



New lease of life for Kunsthaus Zug

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← Sattler, Bruggmann and Stähli enjoying each other's company

More dialogue, outreach and space – Jana Bruggmann, Alexandra Sattler and Simone Stähli bring a breath of fresh air and new ideas to the Kunsthaus Zug, but don't want to jump on every bandwagon.

Three women. Three experts. Three aces. When Matthias Haldemann, Director of Kunsthaus Zug, is asked about the new members of his team, he can barely contain his enthusiasm. Rejuvenation and expertise are just two of the key words he uses to describe how this terrific new trio – Jana Bruggmann (curation), Simone Stähli (outreach) and Alexandra Sattler (collection) – has impacted the art museum. Talking to the motivated trio it quickly becomes clear that they are determined to ensure that the small but excellent art museum at Dorfstrasse 27 is on every visitors' must-see list.

These three art historians have just come from a meeting, and, judging by their expressions, it seems to have gone well. They say that although they have only been working together for a few months, they have already found their rhythm as a team. "I've hardly ever laughed this much at work," says Simone Stähli. It's perhaps not quite the atmosphere you'd expect on the usually rather serious art scene, where all the intellectual expertise seems to leave little room for light-heartedness. But you certainly don't need to be a "serious" art aficionado to enjoy the Kunsthaus. In summer, you can even just spend time in the secluded garden, which is nestled

inside a sixteenth-century complex, without feeling pressured to visit the exhibition. There are fantastic views of the grounds of Zug Castle, the Huwiler Tower and the Burgbach school building. The reception area offers a stunning view of the psychedelic wallpaper by artist Peter Kogler. This installation covering the walls and ceiling subtly distorts spatial perception and challenges the eye. Help, I'm feeling dizzy!

A Swiss gem

Getting back to our trio: as part of the outreach team, Stähli sees her task as keeping people interested in the art with a diverse range of workshops, events and projects. She is confident that with the right approach, she will even be able to win over a few of the most entrenched art sceptics. She firmly believes that "you just need to meet them where they are". Inclusion is very important to her. She wants everyone – from preschool children to the very elderly – to feel welcome in the museum. That means taking everyone's needs into account and ensuring that people with disabilities can also benefit from the art. Bruggmann's role is to ensure that the Kunsthaus continues to raise its profile as a museum through carefully

planned exhibitions and maintains its reputation as the Central Switzerland gem on the country's museum scene. Alexandra Sattler is responsible for the collection, which means she looks after the “treasures” of the Kunsthaus by ensuring that the 4,500 works are properly stored in the depot, and carefully packed, transported and displayed when required. She works closely with the relevant people at other museums to ensure things go smoothly when the Kunsthaus borrows or lends works. It's a real shame that her stint in Zug will soon come to an end after such a brief but productive time. She has been offered a position as a curatorial assistant at the Picture Gallery of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, which is a major career step for the ambitious expert and native Austrian. Kunsthaus Zug has been a great launchpad for her.

Schiele, Klimt, Wotruba and Kokoschka

Teamwork is all the more important at the Kunsthaus because it not only houses its own collection (belonging to the Zuger Kunstgesellschaft) but also looks after the works belonging to the Kamm Collection. Outside of Austria, this is the most important Viennese Modernism collection in Europe. It features works by renowned artists such as Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Josef Hoffmann, Richard Gerstl, Fritz Wotruba and Oskar Kokoschka. Curator Jana Bruggmann regrets that the limited space means the extensive and diverse collection cannot be displayed permanently. However, individual works are regularly dis-

played in temporary themed exhibitions. Thanks to the Kunsthaus, the public gets to see internationally renowned treasures and view lesser-known works.

One of the things that makes the Kunsthaus special is the long-term projects that Director Halde- mann has set up. These projects are based on several years of collaboration with artists such as Roman Signer, Tadashi Kawamata, Olafur Eliasson and Richard Tuttle. Bruggmann will continue these projects while adding her own touch. The projects allow the public to follow the work of an artist over several years and to experience how an entire work develops and changes. The curator's motto is “continuity and commitment over hype and trends”. The Kunsthaus also plans to open a new exhibition warehouse on the V-Zug site in summer 2024. Hall 11, measuring around 700 square metres, will showcase visual art and installations. The idea is that this large, open warehouse space will become a lively meeting place for art and culture, and a new platform for interdisciplinary cooperation.

More female representation in future

A key and continuing priority of the Kunsthaus is the inclusion and promotion of artists who have a direct connection to Zug. Artists who have recently benefited from this focus include Guido Baselgia, Annemie Lieder and Lukas Hoffmann. They had the opportunity to show their works to an interested audience in Zug, as part of either solo or group exhibitions, and are represented in the collection with one or more works. Renowned female artists such as Heidi Bucher, Miriam Cahn, Verena Loewensberg, Annelies Štrba, Josephine Troller and Hannah Villiger also have works in the collection. However, women continue to be under-represented in museum collections – in Zug and in general. One reason for this is that women were not allowed to attend the academies where they could get the requisite education until about 120 years ago. But according to our trio, things are changing. “Women are being increasingly valued and recognised in the art world, and rightly so,” they say.



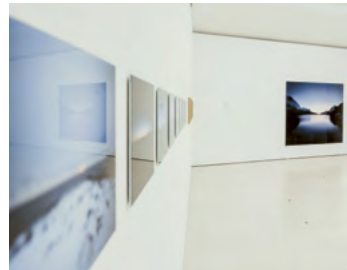
← The Kunsthaus is located in a complex that dates back to the 16th century.



↑ Exhibition view, Guido Baselgia – Lichtstoff und Luftfarben, Kunsthaus Zug, 2023.



← Art outreach plays an important role.



↑ The exhibitions are staged in various wings of the building.

And now our all-too-brief conversation with these museum mavens is drawing to a close. But there's still more art to see on the way out. As you leave the building, an 8-metre-wide nest made of aluminium wire catches your eye. The rebellious work "Parasite" is by Austrian Michael Kienzer. It creates an interesting tension with the branches in the garden. Our understanding of it changes depending on the season. Just after it, at the museum exit, you can pause in front of a chain of illuminated blue letters attached to the baroque façade. On the left it says "I'VE FORGOTTEN TO FEED THE CAT". On the right it says "I HAVEN'T GOT A CAT". If you can't make sense of it, it's best to ask the experts. They will be delighted to provide you with more information. But here's a quick summary: this work by Welsh conceptual artist Bethan Huws plays with the boundaries of understanding. And with the joy of nonsense.



Art museum
zug-tourismus.ch/
en/kunsthau-zug



15 Art out in public – free guided tours

Get to know more than 200 works of art available to view in public around the city of Zug. Take a themed walk accompanied by an art educator to discover works by regional and international artists. Examples of the variety of works on display in public in Zug include Markus Uhr's *Diamantherz* ("diamond heart") above the entrance to the Zuger Bauhütte cafe, Daniela Schönbächler's installation (pictured) in the garden of the government building and *Drei Findlinge* ("three erratic blocks") by Barbara Jäggi in the inner courtyard of the former Landis & Gyr site.

These free tours are supported by the city of Zug and are offered in German, English, French and Mandarin. They take place in all weathers and last 60 to 90 minutes. Please note that the tours have various starting points. Each tour is sure to provide insight, stimulate discussion, involve interaction and offer an exciting change of perspective.



zug-tourismus.ch/en/
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