

Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918). Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings

JUERG ALBRECHT and PAUL MÜLLER

At the end of November 2008, after nine years of intensive research, the long-awaited first volume of the Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings of Ferdinand Hodler was presented. The publication of this two-part edition on the landscapes marks a milestone in Hodler research, as well as in the academic and scientific work of SIK-ISEA.

Photo on page 17
Gertrud Müller
Ferdinand Hodler with his accordion in the Schanzmühle in Solothurn.
Around 1915 (?)

As the following statistics indicate, the success of this ambitious project was achieved by the contribution of numerous people, both within and outside SIK-ISEA, along with the team of authors. The statistics also show how many thousands of references to provenances, literature and exhibitions the authors collated. At last, a clearly laid out reference work is available, commenting on each of the landscape paintings, and addressing questions of genuineness, dating, subject and reception, etc. The online version released in parallel to the book offers an ongoing update of the database and further extends the possibilities for research.





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Fig. 1, page 18 [Cat. 266]
Kastanienallee bei Biberist.
 [Chestnut Avenue Near Biberist]. 1898
 Oil on Canvas. 38 x 55 cm
 Private Owner

Fig. 2, page 18
Index Card of Carl A. Loosli
 Entry in the General Catalogue No. 2352

Fig. 3, page 20 [Cat. 319]
Der Grammont [The Grammont]. 1905
 Oil on Canvas. 64.5 x 105.5 cm
 Private Owner

F. HODLER, ARCHIV		Nr. 2352
Titel des Werkes: <i>Kastanienallee (Avenue aus Biberist)</i>		
Hoch <i>38</i> cm.	Breit <i>55</i> cm.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Öl — <input type="checkbox"/> Tempera — <input type="checkbox"/> Pastell — <input type="checkbox"/> Aquarell — <input type="checkbox"/> Zeichnung — <input type="checkbox"/> Pausen — <input type="checkbox"/> Steinzeichnung — <input type="checkbox"/> Radierung — <input type="checkbox"/> Holzschnitt		
Entstehungs-Datum: <i>1898</i>		
Gegenwärtiger Besitzer: <i>Oscar Müller-Sieber, Biberist</i>		
Versicherungswert:		
Verkaufswert:		
Wiedergabenachweise:		
Signatur: <i>in. (schwarz) A. von der Kunst Oscar Müller / F. Hodler, 1898</i>		
Datum: <i>20. 11. 24</i>		Photographiert von:

2

As a principal aim of a catalogue raisonné is to index the entire œuvre of an artist as completely as possible, the discovery of unknown or long-sought-for paintings is always the occasion for special celebration. In the course of the last nine years, the Hodler archive of SIK-ISEA has become richer by more than several hundred paintings (including approx. 150 landscapes). We owe the new additions, above all, to private collectors, the art trade and documents from the archive of Hodler's biographer, Carl Albert Loosli, which has been revealing its treasures since it opened in January 2004. One interesting finding was the *Kastanienallee bei Biberist* [Chestnut Avenue Near Biberist] (Fig. 1) which was identified thanks to a sketch on the back of one of Loosli's index cards (Fig. 2). The previously unknown painting belongs to the important group of works which revolve around the subject of symmetry. In addition, dedicated to Oscar Miller, the work is an important document evidencing the friendship between painter and patron.

Intertwined with the numerous images are anecdotes which shed interesting light on Hodler's biography, artistic development and history of reception. In this regard, the collector Willy Russ-Young conveys a story he heard from Hodler about a barter transaction with the painter Max Buri. Hodler had been so taken by Buri's accordion (Photo page 17) that he traded one of his own Grammont landscapes (Fig. 3, page 20) for it. As the prices of Hodler's works at that time were ten (!) times higher than Buri's, Buri did not wait long before he sold the painting to a collector from Neuchâtel.

Another essential aspect of the work of a catalogue raisonné is the rectification of the titles of works; with landscape paintings, naturally the correct localization constitutes the basis for assigning a title. As a motif, Hodler often chose mountain massifs with a distinctive pyramid form that he then emphasised through symmetry to create a monumental effect. The mountain landscapes depicted in this manner are so similar that it is easy to mistake one for the other, as, for example, *Pointe d'Andey* (Fig. 4, page 22), a mountain massif in Upper Savoy, with *Schynige Platte* in the Bernese Oberland (Fig. 5, page 22). In addition to actual on-site viewing, the *Atlas of Switzerland* software produced by the Institute of Cartography at the ETH in Zurich was of great assistance in the localization of the subject and position of the painter (Fig. 6, page 22).

