

	Object:	The Nativity
	Museum:	Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de
	Collection:	Alte Meister, Gemälde und Skulpturen
	Inventory number:	6-1851

Description

Albrecht Altdorfer’s Nativity belongs to the important collection of early German masters that came to the Kunsthalle Bremen in 1851 as a bequest of Senator Hieronymus Klugkist. The work reveals strong traces of burns stemming from when it was kept at Karnzow Palace, near Berlin, during World War II, where it served as a surface on which a candle was placed. Altdorfer has expanded upon the biblical story with unusual narrative details. While the Virgin is shown in fervent prayer, an angel has taken the hand of the Christ Child in the manger and looks up at Joseph. But Joseph turns away from his family to shed light on the dramatic action in the background with his lantern. There, angels have been throwing down straw from the open loft. A child, closely resembling the angels except for its lack of wings, had also been part of the action, but now lies injured on the ground. An angel gesticulates excitedly next to him. The drama of the scene is heightened by the gleaming moonlight, which is reflected in frenetic white daubs of color on the walls of the ruins. This small Bremen painting is one of the earliest Altdorfer works to have come down to us. Its fine, miniature-like painting indicates that it was intended as a cabinet piece for a humanistically educated connoisseur.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Oil on poplar
Measurements:	41.6 x 31.4 cm

Events

Painted	When	1507
	Who	Albrecht Altdorfer (1480-1538)
	Where	

Keywords

- Painting