

Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press release

Félix Vallotton Illusions perdues

12.4. – 7.9.2025

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten & Villa Flora

Press conference on the exhibition

Thursday, 10 April 2025, 11 o'clock or individual guided tour by appointment

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten

Stadthausstrasse 6, CH-8400 Winterthur

To mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Félix Vallotton (1865–1925), the Kunst Museum Winterthur is dedicating a comprehensive exhibition to him. Over 100 works will be shown at two locations – in the museums Reinhart am Stadtgarten and Villa Flora – including numerous major works such as the iconic *La blanche et la noire*.

2025 marks the centenary of the death of the Lausanne artist Félix Vallotton. The Winterthur anniversary exhibition offers a valid overview of Vallotton's art with works from all creative phases, genres and techniques. In addition to paintings and woodcuts, it will also include sculptures and drawings. Conceptually, the exhibition is based on *Lost Illusions*, thus referring to Honoré Balzac's novel of the same name. This opens up new perspectives on Vallotton's art, encouraging us to question the artist's prosaic view of the world.

Like Balzac's *Illusions perdues*, Vallotton's art is a precisely observed, critical depiction of society. This manifested itself first in his woodcuts and later in his paintings. Vallotton's still lifes, landscapes, portraits and nudes appear with an unmistakable clarity, a realism reminiscent of the old masters. Captured in the contrast of black and white, embedded in colour and incorporated into painting, it also reveals the modernity of Vallotton's art – a modernity that questions any semblance of the real and supposedly true. Whereas in the 19th century the objective of art was still to convey an image of the world, this endeavour was definitely lost with Vallotton. Although he supported this tradition, he pursued it further, advancing it. However, his pictorial inventions, his compositions and his application of colour permeate the illusionistic, the deliberate and desired deception.

The Kunst Museum Winterthur houses one of the most extensive Vallotton collections in the world: over 200 works – paintings, drawings, woodcuts, lithographs and sculptures, including such important works as *La blanche et la noire* (1913) and *Coucher de soleil, ciel orange* (1910), which marked the beginning of the artist's celebrated series of sunsets. The museum owes its large collection of works by Vallotton to Hedy and Arthur Hahnloser. In Switzerland, they were among the first collectors of Vallotton's oeuvre. Over the years, Hedy Hahnloser and Vallotton cultivated a close friendship that went far beyond collecting art. They kept in close contact, visited each other, wrote letters and after his death, Hedy dealt with the great loss of her friend in a book – the first monograph on Vallotton's art.

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2025 | Année Vallotton

This exhibition is part of *2025 / Année Vallotton*, in which cultural institutions, including the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne and the Fondation Félix Vallotton, are celebrating the artist throughout Switzerland with numerous exhibitions, publications and events. All of these can be discovered at vallotton2025.ch.

Publication to accompany the exhibition

The Kunst Museum Winterthur is publishing a volume with literary texts to accompany the opening of the exhibition. In addition to numerous illustrations of Vallotton's works, it contains contributions by Florian Illies, Peter Stamm, Simone Lappert, Zsuzsanna Gahse and Hedy Hahnloser.

Audio guide with Hedy Hahnloser about her 'Vallo'

The exhibition is accompanied by a specially produced audio guide that sheds light on the artist Félix Vallotton from various perspectives. Vallotton expert and friend Hedy Hahnloser 'chats' with author Simone Lappert, artist Lika Nüssli, curator David Schmidhauser and Vallotton connoisseur David Streiff.

Photographs and information about the exhibition

kmw.ch/press or available by enquiry

Contact

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