

The Monet room. Photography by N. Bräuning.



Façade and entrance. Photography by T. Dix.



Alexander Calder (1898–1976),
The Three, 1966.
Painted steel and aluminium,
205 x 421¼ inches.
Photography by T. Dix.

Beyeler Foundation

The stylish and serene municipality of Riehen, situated on the right bank of the Rhine River at the northeastern edge of Basel, Switzerland, is home to the Beyeler Foundation, a remarkable small museum showcasing the art collection of Ernst Beyeler and his late wife Hildy. The museum building, designed by Genoese “starchitect” Renzo Piano (b. 1937), stands on two and a half acres of picturesque parkland. The two end façades of the museum, constructed of glass, afford scenic vistas over the park. A glass roof, which appears to almost float on top of the building, allows daylight to filter pleasingly into the museum’s interior and provides optimum conditions for viewing the works of art on display.

Consisting of approximately two hundred paintings and sculptures by modern masters, the Beyeler Foundation is the fruit of more

than fifty years of collecting. Born in Basel in 1921, Ernst Beyeler studied economics and art history at the University of Basel. While a student, he worked part-time in an antiquarian book and print shop, which he took over in 1945. Beyeler refocused the business into an art gallery, renaming it Galerie Beyeler, and in 1951 held his first exhibition of classic modern art. The company still operates in its original location at Bäumleingasse 9 in Basel. Through the years the Beyelers purchased works for their personal collection. The foundation was inaugurated in 1997 to allow public access to this phenomenal material.

The forty artists represented in the collection constitute a veritable timeline of modern art, including early modernists such as Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) and Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890) and American expressionists like Mark Rothko (1903–1970), Barnett Newman

(1905–1970), and Jackson Pollock (1912–1956). The Beyelers’ personal friendship with Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) allowed them unparalleled access to the artist’s work and several of his masterpieces hang in the one of the museum’s main exhibition spaces. The collection also includes representative works by Joan Miró (1923–1924), Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), Henri Matisse (1869–1954), and Paul Klee (1879–1940). The timeline ends with George Baselitz (b. 1938), Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945), and Luciano Fabro (1936–2007). Sculptures of African, Alaskan, and Oceanic origin are placed strategically throughout the galleries in intriguing juxtaposition to the fine art on display.

One-third of the museum’s exhibition space is dedicated to temporary exhibitions. Up to four special exhibitions each year explore artists

suggested reading:

Ernst Beyeler. *Beyeler Foundation Collection*. Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2007.

Renzo Piano—*Fondation Beyeler: A Home for Art*. Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser Basel, 1998.



The Giacometti room.
Photography by T. Dix.



Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), *Improvisation 10*, 1910. Oil on canvas, 47¼ x 55 inches.



Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), *Girl with Tear III*, 1977. Oil and magna on canvas, 46 x 40 inches.




Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), *Mme Cézanne au fauteil jaune*, 1888–1890. Oil on canvas, 31¾ x 25¾ inches.

and ideas closely related to the permanent collection. *René Magritte: The Key to Dreams* (2005), *Cézanne and Modernism* (1999–2000), and *The Surrealist Picasso* (2005) are among the acclaimed exhibitions that have been held at the Beyeler Foundation since its inauguration. A large exhibition opens this summer (May 31–October 11, 2009) on the work of Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966). The artist is represented in the permanent collection with masterpieces from his late phase, among them his famous ensemble of figures designed for the Chase Manhattan Plaza. A personal

friend of Giacometti, Ernst Beyeler contributed to the establishment of the Giacometti Foundation in Zurich, which is a partner in the exhibition. More than one hundred works illustrate every phase in the artist's oeuvre and explore his perception and representation of bodies in motion.

Conceptual art, while not represented in the permanent collection, is often explored in the museum's temporary exhibitions, creating dialogue between the modern works and contemporary art. Past exhibitions have featured Jean Claude (b. 1935) and Christo (b. 1935) and

Wolfgang Laib (b. 1950); in 1998–1999 and 2005–2006 respectively. A forthcoming exhibition (November 1, 2009–January 24, 2010) of the work of Jenny Holzer (b. 1950) will include a selection of the artist's signature LED installations, new paintings, and sculptures. Additionally, Holzer will prepare one of the museum's galleries, revealing an American artist's take on a European collection. 

For information call +41 (0)61.645.97.00 or visit www.beyeler.com.

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