

ATELIER BRÜCKNER

PRESS RELEASE

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SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM – LANDESMUSEUM ZÜRICH ROOM AND EXHIBIT – WEST WING OPENED

ATELIER BRÜCKNER is stage-managing the new permanent exhibition entitled "The Collection" in the Swiss National Museum in Zurich. From 11 October onwards, it will be open for viewing in the national museum's west wing, which is the oldest part of the building, now completely renovated (refurbishment: Christ & Gantenbein). "The challenge is the existing historical structure", says Luca Tori, head exhibition curator at the museum. "The rooms themselves are the exhibit".

Opened in 1898, the national museum is one of the most eminent buildings of the historicism of Switzerland. The architect Gustav Gull designed an impressive, castle-like ensemble that gave a new home to historical interiors from the whole of Switzerland. The translocated interior spaces provide an overview of Swiss home decor from the 15th to the 17th century. One focal point is on the extensively panelled sitting rooms of the upper middle class. These historical rooms, as well as Style Rooms and several tower rooms with original display cabinets, characterise the old building, which shows over 7,000 exhibits: from the sacred palm donkey of the 11th century to the noble Valentino costume from the year 2014. The approximately 2,000 square metres of exhibition space deliver an overview of Swiss craftsmanship from a period of 1,000 years.

ATELIER BRÜCKNER focuses on scenographic settings that help to make the historic ensemble 'readable'. The scenography conceives the exhibits and the rooms together and offers settings that show the rooms as exhibit. Object presentations have been moved away from the walls. Scenographic interventions – mostly placed in the middle of the rooms – tell stories about the room or the collections. Oven models, for example, are at the centre of the Rosenberg Room, dated 1566, which itself features a historical oven. The models come from the 17th and 18th centuries and served as show units for sales purposes. All the information provided is in four languages, whereby tablets provide more intricate details.

In terms of content as well as design, the scenography contributes towards making the sequence of rooms rhythmic. The settings are rich in variety and repeatedly excite the attention anew. The variety becomes an experience: In the "Sala Pestalozzi" (from around 1585), the floor has been designed as a reflective surface in order to draw the eye of visitors to the magnificent ceiling there. In the "Lochmann Hall", named after its owner Heinrich Lochmann, figurines made of paper and designed by Belgian artist Isabelle de Borchgrave tell the stories of persons whose portraits are depicted in the frieze that goes round the room. Dated 1667, the large room was once used as a ballroom in the House "zum Langen Stadelhof" in Zurich.

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In the Oetenbach Room (1521), parts of the wall panelling have been drawn into the middle of the room and thus make reference to their translocation. The room was made out of two rooms of a Zurich cloister in 1894 and given its historicising character by means of diverse additions.

A special position in the exhibition is occupied by three connecting rooms that mark the transition from the presentation of collections to further areas of the permanent exhibition. The "People Room" addresses the grid pattern of the historic wooden ceiling (reproduction of the Romanesque wooden ceiling of St. Martin's church in Zillis) in a wall projection and shows portrayals of people who can be seen in the new permanent exhibition.

A circular showcase that gives the room its character stands in the centre of the second connecting room, which, coming from the Great Hall, acts as the prelude to the newly stage-managed rooms. More than 1,500 finger rings – from ancient Egypt up to the present day – are shown here in a closed presentation, which focuses on the "Collection" theme.

Finally, in the Arbon Room, named after its oak ceiling (around 1515), which comes from Arbon Castle, "Rooms" are the central theme. It presents the structure of the museum building. A model on a scale of 1:200 shows the entire building ensemble, which was extended in 2016. 1:50 models represent a historical parlour, namely the Pestalozzi Room, and a Style Room, the Upper Chapel. In this way, the visitor is given an overview of the diversity of room types.

The Arbon Room is directly adjacent to the sculptural new building of the museum, which was opened in 2016 and was planned by architects Christ & Gantenbein. It closes the hoof-shaped historical museum complex and enables a continuous uninterrupted tour of the museum. In the new building, there is a spacious area for special exhibitions and also the permanent exhibition "Archaeology Switzerland" – also designed by Stuttgart scenographers ATELIER BRÜCKNER.

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