

## The Fondation Beyeler

The Fondation Beyeler was officially inaugurated in Riehen on the outskirts of Basel on 18 October 1997, providing Hildy and Ernst Beyeler's remarkable art collection with a publicly accessible home. The new museum was built by the Genovese architect Renzo Piano, whose work includes the Centre Pompidou in Paris, over a period of around three years.

The building of the museum was financed by a non-profit-making foundation set up by Hildy and Ernst Beyeler in 1982, which also supports the Fondation Beyeler financially. The Riehen authorities provided the site free of charge and the Canton of Basel-Stadt annually contributes CHF 2.78 million towards the museum's operating expenses (including a contribution from Riehen).

With his tranquil, restrained building, Renzo Piano has created a museum intended "to serve art, and not the other way round." Clad with red porphyry, it consists of four monumental parallel walls, a glass façade at either end or a winter garden on the west side that looks out over the surrounding countryside. The glass roof suspended over the structure illuminates the whole building with the natural light so desirable for exhibiting works of art. All technical or design details that might distract visitors have been deliberately eliminated from the twenty-two exhibition rooms.

Consisting of around 300 paintings and sculptures by Modernist and contemporary masters, the Beyeler Collection was accumulated by Hildy and Ernst Beyeler during more than fifty years as successful gallery owners. The collection's scope and reputation is constantly being enhanced by the acquisition of major works by artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Richard Serra, Roni Horn, Gerhard Richter, Marlene Dumas, Wilhelm Sasnal, and Wolfgang Tillmans. In some rooms, selected examples of tribal art from Africa, Alaska and Oceania are displayed side by side with European and American works, creating exciting encounters to be found in virtually no other museum in the world.

Through temporary exhibitions the Fondation Beyeler repeatedly creates links between the permanent collection and contemporary art. Three to four special exhibitions closely associated with the permanent collection's contents and characters are held every year.

The following exhibitions have been held at the Fondation Beyeler since its inauguration: "Jasper Johns. Loans from the Artist", "Renzo Piano Building Workshop", "Colours-Sounds. Vasily Kandinsky and Arnold Schönberg", "Roy Lichtenstein", "The Magic of Trees" with "Wrapped Trees" by Christo & Jeanne-Claude, "Face to Face to Cyberspace", "Cézanne and Modernism", "Colour to Light", "Andy Warhol. Series and singles", "Mark Rothko", "Ornament and Abstraction", "Anselm Kiefer. The Seven Heavenly Palaces 1973-2001", "Claude Monet ... up to digital Impressionism", "Ellsworth Kelly. Works 1956-2002", "EXPRESSIVE!", "Paul Klee. Fulfillment in the Late Work", "Mondrian + Malevich at the Center of the Collection", "Francis Bacon and the Tradition of Art", "Calder - Miró",

“ArchiSculpture”, “Flower Myth. Vincent van Gogh to Jeff Koons”, “The Surrealist Picasso”, “René Magritte. The Key to Dreams”, “Contemporary Voices: Fondation Beyeler hosts The UBS Art Collection”, “Wolfgang Laib. The Ephemeral is Eternal”, “Henri Matisse. Figure Color Space” and, most recently “EROS. Rodin and Picasso” and “EROS in Modern Art”, “Edvard Munch. Signs of Modern Art”, “The Other Collection. Homage to Hildy und Ernst Beyeler“, „Forests of the World. The Other Engagement“, “Action Painting”, “Fernand Léger. Paris – New York“, „Venice“, „Visual Encounters – Africa, Oceania and Modern Art“, “Giacometti”, “Jenny Holzer”, “Henri Rousseau”, “Basquiat”, “VIENNA 1900. Klimt, Schiele and their Times”, “Beatriz Milhazes”, “Segantini”, “Constantin Brancusi and Richard Serra”, “Louise Bourgeois”, “Surrealism in Paris – Dalí, Magritte, Miró”, “Pierre Bonnard”, “Jeff Koons”, “Philippe Parreno”, “Edgar Degas”, “Ferdinand Hodler”, “Max Ernst”, “Maurizio Cattelan”, “Thomas Schütte”, “Odilon Redon”, “Gerhard Richter”, “Gustave Courbet”, “Peter Doig”, “Paul Gauguin”, “Marlene Dumas”, “In Search of 0,10 – The last Futurist Exhibition of Painting”, “Black Sun”, “Jean Dubuffet – Metamorphoses of Landscape”, “Alexander Calder & Fischli/Weiss”, “Kandinsky, Marc & Der Blaue Reiter” and “Roni Horn”. In 2017 the Fondation Beyeler is showing: “Monet”, “Beyeler Collection / The Original”, “Wolfgang Tillmans”, “Beyeler Collection / Remix”, “Tino Sehgal”, “Paul Klee” and “Beyeler Collection / In Cooperation”.

