

Press release
Zurich, 28 October 2014

Kunsthaus Zürich presents 'Master Drawings. 100 Years of the Prints and Drawings Collection'

In 2015, the Collection of Prints and Drawings of the Kunsthaus Zürich celebrates its 100th birthday. To mark this event, the exhibition 'Master Drawings', which runs from 23 January to 19 April 2015, brings together approximately 120 selected drawings from the 16th to the 21st centuries, including works by Raphael, Albrecht Dürer, Henry Fuseli, J.M.W. Turner, Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti, Cy Twombly, Urs Fischer, Erik van Lieshout, Jorinde Voigt and others.

Unlike the classic collections of prints and drawings assembled by princes and scholars or libraries, the Collection of Prints and Drawings of the Kunsthaus Zürich has its origins in a group of amateur artists and autodidacts who came together in 1787 to create the Künstlergesellschaft, or society of artists. They kept a 'Malerbuch', or painting book, to which each member regularly submitted drawings and watercolours.

LARGEST HOLDINGS OF DRAWINGS BY FUSELI AND HODLER

In 1915 the Director of the Kunsthaus, Wilhelm Wartmann, drew up the first 'Inventory of the hand drawings and prints collection'. It is thanks to him that the world's largest holdings of drawings by Henry Fuseli and Ferdinand Hodler are now in the Kunsthaus. Acquisitions were publicized in exhibitions and collection catalogues. Thanks to targeted purchases and donations, drawings by Italian, Dutch and Swiss Old Masters were also added to the collection. When the first extension to the Kunsthaus was built in 1925, users of the Prints and Drawings Collection and the library acquired a spacious reading and study room whose upper levels could also be used for exhibitions – one of the best facilities of its kind at the time.

OLD MASTERS, CLASSICAL MODERNISM, CONTEMPORARY ART

With some 95,000 works on paper, the Collection of Prints and Drawings is now an institution of considerable size. The organizers of the anniversary exhibition set out to choose the best, most representative and most surprising works from among the 37,000 hand drawings. They include pieces by Raphael, Palma Vecchio, Perino del Vaga, Taddeo Zuccaro, Cavalier d'Arpino, Guercino, Albrecht Dürer, Hans Leu, Tobias Stimmer, Jost Ammann, Hans-Jakob Plepp, Rudolf Meyer, Jean-Baptiste Oudry, Rudolf Schellenberg, Salomon Gessner, Anton Graff, Henry Fuseli, Théodore Géricault, J.M.W. Turner, Alexandre Calame, Paul

Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Käthe Kollwitz, Max Ernst, Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Hans Richter, Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Alberto Giacometti. The big names from earlier periods in art history up to the time of Classical Modernism are also represented, as are outstanding contemporary artists such as Cy Twombly, Bruce Nauman, Miriam Cahn, Aleksandra Mir, Urs Fischer, Erik van Lieshout, Jorinde Voigt and others.

AN INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE THAT SPANS NUMEROUS GENRES

Today, the Collection of Prints and Drawings is part of an innovative exhibition programme. Thanks to its acquisitions in the fields of drawing, prints, photography, film, video, multiples and installation it forms part of an impressive network, and exchanges exhibits with the world's most prestigious museums. Since 2005, the building in the passage between Rämistrasse and Hirschengraben has been home not just to the prints and drawings but also the curators, the conservation department and the study room for registered visitors. Photographic, video and film works, prints and collages are stored and restored here, and made ready by our scientific staff for exhibitions at the Kunsthaus and elsewhere. The museum stages regular exhibitions of current positions in contemporary art, key areas of the collection and new acquisitions.

COLOUR EXPERIMENTS, TROMPE L'ŒIL, SOCIAL CRITICISM

Bernhard von Waldkirch, conservator of the Prints and Drawings Collection, has spent two and a half years assembling the anniversary exhibition, assisted throughout by an academic advisory board. The selection arrived at by Dr. Gian Casper Bott, Dr. Christina Grummt and Dr. Paola von Wyss-Giacosa focuses on drawing in its original sense; for all the differences in technique, medium and function, it is the art of drawing in its purest form that remains pre-eminent. Pre-Baroque experiments with colour, pin-sharp 'trompe-l'œil' architectures, soft charcoal portraits that appear almost three-dimensional, romantic landscapes and socially critical sketches – the breadth of the topics is mirrored by the diversity of the techniques expertly deployed. Extending over several hundred square metres in the historic and modern sections of the Kunsthaus, the exhibition presents the drawings immediately alongside paintings and sculptures. Enthusiasts and connoisseurs alike will be impressed by the delicate paper's ability to assert its presence in this environment: from the format of a pocket mirror to a vast plate measuring 2 x 6 metres that covers an entire wall. The accompanying texts place the works in their chronological and art-historical context. Regular public guided tours will focus on the inherent properties of the works as well as the latest research findings.

MANY WORKS SHOWN IN COLOUR FOR THE FIRST TIME

The history of the Collection of Prints and Drawings at the Kunsthaus Zürich is documented in a representative publication in which 90 works are reproduced in

colour and on a full page for the first time, together with a commentary. This exquisitely bound volume is published by Scheidegger & Spiess. It will be available in the Kunsthaus shop and in bookstores when the exhibition opens.

Supported by UNIQA Fine Art Insurance Switzerland

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthaus.ch

Fri-Sun/Tues 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wed, Thurs 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Public holidays: Easter 3–6 April 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Admission including collection: CHF 15 / CHF 10 (concessions and groups), Children and young people up to the age of 16 free of charge. Admission free on Wednesdays.

Public guided tours: Sunday 1 February at 11 a.m., Wednesday 18 February at 6.30 p.m., Friday 20 March at 3.30 p.m., Saturday 7 March at 1 p.m., Wednesday 1 April at 6.30 p.m., Saturday 18 April at 11 a.m. with Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, Christina Grummt, Gian Casper Bott or Bernhard von Waldkirch.

Advance sales: Zurich Tourism: hotel room reservations and ticket sales: Tourist Service in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, information@zuerich.com.

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/en/kunsthaus-zuerich.

Magasins Fnac: sales points in Switzerland: Rive, Balexert, Lausanne, Fribourg, Pathé Kino Basel, www.fnac.ch; France: Carrefour, Géant, Magasins U, 0 892 68 36 22 (EUR 0.34/min), www.fnac.com; Belgium: www.fnac.be.

NOTE AND CONTACT FOR THE MEDIA

The press conference will take place on 22 January at 11 a.m. Registration is not required. Visual material is available for download from the website www.kunsthaus.ch under Information > Press.

Contact: Kunsthaus Zürich, Press & Public Relations

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