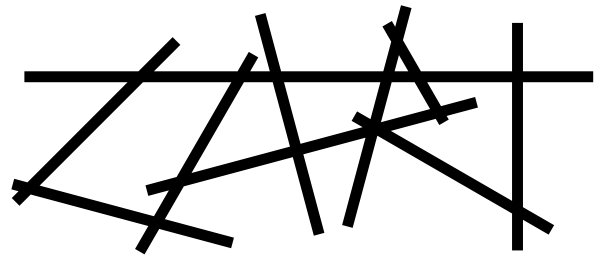


CONCEPT



4.7 - 26.9.2020 Solothurn

MOTIVATION

Why stage an art exhibition in the City of Solothurn?

Despite its small size – the current population is only around 17,000 – the Swiss city of Solothurn has played an inordinately important role in the development of Switzerland and beyond. A major stop along the Aare river, a main artery of communications before the advent of railways, Solothurn was also the center of an incredibly lucrative trade in mercenaries – soldiers for hire who served in some of the most feared fighting forces in Europe. For many centuries the city was the seat of the French ambassador.

In 2020 the City of Solothurn celebrates 2,000 years of history. A city changes over time: it grows, gets remodeled, rebuilt, and repurposed. Buildings originally intended for a specific use – for example the Landhaus, constructed to store goods shipped along the Aare river to Solothurn – lose their relevance and are given new functions.

Architecture shapes places. Buildings in central Europe are built to last a long time. But at some point – often for social, political, or economic reasons – they end up being used for something other than the purpose originally intended. There are many examples of this in modern-day Solothurn: an old warehouse now hosting conferences; the former slaughterhouse enclosing a bar and restaurant; the historical ambassador's residence that now houses local government offices; old townhouses converted into a department store; a chapel used as an art space; butcher's shops that have morphed into restaurants, and restaurants that have morphed into boutiques.

Places shape consciousness. A place's name reminds us of its history, often long after it's ceased to be used for that purpose.

Solothurn can look back on a long history of Christian culture. The city has many sacred spaces such as chapels, churches, and monasteries, including two architecturally magnificent large churches – the Cathedral of St. Ursus and the Jesuit Church – around which much of the city's religious and musical life still revolves. Some of these sacred spaces, however, no longer serve their original religious purpose. They are empty, or are used for other things.

Rediscovering places. Our aim is to take sacred and secular spaces in the city of Solothurn that are unused, hidden, closed, or forgotten, and open them up to art.

IDEA

Using art to fertilize new growth

The organizations behind the project, the Kunstverein Solothurn art association and Haus der Kunst St. Josef art space, are inviting artists to create works specially for selected places in the city. The artists will take up and respond to the specific character of the location.

The idea is that these artistic interventions will serve as a kind of fertilizer to allow new things to grow in these places. Regardless of its original purpose, each space will be given a unique artistic charge that enables us to see it differently.

Does this sound paradoxical?

Because art has to be absolutely free and independent, and its main function is to be art, it can enable us to see the city more clearly. Art can help neutralize places and attune our perception to them more closely.

It might even be possible to reshape a place by means of artistic interventions. It can create a new view of the city.

Living art in Solothurn

Solothurn is staging an art exhibition called Zart. The German word “zart,” besides being a play on the English “art,” translates into something like “gentle,” “tender,” “delicate,” or “subtle.” The idea behind the exhibition is to facilitate encounters between artists and Solothurn people, young and old, locals and non-locals. Encounters with art: see and discover. Encounters in the city that create memories.

PROJECT

Zart art exhibition: 4 July to 26 September 2020

- Artists in Canton Solothurn, but also from other parts of Switzerland and abroad, have been invited to take part.
- The artists have been commissioned to create location-specific artistic installations at different places.
- These include sacred places such as churches and chapels, but also non-religious spaces such as former kiosks, passages, niches, green areas, etc.
- Spaces all over the city have been chosen, both indoors and outdoors. The goal is to set up a tour.
- People will be able to go on a walk taking in all or some of the installations. If possible, the installations should be accessible to the public without supervisory staff.
- There will be the opportunity to view installations in places not normally open to the public.
- Care will be taken to ensure that enough venues are accessible for handicapped people.
- The duration of the project is limited, although all the works do not have to be created and completed at the same time.

