

Pays de rêve

6

There is no meal without art. Here all table talk, whether it takes place at a birthday dinner, a family gathering, a tête-à-tête or a business lunch, expands into a view over landscapes, portraits and still lifes. At Zurich's Kronenhalle, a long tradition of sophisticated hospitality unfolds in the natural presence of the greatest works of art. Time and again, the restaurant has been honoured by famous guests. For decades, artists, writers, singers and actors have lunched and dined at the Rämistrasse establishment, raising a glass to exhibition launches, new titles and premieres.

This book focuses on the art. By illuminating a backdrop of personally dedicated works and photographs, we explain how the legendary hostess Hulda Zumsteg together with her son Gustav, a silk merchant and art collector, succeeded in creating a place that to this day unites the pleasures of the eye with those of the palate in such an intimate way. While Hulda Zumsteg was passionately engaged in cultivating appealing cuisine and close contact with her countless guests at Rämistrasse 4, Gustav Zumsteg was fighting for the highest quality and elegance on

the catwalks of international fashion design at the helm of his silk trade company Abraham AG. And on close inspection, it was not merely a lack of space in Gustav's private apartment that led to many a select work from the French modernist period finding its long-term home at the Kronenhalle. It was much rather due to the liaison between art and daily life that the businessman and art lover learned to appreciate in Paris and the south of France - and upheld as a timeless principle in the Kronenhalle too.

Long before the guests arrive and after they have left, the works remain in place. It is stipulated in Gustav's will that they stay. When a beam of light lifts them from the dark at night, they become the secret protagonists of a play that, when daytime comes, is continuously modified by new scenes at the tables. And before the Kronenhalle opens its doors, they watch over the dark parquet floor being polished, table linens unfolded and silverware carefully placed. These thoughts informed our concepts for the imagery in Christian Flierl's



Renata Burckhardt

The visit

Money, sex and religion
are best not talked about



Kronenhalle, art, couture

A brief history of the Kronenhalle and its art collection

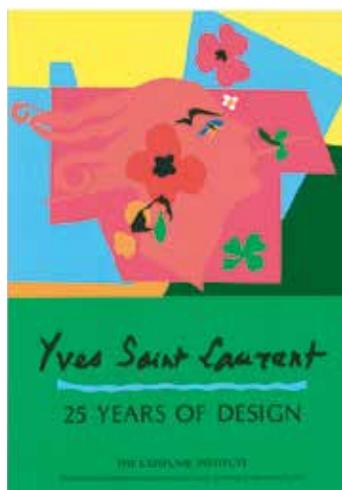
16

Various circumstances have paved the way for the Kronenhalle to become a destination for art lovers. One of them is the fairy-tale biography of a particular woman: Hulda Zumsteg, who at the age of 16, just as the last century began, made her journey from Winterthur to Zurich with just fifty *rappen* in her pocket – and at the age of 80 was established as the proud ‘mother’ of more than 70 staff at the restaurant’s premises at Rämistrasse 4. Another important factor was her entrepreneur son’s enthusiasm for all things beautiful. Gustav Zumsteg was inherently alert to the sensual stimulation of painting and truly grateful for the early trust artists bestowed in him during the fall of France and the post-war years. His friendships granted him access to galleries, studios and the intellectual elite of France and Switzerland; personal and professional contacts the son naturally shared with his hostess mother when in Zurich.

The Kronenhalle's reputation as a legendary meeting point was endorsed by the fact that Zurich became home to many who were politically ostracised during Europe's wars. Driven from their own countries by ideological repression, they would identify all the more with the simultaneous artistic awakening - and find like-minded friends in the convivial atmosphere created by the restaurant's true art of hospitality.

The following pages gather several narratives that came together in the making of the Kronenhalle's art collection. The role of fashion cannot be ignored, as it demonstrates the level of ambition Gustav Zumsteg dedicated to beauty and elegance during his time in the silk trade. Flowers in the brasserie - and flowers featured in its paintings - have added to the glamour of the address. And above all, a bountiful generosity continues the tradition of the house in a sensuous liaison between art and cuisine.

From 1975, mother and son shared the management of the restaurant and bar. He paid attention to this 'fateful' relation, as he often called it, in the best knowledge and conscience, before and beyond her death.