The Fondation Beyeler owes its unique attractiveness to its combination of a superb modern art collection and a fascinating architectural and natural setting, as well as to temporary exhibitions on the highest international level that offer visitors new insights not only into 20th-century art but also into the latest developments in contemporary art.

Over 6.5 million people from all continents have visited the Fondation Beyeler since its inauguration in 1997.

**Press images** are available at <https://www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images>

## **Contact**

Silke Kellner-Mergenthaler

Head of Communications

tel. + 41 61 645 97 21, [presse@fondationbeyeler.ch](mailto:presse@fondationbeyeler.ch), [www.fondationbeyeler.ch](http://www.fondationbeyeler.ch)

Fondation Beyeler, Beyeler Museum AG, Baselstrasse 77, CH-4125 Riehen, Switzerland

**Fondation Beyeler opening hours: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily, Wednesdays to 8 p.m.**

## The Permanent Collection

Hildy and Ernst Beyeler's collection of around 300 works by more than 70 artists provides an extensive overview of classic modern and contemporary art. Starting with late and Post-Impressionist works by Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet, it continues via Cubism with Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque to other characteristic groups of works by Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, Vasily Kandinsky, Henri Matisse, and Paul Klee. American Expressionism is represented by artists like Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. The collection's time-frame comprises works by Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer and Neo Rauch. Among the new acquisitions are works by Louise Bourgeois, Lucio Fontana, Franz West, Philippe Parreno, Felix González-Torres, Gerhard Richter and more. A number of sculptures from Africa, Alaska and Oceania provide an exciting counterpoint to the works of European and American origin.

The collection was built up over more than fifty years, in parallel to the activities of the Galerie Beyeler. Early on, Hildy and Ernst Beyeler started setting aside works they could not or did not wish to sell. They held their first exhibitions at the Galerie Beyeler in the 1940s with Japanese woodcuts, drawings by Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists, and graphic works by Toulouse-Lautrec. The gallery soon became known as a leading specialist in modern art. The Beyelers' successful activities as art dealers, for example their purchase of *Improvisation 10*, which Vasily Kandinsky painted in 1910, laid the foundation stone for the present collection. Another important factor was their personal relationship with a number of artists, for example their friendship with Picasso, several of whose masterpieces can now be seen in one of the main exhibition rooms at the Fondation Beyeler. Works by Picasso and a group of works by Paul Klee are among those that determined the collection's character from the outset.

The idea of setting up a non-profit-making foundation emerged in the 1970s, but did not at first take concrete shape. All that Hildy and Ernst Beyeler wished to do initially was to adorn their home with art and to keep some of their favourite works for themselves rather than selling them. In 1989, at the invitation of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the previously unknown collection was publicly displayed for the first time in the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, where it attracted international attention. Since then, the Beyelers have extended it through carefully selected acquisitions.

The Beyeler Collection's distinctive character derives from its concentration on a particular period. Thanks to its selectiveness and the high quality of the exhibits, it represents more than merely the subjective viewpoint of a collector, providing an impressive survey of 20th-century art.

