

**ART
IN
ARCHITECTURE**



Universität St.Gallen

Foreword



Research in the social sciences thrives on the direct personal interaction between people, researchers and professionals, lecturers and students. For this reason, as a university with a focus on business and the social sciences, the University of St.Gallen (HSG) is committed to the concept of a campus university. Looking back, many an alumnus emphasises the decisive influence of the campus. Its inspiring interiors and exteriors made many random encounters possible, for example by means of the sought-after seats in the library, formerly in the “head” of the Main Building and now in the Library Building. This space helped to shape the rhythm of their studies. In a similar way, at the information days for new students one can sense the impression the campus makes on young people, how it relates to culture, plays a role in selecting and shaping it, such that the exterior sense of order correlates with the interior.

For fifty years the University of St.Gallen has been located on the grounds on Rosenberg. When it opened in 1963 the Brutalist-style building complex designed by architects Walter Förderer, Georg Otto and Hans Zwimpfer was often mentioned throughout Europe. Even today we still admire the courage of the patrons, the city, and the Canton of St.Gallen. The campus in its prominent position on Rosenberg wanted to highlight the sense of the new and their belief in the future. This step, unique back then and pioneering to this day, was made possible by the great commitment of private donors and Swiss businesses. In the opinion of various contemporaries, without the considerable funds from private sources that were invested in the overall project the referendum in the city and canton would hardly have been won. In this sense, the university campus, whose 50th anniversary also symbolised the unique collaboration between political authorities at various levels, the support of members of the

local population, business and governors. To this very day, the HSG is characterised by this spirit of cooperation between state support and private entrepreneurs.

The link between art and architecture is particularly impressive at the HSG campus. Thanks to the early incorporation of art, the campus does not demonstrate the refinement of the architecture through art, but rather a Gesamtkunstwerk. Anyone who discovers the Giacometti sculpture in the centre of the “head” of the building, the Miró frieze, a natural design element on the ground floor, or the playful combination of the self-supporting concrete stairs and the Calder mobile, soon realises that this was an outstanding achievement. Many were involved in this oeuvre, but the driving forces and masterminds behind it were the then Rector Prof. Walter Adolf Jöhr and lawyer Prof. Eduard Nägeli. Ever since and as of 1986, under the responsibility of an Art Committee appointed by the Rector’s office, the symbiosis of architecture and art has been advanced in line with the various phases of the campus’s expansion, in particular with the addition of Bruno Gerosa’s buildings.

The Rector’s office wishes to thank all those who have played a role in conceiving, planning, building, and advancing our unique campus, be it with their time or their money. The present Art Guide is intended to document the spirit of the HSG campus and make it accessible to the reader.

Introduction

Excerpts from the lecture “The Cultural City” delivered by Prof. Peter Nobel, President of the HSG Art Committee 2003–2012, as part of the lecture series entitled “To whom does the city belong?” (HSG, 28 Nov., 2011)

I am standing in the HSG’s main lecture theatre at the “technical/allegorical bar” created by the well-known, indeed world-famous artist Roman Signer, and in the midst of the bottles revolving in the breeze generated by fans. Standing here in front of his carefully staged, explosion-like sculpture piece, I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a few thoughts about the beautiful cultural city of St.Gallen and first and foremost about the great art at the university, which I have visited and experienced several times and always valued.

At the HSG, world-renowned art can be found in and around the university buildings. The architecture plays a fundamental role in the diversity of the urban structure. This is a particularly successful example of art in the public domain and in architecture. Therefore, we should not forget the real founder of art at HSG, Eduard Nägeli, who was a professor of law at the university. Thanks to his connections to important artists (he was President of the Swiss Art Society), he played a pivotal role in furnishing the HSG with art. We should also remember Franz Larese of Galerie Erker, who brought several important artists to St.Gallen. Nor should we forget the many private patrons.

This brings me to the repeatedly asked question of what the term “art” actually means when not defined as prices on the market



**Roman Signer | “Bar” in the main lecture theatre
Revolving bottles above four fans (HSG, 28 November 2011)**

place. When first engaging in deliberations of this nature, I experienced great unease, as we lawyers are used to working with clear definitions. Art, however, stands out precisely for evading all manner of seemingly objective definitions.

Instead of boring you with theories of aesthetics and somehow attempting to penetrate Heidegger’s “Revelation of Truth in Art Works”, I’d rather quote Peter von Matt’s catchy definition of art: “Where wine grows, there is culture. Wine is always two things: hard work and intoxicated enthusiasm. Both are a prerequisites for art. Diligence alone causes callus, intoxication on its own simply leaves you with a headache. Both together produce a work of art and thus inspire politics. The differences in the interpretations are a source of explosive potential, if the intoxication predominates.”

We must have no illusions and be absolutely clear about the fact that there are no objective yardsticks for the quality and reception of works of art. In contrast, more or less large and organised consensus groups with their hidden subjective tastes are in more or less hefty dispute with other communities of consent. These, in turn, have their own hidden preferences. De Kooning also said: “In Art, one idea is as good as another.”

The question now is what role can art play in public spheres. What is the relationship of cities, art, and culture with one another? As to museums, there are facilities for channelling disputes in a civil way. It is up to us, however, whether to visit them, whereas art in public spaces confronts every passer-by.

As the curator and Chairman of the Zurich working group "Art in Public Spaces", Christoph Doswald, aptly stated: "Art wants to get out, move about in urban reality, prove itself there. It lives on confrontation and interaction. It needs physical exchange, as Richard Sennett put it in his fascinating 1996 book *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation*.

Avant-garde art repeatedly spearheads urban transformation processes; Avant-garde artists are not only pioneers, but also social catalysts. Frequently, artists discover our urban outskirts and make them the focus of public attention.

Numerous genuine scandals reveal just how emotionally charged culture and art can be. Examples in St.Gallen also bear witness to this.

I have no intention of telling you the parable of the citizens of St.Gallen, who were increasingly coming to dislike the architect Santiago Calatrava's growing fame and the bus stop he designed; they wanted to get rid of it. In the future, Later, the self-same citizens will probably put up photo panels on the piazza reading "Calatrava's bus stop once stood here".

Having failed in 1994 to place it in a public space in Zurich, the Bechtler family, true art connoisseurs, wanted to position Sol LeWitt's "The Cube" on the St.Gallen university campus. Far from it: Though the project initially met with approval, a protracted populist dispute developed. The Cube would block the view of the Alpstein, it would simply attract graffiti and so on. To cut a long story short,

today, the sculpture stands in a prominent position in Zellweger Park in the grateful small town of Uster.

