

Hans

**Fokus
Press kit**

24.1.-3.5.2026

Fischli



**Zentrum
Paul Klee**

Founded by:

Maurice E. & Martha Müller
and the heirs of Paul Klee

With the support of:



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Bern**



Fokus. Hans Fischli (1909–1989)

24.1.–3.5.2026

The Swiss artist, architect and Bauhaus student Hans Fischli (1909–1989) is the focus of a thematic presentation as part of the permanent exhibition *Kosmos Klee* from 24 January to 3 May 2026 at Zentrum Paul Klee. Based on a series of delicate works on paper and three architectural projects from the turbulent 1930s and 1940s, the exhibition *Fokus. Hans Fischli* explores the artist's early work. Some of the drawings on display were created during a three-month prison sentence in Meilen district prison.

Following his training as a construction draughtsman in Zurich, Hans Fischli studied at the Bauhaus in Dessau from 1928 onwards, where he attended the classes of Paul Klee, Josef Albers, Wassily Kandinsky and Oskar Schlemmer. After finishing his studies, Fischli worked as a draughtsman and architect in Switzerland, while devoting himself, as an artist, almost exclusively to drawing for several years. Under the shadow of World War I and the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany, he produced an extensive series of delicate coloured pencil and ink drawings from the late 1920s onwards. The exhibition is showcasing drawings from the series *Zellengebilde* [Cell Formations], *Celerina* and *Montana*, raising questions about the historical and discursive context of Swiss modernism.

"I'm not here at all to be examined by you; whether you want me or whether you can use me or can't use me, I don't want to." This led to three months of solitary confinement, which was enormously important for me because I was finally able to do nothing except draw.'

Hans Fischli in an interview, 11 April 1986

During the summer of 1930, Fischli served a three-month prison sentence in Meilen district prison in the canton of Zurich for refusing military service. It was during this time that he created the numbered series of works titled *Zellengebilde* [Cell Formations], the title referring to their place of origin: his prison cell. Fischli had only modest means at his disposal in his cell, yet he still succeeded in producing, on a small scale, delicate, organic forms and figures

in ink and pencil, sometimes also adding subtle colouring using watercolour or coloured pencil. While human features can be discerned in some of the works, other drawings appear to depict animals, plants or mythical creatures. The dreamlike quality of the fantastical imagery differs from modernist constructivist concepts, which sought objective, rational principles in abstraction.

Beyond his early visual art, the exhibition also focuses on presenting a selection of three architectural projects by Fischli, reflecting the turbulent political climate of the 1930s and 1940s. Among them is a previously little-noticed early work: from 1936 onwards, under increasingly adverse circumstances, he worked on designing a studio-house in the Black Forest (Germany) for his friend and former tutor at the Bauhaus, Oskar Schlemmer. After the Reich's insurance organisation withdrew its loan for construction, the project became a testament to building with a minimum of financial means. The exhibition is also presenting Fischli as an architect in the service of society. For example, as exhibition architect for the travelling exhibition *Kriegsgefangen* [Prisoners of war] (1945) by the International Committee of the Red Cross, or as the pedagogically minded constructor of the children's village for war orphans La Rasa in northern Italy (1949/50).

Curators

Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen

Exhibition tour *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*

Sunday, 15 February / 17 May 2026, 15:00

With the support of

Kanton Bern, Bundesamt für Kultur BAK, Museumsstiftung der Burgergemeinde Bern

Digital Guide and Podcast

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition *Fokus. Hans Fischli (1909–1989)*. It can be accessed via QR code or guide.zpk.org/en/fokus-hans-fischli. The Digital Guide contains an episode about Hans Fischli from the English-language podcast series *bauhaus faces*. In conversation with Anja Guttenberger, Hans Fischli's son, Peter Fischli, and his grandchildren, Fredi and Gina Fischli, share insights into the artist's life and work. Fredi Fischli is co-curating the exhibition at the Zentrum Paul Klee.





Welcome to Kosmos Klee!

The dynamic permanent exhibition devoted to Paul Klee invites visitors to immerse themselves in the life and work of this important modern artist. With some 80 changing works from the collection, *Kosmos Klee* offers a chronological survey of Klee's artistic career. Biographical and archival material provide an insight into his life and time. In addition, the 'focus room' offers a space for smaller exhibitions devoted to individual aspects of Klee's work, or contributions to the artist's global reception.

