

Basel,
20/07/2017

Press release, 19/07/2017

Statement from the Swiss Architecture Museum S AM on the decision made by the Federal Office of Culture

Today, the Federal Office of Culture informed the Swiss Architecture Museum S AM that, after a transition period, the museum will no longer be able to count on federal contributions to its operations from 2019 onwards. S AM and its Board of Trustees are very disappointed by this decision, which threatens the museum's existence. The reasons are all the more difficult for us to comprehend, as S AM is the only national architecture museum in Switzerland and, through its constant work since it was founded in 1984, has managed to establish itself nationally and internationally. In the past four years, thanks to federal subsidies in particular, it has been able to consolidate its excellent reputation. Moreover, the efforts to increase the museum's public presence all throughout Switzerland in recent years have been immense, considering its size. New and innovative exhibition and mediation formats have been set up in-house as a means of also raising the general public's awareness of architecture. At the same time, S AM's profile has been enhanced Switzerland-wide via lectures and touring exhibitions. However, the unique cooperation with Switzerland's three most important architecture archives, which was initiated in spring 2017, is probably the most important new development. This makes it possible for research and exhibition operations to work together in a manner unparalleled in Switzerland and, above all, enables efficient use of resources, which are scarce in the promotion of building culture.

In terms of how Switzerland is perceived, both nationally and internationally, architecture is one of this country's most prominent vehicles of cultural identity. If Switzerland's only architecture museum, of all things, having conducted its widely appreciated work for over three decades as a privately run institution, is considered expendable when it comes to federal state-funded promotion of culture, this has an impact on not only the museum, but on the entire building culture in Switzerland.

Signed,

Samuel Schultze
President of the Board of Trustees

Andreas Ruby
Director