

GUGGENHEIM

NEWS RELEASE

Guggenheim Museum Presents *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*

First Major Solo Exhibition in the United States Offers Historic Look at af Klint's Artistic Achievements

Accompanied by an exhibition of new work by R. H. Quaytman on Rotunda Level 6

Exhibition: *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*
Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Rotunda Levels 1–5
Dates: October 12, 2018 to January 27, 2019

(NEW YORK, NY—April 3, 2018)—From October 12, 2018, to January 27, 2019, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum will present the first major solo exhibition in the United States of the Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944). When af Klint began creating radically abstract paintings in 1906, they were like little that had been seen before: bold, colorful, and untethered from recognizable references to the physical world. It was several years before Vasily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, and others would take similar strides to free their own artwork of representational content. Yet af Klint never exhibited her remarkably forward-looking paintings and, convinced the world was not ready for them, stipulated that they not be shown for 20 years following her death. Ultimately, her work was not exhibited until 1986, and it is only over the past three decades that her paintings and works on paper have received serious attention.

Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future will offer an opportunity to experience af Klint's artistic achievements in the Guggenheim's rotunda more than a century after she began her daring work. Curated by Tracey Bashkoff, Director of Collections and Senior Curator, with the assistance of David Horowitz, Curatorial Assistant, and organized with the cooperation of the Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm, the exhibition will feature more than 160 of af Klint's artworks and focus on the artist's breakthrough years, 1906–20. It is during this period that she began to produce nonobjective and stunningly imaginative paintings, creating a singular body of work that invites a reevaluation of modernism and its development.

In conjunction with *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*, the museum will present the 34th chapter of paintings by R. H. Quaytman, whose abiding interest in af Klint extends back to 1989, when Quaytman organized an exhibition on the Swedish artist at New York's P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. In these new works, Quaytman will engage af Klint's aesthetic language and spiritually charged subject matter, reexamining both through the lens of the Guggenheim Museum's founding ethos, which was indebted to the art and theories of Kandinsky and culminated with commissioning Frank Lloyd Wright to design "a temple of the spirit."

Hilma af Klint was born in Stockholm in 1862 and went on to study painting at the city's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, graduating with honors in 1887. She soon established herself as a respected painter in Stockholm, exhibiting deftly rendered figurative paintings and serving briefly as secretary of the Society for Swedish Women Artists. During these years, she also became deeply engaged with spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and Theosophy. These forms of spirituality, which were also of keen interest to other artists, including Kandinsky, František Kupka, Malevich, and Mondrian, were widely popular across Europe and the United States, as people sought to reconcile long-held religious beliefs with scientific advances and a new awareness of the global plurality of religions.

Af Klint developed her new approach to art making together with her spiritual practice, outside of Stockholm's male-dominated art world. She had begun to regularly hold séances with four other women by 1896. During a meeting in 1906, one of the spirits that the group often channeled asked af Klint to create a cycle of paintings. Af Klint immediately accepted. She worked on the project between 1906 and 1915, completing 193 paintings and works on paper collectively called *The Paintings for the Temple*. These works, which included her first forays into nonobjectivity, were a radical break from the more staid paintings she produced as part of her public practice. Stylistically, they are strikingly diverse, utilizing biomorphic and geometric forms, expansive and intimate scales, and maximalist and reductivist approaches to composition and color. She imagined installing them in a spiral temple, but the building never came to fruition. After she completed *The Paintings for the Temple*, af Klint continued to test the limits of her new abstract vocabulary. In these years, she experimented with form, theme, and seriality, creating some of her most incisive works.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring eight scholarly essays and a roundtable discussion. Contributions by leading art historians and contemporary artists delve into such topics as af Klint's relationship to modernism, her engagement with new understandings of science and spirituality, and how her work allows us to expand and reimagine the cannon.

Public Programs

A series of public and educational programs will be presented in conjunction with *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*. Program additions, information, and schedules are available at guggenheim.org/calendar.

Music for the Temple: A Tribute to Hilma af Klint by John Zorn

Thursday & Friday, November 29 & 30, 7 pm

Composer John Zorn presents a concert of new music composed in response to the work of Hilma af Klint.

Exhibition Support

Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future is supported in part by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation and The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation.

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The Guggenheim network that began in the 1970s when the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, was joined by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, has since expanded to include the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (opened 1997) and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (currently in development). The Guggenheim Foundation continues to forge international collaborations that celebrate contemporary art, architecture, and design within and beyond the walls of the museum, including the Guggenheim Social Practice initiative, the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative, and The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative. More information about the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation can be found at guggenheim.org.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission: Adults \$25, students/seniors (65+) \$18, members and children under 12 free. The Guggenheim's free app, available with admission or by download to personal devices, offers an enhanced visitor experience. The app features content on special exhibitions as well as access to more than 1,600 works in the Guggenheim's permanent collection. Additionally, information about the museum's landmark building is available in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Verbal Description guides for select exhibitions are also included for visitors who are blind or have low vision. The Guggenheim app is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Museum Hours: Sun–Wed, 10 am–5:45 pm; Fri, 10 am–5:45 pm; Sat, 10 am–7:45 pm; closed Thurs. On Saturdays, beginning at 5:45 pm, the museum hosts Pay What You Wish. For general information, call 212 423 3500 or visit the museum online at: guggenheim.org or [guggenheim.org/social](https://www.guggenheim.org/social)

For publicity images, visit guggenheim.org/pressimages

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#HilmaafKlint

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