

CÉZANNE
PICASSO
GIACOMETTI

Masterpieces from
the Fondation Beyeler

17.09.2010

extended until 02.02.2011



Pablo Picasso, Woman (from the period of Demoiselles d'Avignon), 1907
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Inv. 65.2 © Succession Picasso/VBK, Vienna 2010

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In its exhibition Cezanne – Picasso – Giacometti, the Leopold Museum is hosting Austria's first-ever showing of a representative selection of works from the collection of the Beyeler Foundation. Shortly before his surprising death in June of this year, Prof. Dr. Rudolf Leopold (1925–2010) personally selected the works to be shown. The Picasso painting *Woman* (1907), created during the same period as *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, is a work that was particularly cherished by Ernst Beyeler—and which will now be seen in Vienna. This painting otherwise never leaves the building in Riehen near Basel which star architect Renzo Piano built to house the Beyeler Collection. Elisabeth Leopold, Patricia Spiegelfeld and Franz Smola are the curators of this exhibition, to open on Friday, 17 September 2010, which will show outstanding works of classical modernism complimented by non-European art. Peter Weinhäupl, Managing Director of the Leopold Museum, also brought architect Markus Spiegelfeld on board to transfer the atmosphere of the Beyeler Collection's exhibition building into the Atrium of the Leopold Museum by means of a few effective architectural adjustments.

From Cezanne to Warhol

The Beyeler exhibition at the Leopold Museum presents masterpieces with an insured value totalling several hundred million Euros. Major works by impressionist Claude Monet, such as the *Water Lilies* of 1916, a study for the famous *Bathers* by pointillist Seurat, and the *Seven Bathers* painted around 1900 by Paul Cezanne hang alongside outstanding works by Picasso (*Woman Sitting in an Armchair*, 1910), Chagall, Kandinsky, Klee and Miro. A special focus is devoted to the maverick artist Alberto Giacometti (*Woman of Venice*, 1958), whose sculptures are currently fetching some of the highest prices on the art market. American modernism is represented by Pollock, Tobey and Bacon. All this is joined by fascinating highlights of pop art by Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol (*Self-portrait*, 1967; Joseph Beuys, 1980), and sculptures by Rodin, Matisse and Giacometti (including Giacometti's final work *Elie Lotar* of 1965) round out the selection of works. An interesting counterpoint is provided by masks and cult objects from non-European cultures including those of Africa, Alaska and Melanesia.

Klimt and Schiele in Basel

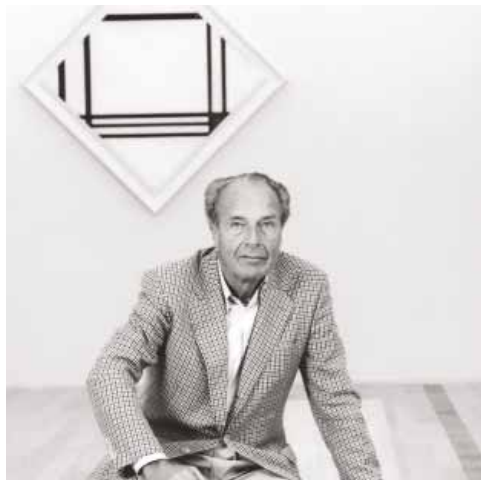
Those who travel to Basel during the coming weeks will find the best of Viennese Jugendstil art and expressionism exhibited there. Beginning on 26 September, the Beyeler Foundation will be showing *Vienna 1900 – Klimt, Schiele and Their Times*, which has been put together in cooperation with the Leopold Museum and other Austrian and international lenders. The Leopold Museum will be contributing works including Gustav Klimt's *Attersee*, as well as Egon Schiele's *Cardinal and Nun and Hermits*.

Sam Keller, Director of the Beyeler Foundation, on the exhibition of the Beyeler Collection at Vienna's Leopold Museum (with excerpts from the catalogue's foreword)

"This exhibition is a declaration of love for this city, which extraordinary artists and museums have made it one of the world's great cultural metropolises," These are the words of Director Samuel Keller on the Beyeler exhibition project in Vienna. Without a single exception, the selection shown consists of those modernist masterpieces which have made a significant contribution to the worldwide renown of the Beyeler Foundation. The Basel-based collecting couple Ernst and Hildy Beyeler spent over sixty years compiling their unique collection with passion, knowledge and an unerring feel for quality. Sam Keller stresses the "select" nature of that which was collected, predominantly works by artistic personalities of the 20th century. These are works "in which artistic achievement is concentrated to the highest possible degree." It follows that the collection is "not a representative cross-section of art history, but rather an organically developed, individual selection of unique paintings, sculptures and drawings which bear witness less to superior purchasing power than to personal connoisseurship."

