

PRESS RELEASE

200 YEARS STÄDEL

“THE FRANKFURT CITIZENS’ MUSEUM: A GIFT FOR EVERYONE” – GERMANY’S OLDEST CIVIC MUSEUM FOUNDATION CELEBRATES ITS ANNIVERSARY YEAR WITH TOP-NOTCH EXHIBITIONS, A GRAND PUBLIC CELEBRATION, PROMINENT ADDITIONS TO ITS COLLECTION AND A MAJOR EXPANSION OF ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME INTO THE DIGITAL REALM

Frankfurt am Main, 21 January 2015. An eventful year awaits the Städel Museum founded in 1815. Germany’s oldest civic museum foundation is celebrating “200 Years Städel”. In honour of its anniversary, the Städel will be featuring a large number of top-notch special exhibitions from Claude Monet to John Baldessari, a major expansion of its digital educational programme, prominent additions to its collection and new publications – all under the motto “The Frankfurt citizens’ museum: a gift for everyone”. On 15 March 2015, the two-hundredth anniversary of its founding day, the Städel will moreover host a grand public celebration with free admission and a wide range of offers throughout the museum and its grounds.

The anniversary year got off to a start with two very special **birthday gifts**: The chairman of the Städtischer Museums-Verein, Sylvia von Metzler, presented Städel director Max Hollein and chairman of the administration Nikolaus Schweickart with the painting *The Assumption of the Virgin* of 1596/97 by Guido Reni (1575–1642) as well as a precious drawing by Edgar Degas (1834–1917). For the purchase of the Reni painting, the museum is indebted to the members of the Städtischer Museums-Verein for the successful donation drive they carried out. The acquisition of Degas’s *Study of a Nude (Étude de Nu)* (ca. 1888–92), on the other hand, was made possible by the generous donation of a single Frankfurt patron of the arts. These prominent works close two gaps in the Städel collection, which spans seven hundred years of art, and are at the same time a harbinger of things to come over the course of the anniversary year: in 2015, Frankfurt’s citizens’ museum will successfully continue its two-hundred-year tradition of dedicated patronage with a large number of gifts, donations and other forms of support, to be publicized separately in due time.

What Johann Friedrich Städel (1728–1816) left behind can be understood as an exceptionally generous and farsighted gift. On **15 March 2015**, the banker and businessman of Frankfurt signed the third and final version of his will, in which he bequeathed his entire fortune and his art collection to the foundation that was to be

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named the “Städelsches Kunstinstitut”. In addition to his donation of immense material and art-historical assets, he thus introduced a visionary idea that has lost nothing of its impact to this day. The Städel – Germany’s most prominent civic cultural foundation – serves as an outstanding model of broad-based civic engagement which continues to contribute decisively to the preservation and further development of this cultural institution. Together, the passion of a single citizen and the dedication of many gave rise to a comprehensive collection of art dating from the Middle Ages to the present, one of Europe’s most prestigious museums and a prominent fixture in Frankfurt’s civic society.

As a means of shedding light on the founding vision – but also the museum’s present state and significance – the Städel has designed an **anniversary wall** for its main stairway. There, on more than fifty square metres, the founding year 1815 and the anniversary 2015 are juxtaposed. What was the nature of the Städel collection in 1815, and who were the visitors who came to Johann Friedrich Städel’s residence to admire his art? What are the dimensions of the Städel museum’s collection today – and in what ways can it be experienced? What has changed fundamentally in the past two hundred years, and what has remained the same? With the aid of historical and anecdotal examples, numerical comparisons and visual impressions, the anniversary wall provides insights into the beginnings of Germany’s oldest civic museum foundation and what it is today.

