



## UCCA Beijing Year-end Exhibition “Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin”

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In collaboration with Museum Berggruen, following a successful exhibition at UCCA Edge (Shanghai), UCCA Beijing presents “Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin.” The exhibition traces the evolution of European modern art in the twentieth century through nearly 100 major works by six modern masters, showcasing styles including Cubism, Surrealism, and various strands of abstraction.

### Exhibition Period:

2023.11.11 – 2024.2.25

### Location:

UCCA Great Hall

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BEIJING, China — From November 11, 2023 to February 25, 2024, UCCA presents its year-end major exhibition “Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin”. Organized in collaboration with Museum Berggruen, Berlin, the exhibition features nearly 100 pieces by modern masters Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Paul Klee (1879-1940), Henri Matisse (1869-1954), Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), and Georges Braque (1882-1963), each carefully selected from Museum Berggruen’s unparalleled collection. Shown in China for the first time, these works by the six artists span painting, sculpture, paper cut-outs, and other media, allowing viewers to experience the development of modern art through styles such as Cubism, Surrealism, and various strands of abstraction. While touring at UCCA Edge, the exhibition attracted overwhelming public interest through its impeccable presentation of the artworks from the six modern masters and the innovative design in the exhibition space, making it a spotlight exhibition in Shanghai in summer 2023.

Press material available at

[ucca.org.cn/en/press](http://ucca.org.cn/en/press)

One of Europe’s leading museums of modern art, Museum Berggruen is a member of the Nationalgalerie and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums). “Modern Time” marks the fourth stop of Museum Berggruen’s international exhibition tour following its debut in Tokyo and subsequent installments in Osaka and Shanghai. At UCCA Beijing, the touring exhibition has been installed in a rigid chronology, allowing visitors to grasp an artistic dialogue that developed across the oeuvres of different artists, and to understand the exhibition as arising from the collection of a single individual: Museum Berggruen’s namesake, legendary art dealer and collector Heinz Berggruen (1914-2007).

“Modern Time” invites viewers on a walk through the history of twentieth-century art, offering a close-up view of the creative processes and thinking of six major figures. The Chinese



translation of the exhibition title aptly references the idea of a leisurely stroll, promising an excursion that reveals the diverse artistic approaches and radical transformations found under the umbrella of Modernism. The exhibition is organized in strict chronology according to the completion of each work, rather than in thematic or artist sections. It thus introduces in sequence the new developments that marked the flourishing of creativity in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Visitors are guided through the exhibition by wall texts contextualizing individual artists, artistic movements, and major historical events, the last being of particular significance considering the impact of the period's upheavals on many of the featured artists, as well as Berggruen's personal background as a German Jew who fled the Nazis.

"Modern Time" sets the scene with two artworks from a slightly earlier era, portraits that Cézanne, an acknowledged influence on Matisse, Picasso, and Giacometti, painted of his wife around 1885 and 1890. The next artist to appear is Picasso—with 40 of his pieces, the exhibition provides all-encompassing overview of 8 decades of his artistic career. A wealth of works from Picasso's Cubist period are complimented by the inclusion of Braque's *Still Life with Pipe (Le Quotidien du Midi)* (1914), which demonstrates the latter's refined approach towards composition and texture while underscoring how the two artists closely collaborated to radically re-imagine perspective.

The exhibition also features ten pieces by Matisse, originator of Fauvism and Picasso's friendly rival for the leadership of the early twentieth-century avant-garde. These works begin with sculptural and charcoal studies of the human body, move into interior scenes boasting vivid Mediterranean colors, and conclude with his final innovation, the paper cut-outs, or papier découpé, which allowed him to unite form and color. For visitors who have had a thorough overview of Matisse's creative career through the recently closed "Matisse by Matisse" exhibition in Beijing, "Modern Time" would be a great opportunity to further enrich your understanding of the innovative artistic explorations from this Modernist pioneer. More than 30 pieces by Klee, meanwhile, constitute the most comprehensive presentation of his art in China to date. His works in the exhibition range from elegantly abstracted landscapes, evoking Cubism and bearing the influence of his time teaching at the Bauhaus, to the whimsical figuration of *Child's Play* (1939). The piece's lightheartedness seemingly offers a riposte to the political violence of the preceding decade and the darkness of incipient conflict. Other works from the same period, such as Picasso's *Large Reclining Nude* (1942), speak to the claustrophobic, anxious atmosphere of the war years.



