

**MASI Lugano**

Museo d'arte  
della Svizzera italiana,  
Lugano

Via Canova 10  
CH – 6901 Lugano

info@masilugano.ch  
+41 (0)91 815 7973  
www.masilugano.ch

---

## Hans Josephsohn

19 September 2020 – 21 February 2021  
Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano  
MASI | LAC

Curated by Ulrich Meinherz and Lukas Furrer

Press conference: Friday, 18 September, 10:30

---

### PRESS RELEASE

Lugano, 4 September 2020

From 19 September 2020 to 21 February 2021, the Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana pays homage to Hans Josephsohn on occasion of the centenary of his birth. Staged in collaboration with Kesselhaus Josephsohn in St. Gallen, the exhibition presents a selection of brass works produced between 1950 and 2006 curated by Ulrich Meinherz and Lukas Furrer.

Born in 1920 in Königsberg, in what was then East Prussia, Hans Josephsohn is considered one of the foremost sculptors of the 20th century. His Jewish ancestry prevented him from studying art in Nazi Germany. In 1938, he attended the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence, but was subsequently forced to flee to Switzerland due to the introduction of the Fascist racial laws. He continued his training as a sculptor in Zurich and dedicated himself to his artistic calling until his death in 2012.

The exhibition showcases around 20 sculptures in a wide open space. Rather than arranging them by chronologically or thematically, the layout aims to underscore the affinities and contrasts between the shapes and surfaces of works produced in different periods. This minimalist approach and the simplicity of the materials chosen for the display are in keeping with the characteristic spontaneity of Josephsohn's work. Indeed, the walls and floor of the exhibition space intentionally appear unfinished and provisional, evoking Josephsohn's treatment of the surfaces of his sculptures. However, the rough, bumpy appearance of the pieces is actually the result of painstaking work and multiple procedures performed by the artist.

The selection of brass sculptures presented at MASI does not claim to offer a retrospective of the sculptor's entire career, exemplifying the central theme of Josephsohn's artistic quest instead: the human figure. Josephsohn's artistic vocabulary comprises a limited number of sculptural types: heads, half-figures, standing figures, reclining figures and reliefs. While real models sourced among his circle of friends and relatives were the starting point for his sculptures, Josephsohn's work eschews a realistic

approach, favouring spontaneity and liveliness, emphasizing anatomical features and aggregating several points of view that make it difficult to identify the frontality of the sculpture.

Two venues in Switzerland house permanent exhibitions of Josephsohn's works: the Museo La Congiunta in Giornico, designed by architects Peter Märkli and Stefan Bellwalder inaugurated in 1992, and the Kesselhaus Josephsohn in St Gallen, inaugurated in 2003.

## **MASI Lugano**

Founded in 2015, after just a few years the Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana (MASI Lugano) has become one of the most visited art museums in Switzerland. It forms a cultural bridge between the north and south of the Alps, between Latin and Germanic Europe. Through its two locations – the LAC cultural centre and the historic Palazzo Reali – it offers a rich programme with temporary exhibitions and changing collection presentations as well as a comprehensive, multilingual educational programme for visitors of all ages. The offer is complemented by the close collaborations with the Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati, which is part of the MASI network, entirely dedicated to contemporary art. MASI is one of the Swiss museums to be directly supported by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture and is also one of the "Art Museums of Switzerland", the group of museums selected by Switzerland Tourism to promote the country's cultural image worldwide.

## **Current exhibitions**

### **La Collezione**

MASI | Palazzo Reali (permanent collection)

### **Shunk-Kender**

Art Through the Eye of the Camera (1957 – 1983)

MASI | Palazzo Reali, until 20 September 2020

### **Vincenzo Vicari Photographer**

Ticino in the tide of change

MASI | Palazzo Reali, until 10 January 2021

## **Upcoming exhibitions**

### **PAM Paolo Mazzuchelli**

Tra le ciglia

06 September 2020 – 28 March 2021

MASI | LAC

### **What's New. A Collection in Progress 2020**

19 September – 13 December 2020

Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati

### **Gabriela Maria Müller**

Anima naturae

Bally Artist of the Year Award 2019

24 September – 01 November 2020

MASI | Palazzo Reali

## **Marta Margnetti**

Prix Manor 2020

28 November 2020 – 14 February 2021

MASI | Palazzo Reali

## **Press Contacts**

### **MASI – Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana**

Head of Communication

Stefan Hottinger-Behmer

+41 (0)91 815 7962

comunicazione@masilugano.ch

### For Switzerland

NEUTRAL

Wasserwerkstrasse 129

8037 Zürich

[yes@neutral.plus](mailto:yes@neutral.plus)

### For Italy

ddl+battage

Alessandra de Antonellis

+39 339 3637388

[alessandra.deantonellis@ddlstudio.net](mailto:alessandra.deantonellis@ddlstudio.net)

Margherita Baleni

+39 347 4452374

[margherita.baleni@battage.net](mailto:margherita.baleni@battage.net)

## **Exhibition Venues**

### **MASI | LAC**

Piazza Bernardino Luini 6

CH – 6901 Lugano

### **MASI | Palazzo Reali**

Via Canova 10

CH – 6901 Lugano

---

## Main Partner



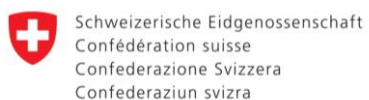
## Founders



Repubblica e Cantone  
Ticino



## Institutional Partners



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Dipartimento federale dell'interno DFI  
**Ufficio federale della cultura UFC**



## In collaboration with

Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen



---

## Press images

01

**Hans Josephsohn**

Untitled

1995

Brass

Josephsohn Estate, Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen



02

**Hans Josephsohn**

Untitled (Mirjam)

1950

Brass

Josephsohn Estate, Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen



03

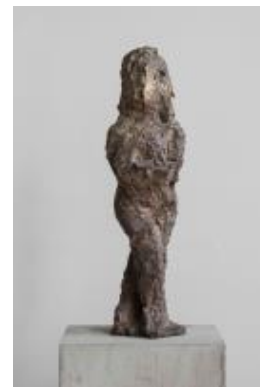
**Hans Josephsohn**

Untitled (Verena)

1982

Brass

Josephsohn Estate, Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen



04

Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen, installation view



05

Hans Josephsohn in his Studio in Zurich  
ca. 2006



06

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield UK, installation view  
2013



07

Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen, installation view



08

Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen, installation view



09

Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen, installation view



10

Venice Biennale 2013, installation view



11

Hans Josephsohn's Studio in Zürich  
ca. 2006



12

Hans Josephsohn at Kesselhaus St. Gallen  
ca. 2006



13

Hans Josephsohn

1972



14

Hans Josephsohn

1972



Captions 1-3:

© Josephsohn Estate, Kesselhaus Josephsohn/Galerie Felix Lehner

Captions 4-12:

Foto Katalin Deér, Kesselhaus Josephsohn

Captions 13-14:

© Willy Spiller