Project managers

Kunstverein Solothurn art association

- Brigitte Müller, communications specialist and president of Kunstverein Solothurn art association
- Anna Bürkli, art historian and freelance curator, vice president of Kunstverein Solothurn art association

Haus der Kunst St. Josef art space

- Reto Emch, artist, curator and director of Haus der Kunst St. Josef art space

An artistic network

To enable an exciting artistic exchange across borders, the initiators of the exhibition have invited contributions from artists from Canton Solothurn, the rest of Switzerland, and other countries. They want the Zart art exhibition to be noticed and talked about in the media all over Switzerland, as well as abroad.

The Kunstverein Solothurn art association has repeatedly staged important art projects ever since it was established back in 1850. It has a tradition of presenting and inviting discussion on contemporary art in Solothurn. When organizing exhibitions and art projects, the association has always cast its net beyond the borders of the canton, with the aim of raising awareness of the local art scene to an audience (including a professional audience) across Switzerland.

The initiators will ensure that the Zart exhibition attracts the attention of specialists and the art scene, kindles the curiosity of interested art lovers, and inspires the public to discover art.

Artists

CANTON SOLOTHURN

- **Nicolo Bernasconi**

Graphic artist Nicolo Bernasconi will revitalize a defunct kiosk in a pedestrian underpass with artifacts and images of consumer goods and shoppers.

- **Verena Baumann**

During the exhibition, painter and watercolorist Verena Baumann will serve as the “city sketcher,” sitting in cafes and drawing the world and the people around her.

- **Sonja Feldmeier**

Painter, sculptor, and object artist Sonja Feldmeier will create a provocative installation by repurposing a tree to create an object resembling something between a flute and a battering ram.

- **Lea Fröhlicher**

Curator and installation artist Lea Fröhlicher will be probing the function of a typical Solothurn feature by setting up a temporary “living room” around one of the city’s fountains.

- **Christian Fürholz**

Video and audio artist Christian Fürholz will transform the Rötibrücke pedestrian and cycle bridge across the river into a bridge of sound, inviting people to explore the city through their ears as well as their eyes.

- **Flo Kaufmann**

Experimental artist Flo Kaufmann, who lives in the old town, transforms things he’s found into objects with amazing functions.

- **Germann/Lorenzi**

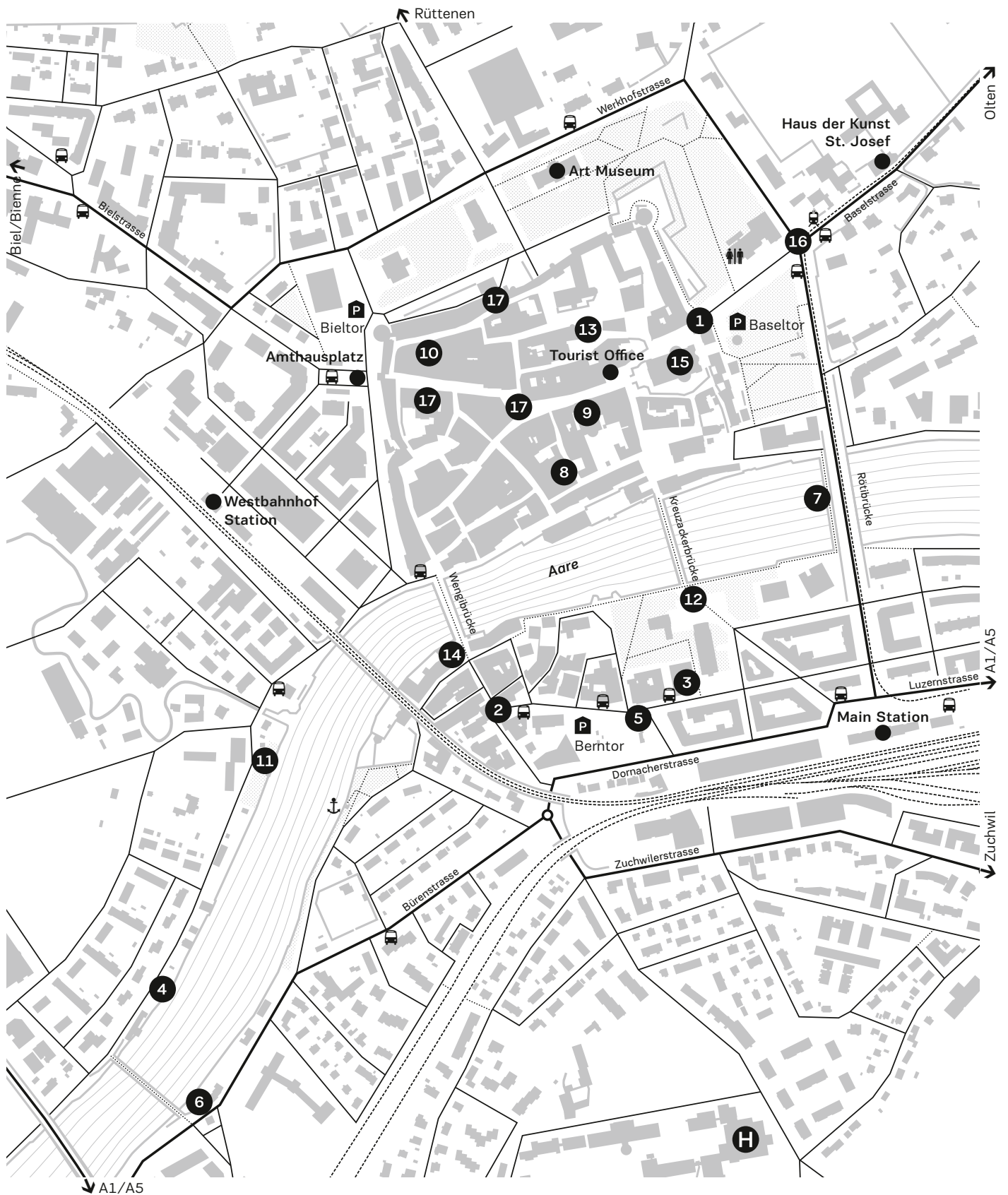
Artist duo Monica Germann and Daniel Lorenzi will create drawings directly on the walls of one of the city’s chapels, taking up and responding to the existing images of Christian martyrs.

