

PublicationDate: 08-02-2001
PAGE: 03
Art

PUBLICATION: BANGKOK POST
KEYWORD: exhibition-Hans Christian Andersen: Life and Art

HEADLINE: The fairy tale retold

SUBHEADLINE: Odense City Museums' roving exhibition at the Siam Society presents a vivid picture of the life and works of Hans Christian Andersen

BYLINE: WANPHEN SRESHTHAPUTRA

The Ugly Duckling, The Emperor's New Clothes, Snow Queen, the Little Match Girl, the Little Mermaid ... It is hardly possible that none of these fairy tale titles ring a bell in your mind. All signed Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), the world's best-known and the most prolifically translated author from Denmark, whose beautiful tales have been told and retold for over a century now.

The Danish writer's tales are remembered for being immediately appealing to children, yet containing a language, humour, seriousness and depth addressed to adult readers as well.

However, especially outside Denmark very few people are aware of Andersen's highly unusual, fascinating personality and the many facets of his life and art.

Thus in order to help the public gain a deeper knowledge of this extraordinary figure _ who actually wanted to be a novelist and dramatist much more than a fairy tale writer _ Odense City Museums have set up a travelling exhibition entitled ``Hans Christian Andersen: Life and Art."

The exhibition is on show at the Siam Society until February 20.

The life of HC Andersen, which he himself called a fairy tale and considered himself to be as fantastic as the characters he made up, is superbly explained and illustrated with paintings, drawings and letters.

The extremes of his incredible life appear sharp in contrast; his miserable childhood as the son of a poor cobbler in a provincial town in Odense, to the position of celebrity, courted by princes and kings. A keen traveller, HC Andersen made up to 30 journeys abroad and was amongst those writers of his day who went the farthest afield. He spent several years of his life travelling.

In 1840 in particular, after a prolonged grand tour in 1833-1834, HC Andersen succeeded in obtaining funds for another great adventure, leaving on a journey taking him to Germany, Austria, Italy, Malta, Greece, Turkey and along the Danube to catch glimpses of the bordering Balkan countries _ a journey which resulted in his brilliant travel account A Poet's Bazaar (1842).

Thanks to Odense City Museum, the Royal Danish Embassy and the Siam Society, HC Andersen's hunger for travelling and breaking boundaries lives on. Hans Christian Andersen's magic is brought to new regions of the world.

The exhibition, which was inaugurated by Danish Ambassador Niels Kaas Dyrland, is worth visiting. And with the State visit of Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, Prince Consort Henrik and their elder son Crown Prince Frederik to Thailand from February 7 to February 12, Thailand is setting its watch to the Danish clock.

* `` Hans Christian Andersen: Life and Art" is on show until February 20 from 10 am to 6 pm at the Siam Society, 131 Soi Asoke, Sukhumvit 21.

In connection with the exhibition, the following events will take place on weekends:

Saturday, February 10: The Danish Pantomime from the Tivoli Garden will perform the fairy tale ``The Little Mermaid" at 3 pm.

Saturday, February 17: Sansanee Sitapan Moller will recite the fairy tale ``The Little Match Girl" at 3 pm.

* For more information, call 661- 6470.