

Media release
Zurich, 7 April 2020

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents masterpieces of landscape painting

From 17 July to 8 November 2020 the Kunsthhaus presents 60 canvases tracing the development of landscape painting since the 15th century. Initially regarded as inferior to history paintings and portraits, by the 17th century the landscape genre was increasingly finding favour among audiences.

The exhibition brings together some outstanding works dating from between 1450 and 1800 to create a panorama of landscape painting. They include canvases from the Kunsthhaus's holdings painted in Flanders, Holland and Italy by artists such as Joachim Patinir, Hendrick Avercamp, Jan van Goyen, Jacob van Ruisdael, Claude Lorrain, Domenichino and Bernardo Bellotto.

NATURE AS A SECOND BIBLE

The presentation opens with a number of late medieval paintings in which the primary purpose of the landscape is to animate the depiction of a Biblical scene such as the birth of Christ and present it in the best light. They are followed by Netherlandish and Italian landscapes from the 16th century. Especially fine works by the Flemish Jan Brueghel (1568–1625) herald the start of landscape painting's heyday in the 17th century, when the genre scales new heights, most notably in Holland. For the Baroque, nature is a second Bible: reflecting the prevailing Protestant faith, Dutch artists tend to eschew religious motifs in the narrower sense, and instead develop a rich tradition of landscape painting. On display are works by Hendrick Avercamp (1585–1634), Jan van Goyen (1596–1656), Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682), Nicolaes Berchem (1621/22–1683) and the hitherto neglected female 'Old Master' Margareta de Heer (1600/1603–1665), with a unique small painting showing a distant view of a landscape combined with a close-up of a garden scene.

FROM HOLLAND TO ITALY

The presentation of 17th-century Dutch landscape painting is followed by views created during the same period in Italy. Alongside a work by Domenichino and another by Salvator Rosa are two magnificent paintings (one from the Kunsthhaus Collection, the other on long-term loan from a private collector) by Claude Lorrain (c. 1600–1682), who was born in what is now France but worked primarily in Italy.

This section consists mainly of important 18th-century landscapes from Italy by artists including Bernardo Bellotto (1721–1780).

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

The final section of the presentation conceived by collection curator Philippe Büttner is both surprising and novel: it looks ahead to artistic production on the cusp of the 20th century, when representatives of modernism started to incorporate their own visions into the choice of motifs and their painterly execution. In early modern landscapes, artists such as van Gogh, Segantini and Monet react in a strikingly different way to the open country that the Old Masters had painted so emblematically – an observation that is foregrounded by the unconventional way in which these works are presented.

PUBLICATION AND ART EDUCATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue (Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess) documenting the current status of research into the individual works (Yves Guignard) and including an introductory essay by Philippe Büttner as well as a detailed new text by Paul Joannides on the landscape painting acquired in 2019 and attributed to Titian. Public guided tours in German (Thursday 23 July at 6 p.m., Saturday 22 August at 1 p.m. and Friday 9 October at 3 p.m.) offer a detailed insight into this thematic presentation, in which works from the Kunsthaus's own holdings as well as long-term loans from the Knecht Collection and the Ruzicka and Koetser foundations are shown together for a short time.

Supported by Albers & Co AG

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch

Fri–Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch.

Admission (including the collection): CHF 16 / CHF 11 (concessions and groups).

Combination tickets including the collection and exhibition CHF 26 / CHF 19.

Admission free to visitors under the age of 17. Information subject to change.

Advance sales: Zurich Tourism, tourist information office in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, info@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on admission when travelling by public transport: www.sbb.ch/kunsthhaus-zuerich.

INVITATION AND CONTACT FOR EDITORS

This media release and illustrations are available for download at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/. The press conference will take place on Thursday 16 July at 11 a.m. Registration is not required. We will be pleased to organize interviews with Philippe Büttner by prior arrangement.

Contact and further information: Kunsthhaus Zürich, Kristin Steiner, kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13