

For immediate release

**LYONEL FEININGER
FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS****FIRST RETROSPECTIVE OF THE ARTIST IN NORTH AMERICA
EXCLUSIVE TO MONTREAL**

Montreal, January 18, 2012 – From January 21 to May 13, 2012, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts will present the first posthumous retrospective in North America on Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956). *Lyonel Feininger: from Manhattan to the Bauhaus* offers the first comprehensive panorama of the oeuvre of this American artist, who has been strangely forgotten since he spent most of his life in Germany. A celebrated cartoonist, a leading figure of Expressionism alongside Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, a professor at the avant-garde Bauhaus School, from its founding in Weimar until it was closed in Dessau by the Nazis, he was one of the most famous modern artists in Germany. Condemned as a “degenerate” artist by the Third Reich, he returned, after a fifty-year absence, to New York, where an exhibition at MoMA in 1944 proved to be his breakthrough. Our exhibition highlights the surprisingly modern multidisciplinary dimension of this versatile creator, who was an illustrator, painter, draughtsman, engraver, photographer, musician and composer. The 350 or so works exhibited include paintings, watercolours, engravings, illustrations and carved toys. For the first time photographs taken by the artist are on display together with a group of photographs by his son Andreas, a renowned photographer of the American modernist school. Seventy prints from a collection of 284 photographs recently gifted to the Museum will be exhibited. This retrospective was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, in partnership with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

The Museum wishes to restore the reputation of this unjustly neglected artist, a major figure of Expressionism and the Bauhaus”, said Nathalie Bondil, Director and Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. “Lyonel Feininger was an accomplished pioneer of the comic strip and an emeritus professor of engraving at the Bauhaus. His hitherto unpublished photographs show his artistic connection to his son Andreas, a famous modernist photographer whose descendants settled in Quebec City. “A Doctor of Souls”, Lyonel Feininger aspired to the spiritual in his art, as did his companions in the Expressionist group *Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) and the painters and musicians Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, who also worked at the Bauhaus. Together they sought to abolish the traditional boundaries of representation, regarding music as the ultimate transcendent art that could free the innermost creative self of every artist and seeking a synaesthetic correspondence between shapes and colours, sounds and words. This quest is mirrored in the Museum’s desire to assert its multidisciplinary and musical dimension...”

For this exhibition the MMFA is again incorporating music into the presentation, both in the galleries and in the new Bourgie concert hall, where a festival dedicated to Feininger is on the programme. Following *Andy Warhol*, *Imagine* and *Miles Davis*, this retrospective will reinforce the importance now accorded to music at the Museum with its first cooperative venture with the Arte Musica Foundation.

Major loans have come from a number of institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the National Gallery in Washington, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Harvard Art Museums, the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, and by Lyonel Feininger's family in the United States and Canada, as well as from many other museums and private collectors in Germany, Austria and the United States and galleries such as Moeller Fine Art, New York - Berlin.

• **AN AMERICAN IN GERMANY**

Exceptionally for his era, Feininger was one of the first "American" artists of his generation to be perceived as an international artist with a hybrid identity. This has since become the norm for many contemporary artists.

Feininger was born in Manhattan, the son of professional musicians. His German-born father was an internationally recognized violinist and his German-American mother, a singer and pianist, while he himself was a talented violinist. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Hamburg, Germany, to study music, but he decided to switch to art school, studying in Berlin, Liège and Paris. He pursued a brilliant career as a caricaturist and painter in Germany. Although he was born American, he was considered a German artist and his works could not be exhibited at the famous Armory Show in New York in 1913. He exhibited in leading German museums, which purchased many of his works. When his oeuvre was denounced by the Nazis and featured in the infamous exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) of 1937, he returned to the United States shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Now that he was considered an American artist, American museums began to exhibit his work, which was presented at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, among others.

Feininger began his career as a caricaturist, illustrator and cartoonist for prestigious publications such as the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Ulk*. As one of the most famous caricaturists in Germany at the turn of the 20th century, he also created comic strips for the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* – *The Kinder Kids* and *Wee Willie Winkie's World*. His style, his subjects, his compositions and juxtapositions, not to mention his sense of humour, were to make him one of the fathers of the modern comic strip. He abandoned his career as an illustrator at the age of thirty-six and in about 1907 began to focus on painting in oils. The lively colourful paintings he executed in that decade evoke his early work as a caricaturist. It was while exhibiting at the Salon des indépendants in Paris in 1911 that he discovered Cubism. He then developed a personal style

characterized by fragmented images. He later exhibited at the avant-garde Galerie Der Sturm in Berlin and taught at the Bauhaus from 1919 to 1933. The retrospective will also feature a selection of watercolours and woodcuts that Feininger produced after 1918, and photos showing his fascination with light. An equally important and original facet of his production – which can be seen also in his paintings – are his carved wooden toys and miniature buildings.

• THE CIRCUIT OF THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition consists of five sections:

- *Genesis of a Career: From Comic Strips to Modern Painting*
New York, Hamburg, Berlin, Liège, Paris (1871-1906)

This section presents Feininger's early work as an illustrator and caricaturist, a chronology of his life through archival documents borrowed from his family, and his earliest paintings.

- *Feininger the Expressionist: Settling in an Unsettled World*
Paris, Berlin (1907-1918)

The second gallery is devoted to the critical period between 1907 and 1918, when Feininger became one of the avant-garde German Expressionist artists.

- *The Bauhaus: A Search for Harmony*
Weimar, Dessau, Berlin (1919-1933)

Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus, the revolutionary art and design school, appointed Feininger as its first "master" in 1919. Despite the shift in the school's orientation in 1923 to bring together art and industry, an approach that conflicted with Feininger's convictions, he remained at the school. He became increasingly interested in photography, a passion he shared with two of his sons, Andreas and T. Lux.

- *At the Edge of the Word (1934-1956). Berlin, Deep, Manhattan*

When the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, the situation became unbearable for Feininger and his Jewish wife, Julia. Some 400 of his paintings were removed from German museums. They leave Dessau, splitting their time between the Baltic village of Deep and Berlin. The Feininger family moved to the United States in 1937, just months before the sadly famous exhibition *Entartete Kunst* [Degenerate Art] in Munich, which displayed nineteen of Lyonel's works. In addition to chronicling this last period of the artist's life, the final section of the exhibition will include music in order to underline Feininger's truly multidisciplinary approach.

- *Andreas Feininger*

In conjunction with the Lyonel Feininger retrospective, some seventy photographs by Andreas Feininger (1906-1999), a major figure in the history of photography, will be exhibited for the first time in this retrospective. They constitute a recent gift from the artist's family through the Wyss E. Feininger Bequest. These images are displayed in an innovative fashion to demonstrate the influence of the photographer's formative years at the Bauhaus, when he lived in Dessau in his father's "teacher's house".

● A MUSIC ROOM AND A FESTIVAL OF MUSIC ACCOMPANT THE EXHIBITION

A talented violinist and composer, Feininger compared his art to music, which played a major role in his approach to art. Throughout his life he sought to reproduce the structures of the fugue in both his pictorial work and in his musical compositions. When asked which artist had influenced him the most, he replied “Bach”. Like his colleagues Klee and Kandinsky, he believed that music brought transcendence to his art.

At the centre of the exhibition is a music room that enables visitors to experience the synthesis of painting and music as Feininger envisaged it: the musical constructions of counterpoint echo the chromatic partitions of his paintings through a wealth of fugues and other pieces for various instruments, most of them composed by Bach but others written by the artist himself.

At the same time the Arte Musica Foundation is presenting a festival in the new Bourgie Hall entitled “A Fugue at the Museum”, an exploration of the world of the fugue with lectures and concerts devoted to this rich and thrilling musical form. The programme ranges from 18th-century repertoire (with Bach’s *Art of Fugue* and the *Well-tempered Clavier*, two landmark pieces) to the present, including Feininger’s own compositions and works inspired by his paintings. The festival “A Fugue at the Museum” was conceived by Isolde Lagacé, general and artistic director of the Arte Musica Foundation.

