

Media release
Zurich, 15 July 2021

Ann Demeester to be new Director of the Kunsthaus Zürich

Ann Demeester, currently Director of the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, Netherlands, will take over at the helm of the Kunsthaus Zürich on 1 January 2023, succeeding Christoph Becker.

With the Kunsthaus extension set to open this coming October, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft has chosen a new Director for the museum. Just twelve months after the Board set up a search committee drawn from its own members and experienced international experts, Ann Demeester has been selected ahead of 40 other candidates.

A MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL WITH EXTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Ann Demeester (b. 1975 in Bruges, Belgium) has been Director of the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, Netherlands, since 2014. Prior to that, she spent eight years as head of the de Appel arts centre in Amsterdam, which is renowned for its international curatorial programme.

A philologist by training, Ann Demeester has successfully managed prestigious art institutions and programmes, placing traditional collections in contemporary contexts and combining Old Masters with present-day art to open up new perspectives. She has worked as an art critic for respected newspapers and has been assistant to Jan Hoet and curator at the Stedelijk Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent as well as the MARTa Herford Museum, where she has executed projects with artists including Luc Tuymans, Richard Tuttle, Salla Tykka and Mika Rottenberg. She has been Professor of Art and Culture at the Radboud University Nijmegen since 2020. Ann Demeester is a highly regarded ambassador for the visual arts and museums in the Netherlands, where she maintains an active dialogue with politicians, the media and the public.

'I am delighted that the Board has unanimously accepted the recommendation of the appointments committee and chosen a highly experienced, capable and charismatic individual for the post of Director. Ann Demeester has the skills to transform a museum into a creative centre and foster a strong team spirit. We were especially impressed by the inclusive, public-oriented strategy that she has implemented in her previous positions, along with a management style built on motivation and trust that is attested by staff, lenders and sponsors alike. I am confident that Ann Demeester, working closely with her team, will help the Kunsthaus Zürich to realize its full potential and make the institution more than a museum. On behalf of the Board of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, I should like to offer my sincere thanks to Christoph Becker for his outstandingly dedicated

service over more than two decades; we are delighted that he will be offering his wise counsel to his successor as she takes up her new role', said Anne Keller Dubach, Chair of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft.

Mayor of Zurich Corine Mauch commented: 'Ann Demeester is an exciting and inspiring personality to lead the Kunsthaus into the future. Her professional background as a journalist and museum director is testimony to her curiosity, broad horizons and enthusiasm for bringing art and culture closer to people. I am convinced that, after a successful term as head of the Frans Hals Museum, she will prove a great asset to the Kunsthaus Zürich. Museums face many significant challenges. I look forward to tackling them with the new Director, Ann Demeester, and the Kunsthaus team, along with the new Chair of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, Anne Keller Dubach.'

HANDOVER ON 1 JANUARY 2023

Ann Demeester will be familiarizing herself with her new responsibilities on a part-time basis from January 2022 and full-time from July 2022, before officially taking up her post, succeeding Christoph Becker as Director of the Kunsthaus Zürich, on 1 January 2023. Christoph Becker will be signing off from the Kunsthaus after almost 23 years with an exhibition on Niki de Saint Phalle (2.9.2022–8.1.2023) which he will be curating.

SWITZERLAND'S LARGEST ART MUSEUM

The Kunsthaus Zürich is the oldest combined collection and exhibition institution in Switzerland. In addition to a collection mainly comprising Western art from the 13th century to the present day, it stages between eight and ten exhibitions a year. Its private patron association, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, is the largest art association in the German-speaking countries, with 23,000 members. After the extension designed by David Chipperfield Architects opens on 9 October 2021, what will then be Switzerland's largest art museum expects to attract an average of 380,000 visitors a year. The Kunsthaus Zürich is renowned for the world's most important collection of works by Alberto Giacometti, the largest assembly of paintings by Edvard Munch outside Norway, and its focus on French painting and Impressionism, which will become a magnet for visitors with the arrival of the Emil Bührle Collection.

MEDIA CONTACT

This media release and portraits of Ann Demeester are available for download at www.kunsthaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/. For further information, contact:

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