

## Media Release

Basel, 30 October 2024

### **Schaulager plans to build an extension to house selected groups of works as well as media-based works**

Since its inauguration in 2003, Schaulager has become an important player in the local and international art world. Based on the unique and unprecedented idea of bridging the gap between museum and storage, the institution is entirely dedicated to preserving original works of art, ensuring their conservation, and making them accessible for teaching and research. School classes, groups of university students, researchers, and other visitors from all over the world daily take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy and study the collection of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation.

After twenty years, the Laurenz Foundation, which funds Schaulager, has decided to plan an extension to house specific groups of works from the steadily growing collection. The focus will be on works rarely loaned out or presented at the Basel Kunstmuseum Gegenwart because of their volume and spatial requirements. Two such works by Robert Gober and Katharina Fritsch have already found a permanent home in the existing building. The new building will house works and groups of works of comparable spatial and installative complexity, such as *Plötzlich diese Übersicht* (*Suddenly This Overview*, 1981–2012), a substantial body of clay sculptures by Peter Fischli and David Weiss, and voluminous sculptures by Matthew Barney.

In addition, the extension will provide space for time-based media works of the kind presented in Schaulager's exhibition "Out of the Box" (2023), whose spatial requirements and installation are often equally complex. Many media works acquired for the collection in recent years have rarely or never been presented to the public since. Even the existing building has neither the space nor the technology to meet the needs of such works. As a result, recent works of art acquired because their contemporary concerns are deemed relevant for the collection, cannot be made accessible for research and art education. These include David Claerbout's *Wildfire* (*meditation on fire*), 2019–2020; Bruce Nauman's *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii*, 2015/2016; and Tacita Dean's *Paradise* (from "The Dante Project"), 2021.

In the new extension, these works will be installed on a rotating basis and made accessible to the public during limited opening hours. However, as in the existing Schaulager, the focus will be on research and education for art professionals and special groups, as well as experts on art conservation. The current Schaulager will continue to host temporary exhibitions for the general public at irregular intervals, accompanied by scholarly catalogues and art education programs. The highly specialized reference library for on-site research will also remain in this building.

The Laurenz Foundation commissioned the architectural office Herzog & de Meuron, who built the existing premises, to work out a preliminary study. It forms the basis of the present project. The exterior of the planned building will be similar in appearance with façades made of material excavated on site, and the two buildings will be connected internally for logistical purposes.



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The entrance to the Schaulager extension will face West in accordance with the Foundation's specification of opening the building to the developing Campus of the Arts and to the other educational facilities projected for the Dreispitz area. The existing Schaulager is accessed through a small gatehouse in front and welcomes visitors with large LED screens, embedded in the façade and visible from afar. The façade will be reinterpreted in the new building in the form of three monumental white, steel panels that rest at an angle in the façade of the entrance. The two lateral flanks rest on flat pavilions that accommodate the reception area and café respectively. Visitors access them after a short walk through a green zone.

The commission has also specified that the building generate surplus energy despite the exacting requirements of conserving the works of art. To this end, geothermal probes will be installed and a large-scale solar PV system mounted on the roofs and the southern façade. Staff circulation is ensured by a narrow structure between the two buildings, which is also used for deliveries, logistics, and technical services.

An expansive, high atrium inside the new building offers spectacular views comparable to the atrium of the existing building. The floor plans' flexible design ensures the open storage of the works belonging to the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation. In addition, new spaces are planned for the staff, such as rooms for conservation, offices, lounge areas, and meeting places. The building also accommodates spaces for art education and seminars as well as a new auditorium. The public reference library and reading room will remain in the present Schaulager.

The Laurenz Foundation is looking forward to the prospect of increasing the public visibility of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation's art collection and actively contributing to the development and diversity of the Dreispitz area.



LAURENZ FOUNDATION

*“In 2003 we charted new territory with the unprecedented idea of creating a facility in which art is stored openly and accessibly. This concept of dedicating an institution entirely to art preservation, research and education has met with unanticipated success. Schaulager has, in fact, become a model art institution worldwide. Large-scale exhibitions accompanied by scholarly publications have contributed substantially to that success. Twenty years after inaugurating the first building, we are now planning an extension to accommodate the spatial requirements and changing needs of the steadily growing collection.”*”

**Dr. h.c. Maja Oeri**

President, Laurenz Foundation / Schaulager and Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation

*“Schaulager has evolved steadily since first opening its doors 20 years ago. It has now become much more than a facility for open storage, with guided tours, lectures and workshops testifying to a growing emphasis on art education for students, experts and a broader public. Preserving works of art made out of diverse and ever new materials often represents terra incognita for restoration. The spatial needs of today’s works and installations pose entirely new challenges. The Laurenz Foundation aims to address these issues with the new extension and to ensure that Schaulager can pursue its goals with enduring success.”*

**Melchior Oeri**

Vice President, Laurenz Foundation / Schaulager and Member of the Board of Trustees,  
Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation