

**Exhibition Announcement**

**28 April 2012 – 12 August 2012**

# **EL GRECO AND MODERNISM**

*The exhibition takes place under the patronage of King Juan Carlos I of Spain and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany*

**Curator: Beat Wismer**

*El Greco and Modernism* is the first major exhibition in Germany focusing on El Greco's paintings and pictorial world. Taking place one hundred years after a ground-breaking El Greco exhibition that toured Europe, *El Greco and Modernism* illustrates how the Old Master inspired and fascinated many artists of the early Modernist period.

Born Domenikos Theotokopoulos in Crete, 1541, El Greco moved to Italy, and later Madrid and finally Toledo in Spain, where he remained until his death in 1614. His paintings had a profound impact on the work of many modern artists including Cézanne, van Gogh, Picasso and Delaunay.

This exhibition will be shown exclusively at the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf. It unites over 100 works – paintings, sculptures, drawings – by around 38 artists from the early Modernist period and over 40 important works by El Greco, above all portraits, landscapes and works on religious themes.

A major highlight includes *The Immaculate Conception*, loaned by the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. There will be also shown works from the artist's workshop. The exhibition also includes key masterpieces such as El Greco's only surviving panel picture, *Laocoön*, loaned by the National Gallery of Art, Washington. In this striking and influential work El Greco explores Greek mythology. Also on show will be *The Opening of the Fifth Seal* loaned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Visitors will have the rare opportunity to view *Laocoön* together with Ludwig

**Press contact**

Marina Bradbury – Account Manager, AGENDA/ Paris  
T +33 1 49 95 08 06 E [mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

Marina Schuster - Leiterin Kommunikation / Pressesprecherin, T +49 (0)211-89 962 11  
[Marina.Schuster@smkp.de](mailto:Marina.Schuster@smkp.de)  
Christina Bolius - Mitarbeiterin Kommunikation / Neue Medien, T +49 (0)211-89 962 50

**Museum Kunstpalast**  
Kulturzentrum Ehrenhof  
Ehrenhof 4-5  
40479 Düsseldorf  
[www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)

## Press Pack

Meidner's *Three Wailing Figures in the Apocalyptic Landscape* as part of his *Apocalyptic Landscapes* as well the *The Descent from the Cross* by Max Beckmann, from MoMA, New York, and El Greco's *El Espolio* from the Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

27. März 2012  
2/5

*El Greco and Modernism* brings together works from the world's leading museums such as MoMA, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Museo del Greco, Toledo, The National Gallery, London, The National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Alte Pinakothek, Munich and the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

El Greco's oeuvre was discovered by the German public circa 1910 following the publication of Julius Meier-Graefe's diary, *The Spanish Journey*. The art historian had encountered El Greco's painting in Spain in 1908. His diary describes the strong impression El Greco's art made on him.

Even though the notion of 'El Greco and Modernism' has been a recurring topic for over 100 years, an exhibition on the subject has remained a desideratum. The Düsseldorf exhibition provides a fascinating insight into the oeuvre of El Greco as well as the evolution of Modernism.

It is particularly timely that *El Greco and Modernism* goes on show in Düsseldorf in 2012. Exactly one hundred years ago, a selection of ten paintings by El Greco went on show in the city, having been shown in Munich in 1911. The paintings were shown within an exhibition of the Hungarian private collection Marcell Nemes, hosted by the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In the same year, a small number of El Greco's pictures were presented in the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne, jointly with works by Picasso and van Gogh. Thus, for many artists of the Rhineland, the summer of 1912 provided the very first direct encounter with El Greco works.

Beat Wismer, General Director, Museum Kunstpalast, says: *"In the 1912 "Almanach Der Blaue Reiter", Franz Marc captured the insights of many artists in a nutshell: "Cézanne and Greco are kindred spirits across the centuries which separate them.""*

The touring exhibition of 1912 had a profound impact on a new generation of artists. Max Beckmann, Oskar Kokoschka, Max Oppenheimer, Ludwig Meidner were all influenced by the paintings. Key representatives of the Blaue Reiter

### Press contact

Marina Bradbury – Account Manager, AGENDA/ Paris  
T +33 1 49 95 08 06 E [mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

Marina Schuster - Leiterin Kommunikation / Pressesprecherin, T +49 (0)211-89 962 11  
[Marina.Schuster@smkp.de](mailto:Marina.Schuster@smkp.de)  
Christina Bolius - Mitarbeiterin Kommunikation / Neue Medien, T +49 (0)211-89 962 50

**Museum Kunstpalast**  
Kulturzentrum Ehrenhof  
Ehrenhof 4-5  
40479 Düsseldorf  
[www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)

## Press Pack

movement, such as August Macke, Franz Marc, Albert Bloch, recognised the Old Master as one of the father figures of Modernism and mentioned his name in the same vein as Cézanne. The complex psychological possibilities offered in El Greco's paintings made him become a key figure for avant-garde artists. In particular, the artist's late works, with their exaggerated figures, distorted pictorial spaces, dream-like landscapes Mannerist aesthetic and striking use of colour, attracted a great deal of attention.

