

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Balthus - Time Suspended. Paintings and Drawings 1932 - 1960**

**18 August - 4 November 2007**

From 18 August till 4 November 2007 Museum Ludwig will present the first solo exhibition of the French painter Balthus (Balthasar Klossowski, 29.02.1908-18.02.2001) ever mounted in Germany. On show will be some 70 outstanding paintings and drawings from the years 1932 to 1960, from international public and private collections.

The beginning of this period is marked by the scandal that Balthus created with his first exhibition, which was in 1934 at Galerie Pierre in Paris. Although his large canvases depicted traditional, in principal innocuous motifs such as a street scene, a music lesson, or a girl at a window, their pointed eroticism offended people's moral sensibilities. Over the ensuing decades Balthus portrayed his contemporaries, painted streets scenes and landscapes, and turned ever and again to young girls on the threshold to adulthood. On show in Cologne will be the paintings "La Rue", "La Fenêtre" and "La Toilette de Cathy" from the exhibition at Galerie Pierre. Further highlights at the exhibition in Museum Ludwig include "La Montagne", as well as "Les enfants Blanchard", which Picasso bought from Balthus.

Although abstract and surrealist painting was at its zenith at this time, Balthus cast his figurative motifs in a "timeless realism", as he termed it. The influence of the Italian Quattrocento and French Classicism, together with painting techniques adopted from the old masters, made him something of an eccentric figure on the contemporary art scene. But his exceptional works were applauded by such fellow spirits as Alberto Giacometti, Antonin Artaud, Paul Éluard and Albert Camus.

Despite having a number of ties with Germany through family and friends, Balthus's paintings are relatively unknown here and not to be found in any of the public collections. This exhibition will be shown solely at Museum Ludwig in Cologne.

This exhibition has received the generous support of the Kunststiftung NRW and der Sparkasse KölnBonn.

Curators: Sabine Rewald, Metropolitan Museum, New York

Kasper König/Nina Gülicher, Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Catalogue: Schirmer/Mosel, 35 Euro (museum), 58 Euro (retail)