Press Release 17.10.2018

Exhibition
Paul Klee. Animality
19.10.18 - 17.03.19

Cats, birds, fish and fantastic hybrids populate the Zentrum Paul Klee in October. For the first time, a Paul Klee exhibition provides a glimpse of the relationship between humans and animals. Then and now, our dealings with animals are diverse and contradictory. Animals are feared, trained, pampered or slaughtered. Paul Klee thought intensely about the roles and nature of animals and human beings and commented critically upon their qualities.

In every phase of his work Paul Klee took an interest in animals. In his view, the study of nature was one of the central principles of artistic creation. He collected seaweed, snail shells and sea-shells and displayed them in his studio. As a precise observer, he often discovered the animal in human beings, and the human being in animals, and reversed the traditional roles. In his works humans «turn animal», while animals display human traits. Like the authors of antique animal fables, Klee comments on political events through wildlife, and his zoological scenes humorously show us human behaviour.

Birds and fish assume a special place in Klee’s bestiary. They exerted a particular fascination on him because unlike humans, who are bound to the earth by gravity, they can move completely freely in air or water. This gives them their own territories which are difficult for humans to access. Apart from that Klee’s zoos are populated by fantastical inventions of hybrid creatures like the double-tailed-three-ears, mythological sphinxes and ungainly urchses.

Klee’s cats occupied a central place not only in his life, but also in his work. He tried to immortalize his favourite animals in more than 250 mostly blurred photographs. In letters to his wife Lily he regularly had his cats Fritzi and Bimbo pass on «pawprints and cold wet nose-kisses».

The exhibition brings together some 130 works from the holdings of the collection of the Zentrum Paul Klee, many of which are being shown for the first time. Loans from Bern Natural History allow the public to engage in the immediate study of animals on Klee’s traces.

The curators Fabienne Eggelhöfer and Myriam Düssegger are at your disposal for individual previews and interviews.

Exhibition opening: 18.10.2018, 6:30 pm

Curators
Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Chief Curator Zentrum Paul Klee
Myriam Düssegger, Cocurator of the exhibition

With the generous support of
Canton of Bern and Burgergemeinde Bern
Worldpremiere – Sounding Soil in the Fruchtland
Animality inside and outside the Zentrum Paul Klee - during the Paul Klee: Animality exhibition the installation Sounding Soil will be on show in the Fruchtland.

The Zentrum Paul Klee is presenting a world premiere on 20 October in conjunction with the Agriculture Days – the general public can listen to the sounds made by soil. The art installation Sounding Soil makes it possible to hear the noises that plants, insects and other soil organisms make. The work was produced by sound artist, researcher and composer Marcus Maeder.

Sounding Soil is a collaborative project of Zurich University of Arts (ZHdK), the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Swiss Soil Monitoring Network (NABO) at Agroscope, ETH Zurich and the Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development.

Contact
Maria-Teresa Cano
Head of Communication and Public Relations Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee
press@zpk.org, Tel.: +41 31 328 09 44