Yves Saint-Laurent and Gustav Zumsteg inspired each other mutually. The long-standing collaboration and friendship was expressed in the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, for which Zumsteg took over patronage. And it survived a period when the luxury market was under pressure and even the most renowned of all Parisian fashion designers had to curtail orders at Abraham AG.

30

1985 Gustav establishes the Hulda and Gustav Zumsteg Foundation, endowed with 50,000 francs. The foundation, amongst other purposes, supports the collection activity of the Kunsthaus Zurich in the area of contemporary art, and promotes young Swiss artists, thus signalling continuing support for Zurich's public art collection, to which Hulda has been contributing funds for the acquisition of innovative Swiss art for many years. The sole heir to the gastronomic and societal gem that is the Kronenhalle decides that upon his death all shares of the Restaurant Kronenhalle AG will go to the foundation.

1986 In August, Yves Saint-Laurent celebrates 25 years of collaboration with Abraham AG and Gustav Zumsteg at the Kronenhalle. Abraham had designed numerous creations exclusively for the Paris couturier. "His fabrics are half my fashion," reports the fashion star. "Collaborating with him comes close to a miracle, a permanent affinity between materials and colours," adds Gustav, who had supported *Yves Saint-Laurent - 25 Years of Design*, the 1983 retrospective at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Met's first exhibition about a living fashion designer.



In 1986, the German magazine *Stern* presents Gustav Zumsteg as “Zurich’s fabric magician” and portrays him surrounded by art in his apartment at Rämistrasse 4. Since 2005, the three still lifes by Henri Matisse, Georges Braque and Chaïm Soutine (from top to bottom) can be found at Kunsthau Zurich.



1988 During the celebrations for its 220th anniversary, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft reflects on the merits of Gustav the collector: “Not infrequently, Gustav Zumsteg has donated an important work to the Kunsthau, and by his good example animated others initially in doubt to do the same.” As a person he always acted with restraint and avoided the limelight, even when a promised legacy of seven works of Classic Modernism would have made a complete exhibition. Exceptional masterpieces that will enter the public collection on Gustav’s death in 2005 include still lifes by Henri Matisse, Chaïm Soutine and Georges Braque.





Reto Finger
There'd be so much more...













Wied

For Venie
harts Ehen
die Brust

die fände
die wie einmal
welche Galt



From Bonnard to Varlin The collection at a glance

82

As long as the Kronenhalle exists as a restaurant and bar, the works are not to be moved from their designated places. This is stipulated in the patron's will, and guaranteed by the Hulda and Gustav Zumsteg Foundation in granting the works to the restaurant as permanent loans. This not only respects the collector's wish; it also means that every guest is entering a very personal chapter of art history. The backbone of the collection consists of French modernist painters, practically all of whom Gustav Zumsteg knew in person. Their striving to find poetry in reality, their devotion to pure observation, their sensual approach to form and colour, had fired the collector's enthusiasm. In Zurich, he added Swiss artists who often measured their figurative work against French role models. Later acquisitions also include pop artists.

Not all works lay claim to the same artistic status. Among the museum-quality paintings, there are souvenirs from artists who wanted to thank the collector or the hostess personally

with an original work. Collection highlights like Georges Braque, Marc Chagall and Joan Miró draw the eye when ordering the artists alphabetically. But an ABC also creates new idiosyncratic juxtapositions – it reveals varying artistic mentalities and bears testimony to the natural coexistence of personal respect and artistic appreciation. The following pages feature all fine artworks that can be seen in the publicly accessible spaces of the Kronenhalle, with the exception of photography and some lithographs. These are, however, listed in the graphic illustration of the hanging on pp. 118–125, and wherever possible the date of creation and the artist are listed against each exhibit.

