

Hilma af Klint

Recently revealed as a pioneer of abstraction, the Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) developed, in the early twentieth century, a fascinating body of work which has yet to be discovered in France.

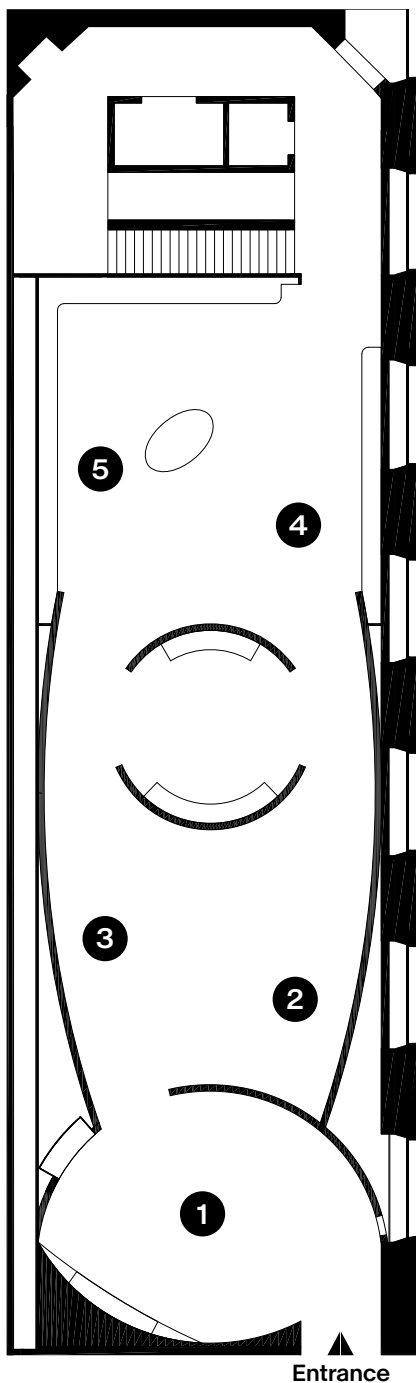
The exhibition presents her *Paintings for the Temple* (1906-1915), an important group of eleven series in which the artist recasts the line between visible and invisible, abstraction and figuration, through symbols, figures and geometric shapes. Inspired by Nordic folklore, natural science and esoterism,

Hilma af Klint developed her visual vocabulary as part of The Five (De Fem) group of women, who produced “automatic drawings” during spiritist seances. Driven by spirituality and freedom of expression, the work of Hilma af Klint continues to inspire new generations. More than a hundred canvases and drawings chart her spiritual journey, and at her request were not shown publicly until many years after her death.

Plans

LEVEL 1

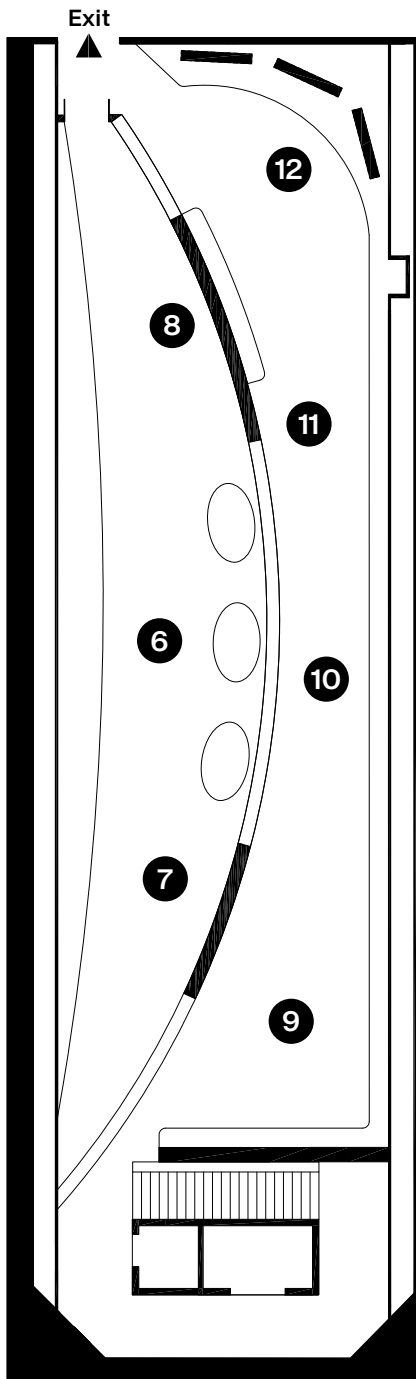
- ① The Five
- ② Primordial Chaos
- ③ Eros
- ④ The Large Figure Paintings
- ⑤ Evolution