Most of the works in the Beyeler Collection are paintings but it also includes a few sculptures. It ends with works by Baselitz, Kiefer and Rauch. Conceptual art, the second main development in modern art, and more recent trends are intentionally not represented in the permanent collection. Instead, they are

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dealt with in the context of temporary exhibitions designed to create a dialogue with contemporary art and to make the museum a dynamic forum for the presentation of artists' ideas.

Another priority of the Fondation Beyeler, alongside its permanent collection, its architecture and its temporary exhibitions, is to teach visitors more about art. Private and public guided tours and viewings of individual works are organized. Events involving other artistic disciplines also serve to enhance visitors' appreciation of art. These events, which are very popular, add a further facet to the comprehensive range of activities offered by the Fondation Beyeler.

## Fact Sheet

### The Collection

Works by Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Louise Bourgeois, Constantin Brancusi, Georges Braque, Alexander Calder, Paul Cézanne, Marc Chagall, Eduardo Chillida, Christo, Edgar Degas, Jean Dubuffet, Marlene Dumas, Max Ernst, Luciano Fabro, Jean Fautrier, Sam Francis, Alberto Giacometti, Vincent van Gogh, Roni Horn, Vasily Kandinsky, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger, Roy Lichtenstein, Jacques Lipchitz, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, Claude Monet, Barnett Newman, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Neo Rauch, Robert Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter, Auguste Rodin, Mark Rothko, Henri Rousseau, Wilhelm Sasnal, Richard Serra, Georges Seurat, Frank Stella, Antoni Tàpies, Wolfgang Tillmans, Mark Tobey, Andy Warhol.

### Museum Building

#### History

First plans submitted by Renzo Piano in April 1992  
Referendum on 5/6 June 1993 the population of Riehen approved the project by a large majority  
Inauguration 18 October 1997  
Extension started: September 1999  
completed: September 2000

### Construction Work

Client Fondation Beyeler, Riehen  
Architect Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Paris and Genoa (design, project planning and implementation) in conjunction with Burckhardt + Partner AG, Basel (overall coordination, site supervision)  
Engineers Ove Arup & Partners International, London (design, structural engineering, natural lighting) in conjunction with Cyrill Burger & Partner AG, Basel (civil engineering including traffic planning), Elektrizitäts AG Basel (electrical installations including security planning and advice on lighting), Forrer AG, Buchrain (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), Bogenschütz AG, Basel (plumbing), Bogner & Lord Cultural Consulting, Vienna and London  
Garden design ARGE für Grünplanung Schönholzer + Stauffer/J. Wiede, Riehen

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## Dimensions

Volume	46,450 cubic metres
Length	127 metres
Width	35 metres
Height	13.45 metres (8.25 metres above ground)
Total exhibition space	3,764 square metres
Permanent collection	2,496 square metres
Temporary exhibitions	1,268 square metres

## Dimensions of the Extension

Additional space	Ground floor + 2,376 cubic metres Lower level + 1,274 cubic metres
Length	Ground floor + 12 metres Lower level + 18 metres
Exhibition space (temporary exhibitions)	Ground floor + 458 square metres
New functional area (offices, storerooms, etc.)	Lower level + 432 square metres
Redesigned functional space	Lower level + 188 square metres

## Building Materials

Floors	French white oak, slightly stained and oiled
Outer walls	Red porphyry (Patagonia/Argentina), glass façades with external blinds
Roof	White-painted steel construction with a glass roof that can be walked on and around 900 repetitive shed brise-soleil (with a total surface area of 2,685 square metres)

## Energy Supply

Geothermic energy: since 1994, at a location close to the museum, Riehen has been retrieving heat by cooling hot water (65° C) pumped up to the earth's surface from a depth of 1,542 metres. The Fondation is connected to this district heating system. The production of solar energy on the roof is planned for the future.

