

Ferdinand Hodler (*14.3.1853 Bern, +19.5.1918 Genf)



Title	Baum am Brienzersee vom Bödeli aus
Also known as	Tree on Lake Brienz Seen from Bödeli
Date	c. 1906
Medium	Oil and oil stick on canvas
Dimensions	image: 85 x 105 cm
Signature	inscr. b. r.: F. Hodler
Inscription	verso auf Rahmen o. l. weisse KHZ-Etikette in Schwarz: [...] Ausstellung Ferdinand Hodler, 5.3.-6.6.2004 / Kat.Nr. 17 / [...] [Privatbesitz]; o. M. schwarz-weiße Etikette in Schwarz-Weiss: A. Frey / Exklusive / Bilderrahmen / Basel Zürich / 8006 Zürich, Stampfenbachstr. 56 Tel. 01 363 18 10 / 4054 Basel Altkircherstr. 17 Tel. 061 38 72 96; o. M. weisse KHZ-Etikette in Schwarz: [...] Ausstellung Ferdinand Hodler / 19.8.-23.10.1983 / [...] Besitzer: [Privatbesitz] (...) / [Privatbesitz] [unterstrichen] / Kat.-Nr.: 96; verso auf Rückseitenschutz keine Bezeichnung; verso auf Keilrahmen o. l. in Blau: H / 261 [unterstrichen] [hs]; o. M. weisse Etikette in Schwarz: GALERIE BEYELER BASEL / 9159 [ms] / HODLER Ferdinand [ms] / Brienzersee vom Bödeli aus [ms] / 1906 [ms] / Oel auf Leinwand [ms] / 85 x 105cm, 331/2 x 41/4" [ms]; o. r. weisse vergilbte KHZ-Etikette in Schwarz: F. Hodler / Brienzersee / Alice Mettler, Zollikon [ms], darauf in Blau: um1904 [hs]; o. r. in Schwarz: AAS52 [hs wohl mit Schablone]; verso auf Leinwand: keine Bezeichnungen
Catalogue raisonné	sik-isea, Nr. 334
Edition / number	-
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Inv. No.	ZKG.2023/0027
Credit line	Kunsthau Zürich, Donated by private owner, 2023
Accession year	2023
Object type	painting
Classification	D 1[1] art 20th century CHE
Description	The landscape oeuvre of Ferdinand Hodler (1853 in Bern – 1918 in Geneva) comprises over seven hundred paintings, including numerous depictions of forests, lakes and mountain peaks. There are often several versions of the same subject, such as Lake Thun with the Stockhorn mountain range. The depiction of individual trees is also part of Hodler's repertoire. The painter liked to refer to his tree pictures as 'portraits',[1] i.e. as individualised depictions. We are also dealing with a painting of this type in 'Tree on Lake

Brienzen from the Bödeli'. However, this subject remains unique in the artist's extensive oeuvre. A deciduous tree with a magnificent crown stands in a lush meadow on the shore of Lake Brienzen. The bushes in the foreground almost completely conceal its trunk.

The church of Ringgenberg and the mountain range towards Niederried near Interlaken can be seen on the left on the other shore. Hodler's location was on the so-called Bödeli, the alluvial plain between Lakes Thun and Brienzen, in Bönigen, at the southern end of Lake Brienzen.

Hodler arranged the painting in such a way that the centre of the tree with its spherical crown almost coincides with the centre of the picture. The composition thus appears symmetrical without being monotonous. The picture is dynamised by the sloping mountain range to the right, the unevenly distributed bushes in the foreground and the clouds in the sky. Hodler thus lives up to his principle of parallelism, with which he attempted to bring order and unity to the chaotic and random nature by means of repeated forms and colours and a symmetrical arrangement. He saw it as the artist's task to 'express the eternal element of nature.'^[2] While earlier tree paintings show far more of the surrounding landscape, after 1900 the artist increasingly isolated the trees and heightened them with a wreath of clouds. This gave them a symbolic character.

In addition to oil paints, Hodler also used oil colour pencils to complete the painting. In 1902, the so-called 'Raffaëlli oil colour pencils' came onto the market. The colour paste in these was not preserved in tube form, but in pencil form. This colour material allowed Hodler to add colour accents, but also to subsequently rework his paintings, as its use can usually be seen on the last layers of paint applied.^[3] In the tree painting from Bödeli, Hodler is likely to have used the oil paint sticks – with the exception of the sky – as accents distributed over the entire surface of the painting.

Around 1906, Hodler was one of the most respected and progressive painters in Europe. In 1904 he celebrated his international breakthrough at the Secession exhibition in Vienna and the following year an entire room was dedicated to him at the Berlin Secession. His professional satisfaction seems to be reflected in the cheerful picture with the tree in all its splendour.

Provenance

Ferdinand Hodler (*1853 Bern, +1918 Genf) (Künstler/-in)
Verbleib unbekannt
o.D. – 1911, Johan Friedrich Michel (*1856 Interlaken, +1940 Interlaken), Interlaken
Verbleib unbekannt
1916 – 1945, Hans Mettler-Weber (*1876, +1945) (Sammler/-in), St. Gallen
[Verbleib unbekannt?]
spätestens ab 22.2.1964 – mindestens bis 5.4.1964, Alice Mettler, Zollikon, wohl
Nachlass
2.7.1979, Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd. (Auktion), London, Lot 24
1979 – o.D., Galerie Beyeler (Kunsthändler)
1982 – o.D., Privatbesitz
spätestens ab 19.8.1983 – mindestens bis 23.10.1983, Privatbesitz
[Verbleib unbekannt?]
24.11.1992, Sotheby's (Auktion), Zürich, Lot 352
1992 – o.D., Privatbesitz
[Verbleib unbekannt?]
spätestens ab 5.3.2004 – mindestens bis 6.6.2004, Privatbesitz
o.D. – 10.8.2023, Privatbesitz, wohl Nachlass
ab 10.8.2023, Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft | Kunsthaus Zürich (Museum), Zürich,
Geschenk

Provenance category

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About the provenance

Literature