Moving forward chronologically, visitors will encounter two sculptures by Giacometti, their stark forms speaking to a sense of existential doubt and isolation felt by many European artists and intellectuals in the aftermath of World War II. Yet the exhibition concludes with a touch of brightness, underscoring the continued relevance of these modern masters through the joyful exuberance of Matisse's paper cut-outs and the defiant energy and eroticism of late period Picasso pieces such as *Matador and Nude* (1970).

The works on display in the exhibition are from the collection of the Museum Berggruen, which takes its name and owes its origins to Heinz Berggruen. Berggruen was a close confidant of Picasso and other artists, and throughout his life built an unmatched collection of modern art. Today that collection forms the core of Museum Berggruen's holdings. UCCA is honored to welcome art from this priceless collection to China as part of the ongoing international exhibition tour which began at The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, and The National Museum of Art, Osaka. Following the installment at UCCA Beijing, in autumn 2024, the exhibition will travel to Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris for its final installment. UCCA and Museum Berggruen are excited to work closely together to share this veritable feast of modern art with audiences in China and foster further Sino-European cultural exchange.

"Modern Time" is among a number of recent major UCCA exhibitions focused on major modern artists, which seek to locate the roots of the contemporary in the modern. Artworks by Picasso in the exhibition expand the exploration of the artist's career begun by the 2019 UCCA Beijing exhibition "Picasso – Birth of a Genius," while pieces by Matisse provide a broader perspective on the artist at the heart of "Matisse by Matisse," another 2023 exhibition that recently closed.

In addition, the exhibition space at UCCA Beijing has been specially designed to resonate with the "Modern Time" theme, creating an experience as if the visitors are strolling through the development of Modernist art. The exhibition curation steers away from the conventional segmentation approach but uses chronology as the trace to lead the audience through the artworks. Three resting areas and one reading area have been inserted into the galleries, allowing the audience to glance through the one hundred years of modern art in a comfortable and relaxed environment without being too distracted from the exhibition itself. There are also VR devices available in the reading area, through which visitors can enjoy a VR guide on select masterpieces from Museum Berggruen's collection, guided by Gabriel Montua, Head of the museum himself. In addition, the collision between UCCA's industrial-



style architectural structure and modern art should also create a special viewing experience for the audience. The exhibition space is designed by Yang Xiaoran from the UCCA Exhibition Department.

Gabriel Montua, Head of Museum Berggruen and exhibition co-curator, comments, “We are immensely looking forward to presenting our collection at UCCA Beijing after the most successful first venue at UCCA Edge in Shanghai. It will be thrilling to experience our works in a completely new exhibition design that will blend in wonderfully with the architecture of UCCA Beijing’s amazing location. We are especially excited about visitors’ reaction in Beijing who will be able to see our works by Picasso and Matisse after the recent solo exhibitions by these artists there, while we hope that the encounter with Paul Klee will be a great surprise to many.”

UCCA Director and CEO Philip Tinari notes, “UCCA is excited to bring this incredible collection to our flagship museum in Beijing. Following individual exhibitions of Picasso (2019) and Matisse (2023), ‘Modern Time’ puts the work of six modern masters into the broader contexts of art history and social change in the twentieth century. We hope these powerful works will bring warmth and joy to our viewers throughout the Beijing winter.”

“Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin” is curated by Klaus Biesenbach, Director of Neue Nationalgalerie, Gabriel Montua, Head of Museum Berggruen, and Veronika Rudorfer, Curator at Museum Berggruen. Before touring to UCCA Beijing, the exhibition was presented at UCCA Edge, Shanghai, from June 22 to October 8, 2023.

