

"Living Landscapes. A Journey through German Art"

An exhibition by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich

Venue: National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing

15th May to 2nd July 2008

During the visit of Federal President Horst Köhler to the People's Republic of China in the summer of 2007, the three Directors-General of the museum associations of Berlin, Dresden and Munich signed a contract concerning their joint collaboration with the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) in Beijing. The idea was to hold a joint exhibition of selected works from their various museums.

Around 30 major works from among the holdings of the Galerie Neue Meister of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden will be brought together with 15 to 20 selected paintings from the Alte Nationalgalerie, Neue Nationalgalerie and the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Neue Pinakothek, Schack-Galerie and Pinakothek der Moderne of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, in a unique exhibition about German landscape painting at the National Art Museum of China.

In holding this joint exhibition, the museums of Berlin, Dresden and Munich are building on their successful collaboration in organising their first such undertaking, the exhibition entitled "Views on Europe. Europe and 19th-century German Painting" at the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels in 2007. Now, the three largest German state art collections are about to present masterpieces from among their holdings in another impressive joint show in Beijing.

"Living Landscapes" will present a broad spectrum of top-quality works illustrating the history of German landscape painting over the past 200 years. The theme of "Figure and Landscape" is a determining and unifying factor in this selection of works, which extends from the Romantic period via Expressionism up to the present day. The exhibition will be taking its Chinese and international viewers on a "journey in pictures".

All three of the said periods constitute milestones in the history of art and in the history of Dresden, Berlin and Munich as centres of the arts and of artists. Moreover, all three artistic trends are major collecting focal points for the institutions involved.

In the early 19th century, with **Caspar David Friedrich** (1774-1840), **Ludwig Richter** (1803-1884) and **Carl Gustav Carus** (1789-1869) working in Dresden, German landscape painting developed into an independent genre and one which continues to be seen as characteristic of German painting per se.

The trends in South German and Northern Romantic painting are illustrated by outstanding works from the Neue Pinakothek in Munich and the Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin. Paintings by **Moritz von Schwind** (1804-1871), **Carl Spitzweg** (1808-1885) and **Joseph Anton Koch** (1768-1839) from Munich and works by **Carl Blechen** (1798-1840), **Karl Friedrich Schinkel** (1781-1841) and **Eduard Gaertner** (1801-1877) from Berlin combine with the Dresden paintings to create a truly superb selection of German Romantic landscape paintings.

German Expressionism was significantly influenced by the Dresden group of artists known as **DIE BRÜCKE**, whose members included **Ernst Ludwig Kirchner** (1880-1938), **Erich Heckel** (1883-1970), **Max Pechstein** (1881-1955) and **Karl Schmidt-Rottluff** (1884-1976), as well as **Otto Mueller** (1874-1930) and

Emil Nolde (1867-1956), who invented a new form of landscape painting a century after the Romantic era.

The paintings produced by this group, which was founded in the Saxon capital in 1905, explore, among other things, the interplay between figure and landscape. The depiction of people in a natural environment or in an urban landscape is the dominant theme of these works.

Thanks to the well-established collaboration between Berlin, Dresden and Munich, an exquisite, almost matchless selection of BRÜCKE paintings will be going on show at the NAMOC. The exhibition will include both early and late works by the most important painters from all three institutions, thus giving rise to particularly exciting contrasts.

Contemporary painting will be exemplified by outstanding works by German painters from both East and West. As well as **K.H. Hödicke** (*1938), **Georg Baselitz** (*1938), who celebrated his 70th birthday in January 2008, will be represented by his painting "Three Fieldworkers" (1967) from the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich. Works by **Martin Kippenberger** (1953-1997) and **Markus Lüpertz** (*1941) will exemplify items from the 1980s.

The Galerie Neue Meister will be showing works from one of the major focal points of its collection, namely paintings by very young artists from Dresden and Leipzig, such as **Neo Rauch** (*1960), **Eberhard Havekost** (*1967), **Frank Nitsche** (*1969), **Markus Draper** (*1969) and others. Following on from the tradition of Dresden landscape painting, these artists explore new pictorial spaces that lie between abstraction and figuration, constituting what has become known as the New Leipzig School.

"Living Landscapes" will not only present views of landscapes, however. With its impressive examples of German Romantic painting it will also reflect human existence through the depiction of landscapes and natural scenes. Man and the traces he leaves in the landscape become perceptible through their pictorial representation. The exhibition explores the manifold and sometimes surprising facets of the relationship between man and nature, between subject and space, over the changeful period from the 19th to the 21st century.

The relationship between landscape and figure explored in "Living Landscapes" is also of fundamental importance in understanding Chinese landscape painting. Differences in composition, contents and painting technique illustrate the different character of the European and Chinese pictorial traditions.

This exhibition in China of European art from the museums in Berlin, Dresden and Munich will take viewers on an exciting and impressive journey through German landscape painting from the Romantic period to the present day.

Exhibition venue:

National Art Museum of China (NAMOC)
1 Wusi Street Dongcheng District
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