
KUNST HISTORISCHES MUSEUM WIEN

Bruegel

October 2, 2018 – January 13, 2019
Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

Statement of the Curators

The exhibition *Bruegel* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna will be an absolutely unique event, and a 'must-see' for every art lover. It will be the very first time ever that the full range of works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder will be on view. More than half of his surviving paintings, drawings and prints will be reunited, works that only leave the walls of the museums that house them on the rarest of occasions. An exhibition such as this therefore ranks among the most extraordinary museum events, and it will most likely not occur again within this century.

The exhibition is based on a broad research project on Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a seminal but enigmatic figure whose pivotal role in the pictorial inventions in regard to landscape and genre is widely accepted. The meaning of many of his works, however, is still hotly debated, and very little is known thus far about his creative process, how he went about in the making of these hauntingly beautiful works. In close collaboration with some 20 international colleagues, new research was initiated across the different media that he worked in, the findings of which will be presented in conjunction with the exhibition.

Our aim is to bring the visitor as close as possible to the overwhelming visual experience of the surprisingly innovative, witty, and socially critical aspects of his oeuvre. Pairings such as the *Beekeepers* next to the *Nestrobber* will underscore his passion for satire. Some of his most important panels, such as the Prado's *Triumph of Death* and Museum Mayer van den Bergh's *Mad Meg* have been restored for this event and will be presented for the first time ever next to each other. Above all, we will give the visitors insight into the astonishing quality of the pen- and brushwork of this exceptional artist, and the opportunity to get intimately acquainted with the hand of the master. The exhibition will be a significant *momentum* in Bruegel-scholarship as well as a feast for the eye of every art lover!

Elke Oberthaler: Head of the Paintings Conservation Studio, Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Sabine Pénot: Curator of Netherlandish and Dutch Paintings, Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Manfred Sellink: General Director and Head Curator, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (KMSKA), Antwerp, Belgium

Ron Spronk: Professor of Art History, Queen's University, Canada; Hieronymus Bosch Chair, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen, the Netherlands