

## Press Release



Musée  
d'Orsay

Musée de l'  
Orangerie

### **Heinrich Kühn**

**6 October 2010 – 24 January 2011**  
**Musée National de l'Orangerie**



Heinrich Kühn, *Still life: Glasses and Carafe*, around 1905  
Photomechanical print, 73 x 52 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay  
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**This exhibition is organised by the Albertina of Vienna in collaboration with the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.**

Heinrich Kühn's great ambition was to create photographs whose artistic merit rivalled painting.

An important figure in international Pictorialism around 1900, and closely linked with Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen, the two great representatives of that movement, Kühn succeeded in developing a modernist body of work within the rather limited iconographic context of his family.

He had already acquired a considerable expertise in microscopic photography while still a medical student in Innsbruck. He had joined the "Camera Club" of Vienna, and it was there, around 1895, that he met Hugo Henneberg and Hans Watzek, both passionate supporters of the movement advocating photography as an independent art form. This international movement put them in contact with two avant-garde associations, the "Linked Ring" in London and the "Photo Club de Paris". Together they threw themselves into experimenting with new techniques, especially with gum bichromate applied with a paintbrush, giving the print a painterly appearance – a technique highlighted by Robert Demachy. In Vienna, the members of the "Trifolium" (Watzek, Kühn and Henneberg) took part in the Secession where they exhibited extremely large format photographs intended to challenge painting.

From 1904, the friendship between Heinrich Kühn and Alfred Stieglitz grew ever stronger. Kühn's art would move radically away from "Romantic" Impressionism, with its classical still lifes, dramatic landscapes, and above all group portraits, to a less detailed and almost abstract style where only the study of light and the rendering of tonal values mattered, a style that reflected the development of the Vienna Secession. Kühn thus produced photographs that defied conventions, and which at times consisted merely of reflections in a glass of water or of a transparent shadow against a wall.

From 1907, Kühn was the undisputed master of the autochrome, a technique with rich and delicate colours perfected by the Lumière brothers. Its bold and highly simplified compositions put his open-air scenes, in particular, ahead of their time.

This exhibition is the first great retrospective devoted to this artist.

**Curators:**

**Monika Faber**, chief curator of the photographic department, the Albertina, Vienna

**Françoise Heilbrun**, chief curator, Musée d'Orsay

**Media partners: Arte - Le Journal du Dimanche - La Tribune –  Pixee**

**Around the exhibition**

Exhibition catalogue, Éditions Hatje Cantz, 280 pages, approx. 280 illustrations, €49.00

**Guided tours**

(Duration 90 mins, except public holidays)

From 16 October

Saturdays and Sundays at 11am and 4.15pm

Wednesdays at 4.15pm

**Children's Workshop** (8-12 yrs)

- 3, 10 and 24 November, 8 December, 5 and 26 January / **The photograph as a painting**

Compose and experiment in order to achieve harmonious and perfectly balanced images. Our young artists create photographs as artistic as paintings.

**Lectures**

- Wednesday 6 October at 6.30pm / **Heinrich Kühn and the Secessionist Movement in Vienna** by Monika Faber, chief curator of the Albertina in Vienna and curator of the Heinrich Kühn exhibition

- Friday 26 November at 6.30pm / **Alfred Stieglitz** by Françoise Heilbrun, chief curator at the Musée d'Orsay and curator of the Heinrich Kühn exhibition

- Friday 3 December at 6.30pm / **The Reaction in France to Heinrich Kühn's work at the height of Pictorialism** by Michel Poivert, professor of the history of photography at the University of Paris I

- Friday 14 January at 6.30pm / **French and American Autochromes** by Nathalie Boulouch, senior lecturer in the history of contemporary art and photography, University of Rennes II

**Practical information**

Opening times: daily except Tuesdays, 9am to 6pm (galleries cleared at 5.45pm)

Admission: museum entry: full rate: €7.50; concessions: €5.00 (€1.50 supplement for temporary exhibitions)

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