27. März 2012  
3/5

Beat Wismer, General Director, Museum Kunstpalast, explains: *'The exhibition will trace two important aspects of reception history: On the one hand, El Greco, who in Germany from 1910 onwards was regarded as one of the fathers of Modernism in the same vein as Cézanne, is brought together with those representatives of the Modernist period – Cézanne, van Gogh, Picasso, Delaunay – on whom he had a formative influence in the view of art historians, museums, but also artists of the time. On the other hand, with direct reference to selected works, the exhibition aims to examine the elective affinity between German and Austrian Expressionists, such as Max Beckmann, Oskar Kokoschka, August Macke, Franz Marc, Ludwig Meidner, Max Oppenheimer and El Greco, and El Greco's influence on these artists.'*

The 2012 exhibition at Museum Kunstpalast paves the way towards a major exhibition in Madrid and Toledo scheduled to take place in 2014, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of El Greco's death.

## Ends

**21 - 23 June 2012**

### SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

*El Greco and the quarrel over Modernism: Fruitful misunderstandings and contradictions in his German reception between 1888 and 1939*

### CATALOGUE:

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, published by Hatje Cantz, comprising approx. 400 pages.

Retail price: 49.80 Euros

### Press contact

Marina Bradbury – Account Manager, AGENDA/ Paris  
T +33 1 49 95 08 06 E [mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

Marina Schuster - Leiterin Kommunikation / Pressesprecherin, T +49 (0)211-89 962 11  
[Marina.Schuster@smkp.de](mailto:Marina.Schuster@smkp.de)  
Christina Bolius - Mitarbeiterin Kommunikation / Neue Medien, T +49 (0)211-89 962 50

**Museum Kunstpalast**  
Kulturzentrum Ehrenhof  
Ehrenhof 4-5  
40479 Düsseldorf  
[www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)

## Press Pack

### EXHIBITION SPONSORS:

Kunststiftung NRW  
Kulturstiftung der Länder  
UBS

27. März 2012  
4/5

### CULTURAL PARTNER:

WDR 3

### ENTRANCE FEES

#### **Weekdays: before 28 April 2012, online tickets (early booking discount)\*:**

10 Euros / 7.50 Euros concessions  
9 Euros per person, group discount for 10+people  
25 Euros, family ticket

#### **From 28 April 2012, tickets bought online\* and at the museum's ticket desk:**

12 Euros / 10.00 Euros concessions  
10 Euros per person, group discount for 10+people  
27 Euros, family ticket

#### **Weekend: before 28 April 2012, online ticket (early booking discount):**

12 Euros / 9.00 Euros concessions  
10 Euros per person, group discount for 10+people  
29 Euros, family ticket

#### **from 28 April 2012, tickets bought online and at the museum's ticket desk:**

14 Euros / 12 Euros concessions  
12 Euros per person, group discount for 10+people  
31 Euros, family ticket

\*From February onwards, online bookings: [www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)

Phone bookings: +49 211 899 01 90

Email bookings: [el.greco@smkp.de](mailto:el.greco@smkp.de)

### Press contact

Marina Bradbury – Account Manager, AGENDA/ Paris  
T +33 1 49 95 08 06 E [mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

Marina Schuster - Leiterin Kommunikation / Pressesprecherin, T +49 (0)211-89 962 11  
[Marina.Schuster@smkp.de](mailto:Marina.Schuster@smkp.de)  
Christina Bolius - Mitarbeiterin Kommunikation / Neue Medien, T +49 (0)211-89 962 50

**Museum Kunstpalast**  
Kulturzentrum Ehrenhof  
Ehrenhof 4-5  
40479 Düsseldorf  
[www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)

## **Press Pack**

### **OPENING HOURS:**

**Monday 1 - 6 pm**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday 10am to 8pm

Thursday, Saturday 10am to 9pm

27. März 2012

5/5

### **VISITOR'S OFFICE**

Guided tour bookings

Telephone: +49(0)211 899 01 90

Email: [el.greco@smkp.de](mailto:el.greco@smkp.de)

***The Museum Kunstpalast Foundation is a public-private partnership between the city of Düsseldorf, E.ON AG and METRO GROUP.***

### **PRESS QUERIES**

For further information, images or request to join the press trip please contact:

Marina Bradbury

Account Manager

Agenda, Paris

[mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

+33 1 49 95 08 06

### **Press contact**

Marina Bradbury – Account Manager, AGENDA/ Paris

T +33 1 49 95 08 06 E [mbradbury@agendacom.com](mailto:mbradbury@agendacom.com)

Marina Schuster - Leiterin Kommunikation / Pressesprecherin, T +49 (0)211-89 962 11

[Marina.Schuster@smkp.de](mailto:Marina.Schuster@smkp.de)

Christina Boliu - Mitarbeiterin Kommunikation / Neue Medien, T +49 (0)211-89 962 50

**Museum Kunstpalast**  
Kulturzentrum Ehrenhof  
Ehrenhof 4-5  
40479 Düsseldorf  
[www.smkp.de](http://www.smkp.de)