

Press release | 16 December 2024

ANDERS ZORN Swedish Superstar

26 September 2025 to 25 January 2026

Press conference: Thursday, 25 September 2025, 11 a.m.

Opening: Thursday, 25 September 2025, 7 p.m.

The Hamburger Kunsthalle is presenting its first survey show of the multifaceted oeuvre of the Swedish artist Anders Zorn (1860–1920), a world-famous artist circa 1900 who experienced a meteoric rise in Europe and the United States with portrait paintings of two US Presidents and various members of high society. On view will be some 150 exhibits, including major works as well as rarely shown paintings and watercolours, along with Zorn's impressive etchings and photography. Zorn visited Hamburg in 1891 at the invitation of Kunsthalle director Alfred Lichtwark and created several atmospheric views of the harbour, which are included in the exhibition.

The artist who would become one of the foremost talents of the century grew up in modest circumstances in the central Swedish province of Dalarna and already caused a sensation as a student at the Stockholm Art Academy. Zorn indulged his wanderlust at an early age, travelling in the 1880s to France, Spain, North Africa and Turkey. During his years in London, he managed to gain a foothold in the English art market (1882–1885), afterward experiencing the heyday of Impressionism first-hand in Paris (1888–1896) and taking the USA by storm in 1893. A flair for contemporary themes coupled with unrivalled technical facility assured Zorn tremendous success. Imbued with lightness and buoyancy, his works exude a fascinating spontaneity – belying what was in some cases an elaborate, well-calculated creative process. Initially working almost exclusively as a watercolourist, the artist concentrated mainly on oil painting from 1887 onwards.

Zorn was a dazzling, highly versatile artist whose oeuvre is difficult to summarise – particularly in terms of subject matter. Alongside Impressionist elements, his works also betray the influence of diametrically opposed artistic trends of the day, such as salon painting. Cosmopolitan views run through Zorn's oeuvre, but these are often intersected by motifs from his Swedish homeland of Dalarna, where he settled again in 1896. Such subjects come to the fore in his later work, which evokes the relationship between human and nature, a theme that increasingly shaped his artistic self-image as well as his identity.

Curator: Dr. Markus Bertsch; Assistant Curator: Jana Kunst

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Anders Zorn (1860–1920)
Emma Zorn Reading, 1887
Oil on canvas, 40.2 x 60.6 cm
Zornmuseet, Mora
© Zornmuseet, Mora

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