PRESS RELEASE

DIGITALLY ROAMING THE STÄDEL'S COLLECTION

FRANKFURT MUSEUM STARTS A NEW FORM OF PRESENTING ITS HOLDINGS WITH *STÄDEL DIGITAL COLLECTION*

FREE-TO-ACCESS EXHIBITS PLATFORM ALLOWS SPECIFIC SEARCH AND DIGITAL ROAMING THROUGH SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS OF ART HISTORY – LAUNCH ON MARCH 15, 2015 – DIGITALESAMMLUNG.STAEDELMUSEUM.DE

Frankfurt am Main, 2 March 2015. After a development phase of more than two years, the *Städel Digital Collection* offers a completely original approach to the institution's holdings. Based on the extensive store of the Frankfurt museum's collection and data, this knowledge tool has a semantic search function that both satisfies art historical interests and provides individual search paths through seven hundred years of art history along intuitive and associative criteria. To ensure the prerequisites for this "digital roaming" facility, the free-to-access Cloud-based exhibits platform encompasses not only large-format pictures, multimedia contents like audio sequences and film productions and a wide variety of details on the Städel's works but also a far-reaching concatenation of these works, contextualizing them in an evident, yet often also surprising way. The sematic preparation of the data from internal and external sources makes for a rich pool of contents with about one hundred data fields on each single work. The beta version will be released on 15 March 2015 – exactly to the day two hundred years after Johann Friedrich Städel drew up his testament, laying the cornerstone for the Städel. Accessible at www.digitalesammlung.staedelmuseum.de, it will allow a new approach to the museum's collection also from beyond the institution's material boundaries. The exhibits platform of the Städel has been developed together with Darmstadt's University of Applied Sciences, Software AG, and media transfer AG (mtG) since mid-2012. Its front end has been conceived by the design office Zum Kuckuck, which also implemented its design. The indexing of the works is undertaken by the Städel Museum in conjunction with Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.

The laying of this large-scale digital foundation of the Städel Museum is made possible by numerous sponsors: the State of Hesse in the context of "Hessen ModellProjekte" funded by LOEWE – Landesoffensive zur Entwicklung wissenschaftlich-ökonomischer Exzellenz (development of the *Städel Digital Collection*), the City of Frankfurt's Department of Cultural Affairs (indexing of the *Städel Digital Collection*), the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) (digitalization of all freehand drawings of the Städel's Department of Prints and Drawings), and DZ BANK AG (indexing of the photographs of the DZ BANK Gallery in the Städel Museum), as well as through the considerable backing given by private supporters.

"The *Digital Collection* of the Städel may draw on the comprehensive digital preparation of its holdings – measures that span several years. The data stock now accessible thanks to these measures and its many-facetted concatenations and different possibilities of use represent a hitherto unique and pioneering opportunity for opening up new further educational offers beyond the traditional museum visit and other forms of digital processes in this field with the help of intelligent semantic search technologies," says Max Hollein, Director of the Städel Museum.

"We have successfully pushed forward the digitalization of the cultural sector in an exemplary manner with the Städel's Cloud-based exhibits platform," Karl-Heinz Streibich, CEO of Software AG, points out. "Only the interdisciplinary project team assembling people from politics, business and science made it possible to transform the Städel into the first digital museum in Germany."

About 600 works with a total of more than 52,000 items of information and tags will be listed and 490 audio tracks and over 80 film productions made available with the launch of the digital museum. By the end of this year more than 1,500 works will be retrievable. Calling up a work, users will obtain manifold information in different media as well as a survey of its exhibition history, selected texts or up to nine audio guide tracks and films. They are thus given an access to the contents of the collection which is tailored to their individual interests and preferences, an access comparable to that of the Städel's analog education offers in this regard. The structure and the specifically developed front end design of the *Digital Collection* inspire the user in her or his search, suggesting further connections with the work in question and creating a basis to explore it in its context: when calling up Rembrandt van Rijn's painting *The Blinding of Samson,* for example, the user will be rewarded with suggestions of other

works by the artist and related seventeenth-century paintings and pointed to Georg Baselitz's painting *Oberon* from 1963/64, which might have a similarly drastic effect on the viewer.