The collection

The Zentrum Paul Klee is the world's most important centre for research into Paul Klee's life and work, and has one of the most significant collections of the artist's drawings, watercolours and paintings. Paul Klee was primarily a draftsman, which is why 80% of the collection of the Zentrum Paul Klee consists of works on paper, matching the collected works. Because of the fragility of the works as well as the large size and diversity of the collection, only parts of it can be displayed at once. Klee enjoyed experimenting, not only in terms of content and form but also technically, using light-sensitive paints, inks and papers. For that reason the works need periods of rest between periods on display.

Kosmos Klee

With *Kosmos Klee. The Collection* the Zentrum Paul Klee offers visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in Paul Klee's life and work, as well as in the unique collection of the institution. Some 80 rotating and chronologically organised works provide an overview of Klee's artistic development, from the highly detailed early works via tendencies towards abstraction and the discovery of colour, to the reduced pictorial language of the later work.

Each decade of Klee's artistic career is identified by a colour in the exhibition, allowing visitors to find their way intuitively around the space. Brief introductory texts, biographical photographs and films give deeper insights into the different phases of the work and Paul Klee's engagement with the people around him.

Aside from his works, the Zentrum Klee also preserves the artist's archive. In the dynamic permanent exhibition, different treasures from the archive are presented, revealing the various aspects of Paul Klee's life. Parts of the artist's collection of natural materials, including shells, stones and pages from herbariums, display Klee's close relationship with nature and natural processes. Other objects include his painting utensils, his schoolbooks, scribbled over with drawings, as well as letters.

Fokus

One part of some 100 m² in area of the permanent exhibition is reserved for the series *Fokus*. Smaller exhibitions focus on particular aspects of Klee's work, present works of artists with surprising references to Klee and follow the global Klee reception. The current presentation is dedicated to the early work of the Swiss artist, architect and Bauhaus student Hans Fischli (1909–1989).

Unpacking Klee

Since June 2024, new episodes of the short film series *Unpacking Klee* are being released regularly and shown in the exhibition and on the Zentrum Paul Klee's YouTube channel. 10 sequences guide the viewer through the depot of the Zentrum Paul Klee, which holds not only art works but also the world's most comprehensive Paul Klee archive. It includes diaries, passports, the correspondence, photographs, musical notes, records, a violin and a grand piano, a collection of natural materials, books, studio utensils and more. Behind the scenes treasures are unpacked to show what the objects tell us about Paul Klee's life and work.

youtube.com/ZentrumPaulKlee

1. Shells
2. Paul Klee's passports
3. Studio utensils for the coloured paste technique
4. Hand puppets
5. Children's drawings
6. Catalogues of the artist's œuvre
7. Studio utensils for the spraying technique
8. Photographs of cats
9. Music
10. Schoolbooks

Digital Guide

The exhibition is accompanied by a digital guide offering thematic tours of the exhibition with changing emphases, a biographical overview and a study of historical and historico-cultural events and themes that were important to Klee's work.



Digitorial® on Paul Klee's travels

The Digitorial® presents five of Paul Klee's most important journeys and illustrates his artistic development from bewildered student to one of the most important artists of the modern period. The five chapters are dedicated to the artist's first journey to Italy in 1901, his 1912 journey to Paris where he visited Robert Delauney, among others, the now legendary study tour to Tunisia with Louis Moilliet and August Macke, one of Klee's trips to the south to recover from his teaching activity at the Bauhaus, and the 1928 journey to Egypt that was made possible by the Klee Society.

mappingklee.zpk.org/en/



Press images Fokus. Hans Fischli (1909–1989)

Download press images:

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01

Hans Fischli

Montana, 1930

Ink on paper

26,5 × 20,5 cm

Succession of Hans Fischli

© Succession of Hans Fischli



02

Hans Fischli

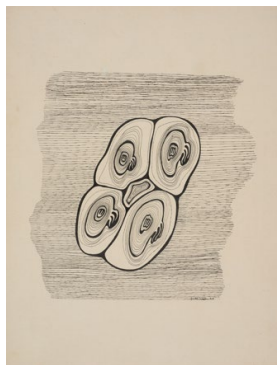
Zellengebilde 89 [Cell Formation 89], 1930

