

Fokus

Press kit

Florence Henri

(1893–1982)

29.8.2026 –
10.1.2027


Zentrum
Paul Klee

Founded by:

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

With the support of:



Kanton Bern
Canton de Berne



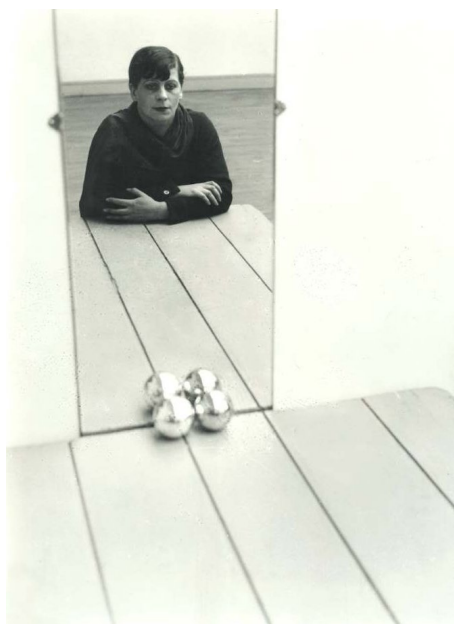
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Fokus. Florence Henri (1893–1982)

29.8.2026–10.1.2027

She was a musician in Paris and London, she painted in Paris, Munich, Rome and Spain, attended courses by Paul Klee, among others, at the Bauhaus, and became, with her photographs, one of the most important representatives of 'New Vision'. Florence Henri (1893–1982) moved at the centres of the European avant-garde and helped shape them to a considerable degree, particularly in the field of photography. From 29 August 2026 to 10 January 2027, in the context of the permanent exhibition *Kosmos Klee*, the Zentrum Paul Klee is showing the artist's first solo exhibition in Switzerland for over 40 years.

Florence Henri's artistic beginnings coincide with a time of great political and social upheavals: before, during and after the world wars, artists all over Europe were seeking new forms of expression to represent appropriately or to deliberately deny social realities. The main figures of these movements lived in large cities such as London, Rome, Berlin, Munich and Paris. Florence Henri also moved between these cities, establishing a dense network with artists from the worlds of music, literature and painting.

Henri enjoyed early success as a pianist, but her self-critical attitude led her to abandon music, and in 1914 she began to train as a painter in Berlin and Düsseldorf. The art historian Carl Einstein brought her into contact with representatives of the avant-garde such as Hans Richter, Iwan Puni and László Moholy-Nagy, as well as other artists from dadaism and constructivism. In 1924, she moved to Paris and studied with André Lhote and later at the Académie Moderne with Fernand Léger and Amédée Ozenfant. Her works from this time at first show distinct Cubist influences. However, encounters with artists such as Piet Mondrian, Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp led to an increasing geometrization of her work.

She also came into contact with Paul Klee in 1927, when, as a guest student, she attended courses given by him, Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers and Wassily Kandinsky at the Bauhaus in Dessau. As she was far more experienced than most of her fellow students, we may assume that she was less interested in the concrete teaching content than in the artistically charged atmosphere of the Bauhaus.

‘Paris makes an incredibly old-fashioned impression after the Bauhaus.’
Florence Henri, letter to Lou Scheper, 29 August 1927

It was particularly Moholy-Nagy’s idea of a ‘New Vision’, and her exchange with Lucia Moholy, that encouraged Henri’s interest in photography. Even though she was very successful as a painter and involved in several exhibitions, in the end it was photography that brought her the greatest fame and allowed her to become one of the most important representatives of that same New Vision.

Henri’s photographs are distinguished by careful composition, an exciting use of light and shade, unfamiliar angles and a deliberate play with focus and blurring. Mirrors and metal balls allow simultaneous perspectives and open up pictorial spaces beyond visible reality. Even during Henri’s lifetime, her works were shown in numerous exhibitions and printed in newspapers and magazines. She also made a name for herself as an advertising photographer. While her late works – during the Second World War she devoted herself to painting again because of prohibitions and a shortage of materials – are very different from her early work, all phases of her career share a constant interest in composition as well as questions of perception and vision.

With some 80 works, mostly photographs and paintings, but also drawings and collages, the exhibition in the Zentrum Paul Klee traces Florence Henri’s artistic development in the middle of the European avant-garde.

Curators

Roberto Lacarbonara and Giovanni Battista Martini

Cooperation

An exhibition organised by the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, and Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, in collaboration with the Archives Florence Henri.

With the support of

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

Individual guided tours for media representatives

We are happy to organise individual guided tours through the exhibition on request. The curators Roberto Lacarbonara and Giovanni Battista Martini are available for guided tours in English, Italian or French from 26 to 28 August 2026. On all other dates, Fabienne Eggelhöfer, chief curator of the Zentrum Paul Klee, is available.

