

**From the Collection**

**Robert Altmann (1915–2017)**

**Publisher and Patron**

**23 February – 13 May 2018**

**KUNSTMUSEUM  
LIECHTENSTEIN**



A presentation in honour of the recently deceased collector, publisher and patron of the arts. Growing antisemitism caused the Hanseatic Altmann family to move to France in 1929, finally gaining them Liechtenstein nationality after a prolonged search for security. But emigration became necessary once again and took Robert Altmann first to Geneva, Madrid and New York, and, finally, in 1941, to Havana. Coming from a culturally disposed family of bankers, he had been interested in art since his early years. He became a collector, patron and publisher and also engaged in his own artistic work. In 1947 he published a first portfolio of lithographs and etchings of Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy and Roberto Matta, among others. Altogether he created seven of these *Brunidor Portfolios* by 1973, followed by book editions with equally renowned collaborators.

In honour of the recently deceased Robert Altmann, the show in the Seitenlichtsaal presents five *Brunidor Portfolios* and his loans and donations to Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein.



Centre for Art and Communication (CCC), Vaduz  
Built by Ricardo Porro commissioned by Robert Altmann, 1971/72

**Conversation between Friedemann Malsch (director Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein) and Mirjam Kaiser (editor KuL) on the exhibition Robert Altmann (1915–2017). Publisher and Patron.**

Robert Altmann died last year at the age of 102. Now, the Kunstmuseum is devoting and exhibiting to him. What can visitors expect?

Friedemann Malsch: It's an in memoriam presentation for Robert Altmann, collated from our own collection, paying homage to a man who was such an important figure, not just for the country of Liechtenstein, but for the arts in general, for poetry, and above all for contemporary events in Liechtenstein.

How would you describe Altmann's importance for the art scene in Liechtenstein?

He played an outstanding role. Not so much in his later years, but mainly in the 1960s to 1980s, when he was an incredible driving force behind Liechtenstein's evolution as an outward-looking hub of contemporary art and poetry. Just think of the 1968 *Kunst und Buch* exhibition at Rathaus Vaduz, which then traveled to the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, where it was an enormous success. It was the first exhibition devoted to the relationship between books and the fine arts.

Let's recap briefly. What was so special about that particular exhibition?

For the occasion, Altmann invited the famous poet Paul Celan to give a reading here. Many people regard that as the genesis of a specifically Liechtensteinian lyricism. It inspired the likes of Hans-Jörg Rheinberger and Evi Kliemand to get involved in poetry. Moments like these are beyond value.

Although there will be people who don't actually remember that exhibition, many will presumably know the Goldenes Haus in Vaduz.

Indeed. In the early 1970s, he set up the Centre for Art and Communication, designed by Ricardo Porro, an outstanding Cuban architect Altmann had met during his exile in Cuba. For 5 years, Altmann's son Roberto, together with his

wife Maggie, hosted exhibitions in that centre, bringing avant-garde artists who were already well known in Europe at the time, to Vaduz. This was also an important source of information for the Staatliche Kunstsammlung. Georg Malin acquired several works from these exhibitions for the Staatliche Kunstsammlung.

Are there any other achievements that can be attributed to Altmann?

While he was still in Cuba, he started publishing prints by various artists. He founded a publishing house called Edition Brunidor, which produced portfolios of artists' prints. Because he was from Liechtenstein, he did a lot for Liechtenstein throughout the world. He sold prints by Max Ernst, Wifredo Lam, Jacques Hérold, Isidore Isou and others all over the world. He returned to Europe in 1951 and divided his time between Vaduz and Paris, putting Liechtenstein on the map. In Liechtenstein, he really was a pioneer who is still talked about in Paris. He even commissioned a poem by Bernard Heidsieck that became internationally renowned, with the title *Vaduz*. The funny thing is that Heidsieck recited that poem all over the world, but never in Vaduz. A few years ago, I tried to bring him to Vaduz. He said he had held readings all over the world, but really didn't feel like doing it any more.

Back to Altmann. He donated several works to Liechtenstein. Are there any in particular worth mentioning?