Preserved in the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva, the sketchbooks of Hodler were also of inestimable value for the research; in addition to a great amount of information concerning his life and work, they provided fascinating insights into the development of an artist's way of thinking in images. For example, the artist drew a rectangle over a sketch made on-site to establish the selected portion of the view (Fig. 7, page 22) for a subsequent painting.

Hodler's numerous repetitions of motif in the form of replicas, versions and variations created special problems for us. In addition to questions of authenticity, the establishment of chronology was one of our main concerns, a task which the Department of Art Technology at SIK-ISEA repeatedly helped us to handle. A poignant example is the replica pair *Der Petit Salève* (Figs. 8 and 9, page 23) in which the blueprint tracing (Fig. 10, page 23) has served as a link.

Since 2009, the Hodler team has been working intensely on the scholarly and scientific treatment of the portraits and self-portraits: to date approximately 560 works have been inventoried. The second volume of the catalogue raisonné will be dedicated to these works. Subsequently, approximately 750 figure images will be scholarly and scientifically addressed and the results released as Volume 3. Numerous works from both of these image genres have only been initially documented through black-and-white photography. Therefore, the Hodler team would be grateful to owners of Hodler paintings if they would register their works. Contact: sik@sik-isea.ch. The final part of the catalogue edition will be Volume 4 entailing an extensive biography, numerous documents, an entire bibliography and various indices.







4

Fig. 4 [Cat. 391]

La Pointe d'Andey von Bonneville aus

[La Pointe d'Andey Viewed from Bonneville]. 1909

Oil on Canvas. 67 x 90 cm

Musée d'Orsay, Paris



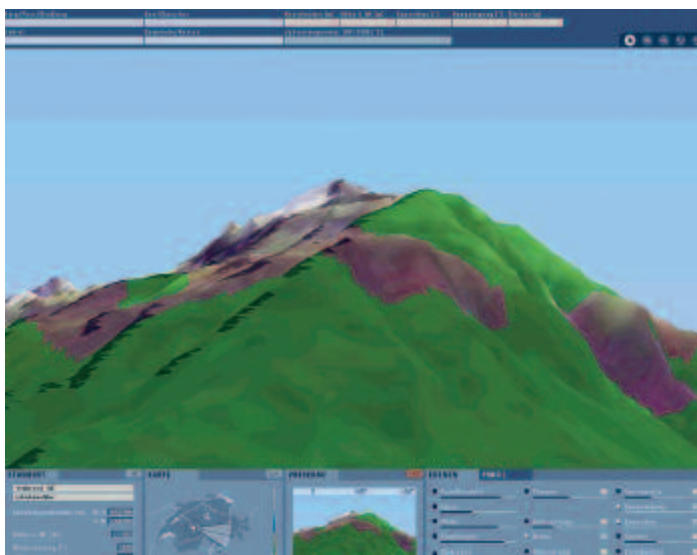
5

Fig. 5 [Cat. 392]

Die Schynige Platte [The Schynige Platte]. 1909

Oil on Canvas. 67 x 98 cm

Saner Foundation, Studen



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Fig. 6

Atlas of Switzerland Software

Screenshot

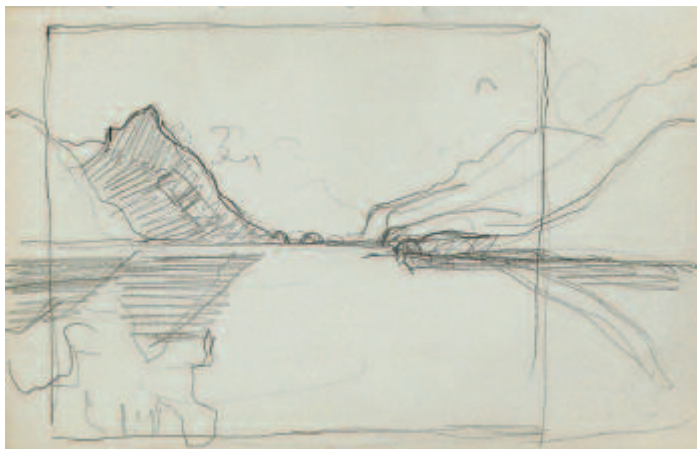
Fig. 7

Sketch on the Lake Thun Landscapes

1904

Pencil on Paper, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva,

Cabinet des dessins, Carnet, Inv. 1958-176/109.04



7

Fig. 8 [Cat. 234]

