

Let There Be Light ... From the Impressionists to Thomas Edison

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” What seems so self-evident in Genesis 1:3 thanks to God’s blessed assistance was a centuries-long path of pictorial research for the visual arts. It was the Impressionists who discovered light as a central subject of their pictures in the 1860s. Its depiction through atmospheric changes became one of painting’s principle tasks. Color was used primarily as a medium of light, which ultimately led to a lightening of the palette and continues to lend the Impressionists’ paintings their luminosity to this day.



Sisley, Alfred: Le jardin, 1873, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Sturzeneggerische Gemäldesammlung

Contemporary art, by contrast, needs neither paintbrushes nor canvas to portray light: a light bulb and an outlet suffice. Light is no longer merely portrayed; now light itself has become a medium of art. Thomas Edison’s (1847–1931) pioneering discoveries showed that a conductor can be heated with electricity and caused to glow. And this fascination with light endures today, as evidenced by the large number of light-based works in the collection of the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen.



Nedko Solakov, Good News, Bad News, 1998–2009, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

This exhibition, which places important Impressionist paintings in dialogue with artists such as John M. Armleder, Silvie Defraoui, Dan Flavin, Sylvie Fleury, Alex Hanimann, Matthew McCaslin, Jason Rhoades, Pipilotti Rist, Nedko Solakov, Keith Sonnier, Michel Verjux, and others, once again casts the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen in a new light.

Curator: Konrad Bitterli

Press release

Exhibition dates

4 July – 25 October 2015

Press conference

Fri. 3 July 2015
11 a.m.

Exhibition opening

Fri. 3 July 2015
6:30 p.m.
Kunstmuseum St. Gallen

Press contact

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Fact sheet

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Exhibition venue	Kunstmuseum St. Gallen
Press conference	Fri. 3 July 2015, 11 a.m.
Exhibition opening	Fri. 3 July 2015, 6:30 p.m. Kunstmuseum St. Gallen
Curator	Konrad Bitterli
Opening hours	Tue. – Sun. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Wed. 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Admission	CHF 12 Pensioners: CHF 10 Students: CHF 6 Free admission for members of the Kunstverein St. Gallen
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