From the 3rd *Brunidor Portfolio* right to the end, he donated his editions to the Staatliche Kunstsammlung and the Kunstmuseum. The Landesbibliothek, on the other hand, which existed before them, holds all of his editions. These include prints by such internationally renowned artists as Max Ernst, Wifredo Lam, Matta, Paul Celan, Toyen, Camille Bryen, Jacques Hérold, Isidore Isou and Miró. They all became incredibly important artists and they all contributed to these editions. That is quite an immense treasure.

What is the focus of the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum?

We are showing a selection of the prints that he donated to the Kunstsammlung in the 1970s, along with five paintings by Isidore Isou that he donated to the Kunstmuseum about ten years ago. In late 1999, early 2000, I presented an exhibition of all the editions at the Kunstraum Engländerbau in collaboration with the Landesbibliothek. That occasion was also marked by the publication of Altmann's memoirs and a commented catalogue raisonné of his Brunidor-Editions, both published by the Staatliche Kunstsammlung.

Although Altmann moved to Havana in 1941, Liechtenstein remained important to him even in his later years. How did that interest express itself?

His business was, as ever, based in Vaduz. From the 1950s onwards, he and his wife lived in Liechtenstein and Paris. And when the Friends of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein foundation was launched in 2006, he was one of the very first to get on board with it, even though he was already quite elderly by then. He always supported the museum with his intellectual input, and dropped in whenever he was here. In 2007, the Friends of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein foundation acquired a painting by Man Ray from his collection in recognition of his lifetime contribution to the Kunstmuseum. That painting can also be seen in the exhibition.

Altmann was a collector, patron and publisher, as well as being a painter himself. Which of these aspects was most characteristic of him? And which made the most definitive mark on his success, or his legacy?

As publisher and patron. He was a great friend of artists. He was friends with Jean Hélion, with Paul Celan, and had a very close friendship with Wifredo Lam, while César Domela was another important artist friend. He was an individual who was very much anchored in his time and in the activities of his time. It was an era when many of those who were friends with artists also became their patrons. He supported the artists as a publisher, too, because the editions he pro-

duced were undoubtedly not commercially viable. But in that way he left a legacy of great international significance.

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## Checklist

Unless otherwise specified:

