

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION PREVIEW 2026 AND OUTLOOK 2027

**MONET ON THE NORMANDY COAST. THE DISCOVERY OF ÉTRETAT,
BRUEGEL'S FANTASTIC WORLDS, NEW PERSPECTIVES WITH ELMGREEN &
DRAGSET, SKIN IN ART ON PAPER, MAJOR EXHIBITION ON MARY
MAGDALENE AND 2027 ON THE GARDEN OF PARADISE**

Monet on the Normandy Coast

The Discovery of Étretat

19 March – 5 July 2026

Exhibition Annex

Press Preview: Tuesday, 17 March 2026, 11.00 am

A coast becomes a myth: the cliffs of Étretat, located in Normandy on the Atlantic coast, captivated numerous artists in the 19th century. From 19 March to 5 July 2026, the Städel Museum will present a major exhibition dedicated to the artistic discovery of the former fishing village of Étretat and its influence on modern painting. Around 170 exceptional paintings, drawings, photographs and historical documents on loan from leading French, German and other international museums as well as several private collections will be on display in Frankfurt. Among them are no fewer than twenty-four works by Claude Monet.

Étretat played an important role in the emergence of a new style of painting that went down in art history as Impressionism. The artists were particularly interested in the distinctive cliff landscape, which they found both excitingly beautiful and threatening. Painters and writers travelled to Étretat, and it was through their works that this remote place became famous beyond France's borders. Following an increase in tourism around 1850, Étretat developed into a popular seaside resort and meeting place for artists, intellectuals and the Parisian bourgeoisie. Gustave Courbet painted his famous wave pictures here; Guy de Maupassant elevated Étretat to a place of longing in his writing; and Maurice Leblanc's fictional gentleman thief, Arsène Lupin, hoarded his treasures here. The aspiring painter Claude Monet was also so fascinated by the unique cliffs and their three rock arches – the Porte d'Amont, the Porte d'Aval and the Manneporte – that he dedicated several paintings to them. Impressed by the ever-changing light and weather conditions, Monet began painting

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series of motifs in Étretat for the first time, a working method that would later become his trademark.

In addition to works by Eugène Delacroix, Gustave Courbet, Claude Monet and Henri Matisse, the exhibition showcases the work of several other notable modern and contemporary artists, including Eugène Le Poittevin, Camille Corot, Gustave Caillebotte, Johann Wilhelm Schirmer and Elger Esser. Together, these works demonstrate the enduring fascination that this location inspires to this day. Loans come from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, among others.

Étretat has been a popular holiday destination for international tourists for over 150 years. However, the influx of people poses as much of a threat to the cliffs as erosion and climate change. Examining the myth of Étretat thus also makes it possible to understand, as if under a magnifying glass, the ambivalent effects of the popularisation of a place and the role that art plays in this. With the comprehensive exhibition *Monet on the Normandy Coast. The Discovery of Étretat*, the Städel Museum invites visitors to rediscover Étretat in all its fragility and fascination through famous masterpieces from the 19th and 20th centuries.

A wide range of educational activities will be available both on site and online to complement the exhibition. Tickets to visit the exhibition and overview tours of the most important works are already available online at staedelmuseum.de.

An exhibition in cooperation with the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

Curators: Alexander Eiling (Head of Modern Art, Städel Museum), Eva Mongi-Vollmer (Curator, Städel Museum), Stéphane Paccoud (Chief Curator of 19th-Century Paintings and Sculptures, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon), Isolde Pludermacher (General Curator of Paintings, Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Project Managers: Eva-Maria Höllerer (Curator, Städel Museum) and Nelly Janotka (Assistant Curator, Städel Museum)

Sponsored by: Fraport AG, Fontana Foundation, Städelscher Museums-Verein e. V.