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

26,5 × 20,5 cm

Succession of Hans Fischli

© Succession of Hans Fischli



03

Hans Fischli

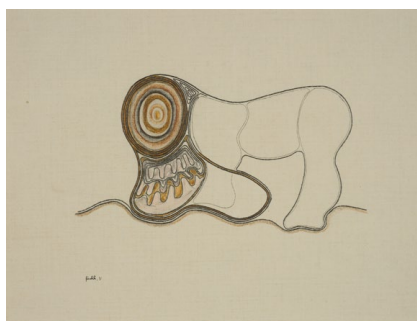
Zellengebilde 46 [Cell Formation 46], 1930

Ink on paper

26 × 20 cm

Succession of Hans Fischli

© Succession of Hans Fischli



04

Hans Fischli

Untitled (Print from the series *Celerina*), 1931

Ink, pencil and coloured pencil on paper

21 × 27 cm

Succession of Hans Fischli

© Succession of Hans Fischli

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05

Hans Fischli

Zellengebilde [Cell Formation], 1931

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

43,5 × 37 cm

Succession of Hans Fischli

© Succession of Hans Fischli



06

Hans Fischli, ca. 1930

Photographer unknown

Succession of Hans Fischli

Press images *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*

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01

Paul and Lily Klee with the cat Bimbo,
Kistlerweg 6, Bern, 1935
Photo: Fee Meisel



02

Paul Klee

Ohne Titel (Ziege und Kühe) [Untitled
(Goat and Cows)], 1896

Watercolour and pencil on paper
9,6 × 13,4 cm

Private collection, Switzerland,
deposit at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern
Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive



03

Paul Klee

Ohne Titel (Aarelandschaft) [Untitled
(Aare Landscape)], 1900

Oil on canvas; folding screen, in five parts
144,5 × 48 cm

Private collection, Switzerland,
deposit at the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern
Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive



04

Paul Klee

*Landschaftliches Hieroglyph mit
Betonung des Himmelblau* [Landscape
Hieroglyph with Emphasis on Sky-Blue],
1917, 104

Watercolour on primed linen on
cardboard

16,5 × 17 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
donation Livia Klee

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive

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05

Paul Klee

Häuser am Meer [Houses by the Sea], 1920, 134

Watercolour on paper on cardboard
24 × 32 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, private loan

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Image archive



06

Paul Klee

Die Büchse der Pandora [Pandora's Box], 1920, 155

Pen and watercolour on paper on cardboard
27,8 × 19 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Museumsstiftung für Kunst der
Burggemeinde Bern

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Image archive



07

Paul Klee

Landschaft bei E. (in Bayern) [Landscape near E. (in Bavaria)], 1921, 182

Oil and pen on paper on cardboard
49,8 × 35,2 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Image archive



08

Paul Klee

Kleines Haus [Small House], 1928, 28

Oil and watercolour on cardboard;
reconstructed frame

41 × 36,5 cm

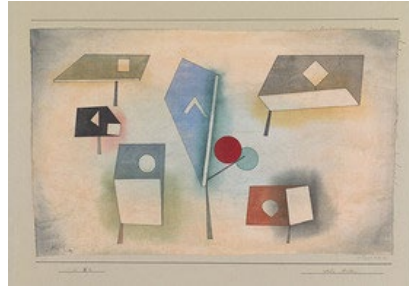
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09

Paul Klee

sechs Arten [Six Kinds], 1930, 134
Pen and watercolour on cotton on cardboard

29,8 × 48,8 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Museumsstiftung für Kunst der
Burggemeinde Bern

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive



10

Paul Klee

durch ein Fenster [Through a Window],
1932, 184

Oil on gauze on cardboard

30 × 51,5 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
donation Livia Klee

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive



11

Paul Klee

Ohne Titel (Zweierlei Augenmass)
[Untitled (Dual Eye-Measurements)],
ca. 1938

Coloured paste and watercolour on
paper on cardboard

44,4 × 59,2 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive



12

Paul Klee

Wander-Artist (ein Plakat) [Itinerant Artist
(a Poster)], 1940, 273

Coloured paste on paper on cardboard
31 × 29,2 cm

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, private loan

Image credits: Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern,
Image archive

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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
photo: Rolf Siegenthaler
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
photo: Rolf Siegenthaler
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18

Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*, Zentrum Paul Klee, 2024,
photo: Christine Strub
© Zentrum Paul Klee

Biography

1879

Paul Klee was born the son of music teacher Hans Wilhelm Klee (1849–1940) and singer Ida Maria Frick (1855–1921) on 18 December in Münchenbuchsee near Bern.

