

Media release

Zurich, 19 September 2019

Kunsthaus Zürich presents 'Picasso – Gorky – Warhol', a selection of sculptures and graphic works from the Hubert Looser Collection.

From 20 September 2019 to 5 January 2020 the Kunsthaus Zürich presents sculptures and works on paper from the private Hubert Looser Collection. The exhibition shows 110 works of Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Arte Povera and Minimal Art, and includes some surprising positions from Pop Art and Classical Modernism. This exploration of the play of lines and textures on the surface of the drawing paper brings audiences closer to the sculptures' presence in space.

One of the earliest and most significant works in the Looser Collection is a large-format drawing by Arshile Gorky. Born in the Ottoman Empire, Gorky was compelled to emigrate to the US in 1920 and thereafter became particularly involved with Surrealism. The key work in the Looser Collection is arguably one of the most important drawings from the 1930s held in Switzerland. In it, Gorky uniquely depicts a combination of figural and abstract-biomorphic elements. While inspired by Picasso's research, he also seems to anticipate elements of an abstraction that would not come to prominence in the US until much later, through the work of Jackson Pollock.

A PAINTED DRAWING IN SPACE

Relatively unknown in Europe, the sculptor and draughtsman David Smith is one of the fathers of American 20th-century art and a pioneer of the distinctive American style of sculpture. His work combines elements of Surrealism with the free forms that typify the American outlook on the potential of modernism.

A now famous sculpture, Pablo Picasso's 'Sylvette' from 1954 turns the spotlight on Europe. It consists of cut-out pieces of sheet metal painted in oils and is a (painted) drawing in space that confounds expectations with its playful approach to form and material. In the exhibition context, 'Sylvette' beautifully illustrates the direct convergence of the graphic with the sculptural.

Another major sculpture is Willem de Kooning's 'Head' from 1973. Born in the Netherlands, de Kooning became one of the leading practitioners in the US art scene after the Second World War. He never entirely abandoned the theme of the

human figure. 'Head III' is not so much a depiction of the human head as a work that uses the impact of sculpture to reinvent the head as tactile event.

OUTLINES OF PUDDLES

The works of US artist Al Taylor, who was born in 1948, are equally novel and striking. Taylor made no distinction between his two-dimensional and three-dimensional compositions, preferring instead to speak of drawings in space. His 'Hanging Puddles' are abstract lines made from strips of rolled steel that extend into space and are viewable from all sides. For the 'Peabody Group' series, Taylor transferred the outlines of puddles left by dogs on city pavements onto paper using ink and watercolour and, in so doing, transformed them into art.

POETIC MINIMALISM

A major position from more recent times is the American artist Roni Horn, whose drawings are subtle cartographic records of the self or of the elements. Sometimes large in size, these patchwork pieces are first sketched out with pigment and pen, then cut up and reassembled. Viewed from a distance they look like abstract patterns, but seen close up they are more evocative of architectural constructions. In their tender, almost fragile beauty, these drawings are imbued with a poetic minimalism.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF MODERNISM FOR THE EXPANDED KUNSTHAUS

The exhibition highlights fundamental aspects of the dialogue between drawing and sculpture in modern art. This is just one of the strengths of the Hubert Looser Collection, which fits perfectly into the broad coverage of major strands in modern European and American art that the Kunsthaus seeks to achieve. A cooperation that was renewed in 2018 guarantees that 75 paintings, sculptures, installations and drawings will remain for 20 years in the Kunsthaus extension, which is scheduled for completion in 2020. The current temporary presentation, which was previously shown in Krems, offers an inspiring foretaste of the coming encounters between this private collection and the public collection of the Kunsthaus.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition catalogue is available from the Kunsthaus shop, price CHF 20. It contains an essay by Florian Steininger, artistic director of the Kunsthalle Krems, and over 150 illustrations.

GUIDED TOURS

Public guided tours in German take place on Saturday 5 October at 1 p.m., Thursday 7 November at 3 p.m. and Sunday 15 December at 11 a.m. The Kunsthaus will be happy to arrange private guided tours on request.

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.

CHF 16 / CHF 11 (concessions and groups).

Combination ticket including the collection and exhibitions CHF 26 / CHF 19.

Admission free to visitors under the age of 17.

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.

MEDIA CONTACT

Visual materials are available at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/.

For further questions: Kunsthhaus Zürich, Press & Communications, Kristin Steiner, kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch, +41 44 253 84 13.