Marketing and Media Partners: City of Frankfurt am Main – Department of Culture and Science, Alnatura Produktions- und Handels GmbH, Ströer Deutsche Städte Medien GmbH, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, arte

Elmgreen & Dragset

Stillleben mit Gemüse

20 May 2026 – 17 January 2027

Städel Museum

Press Preview: Tuesday, 19 May 2026, 11.00 am

In spring 2026, the artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset will transform the Städel Museum into a fascinating interplay of reality and illusion. The Contemporary Art Collection will feature two immersive installations that, together with sculptures and interventions by the artists, will radiate throughout the entire building and into the neighbouring Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung. On their tour, visitors will experience how works of art from the Städel Museum spanning over 700 years enter into dialogues and formerly hidden connections become visible.

Since 1995, Elmgreen & Dragset have worked internationally at the intersection of architecture, installation art and performance, deconstructing seemingly fixed spatial structures and transforming public and institutional spaces. With the exhibition *Stillleben mit Gemüse*, the duo reflects on how the ideological control mechanisms embedded in familiar spatial designs, such as office landscapes, can influence our behavioural patterns. By redirecting visitors' gazes, Elmgreen & Dragset draw attention to moments that are easily overlooked, creating poetic scenes imbued with equal measures of scepticism and humour.

The Scandinavian artists also address the art world itself, highlighting how museum exhibitions influence our understanding of art history. At the Städel Museum Elmgreen & Dragset play with this institutional system, questioning classic forms of presentation. Unlike traditional exhibitions, *Stillleben mit Gemüse* extends throughout the entire museum and collection, inviting visitors on a treasure hunt to discover Elmgreen & Dragset's interventions. These encounters subtly alter the flow through the Städel, creating a series of almost-surreal constellations and placing the visitors themselves at the centre of the experience.

Curator: Svenja Grosser (Head of Contemporary Art Collection, Städel Museum)

Project Manager: Maja Lisewski (Assistant Curator, Contemporary Art Collection, Städel Museum)

Sponsored by: Gemeinnützige Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain GmbH, SEB, Städel Museum-Verein e. V.

With additional support from: New Carlsberg Foundation



Bruegel. Printed

18 June – 20 August 2026

Exhibition Hall of the Department of Prints and Drawings

Press Preview: Wednesday, 17 June 2026, 11.00 am

Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/30–1569) transports viewers into a fantastical world full of humorous imagery and enigmatic details. Although he is primarily known today as a painter, Bruegel achieved fame early on as a designer of prints. His pictorial creations range from large-scale panoramic landscapes to moralising religious parables, from scenes of everyday life to allegorical compositions. In these works, Bruegel is both a storyteller and a critical observer of his time. The exhibition *Bruegel. Printed*, which will take place in the summer of 2026, brings together around forty-five extraordinary prints based on Bruegel's drawings. The Städel Museum's Collection of Prints and Drawings has an impressive inventory of Dutch prints, including thirty works based on Bruegel's drawings. These form the basis of the exhibition, supplemented by loans from the Albertina in Vienna and the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich.

The works on display, including allegorical representations such as *Patientia* (Patience, 1557) and *Temperantia* (Temperance, c. 1560), vividly convey Bruegel's multifaceted imagery. His work addresses the moral issues of his time while touching on fundamental aspects of human life, combining precise observation with imagination and narrative power. Bruegel addresses human weaknesses and refers to the grandeur of nature, while also focusing on everyday coexistence. The special appeal of his works stem from the interplay of closeness to nature, ingenuity and humorous exaggeration. Even today, his depictions offer surprising insights into social interaction and the question of fundamental human values.

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

Sponsored by: Städel Museum-Verein e. V.

Mary Magdalene: Sin. Pray. Love.

17 September 2026 – 17 January 2027

Exhibition Annex

Press Preview: Wednesday, 16 September 2026, 11.00 am

She is Christ's companion, saint and sinner, symbol of desire and repentance—Mary Magdalene has fascinated for centuries with her contradictions. From the writings of the New Testament to medieval legends and up to the present day, she has been interpreted in countless ways in art, always reflecting the ideas of femininity, spirituality and independence of the respective era. With *Mary Magdalene*, the Städel Museum and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung are presenting the first comprehensive exhibition on this extraordinary figure in the German-speaking world. The exhibition explores how her image has evolved over the centuries—from ascetic penitent and ecstatic saint to a modern, self-determined woman as an identification figure. Mary Magdalene is presented both as a projection screen for cultural and religious ideas and as an independent, multifaceted figure who mediates between the body, faith, and the social roles attributed to her.