● THE LAYOUT

The layout of the exhibition was designed by Nathalie Crinière of the Agence NC, Paris. The designer has worked with the Museum on several shows, most notably with *Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences* in Beaubourg, *Jean Cocteau, Enfant Terrible* in Beaubourg and Montreal and *Il modo italiano* in Montreal. She designed the layouts for the retrospective on *Yves Saint Laurent* in Montreal, San Francisco and Paris, and has just created the new presentation for the Liliane and David M. Stewart Pavilion of Decorative Arts and Design, which will be completed in May 2012. The winner of the competition for the Louvre at Abu-Dhabi, she works regularly for the leading institutions of Paris (Beaubourg, Musée d'Orsay, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais...).

● THE CURATORS

The chief curator of the exhibition is Barbara Haskell, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The presentation of the exhibition in Montreal was directed by Nathalie Bondil, director and chief curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Anne Grace, the MMFA’s curator of modern art.

• THE CATALOGUE

Edited by Barbara Haskell, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art of New York, the fully illustrated 277-page catalogue accompanying the exhibition sheds new light on the artist's life and work, based on his voluminous private letters and on new monographs and critical studies published in Germany. Published in English by Yale University Press, it comprises essays and a detailed chronology. The authors are John Carlin, free-lance writer and curator, president and CEO of Funny Garbage, Bryan Gilliam, Frances Hill Fox Professor in Humanities, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, Ulrich Luckhardt, curator, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany and Sasha Nicholas, senior curatorial assistant, Whitney Museum of American Art.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts will oversee the publication of the catalogue in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Somogy Éditions d'art, Paris. It will be the first complete monograph in French on the oeuvre of Lyonel Feininger, and will be available at the Museum's Boutique and Bookshop.

• THE SPONSORS

The exhibition **Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus** is organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, with support from the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Program and the Museum's Volunteer Association.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts extends its thanks to Sun Life Financial, the exhibition's presenting sponsor.

We would also like to thank Astral Media, *La Presse* and *The Gazette*, our media partners, and Air Canada, our official airline, as well as Moeller Fine Art, New York-Berlin, and Essence du Papier, for their support. Our gratitude also extends to the members of the Feininger family and all the lenders and donors who helped make this exhibition a reality.

The Museum wishes to express its gratitude to Quebec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Canada Council for the Arts for their ongoing support.

The Museum would like to acknowledge the invaluable support provided by the Volunteer Guides. We would also like to thank all our members and the many individuals, corporations and foundations who support our mission, especially the Arte Musica Foundation, presided over by Pierre Bourgie, and the Fondation de la Chenelière, led by Michel de la Chenelière.

The Museum's International Exhibition Programme receives financial support from the Exhibition Fund of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Foundation and the Paul G. Desmarais Fund.

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Images of a number of works in the exhibition are available on the Museum's website at the following address: mmfa.qc.ca/media.

Instructions to follow for reproducing works of art: The work of art is to be reproduced in its entirety without cropping, bleeding, guttering, overprinting or any other alteration of any kind, and the caption and photo credit must accompany the illustration of the work.

About the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is one of the most popular museums in Canada. Every year some 600,000 visitors are welcomed free of charge at all times to view its encyclopaedic collection, unique in Canada, and its innovative exhibitions covering every artistic discipline (fine arts, music, film, fashion, design) enhanced by original and unusual layouts. It conceives, produces and tours many of its exhibitions across Europe and the Americas. It is also one of Canada's leading publishers of bilingual art books, which are distributed worldwide. Over 100,000 families and school groups take part every year in its educational, cultural and community-oriented programmes. 2011 saw the opening of a fourth wing devoted exclusively to Quebec and Canadian art – the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion– and a 444-seat concert hall incorporating an outstanding group of Tiffany windows – the Bourgie Hall. At the same time the Museum's rich collections have been redeployed in the other three pavilions, housing the World Cultures, Early and Contemporary European Art, Decorative Arts and Design collections. Finally, from now on the Museum is integrating music, in the form of musical strolls through the galleries and other uncommon activities, to introduce visitors to a different way of appreciating the visual arts.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

TALKING ABOUT LYONEL FEININGER: TWO INTERVIEWS

BARBARA HASKELL, CHIEF CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION, NEW YORK

1. Did Lyonel Feininger enjoy the same reputation in North America, where he was born, as in Germany, where he lived most of his life?

One of the giants of American twentieth-century art, Lyonel Feininger is renowned as a master of modernism. He was widely acclaimed in German avant-garde circles in the first decades of the century and was the first artist appointed to the Bauhaus. Today, his whimsical and deeply spiritual work is as widely celebrated in Germany as it was during his lifetime: one of his “Gelmeroda” paintings appears on a German stamp. Yet his American roots are ever present in his art, which is grounded in a pantheistic view of the world. He believed that there is beauty and goodness in the world and that it is the artist’s task to find it. Unfortunately, North American audiences have had little opportunity to see his work. This exhibition and its accompanying catalogue offer art lovers on this side of the Atlantic a wonderful opportunity to discover this great artist!

2. What do you hope visitors will discover in Lyonel Feininger’s art?

An artist of extraordinary talent whose work runs the gamut from comic strips and narrative, figurative paintings to whimsical toys, fugues, woodcuts, photographs and transcendental paintings of architecture and the sea. Feininger’s work makes us smile, while also connecting us to the rhythms and underlying order of the cosmos.

3. Were there any discoveries you made that have changed your perception of Feininger’s artistic output?

Before beginning this exhibition, I had little knowledge of Feininger’s comic strips or the narrative, whimsical figurative paintings he produced in the period before 1920. This was a revelation that greatly enhanced my appreciation of his work. I had always admired his portrayal of the transcendental sublime. The figurative work is so fresh and contemporary in its presentation of the world, as if it’s being seen from a child’s perspective. It gives viewers entry into what Feininger called “golden childhood.” An artist whose work encompasses both moods is unique.

TOMAS FEININGER, THE ARTIST'S GRANDSON, QUEBEC CITY

1. Your great-grandparents were musicians, and your grandfather decided at the age of sixteen to abandon his music studies in favour of fine art. Nevertheless, music remained an important part of his life. Was this something you observed?

My grandfather often said that each day should begin with Bach. When I was a small child, he would play Bach sonatas on his violin before breakfast. When he was in his seventies, he found it increasingly difficult to control his fingering, so he gave up the instrument. Sadly, he died before the large-scale introduction of the LP record. Endless flipping of 78-rpm records made the enjoyment of long pieces tiresome. His deafness in his left ear may also have made attending concerts an unpleasant experience for someone with his finely tuned senses. His direct association with music faded in the final years of his life.

2. What was the impact of the Bauhaus period?

My grandfather never spoke to me of his Bauhaus years. Clearly, he was devastated by Hitler and the terrible destruction of World War II. My grandmother expressed her feelings by referring to the garbage can in her kitchen as the "Goebbels!" For years, I thought that this was the correct German word. And no, she never explained the etymology to me.

3. What emerged in his interactions with you? What did he want to instill in his grandchildren?

I was the only grandchild born in his lifetime. My grandfather was a private person, but he was always very pleasant and kind to me. He patiently taught me to make woodcut prints, a technique that I continue to use today to make my cards at Christmas. Together, we sailed his model boats on a pond in a city park, and, in 1947, he introduced me to "Book Row" in Lower Manhattan, thus instilling in me a lifelong love of books. I continued prowling the "Row" and bought many books.

