

# Swiss Painters

**S**wiss painting, strictly speaking, does not exist – no more than French, English or Italian painting. There are Swiss painters who belong to artistic movements of their time such as Italian painters of the Renaissance or impressionist French painters. Some Swiss painters like Paul Klee are world famous. Others like Rudolf Koller (1828 - 1905) or Adolf Dietrich (1877 - 1957) are practically unknown outside their country. Who are the Swiss painters and how do they relate to other painters of their time?



musée des enfants

## The old against ...

3. In the nineteenth century, with the emergence of photography, painting evolved into two separate artistic movements. On one side were the «neo-classics» who defended an academic painting very close to reality. According to them, a «beautiful painting» was well drawn-out, composed with care and according to precise rules. Their masters were the great Italian or Flemish painters of centuries past like Leonardo da Vinci or Rembrandt.

## The modern

4. On the other hand, there were the «Impressionist» painters who defended the idea that since photography had been invented, the representation of reality no longer needed to be as precise as before, better to paint his «impressions» by privileging the games of light. The best known representative of this movement is the French painter Claude Monet.

## Anker

5. The debate was heated and both camps had its share of supporters. The Swiss painters were no exception and the two trends were well represented. Among the «neo-classics,» one finds mainly Albert Anker (1831 - 1910) who although Swiss originating in Neuchâtel, studied in Paris. Anker is a typical representative of this academic painting. His paintings are extremely well thought out in terms of the composition of the subjects, the organization of the space as well as the drawing and the colours.



# Swiss Painters



## Hodler and Vallotton

6. Among the «moderns» were Ferdinand Hodler (1853 - 1918) and Felix Vallotton (1865 - 1925) two «post-impressionist» painters. It is noteworthy that both of them began their career in the academic camp. Indeed, Hodler learned his trade with Barthélemy Menn, a Geneva painter very close to Corot, the French master landscape painter. As for Vallotton, he studied art in Paris at the Julian Academy, the most prestigious school of classical painting of the time.



## Symbolism

7. But Hodler and Vallotton parted from the classical current rather quickly to become Symbolist painters. Symbolism is an artistic movement that touches not only painting but also music and literature, especially poetry. Beyond words or pictorial works, it is a question of representing an idea through symbols. For example, the somewhat mysterious landscapes painted by Hodler represent not only lakes and mountains but are also metaphors supposed to embody ... eternity.



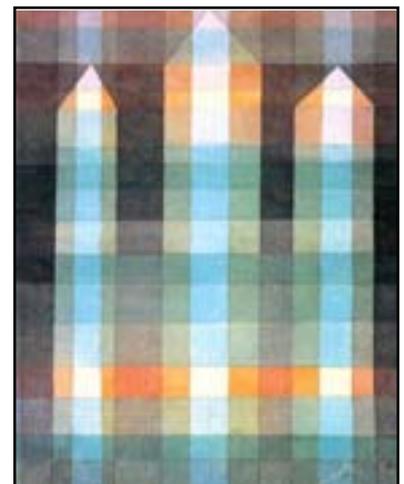
## Surrealism

8. The surrealist movement whose most famous painters were Dali in Spain and Magritte in Belgium also had its Swiss painters. One can mention the Genevan Dominique Appia (1926 - 2017) who painted the ceiling of the Victoria Hall, the prestigious concert hall of Geneva, and from Lucerne Hans Erni (1909 - 2015) who died at the age of ... 106.

## Paul Klee

9. But the most famous Swiss painter is a Swiss of German origin. His name is Paul Klee (1879 - 1940) and is known worldwide. A whole museum is devoted to it in Bern, the federal capital of Switzerland: the Paul Klee Centrum.

It is an absolute must to visit it.



*Klee, Three flowers 1923*