#### **Support and Sponsorship**

UCCA thanks Supporting Sponsor Lufthansa German Airlines and Lufthansa Cargo for their generous support. Exclusive wall solutions support is provided by Dulux. Gratitude to Lead Exhibition Social Media Platform Collaborator Xiaohongshu for their promotional support. UCCA also thanks the members of UCCA Foundation Council, International Circle, and Young Associates, as well as Lead Partner Aranya, Lead Art Book Partner DIOR, Presenting Partners Bloomberg, Voyage Group, and Yinyi Biotech, and Supporting Partners Barco, Dulux, Genelec, and Stey.

#### **Exhibition Catalogue**



In conjunction with “Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin,” UCCA has published a catalogue that features full reproductions of all the artworks from this exhibition by the six masters of modern art. These works are accompanied by an essay jointly written by the curatorial team of Klaus Biesenbach, Gabriel Montua, and Veronika Rudorfer, explaining the structure and themes of the exhibition. Another text by the latter two describes the history and evolution of the Museum Berggruen. Finally, art historian and curator Olivier Berggruen recalls his father Heinz Berggruen’s legacy as an art collector. Each artwork image is accompanied by an in-depth interpretive text, providing comprehensive background and analysis for all the works in the show. The catalogue *Modern Time* is designed by 26 Studio and published by Zhejiang Photographic Press.

Furthermore, UCCA Kids team has collaborated with Everafter Books to publish an illustrated Children’s book, *Matisse’s Journey*, introducing Matisse and his journey around the world in a more fun and accessible manner. There are also stories about the interactions between Matisse and Picasso, illustrating their friendship and their influence on each other’s creative practices. Through this book, the readers will embark upon a journey to explore the inspiration and drive behind Matisse’s continuous creativity, allowing them to follow his footsteps to see the vastness and richness of the world.

### Public Programs

UCCA Public Practice team has curated a series of public programs structured around the concept of “Modern Time”, focusing on the six artists featured in the exhibition and the art movements and art schools related to their creations, exploring cultural and social issues covered by the exhibition. These programs, including conversations, workshops, film screenings and more, will be organized into a total of 5 chapters during the exhibition period, each consisting of 2 to 5 events. These chapters will be presented primarily on weekends.

Extending the rich content of the Shanghai programs, the Beijing series will bring the audience into the vibrant world of modern masterpieces. It will help the audience understand the revolution of color and the visual manifestation of musicality, establish genealogies of modern art, and explore modernism from the perspective of postmodernism.

Specifically, on November 11, 2023, the first public day of “Modern Time,” the three curators – Klaus Biesenbach, Director of Neue Nationalgalerie, Gabriel Montua, Head of Museum Berggruen, and Veronika Rudorfer, Curator at Museum Berggruen – will sit together for an



opening dialogue “Chronology and the Art of Order”, discussing the reason that they chose chronology as their key curatorial concept, the foundation of the genealogies of modern art, and how interpretations on modern art have been enriched along the rise of post-modernism. The dialogue will also temporarily set aside the chronology of the exhibition, but focus on individual artists, and how the curatorial process of “Modern Time” has shed new light on understanding the art from Picasso and Paul Klee. The audience will be able to transcend beyond space and time with the conversation, travel through the ever-changing art world of the twentieth century, and feel the experimentation, revolution, complexity and zigzags of Modernism. This opening dialogue will be moderated by Director of UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Philip Tinari. Please follow UCCA’s official website, official WeChat account and other social media platform for the latest event information.

**UCCA × Berggruen Research Center, Peking University Lecture Series “Rupture and Reconstruction: Multiple Perspectives on Modernity”**

