Exhibition opening: *In Search of the Orient. From Bellini to Klee* plus annual preview

The exhibitions and events presented by the Zentrum Paul Klee in 2009 will be focusing on the theme of the Orient. Central to the three-part series of exhibitions will be a range of artistic explorations of cultural identity and the differences between the Orient and the Occident. Once again, music and the performing arts will provide an attractive foil to the thematic focus. During the second half of the year, the Zentrum will be presenting the entire graphical oeuvre of Paul Klee in an exhibition which at the same time pays homage to gallery owner and art collector Eberhard W. Kornfeld in recognition of his services to this cause.

*In Search of the Orient. From Bellini to Klee:* 7 February to 24 May 2009

This exhibition is the first of a three-part series on the Orient. *In Search of the Orient* takes a glance back in time and invites visitors to journey from Bern to Tunisia and Egypt, Morocco and Jerusalem. It puts Paul Klee’s travels to Tunisia and Egypt into historical perspective, and explores how Europeans have viewed the Orient from the Middle Ages through to the 20th century. In terms of commerce and art, Venice once bridged the divide between the cultures of East and West. One of the exhibition’s highlights from this period is the portrait of Sultan Mehmet II painted by Gentile Bellini in 1480; it is here courtesy of the National Gallery in London. Other artists featured include Giovanni Antonio Guardi, Jean-Etienne Liotard, Eugène Delacroix, Eugène Fromentin, Gustave Bauernfeind, Frederic Lord Leighton and John Frederick Lewis, as well as Charles Camoin, Henri Matisse and Wassily Kandinsky. The fascination and attraction which the Orient exerted on Europe’s painters prepares the visitor for the section of the exhibition concentrating on Klee, specifically the famous trips he made to Tunisia in the spring of 1914 and to Egypt in the winter of 1928/1929. Klee’s works are complemented by the exceptional pictures painted by his travel companions, August Macke and Louis Moilliet, as well as by photographs, postcards and written material affording a thrilling insight into the three artists’ interaction with Arab and Islamic culture. *In Search of the Orient* incorporates a special display of Islamic art featuring historical exhibits and artworks originating from the era when Islamic culture and science was at its zenith. The exhibition also takes a look at Orientalism: a treasure trove in its own right – with important loans from Switzerland, Berlin, Budapest, Paris, Venice and Vienna – this takes the visitor back to the 19th century and to that period’s perception of the Orient; it also brings to life Klee’s interest in this topic.

The exhibition is curated in association with the Westfälisches Landsmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster, Germany.
Dream and Reality. Contemporary Art from the Middle East: 28 February to 16 August 2009
The second exhibition focusing on the Orient takes the form of a multidisciplinary display of “real fiction” works offering a contemporary and topical look at the Middle East, including highly aestheticised and fictitious videos that have emerged out of subjective and poetic perspectives. Among them are installations such as Marwan Rechmaoui’s Beirut Caoutchouc, Beirut’s street plan in the form of a large rubber floor mat. Underlining the sensual aspect of the exhibition are audio stations created by the Bernese ethnomusicologist Thomas Burkhalter and his organisation Norient, as well as performances of live music. Included in Dream and Reality’s definition of art from the Middle East are works by Swiss artists such as San Keller, Chalet 5, Davide Cascio and Michael von Graffenried, who spent time in Cairo as artists-in-residence. But the exhibition encompasses more than dream and reality: it also explores the limits of intimacy and openness and incorporates everyday objects from the Orient of the 20th century.

Paul Klee. Carpet of Memory: 30 May to 30 August 2009
The third Orient exhibition, entitled Paul Klee. Carpet of Memory concludes the ‘Grand oriental tour’ of the Zentrum Paul Klee. This exhibition looks in greater depth at selected content-related and formal aspects of the oriental theme in Paul Klee’s works, with a focus on architecture, calligraphy and ornamentation together with the textile ornaments, the aspect of colour and the watercolour technique in Klee’s oeuvre. The exhibition explores his interest in Arab and Muslim culture and how it is reflected in his works, using his trips to Tunisia and Egypt as a starting point. Thus, the Paul Klee Museum presents yet another aspect of the artist’s work.

Art interpretation
Creaviva children’s museum: the new interactive exhibition at the Creaviva children’s museum carries the title Temple Festival and should be seen as an aid to interpreting the Paul Klee Zentrum’s Orient exhibitions. The Creaviva’s workshops – and the open studios in the first half of the year – are also devoted to the Orient as a theme.
Audio guide and folders – now also in Italian: The Zentrum’s art interpretation activities accompanying the Orient exhibitions include a new audio guide programme. In recognition of the large numbers of Italian-speaking visitors from within Switzerland and abroad, the Zentrum Paul Klee is now making its audio guides and exhibition folders available in Italian.

Programme of events and associated publications
Music: the wide-ranging programme of music embellishing the Orient exhibitions features renowned artists such as Kudsi Erguner, Madjid Khaladj, the Ensemble La Folia Bern, Boris Kovač, Masha and Marjan Vahdat, Ghada Shbeir, Mustapha Said, Sonic Traces and Mahmoud Turkmani.
Film: the cinema is an element of the modern Orient. For the Dream and Reality exhibition trigon-film has compiled a cinematic supporting programme featuring works ranging from traditional narrative cinema and desert ballads to genre spiel and modernist reductionism. These works approach societal and existential issues in exactly the same way, and conflicts are present just as much as the quest for roots – one’s own and those of one’s culture.
Catalogue: publishers Hatje Cantz Verlag have brought out a richly illustrated catalogue in German and French to accompany the exhibition In Search of the Orient. From Bellini to Klee.
Du issue 793 – In Search of the Orient: in association with the Zentrum Paul Klee, this issue focuses on Paul Klee’s oriental journey and the culture of the present-day Arab-Persian region.

The comprehensive programme can be found in a leaflet or by visiting www.zpk.org
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Image material
To download 300 dpi images: http://presse.zpk.org
Username: presse / password: paulklee / keyword: orient

Coming up in the second half of 2009

Exhibition: The graphic work of Paul Klee. The passion of Eberhard W. Kornfeld: 28 August 2009 to 21 February 2010
For the first time, the Zentrum Paul Klee will be presenting the entire graphic oeuvre of Paul Klee in an exhibition that also pays homage to gallery owner and collector Eberhard W. Kornfeld in recognition of the services he rendered to this cause.

Concert: Maria João Pires, piano; Pavel Gomziakov, cello (Sun 7 June 2009, 17h00)
Concert: Fazil Say, piano (Sun 30 August 2009, 17h30)