



The Phillips Collection

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## Ugo Rondinone Presents Works Alongside 19th-Century American Artist Louis Eilshemius, Exploring Dialogue of Art, Nature, and Poetry

Rondinone, acclaimed contemporary Swiss artist, selects works by Eilshemius from his private collection and the Phillips's permanent collection for One-on-One presentation



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection presents *Ugo Rondinone / Louis Eilshemius*, a One-on-One exhibition that focuses on the intersections of poetry and nature in visual art. For the sixth edition of One-on-One, acclaimed contemporary Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone (b. 1964, Brunnen, Switzerland) presents his large-scale forest landscape paintings, a selection of poems on paper, and *diary paintings* in dialogue with 47 paintings by American painter and poet Louis Michel Eilshemius (1864–1941). Rondinone is a longtime collector and admirer of Eilshemius's work, and, unique to this iteration of One-on-One, the exhibition includes paintings by Eilshemius drawn from Rondinone's extensive private collection as well as the Phillips's permanent collection. [\*One-on-One: Ugo Rondinone / Louis Eilshemius\*](#) will be on view at the Phillips from November 7, 2023–January 14, 2024.

"An intrinsic part of the museum's philosophy and mission is fostering connections with living artists," says **Vradenburg Director and CEO Jonathan P. Binstock**. "We're honored to present Ugo Rondinone's contemporary works with those by Louis Eilshemius, of whom our founder Duncan Phillips was an avid collector. In drawing parallels between artists and works, the Phillips creates new opportunities for conversation, for both the showcased artists and for our guests. I've always loved the way unexpected

juxtapositions of artworks at the Phillips offer unique viewing experiences. We are delighted to continue this tradition in newly creative ways.”

Rondinone’s interest in Eilshemius began in 2001 when he first encountered the artist, and he has since assembled an extensive private collection of Eilshemius’s work. The dialogue between the artists reveals a shared expressiveness and lyrical sensibilities, highlighting a deep relationship with nature and poetry. “While Eilshemius and Rondinone have entirely distinct styles, their shared interests—both as artists and poets—as well as the intimacy of the work, offers an exciting and vibrant exchange across artists from different generations,” says **exhibition curator Klaus Ottmann, Phillips Chief Curator Emeritus**.

Throughout his practice, Rondinone has poetically bridged a playful sense of wonder with a romantic reverence for the natural world. The artist’s meticulous ink drawings of forest landscapes, measuring over 13 feet in length, combine these two elements in abundant compositions reminiscent of 17th-century Dutch woodcuts. The landscapes are based on sketches Rondinone made in 1989 during walks in the woods surrounding Vienna and are emblematic of the artist’s exploration of time and rituals. Smaller scale works by Rondinone will also be on view, including his ongoing series of poems on paper and a group of *diary paintings*, minimalist sketches which on the reverse feature collages of images from the *New York Times*. Paired together with paintings by Eilshemius, Rondinone’s works embody a meditative and introspective approach to exploring humanity’s relationship with nature.

One of the most idiosyncratic figures in 20th-century art, Eilshemius’s subjects range from atmospheric landscapes to moody cityscapes and spontaneous nudes. Although his work remained largely obscure until recent years, the artist’s admirers included Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Stella, Henri Matisse, and museum founder Duncan Phillips, who began collecting works by Eilshemius as early as 1927. In addition to paintings and works on paper, poems by Eilshemius will be incorporated in the gallery, revealing the strong connections between his artistic and poetic sensibilities.

“Eilshemius’s work was startlingly suggestive to me and artists who wanted to find a way of reconciling romanticism with modernity,” says **Rondinone**. “Eilshemius believed in individuality to the end. Each bit of creation has its iconic character, distinctly outlined. Our senses are made alive to nature’s particulars, to its complexity.”

The Phillips’s One-on-One series was initiated by Ottmann in 2011. One-on-One engages a contemporary artist to select one or several works by an artist from the museum’s permanent collection and juxtapose them with works of their own. This series embodies Duncan Phillips’s deeply held conviction that the work of artists from a variety of backgrounds “could be shown both separately and together, as evidences of what a universal privilege it is to have intense and intelligent visual life.” (From “*A Collection Still in the Making*,” 1930). Previous One-on-One installations have paired Bridget Riley with Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Peter Doig with Georges Braque, Carol Brown Goldberg with Henri Matisse, Enrique Martínez Celaya with Albert Pinkham Ryder, and Maggie Michael with Arthur Dove.

## ABOUT UGO RONDINONE

Ugo Rondinone studied at the Universität für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna before moving to New York in 1997, where he currently lives and works. His work has been the subject of solo presentations at the Centre George Pompidou, Paris (2003); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2006); Art Institute of Chicago

(2013); Rockbund Art Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2016); MACRO, Rome (2016); Carre D'Art, Nimes (2016); Berkeley Art Museum (2017); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2017); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2017); Belvedere, Vienna (2021); Tamayo Museum, Mexico City (2022); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2022); Petit Palais, Paris (2022); Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista di Venezia, Venice (2022); The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva (2023); Gladstone Gallery, Brussels (2023); Parrish Museum, New York (2023); Städel Museum (2023); Storm King Art Center, New York (2023). In November, he will have a solo exhibition at Fosun Foundation in Shanghai, and in September, a solo exhibition at Gladstone Gallery in New York.

#### EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by The Phillips Collection and is made possible by Jane Lole and Steven Sumberg. Generous support is provided by Michael and Nicolai Frahm with additional funding from the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

#### IMAGE GALLERY:

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact Lauryn Cantrell, [lcantrell@phillipscollection.org](mailto:lcantrell@phillipscollection.org)

**IMAGES:** Ugo Rondinone, *achterjunizweitausendundelf*, 2011, Ink on paper mounted on canvas, 107 3/8 x 160 7/8 in., Collection of the artist/Gladstone Gallery, NYC; Louis Michel Eilshemius, *Golden Bough*, 1920, Oil on paper mounted on Masonite, 12 1/4 x 19 in., Collection of Ugo Rondinone, NYC

#### ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, was founded in 1921. The museum houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist and American modern art collections and continues to grow its collection with important contemporary voices. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips's impact spreads nationally and internationally through its diverse and experimental special exhibitions and events, including its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; renowned Phillips Music series; and dynamic art and wellness and Phillips after 5 events. The museum contributes to global dialogues with events like Conversations with Artists and Artists of Conscience. The Phillips Collection values its community partnership with THEARC—the museum's satellite campus in Southeast DC. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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