

Media release
Zurich, 26 May 2025

Annual general meeting of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft: progress on internal financing and strategic stabilization

The 130th annual general meeting of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft was held on 26 May 2025. Members approved the 2024 annual report and annual financial statements by a large majority. Once again, attention centred on the structural financing situation, as well as the visible progress made by the Kunsthau last year on boosting its internal financing and pursuing its strategic realignment.

ELECTIONS AND CHANGES TO THE BOARD

Members of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft re-elected Dr. Philipp Hildebrand as Chair and Dr. Conrad Ulrich as a board member for a further three-year term, both by a large majority. They also approved the annual report and the annual financial statements for 2024. The Board was then granted discharge for the association's year. PricewaterhouseCoopers was re-appointed as external auditor for a further one-year period.

HIGH VISITOR NUMBERS AND INCREASED INCOME

With 513,162 admissions in 2024, the Kunsthau once again proved highly popular with the public, and is still Switzerland's most-visited art museum. Demand for its educational offerings, international exhibitions such as Wong/van Gogh and Marina Abramović as well as its special programmes remained strong. Income from ticket sales, rentals, partnerships and memberships showed a positive trend. The annual deficit was reduced slightly, to CHF -1,529,489 in 2024 compared with CHF -1,585,979 in 2023. This result is around 50% better than the loss originally budgeted for.

FOCUS REMAINS ON FINANCIAL STABILIZATION

Despite these positive trends, the structural deficit is still a key challenge. Operating costs have risen markedly, especially with the opening of the Kunsthau extension, owing to higher personnel expenses in all areas and increased fixed costs. In October 2024, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft applied for an additional subsidy from the City of Zurich. The City Council is expected to make its decision on this in summer 2025. This move by the Kunstgesellschaft

underscores its determination to match all additional support from the public purse with a corresponding increase in its internal financing, wherever possible. The target remains to balance the budget by 2027 and maintain the model of public-private partnership on an equal footing.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN PREPARATION

In the background, the Kunsthaus continues to work on innovative financing and partnership models designed to secure its strategic objectives over the long term. One pioneering example of this is the recently announced endowment by Marianne and Martin Haefner. With initial capital of CHF 30 million, it establishes a new, growth-oriented source of funding designed to enable at least one exhibition of international significance each year at the Kunsthaus Zürich. As well as allowing the Kunsthaus to plan with confidence over a period of decades, the endowment will enhance the museum's role as a venue for exhibitions with international appeal. The Kunsthaus is grateful to the Haefners for this expression of confidence and their forward-looking investment in Zurich's cultural prominence. One particular feature of the 'Foundation for Major Exhibitions at the Kunsthaus Zürich' is that it is open to donations from other supporters. As an institution that has long been financed by a combination of public funding and private commitment, the Kunsthaus Zürich occupies a special place in Switzerland's museum landscape. In parallel with its efforts to secure an increased subsidy from the City of Zurich, its declared aim is to further grow its income from private sources – through new partnerships, fundraising and innovative forms of cooperation. More projects for the future are in preparation.

DEVELOPING THE COLLABORATION WITH THE FOUNDATION E.G. BÜHRLE COLLECTION

At the annual general meeting, members were also updated on the next developments in the collaboration with the Foundation E.G. Bührle Collection. The Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Foundation have agreed on new guidelines. A separate media release giving details of the agreements reached has already been issued.

STRONG SIGNALS FOR THE FUTURE

ZKG Chair Philipp Hildebrand thanked the members present for their trust. He emphasized that overcoming the challenges of the present requires a joint effort, underpinned by public funding, private support and the Kunsthaus's own creative intent. For over a century, the Kunsthaus Zürich has been backed jointly by the city and its population – a democratically legitimized partnership which was most recently confirmed in 2012 with the 'yes' vote on the extension. 'We face the future with confidence, a clear set of values and new ideas for our programming and finances', comments Hildebrand.

FAREWELL TO A GREAT FRIEND AND PATRON

At the annual general meeting, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft paid tribute to honorary member Werner Merzbacher, a great friend, dedicated supporter and long-time companion to the Kunsthaus Zürich. His generosity, inspirational personality and profound attachment to the Kunsthaus will be fondly remembered.

CONTACT FOR THE MEDIA

The annual report, detailing all the activities of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, is available online (in German): <https://jahresbericht.kunsthhaus.ch/2024/>.

Illustrations accompanying our reporting are available to download from www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich along with this media release.

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