Plans

LEVEL 2

- ⑥ The Ten Largest
- ⑦ The Small Watercolours
- ⑧ Seven-Pointed Star
- ⑨ Swan
- ⑩ Dove
- ⑪ The US Series
- ⑫ Altarpiece



Key dates

1862

Born October 26 in Stockholm (Sweden).

1879

Studied naturalistic and industrial drawing at the Technical School in Stockholm. Attended her first spiritist seances.

1887

A graduate with honours of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, she was given a studio at the heart of Stockholm's artistic scene.

1896

Founded The Five (De Fem) group with four friends: Sigrid Hedman, Anna Cassel, Cornelia Cedeberg and Mathilda Nilsson.

May 1904

Joined the Stockholm Theosophical Society.

November 1906

Began work on the *Paintings for the Temple* cycle.

1908

Dissolution of The Five. Met the philosopher Rudolf Steiner, future founder of anthroposophy, in Stockholm. Gave up painting for four years to care for her blind mother.

1912-1915

Reprised and completed the *Paintings for the Temple* cycle (193 works).

1918

Moved to Munsö with her mother and her partner, Thomasine Andersson, a nurse.

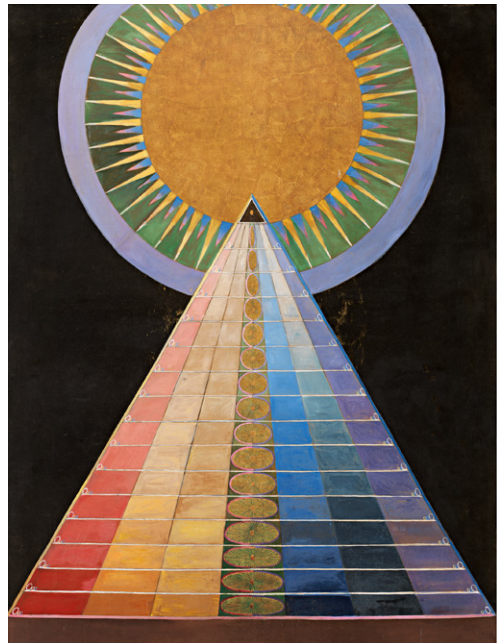
October 1920

Travelled to Dornach, Switzerland. Joined the Anthroposophical Society.

1944

Died on October 21, after a tram accident, days before her eighty-second birthday.

**“The scope of vision is so vast,
you have not yet realised the greater,
richer expanses that lie beyond.”
(January 28, 1900)**



Altarpiece, W Group, 1935, oil on canvas, 237,5 × 179,5 cm
© Courtesy Hilma af Klint Foundation

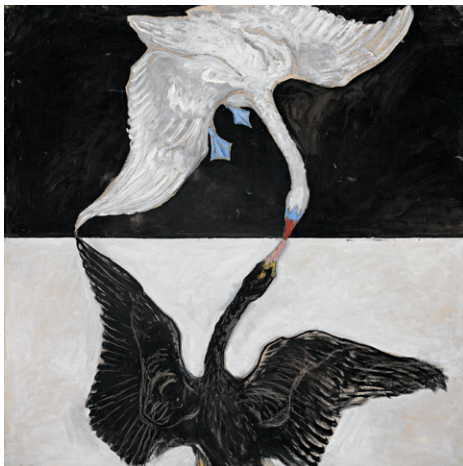
Key words

Spiritism

Early on, Hilma af Klint frequented spiritist circles in order to communicate with the deceased or “higher beings”. Participants used a psychograph to produce “mediumistic” drawings, which delivered more or less cryptic messages. The artist’s notebooks contain drawings that record communication with spirits at seances conducted between 1896 and 1910 by The Five (De Fem) group.

Abstraction and spirituality

Abstract painting emerged in the early twentieth century, underpinned by the idea that art must be more an expression of the soul than a representation of the world: a belief expressed by Hilma af Klint, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian. Drawing on theosophy and various mystical traditions, these artists envisaged colours, lines and forms as an autonomous “spiritual” language.



