

# Lentos Kunstmuseum

## Sisters & Brothers

### 500 Years of Siblings in Art

26.05. to 17.09.2023

We all grew up in families, and even if we left them as adolescents, we mostly stay in contact with our family of origin. That which we experienced in our families, whether we are single children, or have siblings, has an effect on our entire lives. Surprisingly, the longest and not seldom most intensive relationship in an individual's life – the sibling relationship – has rarely been researched until the present time, and has never been the theme of an exhibition.

With the exhibition Sisters & Brothers, the Kunsthalle Tübingen and the Lentos Art Museum Linz, document comprehensively, with 120 works, the emotional theme of the sibling relationship in the visual arts. From a cultural historical perspective, a chronological parcours, showing paintings, sculptures, objects, photographs, drawings and videos, ranging from the 16th century until the present time, reveals changes in the sibling relationship. This runs from the beautiful appearance of the genre painting concerning the romantic and bourgeois sibling image to presentations from the nowadays. Not only do the contemporary artists break the historical presentations of sibling depiction in their works, but they undertake a "deep drill", which also shines a light on the challenging aspects of the sibling relationship. Last but not least, they show that the theme contains potential for the future. Whether twins, siblings, step-siblings, or siblings in spirit, one or the other, mostly capable of conflict and versed early in solicitude and solidarity, has developed the key qualifications for human interconnection.

# Artists

Nevin Aladağ, Eleonore Auegg-Dilg, Rudolf Bacher, Joseph Beuys, Sándor Alexander Bihari, Margret Bilger, Karl Böheim, Miriam Cahn, Eugène Carrière, Sevda Chkoutova, Věra Chytilová, Declan Clarke, Lovis Corinth, Gustave Courbet, Adolf Dietrich, Anton Edler, VALIE EXPORT, Marianne Fieglhuber-Gutscher, Emanuel Fohn, Asana Fujikawa, Jan Goeree, Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, Jan Harmensz. Muller, Julie Hayward, Erich Heckel, Laurentius Christoph Herzog, Christine und Irene Hohenbüchler, Lisa Huber, Christian Jankowski, Rudolf Jettmar, Hanns Ludwig Katz, Carl Koch, Heinrich Kühn, Leopold Kupelwieser, Li Luming, August Macke, Matthias May, Martin-van-Meytens-Schule, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Otto Mühl, Ernst Nepo, Nicholas Nixon, Idowu Oluwaseun, Helga Paris, Joanna Piotrowska, Johann Baptist Reiter, Herbert von Reyl-Hanisch, Anton Romako, August Sander, Egon Schiele, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Peter Sengl, Cindy Sherman, Primus Skoff, Franz Xaver Sölch, Rudolf Steinbüchler, David Sulzer, Fiona Tan, Gert und Uwe Tobias, Fritz von Uhde, Erwin Wurm, Georg Friedrich Zundel

# Texts

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## **Siblings in Mythology**

The relationships between sisters and brothers are more elemental and spontaneous than other human relationships. Therefore, antique and Christian mythology contains many stories which express the varied spiritual driving forces behind this familial constellation.

The sibling relationship dynamic is always derived from a competitive reference to the parents. The first murder within the history of humankind was committed by Cain, motivated by jealousy against his brother Abel. Along with the conflict laden rivalry of siblings and disparate brothers such as Esau and Jakob, mythology also reveals the opposite. This is shown through the fate of interconnected, inseparable siblings like Kastor and Pollux, who embody unconditional sibling love. Mythology also contains the sibling marriages of gods and demi-gods from which special heroes arise. The graphic reproductions of the past did not only have an aesthetic appeal for their noble and bourgeois commissioners and collectors. The graphic reproduction served not only as representation and entertainment but also education, and offered the opportunity to reflect on one's own life in the stories which had become pictures.

