

Exhibitions 2014 / 2015

A Swiss pioneer of abstraction

Color and I. Augusto Giacometti

19.09.2014 – 08.02.2015

Swiss contemporary art

In the Here and Now! Swiss Art of the Last 30 Years from the Kunst Heute Collection

24.10.2014 – 26.04.2015

Artistic research

Bethan Huws: Reading Duchamp, Research Notes 2007–2014

24.10.2014 – 01.02.2015

A leading representative of arte povera

Nakis Panayotidis. Seeing the Invisible

21.11.2014 – 15.03.2015

Exhibitions 2015

A Genius of Swiss Painting

Max Gubler. A Life's Work

13.03. – 02.08.2015, Opening: Thursday, 12.03.2015, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 11.03.2015

Themed Exhibition

Stone of Light. Crystal Visions in Art

24.04. – 06.09.2015, Opening: Thursday, 23.04.2015, 18h30

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 22.04.2015

The Master of Montmartre

Toulouse-Lautrec and Photography

28.08. – 13.12.2015, Opening: Thursday, 27.08.2015

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 26.08.2015

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An Artist Couple of Contrasts

Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation

23.10.2015 – 07.02.2016, Opening: Thursday, 22.10.2015

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 21.10.2015

Art of a Border Crosser

Ricco Wassmer (1915-1972). Commemorating His Centenary Birthday

27.11.2015 – 13.03.2016, Opening: Thursday, 26.11.2015

Media Release / Distribution of the Media Release: Wednesday, 25.11.2015

**Presentation of Works from the
Kunstmuseum Bern Collection**

Window on Contemporary Art

Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR: Changing Presentations

Jan. 2015 – Dec. 2015

Philipp Gasser

29.01. – 28.02.2015, Opening: Thursday, 29.01.2015, 18:00

Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst 2015

05.03. – 04.04.2015, Opening: Thursday, 05.03.2015, 18:00

Outsider art from the collection

Presentation of Works from the Adolf Wölfli Foundation

Jan. 2015 – Dec. 2015

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A Genius of Swiss Painting**Max Gubler: A Life's Work**

March 13 – Aug. 2 2015

Opening: Thursday, March 12, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**Press conference / dispatch of press release:** Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Max Gubler (1898 – 1973) was seen as the “only genius of Swiss painting” right into the 1960s. And he represented Switzerland at the 1952 Venice Biennial. However, after he was committed to a psychiatric hospital in 1958, his expressive realism became somewhat forgotten. The exhibition is presenting the first real retrospective of Max Gubler's life's work. It was only recently that we have been able to access the art he produced during the last four years of his life, which had hitherto been under lock and key.

The idea for a comprehensive overview of his oeuvre came in response to the bequest of Ruth and Hans-Rudolf Kull becoming part of the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection in 2010. The couple accrued one of the leading collections of Max Gubler's art. The focus of the show is on his painting, palpably illustrating his artistic development over six museum rooms, each with its own thematic highlight. One room is devoted to his wife, Maria, whom he painted over 260 times. Other than this, thematically the exhibition addresses the artist's neo-objective early work, figural compositions, landscapes, self-portraits, still lifes, and the paintings of his studio. Especially Gubler's works in series strike us as remarkable. When he took up a motif he would execute up to twelve variations thereof.

To the very end, Max Gubler's art was viewed as being linked closely to his medical and psychological history. What was considered strange, enigmatic or extraordinary in his work was interpreted as a sign of his psychological instability. But painting in the 20th century is always a confrontation with the crises of the age we live in too. Hence the exhibition, with more than 100 paintings from all the phases of Gubler's career, hones in on the artistic development of his oeuvre. It sees its role in rediscovering anew the brilliant oeuvre of a modernist artist.

A catalogue with a wealth of color plates will be published by Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess in conjunction with the exhibition, containing research contributions by Matthias Frehner, Daniel Spanke, Beat Stutzer, Hannah Rocchi, Bettina Brand-Claussen, and Peter C. Claussen.

Curators: Beat Stutzer (guest curator), Dr. Daniel Spanke (co-curator, Kunstmuseum Bern)

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Themed Exhibition

Stone of Light: Crystal Visions in Art

April 24 – Sept. 6, 2015

Opening: Thursday, April 23, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Press conference / dispatch of press release: Wednesday, April 22, 2015

At latest since romanticism, crystal is a leading source of inspiration for artistic work—either its formal structure serves as a model for design in art or its symbolical value comes into play. Crystal rock is something rare; it is valuable and difficult to mine. Although a material thing of hard, cold stone, crystal radiates a light that is seemingly not of this world. The exhibition *Stone of Light: Crystal Visions in Art* looks at how the different art epochs viewed crystal.

