



Max von Moos The Draughtsman

28 August - 13 November 2016
Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

Max von Moos (1903–1979) ranks among the most important Swiss artists of the twentieth century. The exhibition *Max von Moos. The Draughtsman* focuses for the first time exclusively on his drawings, which are surprising for their diversity and offer a new perspective on an artist primarily known as a painter and great Swiss Surrealist. Self-portraits, masks, portraits and landscapes are the subjects that Max von Moos recurrently takes up and varies in drawings, taking them into a distinct world of themes.

The Lucerne-born painter, draughtsman and graphic artist Max von Moos is one of the foremost exponents of the surrealist movement in Switzerland alongside Alberto Giacometti, Walter Kurt Wiemken, Meret Oppenheim, Kurt Seligman and Serge Brignoni. Numerous presentations have been devoted to the artist and the most comprehensive retrospective featuring 500 objects took place at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in 1984. The exhibition *Max von Moos. The Draughtsman* at the Aargauer Kunsthaus builds on this survey and puts the hitherto neglected drawings of the artist centre stage.

Max von Moos drew incessantly both as part of his own artistic practice and as a teacher at the Lucerne School of Applied Arts. He himself explained: "As soon as I stop working, a void ensues. This void is filled by fear and guilty conscience." A representative selection of about ninety works is put together from the several thousands of surviving drawings. The first gallery of the exhibition on the lower floor offers a survey from van Moos's beginnings as a draughtsman up into the 1970s and shows both the stylistic diversity and the thematic constants of the artist's work. Whether portraits, images of animals, views of cities, landscapes or grotesque scenes, and whether meticulously executed in pencil or ink or in colour with crayon or felt-pen – his drawings are always about the

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existential themes of life and especially its fragility. The small exhibition spaces are devoted to individual aspects, such as the references to antiquity or the self-portraits and masks. Concluding the exhibition are felt-pen drawings from the artist's last creative period when he abandoned oil and tempera painting due to an eye condition: they recapitulate the subjects recurring throughout his life.

The exhibition is organised in cooperation with the Max von Moos Foundation and is accompanied by a publication on the artist's drawings authored and edited by Peter Fischer.

Biography

Max von Moos was born in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1903. While ill with tuberculosis, he started drawing and painting. From 1919 until 1922 he attended the Lucerne School of Applied Arts, where he was trained by his father, Joseph von Moos. In 1922-23, Max von Moos lived in Munich to study under Johan Thorn Prikker at the local school of applied arts. Upon his return to Lucerne he resignedly abandoned his artistic activities, fearing he would never be able to attain the level of the Old Masters. Von Moos apprenticed as an antiquarian book seller in Basel and subsequently worked in Geneva for a year. After returning to his native city, he worked at an advertising agency in Horw in 1929, where he met Ernst Maass. Max von Moos again turned to creating art. From 1933 on he worked as a teacher at the Lucerne School of Applied Arts, teaching various subjects until his retirement in 1969.

Max von Moos created his first surrealist works in the 1930s, yet he remained a loner without direct contact to the Surrealists in Paris. He did, however, participate in contemporary events and was a member of the *Allianz* artist association, among other organisations. From 1944 until 1947 he was an active member of the Swiss Party of Labour. His major retrospective at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in 1961 raised his profile. Aside from the discrete surrealist oeuvre, his abstract works from the late 1930s and his tachist works of the 1950s and 1960s should be mentioned.

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

Atlas, Anatomie, Angst: Max von Moos (1903-1979), Kunstmuseum Luzern (2002); *Max von Moos. Retrospektive aller Werkbereiche*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, Kunstverein München, Munich, Museum Moderner Kunst - Palais Lichtenstein, Vienna (1984); *Max von Moos*, Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (1963); *Max von Moos*, Kunstmuseum Luzern (1961); *Max von Moos*, Kunstmuseum Luzern (1937).

Selected Group Exhibitions:

Dreissiger Jahre Schweiz. 1936 - eine Konfrontation, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (1981); *Max von Moos - Camille Graeser*, Kunsthaus Zürich (1979); *Max von Moos - Ernst Maass*, Kunstmuseum Luzern (1973); *XXIX. Ausstellung der*

*Aargauer Kunsthaus

GSAMBA, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (1968); *Max von Moos - Otto Tschumi*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur (1968); *Phantastische Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts*, Kunsthalle Basel (1952); *Konkrete, Abstrakte, Surrealistische Malerei in der Schweiz*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (1947); *Max von Moos - Fritz Pauli*, Kunstmuseum Luzern (1937); *Zeitprobleme in der Schweizer Malerei und Plastik*, Kunsthaus Zürich (1936); *Junge Kunst aus der Innerschweiz*, Galerie Aktuaryus, Zurich (1931).

