

belvedere

KLEMENS BROSCH
A GREAT ARTIST REDISCOVERED

Orangery, Lower Belvedere
9 March to 3 June 2018



Klemens Brosch, Crocodile on the Moon, c. 1912, © Landesgalerie Linz

KLEMENS BROSCH A GREAT ARTIST REDISCOVERED

Orangery, Lower Belvedere
9 March to 3 June 2018

He was seen as a prodigy of his times: Klemens Brosch from Linz started drawing early on. Already as a school pupil his talent was discovered and his work exhibited. After an artistic career lasting only sixteen years, he left around one thousand drawings, watercolours, prints, and paintings that rank him among Austria's greatest draughtsmen alongside Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Alfred Kubin, and Oskar Kokoschka. The Belvedere is showing the first major retrospective of this artist's work in Vienna.

Already at school and later at the Vienna Academy, the prodigy Klemens Brosch was celebrated in Austria's newspapers and showered with academic awards. The retrospective at the Orangery, Lower Belvedere, charts the chapters in his life. Encompassing his first artistic successes in Vienna and Linz, his commissions from private collectors and works from the Belvedere's collection never displayed before, it presents a complete picture of a draughtsman who was feted in his day but later sank into obscurity.

"Klemens Brosch represents an example of a career, and ultimately a life, destroyed by war and its consequences. Anyone encountering the work of this brilliant draughtsman cannot comprehend that it was relatively unknown for decades. Following a pioneering show in his native city of Linz, the exhibition at long last introduces Klemens Brosch's fascinating work in Vienna," said Stella Rollig, CEO of the Belvedere.

Studies by the artist introduce the exhibition, their exactitude and wealth of detail sure to captivate the viewer. In 1913 Klemens Brosch co-founded the Linz artist association MAERZ, a step considered to mark the start of his career. Acclaimed at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts between 1913 and 1919, the hyperrealistic precision of the artist's work is enthralling. Brosch explored the symbolic and uncanny, the magic and transience of nature as if consumed by a creative frenzy.

“Signs and wonders are occurring still ...” Brosch wrote in his diary in 1925, documenting his constant search for the visionary. Intense experiences of nature and landscape are juxtaposed with tragic moments in his life. Virtuoso watercolours and detailed views and glimpses of nature reveal the artist’s intensive exploration of the genre “landscape”, a thread running through every phase of his work. Brosch was influenced by nineteenth-century Symbolist art while at the same time his meticulous drawings of nature and landscapes anticipate aspects of New Objectivity and Surrealism.

The First World War had a lasting impact on Klemens Brosch and his experiences haunted him for the rest of his life. In 1914 he was sent to the battlefields in Galicia but was soon released from military service as he suffered from lung disease. Also in 1914 an army doctor prescribed morphine for pain relief. Brosch succumbed more and more to morphine addiction thereafter, even following his return to the Academy of Fine Arts. Artists faced different conditions after the war and Brosch was no exception. Struggling to process their horrific experiences, they also faced a lack of major commissions. Both of these aspects are reflected in Brosch’s art.

Klemens Brosch’s unusual subject matter appears demonic and enigmatic. His images are fantastic visions, sometimes imbued with heightened pathos. He absorbed Symbolist influences early in his art and addressed dark subject matter like anxiety dreams, death, and mortality. These were usually related to his trauma from the war expressed both in his art and his psychological state. As the years went by, Brosch increasingly succumbed to drug addiction, his horrifying hallucinations reflected in his imagery from this period.

He tried to cure his addiction on a number of occasions. Drug dependency interspersed by harsh therapies were defining experiences during these years. In 1920 Brosch married Johanna Springer in Linz. They had been together for a long time and she also struggled with addiction. A section is devoted to her in the exhibition.

The show concludes with the artist’s many ink paintings and watercolours showing dream visions and death symbolism dating from 1920 onwards. They address the social background of the period, his morphine addiction and treatment at Niedernhart psychiatric hospital, and his tragic suicide on Pöstlingberg hill in December 1926. Leaving an extensive oeuvre of over one thousand drawings, watercolours, and several paintings, Klemens Brosch’s art is a harrowing testimony to a war-torn era.

“Anyone enthusiastic about art will be bowled over to discover these works by the brilliant draughtsman Klemens Brosch,” said Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, curator of the exhibition.

The Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum has 615 works by Brosch, the largest proportion of his oeuvre. In 1964 his widow left the remaining Brosch estate of forty-seven works to the NORDICO Stadtmuseum Linz, including his death mask and late watercolours. This estate forms the core of the holdings of the Museums of the City of Linz comprising a total of 157 works. Private collectors contributed further exhibits.

Brosch’s art featured, together with the work of leading artists, in the following successful international exhibitions: Le Arti a Vienna (La Biennale di Venezia 1984), Vienna 1900 (Museum of Modern Art, New York 1986), Wunderblock (Vienna Festival 1989), Traum und Wirklichkeit (Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien 1994), and Arte e Violenza (Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli 1997), among other shows.

The exhibition is co-organized with the Museums of the City of Linz and the Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum and is seen as an opportunity to (re)discover the artist. It is the most multifaceted exhibition about the artist to be held in Vienna to date.

Curator: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz
Exhibition design: Silvia Merlo

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue. Please contact us, if you want us to send a PDF of the exhibition catalogue: presse@belvedere.at

Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press

#KlemensBrosch

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	KLEMENS BROSCH. A GREAT ARTIST REDISCOVERED
Exhibition duration	9 March 2018 to 3 June 2018
Venue	Orangery, Lower Belvedere
Exhibits	224
Curator	Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, LENTOS Kunstmuseum Linz
Catalogue	Klemens Brosch. A Great Artist Rediscovered Editor: Belvedere, Vienna, Museen der Stadt Linz and Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum Author: Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller Graphic design: Norbert Artner Publishing: Anton Pustet 320 pages, 23 x 28,5 cm, Hardcover, 326 pictures German edition; EUR 38,- The catalogue was originally published under the title „Klemens Brosch (1894–1926). Kunst und Sucht des Zeichengenies“.
Contact	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Wien T +43 1 795 57-0 www.belvedere.at
Guided Tours	T + 43 1 795 57-134 M public@belvedere.at
Opening hours	daily 10am to 6pm Friday 10am to 9pm
Regular Entry	EUR 13,- (Lower Belvedere)
Press Contact	Press Belvedere Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177 M press@belvedere.at

Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press.

#KlemensBrosch