MEDIA RELEASE

06.07.13.10.2019

Turner
The Sea and the Alps

The British painter Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) travelled through Switzerland in search of spectacular motifs. During his travels he visited Lucerne several times in order to study the unique local interplay of light and weather conditions, lake and mountains. The artist first visited Central Switzerland in the year 1802, when tens of thousands of British travellers availed themselves of the brief period of the Peace of Amiens to go on the continent. The impressions of the sea and Alps were of major importance for Turner: here the beauty and the threat of nature culminated to typify the major theme of the sublime, which was central to Romanticism. With the advent of Romanticism, the Alps were no longer just an impediment on the way to the South, but a destination in themselves. At the same time they became a theme in art. Turner filled several sketchbooks with impressions of the rugged mountains. The depictions of the Schöllenenschlucht and the Mer de Glace testify to his interest in weather conditions and the elements in general. For this artist, good weather meant thunder storms and rain showers or at least a veil of mist and a cloudy sky.

During his annual visits to Lucerne between 1841 and 1844, Turner made sketches of the Rigi massif from his hotel room and took steamboat excursions on Lake Lucerne. Back in his London studio he transposed his sketches into brilliant watercolours and oil paintings. Turner painted the Rigi in various light conditions and colour nuances so often that the art historian who administered his estate, John Ruskin, exclaimed in astonishment: “I cannot tell why he was so fond of the Rigi... “

Turner was a clever entrepreneur. He set up an exhibition space so as to present his works to potential buyers, and he also did sample studies. With these detailed sketches of Lake Lucerne and the Rigi he hoped to win commissions to further elaborate on the subjects.

The almost one hundred works on loan from Great Britain and Switzerland include works-on-paper of motifs in Central Switzerland, among them the famous Blue Rigi, Sunrise (1844), the Lucerne Sketchbook, the first oil painting by Turner ever exhibited, and his fascinating later oeuvre. With the exhibition Turner. The Sea and the Alps the Kunstmuseum Lucerne is celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Kunstgesellschaft Luzern, the supporting association of the Kunstmuseum Luzern. Turner visited Lucerne at the very time when the Kunstgesellschaft was being constituted. The foundation of the Kunstgesellschaft Luzern in 1819 by artists and members of the educated middle classes lent expression to the bourgeois need to participate in and shape society. In those same years, tourism also thrived and Central Switzerland exerted a magical attraction on travellers thanks to its countless beauty spots. The nascent tourism also spurred the development of Central Switzerland and stimulated interest in depictions of the Alps, and with it the sale of Turner’s works.

curated by Fanni Fetzer, director Kunstmuseum Luzern, and Beat Wismer, former director of Aargauer Kunsthaus and Museums Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, in cooperation with David Blayney Brown, Tate
DATES

Media Preview
Friday, 05.07., 10.15 am

Opening
Friday, 05.07., 6.30 pm

Underway with the Curator
Sunday, 21.07., 12 am and Wednesday, 04.09., 6 pm
Guided tour with Beat Wismer, co-curator. Max. 25 persons, advance bookings only at the museum ticket office

Underway with the Curator
Wednesday, 07.08. and 02.10., 6 pm
Guided tour with Fanni Fetzer, director Kunstmuseum Luzern. Max. 25 persons, advance bookings only at the museum ticket office

At First Light
Sunday, 25.08., 3 pm
Lucerne Festival
The Lucerne Festival Academy plays At First Light, conducted by George Benjamin.

Erlebnistag
Sunday, 01.09.2019
In cooperation with Lucerne Festival
Composer Seminar Performance, with guided tour 1 pm: Konzert, guided tour at 2 pm, max. 50 persons 3 pm: guided tour, max. 50 persons, concert at 4 pm Entree with the ticket of the Kunstmuseum Luzern, advance bookings via online ticketing

Stürmische Zeiten
Lecture series by the University of Lucerne
Wednesday, 11.09., 18.09, 25.09., 09.10. and
Thursday, 03.10.
Lectures 4.30–5.30 pm
At 6 pm guided tour of the exhibition Turner. The Sea and the Alps
Five speakers from different fields look at individual aspects of Lucerne and Central Switzerland in Turner’s day.

Cees Nooteboom trifft J. M. W. Turner
Thursday, 10.10., 7.30 pm
The famous author will read from his essay on Turner. The subsequent talk will be the chaired by Beat Wismer, co-curator of the exhibition. Max. 50 persons, CHF 50.–, advance booking only at the museum ticket office

Cees Nooteboom im Gespräch
In cooperation with KKL Impuls
Friday, 11.10., 7 pm
The famous author Cees Nooteboom in conversation with Beat Wismer, co-curator of the exhibition. KKL Luzern, Trakt A, Auditorium

Public Tours
Daily Tue–Sat 5 pm and Sun 11 am

Digital Tour with Turner
Travel with J.M.W. Turner and learn more about his life and work: www.turner2019.ch

Publications


Price for both publications CHF 60.– / for members CHF 50.–

Opening hours
Tue–Sun 10 am–7 pm
Also open Mondays for private tours.

Online-Ticketing
Book your ticket in advance and avoid queuing: www.kunstmuseumluzern.ch/besuch/online-tickets

In Kooperation mit Tate, London

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