Only a few years earlier, in 1987, Roman Signer's fountain (it was a leaking barrel on four steel stilts) made numerous St.Gallen residents livid with rage, triggering an unprecedented campaign. A letter to the editor declared the new red cask to be an "alien petrol drum". There were threats of attacks on it and many mourned the dear old fountain in "Grabenpärkli". By way of counter-attack, renowned curators such as Jean-Christophe Ammann attempted to save the reputation of St.Gallen by embarking at the HSG on a series of lectures entitled "Art and Interpretation". From today's point of view, looking back on all this is amusing. In conclusion: Art repeatedly provides an opportunity for unleashing the animal in us.

Art scandals are not rare. One reason for this may be the fact that art often gets selected by the interested, self-appointed elite in charge, which at times runs the risk of appearing conceited. Hence, to prevent scandals, it must nurture a democratic culture, go along with others, explain, but fight as well, as what is new is often too new. Highbrow art keeps its secret, yet precisely all debates about it must be informed by democratic culture.

It is a good thing if the community addresses the question of art in public spaces in an organised and objective manner, even if well-meaning committees all too often aid and abet the mediocre when it comes to reaching a consensus.

In the interest of quality, advocates and opponents would do better to confidently flesh out decisions about art in public spheres on a "combat stage", as art can, indeed should, be both explosive and precarious, as Roman Signer's work demonstrates.





**Roman Signer | Explosion in front of the Main Building
(HSG, 28 Nov., 2011)**



**University of St.Gallen (HSG) –
Art and Architecture in Dialogue**

The University of St.Gallen is an extraordinary institution. It is the only university in the country whose graduates later on, in addition to their academic degree, also have the attribute “HSG” on their business cards as an indication of the quality of the place where they studied. The University of St.Gallen enjoys a widespread reputation as a prestigious management training centre. What is far less well known, something even not all students are aware of, is the extraordinary position the HSG has as a place for art. In terms of the number and quality of the works assembled here, one can actually term the University of St.Gallen an art museum in its own right. That said, the way the art is presented here is anything but museum-like. Strictly speaking, nothing at all is presented; instead, the works of art are integrated in the architecture and everyday student life. This is meant literally, as almost all the works were created by the artists for the specific site in question and not subsequently positioned there. The concept of a dialogue between art and architecture runs through all three building complexes built on Rosenberg since the 1960s: through the Main Building dating from 1963, designed by architects Walter M. Förderer (1928–2006), Georg Otto (1924–2003), and Hans Zwimpfer (1930–2012), who at the time were working as a team in Basel, through the Library Building dating from 1989, to the Executive Campus HSG dating from 1995, both of which were designed by Zurich-based architect Bruno Gerosa (born 1928).

Although in all the buildings the artists created works for a specific place, down through the years and occasioned not least of all by the changes in architecture, there has been a shift in how this basic concept is interpreted. Whereas the Main Building by Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer is based on the strict geometry of rectangular, self-contained concrete blocks and in formal terms is looking for a counterpart in art, Bruno Gerosa’s structures are exceptionally transparent, boast a diversity of shapes, and prompt a corresponding

The former library rises up as a windowless concrete “Tête” above the Main Building



narrative stance in the art works. A visit to the individual buildings enables this transition from a dialectic between art and architecture to their convergence is something visitors can experience in person. It reflects the current trends in art in architecture at the relevant time, as well as the personal ideas and vision of those involved in the projects.

Brief history

Having first been housed in a side wing of the canton school, the university, which had been founded in 1898, moved in 1911 into a prestigious building designed by Carl Adolf Lang. The structure on Notkerstrasse in the museum district was planned with 200 students in mind and soon proved too small. For this reason, as early as the winter term 1944-45 the university senate addressed the need for a new building. Before any thought could be given to it, however, the financing of the former “Commercial University” had to be put on a different footing. Until then it had been financed by the Local Community and the Commercial Directorate and received only a small amount from the canton. On 13-14 February 1954 the population of St.Gallen voted in favour of dual financing by the city and the canton, thus paving the way for the continued successful development of the HSG.



In 1957 a nationwide competition was held for the main HSG building, which was to be built on the site of the former Kirchhofergut manor grounds on Rosenberg. Of the 117 projects submitted, 12 were short-listed for the final round. The jury voted unanimously in favour of the design called “Tête”. The project by the young Basel architecture studio of Förderer, Otto und Zwimpfer won the jury over not least thanks to the architectural language used, which, in addition to its great functionality, succeeded in making a highly expressive mark, albeit with circumspection; by gaining the right to award doctorates in 1938, the HSG (originally founded by the canton in 1898 as the “Higher School of Commerce, Transport, and Administration”) had gained the same status as the other Swiss universities. However, from the Olympus of time-honoured tradition, the latter looked down rather sceptically on the “young” university. As opposed to the other universities, the HSG had always fostered a practical approach, which, though winning the affection of business circles, was if anything suspect in the eyes of the universities. The University of St.Gallen made great efforts to emphasise the “holistic” nature of the education it offered. In order to avoid promoting pure specialists, the degree rules stipulated that an obligatory final examination be sat in a cultural studies subject. The aim was to give the students a general education, in which not only their intellect was challenged, but in which ethical values were also imparted.



The high-quality architecture and the integration of superlative works of art make this approach manifest on the outside, for the buildings were not intended to be merely a structure for smoothly functioning teaching; instead, the intention was to create a place that reflected the comprehensive thrust of the degree course. In the building, which the university moved into in 1963, art and architecture were meant to complement each other and interact, as in a Gesamtkunstwerk such as was set out in the ideals of Baroque, Art Nouveau and Bauhaus. The stringent cubes of the building by Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer reflected rational thought, while the art works, many of them made by artists associated with Surrealism, stood for the “other side to reason”, the irrational. At the time the abstract, sensual, natural shapes of these art works were not universally welcomed, as, if at all, then allegorical representations of the sciences were considered to be suitable decoration for a university. We have the successful collaboration between persons affiliated to the HSG, the three architects, and the artists to thank for the fact that it was possible to push through the revolutionary concept without any major compromises (although some representational works had to be added to the collection initially in place of abstract pieces).



