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MUSEUM LUDWIG

PRESS RELEASE

August & Marta

How August Sander Photographed the Painter Marta Hegemann (and Her Children's Room!)

A presentation for children

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With this presentation in the photography room, we have attempted to make a 1929 children's room tangible for visitor for which Marta Hegemann had created several wall paintings. Except for photographs taken by August Sander, no traces of them have survived today. Complemented by portraits and works on paper by Hegemann we try to offer insight into her designs for the murals, and young visitors are explicitly invited to explore them.

How proud and fierce she looks in August Sander's photo, the painter Marta Hegemann, who used to be a drawing and gym teacher and was the mother of two sons. Her blouse and necklace look tousled, and she has also painted all kinds of symbols on her face: a cross, a dot, birds—motifs that we recognize from her pictures. When Hegemann painted several murals for a children's room four years later, it was again August Sander who captured her work on it and the result with his camera. The paintings were shown in 1929 in the exhibition *Raum und Wandbild* at the Kölnischer Kunstverein. Initiated by the architect Hans Heinz Lüttgen, eight painters were each invited to design a model room. Marta Hegemann had previously designed playgrounds, so here she became responsible for the children's room. Other model rooms included a study by Franz Wilhelm Seiwert, a dining room by Richard Seewald, and a living room by Jankel Adler. Luise Straus-Ernst had especially high praise for the children's room in the magazine *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and described how Hegemann "met the needs of both art and children" by "covering the walls with a merry combination of children, fluttering birds, flowers, little boats, and stars that gave the whole room a bright cheerfulness." Unfortunately, these works have since been lost. But thanks to August Sander's photos, we know what they looked like—at least in black and white.

Two paintings, each two by two meters in size and each focusing on a child, were central to the room. Both children are surrounded by birds, stars, and boats; both have an open book in front of them; and both are surrounded by water, with houses and horses in the countryside in the distant background. Hegemann creates spaces of possibility in these pictures which transport us away from daily life in a city, family, or school. With its tent, wooden horse, and feather headdress, the one child imagines a journey to First Nations' America, the contours of which are visible in the open

book in front of him—a form of cultural appropriation that we want to raise awareness for from today's perspective. A monkey sits at the other child's feet, whose skirt and apron could be signs that she has a job? Hegemann dealt with costumes and roles in all her art. They can give us a feeling of freedom—freedom from ourselves and our life circumstances—or point to constricting roles. As a woman in those times, Hegemann was not allowed to simply study art wherever she wanted, which is why she took an indirect path as a drawing teacher. In the portrait taken by August Sander, she painted her face and thus presented herself confidently as a painter, not without a twinkle in her eye, it seems.

The photographs and drawings on view are hung at a height suitable for children. Hegemann's murals are reproduced in their original size. Young visitors are invited to get involved and contrast the black and white of the photographs with their own color versions of Hegemann's paintings.

Curator: Miriam Szwast

Website and Social Media

The Museum Ludwig will be posting about the exhibition on its social media channels with the hashtag #augustundmarta.

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www.museum-ludwig.de