Der Petit Salève. [The Petit Salève]. 1892

Oil on Canvas. 29.5 x 40.5 cm

Museum Oskar Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Winterthur

Fig. 9 [Cat. 235]

Der Petit Salève. [The Petit Salève]. circa 1892

Oil on Canvas. 30 x 40.5 cm

Private Owner

Fig. 10

Blueprint Tracing of Cat. 234 (Der Petit Salève). circa 1892

Pencil and Pen on Paper. 33.5 x 40.5 cm

Musée Jenisch, Vevey,

Cabinet cantonal des estampes,

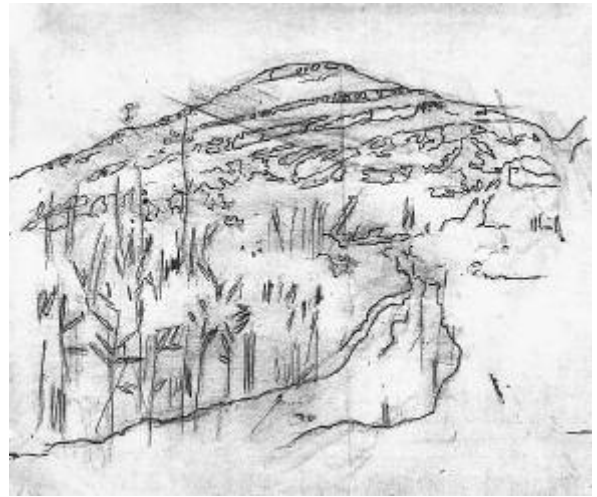
Loan from Private Owner



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*Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings. The Landscapes***Contributors**

Project Directors/Main Authors	OSKAR BÄTSCHMANN, PAUL MÜLLER
Authors	REGULA BOLLETER, MONIKA BRUNNER, MATTHIAS FISCHER, MATTHIAS OBERLI
Institute Managing Director	HANS-JÖRG HEUSSER
Project Management	JUERG ALBRECHT, KARL JOST
Benefactors and Patrons	ARTEPHILA FOUNDATION; DR. CHRISTOPH BLOCHER, Herrliberg; ERNST GÖHNER FOUNDATION, Zug; HANS WILSDORF FOUNDATION, Carouge; HANS IMHOLZ FOUNDATION, Zollikon; WALTER B. KIELHOLZ, Zurich; MAX KOHLER †, Zurich; NESTLÉ SA, Vevey; SANDOZ FAMILY OFFICE SA, Pully; DR. THOMAS SCHMIDHEINY, JONA; SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, Bern; SILVA CASA FOUNDATION, Bern; PETER K. STEINER, Zurich; ULRICH STEINER-MEIER, Zumikon
Finances and Administration	MARCO FAZZONE, SYBILLE GERSPACHER, VERENA HELFER
Legal Consultant	HANS-RUDOLF STAIGER
Database Programming	MICHAEL EGLI, GUIDO LOMBARDINI
Art Technology	KAROLINE BELTINGER, GABRIELE ENGLISCH, ESTER FERREIRA, DANIELE GROS, CHRISTOPH HERM, NADIM SCHERRER, ANNA STOLL, MARIANNE TAUBER
Romandie Satellite Office	PAUL-ANDRÉ JACCARD, BRIGITTE GENDROZ
Reception	BERTHE BOCHA, MONIKA KREBSER
Expertise	BARBARA NÄGELI
Inventorisation	SIMONETTA NOSEDA, CLAIRE-LISE SCHWOK
Library	TAPAN BHATTACHARYA, REGULA FISCHER, DENISE VOSSELER
Press Documentation	ROLAND FRISCHKNECHT, CAROLE SCHNELLER
Photography	LUTZ HARTMANN, JEAN-PIERRE KUHN, VERENA BLATTMANN
Photographic Archive	REGULA BLASS, MONIKA BÜTTNER, ELISABETH SENN
Maps	SWISSTOPO and KOHLI KARTOGRAFIE, Bern
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Image Handling SIK-ISEA	ANDREA REISNER, MICHEL FERNANDEZ
Proofreading	HANS-PETER WITTWER
Editing	JUERG ALBRECHT, URS HOBI, REGULA KRÄHENBÜHL, SYLVIA MUTTI, VIOLA RADLACH, HANS-PETER WITTWER
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Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings. The Landscapes