Please let us know via press@zpk.org if you are interested.



Digital Guide

There is a freely accessible Digital Guide to accompany the exhibition *Fokus. Klee's versos*. It can be accessed via QR code or guide.zpk.org/en/fokus-florence.henri.

Biography

1983

Florence Henri is born in New York to a French father and a German mother.

1895

After her mother's death Henri becomes a ward of her family in Grünberg, Silesia.

1902

Begins to study piano in Paris.

1905

Lives for three years in England, in London and on the Isle of Wight. She meets Eugène Ysaÿe and Rafael Kubelík, and studies with Percy Grainger.

1907

After the death of her father in Paris, Henri goes to live with his sister Anni Gori and her husband, the poet Gino Gori, in Rome, where she meets numerous representatives of the artistic and literary avant-garde, including Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Luigi Russolo, Luciano Folgore and Gabriele D'Annunzio. She studies with Ferruccio Busoni.

1909–1911

Back in London she goes on studying music, and in 1911 plays two concerts of works by Edvard Grieg, Franz Liszt and César Franck in Wigmore Hall in London.

1912–1918

Moves to Berlin, where she continues her music studies. She is a student of Egon Petri and has a relationship with Michael von Zadora. Her house becomes a meeting-point for avant-garde composers and musicians, including Edgar Varese. When, as of 1914, she is no longer able to access her finances in England, she accompanies silent films at the piano in a cinema.

Her self-critical attitude leads her to give up music and turn to painting. She enrolls at the Academy of the Arts in Berlin and paints her first figurative works.

1919–1923

She meets the art historian Carl Einstein and the artists Hans Richter, Hans Arp, John Heartfield, Iwan Puni and László Moholy-Nagy. She visits the Weimar Bauhaus and commutes between Berlin and Munich, where she attends lectures by Hans Hofmann. She becomes friends with Theo and Nelly von Doesburg.

1924–1925

Henri marries the Swiss Karl Anton Koster and receives Swiss citizenship. She moves to Paris, where she studies with André Lhote, Fernand Léger and Amédée Ozenfant and becomes friends with Sonia and Robert Delaunay.

1926

She exhibits at the Académie modern in the Galerie d'art contemporain de Paris.

1927

Back in Berlin, she enrolls in summer classes at the Bauhaus in Dessau, where she meets up with former acquaintances and meets Paul and Lily Klee, Josef and Anni Albers, Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, Georg Muche, Marcel Breuer, Lucia Moholy, who takes several photographic portraits of Florence Henri, and Walter and Ise Gropius. She has her first experiences in photography.

1928

Her photographic works attract a lot of attention, and she is invited to take part in the most important international exhibitions of experimental photography, including *Fotografie der Gegenwart* at Museum Folkwang in Essen, as well as the exhibition *Film und Foto* in Stuttgart.

As a result of the global economic crisis she loses much of her inheritance. She opens a photographic studio which soon becomes one of the best-known in Paris. She offers photography classes and trains a new generation of photographers, including Gisèle Freund, Lisette Model and Lore Krüger.

1930

Solo exhibition in Studio 28 in Paris, as well as participation at the international exhibition *Das Lichtbild* in Munich. She produces numerous portraits of women, many of which appear on the front pages of newspapers and magazines.

1931

Her works are included in the exhibitions *Foreign Advertising Photography* in New York, *Die neue Fotografie* in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Basel and *Photographie d'aujourd'hui* in the Galerie La Plume d'or in Paris.

1932

She participates along with Man Ray, Lee Miller, Herbert Bayer and others in the exhibition *Modern European Photography* in the Julien Levy Gallery in New York and later in the exhibition *Modern Movement in Photography* at the Royal Photographic Society in London.

In the summer, she travels to Spain and to the islands of Ibiza and Formentera.

1933

On 22 January, a solo exhibition opens in the Kunstverein Folkwang in Essen.

Henri participates in the exhibitions *L'image photographique en France de Daguerre à nos jours* at the Galerie Braun and *Salon du nu, exposition internationale du nu esthétique* at the Galerie de la Renaissance in Paris.

1934

With the closure of the Bauhaus in Dessau many artists leave Germany; some move to Paris. Florence Henri makes portraits of Wassily Kandinsky, Fernand Léger, Hans Arp, Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Iwan Puni and Jacques Villon.

Solo exhibition at the Galerie de la Pléiade followed by participation in the *Salon international d'art photographique* in Paris.

