

Press Release

Body – Gesture – Space

Works from the Hilti Art Foundation

12 November 2021—28 August 2022

For seven years, the Hilti Art Foundation has attracted art friends from all the world to its dedicated premises adjoining Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein. The collection highlights European art from the late 19th century to the present day.

The current exhibition comprises painting, prints, photography and sculpture by 21 artists and addresses body, gesture and space in two senses: on one hand, *representational*, such as the human figure, the movement of a hand or an outdoor landscape; on the other hand, *concrete*, such as a three-dimensional visual object, an identifiable physical modification of material or a real pictorial space.

The representation of the human body invariably includes the representation of human gestures, and wherever gesture and affect play a conscious role in painting or sculpture, they entail more than non-verbal communication. They embed the body actively and organically in space, enabling it to be perceived in depth and perspective.

The mimetic depiction of the visible world has undergone substantial change since the end of the 19th century, specifically in the context of classical modernism and, with it, new expressive needs. Expressionism, Cubism and Futurism cultivate a stylised, symbolic and formulaic approach in response to a radically changing world under the influence of science and technology. This culminates in abstract and constructivist art, in which illusionist depiction has vanished altogether. This goes hand-in-hand with an increasingly tangible emphasis on the means of artistic expression.

The resulting emancipation of material and colour from their function as tools of depiction has led, since the 1950s, to fundamental enquiry into the traditional genres of art and indeed into reality as such, leading to entirely new forms of art. Pictures no longer represent bodies but are themselves sculptural “bodies”, which fuse with colour/paint into a single organic whole. Gestures do not fulfil a “narrative” function but become part of the physical entity itself as an expression of its material existence. And where the picture plane has been slashed with a knife,

space becomes a reality, undermining the very foundations of the illusionist representation of perspective with brush and paint.

Viewers will encounter the following artists in the exhibition:

Ferdinand Hodler, Karol Broniatowski, Alexander Archipenko, Umberto Boccioni, Max Beckmann, Willem de Kooning, Yves Tanguy, Henri Laurens, Leiko Ikemura, Wilhelm Lehbruck, Gotthard Graubner, Lucio Fontana, Jean Dubuffet, Imi Knoebel, Louis Soutter, Medardo Rosso, Callum Innes, Alberto Giacometti, Thomas Struth, Hanns Kunitzberger and Germaine Richier.

Some of the paintings, sculptures and prints presented on three storeys will be familiar, having already been presented in earlier exhibitions by curator Uwe Wieczorek. Art friends are invited to enjoy the exciting discovery of new aspects through new affinities.

Those who want to deepen their appreciation of the art collected by the Hilti Art Foundation will be richly rewarded by two visually stunning volumes that present the entire spectrum of the collection, from classical modernism to the present day. In 2020, the catalogue was awarded the distinction of the “Most Beautiful Books from Liechtenstein”.

Supporting programme

See www.kunstmuseum.li and the programme booklet for May – September 2022.

Catalogue

Hilti Art Foundation. The Collection.

Volume 1 – Classical Modernism 1880–1950

Editor: Hilti Art Foundation
Contributors: A. Schneider, U. Wieczorek
Publisher: Hirmer, Munich
Publication: 235 pages, c. 90 colour plates
Format: 23.5 x 30 cm
Language: available in German and English
Price, circa: CHF 54.90 / EUR 45.–

Hilti Art Foundation. The Collection.

Volume 2 – Art from 1950 to the Present Day

Editor: Hilti Art Foundation
Contributors: J. Ryff, A. Schneider, U. Wieczorek
Publisher: Hirmer, München
Publication: 355 pages, c. 180 colour plates
Format: 23.5 x 30 cm
Language: available in German and English
Price, circa: CHF 54.90 / EUR 45.–

Available through the Museum Shop of the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein and in bookstores.

For further information, see www.hiltiartfoundation.li and www.kunstmuseum.li

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