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## **The discovery of 'sibling love' during romanticism**

Into the 16th century sibling representations were found in courtly contexts. These served principally as reminders of, or illustrative material, concerning matchmaking. With increasing bourgeoisification there was a successive valorization of the nuclear family. As a result, the family was idealized as hub of warmth, and the relationships within the family were charged with emotion. In the 18th century, the aristocracy also took on the bourgeois concept of sensibility. Consequently, a veritable child and youth culture developed, which can be perceived in the emotionalizing and intimisation of the portrait and genre paintings.

In particular in England and in Germany, the so called "cult of friendship" emerged from this. Friendship was idealized as the most noble of feelings and was assigned a higher value than the love between men and women, or sibling love. Under the influence of this cult of friendship sibling love transformed into friendship. Originating from the English aristocracy, friendship portraits were created in which daughters and sons were presented as caring soulmates.

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## **Virtuous and sheltered bourgeois sibling paintings**

The iconography of the image of friendship was effective into the 20th century, as being exemplary for portraits of the bourgeois daughter and son, and in the "century of the bourgeoisie" such portraits were plentifully commissioned.

Under the influence of the bourgeois family, the socialization of offspring became society's central theme. Hence, general compulsory schooling, nursery school, and child appropriate medical care were introduced. Due to the individualization of society, the size of the family decreased. The result of this was that parents paid more attention to the needs of their children. The multiple blissful and delightful sibling portraits, such as the *Sorgsame Schwester* (around 1867) by Karl Boheim, reveal expressive signs of the new bourgeois child culture. In contrast to other epochs the various nuances of internal familial relationships – such as the relationship between mother and child or the relationships between siblings – were explored and idealized within images. (*Der Unschuldskuss*, around 1882 by Eugene Carriere).

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### **Siblings as community of destiny**

At the beginning of the last century, and under the influence of WWI and emerging National Socialism in Germany, artists began to turn away from idealized sibling representation. Through the discovery of photography, as true to life as possible illustrations of children, respectively siblings, became obsolete. Artists increasingly made use of the essence of those they did portraits of, and the emotional sensitivity in their glance. In a time of crisis images of siblings depicted them more often as a mutually strengthening and a protective community of destiny. Sadness and suffering, as well as the motif of the dead sibling, were also focused on. Images of siblings were also created, because artists, in connection with the repression which came with National Socialism, withdrew into an inner emigration and exchanged political and social themes for private ones.

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### **Marie I and Marie II – or the uprising of the sisters**

In the 1960s unconventional wild pictures of sisters emerged, which revealed a society in upheaval. Appealing, humorous and rebellious, for example: *Marie I and Marie II* in the film *Tausendschönchen* – a cult film (1966) from the Czechoslovakian new wave. Whether or not the main characters in the film are biological relatives or spiritually akin is left open by the film director Věra Chytilová (1929–2014). The fact is that the two young woman behave less than decently. In opposition to societal etiquette, they take advantage of their admirer, steal and set fire to their house, instead of – according to their roles as housewife and mother – developing it into a refuge of liberating shelter in a male world. Because the film's two protagonists boycotted the prevailing roles and conventions, thus all too obviously undermining the promise of happiness of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR), the film work was confiscated at the time as anarchic material and director Věra Chytilová was banned from working from 1969 to 1975.

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### **Siblings in societal and familial field of tension**

Contemporary sibling depiction, liberated from representational function, reflected extremely personal societal events and political contexts (the fall of the wall, the Cultural Revolution of the People's Republic of China). Whereas the bourgeois cliché of the affectionately loving siblings continued to take effect, above all in the media and popular culture, in the art of postmodern works the idealized motif of bourgeois self-presentation was sometimes critically reflected on (Cindy Sherman), or expanded on, on a conceptual level, (Nicholas Nixon). During the 20th century, under the influence of Psychology, there was an increasingly therapeutic approach to society. Artists, who, at the end of the Avant-garde period were increasingly redirected to themselves, undertook plentiful psychologically intimate "deep drills" concerning the theme of siblings. They reflected new psychological methods, for example the "Familienaufstellung" (Christian Jankowski), and illuminated amongst other things the taboo and conflict laden aspect of the relationship between siblings. (Miriam Cahn).

