

# KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH

Johann Heinrich Wüest (\*14.5.1741 Zürich, +7.4.1821 Zürich)



Title	Schaffhauser Rheinfall
Also known as	The Rhine Falls near Schaffhausen
Date	c. 1775
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions	image: 126 x 88 cm
Signature	not inscr.
Inscription	-
Catalogue raisonné	SIK 70953
Edition / number	-
Edition	-
Inv. No.	ZKG.2023/0019
Credit line	Kunsthhaus Zürich, 2023
Accession year	2023

Object type	painting
Classification	B 1[1] painting 16th to 18th century CHE

**Description** Few works in the Kunsthhaus Zürich are as familiar to the public as the 'Rhône Glacier' (inv. no. 386) by Johann Heinrich Wüest (1741 in Zurich - 1821 in Zurich). It can be considered a stroke of luck that our museum has now been able to acquire the original counterpart of this work from a private collection, the 'Schaffhausen Rhine Falls'[1]. The two paintings were last united in our exhibition on Romanticism in Switzerland (13.11.20 - 14.2.21)[2], and the purchase that has now come about is a fortunate example of the fact that the possibility of a significant acquisition can always arise in connection with exhibitions.

Both oil paintings were originally part of an 18-part wall decoration in the garden hall of the Zurich house 'Zum Wollenhof' (now Schipfe 59) and undoubtedly held a special position there, considering that the remaining panneaux in the decoration programme depict non-specific landscapes (some of these panneaux are also in the Kunsthhaus; see inv. nos. 387-390).

For a wall decoration, it is striking that Wüest has given the sky a strikingly large amount of space, not only in the 'Rhone Glacier' but also in the 'Schaffhausen Rhine Falls': in each case, more than the upper half of the picture is taken up by the blue of the sky and the moving play of the clouds, which in the functional context of a wall decoration certainly testifies to the artist's obstinacy.

Both works are also of exceptional importance in that they are Wüest's own interpretations of small-format oil studies that he had produced a few years earlier on commission from the English naturalist, archaeologist and art collector John Strange. The fact that this year's acquisition also includes these two oil studies once again emphasises the significance of the purchase, as the Kunsthau classified the small wooden panel with the Rhone Glacier painted for Lord Strange as 'lost'[3] as recently as 2007.

With this addition of Wüest's major works, the Kunsthau is not only able to convey a piece of Zurich's history of knowledge and culture. Our museum can now also present magnificent interpretations of two natural spectacles side by side, which skilfully capture the magic of each location[4].

## Provenance

The digitisation of the inventory of the Kunsthau 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\(at\)kunsthau.ch](mailto:provenanceresearch(at)kunsthau.ch).

## Provenance category

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## About the provenance

## Literature