

The Barrett Collection of Swiss Art Gifted to The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD)

Barrett Collection Encompasses 400 Works Spanning Six Centuries of Swiss Art

Collection and Museum to Catalyze Academic and Research Programs for Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at UTD

DALLAS, TX (Nov. 2, 2018) – The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) announced today the gift to the university of the Barrett Collection, consisting of over 400 works of Swiss art. It is the single largest donation ever made to UTD as well as the largest gift of art to any school in The University of Texas system. This unparalleled collection of paintings, sculpture, drawings, and prints is the only definitive collection of Swiss art outside of Switzerland and is considered the largest and finest private collection of Swiss art ever formed. With works dating from the late 14th through the mid-20th century, the Barrett Collection includes important pieces by every major artist born in Switzerland, from Caspar Wolf (1735-1788), the first painter of the Swiss Alps, to Cuno Amiet (1868-1961).

Recognized for its excellence in science, engineering, and business, UTD has recently placed greater emphasis on the arts. With the creation of the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History in 2014, the university has fostered innovative research and graduate education in the history of art, embracing a global history of art that ranges across geography, chronology, and medium. The gift of the Barrett Collection, which will be housed in a new Barrett Museum to be built on campus, will extend the vision for the O'Donnell Institute, attracting new scholars and expanding the role of the arts across the university.

"The arts are an essential facet of any great university," said Dr. Richard Benson, President of UTD. "I am grateful to the Barretts for this generous gift, which will catalyze the development of arts programs at the O'Donnell Institute at UTD and provide our students with direct access to an extraordinary collection."

The Collection was started in the 1990s by Dallas residents Nona and Richard Barrett. As a result of extensive travel in the country they realized early on that, outside of Switzerland, Swiss art was widely unknown, underappreciated, and undervalued. After an early visit to the collection of Mme. Monique Barbier-Mueller in Geneva they made their first acquisition at Art Basel of a painting by Ferdinand Hodler. Relying on knowledge gleaned through research and their rapidly developing private library, along with guidance from curators, dealers, and art historians the Barretts have become the most knowledgeable American collectors of Swiss art of the past two generations. This has enabled them to build the present collection, often acquiring works before they reach the market. Since Nona's death in 2014, Richard and his present wife, Luba, have continued to expand the Collection.

“We have benefited so much from our city of Dallas and are glad to have an opportunity to give something back. Our wish is for our collection to remain intact and have a permanent, public home in our own city as well as in Texas. The building of the Barrett Museum on the UTD Campus not only will achieve that, but will enable the collection to continue to grow through future support from the Barrett Collection Foundation.” said Richard Barrett. “Our dearest hope is that this gift will enhance the cultural fabric of this fine university.”

Noted both for its completeness and the depth of holdings of works by the most important Swiss-born artists, the Barrett Collection has drawn the attention of art historians, curators, and museum directors from around the globe. Works from the Collection have been on view at major art institutions internationally, including the Tate Britain, Kunsthaus Zurich, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Musée d’Orsay, among others. Representative works in the Collection include:

- Swiss Carnation Master, *St. Hubert and St. Catherine of Alexandria*, c. 1490, oil on panel
- Jean-Etienne Liotard, *Portrait of the Empress Maria Theresa*, 1762, pastel on vellum
- Caspar Wolf, *View across Lake Seeberg to the Muntigalm*, 1778, oil on canvas
- Heinrich Füssli, *The Expulsion from Paradise*, 1803-5, oil on canvas
- Angelika Kauffmann, *Ulysses on the Island of Circe*, 1793, oil on canvas
- Arnold Böcklin, *Loneliness*, 1875, oil on canvas
- Alexandre Calame, *Vue du Handeck*, c. 1837, oil on canvas
- Ferdinand Hodler, *Landscape with Rhythmic Shapes*, 1908, oil on canvas and *Woman with Flowers (The Song)*, 1909, oil on canvas
- Felix Vallotton, *Femme au Miroir*, 1909, oil on canvas
- Cuno Amiet, *Self-Portrait*, 1921, oil on canvas and *Portrait of Anne Amiet with Red Background*, 1913, oil on canvas
- Giovanni Giacometti, *Bagnanti (Alberto and Diego)*, 1919, oil on canvas
- Augusto Giacometti, *Amaryllis*, 1942, oil on canvas

Richard Brettell, a scholar of modern painting and Founding Director of the Edith O’Donnell Institute at UTD, has known the Collection since its inception. He has worked closely with the Barretts to develop plans for the museum, which will be unique in the world outside Switzerland.

