

Press release | 22 September 2025

ANDERS ZORN Sweden's Superstar

26 September 2025 to 25 January 2026

Press conference: Thursday, 25 September 2025, 11 a.m.

Opening: Thursday, 25 September 2025, 7 p.m.

The Hamburger Kunsthalle is presenting the multifaceted oeuvre of the Swedish artist Anders Zorn (1860–1920) for the first time in a large-scale exhibition. One of the most famous artists in the world around 1900, Zorn enjoyed a meteoric rise in Europe and achieved fame in the United States with portraits of prominent members of high society and even of two Presidents. Sweden still recognises him today as one of the country's premier artists. Here in Germany, museum-goers now have the rare opportunity to discover the work of the painter, graphic artist and sculptor in this survey show. The over 150 exhibits include major works such as *Midsummer Dance* (1897), arguably Zorn's most well-known painting and one that is still often used today to convey a characteristic picture of Sweden or to promote the country. Also on view, however, are rarely shown paintings and watercolours as well as the artist's impressive etchings and a few small sculptures. Alongside portraits, the exhibition also features Nordic landscapes, everyday views of Zorn's Swedish homeland and scenes from European cities, and also nudes depicted in natural surroundings.

At the invitation of Kunsthalle director Alfred Lichtwark, Zorn visited Hamburg in the winter of 1891/92 and created several atmospheric harbour scenes, which can be seen in the show. Lichtwark hoped to expand the »Collection of Pictures from Hamburg« he had launched in 1889 by inviting acclaimed artists to visit the city, and Zorn was the first non-German artist thus honoured.

The roster of institutions and private collections that have lent works for the exhibition attest to the Swedish artist's high international standing. Works have made their way to the Kunsthalle from Berlin, Boston, Florence, Geneva, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Mora, New York, Stockholm and Washington, among other places. Around 30 etchings and a drawing by Zorn from the museum's own collection are also on display.

The artist who would become one of the foremost talents of the century grew up in modest circumstances in the central Swedish province of Dalarna and already caused a sensation during his student years at the Stockholm Art Academy. Strategically adept, Zorn found in his partner and later wife Emma Lamm someone who could mediate important contacts and help plan his career. He indulged his wanderlust at an early age, travelling in the 1880s to France, Spain, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. The artist gained a foothold in the English art market during a few years spent in London (1882–1885), experienced the breakthrough of Impressionism first-hand in Paris (1888–1896), and took the USA by storm in 1893. A flair for contemporary themes coupled with unrivalled technical facility



Anders Zorn (1860–1920)
Emma Zorn Reading, 1887
Oil on canvas, 40.2 x 60.6 cm
Zornmuseet, Mora
© Zornmuseet, Mora

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assured Zorn tremendous success. Imbued with lightness and buoyancy, his works exude a fascinating spontaneity – belying an elaborate and carefully calculated working process. After initially working almost exclusively with watercolours, Zorn increasingly concentrated on oil painting from 1887 until the end of his career. In 1896 he settled permanently in Mora with his wife, where he died in 1920 at the age of only 60.

In eight exhibition chapters, viewers can discover Anders Zorn as a dazzling, highly versatile artist. Alongside Impressionist elements in paintings such as *Mother Dressing Her Child* (1888) and *Omnibus I* (1890), other facets of his work betray the influence of diametrically opposed artistic tendencies of the period, such as salon painting, for example in the portraits *In Mourning* (1880) and *Elizabeth Sherman Cameron* (1900). Cosmopolitan scenes form a thread running through Zorn's oeuvre, such the painting *Girl with a Cigarette* (ca. 1892), but these are interspersed with motifs from his Swedish home region of Dalarna, as in the painting *Midnight* (1891), which depicts a woman rowing. Such subjects come to the fore in his later work, which evokes the matter-of-fact harmony of human and nature, a theme that increasingly shaped his artistic self-image as well as his identity.

The **educational programme** offers various group **tours** through the exhibition as well as **audio tours** in the Hamburger Kunsthalle app, available for adults in German and English and for children 8 years and older in German. In the **Art Education Room**, which is integrated into the exhibition, visitors can learn more about Zorn's motifs and painting techniques at digital stations where they can use an **interactive watercolour and oil painting program** to create their own works of art, perhaps inspired by the impressive backdrop of the Binnenalster lake. Visitors are also encouraged to do creative self-stagings and portrayals here as a way of critically engaging with Zorn's portraits and the varied clothing styles worn by his sitters. The **SALON ANDERS ANDERS** will take place on 23 October 2025, combining live music, performances and queer perspectives. Under the motto »Critical Whiteness«, the work of Anders Zorn will be debated, from »idyllic Bullerbü« to the portrait of the US president, with the audience able to interactively vote on the course of the individual sections of the evening's programme.

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive **catalogue** (312 pages, Hirmer Verlag) featuring high-quality colour illustrations of all works on view as well as a number of essays exploring the current state of research on Anders Zorn. The catalogue is available for 39 euros in the museum shop or at www.freunde-der-kunsthalle.de at the bookstore price of 49,90 euros.

The exhibition is a cooperative project with the Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid, where it will be presented from 19 February to 17 May 2026.

Curator: Dr. Markus Bertsch
Assistant Curator: Jana Kunst
Research Assistant: Michelle Adler

Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media:

»At the beginning of the twentieth century, Anders Zorn was a shooting star in the art firmament. Now this world-famous artist can be rediscovered at the Hamburg Kunsthalle. The exhibition in addition highlights the Impressionist painter's ties to the Hanseatic city, where he created atmospheric views of the harbour during a stay in 1891. Zorn was impressed by the harbour's air of cosmopolitan optimism.«

I. E. Veronika Wand-Danielsson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Sweden to the Federal Republic of Germany:

»The art of Anders Zorn moves us greatly – through its light, its liveliness and its deep humanity. For Sweden, the artist is a cultural symbol, for the world a great painter with a universal visual language. The fact that his multifaceted oeuvre is now being presented at the Hamburger Kunsthalle fills me with great joy. This exhibition is not only a celebration of art but also a beautiful emblem of the bond between Sweden and Germany.«

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Haspa-Galerie:

The Hamburger Sparkasse has been committed for many years to supporting the Hamburger Kunsthalle. As a token of gratitude for this generosity, the second upper level of the Gallery for Contemporary Art, where the contemporary responses to Friedrich will be on show, has been named the »Haspa-Galerie«.

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