Interview by Anne Grace

LYONEL
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FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

THEMES OF THE EXHIBITION

1893-1906

The genesis of a career: Lyonel Feininger, illustrator

First Paris Drawings

Feininger arrived in Paris in 1892. He spent the next seven months sketching figures on the street and drawing nudes at the Académie Colarossi, where, for three hours in the evening, he could draw live models who changed poses every five minutes. Unlike the majority of artists who went to Paris, he had no interest in participating in the city's art scene. He visited few art exhibitions during his stay, confessing later that he had failed to see even Monet's work, his only goal being to perfect his skill at drawing: "It is the greatest value to me to acquire surety of hand and eye. ... To seize instantly the character of an object whether animate or otherwise—it is the surest method of gaining dexterity in one's fingers." Drawing would remain a fundamental part of his creative process, inspiring paintings that amalgamated observed reality, memory and imagination.

During his art studies in Berlin, Feininger spent almost all his spare time drawing caricatures, having been inspired by the books of Wilhelm Busch, the most famous caricaturist in nineteenth-century Germany. While still a student, Feininger sold his drawings for publication, and throughout the 1890s, his reputation continued to grow. His illustrations were featured in numerous prominent magazines, including *Ulk* [Joke] and *Lustige Blätter* [Funny Pages], both in Germany, and *Harper's Young People* in the United States.

In 1906, at the precise moment that newspaper comics went from being a popular medium to an art form, the editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Tribune* visited Germany to hire five local cartoonists, selecting Feininger among them. The goal was to elevate the degraded medium of Sunday comic strips to something that better suited the tastes of the paper's aspiring middle-class readers. *The New York Herald* had blazed the trail, first publishing *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, by visionary cartoonist Winsor McCay, in 1905.

In 1906, at the age of thirty-five, Feininger had reached the highest level of his profession, but he was frustrated because his work, subject to editorial direction, was not entirely under his artistic control. The opportunity to work for the *Chicago Tribune*—which he did without ever setting foot in Chicago itself—gave him complete artistic licence to produce two comic-strip series: *The Kin-der-Kids* and *Wee Willie Winkie's World*. The *Chicago Tribune* celebrated Feininger's arrival in the comics section by calling him "the most popular cartoonist in Germany's capital" and proclaiming that "there is no better draftsman in the world than Mr. Feininger." The lucrative contract allowed him and his wife to move to Paris in July 1906, where Feininger would come into contact with avant-garde art. He also contributed to the Parisian magazine *Le Témoin*, along with other young artists, including Juan Gris and Félix Vallotton.

1906-1911

From Illustrator to Painter

Feininger spent the period between 1906 and 1908 in Paris. His entry point into the city's art world was the Café du Dome, in Montparnasse, the meeting place for German speaking artists in the French capital. Although Fauvism was attracting converts, Cézanne's work, which sparked such heated debate among the German expats following his memorial retrospective at the 1907 Salon d'Automne, stimulated the ideas that would lead to Cubism.

Feininger's immersion in a community of vanguard artists in Paris intensified his ambition to be a fine artist. In 1907, as a successful thirty-six-year-old illustrator, he courageously quit illustration, determined to teach himself to paint. In full possession of his artistic faculties, he adapted his whimsical distortion of reality to painting. The tilted perspective, foreshortening and scale distortions became more exaggerated following his visits to the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune's 1908 exhibition of van Gogh's work. Feininger portrayed a picaresque carnival world set in his "beloved romantic period," the Biedermeier (1815–1848), an era idealized by Germans. With their saturated rainbow colours, his depictions of villagers engaged in everyday activities—sitting on the shore, rushing hurriedly to and from work, strolling at leisure through crooked village streets—exuded an air of romantic nostalgia similar to the mood that enchanted Feininger in Victor Hugo's *Misérables* (1862)

Paris 1911-Berlin 1918

The "Crystalline" Cubist

Feininger's encounter with Cubism in 1911 at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris was revelatory. He understood immediately that the Cubists' reduction of objects to angular, geometric shapes and their treatment of empty space and mass as virtually synonymous created the impression of volume without resorting to modelling. He began to incorporate the style's faceting of forms into his work, abandoning the flat shapes of his earlier paintings. His images were now broken into geometric planes seemingly tilted at varying angles to the picture's surface. He exploited gradations of colour to enhance volume, giving equal weight to figure and ground. This radical formal realignment made Feininger's second career as a painter possible. In Germany, he drew the attention of the Munich-based Expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter [The Blue Rider]—Franz Marc, Vassily Kandinsky, Alexei Jawlensky and Paul Klee—who, in 1913, invited him to participate in the Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon [First German Autumn Salon], held at the avant-garde gallery Der Sturm [The Storm] in Berlin. Feininger was thrust into the heart of modernism, in the company of Marc Chagall, Umberto Boccioni, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, Fernand Léger and Marsden Hartley.

In 1913, Feininger announced that he was "ready to turn a new page." Many of his new paintings contained interpenetrating and overlapping planes of translucent colour whose resulting diagonal lines and lucent triangular wedges created the sensation of looking through a prism. This luminosity endowed his work with an ethereal, crystalline radiance. As figurative images seemed inappropriate for this new prismatic vocabulary—"Prism-ism," he called it—he turned increasingly to architecture in his search for subjects. In the peace and quiet of Weimar—where he now lived—and its surrounding Thuringian villages, untouched by modernity's psychic fragmentation and crisis of faith, Feininger found a subject matter that answered his lifelong yearning for harmony and oneness: "Even chaos is full of order," he insisted. "The fugitive shadow of a bird flying over the field is unalterable."

Expressionism and der Blaue Reiter: the Quest for the Spiritual in Art

Feininger's discovery of Cubism in Paris in 1911 coincided with the explosion of the Berlin art world, in which he avidly took part. The development of Expressionism in Germany was at its peak. Die Brücke [The Bridge]—a group of young architecture students in Dresden, including Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff—were among the first to engage in this pursuit of artistic freedom, a reflection of their search for a new social order in reaction to the constraining bourgeois mindset of Germany under Wilhelm II. Absorbed in his work, Feininger declined the invitation to join Die Brücke. In 1913, Feininger was invited by Franz Marc, co-founder of the famous Munich-based Expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter [The Blue Rider], to exhibit in the upcoming Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon [First German Autumn Salon]. Der Blaue Reiter's desire to express metaphysical truths through art appealed to Feininger, and he accepted the invitation, happy to exhibit "in the company of those [Franz Marc, Vassily Kandinsky and August Macke] with whom I am predestined to feel at home." Der Blaue Reiter's mission found an outlet in music by virtue of its dematerialization, a concept expounded by the German philosopher Hegel. Like Feininger, Kandinsky and Klee, both accomplished musicians, saw music as a means of expressing a spiritual experience objectively. They focused on the musical qualities of pictorial vocabulary to develop a theory of harmony for colour and form. Seeking to go beyond visible reality, these artists approached painting with a shared focus upon the inner world, where form per se no longer had meaning. According to Kandinsky, who outlined his theories in his influential publication *The Spiritual in Art*, the meaning lay in "the inner sound, the life" of form. An earlier inspiration for their conception of painting as a means of creating a formal unity rather than as a reflection of the objective world came from Orphic painters like French Cubist Robert Delauney. Delauney's discovery that colour, in the same sense as form, can independently evoke motion and rhythm fed the German artists' desire to explore painting's potential to become a sheer orchestration of colour and light.

The War Years

At first, Feininger, like most Germans, fully backed the war effort; however, as it continued, his support waned. Because his American citizenship gave him immunity from the draft, Feininger was far luckier than most other artists. Blaue Reiter artist August Macke died at the front; Ernst Ludwig Kirchner suffered a nervous breakdown and entered a sanatorium; and Franz Marc, who had welcomed the war as a purifying apocalypse that would cleanse and redeem the world, was killed in 1916. The deaths of his peers and the letters exchanged with friends on the front, particularly Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and the poet Adolf Knoblauch, kept the conflict alive for Feininger. Caught between loyalty to Germany and his increasingly uncomfortable status as an American, he fell into a "psychotic state, like an overpowering, totally paralyzing self-hypnosis." Despite the profound effect this world war had on his psyche, Feininger adhered to the same formal preoccupations as before. As the artist wrote in 1917, "In the happiest as in the most resigned works the goal remains identical: to give the final form to one's conception. Always the final form! For only this form endures, and for me painting is anything but a matter of the moment."