At the suggestion of the then Rector Walter Adolf Jöhr, shortly before the conclusion of the architecture competition the university senate established an Art Committee. It was presided over by Eduard Naegeli, Professor of the Swiss Code of Obligations and Commercial Law and President of the St.Gallen Art Society. It was primarily Naegeli's broad knowledge in the field of contemporary art and his contacts in the international art scene that enabled the HSG to assemble a collection of outstanding works that is still exemplary to this day – in the space of only six years. When it came to financing this exacting project the HSG benefited from its excellent relations with the business world, and, together with the great personal efforts and negotiating skills of Walter Adolf Jöhr, this enabled the ambitious plans to be realised

Expansion in stages

For the university, the worldwide attention the integration of art and architecture in the Main Building attracted also constituted an obligation to devise a concept of the same calibre for art integrated in the architecture for the extension that soon became necessary. In fact, even before the competition for the extension was staged in 1981, thought had been given to a possible art concept that would tread in the footsteps of the successful formula. A certain restraint was expected with regard to the architecture, as the existing building



The Library Building is dominated by the light-filled glass pyramid

by Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer was meant to remain the dominant edifice. The proposal by Zurich-based architect Bruno Gerosa, who had also participated in the 1957 competition for the Main Building, ultimately emerged as the winner. As desired, lying low against the slope, the rectangular structure housing the new library, which opened in 1989, keeps an appropriate distance from the existing building, revealing the diversity of its materials and shapes primarily on the inside and on the side looking away from the Main Building. Its look is dominated by the shimmering glass pyramid above the new library, which resembles a contemporary response to the self-contained concrete cube forming the “head”, the top of the Main Building.

In the autumn of 1986 an Art Committee was set up consisting of HSG representatives and architects Bruno Gerosa and Walter Förderer – the university had maintained friendly contact to the latter ever since the construction of the Main Building. In the persons of Rector Johannes Anderegg, Armin Wildermuth and Philipp Guyer the committee included among the professors and lecturers three individuals who, with an immense knowledge of the subject and commitment, addressed the now more complicated strategies involved in contemporary art. Works associated with Neo-Expressionism and Italian Transavanguardia, representatives of a rediscovered symbolic and figurative pictorial language, together form a focal



point of the collection. There are also works by artists who cannot be pigeonholed purely in terms of style, highlighting the complex situation in contemporary art. For the Library Building, the Art Committee again endeavoured to select works of art that could be interpreted as a counterbalance to the conceptual approach of academic teaching. For this reason, works were largely excluded that are ironic and self-reflective, as well as conceptual and concrete pieces, which, though they enjoy a position of importance in contemporary art, appeal more to the intellect than to sensory perception, and as such did not comply with the definition of the collection.

Other than in the Main Building, however, formally the art works bear no dialectic relationship with the architecture, as the latter is no longer the clear image of a specific idea of what a university is. Rather, the architecture of the Library Building is as rich in allusion, and quotes as freely, as the works of art inside. In the 1980s, pluralistic trends and the blurring of the boundaries between art, architecture, and science fed into the concept devised to continue the very successful approach deployed in the Main Building.



Executive education at the HSG

Practice-related degree courses at the University of St.Gallen have always placed particular emphasis on executive education. Diplom and Master's programmes, courses and seminars at various HSG institutes and an executive education level offer executives and graduates of the university an opportunity to stay abreast of the times. Since 1995 the HSG has run an Executive Campus at Holzweid, which was built on a plot of land gifted by Max Schmidheiny in 1974. In 1986, Bruno Gerosa, who at the time was busy with the construction of the Library Building, was asked to conduct an initial study for a course centre. The architect's proposal immediately found favour, such that he was later commissioned with the design of the new building.

The Executive Campus has certainly conjured up memories of a "small late-Modernist garden palace", and nestling on a hill beneath a glass dome and surrounded by greenery, the two-wing complex does indeed resemble pavilion architecture in an English landscaped park. As with the Main Building, with its extensive grounds the location allows the exterior to be integrated in the art concept.



The Further Education Centre Photo | Hans und Jerry Gross, 1998

Architecture

21 | Main Building | 1963

24 | Library Building | 1989

25 | Development and Refurbishment of the Campus |
2006–2011

31 | Executive Campus HSG (WBZ) | 1995

32 | Expansion of the Executive Campus HSG
(WBZ) Holzweid | 2008

Main Building | 1963

In 1963, the University of St.Gallen moved from its original location in Notkerstrasse in the Museumsquartier to a new, more modern concrete structure which, given its layout in subdivided zones, was reminiscent of a university campus. The complex itself, with its many individual buildings, is constructed around the central focal point of the knoll of the gently sloping park with its wealth of old trees. The connected individual buildings lend an informal air to the complex. Arranged as though placed upon a chessboard, the old institute building, technology block, the main auditorium, the cafeteria, and the ancient gym all seem to rise up from the slope, culminating in the single point of the “head” of the Main Building: a windowless concrete cube that originally housed the library. The window façade, which runs the full length of the edifice, allows muted light to filter into the interior of the building and into the central hall, creating a perpetual ceremonious sense of semi-darkness. The sculptural, self-supporting concrete staircase extends across the hall, functions as a dominant force in the space, and leads upwards to the floors above that house the seminar and lecture rooms. Via a smaller, separate stairwell from here it is possible to reach the top floor of the building to the space that used to be home to the library but has since been converted. Devoid of any view over the surrounding landscape, this space is sealed off from the world, devoted to nurturing concentration. From its central location in the Main Building complex, the Library Building towers over all else and is visible even from afar. It is through the design of this structure that Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer gave the university its distinctive image, alluding not only to the university’s status at the pinnacle of the education system but also to the teaching practiced here, namely the emphasis on encouraging a primarily rational way of thinking.



The entrance side of the Main Building as seen from the auditorium

Imposing and sculptural. The self-supporting concrete staircase in the Main Building's great hall

In their concept, the architects combined an appreciation of the university as a noble institution of education with a certain sense of monumentality. This was achieved through the reduction of their designs to precise cubes, the surrounding concrete colonnades in front of a sober glass-and-metal façade, and the projecting architraves of the roof cornices and balustrades. They chose not to depend upon axial symmetry as a significant feature of classic representational architecture. Using the available space in a functional manner, the individual buildings are loosely knit and adapted to fit the topography, befitting the many demands of a modern university and reflecting how the latter hinges on a dynamic community. The structure of the buildings is born of the insight that the architecture should outwardly express its varied and clearly defined purposes.

This expressiveness is a feature of a tendency in architecture known as Brutalism which started in the 1950s and 1960s. This term, which has an unfortunate connotation these days, refers to a form of architecture that specifically positions itself in opposition to the sterile and emotionless architecture of International Style, which focused purely on functionality. Several aspects link the Main Building of the University of St.Gallen to the Brutalist style, such as its figurative language and the way it references the urban and regional terrain where it stands. Not only this, but the way the



process of construction itself is visualised, the transparency of the floor plan, the function of the spaces external to the buildings and the reliance on unadorned materials (fair-faced concrete) are important distinguishing features. It is likely that Brutalism was so named in part due to the French term “béton brut”.

