

PRESS RELEASE

# STÄDEL MUSEUM EXHIBITION PROGRAMME 2018

## **Matisse – Bonnard. ‘Long Live Painting!’**

**Until 14 January 2018**

### **Exhibition house**

Two outstanding protagonists of modernism, presented together in Germany for the first time, will continue to take centre stage at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt until 14 January 2018: Henri Matisse (1869–1954) and Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947). The special exhibition highlights the two French painters’ friendship that spanned more than forty years. Both artists shared a marked preference for the same subjects: interiors, still lifes, landscapes, and, above all, female nudes. The selection of about one hundred and twenty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints unfolds a dialogue between Matisse and Bonnard and offers new perspectives on the development of the European avant-garde from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of the Second World War. The survey is rounded out with a number of photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson, who visited the two artists on the French Riviera in 1944.

**Curator:** Dr. Felix Krämer (Städel Museum)

**Co-curator:** Dr. Daniel Zamani (Städel Museum)

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## **Maria Sibylla Merian and the Tradition of Flower Depiction**

**Until 14 January 2018**

### **Exhibition hall of the Department of Prints and Drawings**

Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717) ranks among the most important naturalists and renowned artists of her time. Marking the third hundredth anniversary of her death in 2017, the Städel Museum presents the special exhibition ‘Maria Sibylla Merian and the Tradition of Flower Depiction’. The show acquaints visitors with the fascinating and filigree world of flower and plant depiction in drawings and prints from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Conceived in collaboration with the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and the Technische Universität Berlin, it features major works by Maria Sibylla Merian in the context of flower depictions of her forerunners, contemporaries, and successors.

**Curators:** Dr. Martin Sonnabend (Städel Museum), Dr. Michael Roth (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett)

## **Rubens. The Power of Transformation**

**8 February to 21 May 2018**

### **Exhibition house**

Almost no other artist exercised such a decisive influence on European Baroque painting as Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) did. The Städel Museum in Frankfurt dedicates a comprehensive special exhibition to the world-renowned artist. On show from 8 February to 21 May 2018, 'Rubens. The Power of Transformation' comprises about one hundred items—including thirty-one paintings and twenty-three drawings by the master—and explores a hitherto little-regarded aspect in his creative process: it shows how profound the dialogue was into which Rubens entered with his predecessors' and contemporaries' achievements and the scope of their impact on the five decades of his production.

Rubens's extensive oeuvre reflects the influences of ancient sculpture as well as that of the later art from Italy and north of the Alps, from the masters toward the close of the fifteenth century to the artists of his own day. Frequently, only a closer look will reveal how Rubens drew on the work of artists of different epochs: the exhibition offers an opportunity to comprehend the sometimes astonishing correlations in detail. The cross-genre presentation brings together paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, and objets d'art. In addition to original sculptures dating from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, the show also encompasses paintings and prints by Rubens's precursors and contemporaries, among them key works by Titian and Tintoretto, by Goltzius, Rottenhammer, and Elsheimer, as well as by Giambologna, Van Tetrode, and Van der Schardt. It features works from numerous international lenders including the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, the National Gallery in London, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Prado and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, the Louvre in Paris, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, the State Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Vatican Museums, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

**Curators:** Prof. Dr. Jochen Sander (Städel Museum), Dr. Gerlinde Gruber (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien), Stefan Weppelmann (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien)

**Frank Auerbach and Lucian Freud: Faces**

**16 May to 12 August 2018**

**Exhibition hall of the Department of Prints and Drawings**

Both born in Berlin and brought to England as children to save them from the Nazis, Frank Auerbach (b. 1931) and Lucian Freud (1922–2011) shared more than a similar destiny: they were linked in close friendship, and their figurative painting revolutionized the language of modern art. Devoting themselves to the same motifs with the greatest intensity and perseverance over decades, they mostly depicted people from their immediate surroundings. The restriction in terms of contents is rooted in their search for artistic knowledge. The creative process is always a relentless struggle for truth.

Seizing the occasion of the important acquisition of a self-portrait drawing by Auerbach by the Städtische Museums-Verein e. V. the Städel's Department of Prints and Drawings presents a selection of Frank Auerbach's and Lucian Freud's prints and drawings in spring 2018.

**Curator:** Dr. Regina Freyberger (Städel Museum)

***Colormaster F*, 2018. Manuel Franke in the Städel Garden**

**20 June to 23 September 2018**

**Städel Garden**

Manuel Franke (b. 1964) develops a monumental object as his contribution to the series 'In the Städel Garden'. Half sculpture, half painting, the object will transform the garden of the Städel Museum on the roof of the Garden Halls into a space-spanning and tangible installation from early summer 2018.

Franke's *Colormaster F* takes on the entire garden bounded by buildings on three sides and counters this layout with a corrugated iron ramp in bright colours.

Deliberately spoiling the view of the green lawn hill from the street and blocking the way of people visiting the garden as a massive, insurmountable obstacle, it offers a completely new experience of the place. *Colormaster F* not only changes the garden's spatial constellation but also creates another, additional space within it that is both open and sealed off. The lawn square and the hill are thus, at least temporarily, enclosed on four sides.

Manuel Franke studied with Tony Cragg and Irmin Kamp at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf as well as with Daniel Buren and Pontus Hulten at the Institut des hautes études en arts plastiques in Paris. His space-spanning and space-transforming installations are characterized by their painterly surfaces and a unique colourfulness.