“Ceci n’est pas un musée,” commented André Malraux at the opening of the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence in 1964. The same holds true for the Kronenhalle. Nevertheless this book aims to provide the visitor with a reliable guide for artistic orientation around the house.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985)

The clock as violinist, 1970

Mixed media on paper,

25 × 33 cm, dedicated



90

Enamoured with the world A grandfather clock is playing the violin. The village gathers beneath a crescent moon. A blue house regards a woman who seems suspended by a dream upside down. The encounters are full of secrets. Marc Chagall carried forward the naive gestures of folk art, scenes of bucolic customs and Jewish traditional figures far into the twentieth century. Real political breaches and the double shocks of revolution and war anchor his art in an area of tension between East and West. His niece Meret Meyer concludes: “One seems to detect a dialogue: the inner journeys and the outer voyages lived over the years look at each other, smile at each other, await and surprise and lose each other just to reunite again in a light, bright and flourishing sky.” She adds that he travelled in Holland, Spain, Italy, Egypt, Palestine and the South of France, and each time gratefully got to know a new light and new mentalities. The summary of all the seas and all the sunsets he witnessed compete in *Le coucher du soleil*, echoing the blue that also illuminates Chagall’s stained-glass paintings in synagogues, churches and institutions like the UN headquarters. The painting leads you almost to believe

that figures are emerging from the canvas to perform an inner world. Perhaps they are there once the last ray of light has disappeared and the lonely figure above the city has merged with the sky.

Chagall’s gift to the twentieth century was to reconcile the most progressive paintings from his early Paris years with the charm of narrative. His capacity to preserve and artistically express great awe in spite of all the surrounding upheavals earned him important public commissions like the ceiling painting in the Opéra Garnier in Paris (1964) and the windows in the Fraumünster church in Zurich (1970). In the catalogue for the 1967 Kunsthaus Zurich exhibition, René Wehrli calls the painter “a dreamer enamoured with the world”. Chagall unsurprisingly cultivated a lively relationship with the stage, and famously designed the costumes and set for a performance of *The Magic Flute* in New York. The Kronenhalle, like many other institutions, proudly shares the artist’s trust in culture, be it on the walls, on the menu or in memory.

Marc Chagall
Le coucher du soleil, 1974
Oil on canvas, 64 × 80 cm



91



Marc Chagall
Harlequin, undated
Ink and watercolour on paper,
47 × 23 cm, dedicated



Marc Chagall
Bouquet, undated
Oil on canvas, 35 × 27 cm



Marc Chagall
Bouquet with lovers, undated
Watercolour and crayon on paper,
37.5 × 28 cm, dedicated



Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918)
Cherry trees, c. 1901
Oil on canvas, 41 × 32.5 cm

100

Hodler's garden You would need to be able to fly to get close to that small row of trees. There is no path to the subjects of Hodler's painting. The grass, which initially reveals tall blades and white blossoms, becomes a homogenous carpet as the eye glides from the foreground to the centre of the image. The meadow turns into a pedestal for five trees, whose slender trunks hold the crowns just above the horizon. Is this serene grouping by Hodler a result of mere observation? Or is the painter already preparing for his later landscapes, which he will artificially superelevate with symmetries and mirroring?

Since the mid-1890s, the painter had been looking unhindered into the depths, "searching and approaching," as the art historian Gottfried Boehm described it. Initially almost "below the threshold of attention", he enforces flatness, introduces rhythms, and orders the space according to rules by which view and perspective, recog-