Sam Keller describes the central status of the Beyelers in the art world of the 20th century: "As arguably the most important art dealer of his time, Ernst Beyeler was friends with numerous great artists—including Pablo Picasso, from whom he was able to purchase paintings directly on his visits to the South of France, and Alberto Giacometti, whom he helped to establish his own foundation. He was also personally acquainted with Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Hans Arp, Henri Moore, Jean Dubuffet, Josef Albers, Mark Tobey, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Francis Bacon, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Antoni Tàpies, Eduardo Chillida, Georg Baselitz and many others."

Altogether, Cezanne, Picasso and Giacometti are "the central pillars of the Beyeler Collection," which contains 200 works by forty post-impressionist, classical modernist, abstract expressionist, pop and contemporary artists. These are joined by thirty rare tribal art objects from Africa and Oceania. All of them number among the important cultural assets of the 19th and 20th centuries.



Ernst Beyeler (1921-2010)



Rudolf Leopold (1925-2010)

Director Keller is proud to note that four million visitors have made the pilgrimage to the Beyeler Foundation's treasures and special exhibitions since the museum was founded. The museum building, designed and constructed by star architect Renzo Piano, is probably one of the world's most beautiful thanks both to its transparent quality and to its being situated in a magnificent park. Exhibitions in Madrid, Berlin and Sydney showed highlights of the collection before it moved into its own specially constructed museum in 1997. The Orangerie in Paris (Paul Klee), the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum (Alberto Giacometti) were visited more recently. Sam Keller confirms that this exhibition, with 44 works, is "the most extensive external exhibition of the Beyeler Collection since its own museum was opened." The exchange was facilitated on the Viennese side by the loan of around 80 works from the Leopold Collection for the Beyeler Foundation's exhibition Vienna 1990 – Klimt, Schiele and their Times. Director Keller notes that "this is Switzerland's first thematic exhibition on Viennese Modernism, with around 300 works from renowned museums and private collections in Europe and the US.

"It should come as no surprise that the Leopold Museum is the most important lender for this exhibition, for it is home to the world's largest Egon Schiele collection and has been working for decades to promote the international recognition of this outstanding artist. Rudolf and Elisabeth Leopold performed a great service with their uncompromising dedication. For this, we owe them our gratitude and our recognition." On a more sombre emotional note, Director Keller goes on to remark that it is "regrettable that these two impassioned collectors, who had known each other for decades, would not live to see their own gems shine amongst the splendour of the other's treasures." Sam Keller believes that Ernst Beyeler would probably have quoted Picasso, who once said to him: "The object must be to evoke enthusiasm, for enthusiasm is what we need the most—both for our sake and for that of younger generation."



Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel

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Ernst Beyeler and his collection

Text by Franz Smola

Ernst Beyeler was born on the 16th of July 1921 in Basel. His father, a railway official, had to work hard to provide for their five children. There was no room for art in the lives of his parents. Ernst Beyeler attended lectures in economics and art history at the University of Basel from 1940 to 1945, during which time he was often called up for military service. After the death of his employer and mentor Oskar Schloss in 1945, Beyeler took over Schloss's antiquarian bookshop situated at Bäumleingasse 9 in the center of Basel. From 1947 onwards, Beyeler started to sell artworks as well as books. The first sales exhibitions organized by Beyeler all centered around graphic art, such as Japanese woodcuts, the graphic works of Toulouse-Lautrec and those of the Impressionists. Bookselling gradually fell by the wayside and from 1951 Ernst Beyeler dedicated himself exclusively to art. In 1953, the young art dealer organized his first exhibition of paintings, which featured works by Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso. Early on, his gallery's main emphasis was on Classical Modernism. He also started to present non-European artworks, such as examples of pre-Columbian art or African Tribal art.