Brutalism was considered a style of architecture which expressed truth and honesty. This is based in part on the fact that it acknowledges the weight and mass of the construction materials. The horizontal is emphasised, as are gravity and the load-bearing nature of elements of the building. Due to the manner in which it accentuates a building’s very construction, Brutalism displays an archaic trait, for the architecture gains a tangibility and expressive force through its strong structure and the emphasis on its material properties. The Main Building of the University of St.Gallen stands out for precisely these sculptural qualities.

The scale and proportions of the Library Building are reflected in its outer form

Photo | Pius and Michael Rast, 1998



Library Building | 1989

This extension, which was built to the northeast of the main complex, was first and foremost designed to create space for a new library, as well as allow construction of a large lecture hall (the Auditorium Maximum, which can seat 642). Bruno Gerosa's orthogonal, two-section proposal was the winning entry for the construction of the new Library Building. In the eastern wing, the large glass pyramid provides plenty of natural light for the introverted two-storied library area with its bookshelves and student workspaces. In the western wing, the quarter circles of the copper roof structure mark the location of the main lecture hall.

Along the northern perimeter, two quadrant-shaped lecture halls are submerged within the surrounding terrain. The modest Library Building allows Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer's commanding "head" to take the lead.



Development and Modernisation of the Campus | 2006–2011

In spite of the 1989 extensions and ongoing adaptations, after more than 40 years, there was no more delaying a general overhaul and expansion of Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer's campus design (originally devised with a population of 900 students in mind). In their original shape, certain buildings could fulfil their initial function, since they had not been constructed considering the current student population, which had been rising steadily. In 2011, after the modernisation had been concluded, the number of students (6,700) had already exceeded the number of workstations calculated for the expansion of the campus (5,000) and, in 2018, this number has risen to 8,600. In addition, the workspaces had to be adapted in line with the Bologna University Reforms to reflect the requirements of higher education. The characteristic campus buildings from 1963 had begun to show the signs of age typical for concrete structures: weather-beaten façades and – as a consequence – there was carbonation several centimetres deep in the façades. As this process was starting to reach the iron reinforcements and corrode them, the situation was becoming serious. In 2005, the canton of St.Gallen passed a bill approving the modernisation and expansion of the university buildings. The works lasted for five years, between 2006 and 2011, and were carried out in stages, during which the university successfully maintained business as usual.



The transparent connecting passage between the Main and the Library Building

Nowadays, the extent and complexity of the renovation is hardly noticeable if one sees the sculptural Main Building and neighbouring blocks connected by various freestanding staircases and courtyards in all its splendour. The greatest respect was paid to the existing campus as it was adapted to fit the altered requirements, and its substance preserved in all possible ways, which even included the restoration of the original furnishing. Since then, the campus has been listed as an architectural monument. Its outer shell, which had been sullied by dirt and weather damage, now radiates a light and inviting impression. This allows the refined nature of the architecture to come into its own, showcasing, for example, how the structure of the walls is highlighted by means of the ridged pattern created by the seams between the shuttering boards. The Main Building's façade is structured by two-storied pilasters and stressed by continuous window strips coloured like fragments of dark-grey scale armour. The chiaroscuro of light and shadow brought about through these elements is now once again plain to see and enjoy, in harmony with the structures. Numerous adaptations of these valuable buildings were undertaken with the utmost care in accordance with the latest technological standards and regulations, such as the reinforcement of the Main Building against earthquakes and the integration of a facilities technology centre. As a result, the modifications and expansions are very discrete. It is only when one heads underground that the extent of the restructuring works becomes obvious through the new pathways.



The library is located beneath the large glass pyramid and a dome-shaped structure of steel supports

The most conspicuous conversions were necessary in the areas of the old cafeteria and sports hall. The old cafeteria, in the separate building at Varnbüel 16 on the slope next to the old sports grounds and Kirchhofergut, which had grown too small, now houses the registrar's office and administrative offices. This place is a central meeting point for students and lecturers due to its central hall, counter area and wraparound gallery. It was possible to move the new cafeteria into the old sports hall thanks to the latter's relocation and expansion to the neighbouring Ölberg. The project was handled by the joint venture of architects ric ag and Priora General Contractor, who were also responsible for further works on the campus: namely the new underground car park, the service building with its flue exhaust chimney, and the conversion of neighbouring buildings. In the old sports halls, there are now three dining halls, a kitchen and free-flow buffet area, as well as additional seminar rooms and group meeting rooms made possible by inserting a mezzanine built at the same level as the ground floor of the Main Building. The dining halls are divided between the old sports hall, the old changing rooms and the equipment room and are identifiable by their particular colour scheme. In the large hall, which contains approximately 300 seats, a light umber gives the space a peaceful atmosphere; a rich green colour decorates the background of the smaller hall with around 85 additional places, and a dark Bordeaux red makes the separate bar



The terraces of the Sports Hall with the sports fields

area wonderfully atmospheric. In all three rooms, elegant furnishings in dark wood tones create colour highlights and a formal clarity.

The existing building components, which attest to the architectural vocabulary of Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer, were carefully integrated into the new concept and the original expressiveness preserved; the new elements, in their modest conservatism, act as contemporary interpretations of the original design idiom. As such, chrome steel, concrete and black and light grey are a dominant presence in the buffet and kitchen areas and they emphasise the room's general mood of peacefulness and lack of ostentatiousness. In the summer, you can eat outside in the area in front of the building. Here the large trees in the old parkland provide a wonderful green backdrop.

Sports Centre

The spacious new sports complex is situated on the Ölberg at the perimeter of a residential estate in the immediate vicinity of the campus and can be reached by following a short footpath. Emerging as the victor from the competition was the tripartite sports hall proposed by architects Lauener + Baer from Frauenfeld, who utilised the gently sloping terrain as part of a structure partly sunken into the hillside. In the grand scheme of the plans for the complete renovation of the University of St.Gallen, the sports hall was admittedly given a



different purpose initially: the three free-standing class cubes within a steel skeleton were used to accommodate provisional seminar rooms and lecture halls from 2007 to 2011 in order to allow teaching to continue uninterrupted despite the hampering effects of the various stages of the construction works.

Constituting a 'constructed landscape', as it were, the buildings huddle into the crest of the hill. From a distance, three wide façades and window strips can be discerned, thrusting themselves upwards behind the athletics track which precedes them and, since they are built into the earth itself, just barely reaching higher than the crest of the hill. The sense of architecture and topography melding is reinforced by the plants of the roof areas, making it seem as though the buildings form part of some natural, terraced scenery.

