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Internationale Tage Ingelheim
International Days Ingelheim

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International Days Ingelheim **From London to Venice:** **Whistler & Masuyama**

26 April to 5 July 2026

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Kunstforum Ingelheim – Altes Rathaus
François-Lachenal-Platz 1
55218 Ingelheim am Rhein

Head of Internationale Tage
Dr. Katharina Henkel

PRESS TOUR
April 23, 2026, 11 am

James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) revolutionised artistic graphic art in the second half of the 19th century with his etchings and lithographs. After more than 25 years, this exhibition in Germany once again highlights the fascinating, sophisticated and innovative work of the American artist. Famous throughout the rest of the world, Whistler is now being rediscovered in this country.

Public transport
To Ingelheim by train
from Frankfurt/M. (ca. 45 min),
from Mainz (ca. 15 min).

The exhibition focuses on Whistler's etchings and lithographs depicting views of London and Venice. Portraits of people from his personal circle, the third thematic area, reveal the sensitive side of this artist, who was considered eccentric. The variety of motifs on display demonstrates his mastery of unusual techniques.

Whistler's life was marked by numerous journeys, which repeatedly provided him with new motifs that he captured in graphic works directly on site. After moving from the east coast of the United States to Paris at the age of 21, he settled in London in 1859. Through his art, he explored the city on the Thames and, by the end of the 1890s, created numerous graphic works depicting various views of the river, its banks and bridges, ships and harbour scenes, and people going about their daily lives.

An avid traveller until a year before his death in 1903, Whistler repeatedly spent long periods in various European cities and was therefore a well-connected artist. In 1879/80, for example, he lived and worked in Venice for over a year. There he created etchings of the waterfronts of magnificent palaces and typical Venetian bridges on the one hand, but above all motifs featuring passageways, courtyards and workshops beyond the tourist attractions.

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For art-historical contextualisation, Whistler's works in the third section are accompanied by selected prints by some of his British, French and American contemporaries: the works of Seymour **Haden**, Frank **Short**, Édouard **Manet**, Camille **Pissarro**, Marcellin **Desboutin** and Joseph **Pennell** reveal the mutual stylistic influences.

Like other Impressionist artists, Whistler collected Japanese woodcuts. His intense engagement with them is evident in the composition of his own works. Selected examples by renowned Japanese woodcut artists such as Utagawa **Hiroshige**, Katsushika **Hokusai** and Kitagawa **Utamaro** therefore flank some of his prints in all three themed rooms.

Hiroyuki Masuyama (*1968), who was commissioned to create new works especially for this exhibition, bridges the gap to the present. Last year, the Japanese artist travelled to Venice and London for this purpose. He took colour photographs of the current situations at the exact locations where Whistler etched his prints: with today's buildings, vehicles, ships and people. The new black-and-white works created from this material are montages in which the current view of those places by Masuyama is superimposed and fitted over the historical graphics by James McNeill Whistler. They reveal how significantly the banks of the Thames have changed over the past 150 years or so, and how minor the changes to the Italian lagoon city appear in comparison. In these new works, Masuyama visualises the latest version of his main theme, which has run through his artistic work since 1997: the connection between space, time and change. These current works hang between Whistler's prints from London and Venice.

For a deeper understanding of his artistic work, a group of older works forms the fourth chapter, with some walk-in installations, large-format light boxes and filigree works on paper. Although they do not connect a specific motif with Whistler, they are united by the idea that every space – whether as small as a patch of lawn or as large as the metropolis of London – changes continuously over time, albeit with varying degrees of intensity.

The works of both artists are an invitation to embark on a “journey” in which the past and present repeatedly intersect, intertwine, complement each other and merge into significant historical documents.

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