Linking the works both with everyday keywords – such as the motif depicted or a visual association – and with notations based on art historical terms and the classification of the picture's contents after the international codification system Iconclass enables users to search – and make finds – by atmospheres, effects on the viewer, motifs and themes, as well as special art historical terms. Furthermore, users of the exhibits platform may mark favorites, create albums and share them and their individual roaming paths through seven hundred years of art history via social media channels. As the records are continuously updated, users will also be kept informed whether a specific work is currently on display in the museum.

"While roaming through the *Städel Digital Collection* the user will change from mere search processes to inspiring discoveries and comparisons and be shown new connections between works of different epochs. The platform is aimed at facilitating an individual digital experience of the collection's contents along interactive and multimedia lines," says Dr. Chantal Eschenfelder, head of the Städel's Education Department and member of the platform project team.

Media contents from external sources are integrated into the *Digital Collection* through interfaces. A series on twenty masterpieces of the Städel produced together with the 3sat magazine *Kulturzeit,* for example, will not only be broadcast in the programs on the occasion of the institution's bicentennial from 2 March to 16 March 2015 but also be ready to be viewed under the respective works on the exhibits platform on a long-term basis. A research project sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and scheduled to last until 2017 centers on the digitalization and indexing of all twenty-two thousand freehand drawings of the Städel Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings: its results will likewise be incorporated into the digital exhibits platform. This will make the latest scientific findings and a wide range of different kinds of information available for both the interested public and scholarly research on an overall scale.

The continuous further development of the *Digital Collection* will also be the Städel's main concern after the launch of the beta version on 15 March 2015. Apart from steadily extending the records, the project partners are already focusing on new

functions which will increase the possibilities offered by the platform: they are working on a mechanism that will permit social tagging, for instance; users will be able to create additional, individual tags for the works they explore. The content recommendation function, a feature available with the version 1.1 release, will provide users with selected contents derived from their interests revealed when searching the exhibits platform. The version 1.1 release will also include an English version. Users are called upon to actively participate in, and comment on, these and further improvements to jointly develop the *Städel Digital Collection.* Feedback may be given via e-mail to digitalesammlung@staedelmuseum.de.

The Digital Extension of the Städel Museum
The Städel Museum, Germany's oldest museum foundation, has taken its two-hundredth birthday this year as an occasion for a fundamental redefinition of its diverse educational program as well as the museum visitor's experience. Considering the increasing digitalization of everyday life, the extension of its educational responsibility into the digital realm is a key concern for the Frankfurt museum. Numerous further digital education offers are being conceived to complement the *Digital Collection,* the core element of the Städel's Digital Extension: an innovative educative point-and-click adventure game for children will be implemented, online art history courses on modern art are developed in collaboration with the Leuphana University Lüneburg, an up-to-date form of preparation for exhibition visits has been launched with the first digitorial for the Monet presentation, and the film sector is massively extended by creating new formats for the platform and the Städel YouTube channel besides specifically produced exhibition and artist films. Visitors to the Städel may use free-of-charge WiFi throughout its premises since February 2015; a special Städel app will be ready for download as of 11 March 2015. They may run the audio guide on their own devices and record their impressions and share them on social media channels. In addition, the new *Digital Art Cabinet* in the Städel Museum, open as of 15 March 2015, will make it possible to explore the *Digital Collection* and the game for children on-site on a touchscreen next to the Media Table.

STÄDEL DIGITAL COLLECTION –

THE MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITS PLATFORM

URL: digitalesammlung.staedelmuseum.de
Launch: 15 March 2015
Technical requirements: The *Digital Collection* has been optimized to be viewed on desktops and tablets running the operating systems iOS 7+ or Android 4+ (for Chrome) and the browsers Internet Explorer (version 11+), Safari (version 6+), Chrome (version 40), or Firefox (version 36).

Cooperation partners: University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt, Software AG,
media transfer AG (mtG)
Front end: Zum Kuckuck, Würzburg
Indexing: Städel Museum in collaboration with Bildarchiv Foto Marburg
Sponsors: State of Hesse in the context of "Hessen ModellProjekte" funded by LOEWE – Landesoffensive zur Entwicklung wissenschaftlich-ökonomischer Exzellenz (development of the *Städel Digital Collection*), the City of Frankfurt's Department of Cultural Affairs (indexing of the *Städel Digital Collection*), the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) (digitalization of the complete freehand drawings of the Städel's Department of Prints and Drawings), and DZ BANK AG (indexing of the photographs of the DZ BANK Gallery in the Städel Museum), as well as private supporters