

PRESS INFORMATION

SEBASTIAN BADEN IS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SCHIRN

The Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt has a new director. Dr. Sebastian Baden will begin his work as director of the renowned institution in Frankfurt on July 1, 2022. With the art historian, curator, and art educator, the Schirn once again has its own separate management thanks to the initiative of the City of Frankfurt. This step was decided by the General Assembly (municipal administration of the City of Frankfurt am Main) on February 18, 2022. Sebastian Baden succeeds Dr. Philipp Demandt as director.

Dr. Ina Hartwig, Head of Cultural Affairs of the City of Frankfurt, welcomes the new Schirn director to Frankfurt: “I am very pleased that we were able to gain Sebastian Baden as the new director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, which is one of the leading exhibition venues in the world—with a clear and distinct profile. Corresponding to its current renown, it was time to once again give the Schirn autonomous management, so as to further invigorate the institution. This signifies, especially in such times as these, the City of Frankfurt’s clear commitment to the Schirn. With his proven expertise as an art historian, exhibition maker, and art educator, Sebastian Baden will further develop the ambitious and pioneering program of the institution and lead it into the future.”

Dr. Sebastian Baden, the new director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, notes: “The Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt stands for discursive, pathbreaking, and inspiring exhibitions on modern and contemporary art, as well as for progressive education work and a dedicated and highly qualified team. Here, in the heart of Frankfurt, standards are set for exhibition work and a lively examination of art and society. Taking over as director of the Schirn and being able to shape its future path is a challenge I accept gladly. I very much look forward to these new collaborative relationships and thank the municipal administration of the City of Frankfurt for its trust.”

Dr. Sebastian Baden, born in 1980, became the curator of contemporary art, sculpture, and new media at the Kunsthalle Mannheim in 2016. He had previously taught art history and media theory from 2010 to 2016 at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. The subject of his 2014 doctoral thesis was “The Image of Terrorism in the Art System,” published by edition metzel in 2017. Baden develops the ideas and concepts in his curatorial work against the backdrop of his multifaceted experience of many years as an art historian, art educator, and artist. He first studied art education at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe, literary studies at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, and independent art at Bern University of the Arts. Directly after his studies, Baden established the gallery Ferenbalm-Gurbrü Station in Karlsruhe in cooperation with his brother Lukas Baden, which presented numerous international collaborations between 2006 and 2011. His art-historical areas of focus include topics such as the history of exhibiting art, art and institutional critique, as well as political iconography and bio-design. Sebastian Baden was awarded the AICA International Incentive Award for Young Art Critics in 2013 for his text on Documenta.

Baden’s work is characterized by exhibitions featuring contemporary artists who deal with topical questions within society, the environment, and economics. His focus is on transdisciplinary projects, partnerships with universities and independent initiatives, and the presentation of new

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media formats. At the Kunsthalle Mannheim, Baden curated solo exhibitions by John Bock, Sofia Duchovny, William Engelen, Christian Falsnaes, Wolfgang Ganter, Mwangi Hutter, Johanna Hullár, Hiwa K, Anselm Kiefer, Zipora Rafaelov, Anike Joyce Sadiq, Gustav Seitz, and Marinella Senatore, as well as the opening exhibition in the new building with works by Jeff Wall. The group and special exhibitions that he was responsible for include the external traveling exhibition *On the Move* (2017) during the construction of Mannheim's new Kunsthalle and the contemporary section of *Construction of the World: Art and Economy 1919–1939 / 2008–2018* (2018), with works by international artists and collectives on the development of capitalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The exhibition *MINDBOMBS: Visual Cultures of Political Violence* (2021–22), which dealt with the history of terrorism in pictures and which Sebastian Baden also curated, was based on important works in the Mannheim collection and showed how contemporary art as a critical medium of enlightenment takes a look behind propaganda and the construction of enemy stereotypes.

As director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Sebastian Baden succeeds Philipp Demandt, who had taken over management of the Schirn and of the Städel Museum and Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung from Max Hollein on October 1, 2016. Philipp Demandt remains director of the Städel and the Liebieghaus.

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