

Media release  
Basel, October 2017

## **New Exhibitions & Redesigned Collection Display**

November 25, 2017–March 25, 2018, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart  
Curator: Søren Grammel

With freshly installed art on three floors, a virtually transformed Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart awaits visitors starting on November 25, 2017. The focus is on treasures from the Kunstmuseum's own collections and the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation as well as three interventions: by Claudia & Julia Müller, Marianne Eigenheer, and, perhaps most strikingly, the artist duo Michael Clegg & Martin Guttman, whose work is on view in the museum's skylight hall.

Most galleries are devoted to the works of a single artist, resulting in a harmonious polyphony of installations, films, and expansive creations throughout the museum. The redesigned presentation includes art by Carl Andre, Francis Alÿs, Burt Barr, Louis Cane, Ceal Floyer, Wade Guyton, Steve McQueen, Sol LeWitt, Kilian Rüthemann, Richard Serra, Oscar Tuazon, Mark Wallinger, and Heimo Zobernig.

A special highlight are the interventions by the Swiss artists Claudia & Julia Müller, who have created a new work to complement an earlier piece in the museum's collection, and Marianne Eigenheer, who was invited to design the room showcasing her art. Clegg & Guttman revisit a work that was on view at Kunsthalle Basel twenty years ago.

### **Michael Clegg & Martin Guttman 120 years after the First Zionist Congress in Basel**

Michael Clegg (b. Dublin, 1957) and Yair Martin Guttman (b. Jerusalem, 1957) have been collaborators since 1980. They studied together in New York and now teach at art schools in Karlsruhe and Vienna.

On occasion of the centennial of the First Zionist Congress in 1997, Clegg & Guttman created an installation that took up Kunsthalle Basel's skylight hall. Twenty years later, a reinterpretation of the ensemble will now be set up at the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart.

Convened by the leading Zionist Theodor Herzl, the 1897 congress brought together young Jewish men at the Stadtcasino in Basel to discuss his vision of a future Jewish state. A century later, Clegg & Guttman worked with a group of historians from the University of Basel to shed light on the prevailing political and social atmosphere in which the congress had taken place. The primary challenge, they found, was to translate historic material into vivid visual experience;

they interwove documents with their own creative interpretations, as in a reading room in which turn-of-the-century newspapers, books, and brochures were on display. Synthesizing scholarly and artistic modes of representation, their installation encouraged visitors to immerse themselves in the historic circumstances and events, while transplanting the material into the art context prompted a shift of perspective, raising the question of how we construct history and generate knowledge.

The revised installation at the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart not only coincides with the First Zionist Congress's 120th anniversary—a memorial celebration in Basel scheduled for this year had to be canceled at the last minute. It is also an illuminating companion piece to the exhibition *Chagall. The Breakthrough Years, 1911–1919* which is concurrently on view at the Kunstmuseum Basel and includes ethnographic photographs by the Russian photographer Solomon Yudovin. Portraying early-twentieth-century life in the shtetl in all its facets, they shine a light on a traditional yet also profoundly precarious social reality that has been and still is crucial to the evolving idea of the Jewish state.

Exhibition sponsor:

Fonds für künstlerische Aktivitäten im Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann Stiftung und der Christoph Merian Stiftung

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### **Opening**

Friday, November 24, 2017, 6:30pm  
Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, St. Alban-Rheinweg 60, 4052 Basel

### **Images and exhibition information**

[www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien](http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/medien)

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