Gently alluding to the campus on Rosenberg, the theme (and it can likewise be identified in the Main Building complex) of constructions designed to converge on a central point where the structure culminates in the "Tête" is varied here by putting emphasis on the horizontal line. The gym it is built into the hillside, and the highest point of the structure draws level with the crest of the "Ölberg". The prefabricated elements of the façade with their laurel branch relief, which were manufactured from insitu concrete, remind the viewer of the textured walls of the Main Building. Yet, the surface pattern is not defined by the somewhat functional means, as here instead a narra-



The east façade of the WBZ Further Education Centre at Holzweid



The area beneath the dome of the Further Education Centre is generous and spacious

tive moment is brought into play: the laurel wreath is, after all, associated with winning Olympic events. This being the case, and since the façade injects some interplay of light and shadow into a building, otherwise marked by its functionality, the elements can perhaps be understood as a small conspiratorial architectural touch.

Upon entering the sports hall complex, the lucidity of the interior of the partially submerged building is surprising. It is almost as if the interior and exterior spaces flow into one another. The three functional levels of the building, which can be recognised even from the outside, form a continuum by dint of the striking load-bearing structure. Around the tripartite sports hall on the lower level, a gallery with arcades leads on both sides to the entry level, where, in the western segment, smaller fitness rooms adjoin to the upper level. The open space of the building is divided by the cube-shaped equipment rooms. Daylight streams in through the north-facing window strip into the gym rooms, which can be used for many different purposes as the need may be. Leading to the entrance, the gallery boasts full-length glazing as it leads towards the sports areas, creating the greatest possible visual merger of the interior and exterior spaces. All three levels of the building are constructed as part of an open, interlocking space, so that there is always something new to catch the eye as the visitor passes through. The contrast of the fair-faced concrete with the warm wood tones of the naturally-treated



oak floors of the sports areas, doors and dividing walls together balance to create a harmonious colour scheme.

Executive Campus HSG (WBZ) | 1995

It took more than 20 years from the moment the land on the Holzweid was donated until the Executive Campus of the University of St.Gallen was officially opened. The tale of its construction is one fraught with numerous political and financial obstacles which first had to be overcome. Bruno Gerosa was once more required to adhere to the principles expressed by the architecture of the Library Building, but in the construction of the Executive Campus, the design was allowed to blossom somewhat more independently. On this site, which stands on its own, the architecture was not required to conform to existing designs. Elements of both Baroque and modern glass architecture combine here to foster an elegant structure.

Beginning at the Holzstrasse, the visitor first encounters a magnificent lime tree and an old farmhouse on the grounds. From there, a path leads to the central courtyard. The courtyard is framed by the two side wings of the building, which has a U-shaped layout. Continuing along this path, the central dome can be reached directly. Blocks of the building in the shape of segments of a circle function as the wings. These blocks house the larger lecture rooms and the Intermezzo restaurant, which are divided between the ground and



Dormitory block with guest rooms



first floor, whilst the seminar rooms and office spaces are located in the wings of the building.

By analogy with the Library Building, the exterior walls are clad with natural stone. Yet, due to the use of a lighter stone (a white-veined marble named Bianco Savanna), the building has a new, illustrious air, which persists as one steps through the entrance directly into the two-tier foyer area beneath the central glass dome, which broaches a dialogue with the pyramid of the Library Building.

The visitor proceeds from the intimate space of the central courtyard into a room filled with light that offers an unexpected view far into the landscape thanks to the fact that the end of the foyer features a lavish glass wall, which traverses both levels of the building. The whitewashed walls, the pale stone tiles, the glass front and the pools beneath the two curved staircases bestow upon the large common room a very high-quality feel.

Expansion of Executive Campus HSG at Holzweid | 2008

Given the growing importance of the continuing education programme and the swiftly increasing number of individuals making use of the services on offer, after 13 years the Executive Campus HSG, which was first opened in 1995, was in need of an extension. Bruno Gerosa was once more selected to decide what form this would take. To the existing Executive Campus HSG complex he added an



Hans Ulrich Auditorium and Cafeteria

orthogonal auditorium and a semi-circular campus block with guest rooms for course participants from abroad or from a long way away. The compact structure, beneath which the access road leading to the extended underground parking lot is located, circles the big lime trees next to the old farm house and vaults, bridgelike, and leads to the large, new North Auditorium to which it is attached. This forms a kind of gateway through which it is possible to reach the original avenue of the Executive Campus HSG buildings.

Inside, the new buildings are organised clearly and functionally. The modular fashion in which the space is structured and the larger lecture halls mean that these spaces can be adapted flexibly to meet the requirements of various continuing education programmes. The central lounge area, created as a place for course participants to meet and enjoy themselves, is the heart of the new campus hotel. Thanks to its peaceful location, it is an ideal place to hold courses lasting several days. Just as in the old Executive Campus HSG, the many seating spots and alcoves of the new building complex invite visitors to strike up conversations.



Tellstrasse 2



Müller-Friedberg-Strasse 6/8

New buildings downtown, at Tellstrasse 2 and Müller-Friedberg-Strasse 6/8 and the Learning Centre on campus

Since the autumn term 2013, thanks to the HSG Foundation, the University of St.Gallen can rely on a newly restored building for teaching and research at Tellstrasse 2. This was truly necessary, as the campus' capacity amounts to 5,500 students instead of 8,600. The 13 seminar rooms with 400 seats and 18 offices on six floors generate spatial proximity to the centre of St.Gallen.

Between 2013 and 2018, Tellstrasse 2 hosted an interesting art programme called "art@tell". Five emerging artists from all five continents were invited every year to expose their work in the building. The dynamic project has merged into a permanent exposition of some prominent pieces.

In 2017, a new build was inaugurated to house three seminar rooms as well as offices of some HSG research units. With the help of innovative office room concepts tailored to the various requirements, 350 modern cost-effective and efficiently operable work stations were created on a surface of approx. 6,700 m².

Also this building is endowed with several artworks by contemporary Swiss and international artists, especially in the four huge areaways.



Learning Centre on campus

An architecture competition for the HSG Learning Centre on campus Rosenberg has been decided in favour of Sou Fujimoto Architects from Tokyo/Paris with the project “Open Grid – Choices of Tomorrow”. This outstanding interplay of architectural, didactic, financial and urban-planning construction is scheduled to be concluded in spring 2022. The goal of this architectural milestone is to help the HSG and its students to face the challenges of digitalisation and to enable a new quality of learning.

