



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE TOTAL ARTWORK IN EXPRESSIONISM**

#### **Art, film, literature, theatre, dance and architecture 1905-1925**

24 October, 2010 to 13 February, 2011  
Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt

Curator: Dr. Ralf Beil, Director of the Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt

In collaboration with Deutsches Film Museum Frankfurt am Main  
Made possible by Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain

## **THE EXHIBITION**

The cultural and historical panorama of *The Total Artwork in Expressionism*, realised in complex scenography as an impressive course of intimate exhibition rooms, monumental ramp architecture, real dance stages and spectacular film installations, is one of Germany's exhibition highlights for Autumn/Winter 2010/2011.

Whether it's the dual talents of Egon Schiele in Vienna after 1900, or the Gesamtkunstwerk of life in the Berlin studio of Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner. Whether it's Paul Hindemith's Frankfurt opera "*Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*" (*Murderer, the Hope of Women*) as an exemplary stage work of art after Oskar Kokoschka, or the full-body masks of the dancer Lavinia Schulz which created a furore at the Hamburg arts festivals of the 1920s: Expressionism made a much deeper impact on its time than hitherto suspected.

The Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt has thus realised for the first time an extensive exhibition of the vital networks, the astonishing total artworks and the genuine interactions between the artistic genres of Expressionism. The concept of the great "unified work of art" inspired the members of the *Brücke* and the *Neopathetisches Cabaret* as well as the artists of Herwarth Walden's *Sturm*, the team of the film *Dr. Caligari* or the architects of the *Gläserne Kette* around Bruno Taut. Against the dramatic contemporary background of the years before, during and after the First World War, the interdisciplinary overview at Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt brings together around 450 exhibits – paintings, film sequences, photos, posters, texts, architectural sketches, music, drawings, sculptures and contemporary documents - to create a unique panorama of the Expressionist époque, thus rediscovering Expressionism.

In order to make the Gesamtkunstwerk palpable as a synesthetic reality, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt has fully reconstructed for the first time the studio niche from Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's attic apartment in Berlin-Friedenau from 1914 in the actual dimensions and with the original furnishings.

Rudolf Belling's architectural model, *Dreiklang (Triad)*, hitherto perceived primarily as a sculpture, is confronted for the first time in a specially built rotunda with the expressionistic music by Arnold Schönberg which was meant to be performed in the orchestral building. The ramp architecture for the film *Dr. Caligari* is recreated on a scale of 1:1 and leads to the



arena for a video installation with key scenes from the masterpiece – the soundtrack is provided by Paul Hindemith's expressionistic opera music *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*. In a specially developed light production, Lyonel Feininger's bizarre toy houses evoke the shadow worlds of the expressionist silent film. Bruno Taut's utopian architectural drama in book format – *Der Weltbaumeister (The World Architect)* from 1920 – was realised for the exhibition as a film. And, for the first time ever, we present the spectacular originals of the full-body masks of Lavinia Schulz outside of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg as testimony to the power of the expressionistic mask dance. Finally, the expressionist film is juxtaposed with the reality of contemporary architecture by short-circuiting the film rooms of *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* with furniture by Hermann Höger and photographs of expressionist upper class interiors from the 1920s.

This hitherto almost unknown Expressionism comes about as the result of the fascinating and furious activities of multitalents between 1905 and 1925, the founding year of the artists' group *Brücke (Bridge)* in Dresden, and the year of the exhibition *Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity)* in the Kunsthalle Mannheim. The chronological breadth of the exhibition is matched by the maximum possible topographical bandwidth: it is not only about the established Expressionist hotbeds of Dresden, Berlin, Vienna and Munich, but also about Hamburg, Itzehoe, Frankfurt am Main and Darmstadt.

The exhibition also closes a circle in the history of the "Gesamtkunstwerk". After its first mention in 1827 in the *Ästhetik oder Lehre von Weltanschauung und Kunst* by Karl Friedrich Eusebius Trahdorff, "the attempt to achieve a total artwork is unifying all the arts" became programmatic, in particular in the works of Richard Wagner as of 1849 as a "Gesamtkunstwerk of the future", which is only conceivable "practically in the community of all artists", their "unification [...] in time and place, for a certain particular purpose" as Wagner himself formulated it. As Harald Szeemann pointed out in 1983 on the occasion of his epochal exhibition "Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk" (*The Inclination towards the Total Work of Art*), the term "Gesamtkunstwerk" has since then "never been theoretically defined".

