

Lentos Kunstmuseum

Jean Egger

Revolutionary of Modern Painting

27.01. to 07.05.2023

Born Hans Egger (1897–1934), the Carinthian painter studied at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. During a painting sojourn in Sicily, his pictures developed a heightened expressiveness. In Paris, where he lived from 1924, Egger began to sign his portraits of prominent personalities Jean Egger. The French press lauded the bold brushstrokes of his landscapes and of the portraits of his partner Signe Wallin. In 1930, this exceptional artist was at the peak of his career having had an outstandingly well-received solo exhibition in Paris. He spent the last two years of his life, afflicted by a serious illness, on Mallorca where Joan Miró visited him several times. The liberation of colour and the radical dissolution of form in his paintings make him one of the most significant Austrian painters of the interwar period.

The exhibition at the Lentos Kunstmuseum demonstrates the breathtaking modernity of this painter, whose works anticipated the art of the post-war years as early as the 1920s and 1930s.

The exhibition was created in cooperation with the Museum Moderner Kunst Kärnten, where the show will be on display from 22 June to 17 November 2023. The exhibition will be accompanied by a detailed publication that reflects the current state of research on the work of Jean Egger with texts by experts.

Biography

1897–1915

Jean (Hans, Hanno) Egger was born on 14 May 1897 in the Carinthian community of Hüttenberg, the second of four children. His parents are the head teacher Josef Egger and his wife Katharina, born Weihs. According to various sources, he completed an apprenticeship as a photographer in Klagenfurt after finishing secondary school.

1916–1918

Due to "general weakness" he was exempted from military service during the First World War and instead was employed as a clerk at the Landsturm district command No. 4 in Klagenfurt. After a stay in Vienna, evidenced by two inscribed drawings, he began studying painting at the Academy in Munich in 1916. On 5 March 1917, however, he was ordered back to the Klagenfurt Landsturm district command. In his free time he meets with the cafetier and art collector Alfons Schiberth and the painter Herbert Boeckl.

1918–1922

When he enrolled in the drawing class of the history painter Carl Johann Becker-Gundahl, co-founder of the Munich Secession, Egger resumed his studies at the Munich Art Academy. Large-format Carinthian mountain landscapes survive from this period. In the Bavarian metropolis he met the publisher's son Arne Bjørnson-Langen, who was his age and lived in France and Norway.

1923–1925

Extensive travels take Egger to several European countries. In Norway, he met the artist couple Oda and Christian Krohg and the pioneer of Expressionism Edvard Munch. He also travelled to Berlin, Leiden, Amsterdam and The Hague. In the spring of 1924 he went on an extended trip to Italy with Arne Bjørnson-Langen, visiting Rome and Sicily. He produced some outstanding landscape paintings on the island. Egger then moved to Paris. In his new home, the Carinthian painter soon became a member of the Société des artistes français and from then on signed his works with "Jean Egger". He met the Swedish artist Signe Wallin (1901-1996) in the circle of the musician Albert Jeanneret. Albert Jeanneret, brother of the Swiss architect Le Corbusier. She became Egger's model and long-time companion.

As a talented portraitist, Egger moved in the salon of the Norwegian writer Dagny Bjørnson-Sautreau, mother of his friend Arne Bjørnson-Langen. Prestigious portrait commissions also awaited him in the social circle of Sophie Szeps-Clemenceau, Berta Zuckerkandl's sister, who was married to the brother of President Georges Clemenceau.

1926–1930

Between 20 March and 2 May 1926, Eggers participated in his first exhibition at the Société des artistes indépendants. From May to July he presented portraits of Sophie Szeps-Clemenceau and Paul Clemenceau as well as a landscape from Palermo at the renowned Salon des Tuileries. In October 1926, he submitted works for an exhibition of the Salon du Franc at the Musée Galliera, a kind of charity event to support the French currency. Also the Austrians Willy Eisenschitz, Walter Bondy, Josef Floch and Felix Albrecht Harta also contribute paintings.

In 1927, three portraits by Egger were exhibited at the Salon des Tuileries, including his painting of the French War Minister and later Prime Minister Paul Painlevé. From the selection of works at the next Tuileries Salon (portraits of Wilhelm Habsburg-Lothringen, the fashion designer Madame Agnès

and the pianist Carlos Buhler) one can see that the Carinthian artist had risen to become the hip painter of the Parisian elite.

In 1929, during an exhibition at the Denks Gallery in New York, two landscape paintings were sold to a collector from Chicago. The remaining paintings were subsequently sent to a warehouse in Manhattan, from which they were later removed - since then they have been considered lost. On the initiative of the Austrian envoy Alfred Grünberger, Egger was awarded the "Silver Palm" and the title of "Officier d'Académie" in spring 1929. In August he travels to his mother's birthplace, the Carinthian mountain village of St. Martin am Silberberg, where he creates a series of paintings of the village church. In October 1929 he carries out a portrait commission in Brussels and Antwerp for the diamond dealer and art patron Sam Tolkowsky.

From 4 to 22 June 1930 Egger presented 20 oil paintings in a sensational solo exhibition that was particularly praised by the Paris newspapers. This first and only solo exhibition in Paris took place in the Galerie Sloden in the elegant Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. The show was opened by the exhibition's initiator, Ambassador Alfred Grünberger. In June 1930, the painter and his partner visit relatives in Signes' native Sweden. Egger's fascination with the Nordic landscape is expressed in a series of landscape paintings predominantly in red and yellow tones.

