

Klemens Brosch. A Great Artist Rediscovered

9 March to 3 June 2018

Lower Belvedere

“Signs and wonders are occurring still ...” wrote Brosch in his diary in 1925. This sentence characterizes the Linz-based artist. Intense experiences of nature and landscape intermingle with tragic moments in his life. After an artistic career spanning only sixteen years, he left behind about one thousand drawings, watercolours, prints, and paintings. Brosch can be seen as one of Austria’s greatest draughtsmen alongside Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Alfred Kubin, and Oskar Kokoschka. The exhibition at the Lower Belvedere will be the first major retrospective of the artist’s work to be held in Vienna.

Brosch’s images are fantastical visions, his meticulous drawings representing nature and landscape anticipate aspects of New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) and Surrealism. After the First World War, Brosch and many of his colleagues had to contend with new circumstances. The war left behind hideous impressions and major art commissions were now in scarce supply. Brosch was deeply affected by this tumultuous change. Early on in his work, the manic draughtsman revealed Symbolist influences in his landscapes, while also exploring dark subjects, like the mass killings of the First World War and visions, as well as the themes of mortality and death. In 1913, his career had begun when he co-founded the Linz artist association MAERZ. The war years had a lasting impact upon him, manifested both in his work and his mental health. Drugs dominated his existence for many years, his pictures documenting his horrifying hallucinations. Drug addiction and the harsh treatments for this dependency started to take over his life. In December 1926, he tragically committed suicide. Brosch left behind an extensive oeuvre, a testimony to a crisis-stricken era. The 2018 exhibition at the Lower Belvedere will trace his life through its various stages. A joint project in cooperation with the Museums of the City of Linz and the Upper Austrian State Museum, it is both a discovery and a rediscovery of the artist – the most varied, wide-ranging exhibition ever to have been devoted to Brosch in Vienna.

The exhibition is a joint project organized by the Belvedere, Vienna, in collaboration with the Museums of the City of Linz and the Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum.

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