Press release, 9 December 2014

Paul Klee – Not a Day without a Line

The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow
16.12.2014 to 1.3.2015

A cooperation of the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel and the Zentrum Paul Klee, Berne

In partnership with the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, the Zentrum Paul Klee and the Fondation Beyeler are jointly organising the first ever Paul Klee exhibition in Russia. Around 130 works from all periods of Klee’s oeuvre will highlight the most important aspects of his art. The fact that up until now only single works by him have been displayed in Russia is reason enough to organise an extensive retrospective. Moreover, the bicentenary of diplomatic relations between the two countries is a festive occasion for holding an exhibition in Russia of works by the Swiss artist loaned by museums in Switzerland.

Paul Klee (1879 – 1940) is one of the most important artists of Classic Modernism. Born in Berne, where he spent his youth, Klee soon decided to move to Germany, where he became a successful avant-garde artist. Persecuted by the National Socialists, he was obliged to fleeing his adoptive country in 1933 and sought refuge in Switzerland. Klee always maintained an individual standpoint and never belonged to mainstream artistic movements, even though he had friends, for example Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, in the movement known as Der Blaue Reiter, and was courted by the Surrealists in Paris. Klee’s work is very versatile, evolving from naturalistic studies in his early work to a more abstract pictorial language all his own that was more or less divorced from nature. He simultaneously created non-figurative colour field paintings, Constructivist drawings and figurative works.

“Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible” was Klee’s creative credo. His understanding of the “becoming of things” enabled him to create totally undogmatic works. He was neither a “law-giver”, who constructed a rigid set of rules, nor the dreamy mystic he is
often said to have been. He was always aware that high quality, “living” art can be created only through the tension between concept and intuition. At the same time, he was a critical observer who commented on contemporary events with ironic distance in many of his works. The works selected demonstrate the versatility and profundity of Paul Klee’s pictorial ideas and oeuvre.

“This long awaited presentation of Paul Klee's oeuvre in Russia is an exceptional premiere. Paul Klee contributed to shape Modern art and was a great friend of iconic Russian painters like Kandinsky. We are proud to present this cooperation with the Swiss museums Zentrum Paul Klee and the Fondation Beyeler and to welcome Paul Klee’s masterpieces to Moscow” declares Marina Loshak, the Director of The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

The exhibition is being curated by Dr. Fabienne Eggelhörer, curator at the Zentrum Paul Klee in Berne.

A catalogue in Russian is being published on the occasion of the exhibition.

Captions:
Paul Klee, Ohne Titel (Gefangen), ca. 1940, Untitled (Trapped), oil and coloured paste on primed burlap, 55 x 50 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Beyeler Collection; Photograph by Peter Schibli, Basel
Paul Klee, Hoher Wächter, 1940, Superior guard, wax paint on canvas, original frame 70 x 50 cm, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Press images: are available on request

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