



Media release

Basel, March 26, 2015

Holbein. Cranach. Grünewald—Masterpieces from the Kunstmuseum Basel

Museum der Kulturen Basel, April 11, 2015–February 28, 2016

Exhibition opening: Friday, April 10, 2015, 6:30pm

While the Kunstmuseum Basel's main building is closed, the public will still be able to admire the most important Old Master paintings from the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, thanks to a fruitful cooperation with the Museum der Kulturen Basel. From April 11, 2015, until February 28, 2016, a high-profile selection of these works will be on view in the exhibition *Holbein. Cranach. Grünewald—Masterpieces from the Kunstmuseum Basel* in the Museum der Kulturen Basel's two-level gallery, which will also present fascinating glimpses of the host institution's collections.

Works of the Northern Renaissance constitute the core of the *Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel's* holdings of Old Master paintings. They include the earliest acquisitions in the collection's history; in an art-historical perspective, they are among the Kunstmuseum Basel's preeminent treasures. The Kunstmuseum's main building, where these masterworks have long been preserved and presented, is closed for renovations from early February 2015 until mid-April 2016. Thanks to a fruitful cooperation with the Museum der Kulturen Basel, art lovers will be able to enjoy a focused selection of these works in the exhibition *Holbein. Cranach. Grünewald—Masterpieces from the Kunstmuseum Basel* at the Museum der Kulturen.

One reason why the Kunstmuseum Basel enjoys global renown today is that it owns the world's single largest collection of works by Hans Holbein the Younger. Most of these masterpieces have never left the city, for it was here in Basel, where Holbein lived and worked for two decades before leaving for the English royal court, that his genius achieved full realization. The treasure of pictures he left behind also opened the eyes of the citizenry to the art of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance: they became assiduous art collectors.

The Kunstmuseum Basel's exhibition hosted by the Museum der Kulturen Basel is designed to highlight the fruits of these collecting efforts. The presentation of some of the most valuable Old Master paintings opens with Konrad Witz's Heilsspiegel Altarpiece, Golden Gate, and Saint Christophorus from the first half of the fifteenth century. With Holbein's father, the portraitist and creator of altarpieces Hans Holbein the Elder, we reach the threshold of the modern era, into which his son then boldly steps forth: the Schoolmaster's Signboards, the Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb, and the Artist's Family are only three of the eleven Holbeins on display. The array of masterpieces continues with Matthias Grünewald's Crucifixion, Hans Baldung Grien's sacred and profane pictures, and Lucas Cranach the Elder's Judgment of Paris and round portraits of Martin Luther and his wife.

Works by Niklaus Manuel (Deutsch) of Berne and the widely traveled Tobias Stimmer, a native of Schaffhausen, illustrate the eminent role Swiss artists played in spreading the ideas of the Renaissance. Stimmer's life-sized full-figure portraits of a Zurich banneret and his wife bear witness to the rise of the bourgeoisie during the era the exhibition surveys.

The two-level exhibition gallery at the Museum der Kulturen Basel accommodates a focused presentation of these paintings. At the same time, it invites visitors to discover the hosting institution's own fascinating collection. A series of evening events will initiate conversations between the Old Master paintings and selected objects from the ethnographic collection. Alternating teams pairing one curator from each museum will explore questions of social, political, and religious history, revealing cultural differences as well as similarities.

The first of these events, on 'Kleider machen Leute: Mode, Repräsentation und Realien der Macht (Clothes Make the Man: Fashion, Representation, and the Accoutrements of Power),' will be held on Wednesday, June 24, from 6:30 to 7:30pm.

The exhibition will open on April 11 at 6:30pm at the Museum der Kulturen Basel; a preview of the art will be followed by a wine-and-cheese reception. Anna Schmid, director, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Bernhard Mendes Bürgi, director, Kunstmuseum Basel, Guy Morin, president of the Executive Council of Basel-Stadt, and Bodo Brinkmann, curator of the exhibition, will address the guests. The event is open to the public and admission is free.

The exhibition is supported by Credit Suisse AG.

The Kunstmuseum Basel 2015

The main building of the Kunstmuseum Basel is closed for renovation work and to connect to the New Building before re-opening in April 2016. The closure affects the exhibition spaces of the gallery and the department of prints and drawings, the prints and drawings study room, and the bookshop in the main building.

Masterworks of modernism are on view in the exhibition *Cézanne to Richter: Masterpieces from the Kunstmuseum Basel* at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst through the end of February 2016.

Artworks of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation will be on display at the Schaulager. The exhibition, entitled *FUTURE PRESENT – Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation – Contemporary Art from Classic Modernism to the Present Day*, will be on display from June 13, 2015 until January 31, 2016.

Media contact

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Media conference

Friday, April 10, 2015, 10.30am, Museum der Kulturen Basel (invitation attached or online at www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien). RSVP to pierre-alain.jeker@bs.ch by April 9, 2015.

Exhibition opening with preview and wine-and-cheese reception

Friday, April 10, 2015, 6:30pm, Museum der Kulturen Basel.

Anna Schmid, director, Museum der Kulturen Basel, Bernhard Mendes Bürgi, director, Kunstmuseum Basel, Guy Morin, president of the Executive Council of Basel-Stadt, and Bodo Brinkmann, curator of the exhibition, will address the guests. The event is open to the general public; admission is free.

Imagery and media information

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien

Publication

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication available free of charge to visitors at the Museum der Kulturen Basel. The publication may also be downloaded in PDF format at the URL listed above.

Museum der Kulturen Basel

Münsterplatz 20, Postfach, 4001 Basel, tel. +41 61 266 56 00

www.mkb.ch

Tue–Sun: 10am–5pm, closed on Mon

Every first Wed of the month: 10am–8pm.

Open 10am–5pm on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whitsunday, and Whit Monday.

**Museum für Gegenwartskunst
and Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation**

St. Alban-Rheinweg 60, CH–4010 Basel, tel. + 41 61 206 62 62, fax + 41 61206 62 53

Guided tours: tel. + 41 61 206 63 00, special events: tel. + 41 61 206 62 56

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/mgk

Thanks to a generous grant from the *Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Christoph Merian Stiftung*, admission to the Museum für Gegenwartskunst is free for all visitors through the end of the year.

Tue–Sun 10am–6pm, closed on Mon

Open 10am–6pm on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whitsunday, and Whit Monday.

Kunstmuseum Basel / main building

St. Alban-Graben 16, CH–4010 Basel, tel. + 41 61 206 62 62, fax 061 206 62 52

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