

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich, 27 November 2008

Book launch: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings by Ferdinand Hodler

On 27 November 2008 the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) will launch the first volume of the catalogue raisonné of paintings by Ferdinand Hodler, which is devoted to his landscapes. This publication is a milestone in Hodler research, but also in the scholarship pursued by SIK-ISEA. The lead authors are the celebrated Hodler expert Prof. Dr. Oskar Bätschmann and Paul Müller (lic. phil.). They are responsible for the contents, together with the Institute's own specialist Hodler team.

Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918) was the most significant Swiss artist at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. He broke with artistic conventions, painting impressive landscapes and portraits and creating monumental historical and symbolic figure paintings, and producing an œuvre that brought acclaim from far beyond the borders of his country. Some of his works have become national icons, such as the “Reaper” and the “Woodcutter”, once found on banknotes, and his “Wilhelm Tell”. Numerous books and exhibitions at home and abroad, and rising prices in the art market, are signs that Hodler’s work now enjoys an international reputation. What has been lacking to date is a scientifically founded catalogue raisonné. Consequently, in 1998, the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) initiated the project “Ferdinand Hodler. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings”. But there is a prelude to this ambitious project, which really took root back in 1951, the year SIK-ISEA was founded. Since that date, works by Ferdinand Hodler have been consistently inventoried, photographed, conserved and restored, put through technical tests and investigated against the backdrop of art history. Over this period, SIK-ISEA has become a centre of competence in Hodler research, with an interdisciplinary approach.

Hodler left behind some 2,000 paintings and several thousand drawings and sketches. The works on paper have not been included in the catalogue raisonné, although they have played a role in helping to understand the genesis of the paintings. These have been subdivided into genres for publication in separate volumes. Forthcoming volumes will be devoted to: the portraits, the figure paintings, and an extensive biography with documents on the artist’s life and work. Each volume contains an introduction to the subject-matter, the catalogue itself, and an annex with discarded and spurious works, details of exhibitions and secondary literature, a short biography and various indices.

The catalogue raisonné of Ferdinand Hodler’s paintings is part of a broader research project at SIK-ISEA. It is being led by the recognised Hodler expert Prof. Dr. Oskar Bätschmann and Paul Müller (lic. phil.). Oskar Bätschmann is Professor of Modern Art History at the University of Bern and from February 2009 he is to be a Professorial Fellow at SIK-ISEA. Paul Müller is project manager for the catalogue raisonné of Ferdinand Hodler. Other authors contributing to the first volume are: Regula Bolleter (lic. phil.), Dr. Monika Brunner, Dr. Matthias Fischer, Dr. Matthias Oberli. Dipl. Rest. Karoline Beltinger is in charge of the technological aspects.

The project is being funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and by many reputed cultural foundations and private benefactors.

Printed version and online access

Ferdinand Hodler. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings. The Landscapes (vol. 1).

Published by: SIK-ISEA, Zurich; distribution: Scheidegger und Spiess, Zurich. Lead authors: Prof. Dr. Oskar Bätschmann and lic. phil. Paul Müller .

23.5 x 32 cm, 627 pages, 627 catalogue numbers with works by the artist, approx. 820 illustrations (mostly colour), sewn, linen with embossed cover and spine, backstrip and 2 marker ribbons, dust cover (colour). CHF 640.- (or CHF 720.- with online access). Advance subscription price (until 31/12/08) CHF 480.- (or 540.- with online access). The book is part of the series “Catalogue Raisonnés of Swiss Artists” and can be ordered online at www.sik-isea.ch (Publications / Databases). Order slips for postal use available from SIK-ISEA.



SIK ISEA

The digital version of the catalogue raisonné of paintings by Ferdinand Hodler extends the search options provided by the printed version and grants rapid access to all relevant data regarding his œuvre. As our database is constantly being updated during the Hodler project, subscribers to online access will also be able to follow exclusive information about our latest research findings. Embedding the œuvre within the virtual environment of the SIKART Lexicon and Database (www.sikart.ch) places it in a broader context. It means that the work of Ferdinand Hodler can be studied against the horizon of artistic creativity in Switzerland as a whole.

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