

Press release
November 2017

Christmas and Cribs

National Museum Zurich | 24/11/17 – 07/01/18

As the days get shorter and the Christmas season draws near, the National Museum invites young and old to step into a fantasy winter landscape with nativity scenes. Complementing the exhibition “Einsiedeln Abbey. Pilgrims for 1000 years”, cribs from the Einsiedeln Abbey collection will be the focus of this year’s Christmas exhibition.

Einsiedeln has welcomed countless pilgrims during its 1000-year history as a place of pilgrimage. Many of them have paid their respects to the Benedictine monastery with gifts and donations. This is partly how nativity cribs and figures have found their way into the abbey’s collection. Though, Einsiedeln is also home to workshops, which make not only statuettes and reliefs, but also cribs, as souvenirs for pilgrims or well-to-do citizens in the region. The clay works of Einsiedeln’s small sculpture makers are among the most beautiful nativity scenes in Switzerland. They are created in the tradition of Late Baroque – a style in which the monastery church at Einsiedeln was also designed. One of the most outstanding clay cribs is that of the Einsiedeln sculptor Ildefons Curiger. This piece of work, created around 1820, depicts the Holy Family, an ox and donkey, three shepherds and three hovering angels. The oldest shepherd has brought a sheep as a gift for the baby Jesus. Curiger’s composition must have been popular because there are several almost identical variations by different Einsiedeln artists.

The nativity scenes are presented in an enchanting winter landscape with snow-covered fir trees and igloos, from which curious animals look down. Young museum visitors can play, read books, make gifts or listen to the Christmas story.

Public holiday opening times

24/12/17: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

25/12/17 | 26/12/17 | 31/12/17 | 01/01/18 | 02/01/18: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Please direct enquiries to:

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