Important works from the collections of the Städel Museum and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung form the starting point for the presentation. These will be supplemented by around 100 additional works, including paintings, sculptures and prints from notable German and international collections. Together, these works illustrate the wide range of artistic and emotional representations of Mary Magdalene. A special focus will be placed on women artists, such as Artemisia Gentileschi, Lavinia Fontana, Elisabetta Sirani, Lotte Laserstein, Kiki Smith and Marlene Dumas. In addition, major works by important male artists, including Albrecht Dürer, Pedro de Mena, Guercino, Georges de la Tour, Claude Lorrain, Auguste Rodin, Arnold Böcklin and Max Beckmann, will be presented. The exhibition will also explore the iconographic transformation of Mary Magdalene in popular culture. The show thus presents how each era has inscribed its own questions, ideas and longings into the figure of Mary Magdalene, demonstrating how she continues to provide an opportunity to reflect on role models, spirituality and the interpretation of female experience.

An exhibition of the Städel Museum and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung

Curators: Dr Bastian Eclercy (Head of Italian, French and Spanish Paintings before 1800, Städel Museum), Dr Stefan Roller (Head of the Medieval Department, Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung)

Sponsored by: Städelscher Museums-Verein e. V.

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

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: Städel Museum-Verein e. V.

In the Garden of Paradise

Art and the Perception of Nature around 1400 (working title)

24 February – 27 June 2027

Exhibition Annex

Press Preview: Tuesday, 23 February 2027, 11.00 am

Paradise—a place of longing that has fired the human imagination for centuries.

Representing both an earthly and a heavenly garden, as well as the original harmony between humans and nature, it became a projection space for religious, philosophical and artistic ideas. The large-scale exhibition *In the Garden of Paradise. Art and the Perception of Nature around 1400* explores this tension, focusing on a pivotal period of upheaval in European art.

The starting point is one of the most famous and, at the same time, most enigmatic paintings in the Städel Museum: *The Little Garden of Paradise* (ca. 1410–20). Barely larger than an open book, the panel reveals an astonishing wealth of detail. The Virgin Mary is depicted amidst courtly society, and the enclosed garden can be interpreted as both a religious symbol and a setting for worldly love. The work is particularly notable for its unparalleled closeness to nature: more than twenty-five plant species, twelve bird species and three insect species are depicted with astonishing precision, reflecting a newly awakened interest in nature as a space for observation and knowledge. The exhibition focuses on this groundbreaking connection between art and the perception of nature, situating *The Little Garden of Paradise* firmly within the historical and artistic context of Europe around 1400—a time marked by upheaval, conflict and intellectual exchange.

Around eighty high-calibre loans from international museums, including the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, the Louvre in Paris and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, bring this development to life.

Alongside paintings by Jan van Eyck, the “Master of Flémalle” and Pisanello, the exhibition also features sculptures, goldsmith work, tapestries, drawings and illuminated manuscripts. The exhibition is complemented by an immersive installation by the Berlin-based artist and stage designer Philipp Fürhofer, which reinterprets the sensual dimension of *The Little Garden of Paradise*. Even in the Middle Ages, paintings were intended to appeal not only to the eye, but to all the senses—through the chirping of birds, the scent of flowers, the taste of fruit and the texture of fabrics. Fürhofer transfers this idea to the present day and creates a walk-in “Garden of Paradise” that brings the historical imagery to life in an atmospheric way.



Curator: Prof. Dr Jochen Sander (Deputy Director and Head of the Collection of Dutch, Flemish and German painting before 1800, Städel Museum)

Project Manager: Dr Corinna Gannon (Assistant Curator, Dutch, Flemish and German painting before 1800, Städel Museum)

Sponsored by: Städelscher Museums-Verein e. V.

Titles and exhibition dates subject to change.