Romanticism found a new aesthetic principle in the structure intrinsic to crystals in rocks and masses of ice while the majestic sublime of the alpine world asserted itself alongside grace and beauty. Bruno Taut and other modernist architects adapted to modern times the utopian idea of the Gothic cathedral of light of the romantics. Painters such as Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, or Fritz Winter in particular found in crystal a matrix that provided the structural framework for their new approaches to painting. The crystalline appearance of their work helped them discard outdated notions of realistic art, so they could make more profound statements on the nature of things.

In modernism, artists have interpreted crystal in new ways altogether. For Joseph Beuys it signified the icy pole of analytic thought, which demanded the warmth of social action. Meret Oppenheim's crystal fountain brings static forms to life through water. Robert Zandvliet makes the inner beauty of the "stones of light" shine in his large-format paintings. And finally, the installations of the artist duo Steiner & Lenzlinger in the exhibition draw on the resemblance between crystal and plant growth by proliferating urea crystals, the basic substance of artificial fertilizer in modern agriculture.

With *Stone of Light: Crystal Visions in Art*, the Kunstmuseum is continuing its tradition of themed exhibitions like *Six feet under*, *Lust and Vice*, or *The Weak Sex*.

Curators: Dr. Daniel Spanke

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The Master of Montmartre

Toulouse-Lautrec and Photography

Aug. 28 – Dec. 13, 2015

Opening: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Press conference / dispatch of press release: Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2015

For the first time ever, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be juxtaposing the work of the world-famous French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) with the photography of his time. It will be confronting his paintings, drawings, lithographs, and posters with contemporary photographs that contain the same or very similar motifs, often having in fact served the artist as models for his work.

None of the photographs were made by Toulouse-Lautrec. In fact he never took pictures himself, but did often commission his friends to do it for him. Sometimes he would use these pictures as models or templates for his art, or sometimes he desired stage performances to be visually documented. Indeed, Toulouse-Lautrec had a profoundly photographic eye like hardly another artist of his epoch. Whatever he depicted and how he did so would have been inconceivable without photography. This is not only evidenced in his ingenious compositions with their cropped figures, but also his sketchy style is intrinsically linked to it: just as modern photography had as its goal, Toulouse-Lautrec, too, sought greatest spontaneity in capturing the fleeting moment. And who could have painted the artificial world of Paris's red-light district Montmartre, its seductive delights and the downfalls or the ruin lurking behind its bright facades, as truthfully and matter-of-factly—as photographically—as Toulouse-Lautrec?

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's painting *Madame Misia Natanson au piano* (1897) belongs to the Kunstmuseum Bern Collection. Misia Natanson, wife of the publisher Thadée Natanson, was a much-admired personage in Parisian artistic circles. The exhibition is devoting a whole separate section to her and her illustrious circle. The painting will be mounted in the exhibition room alongside other paintings, prints, and photographs. The Kunstmuseum Bern Collection also owns a number of prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, and, in view of the pending exhibition, was able to accrue further prints in 2014.

The exhibition will be rounded off by a supplementary program comprising films, themed guided tours, and concerts—as well as a catalogue comprising research contributions and color plates.

Curators: Dr. Rudolf Koella (guest curator), Isabelle Fehlmann (assistant curator)

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A Contrasting Artist Couple**Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Embracing Sensation**

Oct. 23, 2015 – Feb. 7, 2016

Opening: Thursday, October 22, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**Press conference / dispatch of press releases:** Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2015

The artist couple Silvia Gertsch (*1963) and Xerxes Ach (*1957) employ very different stylistic means, art materials, and visual languages. However, both artists share a fascination for light and color in their work. In its fall exhibition, the Kunstmuseum Bern will be presenting an encounter with both of these Bernese artists. The show will be the first of its kind to focus on the individual works of both artists or engage with the artist couple with such intensity.

Silvia Gertsch's reverse-glass painting technique creates compositions of young people during summertime, sunbaking, or strolling along streets, as well as children absorbed by play. In contrast, Xerxes Ach explores the microphenomena of light refraction on the surfaces of different materials and the multifarious impressions it creates. Despite the fact that both artists have adopted dissimilar stylistic languages—one articulates herself in the vocabulary of realism, the other in color-field abstractionism—they both take recourse to photographs as their starting point. With the aid of photography they capture transitory moments in time and ephemeral visual impressions. In Gertsch's case, the photographs are snapshots of everyday life, pictures that would otherwise be lost among the banality of the everyday. Ach, in turn, zeroes in on detailed impressions of the effects of light as we perceive them and, in his art, translates them into a cosmic view of the world.

Silvia Gertsch and Xerxes Ach both address the ephemerality of life and the fleeting nature of sensual things. The shared environment in which the two artists live is the starting point of the exhibition—for which many new works were made. The show investigates the different stylistic languages of the artists and gives ample space to vision as our means of sensually experiencing the world around us.

