

Media Release, 29 January 2015

The Fondation Beyeler is planning an extension

The Fondation Beyeler is acquiring the right to purchase the neighbouring Iselin-Weber-Park in Riehen, where culture will, once again, be integrated into a natural setting. The previously private garden/park with its stock of mature trees will be lastingly conserved, protected from construction, and made accessible to members of the public. Its owner is prepared to sell the site, which covers an area of 9500 m², to the Fondation Beyeler on favourable terms provided the latter commits itself to preserve and maintain the park, and receives planning permission for the construction of an additional museum building.

To replace the three properties currently located at Bachtelenweg 5, 7 and 9, a high quality building will be constructed that provides rooms for the exhibition of artworks as well as a multipurpose room for cultural events. It will contain space for an auditorium – which has been lacking until now – and also for significant artworks that have been donated or loaned long term. Leading Swiss and international architects will be invited to submit preliminary designs for the new building, which will be significantly smaller than the existing museum designed by Renzo Piano, but just as harmoniously embedded in the surrounding landscape.

The project (acquisition of the land and the existing buildings, financing of the new premises, and operating and maintenance costs for the first ten years) will be privately financed. A total of CHF 50 million has already been definitely promised. Generous donations by the Wyss Foundation and the Daros Collection will provide the cornerstone for the project's execution. Only when the entire amount required has been secured and when planning permission has been granted will it be possible to provide information regarding the timetable and probable opening date of the Fondation Beyeler's new gardens and building.

Hansjörg Wyss, the President of the Beyeler Stiftung and the project's initiator, says the following: "Thanks to the generosity of the site's owner, we have a unique opportunity to give even more people and visitors access to Ernst Beyeler's vision of a harmonious blend of art, nature, recreation and peace. I am delighted at this and very grateful to the site's current owner."

For Stephan Schmidheiny, the founder of the Daros Collection, the donation represents the reinforcement of the exclusive partnership with the Fondation Beyeler that it has had since 2010. "The extension of the museum will create room for exceptional encounters with modern art both for art-lovers and for the local residents, while at the same time giving access to a unique, historic garden. I am happy that the Daros Collection can contribute to the achievement of this visionary initiative."

The Fondation Beyeler in Riehen/Basel is an international success story, having established itself as the most-visited art museum in Switzerland. Over 5.6 million people from all continents have visited it since its inauguration in 1997. Designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano and the recipient of a number of awards, the museum in the idyllic Berowerpark

is considered one of the most beautiful spaces dedicated to art that is to be found anywhere in the world.

The famous collection of modern and contemporary art has doubled in size since the museum was created by Ernst and Hildy Beyeler, having expanded through valuable donations and permanent loans from private art collections and renowned artists. As a result of a partnership with the Daros Collection, works from that prestigious collection are also regularly displayed at the Fondation Beyeler. At first, the Fondation Beyeler presented two exhibitions a year but it now organises three to four major exhibitions annually as well as other projects and joint initiatives. In addition, it offers a comprehensive art education and events programme, for which there have in the past been no purpose-built rooms in the museum. Combining the Berowerpark with the adjacent Iselin Park will result in a more extensive public garden, which will be ideally suited for sculptures, cultural events and recreation in a natural setting.

The Fondation Beyeler's plans for an extension will help to develop the local cultural potential and to ensure that the indoor and outdoor facilities are better adapted to visitor numbers and needs. Riehen and the Basel region will thereby become even more attractive for residents and visitors.

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Fondation Beyeler opening hours: 10 am - 6 pm daily, Wednesdays until 8 pm