

Zug, June 2024

## Expansion and opening process Kunsthhaus Zug

### **The reasons for the planned expansion**

The Kunsthhaus Zug owns the most important collection of Viennese Modernism outside of Austria thanks to the Kamm Collection Foundation. This “treasure chamber” includes artworks by renowned artists such as Josef Hoffmann, Gustav Klimt, Richard Gerstl, Oskar Kokoschka, Egon Schiele and Fritz Wotruba, among many others, as well as important pieces of classical modern art. These include paintings, paper works and sculptures as well as works of decorative art, furniture, crockery, glassware, fabrics and books. In addition, there are the numerous collections of the Zug Art Society with the main areas of Swiss Surrealism and Fantastic Realism, contemporary art and art from the region. Due to a lack of space, however, the works from the multifaceted collection of around 10,000 works cannot be shown continuously in a selection alongside temporary exhibitions.

By expanding the exhibition space, it will be possible in future to show the collection in parallel with various larger and smaller temporary exhibitions in order to appeal to a wider audience and present the collection in more depth. This is not only in response to a repeatedly expressed wish of the public, who are interested in the collection. It is also not currently possible to fulfil the condition of the permanent loan agreement with the Kamm Collection Foundation, which stipulates that representative parts of the permanent loan collection should be exhibited constantly.

The infrastructure of the “Kaiser im Hof” complex from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was converted into the Kunsthhaus Zug by Franz Füg in the early 1990s, is in urgent need of optimisation and expansion in order to meet the current requirements of visitors and legal requirements. A permanent art depot is needed outside the building so that the limited space on Dorfstrasse can be optimally utilised for the presentation of art.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option: compliance with legal requirements such as wheelchair accessibility and fire safety, improved infrastructure for the workshop room for schools, toilets, cloakroom, reception, art depot and art delivery, as well as the urgently needed restoration workspace and materials storage and a venue for events are essential. Both operationally and socially, it is no longer justifiable not to utilise the potential of current private and public investments in the building and art. In addition, the art museums in the neighbouring

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cantons have been greatly expanded and made more attractive. In short: “Not expanding” means that the Kunsthhaus Zug has no future!

In addition, the expansion project at the established location is linked to a reflection on the operational tasks and instruments of the future Kunsthhaus Zug in a rapidly changing age.

## **The role of the architecture company Studio Other Spaces (SOS), Berlin, with Olafur Eliasson (artist) and Sebastian Behmann (architect)**

As part of “Project Collection”, the collection model conceived by the Kunsthhaus Zug to promote long-term artistic collaborations, the collaboration with the artist Olafur Eliasson began back in 2004 with “The body as brain”, an exhibition series that turned the museum into a laboratory for researching our own perception. This resulted in several site-specific installations, “The body as brain” (2003–2008) and “The moving museum” (2009), which dealt with possible transformations of the building and were intended to encourage joint reflection on the requirements of a contemporary art and cultural institution. SOS, the innovative office for architecture and art that Eliasson founded in 2014 with architect Sebastian Behmann, is now working with the museum’s representative Martin Kümmerli, Hegglin Cozza Architekten and the local planning team on the actual transformation of the Kunsthhaus Zug. Since 2019, this pre-project has been developed in close collaboration between SOS, experts, the Kunsthhaus team and the authorities.

## **The idea of the expansion**

The Foundation of the Friends of the Kunsthhaus Zug and the Zug Art Society, as the sponsors of the Kunsthhaus Zug, are planning an underground expansion to the Kunsthhaus at its existing location at Dorfstrasse 27 in Zug. The aim of this expansion, which is barely visible from the outside, is to create more (exhibition) space for the versatile and extensive collection, to provide an attractive venue for the diverse art education, to offer a varied range of exhibitions with the inclusion of artists from the region, to adapt the building as far as possible to today’s infrastructural and legally prescribed museum requirements, to open it up to a wider public in terms of content and space and to create added value in terms of urban development.

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The plan for this expansion comprises various construction projects: the underground expansion between the historic Manor House at Dorfstrasse 27 and its supplementary buildings created according to Franz Füg's plans and the town wall with an external staircase near the town wall. The historic complex with the modern remodelled wings will be retained. The Manor House will serve as a coffee shop/museum store on the first floor. The modular structure is flexible and allows diverse, interdisciplinary art presentations in small, medium and large rooms.

A proposed new building, "The Museum's Archive", a display depot for the collection based on plans by Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, should be connected to the Kunsthhaus by a passageway under the Daheim Park and will cross under the historic city wall. It has not yet been possible to obtain the approval of the cantonal monument preservation authorities for this project.

## **Benefits for the entire community**

In addition, the general public will also benefit from an expanded Kunsthhaus. The publicly accessible garden, which has been upgraded with the extension project, invites people to walk around and linger. The courtyard will also be upgraded. A conversion of the Huwiler Tower by SOS is being examined with the city. The Huwiler Tower is to be used for cultural, artistic and private events. By opening it up on two sides, the Kunsthhaus garden can be connected to the Daheim Park as part of a local recreational park. The Daheim Park, Huwiler Tower, Kunsthhaus and Burgbach area will be linked together, enhancing the urban environment. Old and new, past and present, city and art are combined inside and out to create a special place of experience. In addition, there will be a small, freely accessible coffee shop, which has been requested by visitors.

Thanks to the architecturally attractive expansion by the renowned company SOS, the Kunsthhaus Zug will be able to permanently display its multifaceted and exquisite collection in a variety of representative sections and show it in greater depth. It will also have larger new rooms for temporary exhibitions and events. This will attract more visitors from near and far and revitalises Zug's upper old town. Added value that should not be underestimated! Zug is regularly in the headlines both nationally and internationally. The fact that there is also "the other side of Zug", namely a lively cultural life and a multifaceted, attractive art centre, contributes to a more differentiated perception of our city and canton from both inside and outside.

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## **New Website**

The website “The Transparent Museum”, designed with input from SOS, is conceived as a virtual representation of the Kunsthhaus Zug together with the analysis and architectural-artistic redesign. On the newly and interactively designed platform, the Kunsthhaus provides information about the planning status and the progress of the extension process and enables feedback and suggestions to be collected. The many areas of the Kunsthhaus, such as co-operation with artists, research, exchange with other museums, extensive art education, the circle of friends and its position as a social anchor in the city and region of Zug have been incorporated into the design of the interactive website.

## **The next steps**

On June 20<sup>th</sup> 2024, the pre-project of the expansion of the Kunsthhaus Zug was presented to interested members of the public with the participation of Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann from SOS in order to obtain feedback, suggestions and questions. Planning for the future operation of the expanded Kunsthhaus is taking place in parallel. The city and canton of Zug have commissioned a specialised company to carry out a potential analysis of Zug’s museums and the Kunsthhaus Zug in particular. To this end, an initial general survey of the population of Zug has been launched, with a second survey specific to the Kunsthhaus to follow in the summer. All results will be incorporated into the expansion process.

## **The funding**

An expansion study and the resulting pre-project by SOS in cooperation and consultation with the Kunsthhaus team, experts, the local planning team and authorities have been fully financed by private donors since 2019. Private funding from patrons and foundations has been available for the realisation costs for some time or has been promised. The current planning fees are also privately financed. For the actual expansion work, most of the financing is planned to be provided by private donors with support from the public sector.

**Find more information and images  
of the expansion process on our website:**

