

News RELEASE

June 16th, 2022

The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo Acquires Akseli Gallen-Kallela's *Lake Keitele* and Camille Claudel's *Perseus and the Gorgon*

The National Museum of Western Art (NMWA, Ueno Park, Taito-ku, Tokyo, Director: Masayuki Tanaka) has purchased the painting *Lake Keitele* by Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865-1931) and the sculpture *Perseus and the Gorgon* by Camille Claudel (1864-1943).

The highly regarded Finnish painter Gallen-Kallela has been the subject of a meteoric rise in international recognition in recent years. He created four versions of his iconic *Lake Keitele* composition, with the National Gallery, London version attracting massive attention both in the UK and abroad. Along with Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi's *Interior with Ida Playing the Piano** purchased by the NMWA in 2008, the newly acquired Gallen-Kallela work is sure to convey Nordic painting's fascinating aspects to museum visitors.

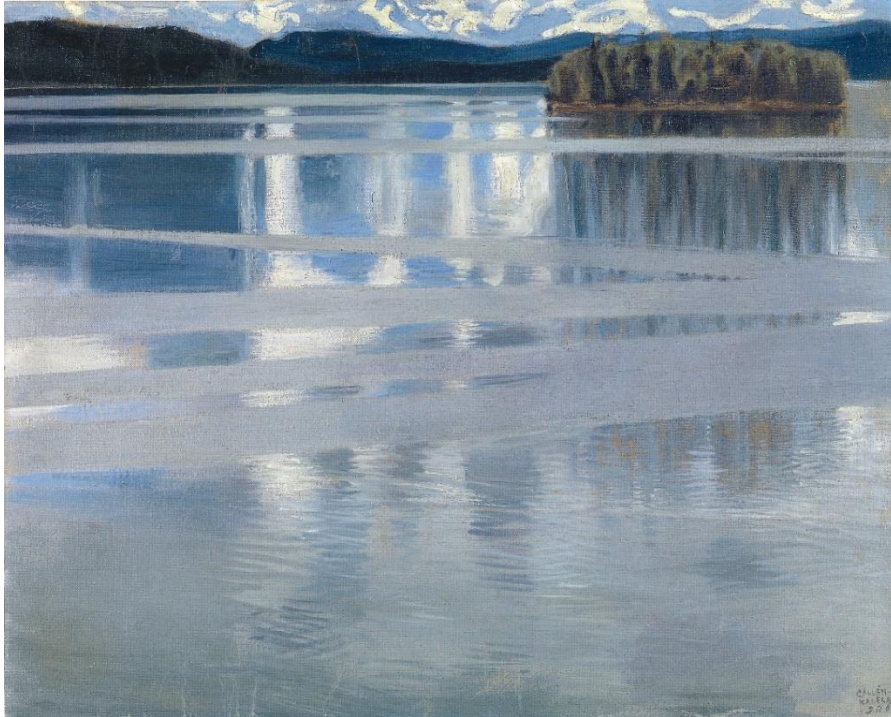
Perseus and the Gorgon was created by Camille Claudel, a sculptor renowned both as a major female artist in modern era France and for her close relationship with her teacher, Auguste Rodin. The NMWA continues to actively collect works by female artists, such as Berthe Morisot's *Woman in Black (Before the Theater)***, with the newly acquired Claudel work an important addition to this group of works. *Perseus and the Gorgon* will also further broaden the contextual range of the NMWA modern sculpture collection which centers on Rodin's works.

Gallen-Kallela's *Lake Keitele* will be displayed in the special exhibition *In Dialogue with Nature – From Friedrich, Monet, and Van Gogh to Richter* (June 4 – September 11, 2022). Claudel's *Perseus and the Gorgon* is currently on display in the fiscal 2022 installation of the NMWA Permanent Collection Galleries.

* NMWA Collection Database information on Vilhelm Hammershøi's *Interior with Ida Playing the Piano*:
<https://collection.nmwa.go.jp/P.2008-0003.html>

** NMWA Collection Database information on Berthe Morisot's *Woman in Black (Before the Theater)*:
<https://collection.nmwa.go.jp/P.2017-0002.html>

■ Akseli Gallen-Kallela's *Lake Keitele*



Akseli Gallen-Kallela

Lake Keitele

1906

Oil on canvas

61.0 x 76.2 cm

Signed and dated in lower right: "GALLÉN KALELA 1906"

P.2021-0001

About the Painting:

This painting is based on the scenery that Gallen-Kallela saw from the shore of Lake Keitele in central Finland during the summer of 1904. The lake surface occupying most of the composition is boldly striated with a zigzag pattern of ripples, imagery said to hint at the wake of the boat

carrying Väinämöinen, the hero of the the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*. In 1909, this work was purchased directly from the artist by the Nobel family, known for Alfred Nobel, the scientist whose bequest led to the Nobel Prizes. It was first in the hands of Alfred's niece and then inherited by her descendants. Of the four known versions of this composition, the National Gallery, London, version is one of that Gallery's most popular paintings.

About the Painter:

Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865, Pori, Finland – 1931, Stockholm, Sweden)

Gallen-Kallela, one of Finland's most beloved painters, was active internationally from the end of the 19th century through the early 20th century. Both Gallen-Kallela and his friend the composer Sibelius created works on the *Kalevala* theme, which contributed greatly to the development of the independence movement of Finland then under Russian rule.

■ **Camille Claudel's *Perseus and the Gorgon***



Camille Claudel

Perseus and the Gorgon

1898-1905

Bronze proof with brown-green patina, unnumbered

51 x 30 x 22 cm

Sand cast by Eugène Blot, 1905-1906

Cast inscription on the back of the Perseus figure:

" EUG. BLOT / 5/ BD DE LA MADELEINE"

Artist signature on the side of the base beneath the shield: "C. Claudel"
S.2021-0001

About the Sculpture:

In her late period Claudel repeatedly turned to depictions of the Perseus legend of Greek mythology. Here Claudel created a uniquely decorative composition to depict the Gorgon, a monster whose gaze turned to stone all those who looked into its eyes, and the hero Perseus, who grasps the Gorgon's head. It is also said that the artist depicted her own face on the monster's head. Claudel made a series of works on this subject in plaster, marble and bronze. This sculpture is one of the rare examples of a bronze cast during the artist's life by Eugène Blot who supported Claudel's artistic activities in her late period.

About the Sculptor:

Camille Claudel (1864, Fère-en-Tardenois, France – 1943, Montfavet, France)

A groundbreaking female sculptor, Claudel is one of modern France's most important female artists. Claudel was involved both professionally and personally with her teacher Rodin. She eventually developed her own personal style, but her anguish over her love/hate relationship with Rodin and artistic problems led to mental health issues that saw her spend the latter half of her life in an asylum. Claudel's talents were reconsidered after her death and her works with autobiographical elements rose to particular fame.

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