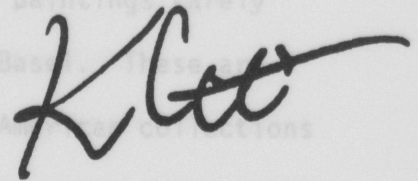


The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

One hundred works from the Foundation, which houses the greatest collection of Klee's art, form the nucleus of the exhibition. Additional paintings rarely seen outside Switzerland are being lent by the Kunstmuseum Bern. The exhibition is joined by works from other public and private European and American collections.



PAUL KLEE

February 9 - May 5, 1987

"Individuality is not an elementary sort of thing. . . . My self, for instance, is a dramatic ensemble. Here a prophetic ancestor makes his appearance. Here a brutal hero shouts. Here an alcoholic bon vivant argues with a learned professor. Here a lyric muse, chronically love-struck, raises her eyes to heaven. Here papa steps forward, uttering pedantic protests. Here the indulgent uncle intercedes. Here the aunt babbles gossip. Here the maid giggles lasciviously. And I look upon it all with amazement, the sharpened pen in my left hand."

--Paul Klee, 1905, The Diaries of Paul Klee: 1898-1918

The Museum of Modern Art presents the first major American retrospective in twenty years devoted to one of the foremost pioneers of modernism, the Swiss-born artist Paul Klee (1879-1940), opening on February 9, 1987.

Organized by Carolyn Lanchner, curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, the exhibition features the artist's masterpieces together with a rich selection of lesser-known works. Although Klee's name and art have long been known to the American public, no previous exhibition has presented the full range of his art in its unparalleled diversity and astonishing inventiveness.

On view through May 5, the exhibition contains approximately 200 paintings and watercolors and 100 drawings and prints from all stages of the artist's career. The scope and depth of this presentation are made possible by a unique agreement with the Paul Klee Foundation at the Kunstmuseum Bern in Switzerland.

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One hundred works from the Foundation, which houses the greatest collection of Klee's art, form the nucleus of the exhibition. Additional paintings rarely seen outside Switzerland are being lent by the Kunstmuseum Basel. These are joined by works from other public and private European and American collections including that of the artist's son, Felix Klee.

The exhibition highlights several important groups of works that constitute outstanding landmarks in Klee's career. A beautiful series of watercolors that Klee made on a holiday in Tunisia in 1914 represent the artist's breakthrough to a mastery of color and remain among this century's most spectacular achievements in watercolor. The works produced during the twenties when Klee taught at the Bauhaus best exemplify the incredibly broad range of the artist's expressive capacities. Included are a large number of the whimsical scenarios of his oil transfer drawings--most well-known among them The Museum of Modern Art's Twittering Machine (1922)--as well as a rich assembly of his famous "magic square" paintings, resonant compositions built solely of vibrant blocks of color. The exhibition also features an imposing array of the majestic striated compositions stemming from a visit to Egypt in 1929, and the shimmering "divisionist" paintings of 1931-32.

Finally, the exhibition offers for the first time in this country an in-depth presentation of the large-format works of Klee's last years in Bern. These hauntingly intense pieces--done in large bold strokes on heavy burlap and paper--formed both a culmination of the motifs and techniques of Klee's entire career, and a stunning portent of the Abstract Expressionist and European Informel art soon to follow.

Ms. Lanchner writes in the accompanying catalog,* "Because Klee understood line, color, and matière to be themselves carriers of meaning, it made little

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difference whether they were employed in the service of abstraction or representation. No other artist of his time was willing to move from the completely nonfigurative to the figurative; no one else so completely demonstrated that the making of the work can be the making of its expressive power, and in this his art held the key to the dilemma of 'subject' that was to become a preoccupying issue to the first generation of American Post World War II painters."

The exhibition is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. An indemnity for the exhibition has been provided by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. After its New York showing, it will travel to the Cleveland Museum of Art (June 24 - August 16, 1987) and the Kunstmuseum Bern in Switzerland (September 25, 1987 - January 3, 1988).

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LECTURE SERIES

A series of four lectures will be presented in conjunction with the exhibition. Dates and speakers are as follows:

Monday, February 9

"Klee's Angels"

Gert Schiff, Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Monday, February 16

"Cosmic Fragments of Meaning: On the Syllables of Paul Klee"

Rainer Crone, Associate Professor of Art History
Columbia University

Monday, February 23

"Klee as Colorist"

Andrew Kagan, art historian and author of Paul Klee, Art & Music

Monday, March 2

"Ad marginem: Paul Klee as Ironist"

Marcel Francisocono, Associate Professor of Art
School of Art and Design, University of Illinois

Lectures will begin at 8:30 p.m. in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1. Tickets are \$7, \$6 Members, and \$5 students, and are available at the information desk or by sending a check and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Department of Education, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019.

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*Catalog: Paul Klee. Foreword by Richard E. Oldenburg; preface and acknowledgements by Carolyn Lanchner. Essays: "Klee and the Avant-Garde 1912-1940," by Ann Temkin; "From Revolution to Exile," by O.K. Werckmeister; "Klee and German Romanticism," by Jürgen Glaesemer; and "Klee in America," by Carolyn Lanchner. 137 color and 309 black-and-white illustrations. 416 pages. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Clothbound, \$55.00; paperbound, \$22.50.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.