

David Sulzer (*9.9.1784 Winterthur, +14.9.1864 Landschlacht (Weinfelden))



Title	Bildnis des ersten Präsidenten der Zürcher Künstlergesellschaft, Johann Martin Usteri (1763-1827), im Hintergrund das Denkmal für Salomon Gessner auf dem Platzspitz
Also known as	Portrait of the First President of the 'Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft', Johann Martin Usteri (1763–1827), with the Memorial to Salomon Gessner on the Platzspitz in the Background Bildnis Johann Martin Usteri [historisch]
Date	1847
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions	image: 77 x 65 cm
Signature	inscr. b. l.: D. Sulzer. / pinxit. 1847. / post mortem.; on book cover: Martin Usteri
Inscription	-
Catalogue raisonné	-
Edition / number	-
Edition	-
Inv. No.	66
Credit line	Kunsthau Zurich, Donated by the artist, 1847
Accession year	1847

Object type	painting
Classification	C 1[1] painting 19th century CHE

Description The oil portrait of Johann Martin Usteri (1763–1827), created by David Sulzer, shows a personality from Zurich's cultural life in the late 18th and early 19th centuries who was interested in and active in many different areas. Usteri was a merchant, politician, poet and draughtsman. As co-founder of the 'Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft' (EN: Zurich Artists' Society) and its president from 1803 to 1827, as well as the first president of the Swiss Art Association (1806–1827), he played a key role in promoting art in Switzerland. It was on his initiative that the Zurich 'painters' books' formed the basis of the later art collection.

The portrait, painted from memory on the occasion of the opening of the gallery in the Künstlergüetli, combines personal and cultural elements. In the background is the

monument to Salomon Gessner on Platzspitz, erected between 1789 and 1791, a tribute to the Zurich poet and artist whose legacy Usteri sought to continue. A laurel branch rises up symbolically on the right, honouring Usteri's services to art and his cultural heritage. Usteri's best-known literary work, the song 'Freut euch des Lebens' (1793), remains a lasting testimony to his creativity and optimism to this day.

The portrait thus combines biographical tribute and cultural context and commemorates Usteri's significant contribution to Zurich and Swiss art history.

Provenance

The digitisation of the inventory of the Kunsthaus is an ongoing work in progress. Due to the time-consuming nature of comprehensive scientific research on each individual artwork, we have decided to disclose some works also without provenance information to the public. The progression of provenance research will be continuously updated online. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at [provenanceresearch\(at\)kunsthaus.ch](mailto:provenanceresearch(at)kunsthaus.ch).

Provenance category

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About the provenance

(State of research 01.01.2007)

Literature

- Hans Jakob Oeri (1782-1868). Ein Schweizer Künstler in Paris, Moskau, Zürich, hrsg. von Valentine von Fellenberg, Ausst.-Kat. Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016, No. 10, S. 10 (ill.).
- Kunsthaus Zürich. Gesamtkatalog der Gemälde und Skulpturen, hrsg. von Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft et al., Sammlungskatalog, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007, S. 156.