

Escape into paradise

The Kunstmuseum Bern shows for the first time in Switzerland a large monographic exhibition by the Victorian painter and draftsman Edward Burne-Jones. Myths, legends and sagas come to life in his works. They show in an overwhelming painting technique a world full of beauty. The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and brings together around one hundred paintings and drawings, furniture and glass windows of this fascinating master of English Symbolism.

Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98), a key protagonist of the pre-Raphaelites, is being presented in Switzerland for the first time in a large-scale monographic exhibition. Victorian art has hitherto largely been neglected on the European continent. Up till now it was a prerequisite to actually go on a tour of the arts in England to become acquainted with this epoch. The exhibition has been conceived together with the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and presents around one hundred paintings and drawings, furniture and glass windows of the fascinating master of English Symbolism Burne-Jones. Moreover, the Kunstmuseum Bern makes reference to the Symbolism of his Swiss contemporary Ferdinand Hodler.

A discovery for fantasy fans as well

The title of the exhibition refers to one of the most important literary sources of inspiration for Burne-Jones in his narrative cycles: William Morris' very successful book *The Earthly Paradise* (1868). Morris, who was Burne-Jones' close friend, companion, and business partner since they studied together at Oxford, relates in *The Earthly Paradise* old Nordic, medieval, and classical Greek sagas and legends anew using archaic language. At the same time, the title characterizes the painter's primary conceptual concern, as his entire oeuvre can be viewed as an alternative, idealistic concept to the prosaic and mundane impact of the industrial revolution in late Victorian times. Burne-Jones took refuge in his art and in a world of sagas and tales peopled by knights, magicians, dragons, and princesses, with fairies, gods, and femmes fatales. These worlds resemble the fantasy universes of Harry Potter or *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien. And so Burne-Jones' work today not only fascinates the art connoisseur but also the young adventurer and fortune seeker.

Great themes in great paintings

In his various painting series Burne-Jones, the former theology student, continually depicted people on a kind of pilgrimage. He also repeatedly makes allusion to fundamental themes such as guilt and atonement, the search for a meaning in life, beauty and transience, fortune and misfortune. Burne-Jones depicted his fantastic themes often in narrative cycles comprising several paintings. This mode of painting resembles the comic-strip illustrations of today. Besides the Perseus series further narrative cycles are presented: For example, the large-format series of Cupid and Psyche, which he executed together with Walter Crane, or the Pygmalion series in four paintings. Using medieval sources Burne-Jones created the Christian cycle of St. George and the Dragon, the fairytale-like and intensely coloured Sleeping Beauty series, and the heartrending depiction of the souls on the banks of the Styx.

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The Exhibition

Opening: Thursday, 18.3.2010, 18h30

Curators: Matthias Frehner (Director Kunstmuseum Bern) and Simon Oberholzer (Guest Curator)

Exhibition architecture: Ulrich Zickler

Entrance Fee: CHF 18.-/14.-

SBB RailAway-Offer:



Benefit from 20% savings on train tickets, transfer and entrance fee.

The RailAway-Offer is available at all train stations and at the Rail Service on 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min). More information:

www.sbb.ch/ausstellungen

Guided Tours for Groups: T 031 328 09 11, vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

Opening Hours: Monday closed / Tuesday 10.00 – 21.00 / Wednesday - Sunday 10.00 – 17.00. From 20.5.2010, Thursday 10h – 21h. **Holidays:** Good Friday 2.4.2010, closed; Easter 4./5.4.2010, 10h – 17h; Ascension 13.5.2010, 10h – 17h; Pentecost 23./24.5.2010, 10h – 17h

Catalogue



Edward Burne-Jones – The Earthly Paradise. Published by Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Kunstmuseum Bern. German and English. Essays by John Christian, Christofer Conrad, Matthias Frehner, Fabian Fröhlich, Vera Klewitz, Peter Nahum, Simon Oberholzer, William Waters, Katharina Wippermann and Annabel Zettel. 274 images, 232 pages. Hatje Cantz Verlag. CHF 49.-

Special Events (in German)

Öffentliche Führungen in Deutsch: Sonntag, 11h: 21./28. März, 4./11./18./25. April, 2./16./30. Mai, 6./20./27. Juni, 18./25. Juli und Dienstag, 19h: 23./30. März, 6./13./20./27. April, 4./25. Mai, 15. Juni, 6./20. Juli

Sonntagmorgen im Museum: Kinderworkshop parallel zur öffentlichen Führung, Sonntag, 10h30 – 12h: 21. März, 2. Mai, 30. Mai, 6. Juni, 27. Juni, ab 6 Jahren, CHF 10.-, Anmeldung: vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch, T 031 328 09 11

Schön-schaurige Bilderwelten: Ein Nachmittag für die ganze Familie: Sonntag, 30. Mai, 14h – 17h, CHF 10.- pro Person

Einführungen für Lehrpersonen: Dienstag, 23. März, 18h und Mittwoch, 24. März, 14h

Literarische Führungen mit Michaela Wendt: Sonntag, 13h: 28. März, 30. Mai, 20. Juni und Dienstag, 18h: 6. April, 4. Mai, 15. Juni

Magic Spieltour: Das DracheNäscht im Kunstmuseum: Sonntag, 6. Juni und 27. Juni 2010, 12h - 17h, für Jugendliche, Anfänger sind willkommen, Eintritt frei.

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