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Media release Umbrella Foundation Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee
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Lisa Marei Schmidt Appointed New Director of Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee



The Board of Trustees of the Umbrella Foundation Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee has appointed Lisa Marei Schmidt as the new director of Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee, as well as chair of the Management Board. The two institutions are among the most important art institutions in Switzerland, and have distinct profiles which Schmidt aims to strengthen and take further during the next phase of development. A German art historian, she has been director of the Brücke-Museum in Berlin since 2017. In 2023, the museum was awarded «Museum of the Year» by The German Association of Art Critics (AICA). Through her professional expertise, her leadership skills, and her open understanding of the role of museums with an emphasis on art education and social participation, Schmidt distinguished herself throughout the international multi-stage recruitment process. The new director will take up overall artistic responsibility for Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee as well as the role of Chair of the Management Board, on 1 August 2027.

Lisa Marei Schmidt has been the director of the Brücke-Museum in Berlin since 2017, and has successfully developed the institution in terms of its content and organisation. In particular, the fields of art education, provenance research, restoration and digitalisation have been strengthened under her direction. Through a varied programme and new forms of participation, the museum has succeeded in reaching a much broader and more diverse audience

Schmidt has gained significant recognition for her innovative approach to Expressionism through exhibitions like *Escape into Art? The Brücke Painters in the Nazi Period* (2019) and *Whose Expression? The Brücke Artists and Colonialism* (2021/22), which were also very well received by the public. As regards engagement with the collection, one of her priorities is the inclusion of contemporary artists.

Lisa Marei Schmidt (born 1978) is an acknowledged expert in the fields of early 20th century art and contemporary art. In 2020, she was curator of the exhibition *Bonzo's Dream* by Swiss artist Vivian Suter, which was awarded "Special Exhibition" by AICA. She also has links with Bern: In 2018, she presented the collection of Eberhard W. Kornfeld in Berlin.

Schmidt studied Art History in Marburg, Amsterdam and Berlin, and Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art in London. Before her appointment to the Brücke-Museum, she worked at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen and, from 2012 to 2017, was curator at Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin. She has good connections within the international museum scene and is a member of several juries and boards of trustees, among them the Boards of the Ferdinand-Möller-Stiftung and the Karl and Emy Schmidt-Rottluff Stiftung, as well as the Scientific Advisory Board of the Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau.

> *"To me, museums are places where art and people meet. They provide space for encounters, new perspectives and dialogue across society. I very much look forward to getting to know the two remarkable institutions, the teams and the people in the City and Canton of Bern. Together, I hope to build on the Kunstmuseum Bern's and Zentrum Paul Klee's distinctive qualities and shape their future development."*
> Lisa Marei Schmidt

> *"With the appointment of Lisa Marei Schmidt, we are welcoming an outstanding personality to Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee. She brings together remarkable professional expertise, international experience and a deep understanding of people. To her, museums are not only places for art, but for encounter, mediation and social participation. This attitude aligns excellently with the identities of our two institutions and with our aim to reach the people within the Canton and beyond. I'm very much looking forward to shaping the next development phase of our museums with her."*
> Jonathan Gimmel, president of the Umbrella Foundation Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee

Multi-stage recruitment process
The appointment followed an international multi-stage recruitment process, including an external management assessment.

The Board of Trustees had established a Selection Committee comprising of Jonathan Gimmel (president of the Board of Trustees), Alex Wassmer (vice president of the Board of Trustees), Giovanna Battagliero (member of the Board of Trustees), Marcel Brülhart (member of the Board of Trustees), Barbara Luginbühl-Sieber (member of the Board of Trustees) and Thomas Soraperra (Commercial Director, non-voting).

The renowned museum experts Dr. Ulrike Groos, Director of Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Dr. Mathias Mühling, Director of Lenbachhaus München and Rein Wolfs, Director of Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam provided specialist support.

A total of 97 candidates applied for the position. Thomas Soraperra, Commercial Director, is serving as interim director of Kunstmuseum Bern and Zentrum Paul Klee until Lisa Marei Schmidt assumes her position on 1st August 2027,

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