

Fondation Beyeler and the private museum

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The Fondation Beyeler in Riehen has already appeared in this book twice, as the creation of the art dealer who co-founded Art Basel and as an example of a charitable foundation.¹ A brief note on its cultural role completes the picture. The museum, which opened in 1997 in a building by Renzo Piano in the park of the Berower estate, houses the collection that Ernst and Hildy Beyeler assembled during half a century of dealing, from Monet and Cézanne to Picasso, Giacometti and Rothko, together with works of non-European art.²

The Fondation Beyeler has become one of the most visited art museums in Switzerland, with several hundred thousand visitors in strong years. Its large monographic exhibitions draw audiences from Germany, France and beyond.³ An extension designed by Peter Zumthor, financed largely by private donors, has been planned to provide space for the growing collection and for events.⁴ The museum demonstrates that a private initiative can achieve the international standing of a state institution within a generation, provided that it can draw on an exceptional collection, an architect of world rank and a city whose cultural reputation is already established.

1 Notes

1. On Ernst and Hildy Beyeler and the Fondation Beyeler, see Part E, Chapter V, and Part H, Chapter IV. To be verified. ↩
2. On the Fondation Beyeler, its building by Renzo Piano in the Berower Park in Riehen (opened 1997), and its collection of about 400 works of classical modern and contemporary art, see the publications of the Fondation Beyeler. Figures to be verified. ↩

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3. On the visitor numbers of the Fondation Beyeler, which according to its annual reports have exceeded 300,000 in several years, see the annual reports of the Fondation Beyeler. Figures to be verified. ↩
4. On the extension of the Fondation Beyeler designed by Peter Zumthor, approved by the municipality of Riehen and financed largely by private donations, see the publications of the Fondation Beyeler. Status and opening date to be verified. ↩

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