“The creation of a museum with a collection of this breadth and depth of Swiss art at its core is unprecedented in the United States. But bringing this collection to a major research university makes the significance of the gift even greater,” said Dr. Brettell. “The focus and range of the Barrett Collection will spark many new dissertations, articles, and books written by our graduate students and faculty.”

In addition to the works currently in the collection, UTD will also receive funding from the Barrett Collection Foundation for future acquisitions, including works by post-WWII and contemporary Swiss artists.

About the Barrett Collection

The major works of the Barrett Collection demonstrate the range of Swiss artists who travelled and spent extensive periods in Russia, England, Spain, Austria, France, Germany, and Italy in addition to their native Switzerland. Thus, the Barrett Collection is devoted in its fullest sense to European art seen through the lens of Swiss-born artists. The core of the Collection is comprised of 11 works by Caspar Wolf, 12 by Angelika Kauffmann, 7 by Heinrich Füssli, 6 by Arnold Böcklin, 50 by the 19th century Swiss landscape masters, 38 by Ferdinand Hodler, 34 by Felix Vallotton, and 41 by Cuno Amiet.

The Collection also includes works by artists less well-known outside Switzerland itself as well as artists who often are considered French (Léopold Robert and Marc Gabriel Charles Gleyre) or Italian (Sigismund Righini and Giovanni Segantini). The Barretts amassed a virtually definitive collection of the work of Giovanni Giacometti (father of the more famous Alberto and Diego Giacometti) and their uncle Augusto Giacometti, whose chromatic paintings and works on paper are scarcely collected outside Switzerland. The Collection also has several works by artists whose careers are only now being carefully studied, including Max Buri and Ernest Biéler.

The following examples highlight the depth and breadth of the Barrett Collection:

Jean-Etienne Liotard, *Maria-Theresa, Empress of Austria*, 1762: The two most powerful women in the world in the 18th century were Catherine the Great of Russia and Maria-Theresa, Empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose large family intermarried with virtually every other important royal family of Europe. Liotard travelled to Vienna to paint the Empress and her family first in 1742, returning several times. During those visits, he represented the Empress herself in pastel and oil, and made drawings and paintings of all her children in what is among the most sustained collective portraits of a royal family by any European artist. The Barrett Collection portrait is pastel on vellum and relates to the official portrait in oil and seems to be done about the same time as a somewhat more elaborate pastel now in the collection of the Musée des Beaux Arts in the artist's native Geneva.

Angelika Kauffmann, *Ulysses on the Island of Circe*, 1793: Angelika Kauffman was, during her lifetime, famous throughout Europe and was one of only two female artists who were founding members of the Royal Academy in London. Fluent in several European languages, she was at home in most of the capital cities of the continent and made paintings on commission for aristocrats and intellectuals (her portrait of the youthful Goethe painted in Rome is an example). Her greatest ambition, like most male artists of her generation, was to excel as a History Painter, and she made large-scale exhibition paintings throughout her life. The Barrett Collection holdings of

works by Kauffman is virtually definitive and contains, in addition to portraits and small scale mythological and literary paintings, two large-scale history paintings, both involved with the life of Ulysses. *Ulysses on the Island of Circe*, is the largest and was painted during the artist's later years in Rome, where she died in 1807.

Ferdinand Hodler, *Landscape with Rhythmic Shapes*, 1908: Ferdinand Hodler was the principal painter from Switzerland during his lifetime and is the only Swiss painter to take his place in the pantheon on modern painting. The Barrett Collection's 38 works form a true retrospective of his pictorial achievements on canvas and paper and represent his career from its earliest landscapes painted for tourists to his elaborate figural allegories. In the end, Hodler's rhythmic landscapes of his native Switzerland, particularly of Lac Lemman (Americans call it Lake Geneva), around which he lived much of his life, are his most perfect works, and the rhythmic landscape in the Barrett Collection makes fully evident Hodler's fascination with the parallels between the visual rhythms of nature and the rhythms of music. Like many advanced artists of his generation, Hodler believed in synesthesia, in which color and sound, composed by painters and musical composers, are fundamentally unified.

