KUNST MUSEUM BERN

Press Release
Bern, 06.07.2011

Ernest Biéler
Dreamt Reality
08.07. – 13.11.2011

The Artist – A Valaisan Dandy

In collaboration with the Pierre Gianadda Foundation, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting a representative overview of the work of the Swiss artist Ernest Biéler (1863-1948). The show offers the opportunity of not only seeing Biéler's enigmatic, symbolist figural compositions but also his paintings of simple country life in the Valais region alongside his decorative works. We invite our visitors to rediscover Biéler in an exhibition that revises the artist's status and demonstrates his significance in international art developments.

Ernest Biéler was born in 1863 in Rolle and grew up in Lausanne. He studied art in Paris. In 1892 he returned impoverished to Switzerland and set himself up in Geneva. Up to 1917 he stayed for longer periods in the French art metropolis, where he cultivated friendships and exchanged ideas on art with fellow artists. Finally, however, he settled in the remote town of Savièse (VS) in the Valais region, where he felt most at home, and in Rivaz on Lake Geneva. Biéler was a remarkable person and remained an outsider throughout his life. Even while living in the seclusion of Valais, as a dandy he was not part of the village community and the locals called him "Monsieur le peintre."

Biéler's Significance for Symbolism and Jugendstil
Biéler was an artist who strategically adapted his art to the tastes of various collectors. In Paris he modeled his work not only after fashionable Salon subjects but also experimented with the avant-garde approaches of artists such as Edouard Manet. His portraits are superbly elegant, demonstrating an excellent command over painting. Back in Switzerland Biéler specialized in depicting typical Swiss subject matter. This he found in the village community of Savièse, still largely unspoiled by civilization. Despite the fact that Biéler's work is to be found in many museums and private collections, on account of his Valais pictures his art was long thought of in terms of clichés. But with his enigmatic symbolist figural paintings and decorative works he made a significant contribution to symbolism and Jugendstil on an international level. Biéler also produced numerous public decorative commissions, such as his ceiling painting in the Bern City Theater – or one of the four stained glass windows in the Hall of the Dome of the Federal Parliament Building of Switzerland. In painting he developed his own personal and technically brilliant graphic style.

A Representative Overview of Biéler's Art and Artistic Domains
With the paintings *The Dead Leaves* (*The Dead Leaves*, 1899) and *Les Sources* (*The Spring*, 1900) the Kunstmuseum Bern owns two key works from Biéler's symbolist phase. Our comprehensive retrospective not only shows the artist's early impressionist work in addition to his symbolist and realistic art, but also his paintings influenced by the Art Nouveau style - the zenith of his art. With around 120 works, the exhibition reveals both well-known and obscure facets of the artist. We are also presenting privately owned artworks that will be on show to the public for the very first time. Our visitors not only have the opportunity of viewing paintings from all the phases in the artist's creative development – additionally they will find Biéler's decorative work, chairs designed by the artist, and his painted ornamentation for a door as well as a secular stained glass window.

The exhibition is part of the Leading Swiss Artists series in the Kunstmuseum Bern. It is a collaborative project with the Pierre Gianadda Foundation, Martigny, where the exhibition will be on show from December 1, 2011 to February 26, 2012.

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The Exhibtion

Opening: Thursday, July 7, 2011, 18h30
Duration: 08.07. – 13.11.2011
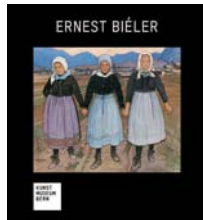**Curator:** Ethel Mathier
Entrance Fee: CHF 18.- / red. 14.-

SBB RailAway-Offer: Benefit from 20% savings on train tickets 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).
Further Venue: Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny (01.12.2011 – 26.02.2012)

The Catalogue (German / French)

Ernest Biéler. Geträumte Wirklichkeit / Réalité rêvée. Hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern / Matthias Frehner, Ethel Mathier und Fondation Pierre Gianadda. Mit Beiträgen von Matthias Frehner und Ethel Mathier.. Deutsch / français. 278 S. , CHF 45.-

The Poster

F4
(89,5 x 128 cm)
CHF 20.-

The Special Events

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 11h: 10. / 17. / 31. Juli, 28. August, 4./18. September, 2. /16. Oktober, 13. November und Dienstag, 19h: 12. / 19. Juli, 2. / 16. August, 6. September, 25. Oktober
Öffentliche Führung mit Gebärdendolmetscher: Dienstag, 9. August, 19h. Ohne Anmeldung, Ausstellungseintritt
Visites commentées en français: Mardi, 19h30: 23 août, 20 septembre, 1er novembre (19h) et dimanche, 12h: 4 septembre
Literarische Führungen mit Michaela Wendt: Sonntag, 13h: 21. August, 4. / 18. September und Dienstag, 18h: 30. August, 18. Oktober, 1. November. Ohne Anmeldung , Ausstellungseintritt + CHF 5.–
Biéler und das Wallis: Trachten, Wein und Kunst: Sonntag, 4. September. 10h30. Detailliertes Programm siehe Einladungskarte. Ohne Anmeldung, Ausstellungseintritt
Gesprächsrunde mit Gästen aus dem Wallis: «Mein Bild des Wallis»
Dienstag, 25. Oktober 2011. 19h Öffentliche Führung, 20h Gespräch mit Pascal Couchepin, André Marty (Moderation), Heinz Julen. Ohne Anmeldung, Ausstellungseintritt
Léonard Gianadda raconte: Mardi, 1er novembre 2011. 19h Visite commentée (en français). 20h Léonard Gianadda raconte (en français) en collaboration avec l'Alliance Française de Berne

With the support of

FONDATION PIERRE GIANADDA
MARTIGNY (SUISSE)

SANDOZ-FONDATION DE FAMILLE

MUNICIPALITÉ DE **SAVIÈSE**

Le Canton du Valais encourage la culture
Der Kanton Wallis fördert Kultur