

Press release

Zurich, 16 December 2010

Kunsthhaus Zürich shows 'Karl Moser – Art and Architecture'.

From 17 December 2010 to 27 February 2011 the Kunsthhaus Zürich presents about 400 drawings, sketches, models and furniture by Karl Moser (1860-1936), its renowned architect. Revered in Switzerland as a 'father of modernism', Moser made architectural history with his contributions to the University of Zurich campus, Basel's Church of St. Anthony and Badischer Bahnhof, and the Lutherkirche in Karlsruhe. Moser's 1910 Kunsthhaus is a paragon of architecture for art – indeed, of an architecture that collaborates with art; and David Chipperfield's planned Kunsthhaus Zürich extension, renders it appropriate homage.

The scion of a Swiss architectural dynasty, Karl Moser was a man of the world and one of the towering figures who remade modern architecture in the late 19th century and continued to advance the discipline well into the 20th. But although his compatriots saluted him as a 'father of modernism' in his own time, Moser was more than just a local hero. For almost 30 years, from 1888 to 1915, when he was appointed professor at ETH Zurich and returned to the land of his birth, Moser ran a large and extremely successful Karlsruhe architecture firm with his partner, Robert Curjel. Back in Switzerland, meanwhile, he was to become the key mentor to a new generation of architects seeking fresh approaches.

GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF MAJOR WORKS IN ZÜRICH

Moser's immense oeuvre comprises nearly 600 buildings and projects; the greatest concentration of his major works, pre-eminent among them the Kunsthhaus Zürich, which he planned and completed between 1904 and 1910, is to be found in Zurich. The architect drafted numerous plans for extensions to the museum up until his death, and in 1924-1925 did in fact contribute an annex. Other monuments are the main campus of the University of Zurich, which looms above the old town; Fluntern Church; and the Church of St. Anthony in Zurich's Hottingen neighbourhood. Cities such as Aarau, St. Gallen, Basel, Mannheim, Frankfurt am Main and Kiel are also graced with prominent examples of Moser's craft, while in Karlsruhe almost 70 of the great man's constructions, including office blocks, churches and villas, lend a distinct character to entire districts.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Kunsthhaus Zürich exhibition is devoted to the manifold skein of relations between the domains of architecture and art as manifest in Moser's work: his close, lifelong collaboration with such visual artists as Carl Burckhardt, Oskar Kiefer and Max Laeuger; the artistic appointment of his constructions; the rigour

of his personal aesthetic standards; his artistic visualization of architectural concepts and his buildings explicitly intended for the world of art.

The lavish exhibition, which features some 400 objects, connects elements of Moser's biography, such as his Karlsruhe period or his acclamation as 'father of Swiss modernism', with various special focuses, including pivotal commissions and groups of works, churches, residential buildings, apartments, public monuments, projects and ideas for modern Zurich and independent artistic work.

The main section of the show is to be displayed in the rooms of the Kunsthaus Zürich's former exhibition wing, recently renovated in keeping with its status as a heritage building, its interiors partially restored to their original condition. In its furnishings, its chromatic character and its spatial arrangement, the location itself is a work of Karl Moser, and thus affords this particular architectural exhibition the rare opportunity to illuminate a major oeuvre not only with plans and models (3), but by means of a direct encounter with its very venue, itself an example of that oeuvre. The cabinet on the ground floor will include documentation of the Kunsthaus in 1910, its 1925 extension, and Moser's unrealized projects of the 1930s, while the architect's collaboration with Ferdinand Hodler and study of his art are the subject of an area of the show located directly below Hodler's monumental painting 'Blick in die Unendlichkeit' on the museum's first upper level. Here as elsewhere in the exhibition, 180 of the master's drawings and plans, 80 of his photographs and selected models are to be juxtaposed with various studies for sculptural decorations and handicrafts representative of the artistic appointment of Moser's architecture. The furniture (10) in the Hodler Saal is part of the architect's original fittings. Among the exhibition's rarities are some 30 fragile plaster models, studies for the decoration of the Kunsthaus façade, drawings for additional sculptural building elements, sketchbooks and 70 other documents illustrative of the use of art in construction.

FROM MOSER TO CHIPPERFIELD

Mounted in cooperation with the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta), ETH Zurich, the exhibition is to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the birth of Karl Moser and provide the cornerstone for the observation of the Kunsthaus Zürich's own centenary, as well as to offer visitors a glimpse ahead at the extension in planning by British architect David Chipperfield. A new model will illustrate the freshly modified plan for the suites of rooms in the new facility, whose materials and spatial arrangement are guided by the existing museum building. The extension is slated for completion, facing the 'old' Kunsthaus across Heimplatz, by 2015. Guided tours led by curator Sonja Hildebrand and workshops featuring architect Giacinto Pettorino will illuminate 100 years of Kunsthaus architecture and test the coherence of the extension *in spe*, as it

proceeds chrysalis-like from content to form, with the modern building tradition as exemplified on Heimplatz.

The extension project is intended to adapt the ensemble known as the New Kunsthaus, in its location straddling the midtown square, to the needs of both art and its public in the 21st century. Art of the 1960s and later is to enjoy better representation, while the Bührle Collection will make the Kunsthaus Zürich Europe's leading centre for French painting and Impressionism outside of Paris. The extension's central hall and art garden, to serve both as a meeting place and as a bridge to the university district, will increase the Kunsthaus Zürich's identification with an area conceived by Karl Moser himself as an urban square, and which has since grown – in keeping with his vision and true to the democratic tradition celebrated in the institution's name (the neologism 'Kunsthaus' rings with the plain speak of such designations as 'Rathaus' and 'Schulhaus') – into a symbol for civic-mindedness and pioneering urban development.

GENERAL INFORMATION / PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zürich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthaus.ch

Opening hours: Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

24/26/31.12.2010, 1/2 January 2011: 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Closed 25.12.2010.

Admission incl. collection: CHF 14 / concessions CHF 10, registration required for groups. Advance sales with discounts: SBB RailAway-Kombi, with 10% reduction on rail travel and entrance to the exhibition, at SBB stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19 per min.).

ART EDUCATION AND PUBLICATION

Public guided tour led by guest curator Sonja Hildebrand: Sunday 9 January from 11 a.m.–12 p.m., Friday 21 January and 11 February from 6.30–7.30 p.m.

Workshops with architect Giacinto Pettorino: '100 Years of Kunsthaus Architecture': 22 January, 12 February, from 2–3.30 p.m. 'From Moser to Chipperfield': 5 and 19 February, from 2–3.30 p.m. Participation CHF 20, registration required.

Lecture by Stanislaus von Moos (in German), 25 February, 6.30 p.m. 'Karl Moser. Architektur für eine neue Zeit, 1880 bis 1936', published by gta Verlag in two volumes, over 700 pages in length and lavishly illustrated with more than 1000 figures, available at the Kunsthaus shop and in bookstores for CHF 180.

CONTACT FOR MEDIA

To download relevant visual material and Karl Moser's biography go to www.kunsthaus.ch > Information > Press.

Further information: Kunsthaus Zürich, Kristin Steiner, Press and Communication kristin.steiner@kunsthaus.ch, Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13