Curator

Karoliina Elmer, Assistant Curator

Publication

In conjunction with the exhibition *Max von Moos. The Draughtsman* at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, the Max von Moos Foundation is publishing a monograph that for the first time takes a comprehensive look at the artist's drawings. Peter Fischer, former director of the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern and the Kunstmuseum Luzern authored and edited the volume. Richly illustrated, the monograph casts a new light on the work of von Moos, as the tremendous complexity of this major figure in the history of twentieth-century Swiss art only comes across in his exuberant body of drawings.

Max von Moos. Der Zeichner, (in German only) edited and with texts by Peter Fischer, Lucerne, Max von Moos Foundation, Lucerne and Poschiavo: Edizioni Periferia, 2016, c. 192 pp., c. 200 colour illustrations, 22.5 x 27 cm, casebound, ISBN 978-3-906016-64-1, price CHF 48.--. A numbered special edition of 20 copies with an enclosed signed original drawing by Max von Moos available for CHF 330.--.

The publication *Max von Moos. Der Zeichner* will appear on October 20 and can be pre-ordered both at the Aargauer Kunsthaus and at the publishing house (www.periferia.ch) for a special subscription price of CHF 42.--.

Preview for the Media

Wednesday, 24 August 2016, 10.30 am

Introduction and tour of the exhibition with Thomas Schmutz, Dep. Director and Curator. Followed by a reception in the foyer

Exhibition Opening

Saturday, 27 August 2016 6 pm

6.15 pm Speakers: Madeleine Schuppli, Director; Thomas Schmutz, Dep. Director and Curator; Roberto Belci, member of the executive board of NEUE AARGAUER BANK AG. Reception in the foyer

Starting at 7.30 pm Food is served in the ten on the Kunsthaus roof

5 - 6 pm Preview for members of the Aargau Art Association

6 - 8 pm Children's Opening.

Meet at the downstairs studio at 6 pm (ages 5-13)

Tour of the Exhibition and Discussion

Thursday, 29 Sep. 6.30 pm

Peter Fischer, editor and author of the monograph, in conversation with Karoliina Elmer, curator of the exhibition and Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus.

Followed by a reception in the foyer

Admission + CHF 8.-

Book Presentation and Talk

Thursday, 20 Oct. 6.30 pm

Gabriela Christen, Director of the Lucerne School of Design and Art and member of the board of trustees of the Max von Moos Foundation, in conversation with Benno K. Zehnder, artist and former director of the Higher School of Design in Lucerne, and Peter Fischer, art historian and editor of the monograph.

Followed by a reception in the foyer

Guided Tour

Sunday 11 am

6 Nov. with Karoliina Elmer

Art Education

Introduction for Instructors

Wednesday 31 Aug. 2.30 - 4.30 pm

Children and Families

Children's Opening

Saturday, 27 August 6 - 8 pm

Meet at the downstairs studio at 6 pm (ages 5-13)

Open Studio

Sunday 28 Aug. / 30 Oct. 11 am - 4 pm

The studio is open for young and old creative minds

Art Hunt

Saturday 27 Aug. / 3 Sep. / 10 Sep. / 17 Sep. and 24 Sep.

10 am - 12.30 pm (ages 9-13)

1.30 - 3.30 pm (ages 5-8)

Children are introduced to art

Family Sunday

Sunday 11 Sep. / 9 Oct. 11 am, 1 pm, and 3 pm

Interactive guided tour and workshop.

For families with children ages 5 and up

For additional events for schools, families, children, and adolescents, as well as barrier-free events please refer to the separate programme

Dates for **Art Workshops** (school classes) and **Art Meets** (adults) upon request: tel. +41 (0)62 835 23 31, email kunstvermittlung@ag.ch

Images for the Media

Images are available for downloading on our website
www.aargauerkunsthhaus.ch> Media. Please consider the copyright.

Opening Hours

Tue - Sun: 10 am - 5 pm; Thu: 10 am - 8 pm

For additional information please contact

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