

Media release

Zurich, 2 July 2020

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Smoke and Mirrors. The Roaring Twenties'

From 3 July to 11 October 2020 the Kunsthhaus Zürich presents a major themed exhibition on the 1920s: 'Smoke and Mirrors. The Roaring Twenties'. For the first time since the 1970s, an art exhibition sets up a transnational dialogue between Bauhaus, Dada, New Objectivity and the design and architecture icons of modernism. Meanwhile, art practitioners from the 21st century revive the disruptive spirit of the inter-war years to produce surprising new works of their own.

The 1920s were a decade of both progression and backlash. A catastrophic world war followed by a pandemic with remarkable parallels to the current corona crisis awakened people's thirst for life. At no time in the 20th century was the desire for change more intense.

EXPERIMENTATION IN THE ARTS

Urban visions were created and cities grew at breakneck speed. Conventional role models in society and family were questioned and upended; disadvantaged and oppressed minorities made their voices heard in politics and culture. Improved conditions for workers went hand in hand with a growing leisure industry. The spirit of innovation in economic relationships and society fed through directly into the arts, with experimentation in all disciplines.

TIMELESS ICONS

Styles emerged in architecture and design that are as fresh today, in the 21st century, as they were a hundred years ago. Having a closer look at Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Zurich, the exhibition covers all the prevalent media of the 1920s, from painting, sculpture and drawing to photography, film and collage, fashion and design. It was a decade that saw the creation of Chanel's 'little black dress' and the celebrated club chair, a collaborative project involving Le Corbusier, Perriand and Jeanneret, as well as Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt kitchen. It also gave birth to what Moholy-Nagy termed the 'New Vision' in photography. What all have in common is that even a century on they look modern, even contemporary. A source of inspiration for myriad imitators and desirable objects in their own right, they are still cherished by design aficionados in the 21st century.

Contemporary artists who explicitly engage with the formal language and themes of the 1920s bridge the gap to the present day.

80 ARTISTS

Kunsthhaus curator Cathérine Hug has selected some 80 artists from a wide range of disciplines for the exhibition:

Josef Albers, Hans Arp, Kader Attia, Johannes Baargeld, Josephine Baker, Marc Bauer, Erwin Blumenfeld, Constantin Brancusi, André Breton, Marcel Breuer, Suse Byk, Andrea Büttner, Coco Chanel, Adolf Dietrich, Dodo, Theo van Doesburg, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Theodore Lux Feininger, Hans Finsler, Laura J Gerlach and Margarete Schütte-Lihotszky, Valeska Gert, Barthel Gilles, George Grosz, Raphael Hefti, Heinrich Hoerle, René Herbst, Hannah Höch, Karl Hubbuch, Pierre Jeanneret, Rashid Johnson, Wassily Kandinsky, Elisabeth Karlinsky, Paul Klee, Rudolf von Laban and Suzanne Perrottet, Laura J Gerlach, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, Jeanne Mammen, Elli Marcus, Fabian Marti, László Moholy-Nagy, Lucia Moholy, Piet Mondrian, Alexandra Navratil, Trevor Paglen, Gret Palucca, Nicolas Party, Charlotte Perriand, Paul Poiret, Man Ray, Hans Richter, Gerrit T. Rietveld, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Thomas Ruff, Christian Schad, Xanti Schawinsky, Wilhelm Schnarrenberger, Kurt Schwitters, Shirana Shahbazi, Veronika Spierenburg, Varvara Stepanova, Edward Steichen, Niklaus Stoecklin, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Rzn Torbey, My Ullmann, Félix Vallotton, Madeleine Vionnet, Rita Vitorelli and Nikolai Wassilieff.

Rather than being arranged chronologically or by genre, the works are grouped together around socio-cultural issues that were key to the 'Golden Twenties': moving on from the trauma of war, new role models, pluralist perspectives and the frenetic pulse of the body in movement. Plurality of expressive resources was a hallmark of this unsettling era. Today, with neoliberal politics nearing its limits, disruptive innovations challenging social and ethical standards, artists positioning themselves as activists and cultural pessimists embracing reactionary tendencies, the time is ripe to revisit the 1920s. For the accompanying programme, the Kunsthhaus has chosen to highlight creative processes and open up debate on the social and economic issues of today.

The exhibition is a cooperation between the Kunsthhaus Zürich and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, where it will be shown in spring/summer 2021.

A co-production with the Festspiele Zürich.
Supported by The Zurich Silk Association.

EVENTS

Re:Frame 20s

Students from the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) led by Prof. Katharina Tietze, ZHdK and curator Cathérine Hug offer their own topical visual responses to the works in the exhibition. The results of this online teaching session can be viewed at trendsandidentity.zhdk.ch.

New bodily sensations: sexuality and the frenetic pulse of movement and music

Part of Zurich Art Weekend: dialogue guided tour with Salome Hohl, Director of Cabaret Voltaire, and Kunsthaus curator Cathérine Hug. Art performance by Talaya Schmid and Angie Walti.

Sunday 13 September, 2 p.m.–2.45 p.m. in the exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich.
3 p.m.–3.30 p.m. performative tour on Cabaret Voltaire. Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members, otherwise CHF 10 / CHF 8 (concessions).

From idea to exhibition

Kunsthaus curator Cathérine Hug and Christoph Stuehn discuss the background and genesis of the exhibition.

Thursday 17 September, 6 p.m.–7.30 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich, auditorium. Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members, otherwise CHF 10 / CHF 8 (concessions).

guerillaclassics

Ana Dordevic (dance) and Valentine Michaud (saxophone) bring a touch of the 2020s to pieces from the 1920s.

Saturday 26 September, 4 p.m.–6 p.m., in the exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich. Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members.

Dance meets drawing: affirming life and rejecting the self

Dancer Martin Svidron reacts to a new mural on Aby Warburg by draughtsman Marc Bauer which is on display in the exhibition.

Saturday 3 October, 4 p.m. and 4.45 p.m. (performances last around 15 minutes) in the exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich. Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members.

Spoken beats with Jurczok 1001

With new texts by the internationally renowned spoken beat artist Jurczok 1001 based on the 1920s writers Marieluise Fleisser and Bertolt Brecht.

Thursday 8 October, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m., Kunsthaus Zürich, auditorium. Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members, otherwise CHF 10 / CHF 8 (concessions).

1920s/2020s: economic crises and perspectives

With Aymo Brunetti (Professor of Economic Policy and Regional Economics, Bern University), Aya Jaff (programmer/author of 'Money-makers', 2020, invited), Walter B. Kielholz (Chairman of Swiss Re / Chairman of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft), Christin Severin (scientist / economics editor at the NZZ) and other guests.

Monday 2 November, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m. Kunsthaus Zürich, auditorium. Free for members, otherwise CHF 15 / CHF 10 (concessions)

Guided tours. Workshops for schools. Art laboratory

Public guided tours in German take place on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 11 a.m. Individual private guided tours can be arranged also in English. The Kunsthaus organizes workshops for schools on request.

The art laboratory is open to all exhibition visitors without extra charge on 5 July, 2 August and 6 September. Materials and ideas for your own personal creations will be provided.

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication (Snoeck-Verlag, in German, 272 pages, approx. 260 illustrations) containing new articles by Cathérine Hug, Petra Joos, Gioia Mori, Alexis Schwarzenbach and Jakob Tanner. Price CHF 44, available from the Kunsthaus shop and bookstores.

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 CHF 23 / CHF 18 (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.

INFORMATION FOR EDITORS

Media releases and illustrations are available for download at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich.

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