

PRESS RELEASE

STÄDEL BRINGS VAN GOGH TO GERMANY: COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION IN AUTUMN 2019

23 OCTOBER 2019 TO 16 FEBRUARY 2020

Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

Press preview: Monday, 21 October 2019, 11.00 am

At the Städel Museum, preparations for a major special exhibition are in full swing. From 23 October 2019 to 16 February 2020, the Frankfurt museum will present a comprehensive exhibition of one of the world's most famous artists: Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890). The largest and most elaborate show in the history of the Städel to date will revolve around the special significance of German gallery owners, collectors, critics and museums for the success story of this precursor of modern art, while also illuminating his role as a decisive figure for the art of German Expressionism. It will feature some 140 paintings and works on paper, including around 50 of the artist's key works.

After years of negotiations, the loan agreements have meanwhile been concluded. The Städel will present outstanding works from collections in Germany and abroad, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Prague and the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Among the highlights will be the self-portraits from the Art Institute in Chicago and the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, but also the famous paintings *Augustine Roulin (Rocking a Cradle)* (1889, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam) and *Fishing Boats on the Beach at Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* (1888, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam).

The exhibition will be the first ever to take an in-depth look at Van Gogh's oeuvre in the context of its reception in Germany. Its point of departure will be a selection of major works from all phases of the Dutch painter's career. Building on that foundation, the presentation will be devoted to Van Gogh's significance for the development of German art at the beginning of the twentieth century. Here an important reference point will be the Städel's own extensive Expressionist collection. Alongside well-known examples by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Gabriele Münter and Max Beckmann, the

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show will also feature artists meriting rediscovery – and on whom Van Gogh had an equally formative influence –, for example Peter August Böckstiegel, Maria Slavona or Heinrich Nauen. The chief aim of this large-scale exhibition and research project is to contribute decisively to a better understanding of artistic developments in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, while also shedding light on Van Gogh's role as a key figure for the art of the German avant-garde.

The exhibition is being realized with support from the Franz Dieter und Michaela Kaldewei Kulturstiftung.

“Van Gogh is dead, but the van Gogh people are alive. And how alive they are! It's van Gogheling everywhere”, wrote Ferdinand Avenarius in *Der Kunstwart* in 1910 to describe the fascination Vincent van Gogh's paintings held for artists in Germany – particularly the younger ones – in the early twentieth century. This country was of decisive significance for the Dutchman's success story. Thanks to the dedication of German gallery owners, critics and museum directors, less than fifteen years after his death – and thus earlier than in other countries – he was perceived here as one of the most prominent precursors of modern painting. The Städel and its then director Georg Swarzenski also played a leading part. In 1908, with support from its Museums-Verein, the Städel was the first public museum in Germany to purchase works by Van Gogh: the early painting *Farmhouse in Nuenen* (1885) and a drawing. The *Portrait of Dr Gachet* (1890) followed in 1912, only to be confiscated from the Städel Museum in the 1930s within the framework of the “degenerate art” campaign. Städel director Swarzenski moreover actively advocated the purchase of van Gogh's works by other museums such as the Kunsthalle Bremen.

“At the time of his death in Auvers-sur-Oise in 1890, only few of Van Gogh's contemporaries were acquainted with his work. When the first Van Gogh exhibitions took place in Europe's cultural metropolises around the turn of the century, the fame of his oeuvre rose dramatically. The special exhibition at the Städel Museum will show that, without the history of the artist's reception in Germany, this development – and Vincent van Gogh's continued popularity to the very present – would hardly be conceivable”, comments Städel director Philipp Demandt.



VAN GOGH AT THE STÄDEL MUSEUM

Curators: Dr Alexander Eiling (Head of the Department of Modern Art, Städel Museum) and Dr Felix Krämer (Director General, Kunstpalast Düsseldorf)

Project management: Elena Schroll (Curatorial Assistant, Department of Modern Art, Städel Museum)

Exhibition dates: 23 October 2019 to 16 February 2020

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Information: www.staedelmuseum.de

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