

Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press release

Redon – Rêve et Réalité

11 March – 30 July 2023

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten

Press tour

Thursday, 9 March 2023, at 11 o'clock or individual tour by arrangement

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten

Stadthausstrasse 6, CH-8400 Winterthur

The Kunst Museum Winterthur is presenting one of the most idiosyncratic artists of the emerging modern age: Odilon Redon. This major exhibition examines his extraordinary path from darkness to light, from the blackness of his early lithographs to the colour fantasies of his mature paintings.

Although Odilon Redon (1840–1916) was a friend and contemporary of the Impressionists, he created a fascinating oeuvre that went far beyond the mere depiction of sensory impressions. Indeed, he was influenced by the intellectual spirit of the fin de siècle and the scientific discourses of the time on evolutionary theory, botany, optics and dream research, which he combined in his ambiguous work with traditional and spiritual ideas from mythology and religion. Another important source of inspiration was the literature of his time, which reflected upon the mysteries of Romanticism and turned to the fantastic and the unconscious. Redon found the greatest recognition and support in the literary circles of the Parisian Symbolists, who saw their ideals realised in his aesthetics of the indeterminate and mysterious.

The exhibition focuses on the artist's important lithographic oeuvre, his so-called *Noirs*. In addition to programmatic single sheets, Redon's outstanding graphic albums *A Edgar Poe* (1882), *Les origines* (1883), *Hommage à Goya* (1885) and *Tentation de Saint-Antoine* (1888), all from the holdings of the Kunst Museum Winterthur, will be shown. In these works Redon developed his iconic subjects, in which precise observation of nature and creative imagination merge. They are enigmatic and dreamlike depictions of primeval organisms, mythical creatures and cosmic entities, which reappear in radiant colour by means of a new visionary light throughout his later painterly compositions.

The exhibition culminates with an explosion of colour, featuring a large group of exquisite pastels and oil paintings from renowned museums and private collections. The colourful highlights here include Redon's famous flower still lifes and boat paintings as well as his remarkable underwater and aerial visions, in which contrasting worlds such as dream and reality, natural science and myth, representationalism and abstraction are united in surprising constellations. These contrasts and inconsistencies bear witness to the spirit of optimism as well as the uncertainty of the fin de siècle. In Redon's art, they attain a virtually universal, eternal validity, rendering his work all the more appealing and relevant today.

The exhibition *Redon – Rêve et réalité* portrays Redon not only as a mysterious maverick of French Symbolism, but also as an open-minded spirit on the threshold of the 20th century, whose broad horizons inspire us to reflect further on his idiosyncratic pictorial worlds.

Kunst Museum Winterthur

Odilon Redon and the Kunst Museum Winterthur

Odilon Redon was closely attached to Winterthur even during his lifetime. The artist was in contact with Hedy and Arthur Hahnloser as well as with Richard Bühler, who were among his first collectors in Switzerland. It was thanks to their commitment that the first major Redon retrospective was held at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur in 1919.

At that time, a representative group of works – two paintings and over 50 drawings and prints – entered the holdings of the Kunstverein Winterthur, which today encompasses over 100 superb works by Redon.

In addition, the Hahnloser/Jaeggli Foundation owns an extensive selection of Redon's works in the form of the significant collection of Hedy and Arthur Hahnloser, which will once again be on display in their hometown after the reopening of the Villa Flora in 2024.

Images and information about the exhibition

kmw.ch/presse or on request

Supporting programme and publication

A varied supporting programme will accompany the exhibition. In addition to guided tours for adults and school classes, there will be a concert of French choral music, a painting workshop on the subject of dreams with painting therapist Seera Schauwecker, a lecture by art historian and Redon expert Professor Dario Gamboni and an Edgar Allan Poe reading with Daniel Rohr, actor and director of the Rigiblick Theatre.

A small publication will appear on the occasion of the exhibition, featuring informative short texts about and numerous illustrations of Redon's work.

Contact

Press office

Melanie Staub
kommunikation@kmw.ch
+41 52 267 51 77

Curator

Andrea Lutz
andrea.lutz@kmw.ch
+41 52 267 65 94