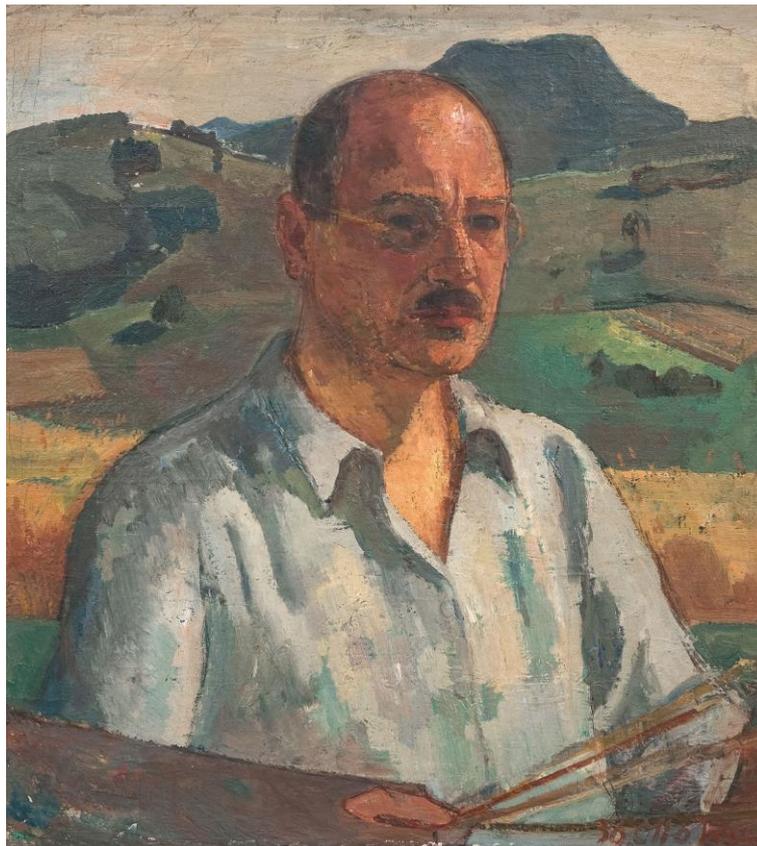


Otto Wyler is too good for the second line

It is high time to remember Otto Wyler –an exhibition in Burgdorf invites to rediscover the Argovian painter.

Anna Raymann



Otto Wyler without his notorious suit in his «Self-portrait in front of the Jura» (1936). © Estate of Otto Wyler

It's time to lift Otto Wyler out of oblivion. An exhibition in Burgdorf invites to an encounter with the painter of Aargau.

As a matter of fact, Otto Wyler wore a suit while he was painting, the photographs indicate this. In Rimini the tie was close-fitting around his neck. The spindly legs of the boys peeking over his shoulders were sticking out of their shorts. Even in Marrakesh he didn't take off his jacket while painting. The

majority of men wore suits in those days. However, it suited Wyler who lived a middle-class life with his family, to loosen his shirt button only for a rare self-portrait.

Otto Wyler, born in 1887 in Mumpf, after study years in Paris and a few years in Ftan, lived in Aarau. The Aare, the Jura Hill range and the local forests are well liked motives. Wyler isn't an innovator, his works reflect the styles of his time: traces of late Impression-

ism, Fauvism as well as Art Nouveau and Japonisme, all are evident in the powerful color palette.

His exhibition list which leads to Germany and Morocco, is long. However after his death in 1965 he gradually fell into oblivion. Patricia Bieder wrote in the catalogue that will appear next week, as part of the exhibition "The Most Beautiful Paintings. Encountering Otto Wyler" in the Franz Gertsch Museum in Burgdorf: "He is an artist in the second line"

In the shadow of Cezanne, Hodler and Amiet

The museum in Burgdorf offers the painter from Aarau, a fascinating home with its smart and fanciful architecture until the end of February. There is space for just 70 paintings in two rooms - compared with an "oeuvre" that includes at least 1000 works, this is a narrow segment. The curator Anna Wesle and the exhibition maker Beat Wismer decided cleverly, they succeeded to show the broad spectrum of Wyler's paintings.

In an Argovian tradition a May Parade welcomes the public. The early work shines and bangs. Light spots are already dancing here, which the artist made ramble afterwards masterfully also above water, cliffs and bodies. Patricia Bieder reported that the press praised Otto Wyler as a promising talent after his first exhibitions. The author stopped on the tour in front of the "Madonna", which is standing out in front of a range of hills, a puffy cloud just came to it as aura. Bieder said: "Perhaps he was slightly overzealous".

Wyler left the symbolism behind. The "Lady in Kimono" that he dressed in water lilies is wonderful. The painted nature experiences are atmospheric, a zoom in two paintings from the portrait to the detailed view of a hand

seems refreshingly trendy. The color palette is impressive, people think about Ferdinand Hodler, Cuno Amiet and Paul Cezanne in the two dimensional and linear order.

Painting was a vocation for Wyler but above all a profession that had to support four children. It astonishes that his Jewish origin didn't bother him privately and artistically during the world wars. He escaped from military service by virtue of a declaration of unfitness.

He lived a middle-class life in Aarau. This is reflected in the works, many are commissioned works. His wife Betty frequently posed as model. Otto Wyler was a family man. A photograph in the catalogue shows him with his daughter Lotti Fellner painting – now finally he has taken off his jacket.

The exhibition in Burgdorf is one of several efforts this year to bring the artist to the first line. Bieder said: "His works prove that he also belongs there."

Until the end of October the Kunsthaus Zofingen exhibited his works in combination with the paintings of his three followers: the daughter Lotti Fellner, the grandson Tom Fellner and the great granddaughter Anne Fellner. Furthermore the grandson Yehuda R. Sprecher is making efforts to document the artistic legacy meticulously. The digital archive / website is a genuine treasure trove that is supplemented continuously. The latest addition with a re-discovered work is just a few days old.

The art world rediscovers Otto Wyler, the exhibition makes it easy for the public to "encounter" the artist from Aargau and it's worth it.

The most beautiful paintings. Encountering Otto Wyler: until 27.2.22 Franz Gertsch



The river Aare is flowing lively through Otto Wyler's «River landscape» (1909). © Estate of Otto Wyler