General Facts and Figures

1	Times that Hodler painted the Zinalrothorn
2	Parts to the first volume
6	Researchers who worked and wrote for years
6	Weeks of technical production
8	Months of design and layout
9	Years of research (with an average of 3 full-time equivalent posts)
14	Benefactors and patrons (institutions, foundations and private persons)
18	Months of proofreading and editing
33	Paintings representing the motif 'Lake Thun with Stockhorn'
52	Questionable attributions
59	Archives that were consulted nationally and internationally
70	Erroneous attributions and forgeries that were discovered
104	Times that Hodler painted Lake Geneva
627	Paintings completed entirely by Hodler's own hand
632	Total amount of pages
640	CHF price of the first volume
700	Copies printed for sale
720	CHF price of the first volume with online access
749	Work commentaries including scientific and scholarly annotations
978	Illustrations
1271	Literature (publications) and exhibitions cited in abridged form
1951	Years A. D. until the beginning of the inventurisation
1998	Years A. D. until the beginning of the research
2008	Years A. D. until publication
3120	Provenances (online)
3680	Documented exhibitions (online)
3712	Historical titles
6703	Literary references (online)
2,521,000	Characters, amount of text (equals 1441 manuscript pages)
3,700,000	CHF research and publication costs
10,912,000	CHF paid in June 2007 by a collector at an auction for Hodler's 'Lake Geneva viewed from Saint-Prex' [Cat. 280]

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*Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings. The Landscapes***Production Facts and Figures**

Volume Parts	2 (632 pages in all), in slipcase, sealed in foil
Format	235 x 320 mm closed, 470 x 320 mm open
Cover Height	325 mm
Slipcase Size	250 x 338 x 74 mm
Weight	4500 g (2 parts in slipcase)
Contents Quantity	632 pages
Book Jacket Quantity	2 x 4 pages
Illustrations	978 (749 reproductions of works, 229 other illustrations)
Contents Material	LuxoArt Samtoffset, 130 g/m ² , white, coated, woodfree paper
Attachment Material	Normaset Puro, 170 g/m ² , offset, white
Cover Material	Grey cardboard, 2.5 mm thick
Book Jacket Material	Munken Lynx, 130 g/m ² , ecru, coated, woodfree paper, American treatment
Slipcase Material	Ecoboard, 1400 g/m ² , 2 mm thick, white on both sides
Binding Method	Sewn
Book Cover Material	Half-linen dark
Spine Embossing	Colorit 965
Head and Tailbands	Bordeaux 382
2 Ribbon Page Markers	Anthracite 958, Bordeaux 215
Print Substance/Content	4-colour Euroscale, two-sided
Print Substance/Book Jacket	5-colour Euroscale and Pantone 174 U, single-sided, matt dispersion lacquered

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Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings. The Landscapes

Press

- ‘ALLE HODLER IN EINEM KATALOG’, *Berner Zeitung*, 25.11.2008
- ‘MEILENSTEIN DER HODLER-FORSCHUNG’, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 28.11.2008
- ‘HODLER COMME VOUS NE L’AVEZ JAMAIS VU!’, *Le Matin Dimanche*, 30.11.2008
- ‘EIN MONUMENTALES REFERENZWERK’, *Der Landbote*, 9.12.2008
- ‘HODLERS LANDSCHAFTSWERK UNTER DACH UND FACH’, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18.2.2009

In 2008, Ferdinand Hodler was a name often to be read in the press. At the end of 2007 already, the Hodler exhibition in the Musée d’Orsay, in which SIK-ISEA was intensely involved, had been recognized with great acclaim in France. The exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts Bern (9 April–10 August 2008) proved to be a huge public success with a correspondingly positive echo in the press and among experts as well. Subsequently, the exhibition was shown in Budapest (9 September–14 December 2008). Here the SIK-ISEA Hodler team was also on hand to advise the exhibition makers and contribute texts to the catalogue. Also on this occasion, a number of paintings were restored by the Department of Art Technology. Shortly after the opening of the Bern exhibition, SIK-ISEA organized an international symposium on Ferdinand Hodler at which all of the authors of the catalogue raisonné (Oskar Bächtli, Regula Bolleter, Monika Brunner, Matthias Fischer, Paul Müller, Matthias Oberli) gave lectures.

The release of the first volume (in two parts) of the catalogue raisonné received a very positive response from the press, as was proven by the impressive number of articles – 28! – in the national media. This does not even include the expected reviews in professional journals.