The "City at the Edge of the World" Sculpture Toys

The "childlike joyous and fantastic-bizarre Feininger world," as the artist himself called it, found expression in these small handcarved, hand-painted toys he made, initially for his sons, and later for friends and their children. He designed a model train set similar to his wooden prototype for a Munich toy company, Otto Lowenstein, never manufactured due to the outbreak of the war. Carved in 1913, this Christmas present for his sons would soon be followed by toy boats, houses and people. Each Christmas, he added more objects to the ensemble, which his son T. Lux would later call "City at the Edge of the World," after his father's gouache

of that title. Somewhere in between sculpture and toys, these objects functioned as actors and props in an ever-changing performance. Their slapstick absurdity and guileless whimsy were doors through which Feininger entered “into Golden childhood again.”

“A universe flowing through him”: The Baltic Coast

During a vacation to the Baltic Sea town of Timmendorf with Gropius and Kandinsky in 1922, Feininger’s style underwent a breakthrough. Experiencing the sky, clouds and ocean for the first time in years, he was filled with happiness and “visions of longing.” By applying his pigments in thin layers, which he washed with turpentine to reveal underlayers of paint, he endowed his canvases with a chromatically modulated, radiant transparency. His light-infused seascapes, with their images of diminutive figures on the beach looking out to an infinite sea and sky, recall the paintings of Romantic German artist Caspar David Friedrich.

In 1924, Feininger discovered the fishing village of Deep on the Pomeranian coast, at the south of the Rega River. The sweeping vistas and silent beauty of Deep’s uninhabited beaches and deserted, storm-blown dunes appealed to his desire for what he called “transcendental space,” a term he borrowed from philosopher Kant. Entranced by the village’s expansive landscape and the reflections of light on the water, especially at sunset, when “the glory from above” suspended the separateness of sky and water in multitudinous reflections of shimmering dots, he would return there every summer through 1936. In these watercolours, the artist achieved a mixture of delicacy and monumentality by interrupting the pressure of his hand in the act of drawing, thereby giving his ruled lines a pulsing vibrancy. For the next twelve years, the experience of the sea air and beach in Deep each summer would renew his sense of a “universe flowing through him.” Back in his studio each fall, away from a “too-close proximity” to the subject, he would transform the charcoal compositions he made in Deep into visions of the sublime.

Nature Notes: “The greatest treasure you can build on”

Since Feininger’s first trip to Paris in 1892–93, he had been an inveterate sketcher, forever jotting down his impressions of people and architecture. He regarded these *natur-notizen*, or nature notes, as the “greatest treasure you can build on.” Drawn with lead or coloured pencil, sometimes with great precision, sometimes sketchily, these meticulously dated and filed notes served as archives of memory, supplying him with motifs for his art, often years after the initial sketch was made. This working method mirrored his experience as an illustrator, which Feininger credited with teaching him to sketch the essentials of his subject quickly, afterwards utilizing memory and imagination to transform his sketch into a final composition.

1919-1933

Weimar, Dessau, Berlin

Feininger and the Bauhaus

In April 1919, the architect Walter Gropius recruited Lyonel Feininger to the faculty of the State Bauhaus, created by merging Weimar’s Academy of Fine Arts with its School of Applied Arts. Under his direction, the school aimed to be a modern version of the Bauhütte, or medieval guild, in which fine artists worked alongside artisans. Gropius selected Feininger, then thirty-eight years old, sculptor Gerhard Marcks and painter Johannes Itten, giving each artist the title of *Meister* [Master] rather than Professor to reinforce the school’s workshop-based approach. Convinced that art was essentially spiritual and thus could not be taught, Feininger approached his position as Master more like a counsellor. To avoid imposing his own

aesthetic style, this gentle instructor advised his students on practical skills and professed only avuncular judgments.

Feininger and the Bauhaus Graphic Workshops

Under Feininger's leadership, the Bauhaus graphics workshop became a hotbed of activity. In October 1921, he launched an ambitious program to publish a series of print portfolios under the rubric "Neue Europäische Graphik" [New European Graphics]. In addition to raising funds, the series aimed to demonstrate "how the generation of artists of our time are taking part in the ideas of the Bauhaus and making a sacrifice by donating the use of their own works," as Gropius put it. The first portfolio, titled *Meistermappe des Staatlichen Bauhauses* [State Bauhaus Masters' Portfolio], contained prints by Bauhaus faculty members. Individual portfolios of prints by the school's Masters, including Marcks, Kandinsky, Muche and Schlemmer, were to follow. Gropius' appeals for contributions from artists outside the Bauhaus community led to portfolios of German, Italian and Russian prints, each in an edition of at least 110.

In 1921, in an effort to reinforce the symbiosis between aesthetic invention and technical proficiency, Gropius began to emphasize the teaching of abstraction over nature-based study. Despite his discontent, Feininger accepted Gropius' request that he head the graphics workshop. This assignment relieved him from teaching, which had become demanding. In 1922, the Bauhaus' funding was threatened. Gropius resolved to raise funds by creating marketable products in partnership with industry, championing a new unity between art and technology. The publication of *Malerei, Fotografie, Film* [Painting, Photography, Film] by artist, photographer and theorist László Moholy-Nagy, which cast static painting as antiquated and lauded technological art as the only legitimate form, offered poignant evidence of how much the Bauhaus had changed since its inception only a few years earlier. Feininger's opposition to this new direction was categorical: "Even the greatest technical perfection can never replace the divine spark of art!"

Having lost the support of the newly elected conservative Thuringian parliament, the school closed in 1925, moving to the industrial city of Dessau later that year. Although Feininger, then fifty-four, felt marginalized at the Bauhaus, he agreed to join the faculty in Dessau and live in one of the Gropius-designed Master Houses rent-free but without salary, exempt from teaching. The Feiningers shared the duplex Master House with the Moholy-Nagys. With its red staircase and cobalt-blue stair-strings, the new lodging delighted Feininger. He appreciated the "feeling of community with the friends in other houses — not too close, not too far." However, with Gropius' and Moholy-Nagy's departure in 1928, emphasis on functionalism and the applied arts nearly obliterated the school's earlier utopian marriage of the fine arts and crafts. What kept Feininger in Dessau was his attachment to Klee and Kandinsky. In 1932, Dessau's Nazi-controlled city council voted to close the Bauhaus, which relocated to Berlin.

Feininger and the Nazis **A "Degenerate Artist"**

Almost immediately after Hitler's rise to power on January 30, 1933, modern art fell victim to the Nazis' agenda to eliminate all art that did not promote what they viewed as "healthy" Aryan values. They believed that modernity, with its accelerated pace of change and simultaneity of experience, had created psychological fragmentation and anxiety. What was needed, the Nazis claimed, was an art that engendered order, coherence and pride in Germany. In March 1933, the government in Dessau hung city- and state-owned works by modern artists in two display windows of a hard-line Nazi Party newspaper, accompanied

by a “review” that, among other things, charged Feininger with being a top-ranking Bolshevik. The following day, storm troopers searched Feininger’s “beloved home in Dessau.” At once, Feininger put his furniture and household belongings in storage and sent his art to the Moritzburg Museum in Halle to be warehoused. For the next year and a half, deprived of a studio, he and his wife, Julia, who was Jewish, lived in Dessau and with friends in Berlin. In 1936, Feininger went back to the United States for the first time in almost fifty years to teach a summer course at Mills College in Oakland, California. When he returned to Berlin, the political climate was becoming increasingly hostile: Halle’s Nazi Mayor quarantined the Moritzburg Museum’s modern art collection, including a large number of Feininger’s works, in a “chamber of horrors” that was accessible only by paying a fee and registering in a visitors’ book.