The Städel is moreover celebrating its anniversary with a substantial number of large-scale research and **exhibition projects**. Among the highlights will be the special exhibition “Monet and the Birth of Impressionism” (11 March to 21 June 2015), presenting some one hundred masterpieces by Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Alfred Sisley, Paul Cézanne and others, as well as a group exhibition on figurative painting in the German Federal Republic of the 1980s (“The 80s”, 22 July to 18 October 2015). The anniversary exhibition planned for the autumn, “The Masterworks in Dialogue: Eminent Guests for the Anniversary” (7 October 2015 to 24 January 2016) will present approximately eighty select works from all areas of the Städel collection side by side with masterworks and companion pieces from the world’s most renowned museums. Spectacular temporary “partnerships” and long-yearned-for “encounters” will thus come about. The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of lectures by the Städel’s curators on the history of the collection; the opening address will be given by Daniel Kehlmann. From 5 November 2015 onward, the Städel’s exhibition annex will moreover feature a very special series of works by the American concept and media artist John Baldessari. Conceived specifically for the Städel, the series will be based on objects in the collection: masterpieces by Lucas Cranach the Elder, Agnolo Bronzino, Dirck van Baburen, Maria Lassnig and others will serve as visual material for the large-scale pictorial collages by the world-famous artist (until 24 January 2016).

The two-hundred-year existence of the Städel Museum will also provide the occasion for a fundamental redefinition of the diverse educational programme and the visitor experience offered by Germany's oldest civic museum foundation. Against the background of the increasing digitalization of everyday life, the **expansion of the museum's educational responsibilities into the digital realm** represents a key building block for the Frankfurt institution. To this end, the Städel has initiated a wide range of projects to be made public over the course of the anniversary year: A comprehensive digital exhibit platform is presently in the making – a tool as intelligent as it is intuitive that will allow visitors to “roam” our collections at their leisure. Innovative and educational computer games for children are also undergoing realization, online art-history courses are being developed in cooperation with the Leuphana Universität, the prototype of a completely novel digital art book is being produced, and the educational “digitorial” already available now offers a modern means of preparing for visits to exhibitions. Starting in February 2015, Städel visitors will moreover have free access to WiFi throughout the museum and its grounds, allowing them, for example, to download the Städel app (available from March onward), listen to the audio guide on their own devices, or simply document their museum experience and share it by way of the social media. A newly developed “cabinet of digital curiosities” right in the museum will supplement the media table by providing means of trying out the new exhibit platform and the app game for children.

In addition to the new digital formats, a commemorative publication entitled *...zum Besten hiesiger Stadt und Bürgerschaft. 200 Jahre Städel* will be published in March by the Prestel Verlag. In addition to essays by Städel authors such as Max Hollein and Jochen Sander, it will contain a contribution by Thomas Gaehtgens (director of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles) on the development of the Städel Museum from Johann Friedrich Städel's foundation to the European institution it is today. Florian Illies will devote his article to the “matter of taste”, author Martin Mosebach will speculate on the founder's personality, Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen (secretary general of the Kulturstiftung der Länder) will address the significance and development of civic engagement for art and culture in Germany, Christoph Stölzl (president of the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt in Weimar) will write about the foundation as an expression of the civic will, and Wolfgang Ullrich (professor of art theory and media theory at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe and pro-rector for research) will report on museums and the social media. Finally, a conversation between Sylvia von Metzler, Nikolaus Schweickart and Felix Semmelroth (Deputy Mayor in Charge of Culture of the City of Frankfurt am Main) moderated by Tim Sommer (editor in chief of *art – Das Kunstmagazin*) will revolve around volunteer involvement in the area of art and culture, the past and future of the Städel Museum and the importance of the foundation in and for Frankfurt. A series of scenes by the Frankfurt photographer Katrin Binner will provide an introduction.



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Location: Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

Museum opening hours: Tue, Wed, Sat and Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Thu and Fri 10 am – 9 pm

Advance ticket sales at: tickets.staedelmuseum.de

Social media: The Städel Museum is communicating the anniversary on the social media with the hashtag #200jahrestaedel

Media partners: 3sat, Fraport AG, Media Frankfurt GmbH, Verkehrsgesellschaft Frankfurt am Main

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