

A talented and much-admired Swiss in England

The new year is commencing at the Kunstmuseum Bern with a major discovery: for the very first time an exhibition will be devoted to Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733 – 1794), the Swiss who became famous, especially in England, by pursuing a successful career as a topographer, illustrator, caricaturist and painter of watercolors. On show will be watercolors and drawings that have been gathered together from numerous leading collections, among them from the British Museum, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tate Gallery, the Society of Antiquaries as well as the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut.

The great popularity of this «Very English Swiss», as Grimm is called in Great Britain, has its roots in his true-to-life scenes, his legendary swiftness of execution, his modest prices and the perfection of his sketching and painting techniques in painting outdoors. Specialists in British art see in Grimm a pioneer among topographers, view his watercolors as landmarks in the art, and compare his caricatures to those of Thomas Rowlandson.

From Burgdorf via Paris to London

Grimm was born in Burgdorf, where his first interest was poetry and then, from 1760 onward, began to explore painting. He took his first lessons in art from Johann Ludwig Aberli (1723-1786). In 1765 Grimm went to Paris, where under Jean-Georges Wille he continued studying art and, on extended excursions, engaged first of all with landscape painting. In 1768 he moved to London, where he stayed for the rest of his life and worked as an independent draftsman and painter. Grimm illustrated Shakespeare's plays early in his career on the British Isles and stood out as a caricaturist by ridiculing the quirks and peculiarities of British society.

18th-century Britain as a visual encyclopedia

From 1773 onwards Sir Richard Kaye became Grimm's most faithful benefactor, allowing the artist to have carte blanche and capture anything he found «curious». Grimm's cooperation with Kaye lasted for over two decades. The result was over 2,600 watercolors and drawings addressing British everyday life, architecture and landscape, as well as the nation's mores – indeed, a veritable encyclopedia of 18th-century Georgian England before the sweeping changes of the Industrial Revolution set in. Grimm traveled all over England in search of unusual subject matter or captured otherwise-neglected historical themes for posterity. In this way he created a fascinating panorama of locations and sites, many of which no longer exist today. Numerous other people and institutions commissioned Grimm to depict scenes of British heritage or rural areas, among them William Burrell and the Society of Antiquaries.

The first exhibition showing an overview of Grimm's legacy

The exhibition is the first comprehensive retrospective to mount Grimm's oeuvre and brings together examples from every genre. It will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue in German and English. The curator is the specialist of the period Prof. Dr. William Hauptman, Lausanne, who was already in charge of organizing the large John Webber exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Bern in 1996. Dr. Therese Bhattacharya-Stettler is the co-curator of the exhibition.

Contact person: Brigit Bucher, brigit.bucher@kunstmuseumbern.ch, Tel. +41 31 328 09 21

Images: Marie Louise Suter, press@kunstmuseumbern.ch, Tel. +41 31 328 09 53

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN
MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8 – 12 CH-3000 BERN 7
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE
SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE
T +41 31 328 09 19/44
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

The Exhibition

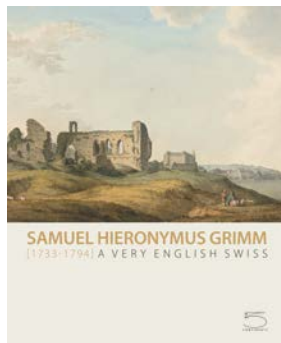
Duration: Jan. 17 – April 21, 2014

Opening: Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

Curators: Prof. Dr. William Hauptman (guest curator), Dr. Therese Bhattacharya-Stettler (co-curator, Kunstmuseum Bern)

Admission fee: CHF 14.00 / reduced CHF 10.00

The catalogue



Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1733–1794). A Very English Swiss

Published by Kunstmuseum Bern. Fully illustrated catalogue in English and German with essays by William Hauptman. Approximately 230 pages. Edition 5 Continents.

The poster



F4
89,5 x
128 cm
CHF 20.00

The exhibition has been generously supported by:



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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8–12 CH-3000 BERN 7
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE
SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE
T +41 31 328 09 19/44
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH