicted early 20th-century society with a degree of cool detachment and subtle social criticism, tells stories that are as topical today as they were in his lifetime.

### PRECIOUS MOMENTS

Most of the paintings on display were created between 1895 and 1912. This was the most productive, easiest and most successful period in Vallotton's life, after many years spent battling health problems and financial difficulties and surviving by selling prints. In 1899 he married his beloved of many years, a widow named Gabrielle Rodrigues-Henriques whose family wealth immediately transformed his financial situation. He was now a member of the bourgeoisie – a class that he had previously criticized indirectly in his pictures, with interiors that, for all their superficial respectability, in fact exposed society's double standards. Now he could spend the summers by the sea at Honfleur, near Lausanne or travelling around France. This changed the nature of his painting: it

became softer, more upbeat, lighter. Vallotton painted subjects such as his own apartment with Gabrielle as his model, delicate, pretty landscapes and street scenes – these were the good times, the precious moments! At last, he was successful and able to sell his canvases. In 1907 he met the Hahnlosers, a Swiss family of collectors who did much to promote his work, purchasing many of his pictures themselves or organizing their sale to other admirers. For the first time, Vallotton had entire exhibitions devoted to him.

### AROUND 50 PAINTINGS

For this project, the Kunsthau Zürich invited the collector to act as guest curator, creating a fascinating and entertaining dialogue between the two collections. For him, seeing the fruits of his decades-long engagement with Vallotton in their entirety for the first time in a museum is a unique experience; one that is combined with the challenge of working with a museum collection. It is a test for both groups of paintings. A deliberate decision has been made to exhibit not just the principal canonical works but rather a broad overview. As a result, the presentation includes works retrieved from the depths of the Kunsthau's storage areas that have rarely been seen before. The exhibition is thus a homage both to a major museum collection and to the passion of two charming art lovers and collectors who, quite simply, developed an enthusiasm for one of the most exceptional artists of the early modern era.

### ART EDUCATION AND PUBLICATION

Art historians from the Kunsthau will be conducting three public guided tours of the exhibition and answering questions from participants. The dates are: Sunday 7 July at 12 midday, Thursday 8 August at 6 p.m., and Sunday 15 September at 11 a.m. Private guided tours for small groups can also be arranged on request. A 32-page publication by Scheidegger & Spiess, with 17 illustrations accompanies the exhibition and is available from the Kunsthau shop for CHF 16.-.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthau Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel.: +41 (0)44 253 84 84, [www.kunsthau.ch](http://www.kunsthau.ch).

Open: Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see [www.kunsthau.ch](http://www.kunsthau.ch).

Admission incl. collection: CHF 15 / CHF 10 concessions and per head for groups of 20 or more (subject to change). Children and young people up to the age of 16 free of charge.

### 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 land line), [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch).

Zurich Tourism: Tourist Service in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, [www.zuerich.com](http://www.zuerich.com).

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

Visual material is available for download at [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch) under Information > Press.

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