From the very beginning, Ernst Beyeler distinguished himself from other art dealers by publishing opulent, large-scale catalogues to accompany his summer exhibitions. These volumes soon became his gallery's signature feature. Very often, they would inadvertently fall into the hands of artists and art collectors, who thus became aware of this still relatively unknown Basel gallery. Even then, the summer exhibitions already featured works by high-profile artists such as Bonnard, Picasso, Léger, Klee and Giacometti, to name but a few.

During his early years as a gallery owner, Ernst Beyeler already managed to reach out to eminent art collectors, many of whom were from the US. Towards the end of the 1950s, Beyeler came to the attention of the American collector G. David Thompson from Pittsburgh. Thompson was a wealthy steel magnate who, at the time, owned one of the most comprehensive collections of contemporary art, which he intended to enlarge through acquisitions and bartering, before eventually selling it. Thompson quickly recognized Ernst Beyeler as a talented businessman and repeatedly entrusted him with selling large parts of his collection. Beyeler successfully brokered a deal to sell the majority of the approximately 100 works by Paul Klee in Thompson's possession to the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, which was in the process of founding its own collection in Düsseldorf. Shortly afterwards, Thompson handed over another important part of his collection to Beyeler, comprising around 340 works by masters of Classical Modernism such as Schwitters, Matisse, Mondrian, Miró, Picasso, Léger and Pollock, large parts of which Beyeler skillfully sold to eminent private and public

collections. Finally, Thompson trusted Beyeler with his Giacometti collection, the most comprehensive any collector had hitherto compiled of the artist. Irrespective of political oppositions and with a willingness to take an entrepreneurial risk, Beyeler, together with the brothers Hans and Walter Bechtler, established the Alberto Giacometti Foundation, and through it managed to secure Thompson's Giacometti collection for Switzerland. A large portion of the collection went to the Kunsthaus Zürich, while the Kunstmuseum Basel and the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, with which the patrons Hans Grether and Balthasar Reinhart were also involved, received works as well. Only a few years later, the market price for sculptures by Alberto Giacometti went up many times over what Beyeler had paid Thompson just a short while before.

Pablo Picasso had also become aware of Beyeler's opulent catalogues and they first met in 1957. Over the following years, Picasso came to trust Beyeler so implicitly that he allowed Beyeler to choose artworks from his collection – a privilege Picasso had not even granted his long-standing art dealer Kahnweiler. In 1966 Beyeler obtained 26 of the 45 chosen works by Picasso, which he later presented in several large-scale Picasso exhibitions in his gallery. Beyeler was most taken with Picasso's early Cubist works. He managed to acquire the privately owned painting *Woman* ("*Demoiselles d'Avignon*" period) of 1907, which played a central role in the emergence of Cubism and is considered one of the most important works of the Fondation Beyeler today. Picasso was not the only artist interested in getting to know Beyeler. Among many others was Mark Tobey, who even lived in an old townhouse in immediate proximity to the Galerie Beyeler from 1960 until his death in 1976. Beyeler was also acquainted with Roy Lichtenstein and had personally met many of the most eminent artists of his time, such as Braque, Chagall, Arp, Ernst, Nicholson, Albers, Giacometti and Moore. However, he hardly ever acquired the exclusive rights for selling works by a particular artist, with the exception of Jean Dubuffet, who later switched to a gallery in the US.

Over the years, the Galerie Beyeler acquired an impressive network of clients from all over the world, but mostly from the US. Beyeler managed time and again to obtain whole collections and to sell them on in their entirety, as was the case with large parts of the Parisian Cuttoli collection in the 1970s, the majority of the Parisian Pellequer collection in the 1980s as well as the Weil collection in St. Louis. Even the then Empress of Persia featured among Beyeler's clients. During his sixty years as a gallery owner, Ernst Beyeler bought and sold roughly 16.000 artworks. Many of these works were shown for the first time during the more than two hundred monographic and topical exhibitions held at the Galerie Beyeler, which were often supplemented by works not for sale, but loaned to the gallery by private collectors or museums. The Swiss art museums also benefited from the international renown of the Galerie Beyeler. The Kunstmuseum Basel in particular purchased some important paintings from the gallery and occasionally received works as permanent loans. Ernst Beyeler made another important contribution to the art world by co-founding the international art fair ART Basel, on whose organizing committee he served as a member until 1992 and which is now considered the most significant art fair for modern and contemporary art on the European continent.