## Building Costs

Around CHF 65 million for the museum, the conversion of the Berower Villa and gardening work (the entire amount was borne by the Beyeler Foundation).

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## Room Layout

Ground floor	14 exhibition rooms for the permanent collection, 5 rooms for temporary exhibitions, 1 documentation room, winter garden
Lower level	3 rooms for events and temporary exhibitions

## Berower Park

The museum building stands in the Berower Park, 9,600 squares metres of which has been made available to the Fondation Beyeler by the Riehen authorities. The design of the park, which is based on an English landscaped garden, dates back to plans prepared by Franz Caillat in 1832/33.

## Berower Villa

Offices, library and restaurant

## Fondation Beyeler

Responsible entity      Beyeler Foundation, set up in 1982

## Management of the Museum

Chairman of the Board of the Foundation	Dr. h.c. Hansjörg Wyss
Director	Samuel Keller
Managing Director	Ulrike Erbslöh
Curators	Dr. Theodora Vischer (Senior Curator) Dr. Ulf Küster Dr. Raphaël Bouvier Michiko Kono (Associate Curator) Dr. Anna Szech (Associate Curator)

Agreement between the Beyeler Foundation and the Canton of the City of Basel and the Riehen authorities:

The Canton of the City of Basel has agreed to give the Beyeler Foundation CHF 2.97 million a year (including a contribution from Riehen).

The Riehen authorities have made the Berower Park available to the Beyeler Foundation free of charge for 80 years (with an option for 100 years) and are allowing it to use the historic building located on the site. The Riehen authorities have also assumed responsibility for maintaining the grounds of the Berower Park.

## The Architecture

The Fondation Beyeler consists of three parts: the Berower Park, acquired by the Riehen authorities in 1976, the 18th-century Berower Villa, which houses the restaurant and offices, and the museum recently built by Renzo Piano.

In 1991, the Genoese architect Renzo Piano—who was awarded the renowned Pritzker Prize in 1998—was invited to develop an architectural concept for the Fondation. Piano described the assignment as follows: “A museum should attempt to interpret the quality of the collection and define its relationship with the outside world. This means taking an active, but not an aggressive role.” Two years later following a referendum held in Riehen, permission was given to build the museum. Construction work began the following year and continued until autumn 1997.

## The Museum Building

The elongated building covers the whole breadth of the narrow plot of ground situated between a busy main road and a protected area of farmland. It combines two contrasting motifs: long, solid walls and a light, apparently floating glass roof. All the external walls are clad with red porphyry from Patagonia (Argentina).

The building is supported by four 127 metre-long parallel load-bearing walls placed at intervals of about seven metres. The two end façades are made of glass and look out over the park. On the road side, the museum is completed by a windowless wall that protects the building and on the inside of which the Art Shop, cloakroom, toilets, etc. are located. Piano has described this wall as a kind of “backbone” or “formative zone” from which the architecture of the whole building develops. On the opposite wall there is a winter garden with a view of the surrounding countryside.

Located between the longitudinal walls, the exhibition rooms dedicated to the permanent collection are arranged in a well-proportioned pattern that can be altered if necessary. The rooms are not organised in any strict linear order, but visitors feel a natural inclination to move in a certain direction. Another distinctive characteristic of the Fondation Beyeler is the absolute serenity of the exhibition rooms, which is unmarred by any technical or design details and is enhanced by the sensitive interplay between the walls, the ceiling and the light-coloured French oak floor.

About one-third of the total exhibition space is reserved for temporary exhibitions that are presented directly beside the permanent collection. A staircase in the adjacent winter garden leads down to the museum’s lower level, where there is a 311 square metres multi-purpose room that can also be used for temporary exhibitions.

A large glass roof lets daylight into the whole building. Unlike conventional top lighting, this roof allows the zenithal daylight to filter into the building’s interior in its natural state instead of homogenising it

and making it diffuse and milky. There are also three systems with artificial light sources that illuminate the rooms when there is insufficient light from outside.