Donation Robert Altmann, Vaduz/Viroflay

### Joan Miró

\* 1893 in Montroig, † 1983 in Palma de Mallorca

1

#### **Petite fille sautant à la corde, femmes, oiseaux, 1947**

Etching and embossed prints on handmade paper

42.1 × 32.5 cm

### André (Aimé René) Masson

\* 1896 in Balagny-sur-Thérain, † 1987 in Paris

2

#### **Untitled, 1967**

Drypoint on handmade paper

38 × 28.5 cm

3

#### **Untitled, 1967**

Drypoint on handmade paper

38 × 28.2 cm

4

#### **Untitled, 1967**

Drypoint on handmade paper

38.2 × 28.3 cm

5

#### **Untitled, 1967**

Drypoint on handmade paper

38 × 28.4 cm

### Isidore Isou

\* 1925 in Botosani, Romania, † 2007 in Paris

6

#### **Untitled, 1952**

Oil on canvas

65 × 54 cm

7

#### **Double réseau, 1961**

Oil on canvas

73 × 60 cm

8

#### **Untitled (incrustations en blanc), 1961**

Oil on canvas

73.2 × 60.2 cm

9

#### **Untitled (La Vérité), 1961**

Oil on canvas

60 × 120 cm

10

#### **Untitled, 1961**

Oil on canvas

80.9 × 65.1 cm

### Camille Bryen

\* 1907 in Nantes, † 1977 in Paris

11

#### **Untitled, 1971**

Colour etching on Arches

66 × 50.5 cm

### Constantin Xenakis

\* 1931 in Cairo

12

#### **Untitled No 21, n.d.**

Pen and ink on paper

73 × 50.9 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

13

**Untitled No 20, n.d.**

Pen and ink on paper

70 × 50 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

**Jirí Kolář**

\* 1914 in Protivin / Bohemia, † 2002 in Prague

14

**Postkarten an einen Freund aus  
Liechtenstein, 1988/89**

4 replications of collages

34 × 27 cm

Donation Margarethe Altmann, Vaduz

**Man Ray**

\* 1890 in Philadelphia, † 1976 in Paris

15

**Portrait imaginaire d'Arcimboldo, 1953**

Oil on canvas, original frame

69.5 × 50 × 2.5 cm

Purchased with funds from

Stiftung Freunde des Kunstmuseum

Liechtenstein

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

16–20

Robert Altmann

**Brunidor Portfolio III, 1961/62**

Portfolio with works of different artists,

5 lithographs

Print: René Guillard, Paris and

Emil Matthieu, Zurich

16

**Guy Harloff**

\* 1933 in Paris, † 1991 in Galliate, Italy

**Untitled, 1961/62**

Colour lithograph on vellum

32.7 × 41.5 cm

17

**Isidore Isou**

\* 1925 in Botosani, Romania, † 2007 in Paris

**Untitled, 1961, ed. 1962**

Colour lithograph on paper

41.7 × 33 cm

18

**Gherasim Luca**

\* 1913 in Bucharest, † 1994 in Paris

**Untitled, 1961/62**

Lithograph on vellum,

from the Brunidor Portfolio III

42 × 33 cm

19

**Joaquin Ferrer**

\* 1929 in Manzanillo, Cuba

**Untitled, 1961/62**

Colour lithograph on vellum

41.9 × 32.8 cm

20

**Wifredo Lam**

\* 1902 in Sagua la Grande, Cuba,

† 1982 in Paris

**Untitled, 1961/62**

4 colour lithograph on vellum

41.9 × 33.2 cm

21–25

Robert Altmann

**Brunidor Portfolio IV, 1963/64**

Portfolio with works of different artists

Print: Hayter et chez Lacourière, Paris

21

**Enrique Zañartu**

\* 1921 in Paris, † 2000 in Paris

**Untitled, 1963/64**

Etching and aquatint on vellum

52.3 × 37.6 cm

22

**Augustin Fernandez**

\* 1928 in Havanna, † 2006 in New York

**Untitled, 1963/64**

Etching on Rives vellum

53 × 37.6 cm

23

**Gisèle Celan-Lestrange**

\* 1927 in Paris, † 1992 in Paris

**Untitled, 1963**

Etching and aquatint on Arches vellum

53.3 × 3.8 cm

24

**Jacques Hérold**

\* 1910 in Piatra, Romania, † 1987

**Untitled, 1963/64**

Colour etching with embossing on

Arches vellum

53.4 × 37.9 cm

25

Robert Altmann

**Brunidor Portfolio V, Force de la Mer, 1965**

Portfolio with lithographs by Jean Hélion

each 38 × 53 cm

Print: Jacques Desjobert, Paris

**Jean Hélion**

\* 1904 in Couterne/Orne, † 1987 in Paris

26

**Le Journal, 1943**

Ink and watercolour on pen on paper

28 × 18.9 cm

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz

27

Robert Altmann

**Brunidor Portfolio VII, Three Artists / Six Images, 1971–1973**

Portfolio with works of different artists

2 silkscreens by Henri Chopin and John Furnival,

2 lithographs by Tom Philipps in a cassette with

blue linen cover and gold embossing

each 33 × 26 cm

28–33

Robert Altmann

**Brunidor Portfolio VI, 1967**

Portfolio with 6 etchings by

Gisèle Celan-Lestrange and a

poem by Paul Celan

**Gisèle Celan-Lestrange**

\* 1927 in Paris, † 1992 in Paris

**Blatt I–VI, 1967**

Etching and aquatint on Rives vellum

each 42 × 33 cm



## **Guided tours**

### **Thursday, 1 March 2018, 6 pm**

Robert Altmann (1915–2017)

Publisher and patron

with Friedemann Malsch

### **Thursday, 26 April 2018, 6 pm**

Robert Altmann (1915–2017)

Publisher and patron

with Fabian Flückiger

## **Curated by**

Friedemann Malsch

## **Translation**

Ishbel Flett

## **Mounting**

Marcel Meier (head), Rita Frommelt,

Stefan Sude



**Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein  
with Hilti Art Foundation  
Städtle 32, P.O. Box 370  
FL – 9490 Vaduz  
Tel +423 235 03 00  
Fax +423 235 03 29  
[mail@kunstmuseum.li](mailto:mail@kunstmuseum.li)  
[kunstmuseum.li](http://kunstmuseum.li)  
[hiltiartfoundation.li](http://hiltiartfoundation.li)**