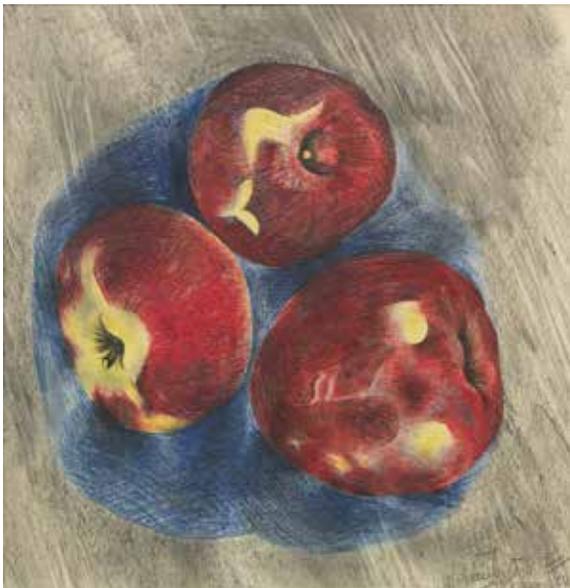
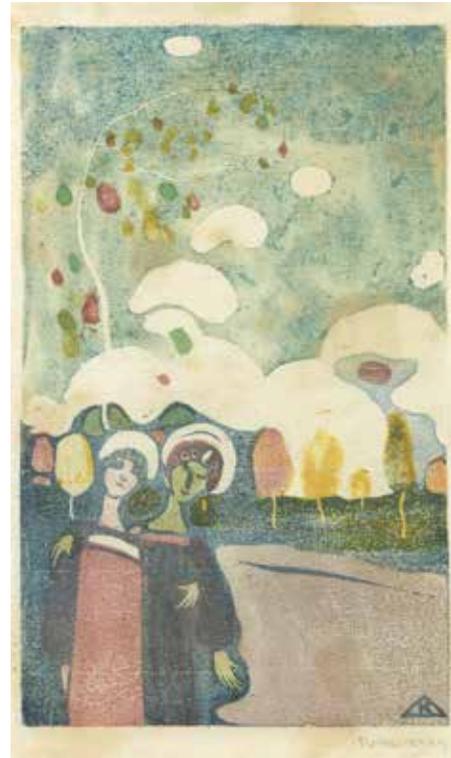
nition and slight alienation gently seek their balance. The trees stand very still in their row; the wind, which has dug dark shadows into the crowns and nearly ripped apart their branches, particularly the first tree on the very left, has abated. It has left the two compact crowns in the middle untouched. Slowly, the artist's will to penetrate to the very heart of things is germinating in this tender portrait of a group of trees.

"The artist's calling, if one may speak of such, lies in expressing what is eternal in nature, namely its beauty, and for that its essential beauty," wrote Hodler. He wants to show an "enlarged, simplified nature", one "free of all the details that mean nothing". Hodler's commitment to a form of painting that eliminates anything marginal or incidental from its surfaces elevates each section of a landscape to a model of the exceptional. The human being leaves the picture and is thus invited to observe more intensely. Each fruit tree may be a tree of knowledge.

Max Hunziker (1901–1976)
Dialogue ou soliloque, undated
Hand etching on paper, 18 × 13.5 cm



Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944)
Two girls, 1907
Linocut, 21.2 × 12.7 cm



Johannes Itten (1888–1967)
Apples, 1930
Colour pencil on paper, 27 × 28 cm

Before *Der Blaue Reiter* They could be saints. The head coverings of the two figures in the painting are reminiscent of luminous haloes; the elongated neck and the play of the hands speak of grace, affection and perhaps awe. Within the soft contours of the linocut's colour fields, the mysterious pair remains part of the landscape. Small clouds rise, a birch tree tosses its last foliage – red, green, yellow – into the sky. Kandinsky's small sheet leads you into the fairy-tale world of his early works. The artist had settled in Paris for a year, where he would work on small Impressionistic landscapes, often working outside. In his references to folkloristic motives from an earlier Russia resides a subtle protest against the Tsarist Empire and the Russian élite eager to catch up with Western modern culture. Depicting a colourful country life grants Kandinsky space for memories as well as free artistic expression. At stake, however, are not only outdated ways of seeing. Together with other internationally connected artists, Kandinsky is aiming for a 'spiritual rebirth' of art. More than 100 years later, we know that the most innovative images of his generation are nourished not least by the expressive power of role models far away in time and place.

Brasserie (ground floor)

