

## Press information

# Museum Folkwang 100

## **Museum Folkwang opens major anniversary exhibition: *Expressionists at Folkwang. Discovered – Defamed – Celebrated***

Essen, 18.08.2022 – In its centenary year, Museum Folkwang is showing its second major exhibition, *Expressionists at Folkwang. Discovered – Defamed – Celebrated* (20 August 2022 – 8 January 2023). On 1,400 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space and in 14 sections, the diverse connections between Expressionist artists and Museum Folkwang are presented. The exhibition combines works from the museum collection with international loans from Spain, Austria, Switzerland and Germany; it comprises around 250 works by renowned artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Oskar Kokoschka, Franz Marc, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Edvard Munch, Gabriele Münter, Emil Nolde and Egon Schiele. The opening of the exhibition on 19 August at 6 p.m. is timed to coincide with the start of Museum Folkwang's 24-hour summer festival.

*Expressionists at Folkwang. Discovered – Defamed – Celebrated* is dedicated to one of the most fascinating topics in the history of art. The founder of Museum Folkwang, Karl Ernst Osthaus, discovered Expressionism as a revolutionary art movement at the beginning of the 20th century, paying tribute to its most important representatives in early exhibitions and acquiring Expressionist works for his collection. When in 1922 – exactly 100 years ago – the Osthaus collection was sold to Essen and Museum Folkwang moved to the centre of the Ruhr region, Expressionism was already firmly established in the Essen museum director's Ernst Gosebruch's exhibition programme and acquisition interests. Unfortunately, however, the National Socialist era officially ostracised Expressionist art, leading to the confiscation and selling of Expressionist works housed in the museum. However, the exhibition *Expressionists at Folkwang* also showcases the rebuilding of the Expressionist collection after the Second World War and of the museum's diverse exhibition activities of the post-war decades, in which Expressionism was truly rehabilitated and celebrated as one of the most important artistic movements of the early 20th century.

With its early commitment to Expressionism, Museum Folkwang played a pioneering role, which is why in 1912 Franz Marc described it for the artists' group *Der Blaue Reiter* as "a museum that is in its way a model of our own way of thinking". In 1912, Museum Folkwang also hosted the first exhibition of the editorial team of *Der Blaue Reiter*, including works by August Macke, Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, among others. *Expressionists at Folkwang* presents several works that were shown at this exhibition in 1912, but also in a solo show by Franz Marc in 1911 held at Museum Folkwang.

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For the duration of the current exhibition, the paintings by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner – which were personally acquired by Karl Ernst Osthaus and since went their own ways – are reunited again for the first time. The show also presents a number of sketches and paintings that Kirchner made for the ceremonial hall in Museum Folkwang. In addition, *Expressionists at Folkwang* illuminates Museum Folkwang's pioneering relationship with Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele. Karl Ernst Osthaus was the first museum director to acquire works by the two Viennese artists. He owned the largest collection of Schiele's works at the time, with one painting and 14 watercolours. Some of these works are on loan to Museum Folkwang for the first time in 85 years.

A separate room in the exhibition is dedicated entirely to Paula Modersohn-Becker. Museum Folkwang played a central role in the dissemination of her works. The work of the painter, who died at a very young age, was shown posthumously in a large retrospective at Folkwang in 1913; it subsequently travelled to other cities. It was on this occasion that Osthaus acquired her famous *Self-Portrait with Camellia Branch* (1906/07). A total of 12 works from the 1913 retrospective are brought together in *Expressionists at Folkwang*, including five self-portraits by the artist.

The sculptors Wilhelm Lehmbruck and Ernst Barlach are also honoured in a joint presentation. Karl Ernst Osthaus and Ernst Gosebruch both valued Lehmbruck, acquired works by the artist and showed them in exhibitions in Hagen and Essen. Ernst Barlach's works were first presented in Hagen in 1910.

On the occasion of its 100th anniversary in Essen and with this centenary exhibition, Museum Folkwang is therefore linking the history of Expressionism with its very own museum history. To this day, Expressionism plays an important role in the museum's programme as well as in its further development.

Acquisitions of works made by Museum Folkwang as recently as 2021 are also exhibited in *Expressionists at Folkwang*.

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## Information

**Expressionists at Folkwang**  
**Discovered – Defamed – Celebrated**  
20 August 2022 – 8 January 2023

Tickets at: <https://museum-folkwang.ticketfritz.de>

Main sponsor: E.ON  
Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue in German and English language published by Edition Folkwang/Steidl (€38).



**Franz Marc**  
*Reclining Bull*, 1913  
Tempera on paper, 40 × 46 cm  
Museum Folkwang, Essen  
Photo: Jens Nober