

**K. WITZ, THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES (work under restoration in 2012)**

→ LEVEL 2 / ROOM 1



Here is the oldest representation in Western painting of a topographically accurate landscape occupying a major place in a biblical subject. An inscription on the base of the frame tells us that it was painted in 1444 by Konrad Witz in Basle. This episode from the life of Saint Peter graced the outer left wing of an altarpiece originally placed in Geneva Cathedral, luckily rescued from the protestant iconoclasm of 1535.

Christ in a red cloak walks on the waters of Geneva Bay; Peter and the fishermen haul up their net miraculously filled with Arctic char; the Môle and the Mont-Blanc massif dominate the biblical scene. These details make *The Miraculous Draught of fishes* a fascinating and historical document. The original choice of subject and pictorial work, the reflections, the effects of the transparency of the water and the bubbles make this work, in a delicate style between the preciousness of the Flemish studios and the aesthetic explorations of the Italian artists, one of the Musée d'art et d'histoire's treasures.

Continue through Fine Arts as far as the small corner room number 10 dedicated to Corot. The picture which concerns us is on your left.

**J.-B. CAMILLE COROT, LE QUAI DES PÂQUIS IN GENEVA**

→ LEVEL 2 / ROOM 10



Here Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot has painted a view familiar to those who walk in Geneva, on the west shore of Lake Geneva (Lac Léman). In the foreground stretches the Quai des Pâquis with Mont Salève rising behind it. Corot's mother was Swiss and he often came to Geneva, where he kept up with many friends. The Musée d'art et d'histoire owns an exceptional collection of works by Corot, representative of the whole body of his work.

A white veil glides over the water, some human figures can be seen, barely outlined; the shady streaks of a row of trees break up the sunlight on the promenade and demonstrate the care lavished by the painter on the effects of light. As was his wont, Corot uses dark tones which harmonise gently and create a serene atmosphere. But he does add a touch of vibrant colour with the bright blue shutters in the centre, to catch our eye.

Two rooms further on, you will enter the landscapes of the Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler. Stop in front of the painting placed between the two doors.

AUGUST 2012 - DURATION: 1 HOUR

**THEMATIC ITINERARY TEN MAJOR WORKS OF THE MAH**



**F. HODLER, GENEVA BAY AND MONT-BLANC AT DAWN**

→ LEVEL 2 / ROOM 12



Ferdinand Hodler painted this view of the bay a few weeks before his death, in 1918. Towards the end of his life, the sick artist tirelessly painted this view from the window of his Geneva apartment on the Quai du Mont-Blanc. Ever since his apprenticeship, Hodler had kept a special affection for landscape painting, dedicating himself to nature worship as a profound-

**F. VALLOTTON, THE TURKISH BATH**

→ LEVEL 2 / ROOM 13



The museum owns numerous paintings and drawings by Félix Vallotton and nearly all his engraved and lithographed work. This collection, one of the strong points of the museum's collections, provides a thorough overview of the painter's artistic development.

This painting is representative of the new direction taken by the painter after his

dly tonic source of life, beauty and inspiration. The museum conserves a large collection of works by Hodler, mainly landscapes and self-portraits, which cover the artist's far-ranging stylistic development.

The canvas is divided into horizontal strips vertically punctuated by swans at the bottom of the picture. Any reference to the urbanisation of the lake is avoided. Here there are only the unchanging natural elements of water, mountains and sky emerging in broad slices of bright colour. This canvas is typical of the production of Hodler's last years, offering a simplified, monumental vision of nature.

In the next room, look at the first picture on the left wall.

nabi period. Since 1907, the year *The Turkish Bath* was painted, the artist gave himself up entirely to the study of the figure. Here he deals with the female nude – a recurrent theme in art history. The perfection of the contours, pre-eminence of line, density of the volumes, the bluish tints and the pink and cream-coloured flesh is one of Vallotton's pictorial triumphs. Nevertheless, a number of clues, such of the dog in a bathroom, generate a feeling of strangeness. The painting contains no erotic undertones, unlike many other female nudes, taking more of a critical approach to the history of painting.

Your 10-major work tour ends here, but other thematic itineraries will be offered at the museum from the month of June 2012.



**THEMATIC ITINERARY TEN MAJOR WORKS OF THE MAH**



MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, GENEVA

The collections of the Musée d'art et d'histoire cover several millennia and cultures as diverse as Ancient Egypt and modern Europe. To help you explore this great wealth in a short time, this ten-work tour takes you through archaeology, applied arts and fine arts to discover rare and emblematic pieces. You are now at the reception desk of the Musée d'art et d'histoire. To start your itinerary, take the stairs to your left and go down to the lower level dedicated to the ancient worlds. Stop in the first room – Egyptian antiquities – the first work of the itinerary is on your left.

## RAMSES II

→ LEVEL -1 /  
EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES ROOM



Edouard Naville, a Genevan Egyptologist, discovered this statue during a dig he led at Bubastis, in the North of Egypt, between 1887 and 1889. This sculpture is the jewel of the Musée d'art et d'histoire's Egyptian collection, the most important one in Switzerland.

🌀 This colossal statue represents a pharaoh on his throne, recognisable from his attributes – on his head, the striped head-dress called the nemes, on his forehead, the remains of the uræus, the protective rearing cobra, and on his chin, the false beard. The king's name, Ramses II, can be read in cartouches on the sides and back of the throne as well as on the belt buckle above the pleated loincloth. Carved from a single block of granodiorite, weighing more than three tons, the three-thousand-year-old statue is very well conserved; only the uræus and the nose have suffered losses.

