

PRESS RELEASE

THE SCHIRN TURNS THIRTY

The Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt was officially opened on February 28, 1986. Since then, the Schirn has presented more than 220 exhibitions on roughly 2,000 m² of floor space – and welcomed over eight million visitors. The Schirn is not only one of the most prestigious and internationally recognized art institutions in Europe, but also a constant in the cultural life of the city of Frankfurt – a place of encounter where interested citizens, patrons and partners, young and established artists, dedicated friends and people from all over the world come together. In the first highlight of its anniversary year 2016, the Schirn is presenting the exhibition entitled “Joan Miró. Painting Walls, Painting Worlds“. The grand Schirn Summerfest will also be part of the thirtieth-anniversary celebration.

The Schirn program focuses on themes, discourses and trends of relevance to art and cultural history from a contemporary perspective. Its goal is to introduce new points of view and break away from traditional modes of reception. The exhibitions are devoted in equal measure to contemporary artistic positions and the art of the modern era. The Schirn regards itself as a place of discovery and a seismograph designed to register explosive developments in visual art. It also offers a distinctive range of current and focused educational and communicative activities for all age groups – including the permanent games and learning circuit, the MINISCHIRN and the Digitalorial®, a digital offer for visitors preparing to view an exhibition. In recent years, the Schirn has also continued to build upon its role as a pioneer in the field of integrated online communication through numerous progressive digital applications and projects – from free WiFi in all rooms of the Schirn to exhibition projects presented exclusively online. In October 2015 the Schirn relaunched its website based on a new, path-breaking concept, and the *Schirn Magazine* with its numerous articles and features has established itself over the years as an important online medium for the contemporary art and culture scene.

In the words of Peter Feldmann, Mayor of the City of Frankfurt am Main and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Schirn: “Thirty years of the Schirn represent thirty years of culture for the people of Frankfurt and the State of Hessen – and for visitors from all over the world. The Schirn is a living setting for cultural learning with a unique, future-oriented education program for all ages and all segments of the population. The MINISCHIRN, in particular, shows how children with different social and cultural backgrounds can learn from each other by playing and experimenting together, and how they can be introduced almost in passing to the basic principles of aesthetic perception – an original concept such as we find only at the Schirn.”

Prof. Dr. Felix Semmelroth, Deputy Mayor in Charge of Culture of the City of Frankfurt am Main, expresses the following thoughts about the Schirn: “Thirty years of the Schirn are thirty years of outstanding exhibitions representing a range of discursive and surprising approaches. Like virtually no other exhibition hall in Europe, the Schirn offers a contemporary view of our art and cultural history, poses questions and challenges the public again and again. Thirty years of the Schirn also represent the fruits of emphatic and evolving efforts to develop new perspectives on art – and that without a collection of its own. Therein lie the strength and quality of the Schirn. Frankfurt without the Schirn? Unthinkable!”

As Max Hollein, Director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt explains, “The Schirn tends by nature to look ahead rather than back. As a significant, internationally recognized art institution supported by strong visitor response, it offers a fresh look at modern art while maintaining a close watch on current tendencies in the art world. With this concept, the Schirn will surely continue to

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play an outstanding role for the next thirty years as well. We have been crossing spatial boundaries and extending our radius of action for some time now. With digital art projects, performances, digital art projects accompanying individual exhibitions and other progressive educational programs, we work and intervene in urban and digital space. All of these offerings promote new manifestations of artistic practice and encourage people to examine aspects of art long before and after their visits to the Schirn."

With its programmatic emphasis on art from the 19th century to the present, the Schirn has presented a number of major survey exhibitions, focused topical exhibitions and retrospectives over the years – on the radical turn-of-the-century Austrian art, on pioneering artistic positions in Expressionism and Dadaism and on Surrealist object art from Salvador Dalí to Man Ray of the turn of the century, to cite only a few examples. In "Women Impressionists" it offered the first look at the female representatives of the movement; in "Esprit Montmartre" it opened a window to the world of Paris bohemians; in "German Pop" it highlighted the surprising aspects of German Pop Art; and most recently in "STORM Women," which attracted more than 113,897 visitors, it presented exclusively women of the avant-garde in Berlin from the 1910s to the 1930s. Themes of relevance to social and cultural history have been illuminated, such as "Shopping – A Century of Art and Consumer Culture", "Privacy", the visual art of the Stalin era or the New Romanticism in contemporary art. Other exhibitions revealed the influences of Charles Darwin's theories on the art of the 19th and 20th centuries and the astounding causal relationships between artists of the modern period and the self-appointed "prophets" of the age. The concept developed by the Schirn also encompasses large-scale solo exhibitions devoted to specific aspects of the oeuvres of individual artists, including Carsten Nicolai, Odilon Redon, Edward Kienholz und Nancy Reddin-Kienholz, Haris Epaminonda, Edvard Munch, Jeff Koons, Gustave Courbet, Yoko Ono, Théodore Géricault, Philip Guston and Helene Schjerfbeck. Jan De Cock, Jonathan Meese, John Bock, Mike Bouchet, Tobias Rehberger and Doug Aitken have developed exhibitions specifically for Schirn or presented new works and work groups for the first time at the Schirn (the most recent example was Daniel Richter).

THE DIRECTORS OF THE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT Christoph Vitali (1986–1993), Hellmut Th. Seemann (1994–2001), Max Hollein (since 2001)

THE FIVE MOST FREQUENTLY VISITED EXHIBITIONS IN THE HISTORY OF THE SCHIRN "Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye," 2012 (213,177 visitors); Wassily Kandinsky—The First Soviet Retrospective," 1989 (189,385 visitors); "Esprit Montmartre. Bohemian Life in Paris around 1900," 2014 (186,512 visitors); "Women Impressionists – Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, Eva Gonzalès, Marie Bracquemond," 2008 (184,793 visitors); "Henri Matisse – Drawing with Scissors," 2002 (138,234 visitors).

THE MINISCHIRN The MINISCHIRN, an innovative permanent installation devoted to general aspects of aesthetic perception (color, form and structure) occupying a total of over 100 m² of floor space opened on December 16, 2014. Since opening day, more than 10,000 children from three to six years of age have visited the creative games and learning circuit.

All information about the exhibition program and the events scheduled at the Schirn in 2016 is posted at www.schirn.de.

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