Cuno Amiet, *Women in the Garden*, 1910: Of the masters of Swiss modernism—Ferdinand Hodler, Felix Vallotton, and Cuno Amiet—the latter is the least known outside his native country. Yet, in his fascinating interactions with the two competing forms of artistic modernism—the French and the German, he made important contributions to both. Amiet started his vanguard career by training at the Académie Julian in Paris and went to Pont Aven in Brittany to follow in the footsteps of his hero Paul Gauguin. His fluency in German and his fascination with the early forms of what is now known as German Expressionism led him to early membership in the Berlin-based group, Die Brücke later in his career. This “bi-cultural modernism” and his relationship with the great collectors of modernist paintings, Josef Müller and his sister Gertrud Dubi-Mueller, gave him first-hand knowledge of works by van Gogh, Gauguin, and Kandinsky. This 1910 painting, *Women in the Garden*, is part of a series of paintings that approach the French notion of the “decorative,” but injecting it with a chromatic power that belies its gentle subject.

Giovanni Giacometti, *Bathers (Alberto and Diego)*, 1919: Giovanni Giacometti was not Italian, as his name suggests, but Swiss, and descended from a family living in the Italian-speaking St. Gallen Switzerland, where he painted, assisted the great Italian-born Swiss painter, Segantini, and raised a family devoted to art. Two of his three sons, Alberto and Diego Giacometti, left this part of Switzerland as young men for Paris, where, Alberto, with the assistance of Diego, became one of the most famous artists in the world. Often considered French, Alberto was selected by the French government to be the artist for the French Pavilion of the 1962 Venice Biennale, hence forever confusing his national origins. In this work in the Barrett Collection, we see their father representing his two soon-to-be famous sons swimming on a beautiful summer day in Switzerland. The Barrett Collection includes more than 25 works by Giovanni Giacometti and his less-well-known, but even more inventive artist-cousin,

Augusto Giacometti, making it possible to understand the Swiss roots of this dynasty of European artists.

About the O'Donnell Institute

The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at The University of Texas at Dallas is a center for innovative research and graduate education in the history of art. Under the leadership of Founding Director Dr. Richard Brettell, research and teaching at the O'Donnell Institute embrace a global history of art that ranges across geography, chronology, and medium. Founded in 2014, the O'Donnell Institute is the first art history research institute created in the digital age, exploring in particular the intersection between the visual arts and the sciences and technology. As a center for the growing community of art historians, curators, and practicing artists in Dallas and Fort Worth, the O'Donnell Institute is dedicated to intellectual creativity, exchange, and collaboration in the form of lectures and symposia, exhibitions, publications, and collaborations with area institutions. More information on the O'Donnell Institute is available at <https://www.utdallas.edu/arthistory>.

About The University of Texas at Dallas

Created in 1969 upon the foundations of a research institute funded by the founders of Texas Instruments, The University of Texas at Dallas has grown to an enrollment of almost 29,000 students studying in 140 bachelors, masters, and doctoral degree programs. Last year the *Times Higher Education* survey ranked UT Dallas as the best university in the United States created during the past 50 years. In 2018, UT Dallas, one of the nation's 115 Carnegie "R1 – Highest Research Activities" universities, became one of only three state universities qualified to receive funding from the National Research University Fund created by the Texas legislature. As the University approaches its 50th anniversary, it continues to fulfil its founder's vision of providing cutting edge research and graduate education in the sciences and technology, led by the Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science, within a much broader educational matrix, featuring the nationally distinguished faculty of the Jindal School of Management and leading scholars in the areas of the arts, humanities, social sciences, and behavioral and brain sciences. The Barrett Museum and the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History have created a major new advance in the continuing enrichment of the educational ambience and cultural life of UT Dallas.

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