Understandably, these events pressed on Feininger, and he returned to New York with Julia in June 1937 to settle permanently. A month later, the Third Reich staged its most brutal assault against modern art with the opening of an exhibition in Munich intended to clarify for the German people the kind of art that was “un-German” and therefore unacceptable. The infamous exhibition *Entartete Kunst* [Degenerate Art] opened in nine narrow rooms of Munich’s Hofgarten with more than 600 paintings, sculptures, prints and books confiscated from the collections of thirty-two German public museums. Among the assembled works were twenty-four Feininger paintings, prints and watercolours. Even before the exhibition closed in Munich, committees from the Reich’s Chamber of Art had begun confiscating the remaining modern art collections from German museums. The purge affected over 20,000 works, including more than 460 by Feininger.

Return to Manhattan

The return to the United States in 1937 was difficult: Feininger docked in New York, just shy of his sixty-sixth birthday, with two dollars in his pocket. He discovered that the city of his childhood—low and horizontal, with open train tracks and rivers filled with sailing ships—no longer existed. It was a shock and a source of wonder for an artist who had found inspiration in nature or in small villages, whose slower, more regular patterns of life encouraged stability and order. Now he found himself surrounded by the noise, dirt and visual cacophony of the world’s most modern city. Not surprisingly, it was well over two years before he started to paint. Images of sailing boats and dunes echoed previous canvases, the motifs from early woodcuts providing inspiration for new paintings. Aside from a few Manhattan subjects, he painted Baltic Sea images, deriving compositions from earlier works and the hundreds of sketches he had brought with him from Germany.

In October 1944, the Museum of Modern Art fulfilled a promise made by its brilliant director, Alfred H. Barr, to Feininger as early as 1930 by opening the first retrospective of the artist’s work in his native country. The show toured to ten American cities, confirming Feininger’s status as a major twentieth-century artist. By reducing form to an absolute minimum and simplifying the complexities of colour and paint application, Feininger created dematerialized, rhythmic vitality with great economy of means.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE MONTREAL PRESENTATION OF *LYONEL FEININGER: FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS*

■ In order to underscore the multidisciplinary nature of this artist, and in keeping with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' programming, the Montreal presentation, under the direction of Nathalie Bondil, MMFA Director, and Anne Grace, MMFA Curator of Modern Art, features some **150 additional works**. It is also supplemented by explanatory panels and documents that reveal the artist's many avenues of creativity.

- **Works on paper:** More than eighty prints and drawings bear witness to the importance of drawing in the artist's creative process: sketches from his early days in Paris, many of which are being shown for the first time in a museum; illustrations and comic strips published in German magazines and American newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century; preparatory drawings and watercolours; twelve landscape drawings in pencil sketched in the Harz mountains in the summer of 1917-1918; and some of his famous "nature notes," which were so important to his artistic practice. The first gallery will present Feininger's initial vocation as an acclaimed illustrator and cartoonist who only began painting around the age of thirty.

- **Never-before-exhibited documents, letters and watercolours** on loan from the artist's family provide additional insight and complement the chronology of the artist's life.

- **Photographs:** To highlight the Feininger family's interest in photography, the Museum has included in the exhibition four of Lyonel Feininger's photographs, as well as shots taken by his two sons: twenty "copy prints" by T. Lux, a direct participant in daily life at the Bauhaus, and a whole section devoted to fifty-three vintage prints by Andreas, part of a major gift of 287 works the Museum received in 2011 from members of the artist's family now living in Canada. The presentation of these works by one of the great Modernist photographers was made possible thanks to the Feininger family.

■ Feininger and the Bauhaus

Feininger's role as "Master" in the Bauhaus graphics workshop is highlighted with the presentation of several prints by fellow "Masters": Itten, Schlemmer, Klee, Marcks, Schreyer. These works are drawn from the portfolio series *Neue Europäische Graphik* [New European Graphics], a project Feininger oversaw during his tenure there. This section also features the masterful paintings from Feininger's Bauhaus years and a copy of the Bauhaus manifesto, recently acquired by the MMFA, as well as a family photo album and "copy prints" of T. Lux Feininger's iconic images of life at the innovative school of art and design. This is complemented by a projection of the film *Bauhaus: Face of the Twentieth Century* in the galleries (26 min., screened alternately in English and French). Footage from the exhibition *Entartete Kunst*, which took place the year Feininger left Germany for the United States, will also be shown.

■ Lyonel Feininger and Music

Particular emphasis has been placed on the important role played by music in Feininger's life: the artist's violin (on loan from the Feininger family) is on display; and fugues composed by Feininger, as well as music by Bach, can be heard in the Music Room to illustrate the profound connection between music and the visual arts throughout the artist's life. The art in the Music Room emphasizes the "contrapuntal" musicality in Feininger's series, most notably with the series of works on the Gelmeroda church and views of the Baltic Sea. The music in the exhibition was selected by François Filiatrault, early music specialist, and Claude Nadon.

■ The exhibition was designed by Nathalie Crinière, Agence NC, Paris. With a Bauhaus-inspired colour scheme, the gallery layout was designed to feature a thematic grouping of works, with a bold staging that follows Feininger's trajectory through Paris, Berlin, Weimar and Dessau. After a gallery that reflects the turbulent world of the 1910s, the pure aesthetics of the Bauhaus is evoked by a large gallery in which a cubic structure serves as a film screening room. A beautiful Music Room, composed of circular walls, showcases the importance of music in Feininger's art and creates an atmosphere conducive to the appreciation of his series paintings.

The typography used in the exhibition was created by Brad, the Museum's advertising agency. It was designed after Lyonel Feininger's original typeface for the portfolio series *Neue Europäische Graphik* produced at the Bauhaus.

■ The Museum wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the Feininger family, as well as Moeller Fine Art, New York – Berlin, who graciously agreed to lend a number of additional works to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

THE REVOLUTIONARY MODEL OF THE BAUHAUS

The Bauhaus occupies a unique place in the history of twentieth century culture, art, architecture, design and new media. In 1919, Berlin architect Gropius was offered the opportunity to effect social change when the Socialist government of the state of Thuringia invited him to become the founding director of a new and innovative art school in Weimar. He baptized this pedagogical experiment the Bauhaus, or “house of building,” choosing a name to suggest the medieval “Bauhütte” where craftsmen and artists worked side by side. Gropius appointed Feininger, Itten, Marcks, Klee, Kandinsky, Mucbe, Schlemmer and Albers, among others, to be “Masters” at the Bauhaus. Their different stylistic ideologies encouraged a wealth of experimentation whose locus was a curriculum combining the theoretical and the practical. Any occasion resulted in an outpouring of creative effort, often culminating in a performance. The Bauhaus Jazz Band provided the music for the school’s numerous dances and festivals. The school would undergo significant changes during its fourteen years of existence, inevitable in such a highly experimental institution greatly affected by the political upheavals of the Weimar Republic. The school’s approach also proved financially impractical, and in 1923, it was necessary for Gropius to turn away from the crafts and orient the instruction to designing for mass production, adopting the slogan “Art into Industry.”

