



DEN
HIRSCHSPRUNGSKE
SAMLING

PRESS RELEASE

NEW SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Bertha Wegmann. Painting in Many Languages

9 February 2022 – 29 May 2022

Bertha Wegmann (1847–1926) could paint anything. Portraits, landscapes, flowers and city scenes. As an artist, she had an equally keen eye for details and for the overall effect. She was a cosmopolitan figure, moving with ease in major metropolises such as Paris and Munich – and in the landscapes in between. She was a star at exhibitions in Denmark and Europe alike.

And then she was forgotten.

Now, almost 100 years after her death, Bertha Wegmann is on her way back into the annals of art history.

The Hirschsprung Collection presents the special exhibition *Bertha Wegmann. Painting in Many Languages* from 9.2–29.5 2022. The first-ever research-based exhibition about the artist.

ONE OF THE BEST-KEPT SECRETS OF DANISH ART



Bertha Wegmann. Painting in Many Languages tells the story of a talented artist who was supported by the wealthy merchants and art collectors of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Copenhagen, and who achieved her artistic breakthrough at an early stage. She successfully participated in the major annual exhibitions in Denmark and internationally. She won acclaim by winning awards at the Salon in Paris, and back in Copenhagen she received many accolades and was given influential official positions in the art world. She was the only female member of the Academy's Plenary Assembly and the only woman on the powerful jury for the annual Charlottenborg exhibitions. She ranked alongside Peder Severin Krøyer as one of the most sought-after portrait painters in Denmark.

At the same time, this is the story of one of the best-kept secrets in Danish art from the decades around 1900. Despite enjoying exceptional attention and respect in her own day, Wegmann is also part of the

large group of women artists who were never inscribed in art history. And while Wegmann was successful and well-known, the gradual process of oblivion and marginalisation set in during her own lifetime. The fact that she was a woman, born in Switzerland and trained in Munich and Paris contributed to displacing Wegmann from art history, even though she had lived in Denmark ever since she was five and exhibited diligently there. The lingering wounds from 1864 did not make it easy to be a Danish artist with a German-sounding background.

AN ARTIST OF GREAT RANGE

The exhibition presents a dazzling array of Bertha Wegmann's best works: portraits of her loved ones as well as official portraits of men, women and children. But Wegmann insisted on being more than a portrait painter. The fact that she succeeded in doing so is demonstrated by the many scintillating landscapes from her tireless travels in Denmark and abroad. Further seasoning is added with arrangements of wild and cultivated flowers, views of cities and the countryside, genre scenes and situations. Wegmann mastered many subjects and many styles, granting her a rare ability to 'paint in many languages'.



IMPRESSIVE ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS

As an artist and as a human being, she succeeded in unfolding an impressive artistic endeavour – not alone, but with the aid of her close relationships with many other prominent women artists of the time. The Swedish painter Jeanna Bauck in particular would be a lifelong figure of importance for Bertha Wegmann. Ever since meeting in Munich in 1871, they remained close and tirelessly supported each other in their art. Later, the author Toni Möller would also become an important figure in Wegmann's life. Not least in the later part of her career. The two women were mainstays of in Wegmann's life and artistic work, and the exhibition unpacks this story, too.

LARGEST COLLECTION OF WEGMANN'S WORKS

The founders of the Hirschsprung Collection, Pauline and Heinrich Hirschsprung, had an eye for Bertha Wegmann's talent and sought out the artist at their own behest. The paintings *Portrait of the Swedish Painter Jeanna Bauck* from 1885 and *Portrait of Petrea Hirschsprung* from 1888 were added to the collection at an early stage; the former in 1901, the latter in 1913. Today, the Hirschsprung Collection is home to eleven paintings and several drawings by Wegmann, making it Denmark's largest collection of Wegmann's works. In recent years, the museum has taken steps to ensure that the women artists of the nineteenth century are more fully represented in the museum's collection, and Bertha Wegmann is among the artists who have been of particular interest to the museum.



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Bertha Wegmann. Painting in Many Languages presents works borrowed from museums in Denmark and abroad as well as from private lenders in Denmark, the UK, Sweden and the USA. The exhibition also includes a range of letters, drawings, photographs and objects, several of them from the artist's newly acquired archive.

The exhibition design was created by scenographer Nanna Arnfred. Pointing back to nineteenth-century salons, the hang will convey a sense of the distinctive salon atmosphere from Bertha Wegmann's time. The exhibition also includes a new film created by the production company Besyv.

Research-based book: The research-based book *Bertha Wegmann* is published to coincide with the exhibition. It features contributions from: Carina Rech (Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde in Stockholm), Emilie Boe Bierlich, Peter Nørgaard Larsen (SMK), Annette Rosenvold Hvidt, Rasmus Kjærboe, Ernst Jonas Bencard, Gertrud Oelsner and Lene Bøgh Rønberg (The Hirschsprung Collection). The book is published by Strandberg Publishing.

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For more information about the exhibition or to receive high-res press photos, please contact:

Press officer Cecilie Monggaard Wenstrup

cecwen@hirschsprung.dk

Tel.: +45 3544 0944

Curator and project researcher Lene Bøgh Rønberg, PhD

lenron@hirschsprung.dk

Tel.: +45 3544 0945

For more information on the book *Bertha Wegmann*, please contact:

STRANDBERG PUBLISHING

Mette Wibeck Olsen

Tel: +45 4075 3476

mette@strandbergpublishing.dk

Press photos:

Bertha Wegmann: *A Young Woman. Portrait of the Artist Marie Triepcke*, 1885. The Hirschsprung Collection
Bertha Wegmann: *Arrangement with a Bunch of Wild Flowers and the Artist's Palette*, c. 1882. The Hirschsprung Collection

Bertha Wegmann: *Young Mother with a Child in a Garden*, 1883. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Bertha Wegmann: *Interior with a Woman Sewing*, 1891. Private collection/© 2008 Christie's Images Limited

Bertha Wegmann: *Portrait of the Swedish Painter Jeanna Bauck*, 1885, The Hirschsprung Collection