1931–1932

The attending physician at the Vienna Wilhelminenspital confirmed Egger's good chances of recovery from his lung condition if he took it easy. He wanted to recover in Carinthia in the summer of 1931. The only Austrian exhibition of Egger's work during his lifetime was shown at the Würthle Gallery in Vienna from 17 to 31 October. It comprised 32 pictures, including many pastels he had just painted in Carinthia and two Swedish landscapes. In December, Egger travelled to Menton on the Côte d'Azur - because of the mild climate - to improve his lung condition.

The artist spends the last two years of his life mainly in the Mallorcan village of Pollença, where he waits in vain for the long-awaited convalescence. Together with Signe, he moved into the beautifully situated villa "Can Hans". On Mallorca, where he had the opportunity to exchange ideas with the Spanish painter Joan Miró, Eggers produced his last works: formally highly resolved, impasto landscapes and expressive portraits of his partner Signe in particularly strong colours.

1934

From February back in Paris, in March on to Spain and Mallorca. Terminally ill, Jean Egger finally returned to Klagenfurt by train on 16 October 1934, where he died only a few hours after arriving at his parents' home, aged only 37, as a result of his long-standing lung disease.

Program

Opening

Thu 26.01., 7pm

The Lentos starts the new exhibition year with the exhibitions "Jean Egger. Revolutionary of Modern Painting (1897 - 1934)" and "Anita Witek. Unpredictable Events". We will celebrate the opening together at the Kunstmuseum.

With welcome by Hemma Schmutz (Lentos Director), introduction by Brigitte Reutner-Doneus (Curator), greetings by Gilles Pecout (Ambassador of the Republic of France), opening by Doris Lang-Mayerhofer (City Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries of the City of Linz).

Musical accompaniment: Lydia Küllinger (flute) and Oliver Jungbauer (guitar)

Guided tours

Guided tour

Thu 6pm

Sun 4pm

Guided tour ticket € 4 plus admission, duration 1 hour

Curator's guided tour

Thu 16.02. 6pm

Thu 27.04. 6pm

In-depth insights and information on the exhibition with curator Brigitte Reutner-Doneus

Guided tour ticket € 4 plus admission, duration 1 hour, registration required

Expert guided tour

Thu 13.04. 6pm

Curator Brigitte Reutner-Doneus in conversation with Matthias Boeckl (art historian and Egger-specialist)

Guided tour ticket € 4 plus admission, registration desired

Express Tour

Every 1st Sat in the month 4pm

This tour offers an insight into the Lentos. It looks at the museum's history and collection of art and includes highlights of the present special exhibition. Language: English

Ticket: € 3 plus admission, duration: 45 minutes

Events

Sunday Matinee

Mme Paul Clemenceau, Paris, dearest!

Sun 05.03.23 11.00am-12.30pm

The exhibition includes Jean Egger's famous painting of Sophie Szeps-Clemenceau, Berta Zuckerkandl's sister. The reading from Berta's correspondence to her sister Sophie, who lived in Paris, vividly portrays the social and political events of the time, from the fall of the Habsburg monarchy to the Dollfuß regime.

The matinee will be performed by the actress Lisa Furtner, the experimental pianist Karen Schlimp and the flutist Cordula Bösze in cooperation with the association Musik im Raum.

Cost: € 8 plus admission, registration: kasse@lentos.at or +43 732 7070 3614

Art trip to Carinthia:

In the footsteps of Jean Eggers and his fellow painters

Tue 09.05. to Thu 11.05.23

We travel to original locations of Jean Egger's paintings, see the artistic work of his fellow painters in the Werner Berg Museum and in the Museum of the Nötsch Circle. We also visit the Museum of Modern Art Carinthia in Klagenfurt and the Museum Liaunig in Neuhaus/Suha. Before the art tour, Brigitte Reutner-Doneus will give participants an exclusive guided tour of the exhibition at Lentos.

Details of the art tour can be found at lentos.at.

Workshops

Workshop for adults:

Expressive painting

Fri 10.03.23 each 15.00-17.00

Fri 24.03.23

Fri 14.04.23

The artist Klaus Scheuringer will guide you to expressive painting inspired by Jean Eggers portraits and landscapes.

Cost: € 15/person for all three dates, registration required.

Nude drawing

Thu 09.02.23 each 18.00-20.00

Thu 02.03.23

Thu 30.03.23

A nude model strikes poses in reference to Jean Egger's paintings. The artist Klaus Scheuringer supports beginners and advanced students in drawing. If possible, please bring a drawing pad and soft graphite pencils.

Cost per date (can be booked individually): € 6, registration required.

Registration for guided tours and workshops: +43 732 7070 3614 or kassa@lentos.at

Facts & Figures

Exhibition titel	Jean Egger Revolutionary of Modern Painting
Exhibition period	27.01.-07.05.2023
Curator	Brigitte Reutner-Doneus
Exhibition design	Klemen Breiffuss
Venue	Big Hall
Exhibits	Around 200 exhibits including paintings and drawings
Publication	The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with texts in German by Matthias Boeckl, Cornelia Cabuk, Brigitte Reutner-Doneus, Hemma Schmutz and Christine Wetzlinger-. Grundnig by the publishing house Johannes Heyn. 242 pages, € 34 This and other publications are available in the Lentos Shop or online (shop.museenderstadt.at).
Cooperation	Eine Ausstellung des Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz in Kooperation mit dem Museum Moderner Kunst Kärnten.
Opening hours	Tue–Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Thu 10 am – 8 pm Uhr Closed on Mondays, You will find special opening hours on www.lentos.at
Admission	€ 11, reduced € 9 / € 5

Contact

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