Ernst Beyeler always received great support from his wife, Hildy. With her keen eye for art, she expertly advised her husband and often ensured that important works of art did not leave the gallery. The Beyelers' modest home in Riehen, which the Basel painter Paul Basilius Barth (1881 -1955) had incidentally built for himself in 1935/36,¹ had soon become too small for their private paintings, so that many of them were stored in a depot reserved for those works that were not to be sold. The couple often succeeded in retaining particularly eminent works of art and even, on occasion, in buying them back. The couple's shrewd judgment, dubbed the "Beyeler-eye", had long since become legendary among members of the art world. Their main focus was on collecting "proven" works of art.² Trials were conducted privately, when works could be observed over a longer period of time and under varying circumstances. Their intention as collectors was not to compile a history of modern art; rather their collector's passion arose out of the deep sense of sympathy which they came to feel for every single work in their possession. A work's singularity and constancy were the main criteria when choosing their collection. Rather than works that pleased, it was the strong, often "difficult" pieces, such as require the beholder's full attention, which appealed to the couple³.

Among Beyeler's many preferred artists, the likes of Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, Francis Bacon, Jackson Pollock, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol stand out. With some artists, it was his aim to assemble different groups of their works in order to be able to comprehend and convey all facets of that artist's personality. Today, these monographic compilations within the Beyeler collection are particularly renowned the world over. The Fondation Beyeler owns 33 paintings, graphic works and sculptures by Picasso alone, seven paintings of which hail from the artist's Cubist period. Other impressive compilations include twenty late works by Paul Klee, twelve paintings by Jean Dubuffet, another twelve works by Fernand Léger, seven paintings by Piet Mondrian, six paintings and one bronze by Joan Miró as well as four paintings by Francis Bacon. Beyeler's Alberto Giacometti collection is entirely unique. The central piece of this compilation is a group of figures which Alberto Giacometti had designed for the Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York in 1960, but had never put up. It is made up of an impressive *Homme qui marche II* standing almost two meters tall, two large-scale *Grandes femmes* as well as a bust entitled *Grande tête*. Beyeler was also particularly interested in contemporary American painters such as Rothko, Newman, Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein. Their works reveal an emphasis on contemporary American art unique in European collections of this scale.

1 Hohl, Reinhold: „Beyeler Foundation Collection“, in: exh. cat. Beyeler Museum AG [ed.]: Beyeler Collection, Ostfildern and Riehen 2007, p. 13.

2 Boehm, Gottfried: "Proven Works – A journey through Modern Art", in: exh. cat. Markus Brüderlin [ed.]: Fondation Beyeler, München-New York and Riehen, 1998 (2. edition), pp. 39-40.

3 Hohl, Reinhold: „Beyeler Foundation Collection“, in: exh. cat. Beyeler Museum AG [ed.]: Beyeler Collection, Ostfildern and Riehen 2007, p. 14.

In 1982 the Beyelers decided to put the artworks they deemed too precious to sell into a foundation. These works were presented to the public for the first time in 1989, although not in Switzerland, but in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, followed by further exhibitions in Berlin and Sydney. The Swiss public, however, would receive permanent access to the collection as construction work for a museum situated at Berower Park in Riehen near Basel and designed by the internationally acclaimed architect Renzo Piano began in 1994. Since its opening in 1997, the Beyeler Museum has further enriched a country already wealthy in private collections and continues to attract art enthusiasts from all over the world. Interacting with the surrounding gardens, the building's bright halls display the artworks from the Beyeler collection to an aesthetic advantage and effect unrivalled by most other museums.

Ernst Beyeler proceeded to direct the affairs of his new museum with great dedication and commitment. His efforts were assisted by eminent art historians and experienced museum directors such as Markus Bröderlin, the long-standing curator of the Beyeler collection and Christoph Vitali. In 2007 Georg Krayer was appointed president of the administrative board and in 2008 Sam Keller became the museum's new director. In 2009 Ernst Beyeler resigned from his post as president of the foundation council to be succeeded by Hansjörg Wyss. The numerous exhibitions shown since 1997 have all served to elevate the works of the Beyeler collection to the highest academic level and have firmly embedded them into the fascinating context of international art. Beyeler has also contributed to exhibitions in other museums, among them the Kunstmuseum Basel and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And it was owing to Beyeler's initiative and considerable financial support, that two important sculpture exhibitions were able to take place – "Skulptur im 20. Jahrhundert" in 1980 at Wenken Park in Riehen and an exhibition on sculptures from the 19th century to the present held in 1984 in Brüglingen. A reminder of this emphasis on sculpture can be found at the museum's park today, in the shape of the mobile/stabile designed by Alexander Calder in 1966 entitled *The Tree*.