1 → p. 93
 Marc Chagall
Le coucher du soleil

2 → p. 90
 Georges Braque
La plaine II

3 → p. 18
 I. C. Fuesslin
Rudolphus Bruno
 Copperplate engraving

4 → p. 95
 Lyonel Feininger
Manhattan

5
 Anton Graff
Samuel Gessner, c. 1784
 Copperplate engraving

6 → p. 98
 Giovanni Giacometti
Toietta della sera

7 → p. 114
 Chaïm Soutine
Still life

8
 Portrait of Gustav Zumsteg
 Photo: Gian Paolo Barbieri,
 1972

9 → p. 109
 Joan Miró
*Landscape with moon
 and star*

10
 Portrait of Hulda Zumsteg
 Photographer unknown

11 → p. 115
 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
Hanging bird

12 → p. 20
 Portrait of Georges Braque
 Photographer unknown

13 → p. 100
 Julio Gonzalez
Deux bouteilles

14
 Portrait of Hulda Zumsteg
 in the wine cellar
 Photographer unknown

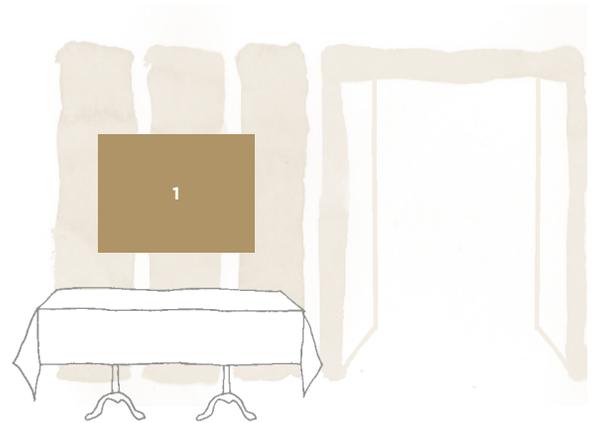
15
 Portrait of Signore Mazzola,
 Chef de service
 Photographer unknown

16 → p. 113
 Alex Sadkowsky
Man at table

17 → p. 109
 Joan Miró
Figure

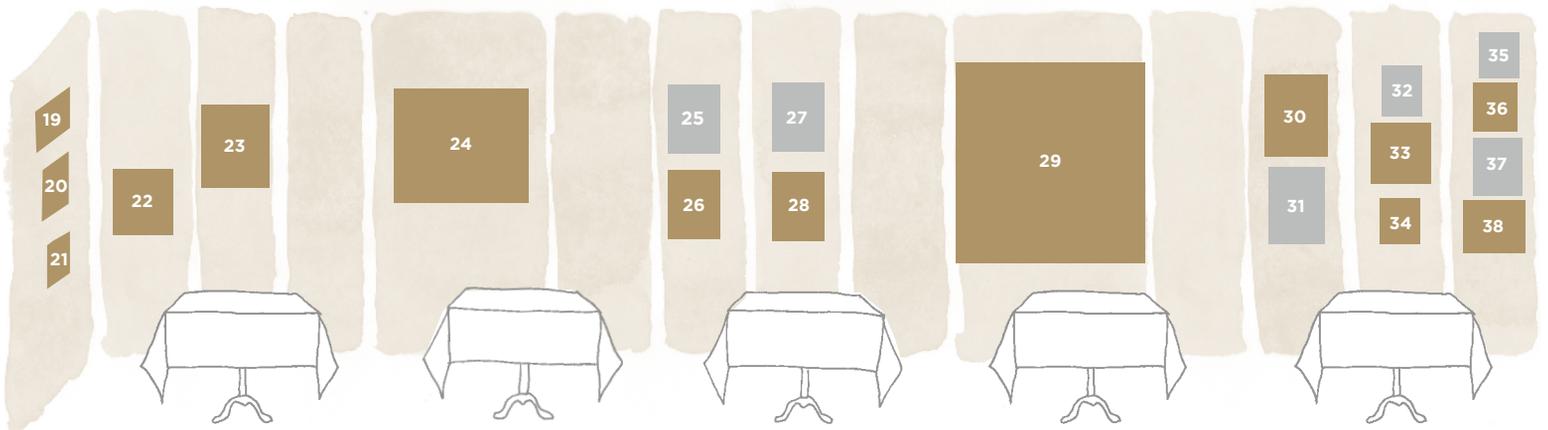
18 → p. 20
 Portrait of James Joyce
 at Zurich's Platzspitz
 Photographer unknown

