

PRESS RELEASE**SURFACE. ON SKIN****2 DECEMBER 2026 – 28 FEBRUARY 2027****Exhibition Hall of the Department of Prints and Drawings****Press Preview: Tuesday, 1 December 2026, 11.00 am**

Frankfurt am Main, October 2026. With an area of around two square metres, the skin is the largest organ of the human body. It covers and envelops the body, delimits and protects it, and enables us to feel. Experiences and sensations are inscribed on its surface. The skin shapes our identity and serves as a projection surface for those we encounter. The exhibition *SurFace. On Skin* focuses on the fascinating topic of human skin. Based on selected works from the Collection of Prints and Drawings, over sixty exhibits in different media and from various eras are presented, including drawings, paintings and sculptures, from the Old Masters to contemporary art. A multi-layered panorama thus unfolds, highlighting the reproduction of skin as one of the fundamental tasks of artistic practice. The skin is revealed as a mirror of beauty and vulnerability, of youth and age, and a conduit for emotions, touch and desire. The exhibition brings together works of lesser-known artists and artists of renown, including Hans Baldung Grien, Raphael, Titian, Peter Paul Rubens, Auguste Rodin and Robert Mapplethorpe. The juxtaposition of these works reveals the similarities and differences in their depictions of skin, highlighting the diversity of creative approaches. The variety of materials and techniques employed—from brush and paint to metalpoint, chalk and charcoal, as well as three-dimensional objects—enables a sensual experience of the surface of the human body.

Early instructions on artistic practice already address the reproduction of human skin, which becomes the touchstone for the persuasiveness of the works. While painting and sculpture long strove for the most perfect imitation possible, tendencies towards abstraction emerged early on in drawing. Perception is shaped by the haptic qualities of the surface: by the soft application of paint, the delicate smudging of chalk or the rough texture of the paper. Depictions of touch reinforce this sensual effect, combining seeing, feeling and understanding. Thus, art proves to be an inspiring “archive” of how we perceive and experience skin.

Curator: Dr Astrid Reuter (Head of Prints and Drawings before 1800, Städel Museum)

Sponsored by: Städtischer Museums-Verein e. V.

**Städtisches Kunstinstitut
and Städtische Galerie**

Dürerstraße 2
60596 Frankfurt am Main
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-170
Fax +49 (0)69-605098-111
presse@staedelmuseum.de
www.staedelmuseum.de

PRESS DOWNLOADS
newsroom.staedelmuseum.de

**PUBLIC RELATIONS &
ONLINE COMMUNICATION**
Elisabeth Pallentin
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-195
pallentin@staedelmuseum.de

Carolin Fuhr
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-234
fuhr@staedelmuseum.de

Theresa Franke
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-160
franke@staedelmuseum.de

Anton Wenzel
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-212
Wenzel@staedelmuseum.de