The project envisions a structure consisting of multiple, independent and versatile cubes on a grid. The heights of the cubes will vary from 3.5 to a maximum 18.5 metres above street level on Guisanstrasse. The architecture integrates itself in Rosenberg’s natural landscape thanks to rooftop terraces planted with greenery. Indoor and outdoor spaces are connected by glass elements.

Guided Tour of the Art collection

37 | Main Building

82 | Library Building

98s | Executive Campus HSG (WBZ)

Main Building

The building's cubic geometric volumes and the organic shapes of artworks were meant to blend harmoniously with the University of St.Gallen Main Building. What seems clear and straightforward as a theoretical concept, turns as built reality into a complex interaction of two fundamentally different positions, whereby each work, each location is a new challenge for the viewer. This is another way in which the aspirations of the Art Committee and the architects have been met: to make certain the art was not some harmonious "decorative" supplement to the buildings, but instead as a different vocabulary entering into an excitingly confrontational dialogue with the architecture. On touring the building we will perhaps ascertain in astonishment that these works are not staged in a spectacular, but rather in a precise manner. They occupy niches and form unexpected vantage points, they define transitions between nature and the buildings, and between the indoors and outside. Moreover, there are places where art and architecture enter into such a perfect symbiosis that you cannot say whether the building creates space for the art, or the space is first created by the art. In a way, the art in the Main Building works at a subliminal level: It does not grab us stridently, but sets the tone, and therefore the one or other visitor possibly does not even notice it immediately. Here are gathered the works of some of the most famous artists of the 20th century. Yet there are no signs telling you about them, as such signs would only extract the artworks from their surroundings and forge a distance between them and the viewer. Art is not exhibited at the HSG; people live with it in a manner otherwise only possible in private residences.



The park grounds with the tall Wellingtonia bring the old Kirchhofergut manor to mind Photo | Hans and Jerry Gross, 1998

Approaching from the city, your first impression of the HSG's Main Building will no doubt be informed by the history of the grounds. Visitors are not greeted by buildings, but by glorious old trees. They stood in the park of the Kirchhofergut manor that was bequeathed to the City of St.Gallen in 1930, and on the grounds of which the new university was inaugurated in 1963.

Thanks to the harmonious manner in which the various building sections adapt to the slight slope of the former landscaped gardens, the architects have succeeded in preserving the park's balanced, romantic and in parts classically sublime mood – and using it anew. The seemingly natural and yet completely designed fabric of an English landscape garden is reflected in the architecture, as the sequence of ostensibly chance visual axes typical of such parks is reproduced in the building complex by Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer. Despite the massive presence of the cubes, there are forever new views afforded, surprising angles and sudden insights offered. Two crude concrete blocks marking a passageway form the beginning of a broad flight of stairs leading up to the Main Building. Yet before you get there, various paths and hidden staircases invite you to wander around, beckoning like the one or other little place where you can tarry a while. For example, one path turns off left, and meanders through the rampant bushes and trees of the old park toward a small sunny spot complete with a few wooden benches, on a soft slope

Carl Burckhardt | «Amazone»,
1921–1923, bronze



exactly beneath the old Kirchhofergut manor. Here, at a place slightly off the beaten track, there's a classic park setting: Ornamental shrubs create a quiet nook, and a striking sculpture catches the eye. On a plinth, as if extracted from the countryside, stand she bronze "**Amazone**" created by **Carl Burckhardt** (1878–1923) – against the backdrop of the nature tamed in the park grounds.

The "Amazone" has a special role within the wealth of artworks in the University of St.Gallen collection, as it is the only one made by an artist who died before the campus was built. Moreover, it is the last work by the major Swiss sculptor, albeit one he did not quite complete. The homage to the great Basel-based artist has therefore been placed in the "historical" part of the grounds, as the preserved Kirchhofergut is likewise part of the university and is used today for meetings and as a kind of clubhouse for lecturers.

A footpath from town leads past this dreamy little spot directly up the hill to the university.

The large flight of stairs takes us to the entrance to the Main Building, whereby most will stop along the way, as on the right there is a huge *Wellingtonia* standing on its own.



**Umberto Mastroianni | Untitled,
1964, painted aluminium**



**Zoltan Kemeny | Untitled,
1963, brass relief**

“Sequoias” can grow to become 3,000 years old and their soft, reddish bark formed an eye-catcher in many a garden toward the end of the 19th century. At the HSG, the architects exploited the setting by placing the then “institute building” (today’s Rector’s office), which stood slightly to one side of the other buildings, in a small depression behind the Wellingtonia, which itself stands slightly apart from the denser copses. In this way, the building was integrated in the overall park concept.

Behind the reddish brown fissured bark of the trunk, one spies the clear grid pattern of the windows in the building’s west façade, the stringent structure of which is interrupted by a protruding concrete beam on which a wild knot of coloured metal grabs one’s attention: The aluminium sculpture by **Umberto Mastroianni** (1910–1998) “floats” on its plinth-like beam in front of the building’s windows. The sculpture’s hard metallic gleam is undermined by the paint, creating a parallel to the painted iron of the building façade. Born in Fontana Liri near Rome, Mastroianni has shaped a sculpture vibrant through its Baroque use of shape, and thanks to its intrinsic sense of motion can be considered a worthy successor to the Italian Futurists.



Ferdinand Gehr | “**Blumenbild**”, 1963, oil on canvas, 113 x 88 cm

Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information Office, 1998

Inside the building, the light is subdued, and from it emerges, with a soft, mysterious shimmer, the brass relief by **Zoltan Kemeny** (1907–1965). The artwork on the wall of the stairwell links the ground floor with the first floor and with its precious gleaming exterior contrasts with the fair-faced concrete. In the mid-1940s, Kemeny started with the surface of images. If one studies the individual elements of the relief, one sees small open cubes that are countlessly repeated and varied. Given the rows and repetition, the individual element is of little significance compared with the over-arching pattern or rather the overall fabric of the relief. Kemeny is not interested in depicting one or other of the chance shapes of reality and instead seeks to uncover the very system underpinning the growth of all shapes.

