

Media release

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Kunsthhaus Zürich to expand its surface by 60%.

Kunsthhaus Zürich to realise its vision of a museum for the 21st century with an extension planned for 2015.

Renovated in the period from 2001 to 2005, Kunsthhaus Zürich cannot simply rest on its laurels. Considering the fact that it was founded by artists, and not by the state or an aristocrat, and that it was the first institution worldwide to combine collections and exhibitions, it is in the process of re-defining itself for the 21st century claiming more room for art and visitors.

Its curatorial concept, which currently tends to favour a linear approach to art appreciation, is to become more investigative, and will seek to demonstrate links within individual periods and between various genres. To this end, the concept will focus chiefly on a more dynamic and interconnected use of the museum's own collection of art from the 1960s onward.

The new galleries needed to implement this vision, with flexible, re-configurable suites of rooms, will be available for a wide range of uses, suitable equally for new media, prints, drawings and photography. This fresh style will be excitingly juxtaposed with the classical scope of the Bührle Collection, Switzerland's most important private collection also to be housed in the extension, as well as with presentations in the less flexible space of the existing building.

In future, Kunsthhaus Zürich will be able to efficiently accommodate medium-sized travelling shows without affecting elements of the permanent exhibition.

THE LARGEST SWISS ART MUSEUM WILL PAY MORE ATTENTION TO VISITORS

The Kunsthhaus can show less than 10% of its total collection of paintings and sculptures (the international standard is 20%), with some 100 masterpieces permanently in storage. Many items and collection subjects simply lack adequate space, and the museum's special focuses cannot be properly presented, nor can relevant information be communicated in keeping with contemporary expectations.

The extension, together with the renovated museum building, will constitute a New Kunsthhaus on Heimplatz. Planned to contribute some 13,200 square metres of new space (a 60% gain), the extension will be dedicated mainly to serving visitors and displaying works of art. The two buildings, which will together constitute the largest museum of art in Switzerland, will be connected underground.

With more space for Alberto Giacometti, Swiss art, Old Masters and popular major exhibitions, the familiar traditional building will see its value appreciate

and its visitor numbers remain stable. Meanwhile, across the square, contemporary art, classical modernism and 19th-century work will provide the setting for a new speciality, French painting, as Kunsthaus Zürich becomes the leading address (after the Musée d'Orsay) for French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. The Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection will be moving its 150 masterpieces, by such fabled names as Cézanne and Monet, to Heimplatz. These works will now be available to the approximately 300,000 guests the Kunsthaus already welcomes each year, as well as attracting new visitors. The quality of the visitor experience will be improved with recreation zones, explanatory literature and research tools.

SITE RESERVED. LANDMARK PLANNED. PROJECT CREDIT APPLIED FOR
World-class art deserves to be displayed in an architectural landmark. After test planning was carried out in 2006 and the canton had assured that it would hand over the site at the end of June 2007, Zurich's governing body has now applied to the city legislature for a project credit of CHF 6.5 million, to be used for a two-stage international architectural competition and initial planning measures. If the city legislature approves the application, the competition can be announced in late 2007. The jury is to be presided over by Walter B. Kielholz, President of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, and moderated by internationally renowned architect and urban planner Prof. Carl Fingerhuth. The Building Department of the city of Zurich will hold the competition.

FINANCING IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP. INAUGURATION BY 2015
The total cost of the extension, without adjustment for inflation or reserves, is estimated at CHF 150 million. The project partners – the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, Foundation Zürcher Kunsthaus and the city of Zurich – have agreed to obtain financing for half the construction budget from public coffers, and the necessary credit facility will be put before the city electorate. The canton will contribute the site and a share of its lottery fund. The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, whose more than 20,000 members make it the largest art association in Europe after the Tate, has agreed to put up the remaining 50% from its own capital. The extension is to be inaugurated by 2015.

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