**Curator:** Dr. Martin Engler (Städel Museum)

**Ursula Schulz-Dornburg. The Land In-Between**

**Photographs from 1980 to 2012**

**4 July to 9 September 2018**

**Exhibition house**

Born in Berlin in 1938 and based in Düsseldorf today, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg has centred on border landscapes, places of transit, and relics of outmoded cultures since the early 1980s. Her photographs confront us with cult and cultural sites in Europe, Asia, and the Near East and, above all, with the visible and invisible boundaries between these continents and regions. Mostly in black and white and comprising numerous parts, the series of photographs taken there are a testimony to vanished sceneries, past political systems, crumbling civilisations, and disappearing societies. Fuelled by ethnological curiosity and betraying an archaeologist's eye, her pictures reveal the blurry fringes and points of intersection of today's life between globalised everyday world and its blind spots on the threshold between conceptual art and enlightened approach.

Assembling thirteen series, the exhibition offers a first institutional overall survey of Ursula Schulz-Dornburg's artistic development and the photographer's creative range over the past thirty years.

**Curator:** Dr. Martin Engler (Städel Museum)

**Co-curator:** Iris Hasler (Städel Museum)

**Städelschule Graduates**

**11 July to 5 August 2018**

**Exhibition house**

The 2018 exhibition of the graduates from the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule will be presented in the Städel Museum. The show in the Städel's exhibition house offers solid insights into the multifarious production of the internationally renowned art college's students.

**Lotte Laserstein**

**19 September 2018 to 17 March 2019**

**Exhibition hall of the Department of Prints and Drawings**

The Berlin painter Lotte Laserstein (1898–1993) made a name for herself with sensitive portraits of her contemporaries in the late years of the Weimar Republic. She successfully participated in numerous exhibitions and competitions. Critics found hymnic words to sing her praise, calling her a 'passionate painter by nature' and attesting her 'skills of remarkable dimensions'. Following the artist's early recognition,

her career came to an abrupt halt, however: the political situation under the National Socialist regime increasingly excluded the painter with a Jewish background from the cultural scene. Laserstein found herself forced to leave Germany in 1937. With the artist cut off from the international arena, her work was largely ostracised from public perception. Today, Laserstein's oeuvre ranks among the major rediscoveries of recent years.

The Städel Museum's exhibition paying tribute to the painter will be on display in Frankfurt from 19 September 2018 to 13 January 2019 and subsequently in the Moderna Museet Malmö. It will be the first solo presentation of the artist's work to take place outside of Berlin. The show will build on the Städel's holdings, which has acquired important works by the artist over the past few years: the paintings *Russian Girl with Compact* of 1928 and *Boy with Kasper Puppet* (Wolfgang Karger) of 1933. Assembling about fifty works, the exhibition looks into Laserstein's development as an artist, focusing on her works of the 1920s and 1930s, which mark the highlight of her production. Laserstein's central concern was portraiture. She rejected traditional role expectations and developed new, especially female images for identification in many of her works. These images found their expression in athletic and fashion-conscious women in control, who reflected the type of the New Woman. The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to become acquainted with this long-forgotten artist's fascinating work.

**Curators:** Dr. Alexander Eiling (Städel Museum), Elena Schroll (Städel Museum)

## **Victor Vasarely. In the Labyrinth of Modernism**

**26 September 2018 to 13 January 2019**

### **Exhibition house**

The Städel Museum will present a retrospective dedicated to the important artist Victor Vasarely's work in autumn 2018. A co-founder and main representative of op art, Vasarely (1906–1997) forged a bridge between modern and contemporary art, between the aesthetically enormously productive interwar era and the post-war avant-gardes. His oeuvre spans more than six decades and incorporates the most different styles and influences: born in Hungary, Vasarely was an advertising graphic designer and a key figure of French post-war art rooted in the Bauhaus of the 1920s. First and foremost, however, he stood at the beginning of a development that further blurred the boundaries between free and applied art, between 'high' and 'low', panel painting and poster, museum and teen room.

Conceived in collaboration with the Centre George Pompidou in Paris, 'Victor Vasarely. In the Labyrinth of Modernism' traces the roots and genesis of this once-in-a-century oeuvre based on key pictures and objects of his major work. Particularly the

pictures of his *Vega* series have informed our notion of the artist to this day: technoid and psychedelically colourful pictures that seem to press into the room by means of optical illusion—a both perfidious and fascinating mixture of minimalist reduction and pop-art motley whose industrial colourfulness, seriality, and simplification became emblematic for a society’s faith in the future and the ‘Swinging Sixties’. Partly still merging figuration and abstraction, Vasarely’s early paintings testify to his ties with the Russian and German avant-gardes of the 1910s and 1920s. Abstract motion studies and other works from these early years, however, leave no doubt about the ambiguous tenor that still informs Vasarely’s œuvre till the end: the rigid geometry is playfully set in motion; the compositions, initially firmly resting in themselves, are thrown out of kilter. What superficially presents itself as a light-hearted delusion of perception is actually one of the most consistent inquiries into the project of modernity and its advancement. Vasarely, whose work is much too willingly reduced to his bewildering op art, is presented in his role as one of the central figures of modern art in the Städel’s show.

Assembling one hundred and twenty works from more than sixty years and from both European and US collections, the exhibition pointedly conveys the mutual penetration and influences of everyday sphere and art, the continuing transition between the aesthetics of pop and modernism in Vasarely’s work. It offers not only a confrontation with one of the first European pop artists but also with a new history of the project of modernity that runs through the entire twentieth century.

**Curator:** Dr. Martin Engler (Städel Museum)

**Co-curator:** Dr. Jana Baumann (Städel Museum)

**Titles and dates subject to alterations.**