REST
OF SWITZERLAND

- **Roman Crelier**
Romain Crelier, an artist from French-speaking Switzerland, will place three colored LED lights in the windows of the ancient Jesuit church to fill the Baroque building with atmospheric light.
- **Alex Hanimann**
St. Gallen artist Alex Hanimann plans to adorn the interior of the otherwise inaccessible Church of the Holy Ghost with a 3D-printed statue of a woman, contrasting sharply with the existing carved wooden figures.
- **Delphine Reist**
Internationally-acclaimed artist Delphine Reist will create an installation called “Collier” on Dornacherplatz square: car tires arranged around a streetlight like a decorative chain, pointing to the parking garage as a reminder of how traffic in the Vorstadt area of the city has been reduced.
- **Celia and Nathalie Sidler**
Artistic duo Celia and Nathalie Sidler will work against the backdrop of Solothurn’s market, exploring notions of strangeness and familiarity by creating pats of butter featuring motifs of plants – not local species, but invasive neophytes.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Leone Contini**
In an installation called “Cucuzzeide,” Florence-based artist Leone Contini will take seeds from local allotments and his own garden to grow pumpkins and gourds in a bamboo frame down by the Aare river.
- **Atsuo Hukuda**
Atsuo Hukuda from Shibukawa, Japan – also well-known in Europe – will use paper to create four silver-colored objects hanging from a wall of the Cathedral of St. Ursus – maximum effect with minimal effort.
- **Rainer Prohaska**
Internationally-active Austrian artist Rainer Prohaska plans to create a kind of city gate on Kreuzackerplatz square near the railway station as a landmark where people can stop, explore, and gather.
- **Johan Tahon**
The highly expressive Belgian sculptor Johan Tahon will create a ceramic statue for the Chapel of St. Urban, a tiny church nestled between shops and homes in a quiet side street of the old town.



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|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Baseltor Sonja Feldmeier | 11 Small Park, Römerstrasse Leone Contini/Yves Lavoyer |
| 2 Berntor Rainer Prohaska | 12 Kreuzackerplatz Rainer Prohaska |
| 3 Solothurn BBZ Training Center Christian Fürholz | 13 City Hall Muriel Baumgartner |
| 4 Römerstrasse Fountain Lea Fröhlicher | 14 Zum Heiligen Geist Hospice Church Alex Hanimann |
| 5 Dornacherplatz Delphine Reist | 15 St. Ursus Cathedral Atsuo Hukuda |
| 6 Dreibeinskreuz Chapel Germann/Lorenzi | 16 Baseltor Underpass Nicolo Bernasconi |
| 7 Rötibrücke Pedestrian Bridge Christian Fürholz | 17 Market, City Dairy, Gänterli Organic Store Celia und Nathalie Sidler |
| 8 Goldgasse Flo Kaufmann | Studio Roman Candio |
| 9 Jesuit Church Romain Crelier | City of Solothurn Verena Baumann |
| 10 St. Urban Chapel Johan Tahon | |