1898

After finishing his secondary education and wavering between music and painting for a long time, he decides to study art and goes to Munich where he attends Heinrich Knirr's private drawing school.

1899

Klee meets his future wife, the pianist Lily Stumpf (1876–1946).

1900

After five months, he breaks off his studies at the Munich Academy in Franz von Stuck's painting class.

1901

In July, Klee returns to his parents in Bern.

1901/1902

He undertakes a six-month educational trip through Italy with the sculptor Hermann Haller and experiences a creative crisis in view of the art of antiquity and the Renaissance.

1902–1906

He retreats to his parents' house to study on his own and creates his first reverse glass paintings and etchings.

1906

After marrying Lily Stumpf on 15 September in Bern, the couple move to Munich.

1907

On 30 September, their son Felix is born.

1911

Klee meets the artists of the *Blauer Reiter*: August Macke, Gabriele Münter, Wassily Kandinsky, Marianne von Werefkin, Alexej Jawlensky and later Franz Marc.

1912

17 works of Klee are part of the second *Blauer Reiter* exhibition in Munich. In April, he travels to Paris, where he sees Cubist works for the first time and visits Robert and Sonia Delaunay.

1914

In April, Klee travels to Tunisia with August Macke and Louis Moilliet. There, he deepens the impulses towards abstraction and colour design which he received in Paris.

1916

On 11 March, Klee is called up to the army and, after infantry training, performs his military service with the aviation unit in Schleissheim near Munich and in Gersthofen. He is able to continue his artistic work.

1916–1918

Through his exhibitions in the Berlin gallery *Der Sturm*, he becomes a cult figure of young art in Germany.

1920

Hans Goltz, who represented Klee in his gallery, organises a first retrospective of 362 works in Munich. The first Klee monographs are published. In October, Klee is appointed to the Bauhaus in Weimar by Walter Gropius.

1921

On 13 May, Klee moves from Munich to Weimar and starts teaching.

1923

The Berlin National Gallery organises Klee's first museum exhibition in Germany in the Kronprinzen-Palais.

1924

Art dealer Galka Scheyer founds the artist group *Die Blaue Vier* with Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Alexej Jawlensky and Paul Klee and tries to make the artists known in the U.S.

1925

The Bauhaus moves to Dessau.

Klee takes part in the first surrealist group exhibition *La peinture surréaliste* in Paris together with Max Ernst, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso and other artists.

1926

Klee and his family move to Dessau, where they live in one of the two-family houses built by Gropius for Bauhaus masters with Wassily and Nina Kandinsky.

1928

Klee undertakes a journey through Egypt. The hieroglyphs and the Nile landscape in particular leave their mark on his work.

1929

Several exhibitions are organised to celebrate Klee's 50th birthday, including in Berlin, Dresden and Paris as well as at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

1931

Klee leaves the Bauhaus and takes up a professorship at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art.

1933

Under pressure from the National Socialists, Klee is dismissed from his teaching position. At the end of the year, he leaves Germany with his wife and returns to his hometown of Bern.

1935

Klee shows the first signs of scleroderma.

1936

His poor state of health makes Klee's artistic work much more difficult.

1937

Klee's art is labelled 'degenerate' by the National Socialists and 102 of his works are confiscated from German museums. 15 of them are part of the exhibition *Entartete Kunst*.

1939

Despite his poor state of health, Klee's productivity reaches a peak. He creates 1253 works in just one year.

1940

On 29 June, Paul Klee dies in Locarno-Muralto. His application for naturalisation, which had been pending until then, is approved on 5 July.

Current and upcoming exhibitions at the Zentrum Paul Klee

Anni Albers. Constructing Textiles

until 22.2.2026

Schwitters. On the Fringes of the Avant-Garde

20.3.–21.6.2026

Anne Loch. Painting: So what?

18.7.–20.9.2026

Roberto Burle Marx. Modernismo tropical

17.10.2026–7.2.2027

Kosmos Klee. The Collection

Fokus. Klee's versos

9.5.–23.8.2026

Fokus. Florence Henri (1893–1982)

29.8.2026–10.1.2027

Opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday

10:00–27:00

Monday closed

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Accreditation for media representatives



Admission to all exhibitions at the Zentrum Paul Klee is free for media representatives with a valid press card.

Please fill in the digital accreditation form which you can either access via zpk.org/en/ueber-uns/medien/akkreditierung or by screening the QR-Code before your visit.



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