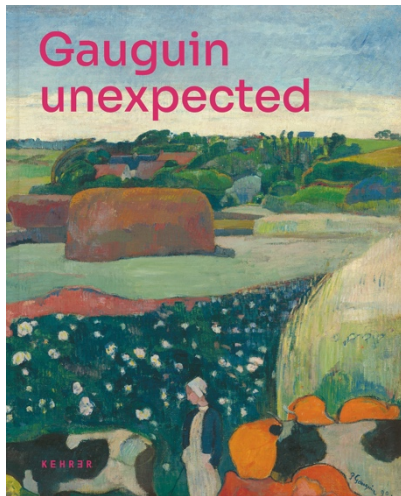


NEW RELEASE 2024



Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien *Gauguin unexpected*

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An impressive journey through the life and artistic development of the great Paul Gauguin

Based on a wide variety of Gauguin's work, this book takes the reader on a journey through the life and artistic development of the influential Paul Gauguin. It documents his beginnings as a Post-Impressionist to his later role as a pioneer and one of the fathers of Modernism, highlighting the various facets of his work—from painting to graphic art to sculpture. The catalog aims to provide a comprehensive picture of Gauguin's complex and multifaceted art, as well as his personality. It includes impressive works from international museums and significant private collections, as well as essays on Paul Gauguin's fascinating biography. The publication also addresses the problematic aspects of his life and work, placing his oeuvre in the context of post-colonial discourses and current debates about sexism and abuse, thereby creating a nuanced view of one of the most significant artists of the 19th century.

Born in Paris in the 1840s, Gauguin initially worked in banking before turning to art. Driven by a longing for a carefree, primitive existence, Gauguin left his conventional life in France and embarked on a spiritual and artistic quest to French Polynesia. "I will go there to completely withdraw from the so-called civilized world and only interact with the so-called 'savages.'" He settled on the South Sea island of Tahiti. Fascinated by the intense and vibrant colors, he initially began painting the island's landscapes. Later, he focused on depicting native women and girls engaged in various activities. He idealized them, painting them in a primitive and free manner, away from the constraints of Western civilization, creating brightly colored compositions. However, Gauguin soon realized that he could not find the integrity of simple rural life even in the South Seas,

as industrialization was also making its mark there. During his first stay in Tahiti from 1891 to 1893, Gauguin created some of his most famous works, which can be understood as an effort to represent the life and culture of the indigenous population in all its diversity. Common to all of them is an extraordinary use of color and linear intensity, as well as a remarkable reduction to the essentials, which still impresses today.

In search of greater recognition in the French art world, Gauguin returned to France after his first stay in Tahiti. However, financial success eluded him there as well. This was followed by a return to French Polynesia and an art career full of adversities.

Gauguin left behind a body of work that is both remarkable and technically diverse. His approach significantly contributed to understanding the image not only as a representation of reality but also as an expression of inner feelings and ideas, profoundly shaping the art of the twentieth century.

Exhibition

Gauguin unexpected
Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien
October 3, 2024 – January 19, 2025

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