

Press Release

Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung Exhibition Programme 2018

With New Splendour. The Restored *Crucified Thief* by the Master of Flémalle in Context

Until 18 February 2018

The Master of Flémalle's so-called *Crucified Thief* has undergone comprehensive conservation and restoration measures in the Städel since October 2014. It is a key work of European art history, created by one of the most enigmatic masters of early Netherlandish painting. Painted on both sides, the fragment is the only surviving section of a large-scale Deposition triptych that ranks among the most extraordinary and influential works of Netherlandish painting from the beginning of the fifteenth century. Now that the conservation and restoration measures have reached completion, the precious work literally shines with new splendour. Taking this opportunity, the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung decided to present a special exhibition dedicated to it, which is on show for three months.

The presentation not only sheds light on the procedure and spectacular outcome of the technological examination and restoration measures. It also features thirteen selected comparable items in the media of sculpture, panel painting, drawing, and book illumination that serve to contextualise the fragment in a wide variety of ways.

Presumably created for a church in Bruges around 1430, the Deposition triptych repeatedly inspired subsequent generations of artists so that its original appearance can be largely reconstructed with the help of contemporary drawn and painted copies and thanks to the adoption of individual figures or groups of figures. Apart from a painted copy from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool as well as drawings from the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge (Mass., USA) and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (UK), the painting is shown in conjunction with Netherlandish and German sculptures of the period in question, which is magnificently represented in the collection of the Liebieghaus with the so-called Rimini Altarpiece and Hans Multscher's Holy Trinity. The exhibition has been realised as a joint endeavour of the Städel Museum and the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung.

Curator: Prof. Dr. Jochen Sander (Städel Museum)

Technological research and restoration: Dipl.-Rest. Annegret Volk; Stephan Knobloch, head of the Paintings Restoration Department (Städel Museum)

The *Crucified Thief* restoration project has been made possible by: Bank of America Art Conservation Project, Städtischer Museums-Verein e. V.

William Kentridge. O Sentimental Machine

22 March to 26 August 2018

Frankfurt's Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung will feature a both comprehensive and unusual exhibition project involving one of the internationally most important contemporary artists by staging a solo show paying tribute to William Kentridge (b. 1955) in thirty-two of its rooms in 2018. The South African artist, who is at home in multiple artistic disciplines, has been invited to bring his works into dialogue with the holdings of the house's sculptural collection that spans five thousand years. The exhibition comprises more than thirty, partly space-filling installations exemplifying the range of Kentridge's approach.

The presentation developed for the Liebieghaus focuses on the artist's fundamental interest in the phenomenon of movement and its material-mechanic and optical-illusionist generation. Ranging from automatic theatres, which were already in great demand in the Ancient World, to Renaissance anamorphoses and the precursors of nineteenth-century cinematographic apparatuses such as phénakisticopes and zoetropes, the techniques Kentridge falls back on also forge a bridge across a long span of time. These devices are all rendered in charcoal drawings, sculptures, objects, and films in the random, quick, and provisional manner so characteristic of the artist. In addition to drawings and sculptural works, the presentation in the Liebieghaus will confront visitors with Kentridge's recent major installations: intertwining different forms of artistic expression and thus evoking the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, these installations find an exciting context in the Historicist architecture of Heinrich von Liebieg's villa. The nineteenth-century thus constitutes a second exhibition focus, which offers itself to the development of issues concerning the inhuman definition of time and work in the era of industrialisation—issues that have pervaded William Kentridge's political work from its very beginnings. The exhibition 'O Sentimental Machine' not only establishes a connection between Kentridge's oeuvre and the 'great' history of sculpture but also intensely relates the former to the opulence of Historicism toward the end of the nineteenth century. For the first time William Kentridge's works will be presented on a stage that combines with the artist's conceptual, narrative and aesthetic intentions in a close and fertile way. Kentridge, who participated in the Documenta in Kassel several times and whose works of art and opera productions have fascinated an international public from the Louvre to the Met in New York, has been known to Frankfurt's public since 2005. He was the first artist to hold the Max Beckmann Professorship of the Städelschule that year.

Curators: Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Brinkmann, Kristin Schrader

Scenography: Sabine Theunissen

Medea's Love and the Quest for the Golden Fleece (working title)

5 October 2018 to 10 February 2019

The Republic of Georgia will be the Frankfurt Book Fair's Guest of Honour in 2018. Marking this occasion, the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung will present important loans from the Georgian National Museum. The exhibition 'Medea's Love and the Quest for the Golden Fleece' (working title) will tell a great myth of the Old World: the story of Prince Jason, who has to live through a superhuman adventure together with a group of famous Greek heroes. A dangerous expedition by boat (the Voyage of the Argo) takes the crew to the land of Colchis. They are to seize the Golden Fleece and return to Greece. This basically hopeless task—the fleece is guarded by a dragon—can only be tackled thanks to a great love: Medea, daughter of the King of Colchis and talented sorceress, falls in love with Jason and allows the Argonauts to steal the Golden Fleece.

The exhibition in the Liebieghaus will retell the entire myth based on ancient pictures that have vividly survived on Greek and Etruscan vases, in Roman wall paintings, and especially in Greek and Roman sculpture. The presentation also comprises a number of famous and exceptional bronze and gold objects from the Georgian National Museum. Visitors will find the design of the Bronze Age weapons, receptacles, and golden jewellery items extraordinarily beautiful and impressive.

It is little wonder that Georgia is associated with its legendary gold finds in the myth, as the discovery of one of the oldest gold mines and facilities for processing gold in Sakdrisi is considered the spectacular achievement of today's archaeological research in the country. New findings prove the outstanding significance of gold mining for the civilisation of early Georgia and, once again, evidence the country's early richness in gold, which found its reflection in the legend of the Golden Fleece.

In addition, 'Medea's Love and the Quest for the Golden Fleece' takes up the latest research results concerning images of Greek myths, particularly of the legend of the Argonauts. The interpretation of the famed Quirinal bronzes, the so-called *Boxer at Rest* and the so-called *Terme Ruler*, has been contentious since the works' discovery in 1885. Investigations in the context of the polychromy research carried out by the Liebieghaus have yielded insights into the formal and narrative design of the two bronzes. By confirming their interpretation as a representation of one of the crucial adventures of the legend of the Argonauts, the exhibition gives centre stage to this group of sculptures, for which a recast is realised.

Curator: Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Brinkmann

Titles and dates subject to alterations.

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