The exhibition *The total Artwork in Expressionism* at Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt now brings the Gesamtkunstwerk back to the content first postulated by Wagner. In Expressionism, with its numerous interdisciplinary associations and "communities" of artists from all directions and styles, Wagner's "Gesamtkunstwerk of the future" becomes a reality for the first time. The various waves of liberation in terms of content and form in the period before, during and after the First World War gave rise to countless avant garde impulses in art, film, literature, music, theatre, dance and architecture, which influenced not only their generation, but the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **THE CATALOGUE / THE AUDIOBOOK / THE FILM**

The richly illustrated catalogue book, edited by Ralf Beil and Claudia Dillmann, with 16 essays by Thomas Anz, Ralf Beil, Gerda Breuer, Claudia Dillmann, Werner Durth, Petra Gehring, Wolfgang Pehnt, Rüdiger Schütt and others, as well as 31 source texts by Hugo Ball, Gottfried Benn, George Grosz, Bruno Taut, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Herwarth Walden and others, is published by Hatje Cantz Verlag: 512 pages, 467 illustrations, 24.5 x 30.5 cm, hardcover, German language version, €45 at the museum reception desk, €58.00 in bookshops. An English version is currently being prepared.



Alongside the exhibition, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt and Hatje Cantz are also publishing the volume "Gesamtkunstwerk Expressionism 1905-1925" in the series "Art to Hear": 64 pages, 50 coloured illustrations, 22 x 22 cm, with CD, German and English version, €16.80.

The range of accompanying media is rounded off by a film on the theme of the exhibition, produced by Cine +, Berlin by commission of the Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt and the German Film Museum Frankfurt am Main: DVD with hardcover, 25 mins., €19 at the museum reception desk.

## **THE PROJECT "THE PHENOMENON OF EXPRESSIONISM"**

The exhibition *The Total Artwork in Expressionism* is an elementary module of the major cooperative project "The Phenomenon of Expressionism" initiated and funded by the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain. For the first time in the Rhine-Main region, more than twenty established art and cultural institutions have networked to represent the diverse interactions of the époque with the region in a wide range of different facets in the form of exhibitions, music and dance productions as well as film and theatre performances in Bad Homburg, Darmstadt, Frankfurt am Main, Hofheim and Wiesbaden between now and 2012. The initiative has been well received by enthusiastic audiences since the series began in autumn 2009. Major successes included the monographic exhibition of works on Martin Elsaesser and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner as well as further highlights of "The Phenomenon of Expressionism" such as the world premiere of the reconstructed version of Fritz Lang's masterpiece *Metropolis* from the year 1927.

Professor Dr. Herbert Beck, Managing Director of the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain explains: "Within the framework of 'The Phenomenon of Expressionism' the exhibition at Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt provides an interdisciplinary overview of the sweeping impact of Expressionism. The exhibition proves clearly how profoundly the search for new forms of expression stands for upheaval and renewal in all areas of life."

Dr. Ralf Beil, Director of the Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, underlines the importance of the funding for the exhibition project: "Without the substantial support of the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain, such an ambitious rediscovery of Expressionism as represented by the exhibition *The Total Artwork in Expressionism* at the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt in Autumn/Winter 2010/2011 would simply not be possible."



## EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Curator of the exhibition and  
director of Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt

Dr. Ralf Beil, Director Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt

**Lenders** more than 70 national and international lenders including:  
Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin, Kirchner Museum Davos, Städel Museum  
Frankfurt, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Neue Pinakothek  
Munich, Cinemathèque Paris, New National Gallery of Prague,  
Moderna Museet Stockholm, Leopold Museum, Vienna

**Exhibited works** around 450 exhibits from all artistic genres, including:  
paintings, film sequences, photos, posters, texts, architectural  
sketches, music, drawings, models, sculptures, contemporary  
documents,

