

Adolf Wölfli Universe. A Retrospective February 1 to May 18, 2008

and

The Sky is Blue. Works from the Morgenthaler Collection, Waldau February 1 to May 18, 2008

Outsider Art with World Renown

With works by Adolf Wölfli and also from the Morgenthaler Collection, “Outsider Art” is visiting the Museum of Fine Arts Bern with two exhibitions. Rejected and forgotten by society, behind the high institutional walls of the Waldau Psychiatric Clinic near Bern, patients created works that are appealing and troubling at the same time.

The psychiatrist Walter Morgenthaler did not only encourage the artistic activity of his patient Adolf Wölfli during his time as assistant medical director in Waldau from 1913 to 1920, he was also intensely interested in the significance of creative works by other mentally ill patients.

Attracting worldwide interest for a radical body of work

Today, Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930) is one of the most important artists of the 20th century and his work is exhibited all over the world. This international career of an orphan, “discarded child”, prison inmate and patient in a psychiatric clinic is unusual. It is the result of a radical body of work.

Wölfli did not only draw, he was a writer and composer too in the pursuit of his obsessive mission. On over 25,000 pages he reinvented his own life. First of all in the form of a spectacular childhood, then in a glorious future that he entitled “St. Adolf Giant Creation”. Wölfli himself becomes St. Adolf II and the focus of his creation.

The retrospective leads us through Wölfli’s universe which, today, has lost nothing of its drama, comedy and beauty. In heretofore unseen abundance, Wölfli’s pictures, texts and music are to be seen and heard. In particular, Wölfli’s final work, “*Trauer Marsch*” (*Funeral march*) can be experienced anew in the form of a projection. The exhibited works are all from the Adolf Wölfli Foundation, founded in 1975, Fine Arts Museum Bern.

Unique collection of “Outsider Art”

Walter Morgenthaler (1882–1965) was interested mainly in the psychodiagnostic interpretation of the art works, as was usual at that time. However, the collection he left in what is now the Psychiatric Museum of Bern is a collection of 5,000 works that are unique from an artistic point of view also. Together with the Prinzhorn Collection in Heidelberg, it is one of the most comprehensive and important collections of its kind.

It is also thanks to Morgenthaler’s commitment that “Outsider Art”, also known as “Art Brut”, has gained public recognition and appreciation. The exhibition title, “The Sky is Blue”, a quote from a work by Constance Schwartzlin-Berberat, is symbolic of the boundlessness of the inner world.

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Press Release
Media Culture
Bern, January 30, 2008

Opening of both exhibitions

Thursday, January 31, 6.30pm

Exhibition dates

February 1 to May 18, 2008

Admission

CHF 14.- / reduced CHF 10.- (for both exhibitions)

Publication to accompany the Wölfli exhibition (in German)

For the exhibition, "**Adolf Wölfli Universum**" will be published with texts and contributions by – among others – Adolf Wölfli, Aristophanes, Kurt Schwitters, Daniel Baumann, Tobias Madison, Emmanuel Rossetti, Otto Nebel, Hugo Ball; 120 pp., numerous colour illustrations. CHF 20.00 (Used Future 31, www.usedfuture.net)

Publications to accompany the Morgenthaler exhibition (in German)

The Sky is Blue – Drawings, Texts and Objects from the Walter Morgenthaler Collection.

[The Museum of Fine Arts Bern and the Psychiatric Museum of Bern, Bern: EditionSolo, ISBN 978-3-9522759-93, Authors: A. Altorfer, M.L. Käsemann, W. Jutzeler, K. Luchsinger i.a., CHF 30.00]

Plans. Works from Psychiatric Clinics in Switzerland 1850-1920

With contributions by A. Altorfer, D. Baumann, B. Bernet, B. Brand Claussen, F. Choquard Ramella, P.C. Claussen, I. Dessort Baur, J. Fahrni, K. Luchsinger, A. Rufer, M. Schmidt. K. Luchsinger (ed.). Chronos Verlag, CHF 35.00

Exhibition in the Psychiatric Museum of Bern

Parallel to the exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts Bern, the Psychiatric Museum of Bern in Waldau will be presenting more "intimate" works and information about the artists in a complementary exhibition as well as an enlightening photographic documentary of psychiatry in the Waldau at the beginning of the 20th century (February 8 to August 23, 2008).

Psychiatric Museum of Bern, Bolligenstrasse 111, 3000 Bern 60, Switzerland T: 031 930 97 56,
www.puk.unibe.ch/culture.html. Opening hours Wed-Sat 2 to 5pm

Accompanying programme

Eröffnung beider Ausstellungen

Donnerstag, 31. Januar 2008, 18h30

Öffentliche Führungen

Jeweils Dienstag, 19h

Kuratorenführungen: Daniel Baumann, Kurator der Adolf Wölfli-Stiftung, führt durch die Wölfli-Ausstellung

Dienstag, 5. Februar 2008, 19h

Dienstag, 22. April 2008, 19h

Einführungen für Lehrpersonen

Dienstag, 12. Februar 2008, 18h

Mittwoch, 13. Februar 2008, 14h

Filmreihe Kino Kunstmuseum

Ab März 2008 Programm ab Februar auf:

www.kinokunstmuseum.ch

Kurs in Zusammenarbeit mit der

Volkshochschule Bern: Die Waldau und die

Kunst

Dienstag, 4., 11., 18. und 25. März, 17h30 (mehr

Infos www.vhsbe.ch)

Guided Tours in English (Wölfli)

Tuesday, March 18, 7.30 pm

Tuesday, April 22, 7.30 pm

10 Stunden Adolf Wölfli nonstop: Mitarbeiter des Kunstmuseums Bern lesen nonstop aus den Adolf Wölfli Schriften «Von der Wiege bis zum Graab» Dienstag, 29. April, 10h – 20h