In 1925, the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to the industrial city of Dessau, where Gropius designed a new building to house the school. It has become a hallmark of modernist architecture, with its steel-frame construction, glass-curtain wall and asymmetrical pinwheel plan. The cabinetmaking workshop, under the direction of Marcel Breuer, produced designs that are now icons of modern furniture. Inspired by the extruded steel tubes of his bicycle, he experimented with metal furniture, ultimately creating lightweight, mass-producible metal chairs. The textile workshop also flourished, especially under the direction of designer and weaver Gunta Stölzl, who created abstract textiles and encouraged experimentation with unorthodox materials, including cellophane, fibreglass and metal. In the metalworking workshop, designers such as Marianne Brandt transformed everyday objects, with careful attention to functionality and ease of use. The graphics workshop, initially producing prints under Feininger’s direction, later focused on typography. Under László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer, visual clarity was stressed above all with the use of sans serif typefaces and the incorporation of photography.

In 1928, Gropius was succeeded by the architect Hannes Meyer as director. Yielding to pressure from an increasingly right-wing municipal government, Meyer resigned only two years later. With Mies van der Rohe named as head, a new emphasis was placed on architecture in the curriculum. The increasingly unstable political situation in Germany, combined with the Bauhaus’ dire financial difficulties, forced him to relocate the school to Berlin in 1930, where it operated on a reduced scale. Under pressure from the Nazi regime and with the consent of the Masters, he dissolved the Bauhaus in Berlin in 1933.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

LYONEL FEININGER PHOTOGRAPHER

Among the members of Lyonel Feininger's family, the title "photographer" was usually reserved for his two sons, Andreas and T. Lux. In fact, Lyonel was an avid photographer who amassed a cache of 18,000 slides and negatives. In 1928, the year he began his intensive engagement with photography, he was approaching sixty, living at the Bauhaus in Dessau, and already ranked among the most famous and highly respected painters in Germany. Even though photography would become one of his central pursuits, his photographs were virtually unknown until today, as Feininger never chose to exhibit this body of work publicly. Prior to 1928, Feininger used photography for family snapshots and as a documentary tool, rejecting any notion that the medium could be associated with artistic expression. He identified the term "photographic" with apathetic ease.

Feininger changed his approach to the medium after his sons began taking photographs. Andreas outfitted the cellar of the family home in Dessau with a darkroom and enlarger. Feininger created a series of images marked by a modernist ambition and formal prowess rivalling any of the other Bauhaus photographers of the period. He first photographed the trees and streets immediately around his house, then the school's new academic buildings—geometric glass shapes emerging gently from the damp evening haze, in soft focus, like ghosts of Gropius' starkly angular designs. Photographing almost exclusively at night allowed Feininger to expand on his painterly explorations of what he called the "magical, veiled world" that appeared early or late in the day. Moisture in the air and streetlamp reflections offered him a range of light effects to explore and manipulate. In stressing the dominance of light and atmospheric phenomena, and by utilizing long exposures, Feininger's photographs retain an unearthly, romantic tenor that belies the technological spirit of the Bauhaus buildings. As images that fuse formalist innovation with a heightened awareness of the artist's hand and time's passage, these photographs are suspended, like so many of his paintings, between fascination with modernity and yearning for a prelapsarian sense of quietude and harmony. For an artist who considered light the ordering principle of the world, the source of clarity amid chaos, the camera provided a vital and transformative "new way of seeing."

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

PAINTING AND MUSIC

“Music is the language of my innermost self”

One cannot fully appreciate the art of Feininger without understanding the central role that music played in his life. His passion for music came from his mother, Elisabeth, pianist and accompanist of international stature, and from his father, Karl, world-class concert violinist. Karl Feininger’s book, *An Experiential Psychology of Music Education*, published in 1909, was influenced by the Idealist philosophy of Kant, Schopenhauer and Hegel. For German artists of his generation who shared this philosophical heritage, the inner realm was venerated as a spiritual space free from the constraints of society’s rules and laws. Schopenhauer had declared music — non-representational, indeed, invisible — superior to all other arts.

Violin was Feininger’s chief instrument. Between 1921 and 1926, he composed twelve fugues — a form that impressed him with its ability to express a full range of human emotions, while simultaneously obeying strict contrapuntal laws. Since the late nineteenth century, visual artists had looked to instrumental music as a model for an emotionally expressive art free of narrative and naturalistic imitation. Kandinsky and Klee, Feininger’s friends from Der Blaue Reiter right up to the Bauhaus, were among the proposition’s fiercest advocates. For them, the key pairing was colour: Kandinsky likened colour to the musical keyboard in his 1911 book *On the Spiritual in Art*, and Klee created colour charts for his Bauhaus courses that established analogies between colour gradations and musical counterpoint. Having them as neighbours nurtured Feininger’s attachment to music as a carrier of emotions and moods inexpressible in words.

Rather than emulating the emotional power of music, Feininger sought to decode its structure, particularly that of polyphony. In polyphonic counterpoint, the initial thematic vocal statement is followed by overlapping voices harmonically echoing the original theme to produce a vertical column of opulent sound. The possibility of translating this thematic repetition and variation into painting “intoxicated” Feininger “with joy... and hope for [his] work”: he described his paintings as “sound contained.” After he began composing, he fully understood how he could transpose the clarity and simplicity of the fugue into his art. Taking his cue from the “insurmountably concise” artistry of Bach, he replaced the complex, faceted forms in his prismatic work with expansive planes of transparent colour, which he juxtaposed to create a chromatic equivalent. Just as the fugues begin with a single musical line, he transformed a modest structure into an edifice as “monumental and eternally alive” as Bach’s music.

FEININGER AND THE ART OF THE FUGUE

Although it was not taught as a discipline at the Bauhaus, music played a key part in the social life of the school, especially for Feininger and his colleagues, Vassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Klee, like Feininger, was an accomplished violinist from a musical family, and Kandinsky, a close friend of the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg, wrote four “colour-tone dramas” between 1909 and 1914, the most influential of which was *Der gelbe Klang* [The Yellow Sound]. In the evening and at his Sunday afternoon open houses, Feininger often played violin duets with Klee and piano with his adolescent son Laurence, or with Hans Brönnner, a Weimar composer and Laurence’s piano teacher. For Feininger’s fiftieth birthday, on July 17, 1921, Brönnner

presented him with an organ fugue he had composed. The gift inspired the artist, who spent the next thirteen days composing a fugue of his own. Over the next six years, Feininger completed eleven more fugues, mostly for organ, with two others remaining unfinished. The fugues were performed multiple times between 1924 and 1926, some to noteworthy acclaim. Collector and critic Paul Westheim published a facsimile of *Fugue VI* in his almanac of European art.

Derived from the canon form, the fugue is a composition of three or more voices based entirely on imitation, in which the main theme and one or several secondary themes give chase from voice to voice. The fugues being difficult to play, Feininger was disappointed by most of the performances of his pieces. At a concert in Halle in 1925, the organist took so many liberties with the composition that Feininger became ill! The musical success or failure of his fugues notwithstanding, their primary importance lay in the fact that they gave Feininger insight into the structure of polyphonic counterpoint.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

ANDREAS FEININGER, MODERNIST PHOTOGRAPHER : THE MEASURE OF PERFECTION

In a century that witnessed unprecedented international conflict and violence, Andreas Feininger (1906-1999), like his father Lyonel, was drawn to sanctuaries of peace found in nature, in its sublime vast expanses or its microscopic wonders. When Andreas focused his lens—"the eye of a structural engineer," he calls it — on natural phenomena, it was its geometry and monumentality that he brought out, characteristics also intrinsic to his father's art. Nevertheless, in their clarity of line, Andreas' photographs are closer to New Objectivity than to Lyonel's interest in the fragmentation of form.

Trained as a cabinetmaker at the Bauhaus, then as an architect, Andreas Feininger's professional career as a photographer began somewhat by chance, as an architectural photographer in Sweden. Soon, however, foreigners were forbidden to take photographs and drive cars: it was 1939, and the government feared spies. Andreas left with his wife, Wysse, and son, Tomas, and moved to New York, where he began a career as a photojournalist and soon established a reputation as one of its pioneers. As a staff photographer for *Life* magazine from 1943 to 1962, he shot 346 stories, many of which included compelling double-page spreads. He also wrote more than fifty books on photography, which featured reproductions of his work and essays on technical and theoretical approaches to the medium. Some of these works have been translated into fourteen languages.

