

Media release

Zurich, 15 December 2021

Kunsthhaus Zürich takes stock of the year as Chipperfield building opens

With visitor numbers up from 226,000 to 370,000 and an 18% increase in membership, the enlarged Kunsthhaus Zürich is exceeding its targets. The total number of guided tours of the collection in the last quarter alone stands at 450, while interest in the contextualization of the Emil Bührle Collection remains strong.

Following the opening of the extension in October, the Kunsthhaus Zürich is now the largest art museum in Switzerland, in terms of surface area. It was already clear during the previews in spring that visitors would be impressed by the architecture and the originality of the Kunsthhaus's offering.

MORE VISITORS AND MORE MEMBERS

The Kunsthhaus welcomed significantly more visitors in 2021 than in 2020, with around 360,000 admissions already recorded, compared with 226,000 in the previous year. This is despite the fact that the museum was closed for two months by official order during the pandemic. The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, the patron association of the Kunsthhaus, saw a record rise in membership of 18%. More than 3,600 new members had joined by the end of September 2021, bringing the total to around 24,500, compared with 20,816 in 2020. Membership fees totalling CHF 2,282,721 are largely responsible for securing the Kunsthhaus's high self-financing rate. That is also good news for artists, as 15% of those fees – in other words, currently CHF 342,408 – are used to acquire works of (mostly contemporary) art. The provisional financial statements for the year point to a balanced result overall. Precise figures will be presented at the annual general meeting of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft at the end of May 2022. The members will then also elect a new chair. Since the sudden death of Anne Keller Dubach in September, Vice Chair Conrad M. Ulrich has been heading the association on an interim basis.

STRONG INTEREST IN CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE BÜHRLE COLLECTION

The contextualization of the Emil Bührle Collection, which the Kunsthhaus had invited to move from its private setting in an outer district of Zurich to the city centre and the public spotlight, was announced in a popular vote in 2012. The

question of how to document the collection appropriately is still hotly debated among historians. The contribution made by the Kunsthaus towards the contextualization of this private collection, is based on independent academic research by the University of Zurich commissioned by the City and Canton. The Kunsthaus has extracted the essential elements from the vast quantity of information contained in the research report, with the help of evaluations by several dozen figures. Visitors have praised the factual and comprehensible way in which the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Bührle Collection are explained in the presentation room.

Since provenance research did not form part of the University's mandate, the Kunsthaus has added QR codes next to all the works in the Emil Bührle Collection linking to the information on their origins. Details of the provenance research supplied by the Bührle Collection to the Kunsthaus were presented by the Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection at a joint media briefing today [www.buehrle.ch/en/provenances]. The Kunsthaus's online collection will be relaunched in a user-friendly new format in January, and will also incorporate the provenances from the Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection. Over the course of the year, commentaries will be added to this information in accordance with museum standards, complementing it where it is sensible and possible to do so. The Kunsthaus website contains details of current in-house provenance research [www.kunsthaus.ch/en/sammlung/provenienzen].

In parallel with this, an independent committee of experts appointed by the Board of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft will examine how far the methodology and approach employed by the Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection were correct and whether the results were presented correctly.

The Kunsthaus's online Digital for the contextualisation of the Bührle Collection, which has been taking research and mediation out of the museum and into the global public sphere since October, is attested a high to very high knowledge value in surveys of its 6,000 users, as well as an objective editorial stance by the majority. Meanwhile, interest in the archive of the Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection, which has been in the Kunsthaus library since October and is accessible to the public, remains minimal: it has been visited by only two people to date.

All areas of the collection in the enlarged Kunsthaus are currently attracting large numbers of visitors – from contemporary art and the Merzbacher and Looser collections to Dada and the Zurich Concretists. Some 450 guided tours have taken place since the extension opened, or have been booked up to the end of the year.

2022 EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The programme for the year ahead is as diverse and multifaceted as visitors have come to expect. The thematic exhibition on current social issues 'Earth Beats. The changing face of nature' is already under way, and runs until 6 February 2022. It will be followed by monographic exhibitions on genres as varied as Yoko Ono

(performance), Federico Fellini (drawing/film) and Aristide Maillol (sculpture). The large exhibition gallery will host 'Art and Medicine' and 'Niki de Saint Phalle', once the horizontal, 400-m² '2000 Sculpture' leaves the Kunsthaus after 20 February 2022. The Cabinet will display the Baroque drawings of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, followed in summer by the sketchbooks of Rudolf Koller – the Kunsthaus holds one of the leading collections of his work. In between, the performer Alexandra Bachzetsis will animate the space with her new work '2020: Obscene'. Full details of the exhibition programme are available at www.kunsthaus.ch.

TARGET: SOUND FINANCES AS THE KUNSTHAUS WELCOMES A NEW DIRECTOR

The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft expects the enlarged premises and expanded programme to attract an average of 375,000 visitors a year from 2022. The target is for the Kunsthaus to retain its traditional self-financing rate of over 50%. As of 1 January 2023 Kunsthaus Director Christoph Becker, who has been in charge since July 2000 and has successfully fulfilled the mission entrusted to him with the completion of the extension, will hand over the reins to Ann Demeester. A new subsidy agreement will be concluded with the City of Zurich in 2022, providing funding for museum operations and maintenance of the collection. As a private association, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft continues to rely on membership fees, donations, sponsorship and income from admissions and rentals in order to finance exhibitions and acquisitions of art.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz, CH-8001 Zurich, www.kunsthaus.ch

Fri-Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Public holidays: 24/26 December, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. 25 December closed. 1/2 January 2022, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Admission: CHF 23 / CHF 18 concessions and groups, including the collection. Admission free to visitors under the age of 17. Free admission, discounts and further benefits with a 2022 annual membership (adults CHF 135 / couples CHF 225 / young people up to 25 years of age CHF 40). Advance ticket sales: www.kunsthaus.ch

CONTACT FOR THE MEDIA

Media releases and images to download as well as an overview of dates for media briefings in the new year can be found at www.kunsthaus.ch/en/medienbereich/media-corner/.

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