1936–1945

Henri takes part in the major exhibition *Foto 37* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam

She produces photographic reports which are published in the magazine *Lilliput* and elsewhere. During these years, changes become apparent in the perspectives, lighting and typology of her photographs.

She returns to painting. The outbreak of war prevents her creative photographic work, so she devotes herself primarily to painting during the war. She makes only two photographic works: In 1940, she carries out a report in Brittany, and in 1942, she makes several portraits of the author Ernst Jünger.

1951–1962

Henri takes long trips to Tossa (1953), Ischia (1954) and Torremolinos (1955), as well as to the island of Mykonos (1956) and the Canaries (1959). She makes numerous paintings inspired by her travels.

1952

Exhibition in the Galerie Nebelung in Düsseldorf. Her photographs from the 1930s are published in various magazines including *N-Z Wochenschau*.

1953

In Paris, she photographs the famous dancer Rosella Hightower and over the next few years the painter E. W. Nay.

1955

Solo exhibition featuring paintings at the Duisburger Bücherstube.

1963–1970

She leaves Paris and moves to Bellival, where, along with Jeanne Taïffoireau, she restores an old farmhouse and sets up a studio in the building.

1970–1981

She devotes herself to publishing and printing her photographs from old negatives. She makes collages and a final series of abstract works before a severe accident leaves her immobile.

A deeper engagement with her work by numerous art historians leads to many retrospectives of her work being organised, including shows at the Westfälischer Kunstverein Münster, the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Palazzo Pilotta in Parma, at Banco di Chiavari e della Riviera Ligure in Genoa, the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva and the Musée de Chambéry.

1982

Florence Henri dies on 24 July in Compiègne.

Press images *Fokus.Florence Henri (1893–1982)*

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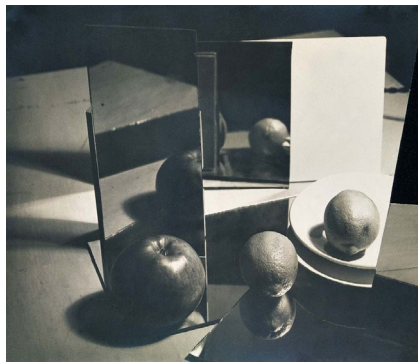
01

Florence Henri

Self-portrait, 1928

Silver salt print

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



02

Florence Henri

Still life composition, 1929

Silver salt print

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



03

Florence Henri

Jeanne Larvin, 1929

Silver salt print

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



04

Florence Henri

Shadow Composition, 1936

ver salt print

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05

Florence Henri

Portrait (Lore), 1935

Silver salt print

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



06

Florence Henri

Portrait composition, 1937

Silver salt print

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



07

Florence Henri

Composition, 1924–1925

Oil on wood

33 × 41,3 cm

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



08

Florence Henri

Spanien [Spain], 1935–1940

Tempera on paper

33 × 41 cm

© Martini & Ronchetti, courtesy Archives
Florence Henri



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 draughtsman, 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 variety of the recto and verso compositions within Klee's oeuvre.

Unpacking Klee

Ten episodes of the short film series *Unpacking Klee* 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. The sequences are being shown in the exhibition and on the Zentrum Paul Klee's YouTube channel.

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.



Digitalorial® on Paul Klee's travels

The Digitalorial® 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 *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 Burgergemeinde 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

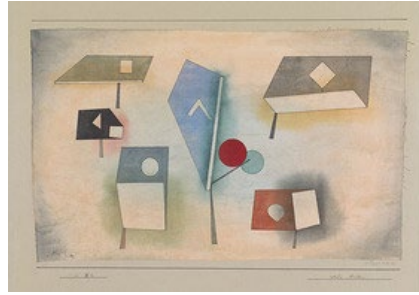
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09

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 Burgergemeinde 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, 2026, photo: Rolf

Siegenthaler

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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*,
Zentrum Paul Klee, 2026, photo: Rolf
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*,
Zentrum Paul Klee, 2026, photo: Rolf
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Exhibition view *Kosmos Klee. The Collection*,
Zentrum Paul Klee, 2026, photo: Rolf
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© 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 387 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 134 of his works are confiscated from German museums. 17 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

Anne Loch. Painting: So what?

18.7.–20.9.2026

Roberto Burle Marx. Modernismo tropical

17.10.2026–7.2.2027

Ursula. Blossoming Poison

5.3.–27.6.2027

Kosmos Klee. The Collection

Fokus. Florence Henri (1893–1982)

29.8.2026–10.1.2027

Fokus. Petra Petitpierre (1905–1959)

16.1.–23.5.2027

Opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday

10:00–27:00

Monday closed

On Monday, 28 December 2026, the Zentrum Paul Klee will be open from 10:00 to 17:00.

Contact

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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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