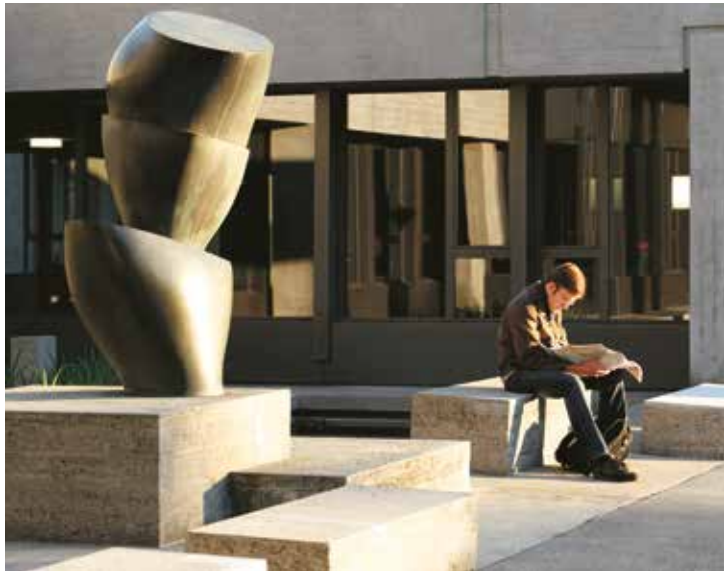
In the same building, behind the door of the Rector’s office, and thus in a room that is not always accessible, hangs the radiant “**Blumenbild**” by **Ferdinand Gehr** (1896–1996), a piece that Eduard Naegeli commissioned from the artist. Painted in tempera, the composition with the red peonies glows, in the flattish, poster-like and yet symbolic, abstract style Gehr, who came from St.Gallen, so propagated in his renewal of religious art.



Alicia Penalba | Untitled, 1963, concrete, 11 parts

Back on the path to the Main Building, we find ourselves at the foot of the large outdoor flight of stairs, witnessing the no doubt best-known and most photographed view of the HSG: Behind the group of sculptures by Argentine artist **Alicia Penalba** (1913–1982), which dance in a free and playful rhythm across the meadows, a kind of concrete wall screen rises up, the wall supporting the terrace, behind which the Main Building stands powerful and majestic, crowned by a no-frills cube, the concrete “Tête”. The sculptures are made of the same material as the wall behind, but with a coarser-grained structure. Thus, the loose group seems to have been extracted from the edifice, and their organic shapes mark the transition from nature to architecture. The eye does not suddenly alight on the surface of the wall, but can gradually find its way, offered a basis by the volume of the 11 wing-like figures, following the movements of the lines and diagonals of the sculptures’ movement across the space, and scrutinise them.

While the stairs initially lead to the smooth surface of the terrace wall, it suddenly changes direction and offers a view out over the countryside. Another change of direction, and it reaches the terrace in front of the Main Building. Exactly opposite the last step, in a protective niche in the building, stands the bronze “**Schalenbaum**” by **Hans Arp** (1886–1966), placed on an architecturally shaped platform on the edge of a small pond. In this setting, where the



Hans Arp | “Schalenbaum”, 1947–1960, bronze (built in 1963)

fair-faced concrete collides with the smooth reflection of the water and the open sky competes with the built greys to see which is brighter, the haptic properties of the satin polished “Schalenbaum” comes into their own. Here, the light is diffused gently, creating a soft halo, a shimmering shroud around the outlines. In the smallest of spaces, the location combines the organic and the built, is to be seen both from outdoors and from inside the building, and thus designates the interface between landscape and architecture. These twin poles are likewise artistic principles to be observed in Arp’s large bronze artwork. The French title “Coupes superposées” refers to two different notions of form, as it can be read “stacked bowls” or as “cuts one upon the other”. The sculpture is defined both by soft, swelling curves, but also by abrupt cuts that savage the budding growth of the shape, replacing rampancy with a rhythmic sequence. Nature inspired Arp in his sculptures yet the organic shapes he created had no direct models in nature. Rather, the creative process follows the Surrealist principle of psychological automatism, the work ensuing without reflection by the mind, and the artist apparently acting as the medium of a process he does not control.



Soniatta | Ceiling design 1963,
wooden panels, painted



Etienne Hajdu | Untitled, 1963,
wire, tripartite

The heavy iron-and-glass doors of the main entrance open onto a large hall: The impression it makes, thanks to the skilful use of light, its height and the sculpture on the staircase, could perhaps best be termed 'sublime'. Yet the hall's monumental feel swiftly gives way to the pulsating life that usually fills the hall. In the midst of everyday student life, it is evident how the dialogue between art and architecture unfolds, as it were, latently. Thus, a chance glance from the entrance to the right through the passageway to the former 'technology wing' will discern the outline of a white bird on the wall there: a mosaic called "**Oiseau**" by **Georges Braque** (1882–1963).

On the one hand, the image with its radiant strong colours forms a fixed visual point that overcomes the distance of the long corridor; on the other, it gives the hall dynamism, as the bird's flight suggests a steady, even motion, something also reflected in the asymmetric positioning on the wall base. In the 1950s, the theme of a bird is to be found in many of Braque's pictures, not as an allegory, but in order to lend depth to the pictorial space, which is fundamentally unlike the illusionist pictorial space of central perspective and was developed to fit the spatial conditions of the pictorial surface. The mosaic was realised by Hedy Melano-Högger and is based on a colour etching on which a white bird in a black oval is juxtaposed to



**Georges Braque | “Oiseau”, designed 1958, mosaic
(realised in 1965 by H. Melano-Högger), 150 x 150 cm**

an orange ‘X’ such that the bird seems fixed on the pictorial surface, whereby its movement leads away from this captured centre into the unlimited space beyond.

If Braque’s “Oiseau” sets the room in motion, in the other direction the eye encounters an artwork that achieves precisely the opposite effect. **Etienne Hajdu** (1907–1996), like Zoltan Kemeny a native of Transylvania, created a lead relief: It is a dark gleaming sluggish mass that gives the painted wooden interior of the reception the visual stability required to stand out against the monumental scale of the stairs. Three slabs are connected at right angles to one another such that, seen from different vantage points, they seem to form a volume. And this is not to forget the small ceiling piece made by Basel-based painter **Soniatta** (1928–1969), a friend of the architect, and located at the beginning of the corridor.



In the darkest part of the entrance hall, in the middle between hard-edged concrete pillars, stands something soft and colourful, glowing. This is the emanation of the ceramic frieze, some 30 metres long, produced by **Joan Miró** (1893–1983) and ceramic maker **Josep Llorens Artigas**, that runs across the entire length of the hall on this side like a continuation of the thin strip of windows that runs right round it; with its colour fields that light up here and there between dark written characters, it generates restrained yet sparkling highlights. Miró worked from 1944 onwards with ceramic maker Llorens Artigas and together the two produced a major group of ceramic works, including the frieze in St.Gallen, wall pieces for the UNESCO building in Paris, Harvard University in Cambridge/Massachusetts, the Guggenheim Museum in New York and Kunsthaus Zürich. While it may initially seem surprising that such an important piece remains in the background, as it were, especially as from the hall side it is subdivided by the pillars, but it was precisely Miró's intention that his frieze interact with the architecture to great effect: Since there is no overall view of it, one is prompted to consider it in sections, to change vantage point, to read the black characters as a sequence rather than in synoptic purview as when studying an image from the front.