**Artists** 111 painters, sculptors, composers, writers, stage designers, dancers,  
graphic artists, directors, architects including:  
Ernst Barlach, Rudolf Belling, Anita Berber, Otto Dix, Josef Fenneker,  
George Grosz, Wenzel Hablik, Paul Hindemith, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,  
César Klein, Oskar Kokoschka, Fritz Lang, Wilhelm Lehmbruck,  
Ludwig Meidner, Erich Mendelsohn, Hans Poelzig, Mies van der Rohe,  
Hans Scharoun, Egon Schiele, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Arnold  
Schönberg, Lavinia Schulz, Bruno Taut, Robert Wiene, Mary Wigman

**Exhibition area** 1000 m<sup>2</sup>

**Venue** Exhibition building Mathildenhöhe  
Olbrichweg 13  
64287 Darmstadt

**Homepage** [www.mathildenhoehe.eu](http://www.mathildenhoehe.eu)

**Duration of the exhibition**

24 October, 2010 to 13 February, 2011

**Entrance fee:** € 8 | € 6 concessions; family ticket € 16 (two adults with children)  
Groups as of 10 persons: € 6 per Person

**NEW:** Online tickets <http://www.mathildenhoehe.eu/www/ausstellungen.html>  
€ 9.30 | € 7.10 concessions

**Opening times** Tuesday to Sunday 10 – 18 hrs | Thursday 10 – 21 hrs



### Special opening times

24.12.2010: closed  
25./26.12.2010: 10 – 18 hrs  
31.12.2010: 10 – 16 hrs  
01.01.2011: 12 – 18 hrs

### GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION

#### PUBLIC TOURS

Thursday, 18.30 hrs  
Saturday, 15 hrs  
Sunday, 11 and 15 hrs  
Price: 3 €

#### **NEW:** GUIDED TOURS IN GERMAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Saturday, 13.11. / 04.12.2010 / 15.01. / 05.02.2011, 11 hrs

#### SPECIAL TOURS ON REQUEST

German, English, French, **NEW:** Spanish, **NEW:** Italian, **NEW:** Bulgarian, Russian and **NEW:** German sign language  
mathildenhoehe@darmstadt.de  
T +49 (0) 6151 13 27 78

#### AUDIOGUIDE GESAMTKUNSTWERK EXPRESSIONISM

German / English at the reception desk in the exhibition building, price: € 3

### CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

#### **NEW:** CHILDREN'S AUDIOGUIDE

Mathilda lights the way, suitable for children from 6 years, € 2

#### TEMPORARY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Every Sunday 14.30 – 17.00 hrs (except 26.12.2010 and 02.01.2011)  
Creative activities in Expressionism for children from 3 to 12 years with  
Isabelle Pauly in the sculptor studios, Artists' Colony Museum Darmstadt  
Free with entrance ticket for Gesamtkunstwerk Expressionism

#### FAMILY WEEK ON THE MATHILDENHÖHE

Tuesday, 25.01. – Sunday, 30.01.2011  
For one week reduced entrance fee for parents and children in the exhibition building  
Mathildenhöhe and the Artists' Colony Museum  
Guided tours for children daily during the family week at 16.00 hrs  
Free with entrance ticket for Gesamtkunstwerk Expressionism



## **THE EXHIBITION EVENTS / THE FILM PROGRAM**

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive, high-calibre framework program with stage performances, readings, concerts, lectures, films and symposia. The participating institutions and groups are: Staatstheater Darmstadt, Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, Deutsches Polen-Institut, Akademie für Tonkunst Darmstadt, Literaturgruppe Poseidon, Studentischer Filmkreis der TU in Darmstadt, die Herwarth-Walden-Gesellschaft, die Freimaurerloge zur Einigkeit, das Haus am Dom, die Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, hr2-kultur in Frankfurt am Main, die Caligari Filmbühne Wiesbaden and das Capitol Theater in Offenbach.

For further information, please go to [www.mathildenhoehe.eu](http://www.mathildenhoehe.eu).



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This press release and printable press pictures from the exhibition are available in the press section of our website at [www.mathildenhoehe.info/www/presse.html](http://www.mathildenhoehe.info/www/presse.html).

We will be happy to arrange background talks and interview options in connection with the exhibition. For this, and for any other information, please contact us at tel. no.

+49 (0) 6151 13 37 38 or e-mail [presse.mathildenhoehe@darmstadt.de](mailto:presse.mathildenhoehe@darmstadt.de).