

Zurich, 5 November 2021

Press Release

## **LILL TSCHUDI. THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MODERN LINO CUT**

**1 December 2021 – 13 March 2022**

Opening: Tuesday, 30 November 2021, 5 to 8 p.m., with both curators in attendance

**In the 1930s and 1940s, the artist Lill Tschudi (1911–2004) from Glarus in Switzerland achieved widespread and lasting recognition in the English-speaking world for her linocuts in the spirit of Modernist British Printmaking. Yet in her native Switzerland, she has been all but forgotten. The exhibition at the Graphische Sammlung and the accompanying catalogue present her iconic works along with previously unknown material from the artist's estate and numerous private collections. The selection sheds new light on the life and work of this extraordinary artist whose mastery of the colour linocut was unparalleled.**

The interwar years swept Europe along in a rush of breathtaking speed and exuberant joie de vivre, going down in cultural history as a brief yet intensely vibrant intermezzo. In 1929, a young merchant's daughter from Glarus in Switzerland headed for the bright city lights of London to study art. There, at The Grosvenor School of Art, Lill Tschudi met like-minded people and soon made a name for herself as an exceptionally talented artist – a reputation that remains undiminished in the English-speaking world to this very day. The Metropolitan Museum (MET) in New York holds a substantial 118 of her works. In Australia and the UK, her works still command high prices at auctions. In Switzerland, however, her work has been all but forgotten and is represented only very marginally in public collections, with the notable exceptions of the Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich and Kunsthaus Glarus. Except in Glarus, even during her lifetime, solo exhibitions were only held in smaller galleries here.

The Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich has now set its sights on presenting, for the first time, all the linocuts by Lill Tschudi from the 1930s and 1940s that it holds in its collection, along with numerous works on loan from national and international collections. At the same time, an exhibition at the MET will showcase prints by the artist from the extensive collection of Leslie and Johanna Garfield (*Modern Times: British Prints, 1913–1939*, 1 Nov. 2021–9 Jan. 2022). In Zurich, the uniquely dynamic and colourful world of Lill Tschudi's images will also be complemented by some examples of works by her fellow artists in the circle of Modernist British Printmaking.

Technology, tempo and telephone – the modern world of consumerism and leisure rarely found expression in Swiss printmaking at the time. From sport and entertainment to vibrant city life, from contemplative scenes of rural Switzerland to portrayals of the country's wartime Women's Auxiliary Service (FHD) – Lill Tschudi covered an astonishingly broad thematic range, executed with unparalleled technical brilliance. What is more, the extensive preparatory research for the exhibition brought some remarkable discoveries to light. Insights into private collections and the artist's estate allow the spectrum of her well-known linocuts to be broadened to include previously unknown material such as drawings for preliminary studies, oil paintings, sketchbooks and printing plates. These also include examples of applied graphic designs for posters and

textiles. Tschudi had studied *publicité* in Paris under Fernand Léger and had focused intensively on advertising for a while. One particularly noteworthy discovery is a previously unknown album in the form of a leporello into which the artist cut and pasted motifs from the then glittering world of the illustrated press, resulting in a veritable trove of images for reference. This album forms the heart of the exhibition and may even be described as the key to understanding this extraordinary woman's colourful life and oeuvre. Even though her own personal biography may have been exceptional in her day, it nevertheless clearly indicates that there were, at the time, talented women artists in Switzerland who followed their creative vocation with an indomitable will.

## CATALOGUE

A lavishly illustrated catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition, with numerous texts exploring and analysing Lill Tschudi's wide-ranging oeuvre, her choices of subject matter, and the sources of her imagery, as well as addressing the background to her considerable popularity outside Switzerland: LILL TSCHUDI. DIE FASZINATION DES MODERNEN LINOLSCHNITTS / THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MODERN LINOCUT 1930-1950, issued and edited by the Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich, with contributions by curators Alexandra Barcal and Marcel Just, as well as Jennifer Farrell and Anna Lehninger, Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2021

With the kind support of: Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Stiftung der Glarner Kantonalbank, Kanton Glarus / Swisslos, Gemeinde Glarus Süd, RTR Rechtsanwälte AG, Arosa und Forbo – Flooring Systems Schweiz

## Practical Information

Curatorial team	Alexandra Barcal, Conservator 20th and 21st C., Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich Marcel Just, guest curator
Events	Within the scope of the exhibition, there will be numerous guided tours and events. For details, visit: <a href="https://gs.ethz.ch/en/agenda/">https://gs.ethz.ch/en/agenda/</a>
Opening hours	Daily, 10 a.m. – 4.45 p.m. <b>Closed: 24 December 2021 – 2 January 2022 and 14 January 2022</b>
Entrance	Free
Media contact	Julia Burckhardt, Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich Tel +41 44 632 40 46 <a href="mailto:presse@gs.ethz.ch">presse@gs.ethz.ch</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.gs.ethz.ch">www.gs.ethz.ch</a>

**On the premises of the Graphische Sammlung ETH Zürich applies a COVID-19 certificate requirement.**