Among the works presented here are early photographs taken in Hamburg at the beginning of the artist's career. A masterful series of avant-garde macro photographs, often from a surrealist viewpoint, is witness to his fascination for the varied phenomena of nature. The patterns and complex structures found in these images are also reflected in his photographs of urban scenes, such as the geometric construction of New York skyscrapers or the repetitive units found in the assembly lines of industrial production. In dramatic contrast, works capturing scenes in Manhattan, brimming with life, document the changing face of the metropolis in the mid-twentieth century.

This exhibition presents photographs from the Wysse E. Feininger Bequest. The Museum wishes to thank Tomas Feininger and his family for helping to make this bequest possible.

LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

LYONEL FEININGER – BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1871

July 17. Lyonel Feininger is born at St. Mark's Place, in New York City. He is the first child of violinist and composer Karl Friedrich Feininger, born in Germany, and singer and pianist Elisabeth Cecilia Lutz, born in New Jersey, to German émigré parents.

1887

Feininger sails for Hamburg, Germany, to study violin at the Leipzig Conservatory. Upon arrival, he decides to study art instead at the General Vocational School. He will continue his studies in various schools in Berlin, Liège and Paris over the next few years.

1895

Feininger begins to work regularly for several German humour magazines.

1901–02

Feininger marries pianist Clara Fürst, daughter of mural painter and Berlin Secession member Gustav Fürst. Their daughters Eleonora (Lore) and Marianne are born.

1906

He produces some comic-strip series for the *Chicago Tribune*. He moves to Paris with Julia Berg, an art student he met the year before. Their son Andreas Lyonel Feininger is born. Feininger begins frequenting the Café du Dome, in Montparnasse, the gathering place for German-speaking artists in Paris.

1908

Feininger and Julia marry and move to Berlin. A member of the Berlin Secession, he exhibits with the group every year between 1908 and 1912, and again in 1914.

1909–10

Their sons Laurence Karl and Theodore Lucas (T. Lux) are born.

1911

Feininger is represented by six paintings in Paris' Salon des Indépendants, where he discovers Cubism.

1912

Feininger meets members of the Dresden-based German Expressionist group Die Brücke [The Bridge], who invite him to exhibit with the group—he declines.

1913

Franz Marc, co-founder of the Munich-based Expressionist group Der Blaue Reiter [The Blue Rider] with Vassily Kandinsky, invites Feininger to participate in the First German Autumn Salon at the gallery Der Sturm [The Storm].

1914–18

World War I begins. In April 1917, the United States enters World War I on the Allied side. In August of the same year, Feininger, an American national, is put under “city arrest” and must report daily to the local police station. The following year, Wilhelm II abdicates, precipitating the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On November 11, 1918, Germany signs the Armistice, ending World War I.

1919

Weimar Republic begins. Architect Walter Gropius appoints Feininger “Master” at the Bauhaus in Weimar. He is the first instructor of this new avant-garde state art school.

1921

Already a talented violinist, Feininger composes his first fugue; he completes eleven more between 1921 and 1927.

1924

Collector Galka Scheyer forms Die Blaue Vier [The Blue Four], consisting of Feininger, Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Alexei Jawlensky, to promote their work in the United States.

1925

The Bauhaus moves to Dessau. A year later, the Feiningers settle into one of the “Master Houses” designed by Gropius.

1929

Alfred H. Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, includes Feininger’s work in the exhibition *Paintings by 19 Living Americans*.

1931

In celebration of Feininger’s sixtieth birthday, the Nationalgalerie Berlin mounts a major exhibition.

1932 Now in control of Dessau’s city council, the National Socialists (Nazis) dissolve the Bauhaus.

1933

Adolph Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany. Feininger and Julia—whose background is Jewish—leave Dessau, splitting their time between the Baltic village of Deep and Berlin.

1937

The Nazis open the *Entartete Kunst* [Degenerate Art] exhibition in Munich, with over 600 examples of modern art confiscated from German museums, including twenty-four Feininger works. Feininger and Julia leave Germany permanently and move to New York City.

1944

Alfred H. Barr mounts an exhibition of Feininger’s and Marsden Hartley’s work, which travels to ten American cities.

1945

Feininger teaches a summer course at Black Mountain College, North Carolina. Feininger’s first wife, Clara Fürst, is killed while being deported to Auschwitz.

1947

Feininger's health declines. He is elected president of the Federation of American Painters and Sculptors.

1950

Feininger's first solo show in Europe since his departure in 1937 is presented first in Hanover, then in Munich, Braunschweig, Mannheim, Düsseldorf, Paris, Hamburg, Berlin and London.

1956

January 13. Lyonel Feininger dies at the age of eighty-five in his New York apartment. He is buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.

The Arte Musica Foundation presents:

A Fugue at the Museum

in connection with the exhibition

Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus

Eight Concerts

Thursday, March 8, to Sunday, March 11, 2012

at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Bourgie Hall

Montreal, January 18, 2012 - The Arte Musica Foundation invites music lovers to discover the fascinating world of the fugue during the festival **A Fugue at the Museum**, presented from **Thursday, March 8, to Sunday, March 11, 2012**, in **the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Bourgie Hall**.

The programme, which includes **eight concerts** covering repertoire from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, will focus on the rich, passionate musical form of the fugue, with particular attention paid to the composer who most influenced artist Lyonel Feininger: **J. S. Bach**.

A touchstone of Western music, the **Well-tempered Clavier** will be presented in its entirety in **four concerts** performed by **four musicians** as remarkable as they are versatile, who will demonstrate their skill on Bourgie Hall's magnificent collection of keyboard instruments.

Luc Beauséjour, Tom Beghin, Jean-Willy Kunz and Ilya Poletaev will play the forty-eight Preludes and fugues on the harpsichord, clavichord, piano, pianoforte and organ on Friday, March 9 and Sunday, March 11.

Bach's ultimate masterpiece, the **Art of the Fugue**, will be performed on Saturday, March 10 by Les Idées heureuses. Ensemble Caprice, renowned for its vivacious and innovative approach to the Baroque repertoire, will present the famous **Brandenburg Concertos** on Sunday, March 11.

A Fugue at the Museum

Thursday, March 8, at 2 p.m.

The Well-Tempered Telephone

SMCQ Ensemble, Geneviève Soly, harpsichord and Jean-Willy Kunz, organ

Work of Walter Boudreau and Yves Daoust inspired by the first Prelude and fugue of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*, which will require audience participation with their own precious instruments: the cell phone.

A unique experience for the whole family during spring break.

7.30 p.m.

Preludes and fugues by Shostakovich

David Jalbert, piano

Excerpts from a major twentieth-century work inspired by Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*.

Friday, March 9, at 6 p.m.

1. The complete Well-Tempered Clavier by J. S. Bach

Preludes and fugues Nos. 1 to 6, books I and II

Tom Beghin, pianoforte and clavichord

Ilya Poletaev, harpsichord, piano and organ

Presented by



Friday, March 9, at 6 p.m.

2. The complete Well-Tempered Clavier by J. S. Bach
Preludes and fugues Nos. 7 to 12, books I and II

Tom Beghin, pianoforte and clavichord
Ilya Poletaev, harpsichord, piano and organ

Saturday, March 10, at 7.30 p.m.

The Art of Fugue by J. S. Bach

Les Idées heureuses
Natalie Michaud, recorder and direction
Geneviève Soly, organ and harpsichord

Sunday, March 11, at 2 p.m.

3. The complete Well-Tempered Clavier by J. S. Bach
Preludes and fugues Nos. 13 to 18, books I and II

Luc Beauséjour and Jean-Willy Kunz, harpsichord, organ and clavicymbalum

4 p.m.