The next work is in the Roman antiquities room. To reach it, you must cross through the Greek antiquities room, after the Egyptian collections.

## PLOTINA

→ LEVEL -1 /  
ROMAN ANTIQUITIES ROOM



This portrait of Plotina, a true masterpiece of second century sculpture, is the prize of the Musée d'art et d'histoire's collection of Roman portraits, which is the most important collection in Switzerland. This work is also outstanding because of what we know about the precise circumstances of its finding, unusual for antiquities, at Ostia, the port of Rome.

🌀 This portrait in marble is of Plotina, wife of the Roman emperor Trajan who reigned from 98 to 117 A.D. It shows exceptional workmanship and is in a remarkable state of conservation; only the nose and the pinnae of the ears are missing.

Plotina was a woman who left a strong mark on her time. Very close to her husband, she had a lot of influence on his politics, notably in favour of the people. Some literary sources claim that she was also behind the accession of Hadrian as successor to Trajan. She was deified in 121 A.D.

The third work is on the wall opposite.

## PLATE WITH CHARIOT AND HUNTERS

→ LEVEL -1 /  
ROMAN ANTIQUITIES ROOM



This plate, a masterpiece of ancient silverwork, dated between the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century A.D., is a gift from Mme Monique Nordman, and illustrates the importance of donors for the institution.

🌀 This large silver dish is exceptional in its size and in the quality of the work-

## COPTIC HANGING

→ LEVEL 0 / ORIENTAL CHRISTIAN ART ROOM



This immense hanging of linen and wool, woven in the sixth or seventh century A.D, comes from Egypt. Its size and state of conservation make it the centrepiece of the Musée d'art et d'histoire's Coptic collection. Its fragility justifies the special precautions for its presentation, where the hanging is only lit up when you approach it, as textiles require controlled lighting conditions.

THEMATIC ITINERARY  
TEN MAJOR WORKS OF THE MAH



manship. The scenes evoke the favourite activities of the Roman aristocracy. In the centre, an auriga, or charioteer, has won a victory in the races at a circus. The palm and the crowns signal his success. The triangular objects on either side of the team are the circuit counters. Around the edge, six hunting scenes show the different techniques used to capture panthers, bears, deer, lions, tigers and boar alive. These animals were caught for parades, or more often for the circus games.

Next go to the Early Christian and Byzantine collections. Take the lift to the museum courtyard. At level 0, leave the Armour room by the right. From the Salle d'honneur of the Château de Zizers, go through the icons room to your right and then through the Janet Zakos room. At the end on the right, enter the room where you will find the next work at the far end.

🌀 Made up of several pieces sewn together, this hanging doubtless once decorated the apse of a church and was re-used as a shroud, which is what preserved it through the centuries. The lower part is adorned with rosettes and gem-studded Greek crosses; the upper part, with five figures separated by columns. The Virgin, in a praying position, wears a robe with pronounced folds and is surrounded by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, winged and haloed. On the left, two saints, to judge from their haloes, are too deteriorated to be identified but their ecclesiastical robes mark them as fathers of the church.

Now return to the Armour room. Stop in front of the first showcase on your right, devoted to the Escalade.

## SAVOYARD HELMET

→ LEVEL 0 /  
ARMOUR ROOM



Sources relating the Duke of Savoie's nocturnal attempt to storm Geneva in 1602, the famous Escalade, report that the Savoyard troops were equipped with "head helmet". In fact, even though tradition holds that it was a war trophy, this type of closed helmet, fashionable toward the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, was worn both by Genevans and by the Savoyards.

🌀 With their various expressions, almond-shaped or rounded eyes, mouths smiling or reduced to a rectangle, perforated moustaches or prominent noses, these helmets are virtual masks! Indeed the mezail, the visor protecting the face, suggests a human face to a greater or lesser degree. This type of helmet was called "armet Savoyard" in the nineteenth century, in reference to our collection which comprises some thirty of them.

The next works belong to the Fine Arts collection, displayed on the top floor. You can use the lift. You will then need to find the level 2 landing, by turning to your left to reach the entrance of the collections. You can also return to the Museum entrance hall and take the stairs.

## A. CANOVA, VENUS ET ADONIS

→ LEVEL 2 /  
FINE ARTS COLLECTION LANDING



This white marble group is a neoclassical masterpiece by Antonio Canova which won him his reputation as a modern Praxiteles, in reference to the famous sculptor of Antiquity. Sculpted for the Marquis de Salsa, in Naples, this group was bought by the Genevan Guillaume Favre in 1820. For the occasion, Canova re-worked Venus's drapery, before the statue was brought to adorn the library of the Villa La Grange, located in the eponymous park, today a public park.

🌀 A young male nude of diaphanous beauty wraps his left arm around his graceful companion who leans against his shoulder. A faint smile plays on his face, but as for her, doesn't she look a little worried? It is the goddess of Love, Venus, with her arms holding back her lover Adonis, who is ready for the hunt, as suggested by the presence of the dog seated behind the couple. The hunt was to lead to his death...

Now go into the Fine Arts through the room on your right. The next work, one of the Museum's best known works is in the centre of the room.

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