Publication: The artists are jointly producing an artists' book for the exhibition. The number of pages, the layout, and content are currently work in progress.

Curator:

Dr. Kathleen Bühler

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Art of a Border Crosser

Ricco Wassmer (1915-1972). Commemorating His Centenary Birthday

Nov. 27, 2015 – March 13, 2016

Opening: Thursday, Nov. 26, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Press conference / dispatch of press releases: Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2015

On the occasion of Ricco Wassmer's centenary birthday (whose real name was Erich Hans Wassmer, 1915–1972), the Kunstmuseum Bern is mounting a comprehensive retrospective for this Swiss painter. The arrangements in his paintings are surreal in appearance; by conflating naive painting, new objectivity, and magic realism he produced a highly unique oeuvre. The themes that were important to the artist were loss of the blissfulness of childhood, slender youths, subject matter involving sailors, sailing ships, still lifes, homages, and the yearning for distant lands.

Wassmer grew up as the son of an industrialist and spent his youth at Bremgarten Palace among circles of people interested in art. After studying in Munich and Paris, he returned to Switzerland in 1939. In 1948/49 he spent several months in Tahiti and then twice sailed around the world as a ship's cook on a freighter. From 1950, he lived part of the time in central France near Vichy, but his bonds to the art scene in Bern, in connection with the Kunsthalle director Arnold Rüdinger, remained strong. In 1963 he moved to Ropraz near Lausanne, and in 1972 he died at the age of 57 from the aftereffects of a lung disease that he had suffered from for many years.

With over 200 loans, especially from private collectors, the show will be providing a broad overview of Ricco's art. Many of the artworks were never shown in public prior to this exhibition, and among them are a few pieces that have only recently been discovered. A large selection of photographs will be on show. This is because the camera not only began to replace sketching directly from models, but also grew more and more important in its own right from the 1950s onwards. In addition, we will be exhibiting objects that belonged to the passionate collector and were utilized as a source of imagery in his art.

The show will follow a chronological order based on the catalogue raisonné of the artist's paintings and objects. Betty Stocker began the catalogue and Marc-Joachim Wasmer took over from 2008 (*Catalogue raisonné der Gemälde und Objekte*). A richly illustrated, two-volume catalogue with a biography and a critical catalogue of works will be published in conjunction with the exhibition; it will also be available on the Internet.

After a cabinet exhibition in 2002, which was realized in conjunction Mike Wildbolz's documentary film, this will be the second posthumous presentation in Bern of Ricco's work. The basis for the works on exhibition stems not only from the legacy of the collector Emanuel Martin, which was divided up among the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Aargauer Kunsthaus. It also takes recourse to permanent loans and the photographic legacy of the artist.

Catalogue: For the exhibition, the Kunstmuseum Bern is publishing Marc-Joachim Wasmer's *Catalogue raisonné der Gemälde und Objekte*. Work on the online version of the catalogue raisonné of the artist's paintings and objects is still in progress.

Supporting Programm: The cinema at the Kunstmuseum will be presenting the film program "Schöne Matrosen" (Beautiful Sailors) in cooperation with the Kornhausforum Bern, which will be mounting the documentary exhibition *Bob, le flaneur*, taking place simultaneously (November 2015), about the dandy and display designer Bob Steffen.

Curators: Dr. Marc-Joachim Wasmer, University of Zurich (guest curator and author of the Ricco Wassmer catalogue raisonné).

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The Collection of Contemporary Art**Kunstmuseum@PROGR: Windows on the Present**

The exhibition room Kunstmuseum Bern @ PROGR is a non-commercial space for contemporary art. Jointly with the Stadtgalerie, the Kunstmuseum Bern annually mounts some eight presentations with works from the museum's collection at this location. There, in the past, our visitors have enjoyed the opportunity of viewing the works of artists such as Marina Abramovic, Raymond Pettibon, Luzia Hürzeler, Carlo Lischetti, Kotscha Reist, and Cécile Wick.

Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst 2015

March 5 – April 4, 2015, Opening: Thursday, March 5, 2015, 6:00 p.m.

The Credit Suisse Förderpreis Videokunst has become an established award for promoting video art and, for the fourth time, will be announcing the pending competition at Swiss universities of applied sciences. The national video-art competition targets students using video as an art medium in an innovative way. In February 2015, a jury comprising famous personages will decide who wins the prize of CHF 8,000.00 and a place in the collection of the Kunstmuseum Bern. On the occasion of the Kunstmuseum Bern and Credit Suisse being partners now for 15 years, they introduced this prize as an incentive for talented young artists. The prize winner will be announced on 26 February, 2015. The work of the prize winner will be showing through to the evening of 4 April in the museum exhibition space and then at the main office of Credit Suisse in Bern on Museum Night 2015.

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