

Rudolf Staechelin Collection Im Obersteg Collection

Media release, Basel, June 10, 2014

Two Basel Art Collections on Tour

**The Rudolf Staechelin Collection and the Im Obersteg Collection in Madrid,
March 18–September 13, 2015**

**The Rudolf Staechelin Collection and the Im Obersteg Collection in
Washington, D.C., October 10, 2015–January 10, 2016**

The Rudolf Staechelin Collection and the Im Obersteg Collection are two distinguished private collections with deep roots in Basel and a long history of affiliation with the Kunstmuseum Basel. The temporary closure of the museum in 2015 creates the unprecedented opportunity to send the two collections on a joint international tour. Bringing the works of both collections together allows for an exhibition that will guarantee unique perspectives: the Rudolf Staechelin Collection includes works by leading nineteenth-century precursors of modernism, and the Im Obersteg Collection holds eminent masterworks of twentieth-century art. The traveling exhibition will be on display at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (March 18–September 13, 2015, concurrently with the presentation of works from the Kunstmuseum Basel) and the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. (October 10, 2015–January 10, 2016). The organizers are expecting a very large visitor interest.

The Rudolf Staechelin Family Trust and the Im Obersteg Foundation are pleased that their exhibition in Madrid has been coordinated with the Kunstmuseum's projects, resulting in an extraordinarily rich presentation of Basel's artistic treasures.

The two Basel collections have a shared history and have been described as "sister collections." They were founded by the two prominent collectors Rudolf Staechelin (1881–1946) and Karl Im Obersteg (1883–1969). Encouraged by the intellectual atmosphere of their native Basel, the two entrepreneurs and friends developed a passionate interest in art; they also served as members of the Kunstmuseum's board of trustees. Starting in 1914, Staechelin assembled an imposing collection of nineteenth-century French modern art; Im Obersteg began acquiring eminent modernist masters in 1916.

Taken together, the two collections form a panorama primarily of figurative modern painting from the late nineteenth century until around 1940. The quality of the collections is evident in holdings such as Vincent van Gogh's epoch-making masterwork *Jardin de Daubigny* (1890) and a set of Picassos including *Buveuse d'Absinthe* (1910) and *Arlequin au loup* (1918). Also

among the cornerstones of the collections are the three portraits of Jews Marc Chagall created in 1914, an ensemble that has left Switzerland only once, in 2003, for an exhibition in Vienna, and a large group of works by Alexej von Jawlensky. Next to representatives of international modernism, Swiss artists of the early twentieth century such as Ferdinand Hodler and Cuno Amiet define character of the collections.

Manuel J. Borja-Villel, director of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, and Rosario Peiro exhibition curator will curate the exhibition in Madrid. The collections will be shown for the first time as well in Washington DC at The Phillips Collection, a museum based on the taste and collecting instincts of another enthusiast of modern art, Duncan Phillips. We are especially pleased, that Dorothy Kosinski, director of the Phillips Collection, who is closely associated with Basel and is still known to the Basel audience as the curator of the great Léger exhibition in 1994 at the Kunstmuseum Basel, will shepherd this project in Washington. The presentation will be accompanied by a catalogue with contributions by Dorothy Kosinski, Henriette Mentha, and others; the overall project management is in the hands of Henriette Mentha, project manager and curator at the Im Obersteg Collection.

For more information, please contact Ms. Henriette Mentha at henriette.mentha@bs.ch, +41 61 206 62 44.

The Rudolf Staechelin Family Trust and the Im Obersteg Collection would like to thank the Kunstmuseum Basel for the productive cooperation and for disseminating this media release.