With his museum for the Fondation Beyeler, Renzo Piano has created a building of restrained elegance that serves art without being self-effacing. This characteristic is discussed in detail in the book "Renzo Piano–Fondation Beyeler. A Home for Art," which places the building in the context of international museum architecture. Basel's international reputation as a centre of fine architecture is considerably enhanced by the Fondation Beyeler.

## **The Extension**

Less than two years after the Fondation Beyeler's inauguration, the museum was extended by 12 metres (between September 1999 and May 2000). The total exhibition space was increased by 458 square metres to 3,764 square metres, offering more flexibility for the organisation of exhibitions. Additional space was created on the lower level for events, seminars, new media and offices. At the same time, the museum's grounds were extended to the north so that the building now stands in the centre of them geographically as well as in other respects.

## Biography of Ernst Beyeler

- July 16, 1921 Birth in Basel.
- 1940 Started studying economics and art history at the University of Basel. Also worked part-time in the antiquarian book and print shop run by Oskar Schloss at Bäumleingasse 9 in Basel.
- 1945 Took over the shop (with books, prints and drawings).
- 1947 First exhibition, of Japanese woodblock prints, followed by further ones in the fields of graphic art and painting, principally French painting.
- 1951 Organised the first of a since uninterrupted series of more than 300 exhibitions focusing mainly on classic Modernism.
- 1959–65 Acquisitions from the Thompson Collection, Pittsburgh: 100 works by Klee (88 of which are now in the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf), 340 works and groups of works by Cézanne, Monet, Picasso, Matisse, Léger, Miró, Mondrian, Braque, et al., and 80 works by Giacometti (now in the Giacometti Foundation, Zurich, and Kunstmuseum Basel).
- 1966 Visited Picasso in Mougins. Beyeler is given the unprecedented opportunity to choose 26 works from the artist's own holdings. Was subsequently allowed to select drawings for the exhibition "90 Works on Paper" staged in 1971 to mark Picasso's 90th birthday. The Galerie Beyeler organised a comprehensive retrospective to mark the centenary of Picasso's birth in 1981.
- 1970 Co-founder and until 1992 active co-organiser of Basel's international art fair, ART.
- 1972 Ernst Beyeler acquired some 100 oil paintings, water colours and drawings from Nina Kandinsky.
- 1980 & 1984 Two international exhibitions "Sculpture in the 20th Century": the first in the Wenken Park in Riehen (with about 200 works from Rodin to Serra) in 1980 and the second in the Merian Park in Basel (with 220 works from Bourdelle to Beuys) in 1984.
- 1982 Creation of the Beyeler Foundation.
- 1985 Appointed a "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres" by the French Ministry of Culture in Paris.
- 1987 Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Basel.
- 1989 First presentation of the Beyeler Collection in the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid.
- 1993 The Beyeler Collection was exhibited in the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.
- 1994 Construction work began on the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen, the museum designed by Renzo Piano to house the Beyeler Collection, which at the time included around 150 classic Modernist works and artefacts from Africa and Oceania.
- 1996/97 The Beyeler Collection was exhibited in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

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- 18.10.1997 Inauguration of the Fondation Beyeler.  
Since then, over 40 exhibitions have been shown there.
- 1998 Appointed a “Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur”.
- Nov. 12, 2001 Establishment of the “Art for the Tropical Forests” Foundation, expressive of Ernst Beyeler’s lifelong commitment to nature and the environment.
- 2007 With the exhibition "The Other Collection", the Fondation Beyeler marks the 10th anniversary of the museum inauguration and the 60th anniversary of Galerie Beyeler, honoring the lifework of Ernst and Hildy Beyeler.
- Jan. 12, 2008 Honored with the SwissAward for Culture.
- July 18, 2008 Death of Ernst Beyeler's wife Hildy.
- Feb. 25, 2010 Ernst Beyeler dies at age 88 in his residence in Riehen.