

Press release
Zurich, 6 June 2013

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents first Swiss showing of the Hubert Looser Collection

The Hubert Looser Collection, with its focus on Abstract Expressionism, Minimal Art and Arte Povera, moves to the Kunsthhaus extension on long-term loan in 2017. By way of a preview, from 7 June to 8 September 2013 the Kunsthhaus is exhibiting the collection in the context of its creation. It ranges from works by Pablo Picasso and Jean Tinguely to Asian sculptures; there is also a glimpse into the private spaces of their owner.

Born in 1938 in Vilters (St. Gallen) and now living in Zurich, patron of the arts and former businessman Hubert Looser has, over a 40-year period, assembled a dazzling collection of art, the majority of it contemporary. In order to keep central groups of works and masterpieces together and make them accessible to the public on a long-term basis, in 2012 the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Fondation Hubert Looser reached an agreement under which the Kunsthhaus Zürich can choose 70 works from the private collection and integrate them as long-term loans into the Kunsthhaus extension. With the presentation set to become a reality in 2017, the Kunsthhaus is now organizing the first showing of almost the entire Hubert Looser Collection in Switzerland.

TWOMBLY, DE KOONING, KELLY

Collection curator Philippe Büttner has selected around 70 paintings, sculptures, installations and works on paper for the current exhibition. At its core are the works that will hugely enrich the Kunsthhaus's own holdings from 2017 onwards. They include six pieces by the American Cy Twombly – some of them recent – which will perfectly complement the outstanding collection of works from the early and middle phase of his career already held by the Kunsthhaus. John Chamberlain and David Smith are represented by striking positions Together with works by Willem de Kooning from the Hubert Looser Collection, they will be joining the Abstract Expressionist pieces by Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko from the existing Kunsthhaus collection in 2017. The ensemble of nine works by Willem de Kooning is particularly outstanding. It includes a triptych from 1985 and two bronze sculptures, one of them the celebrated 'Hostess' from 1973. A representative wall-mounted sculpture by Donald Judd – one of the leading practitioners of Minimal Art – will also be on display. Two further artists, Ellsworth Kelly and Al Taylor, have until now been significantly under-represented at the Kunsthhaus.

MARTIN, RYMAN, PENONE

Also new to the Kunsthaus are two paintings by the important abstract artist Agnes Martin, whose geometrically clear yet vibrantly sensitive work lies between Abstract Expressionism and Minimal Art, and works on paper by Jasper Johns and Brice Marden. Two paintings by Robert Ryman are shown alongside works by Cy Twombly, foreshadowing their encounter with other important Twomblys in the Kunsthaus extension. While sculptures by Lucio Fontana complement the ensemble with his 'Concetti spaziali.' The mythical and archaic qualities of nature are afforded new prominence with the addition of installations by Giuseppe Penone. His room lined with laurel leaves surrounds the visitor on all sides and is suffused with an intense aroma. Swiss art and fragile drawings are exhibited in separate rooms within the otherwise open exhibition architecture. The Hubert Looser Collection also includes a heavyweight, ten-part outdoor sculptural installation by Tony Smith, three sections of which have been removed from the Zürichberg and transported to Heimplatz.

TEMPORARY GUESTS: BRIGNONI AND PICASSO

There are two main motivations for the choice of exhibits to appear in the Kunsthaus from 2017: to fill gaps and to provide a home for groups of works. As a result, some important items will remain with their owner, and the current exhibition is therefore a special opportunity for visitors to experience them. They include Pablo Picasso's 1954 sculpture 'Sylvette,' consisting of cut-out sheet metal shaped and painted in oils on both sides that presents viewers with a variety of Cubist-style profiles as they move around it. Looser's passion also encompasses sculpture from outside Europe, as well as Surrealism. The former is somewhat outside the scope of the Kunsthaus collections and is not included in the selection for 2017. The Asian statues will feature, however, since an interest in them influenced the perceptions and creative processes of their collector and some of his favoured artists – together with more than a few visitors. Hubert Looser has also agreed to open a 'window' into his home, reflecting both the private origins of the collection and the museum visitor's expectation of spacious public presentations that elucidate the works in their scientific and artistic contexts.

A NEW DYNAMISM FOR THE COLLECTION

In a video made in 2012, the collector guides audiences through the rooms of his private residence and talks about his passion for art. He reveals an approach that abjures modish trends, choosing instead to foster dialogues and productive tensions and, in so doing, enabling encounters with art that are replete with new experiences and revelations. This is perfectly in tune with the Kunsthaus Zürich's plan for the extension by David Chipperfield which opens on Heimplatz in 2017: a dynamic presentation of its own collections with regularly changing

constellations and thought-provoking juxtapositions of differing genres and formats.

PUBLICATIONS AND ART EDUCATION

An audioguide is included in the price of admission to the exhibition. An 80-page publication accompanying the exhibition looks ahead to the future of the Hubert Looser Collection in the Kunsthaus Zürich. With 68 illustrations, it includes contributions by Philippe Büttner (collection curator at the Kunsthaus Zürich), Florian Steininger (curator of the Bank Austria Kunstforum Vienna) and Raphaël Bouvier (curator of the Fondation Beyeler) as well as a catalogue of the works on display, indicating which of them will be moving to the Kunsthaus Zürich in 2017. A lavishly illustrated standard work, entitled 'Collection Hubert Looser,' was published by Hatje Cantz Verlag in 2012. Over some 250 pages, it offers an insight into a private life with art and includes more than 120 pictures of the works in the collection.

Both are available from the museum shop. The bound catalogue costs CHF 48 and the new publication CHF 29.

Accompanying the exhibition is an extensive summer art education programme with around 40 workshops, guided tours and discussions aimed at all generations. For further information and registration, visit www.kunsthaus.ch. To find out more about the activities of the Fondation Hubert Looser, see its dedicated website www.fondation-hubert-looser.ch.

Supported by Farrow & Ball.

GENERAL INFORMATION / GUIDED TOURS

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

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

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

1 August (Swiss National Day) 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Admission incl. audioguide: CHF 20 / CHF 15 concessions, per head for groups of 20 or more. Children and young people up to the age of 16 free of charge. School parties and groups are requested to register in advance.

Public guided tours: Wednesdays 6 p.m., Sundays 11 a.m.

Private guided tours in other languages can be arranged by calling +41 (0)44 253 84 84.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by land line), www.sbb.ch.

Zurich Tourism: Tourist Service in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, www.zuerich.com.

Magasins Fnac: sales points in Switzerland: Rives, Balexert, Lausanne, Fribourg, Pathé Kino Basel, www.fnac.ch; France: Carrefour, Géant, Magasins U, 0 892 68 36 22 (EUR 0.34/min), www.fnac.com; Belgium: www.fnac.be.

NOTE TO MEDIA

Downloadable illustrations, a résumé of the collector and a history of the Hubert Looser Collection can be found at www.kunsthhaus.ch under Information > Press.

For further press information, contact:

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