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### **After the we – Siblings as utopic figures of thought**

Then we take a look back at art history, there appears to be a need to reflect on one's own family relationships, and in particular on sibling relationships, according to the spirit of our times. Additionally – as during the Romantic period, sibling relationships today are also highly loaded with idealism. As a reaction to individualization within and the consequent isolation also within western affluent societies, there has been an increased interest in cooperation since the 1990s. Twins, in particular, have moved

into the limelight and were “discovered” as actors and themes for art, as they seem to embody the desire for a harmonious community “two hearts, one soul” with the most clarity (Gert & Uwe Tobias). Whether twins, siblings, step-siblings or siblings in spirit, those who grow up with one another acquire, for the most part, important key qualifications for human interconnection.

# Program

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## Events

### **20 Years of Lentos | Birthday Party**

**Thu 25.05, 5pm**

Featuring Afterwork Happy Hour, DJ and live sound, and the opening of the new exhibition "Sisters & Brothers." Bring your friends & family, let's celebrate!

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## Guided Tours

### **Public Tour**

**Sun 4-5pm**

**Thu 6-7pm**

Tour ticket: €4 plus admission, No registration required

### **Baby Tour**

**Tue 20.6.23 10:30-11:30am**

**Sat 9.9.23 3-4pm**

A relaxed tour through the exhibition tailored to the needs of visitors with babies.

Cost: Museum admission only

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## **#sistersandbrotherslentos**

Whether siblings, friends, or soulmates – grab your favorite person and become part of our exhibition. Take a photo together and post it with the hashtag #sistersandbrotherslentos on your Instagram channel. We will display all the photos posted under this hashtag on a screen at Lentos.

Tip: Visit our Instagram channel @lentoslinz to find the perfect filter to turn your shared photo into a unique #sistersandbrotherslentos artwork.

# Facts & Figures

<b>Exhibition title</b>	Sisters & Brothers 500 Years of Siblings in Art
<b>Exhibition duration</b>	26.05. to 17.09.2023
<b>Curator</b>	Curator and Project Idea: Nicole Fritz, Kunsthalle Tübingen Co-Curator of Lentos: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller
<b>Exhibits</b>	Approximately 120 paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, objects, and videos
<b>Publication</b>	A richly illustrated catalog with text contributions in German by Tilman Allert, Nicole Fritz, Tilo Grabach, Zita Hartel, Bernd M. Mayer, and Sabine Wienker-Piepho has been published by the Walther König bookstore. 176 pages, €34 This and other publications are available at the Lentos Shop or online ( <a href="http://shop.museenderstadtlinz.at">shop.museenderstadtlinz.at</a> ).
<b>Exhibition venue</b>	Main Hall
<b>Cooperation</b>	Eine Ausstellung der Kunsthalle Tübingen in Kooperation mit Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.
<b>With the support of:</b>	"With the Lentos Art Museum, Linz provides a modern space for art and culture. Raiffeisenlandesbank OÖ wants to help sustain and strengthen Linz's position as a modern economic and cultural city and is therefore a reliable and strong partner for local cultural institutions. It's not just about financial support. We also aim to further enhance the positive interaction between culture and economy in our region." Dr. Heinrich Schaller, CEO of Raiffeisenlandesbank OÖ

Raiffeisenlandesbank  
Oberösterreich 

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<b>Opening hours</b>	Tue-Sun 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Thu 10:00 am-8:00 pm Closed on Mondays. Please check <a href="http://www.lentos.at">www.lentos.at</a> for special opening hours.
<b>Admission</b>	€ 11, reduced € 9 / € 5
<b>Press contact</b>	Clarissa Ujvari M: +43 650 48 49 706 T: +43 (0)732 7070-3603 <a href="mailto:clarissa.ujvari@lentos.at">clarissa.ujvari@lentos.at</a> Ernst-Koref-Promenade 1 4020 Linz
<b>Web &amp; Social Media</b>	<a href="http://www.lentos.at">www.lentos.at</a> <a href="https://facebook.com/lentoslinz">facebook.com/lentoslinz</a> <a href="https://instagram.com/lentoslinz">instagram.com/lentoslinz</a>

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