

MEDIA RELEASE

Adam Szymczyk appointed as Director of S AM Swiss Architecture Museum in Basel

After ten highly successful years, Andreas Ruby will leave his post as director of the S AM Swiss Architecture Museum at the end of 2025. In May this year, the Board of Trustees launched an open call for applications and assembled a search committee to find a new director. The committee consisted of four architects, members of the Board of the S AM Foundation: Meinrad Morger, President of the Board, and Emanuel Christ, Ludovica Molo and Céline Guibat as well as external members Niels Olsen and Fredi Fischli, curators of gta exhibitions at ETH Zürich (who shared one vote), and architect Christine Binswanger who chaired the committee.

By the end of June, 58 applications were received from both Switzerland and abroad. Eight candidates with diverse profiles were invited for an interview. On October 6, the Board of Trustees confirmed the search committee's unanimous proposal to appoint Adam Szymczyk as the new director of S AM.

Born 1970, Szymczyk studied art history at the University of Warsaw and completed the curatorial training program at De Appel in Amsterdam. In 1997, he co-founded the Foksal Gallery Foundation in Warsaw. He worked as director and curator at Kunsthalle Basel between 2002 and 2014, curating over 80 exhibitions. During this time, he also co-curated the 5th Berlin Biennale with Elena Filipovic, in 2008. In 2013, he was appointed artistic director of documenta 14, which he organized in Athens and Kassel simultaneously, in 2017. For the past eight years, he has been working freelance in Zurich, curating exhibitions in Switzerland and internationally, and he wrote for specialized press and exhibition catalogues. He also taught seminars at the gta Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture at ETH Zürich, at the Universities of Basel and Zurich, as well as at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. He has frequently collaborated with architects and served as a jury member in architecture competitions.

Adam Szymczyk said, «I am very much looking forward to leading the program of S AM as its director from 2026 onwards. Having followed S AM's activities and development closely since 2003, I am excited to work again in Basel – the city I love and consider home. After over 25 years curating contemporary art exhibitions, I am eager to apply my knowledge and experience in a different context. In my work as curator, author and lecturer, I have often addressed architecture and architects, with growing awareness of the political dimension of the profession and the discourse that shapes architecture within a broader social, economic, and cultural context. I often think about the daring vision shared by those who created the Architecture Museum in Basel in 1984.»

Adam Szymczyk's poetic and theoretically grounded reflection on architecture fully convinced the selection committee. He sees works and projects by architects and artists as responding to pressing issues of our time, such as the need for meaningful and responsible use of resources, as well as the social relevance of the profession and its actors. In Szymczyk's work, critical examination of history serves as an inspiration for the present and serves to define a vision for the future. Beyond the sensory quality of his exhibitions, Szymczyk's curatorial practice is characterized by precision of observations and clarity in communication with the audience, and similar qualities were also evident in his presentation to the selection committee.

We are convinced that Adam Szymczyk, working together with the S AM team, will strengthen our network, and take our public to inspiring and surprising places.

S AM Board and Search Committee, October 20, 2025

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