

Principally Painting

36 Works from the Collection of the Hilti Art Foundation

6 November 2020 to 10 October 2021

Vaduz/Liechtenstein – For over five years, the Hilti Art Foundation has attracted art lovers from all over the world to visit their dedicated exhibition building, which adjoins the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein. The collection clearly highlights European painting from the late 19th century to the present day.

Painting is the uncontested **principal** focus of the current exhibition, which opens on 6 November, showcasing 28 selected works by such artists as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Lovis Corinth, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Pablo Picasso, Verena Loewensberg, Imi Knoebel, Sean Scully, Hanns Kunitzberger and Callum Innes. A **secondary** highlight, in quantity but certainly not in quality, comprises eight sculptures, including pieces by Medardo Rosso, Alberto Giacometti and Henry Moore. The encounter between the two genres is far from casual, for they relate to each other in both form and content.

"The exhibition ***Principally Painting*** draws attention primarily to a medium that shows a surprising diversity of materials above and beyond the subject matter itself," as curator Uwe Wieczorek observes, adding that "Painting is ordinarily applied to a flat support of wood, canvas, cotton, aluminium, cardboard, paper or other suitable materials. The medium itself, that is, the paint, consists of extremely fine-grained pigments combined with binders such as egg yolk, casein, glue, oil, acrylic or synthetic resin. Depending on the agent, the paint looks matt or shiny, opaque or transparent. Its consistency may vary from a pastose layer to a thin diluted wash and it can be applied with fingers, paintbrush, roller, spatula, squeegee or spray gun. In addition to all of these factors, the personal signature of the artist is ultimately the most important in determining the appearance of the painting."

In the paintings that open the exhibition, Lovis Corinth and Auguste Renoir deftly convey the captivating charm of sitters with whom they had an intimate relationship. Corinth pictures his newly wedded wife Charlotte Berend, and Renoir his beloved model Nini Lopez.

In his painting of Fernande Olivier, Pablo Picasso remains largely faithful to the features of his partner with whom he lived during his early years in Paris, while his portrait of a woman wearing a white hat, painted over four decades later, clearly shows the attributes of Cubism. Despite the reduced palette, the painting features exquisite gradations between white and black within a play of pictorial elements that evoke both drawing and sculpture. Cubism also informs the style of Picasso's *Still Life with Vessel and Blue Coffemaker*.

The works of art on display in the second gallery of the venue speak the "language of geometry". It was also Verena Loewensberg's artistic idiom of choice. Although she belonged to the circle of concrete artists in Zurich, she explicitly emphasised that her work was not concrete but rather constructivist and, in fact, related to the seemingly incompatible notions of emotion and "mood". It is the latter, Loewensberg declared, that gave her the inspiration for her inventive, meticulously painted motifs, which are as rigorously minimalist as they are cheerfully playful.

Viewers will discover four works by Imi Knoebel in the new show. The elementary forms and shapes characteristic of his art testify to his appreciation of the great achievements of nonobjective painting in Classical Modernism. Study of Knoebel's oeuvre up to the present day reveals that the vocabulary of geometry has remained a constant throughout his career.

Geometry as the basis of composition is also a constant in the painting of the 20th and 21st centuries, although not all artists espoused the philosophy of a clear-cut formal idiom with an equally unambiguous use of colour. The colorists among painters, for instance, did not attempt to tame the basically unruly, roaming phenomenon of colour by obeying a canon of rational forms.

Thus, in the third gallery, Callum Innes presents painting as a concentrated process, in the course of which the material and immaterial qualities of both pastose and diluted paint in concert with gravity and light create a composition of deliberate, sensual traces left behind who on the picture plane.

In contrast, Hanns Kunitzberger applies paint in paper-thin oil washes until all that remains appears to be a gentle fog seamlessly intensifying towards the centre of the

picture, as if floating weightless and suspended in an immeasurable, utterly attention-absorbing space.

Some of the paintings and sculptures presented on three levels will be familiar to visitors, as they have already been on view in earlier exhibitions. Uwe Wieczorek has selected them to give visitors the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate these exceptional works in a different context and to make them accessible over a longer period of time.

In addition to the above-mentioned artists, the current presentation also includes works by Erich Heckel, Juan Gris, Piet Mondrian, Fritz Glarner, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, Gottfried Honegger, Norbert Kricke, Yves Klein, Gotthard Graubner, Bertrand Lavier and Willem de Kooning. The names of the artists illustrate the breadth and depth of the exciting art that makes a visit to the Hilti Art Foundation so worthwhile. *Principally Painting* will be on view until **10 October 2021**.

And for those whom the exhibition has animated to learn more about the Hilti Art Foundation, two recently published, sumptuous and richly illustrated volumes – Art from Classical Modernism to the Present Day – offer the opportunity to enjoy in-depth study of the entire spectrum of the collection.

November 2020

Catalogue

Hilti Art Foundation. The Collection.

Volume 1 – Classical Modernism 1880–1950

Editor: Hilti Art Foundation
Contributors: A. Schneider, U. Wieczorek
Publisher: Hirmer, Munich
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Hilti Art Foundation. The Collection.

Volume 2 – Art from 1950 to the Present Day

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Publisher: Hirmer, München
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Language: available in German and English
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Available through the Museum Shop of the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein and in bookstores.

Contributors

Dr. Angela Schneider (Volumes 1 + 2)

Studied art history, classical archaeology and history at the University of Munich. Custodian at the National Gallery in Berlin from 1973 to 1999 and deputy director until 2008. Has planned and mounted numerous exhibitions of 20th-century international art.

Dr. Uwe Wieczorek (Volumes 1 + 2)

Studied art history, classical archaeology and the history of books. Worked for the Berlin State Museums from 1987 to 1992. Director of The Collections of the Prince of Liechtenstein from 1992 to 2003. Since 2003, curator of the Hilti Art Foundation. Has planned and mounted exhibitions on art from the Renaissance to the 21st century.

Dr. Julia Ryff (Volume 2)

Studied art history, Byzantine art and French literature. 2009 bis 2011 DFG project, Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung, Munich. 2014 to 2018 worked at Christie's, Zurich. Since 2019, specialist for Impressionism and Classical Modernism at Bonhams, London.

Opening hours:

Hilti Art Foundation at KUNSTMUSEUM LIECHTENSTEIN
Städtle 32, 9490 Vaduz, Liechtenstein
Tuesday – Sunday 10 am – 5 pm
Thursday 10 am – 8 pm
Closed on Mondays

For more information, see Instagram, Facebook and our websites

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Tickets

CHF 15.– (reduced price CHF 10.–)

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