From “Matisse by Matisse” to “Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin,” UCCA’s two major exhibitions of 2023 look back at the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, examining the current in visual culture known as Modernism. In the period that these exhibitions examine, there occurred an irreconcilable split between modernity as a historical epoch and Modernism as an aesthetic concept. Whereas the former embraced rationality and espoused a teleological view of history, the latter, as expressed through avant-garde art, was rooted in an anti-bourgeois attitude and a distrust of the beautiful picture that “modern civilization” presented of itself. Inspired by the fascinating implications of this inner contradiction, in the second half of 2023, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art has initiated a series of academic lectures in collaboration with the Berggruen Research Center at Peking University, entitled “Rupture and Reconstruction: Multiple Perspectives on Modernity.” The first three lectures in this series have attracted overwhelming attention. The next lecture will be held on November 25, inviting Professor Wu Guosheng from Tsinghua University and Professor Sun Zhouxing from Zhejiang University. Centered on the concept of modernity, the lecture series will touch upon on fields including intellectual history, philosophy, religion, and art. Leading scholars from China and abroad will share insights from their research and elucidate the many complex meanings of modernity.

“Modern Time: Masterpieces from the Collection of Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin” Workshop Series UCCA Kids has designed a series of workshops based on the exhibition, leading children to explore the creative careers of six modern masters of the 20th century: Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Alberto Giacometti, Paul Cézanne, and Georges Braque. In these workshops with different themes, children will learn about



various modernist art movements and try to understand the unique life experiences and historical contexts behind these movements. By gaining a deep understanding of the creative methods and styles of these modern art giants, children will be able to use a variety of artistic materials, unleash their imagination and creativity, and find their own ways of expression.

#### **Exhibition Merchandise**

“Modern Time” is accompanied by exclusive exhibition merchandise created by UCCA Store. Inspired by masterpieces by Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, and Paul Cézanne, these t-shirts, canvas tote bags, phone grips, and more allow visitors to bring a little bit of the spirit of Modernism home with them. For every tote bag purchased from this collection, UCCA Store will donate RMB1 to UCCA Foundation’s initiative “Opening the Door to Art,” raising awareness for philanthropic programs that are helping make the next generation’s artistic dreams come true. Merchandise may be purchased at UCCA Store during the exhibition, or online at our official Tmall store.

#### **About Museum Berggruen / Nationalgalerie Berlin**

As a member of Nationalgalerie and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums), Museum Berggruen is one of the most important museums of modern art in Europe, world-renowned for its numerous outstanding exhibitions and its impressive collection of notable works by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, and Alberto Giacometti.

Museum Berggruen owes its name and origin to the art dealer and collector Heinz Berggruen (1914-2007). Heinz Berggruen began collecting art and opened his first art gallery in Paris in 1948, gradually building a world-leading private collection. In 1996, he was invited to present his collection in his hometown of Berlin, housed in the western Stülerbau opposite Charlottenburg Palace, known at that time as the Berggruen Collection. Convinced by its quality, in the year 2000, the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage) managed to purchase the collection for the Nationalgalerie with funding from the German government and the state of Berlin. In 2004 it was renamed as the Museum Berggruen. After the death of Heinz Berggruen in 2007, his family agreed to make further works available to the Nationalgalerie as permanent loans and to continue supporting the museum. Museum Berggruen is currently undergoing a three-year extensive renovation to improve visitor experience, with plans to reopen in 2025.

#### **About UCCA**





尤伦斯当代艺术中心  
Center for Contemporary Art

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art is China's leading contemporary art institution. Committed to bringing the best in art to a wider audience, UCCA shares a wide range of exhibitions, public programs, and research initiatives to a public of more than one million visitors each year across three locations. UCCA Beijing sits at the heart of the 798 Art District, occupying 10,000 square meters of factory chambers built in 1957 and regenerated in 2019 by OMA. UCCA Dune, designed by Open Architecture, lies beneath the sand in the seaside enclave of Aranya in Beidaihe. UCCA Edge, designed by New York-based architecture firm SO - IL, opened in Shanghai in May 2021. Formally accredited as a museum by the Beijing Cultural Bureau in 2018, UCCA also operates non-profit foundations, licensed by the Beijing Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Hong Kong government. UCCA's commercial ventures include the retail platform UCCA Store, the children's education initiative UCCA Kids, and collaborations and projects under the rubric UCCA Lab. Opened in 2007 and revived by a committed group of Chinese and international patrons in 2017, UCCA works to bring China into global dialogue through contemporary art.

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