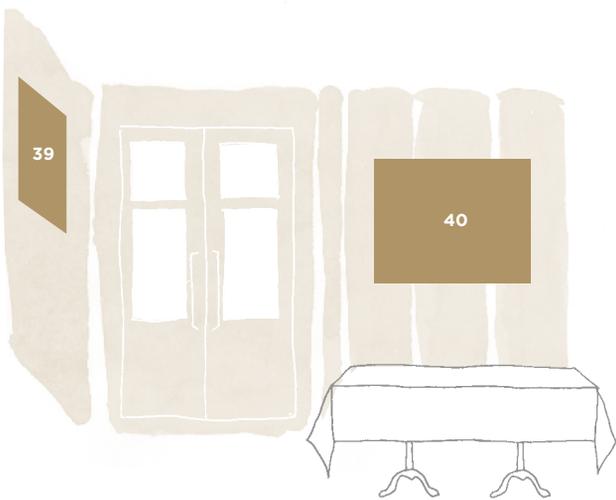
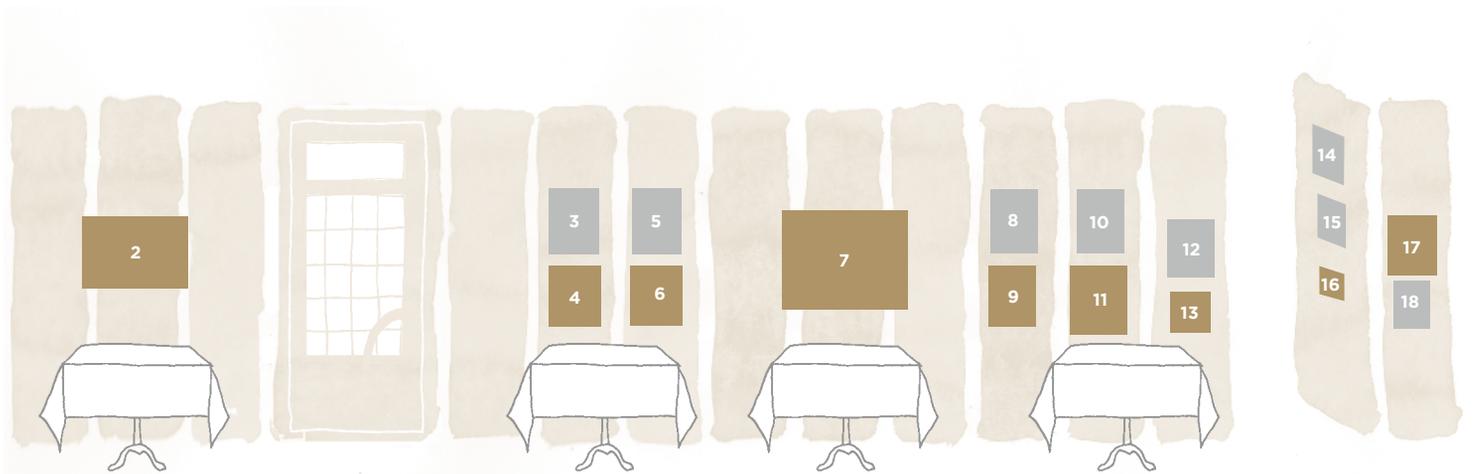
Wall towards Chagall Room and hallway (East/Pfauen)



Graphic prints and photographs are included in the illustration (in grey) but not listed in the catalogue of works.

Wall towards the main entrance (West/Bellevue)





19 → p. 109
Joan Miró
Picture letter

20 → p. 89
Pierre Bonnard
La petite blanchisseuse

21 → p. 103
Wassily Kandinsky
Two girls

22 → p. 94
James Ensor
Pot plant

23 → p. 93
Marc Chagall
Bouquet

24 → p. 91
Georges Braque
Gros nuages

25 → S. 18
Karl Stauffer-Bern
*Conrad Ferdinand Meyer
von Zürich, 1887*
Etching

26 → p. 115
Jean Tinguely
Picture letter

27
Arnold Böcklin
Gottfried Keller, 1889
Heliogravure

28 → p. 86
Pierre Alechinsky
Composition

29 → p. 116
Varlin
Hulda Zumsteg

30 → p. 117
Varlin
Friedrich Dürrenmatt

31
Portrait of Alexander Calder,
Photographer unknown

32
Portrait of James Joyce
Photographer unknown

33 → p. 86
Cuno Amiet
Portrait of James Joyce

34 → p. 94
Eduardo Chillida
Hand

35
Portrait of Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Photo Edouard Rieben, 1980

36 → p. 104
Anna Keel
Moritz Schumacher from Berlin

37
Portrait of Federico Fellini
Photographer unknown

38 → p. 94
Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Minotaur with a glass

39 → p. 111
Pablo Picasso
Peintre au travail

40 → p. 108
Joan Miró
*Les éclats du soleil
blessent l'étoile tardive*