Like most other museums, the Beyeler collection did not manage to escape many of the problems facing cultural institutions and the art market especially during the 1990s. Beyeler, too, was confronted with restitution claims for artworks seized by the Nazi regime. In the early 1950s, Beyeler had bought the 1910 painting *Improvisation 10* by Wassily Kandinsky for a large sum from the Berlin art dealer Ferdinand Möller, one of the few dealers who had managed to sell artworks confiscated by the Nazis abroad. The regime had seized the painting in 1937 from the modern-day state museum of Hanover as "degenerate art". In the 1990s, the descendants of the painting's former owner Sophie Küppers-Lissitzky filed restitution claims against Beyeler. The issue dragged on for several years until Beyeler and the heirs settled on a substantial compensation.⁴ Thus Beyeler ensured that Kandinsky's work, which after all is considered to be the first non-objective painting in modern art history, remained in the Beyeler Museum.

⁴ Hohl, Reinhold: „Beyeler Foundation Collection“, in: exh. cat. Beyeler Museum AG [ed.]: Beyeler Collection, Ostfildern and Riehen 2007, p. 21.

Ernst Beyeler received due recognition for his achievements from various institutions. In 1985 he was awarded the French order Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and in 1998 another French order, that of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, was bestowed on him. In 1987 the University of Basel conferred an honorary doctorate upon Beyeler. Together with his wife Hildy, Beyeler founded the "Art for Tropical Forests Foundation" in 2001. In 2008 he had to mourn the death of his wife Hildy and two years later, on the 25th of February 2010, Ernst Beyeler passed away in Riehen aged 88.

Looking at the number of paintings in their possession, which is relatively small compared to other private collections, it soon becomes apparent that Ernst and Hildy Beyeler were never interested in quantity, but always in the highest quality. The Beyeler Museum comprises around two hundred paintings and sculptures from the Classical Modern and contemporary periods as well as some twenty objects of Oceanic and African Tribal art. Based on sixty years of experience as a renowned gallery owner, the collection is the result of Beyeler's stringent selection process, characterized by a sense of passion and tenacity, which revealed itself particularly when Beyeler wanted to retain priceless works for his collection. Thus the Beyeler Museum is shaped more than any other museum by the will and taste of its founder and collector. Rarely can masterpieces of European and American Modernism be experienced on such a condensed and elevated level as in the Fondation Beyeler.

PROGRAMME OF SUPPORTING EVENTS FOR THIS EXHIBITION

Guided tours

Free tours of the exhibition:

- Saturday, 18 Sept. and 25 Sept. 2010, 3 p.m.
- from October 2010, every Saturday, Sunday and holiday at 3 p.m.

Guided tours upon request

Tours can be booked in various languages and with various themes:

- *“The colour has me...” – explosions and excesses of colour in 20th-century art*
- *Truth and authenticity in the art of the modern era*
- *Ahead of their time, revolutionary and notorious – what made the masters of classical modernism famous*

Workshop for adults (7 hours)

- *Body forms (experimental nude painting)*
Saturday, 13 Nov. 2010, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (registration deadline: Tuesday, 9 Nov. 2010).
Further workshops upon request!

Focus on the exhibition by LEO Kids Studio (Sundays from 2-5 p.m.)

Painting like the great masters

3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 Oct. 2010
7 Nov. and 26 Dec. 2010, 2, 9 and 16 Jan. 2011

Educational programmes for school groups

- *My miniature universe* (for school students aged 6 to 10)
Duration: 1.5 hours including studio visit
- *Heads up! Artistic flights of fancy!* (for school students aged 10 to 14)
Duration: 1.5 hours including studio visit
- *Ingenious – but why?* (for school students aged 14 to 19)
Duration: 1.5 hours

Information and registration for events of the supporting programme:

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EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

CEZANNE - PICASSO - GIACOMETTI Masterpieces from the Beyeler Foundation, 208 pages

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Rudolf Leopold (†29.6.2010)

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CURATOR
Rudolf Leopold (†29.6.2010)

TEAM OF CURATORS
Franz Smola, Elisabeth Leopold,
Patricia Spiegelfeld

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