4. The complete Well-Tempered Clavier by J. S. Bach
Preludes and fugues Nos. 19 to 24, books I and II

Luc Beauséjour and Jean-Willy Kunz, harpsichord, organ and clavicymbalum

7.30 p.m.

J. S. Bach's Six Brandenburg Concertos

Ensemble Caprice
Matthias Maute, conductor

Three courses and four lectures accompany this cycle
Consult the complete programme: www.bourgiehall.ca

Tickets :

By phone from Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.:
514-285-2000, option 4 or 1-800-899-6873,
Or in person at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Ticket Counter

Tickets online, informations and programmation: www.bourgiehall.ca
The Bourgie Concert Hall is located at 1339 Sherbrooke Street West
in the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art of the Montreal Museum of Fine
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LYONEL
FEININGER

FROM MANHATTAN TO THE BAUHAUS

INFORMATION

Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus

January 21 – May 13, 2012

Michal and Renata Horstein Pavilion

1380 Sherbrooke St. West

514-285-1600 – mmfa.qc.ca

MUSEUM HOURS

Three evenings a week

Tuesday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.*.

Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Closed on Monday

* Exhibitions with admission fees only

ADMISSION

VIPs (Friends of the Museum*)	Free
26 to 64	\$15 (\$7.50 on Wednesday from 5 to 9 p.m.)
65 and over	\$7.50
13 to 25	\$7.50
0 to 12**	free
Groups of 20 or more	\$12/pers.

* Museum VIPs benefit from many privileges, including free admission to all the Museum's exhibitions upon presentation of their membership card

** Accompanied by an adult

Tickets are on sale:

- At the Ticket Counter of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (in person only)
- Online: www.mmfa.qc.ca
- By phone: 514-285-2000, Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CATALOGUE

Edited by Barbara Haskell, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art of New York, the fully illustrated 277-page catalogue accompanying the exhibition sheds new light on the artist's life and work. Published in English by Yale University Press, it comprises essays and a detailed chronology. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has overseen the publication of the catalogue in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Somogy Éditions d'art, Paris. It is the first complete monograph in French on the oeuvre of Lyonel Feininger. Available at the Museum's Boutique and Bookshop (\$67.95 before tax).

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

• Musical Canvases

Admission fees

- Friday, January 20: *The Fugue from Bach to Feininger*

5 p.m.: Guided tour of the exhibition *Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus*

6.30 p.m.: Concert - works by Schumann, Ana Sokolovic, L. Feininger, and J. S. Bach, with Mathieu Gaudet, piano

- Friday, April 20: *Tribute to Feininger*

5 p.m.: Guided tour of the exhibition *Lyonel Feininger*

6.30 : Concert: works by K.D. Richter and L. Feininger, with Louise Bessette, piano

• LECTURES

Free admission – in the Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

On Wednesdays, at 6 p.m.

- February 1 – *Lyonel Feininger's artistic lineage: a musician, painter and photographer*

By Anne Grace, Curator of Modern Art, MMFA

- February 15 – *The architecture of form: Andreas Feininger and the Bauhaus aesthetic*

By Ann Thomas, Curator of Photography, The National Gallery of Canada

- March 28 – *L'oeuvre d'art totale et autres utopies modernes: l'art de Feininger*

By Suzanne Paquet, assistant professor of art history, University of Montreal

• Lectures « A fugue at the Museum » - in French

Free admission – in the Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

- Wednesday, January 25 / 5 to 7 p.m.

Lyonel Feininger: des voiliers et des clochers. La présence de J.S. Bach dans la peinture de Feininger

By Dujka Smoje, honorary professor, Faculty of Music, University of Montreal

- Tuesday, March 6 (part 1) / 5 to 7 p.m.

Le clavier bien tempéré de J.S. Bach: un traité des passions

By Gilles Cantagrel, musicologist, writer, lecturer and programme director of France Musique from 1984 to 1987

- Wednesday, March 7 (part 2) / 5 to 7 p.m.

- Saturday, March 10 / 3 to 5 p.m.

L'art de la fugue dans la peinture du XX^e siècle

Par Dujka Smoje

• Series of three classes: « Un panorama de la fugue », in French, by Dujka Smoje

Sundays, 1.30 to 3.30 p.m.

Admission fees

- February 5: *Ma fin est mon commencement*

- February 12: *Dans la ronde de la fugue*

- February 19: *La fugue après Bach – Ludus tonalis, ludus atonalis*

● **CONCERTS**

A Fugue at the Museum

- Thursday, March 8 / 2 to 3 p.m.: *The Well-Tempered Telephone* – SMCQ Ensemble
- Thursday, March 8 / 7.30 p.m.: *Preludes and fugues, OP. 87*, by Shostakovich – David Jalbert, piano

J.S. Bach well-tempered clavier in four concerts:

- Friday, March 9 / 6 p.m.: Preludes and fugues Nos. 1 to 6, books I and II
- Friday, March 9 / 8 p.m.: Preludes and fugues Nos. 7 to 12, books 1 and II with Tom Beghin and Ilya Poletaev
- Sunday, March 11 / 2 p.m.: Preludes and fugues nos. 13 to 18, books I and II
- Sunday, March 11 / 4 p.m.: Preludes and fugues nos. 19 to 24, books I and II with Luc Beauséjour and Jean-Willy Kunz

The Art of Fugue by J.S. Bach

- Saturday, March 10 / 7.30 p.m.: *The Art of Fugue* and *The Preludium und Fugue*, with Les idées heureuses
- Sunday, March 11 / 7.30 p.m.: *J.S. Bach's six Brandenburg Concertos*, with Ensemble Caprice

● **Guided tours**

January 21 – May 12, 2012

- Thursdays
1.30 and 6 p.m. in French
2.30 and 6.30 p.m. in English
- Saturdays
10.30 a.m. in French and 11 a.m. in English

● **Films**

A fugue at the movies

Saturdays at 2 p.m. – free admission, Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

- January 21: *Un art de la fugue* – France, Bruno Monsaingeon, 1980, 58 min.
- January 28: *Le silence avant Bach* – Spain, Pere Portabella, 2007, 102 min.
- February 4: *Chronique d'Anna Magdalena Bach* – Germany, Danièle Huiller and Jean-Marie Straub, 1967, black and white, 93 min.
- February 11: *Scènes de quatuor (Strings Attached)* – France, Bruno Monsaingeon, 2011, 57 min.
- February 25: *Sonate pour alto – Dimitri Chostakovitch* – Russia, Alexander Sokurov, 1988, 80 min.
- March 3 – *Jean-Sébastien Bach : l'art de la fugue* – France, Gérard Guillaume, 1970, 30 min.
/followed by : *Le ruisseau* – Canada, Étienne Robert de Massy, 1998, 20 min.
- April 28 : *Trente-deux films brefs sur Glenn Gould* – Canada, François Girard, 1993, 93 min.

Films at the Museum

Sundays at 2 p.m. – free admission, Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

- January 23: *Bauhaus – Model and Myth*, Germany - Neils Bolbrinker and Lertin Stutterheim, 1996-2009, 103 min. – in English and German, English sub-titles
- January 29: *Bauhaus – The Face of the 20th Century* – United Kingdom, Julia Cave and Frank Whittford, 1994, 50 min.

- February 26: *Bauhaus de Dessau* – France, Frédéric Compain, 2000, 26 min., in French, followed by: *Paul Klee, le silence de l'ange* – France, Michaël Gaumnitz, 2005, 52 min., in French
- April 1: *Futurism, an Art/Life Movement* – Italy, France, Luca Versone, 2010, 52 min., in Italian with English sub-titles

Details of educational and cultural activities in the brochure published by The Education and Community Programmes Department of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and on the Museum's web site at mmfa.qc.ca