Swan, SUW Series, Group IX: 1st Part, 1913, oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm © Courtesy Hilma af Klint Foundation

Paintings for the Temple

This group of ten series is Hilma af Klint’s most ambitious undertaking. She kept it secret, concluding that the world was not yet ready to understand her paintings, which existed outside the Swedish academic tradition and gave form to invisible forces and mystical concepts.

First phase (1906-1908): *Primordial Chaos, Eros, The Large Figure Paintings, The Ten Largest, The Seven-Pointed Star, Evolution, The Small Watercolours.*

Second phase (1912-1915): *The US Series, Swan, Dove, Altarpiece.*

Theosophy

Co-founded in 1875 in New York by the Ukrainian occultist writer Helena Blavatsky and the American military officer and journalist Henry Olcott, the Theosophical Society set out to spark spiritual renewal through a universal religion that would fuse Buddhist wisdom with Christian esoterism. Theosophy’s influence explains the multitude of symbols in af Klint’s work.

Anthroposophy

Founded in 1913 by the philosopher Rudolf Steiner, the General Anthroposophical Society promised “knowledge of the spiritual world” by means of thought, meditation and the life of the soul. Hilma af Klint first met Steiner in 1908, and again two years later, in her studio. In 1920 af Klint joined the Anthroposophical Society, engaging in contemplative observations of nature which she incorporated into her work.

Folklore

The late nineteenth century in Europe saw a revival of interest in national folk heritage, in architecture, furniture, objects, textiles, and other areas. Opened in Stockholm in 1873, the Nordic Museum presented traditional arts, crafts and lifestyles that were part of neither academic nor industrial culture. Hilma af Klint kept close ties with this sphere and was inspired by its vast repertoire of forms and artefacts.

Visitor information

May 6 — August 30, 2026
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 7.30 pm
Late opening on Friday until 10 pm
Grand Palais, Square Jean Perrin entrance
Gallery 8

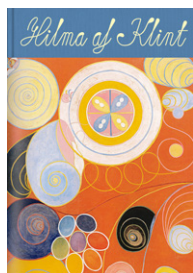
Entry

Full price: €15

Reduced price: €12 (Abonnement holders, ages 18-25, students up to age 30 inclusive, family discount)

Free (under 18s, job-seekers, visitors with a disability, Pass GrandPalais or Carte Pop holders)

Catalogue



Hilma af Klint

Pascal Rousseau (editor)

Co-published by Centre Pompidou-GPRMn
320 p., €45 (In French only)

Teaching materials

For teaching materials, go to
<https://www.grandpalais.fr/fr/programme/hilma-af-klint>

Additional resources

The Birth of Abstraction information pack:
<https://www.centrepompidou.fr/fr/offre-aux-professionnels/enseignants/dossiers-ressources-sur-lart/naissance-de-lart-abstrait>

Guided tours

For guided tours organised by the Grand Palais, go to: <https://www.grandpalais.fr>

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<https://www.centrepompidou.fr>

Related programming

THE WORLDS OF HILMA AF KLINT

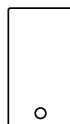
To complement the exhibition, a programme of events and opportunities for meetings, discussion and reflection, as well as film screenings, performances and artistic celebrations, will be offered throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Free admission, subject to availability

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GrandPalais Rmn × Centre Pompidou

After four years of building work, since the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024, the Grand Palais has progressively reopened to the public.

This iconic monument hosts exhibitions and events as part of a diverse and festive programme, rolled out by GrandPalaisRmn.

The Centre Pompidou has embarked on a metamorphosis, designed so that it will remain a centre "on the move" throughout renovation of the Beaubourg building until its scheduled reopening in 2030.

Throughout this period, the Centre Pompidou is taking its Constellation programme of exhibitions, performing arts, film, encounters and workshops to venues across France and internationally.

The GrandPalaisRmn and Centre Pompidou are delighted to put the Grand Palais at the heart of the Constellation programme.

Exhibition

Curator: Pascal Rousseau

Project manager at Grand Palais: Christelle Terrier

Head of production at Centre Pompidou: Adeline Crétet

Scenographer: Pascal Rodriguez

Graphic design: deValence

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