Joan Miró (in collaboration with Josep Llorens Artigas) | Untitled, 1964, ceramic tiles, 29 x 1.1 metre Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information Office, 1998

The allusion to the concentrated form of Far Eastern calligraphy is undermined by the actionist vehemence of the gestures with which the characters were painted, the colour diffusing in a sprinkle of small splashes.



Max Gubler | “**Nachtlandschaften**”, 1957,
oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm (acquired 1963)

Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and
Information Office, 1998



Karl Prantl | “**Zur Meditation**”,
1979, basalt, bipartite

In the rear section of the large hall the original art programme has been supplemented, as a glance through the two windows between the lecture theatres reveals. In 1979, in memory of Eduard Naegeli the two stones called “**Zur Meditation**” and made by Austrian sculptor **Karl Prantl** (1923–2010) were placed on a small meadow section toward Guisanstrasse. The two steles made of columns of basalt turn the space, and it can only be seen from inside the building, into a spot as meditative as a Japanese garden.

“**Nachtlandschaft**” by **Max Gubler** (1898–1973) hangs in the large meeting room and the Zurich-based artist painted it toward the end of his life, harrowed by illness and depression. It shows the view from his studio in Unterengstringen, past a leafless tree, out over a barren, icy landscape; on the horizon a red moon hangs low beneath a dark violet night sky.

Pride of place in the entrance hall undoubtedly goes to the sculptural staircase in the Förderer building, which powers upward with its massive diagonals crossing the space.

But before we walk up it to the first floor, it bears stopping for a moment on the first landing and looking down. From here we can see how the artworks in the hall reference the constant coming and going here. They cannot be grasped from a single vantage point, but only really as part of the flow of everyday movements. This is also true of the mobile by **Alexander Calder** (1898–1976), which seems so



Alexander Calder | Untitled, 1966, sheet metal

massive close-up and yet floats like some refined web in the centre of the stairwell. The primary red of the mobile catches the light that drips over the rods and the triangular, trapezoidal or oval panes. Ascending the stairs, given the architecture's turns we repeatedly have different views of the mobile, which oscillates slightly, turning on its own axis. Calder's mobile juxtaposes the spatial experience of movement to the staircase as a static volume. While classical sculptures with their set volumes express stability and are subject to load-bearing laws, in the early 20th century we saw efforts to make movement a theme in sculpting. Calder's mobiles are an attempt not only to present the illusion of dynamic processes but make this the very material of sculpture by creating pure 'compositions from movement'. Motion as a spatio-temporal sequence was expected to express the fourth dimension in a sculptural idiom, to enable us to experience space in time. Calder also felt mobiles were a way of not fixing sequences of movement from the outset but having them instead governed by chance.



**Pierre Soulages | Untitled, 1963, tapestry,
670 x 280 cm**

Arriving on the first floor, a newspaper corner invites one to take a breather. The soft blue leather armchairs, purpose-designed for the HSG, are very comfortable and through the generously sized window front there is a view of the Library Building, the roof of which with its characteristic pyramids is easily visible. Although the reading zone is not set off formally from the stairwell, there is a new sense of space here, shaped by the incoming light and the warm colours of the tapestry made by **Pierre Soulages** (born 1919). Soulages is considered a European exponent of Abstract Expressionism, that 'liberation of gesture' in painting that arose in the United States in the 1940s.

The bright underlying hue of the tapestry and the brown and ochre tones that alongside the predominant blacks underpin the painterly expression, serve to give the location a warm colour temperature that contrasts with the cool grey of the concrete; here, the dark side of the dense gestures is juxtaposed to the brightness of the window and the open surface reflects the sparse light entering from the stairwell. The painting seems decidedly spontaneous and vivacious at first sight and persists in the tapestry because Soulages always tones down the vehemence of the gestures in his paintings in favour of a clear, stable composition.



When starting up the narrow steps of the sober stairwell that leads up to the second floor, which houses the reading rooms and workstations and the core of the original library (now also a reading room, surrounded by seminar rooms), there is already an anticipatory sense of an almost monastic mood about things: The small staircase, following on from the impressive flight of stairs up from the hall, has the feel of an intimate theatre about it. At the top one notices that the concrete cube the stairs lead us round serves as the base for a sculpture.



**Alberto Giacometti | “Standing Woman”,
1960, bronze, 59 x 19 x 10 cm (acquired 1963)**

Together with the square skylight directly above the platform, a kind of imaginary space arises for the “**Standing woman**” by **Alberto Giacometti** (1901–1966). The staging by the architecture emulates Giacometti’s strategy of sometimes placing his figures in cages or boxes to set them off, have them act as if on a stage, isolated and with recourse only to themselves. The “standing woman” is a bronze that rises up from a base that angles upwards and backwards; it grows slender out of a pair of feet that have mutated into a second base, anchoring the almost dematerialised figure in space. In its tense upright gait, arms pressed close to the body, it seems oppressed by its surroundings and not some sensual woman – rather the general expression of human existence on earth. Giacometti often repeated that the reality of the world outside puzzled him and he therefore constantly sought to tackle that world and the appearance of things, not in order to depict its contingency, but to trace the human lived reality behind the individual appearance, to find the universal in the particular. Even if the figure is small, it unleashes an immense impact; in fact you may be forgiven for thinking the path up to it simply served to prepare this point of utmost concentration.





Alberto Giacometti | “**Standing Woman**”, detailed study

In the former library, art and architecture are meant to interact to create a setting that fosters quiet, focused, not to say devoted reading. It is thus very strange that on arriving on the top floor we are not greeted by some view out, but instead by an introspective place of concentration. Softly filtered daylight enters through a few skylights, and instead of into the distance, we find ourselves looking at picture panels by **Antoni Tàpies** (1923–2012) that take up the theme of doors and curtains and visually, suggestively seal the walls of the library. Soft light from the sides wafts across the images, and in the otherwise sparsely illuminated hall we therefore see all the more clearly the properties of their surfaces, the scratches, cracks and fissures, covered with cloths. The concrete’s sobriety is annulled and ancient walls seem here to reveal the traces of their history. The 14 panels are actually material compositions, pictorial objects, as Tàpies turned his back on some illusionistic pictorial space with the experimental application of the paint and careful treatment of the surface, which he covers with relief-like layers – creating paintings that do not reference anything outside them but take real form in the world as themselves qua a new realism.





**Antoni Tàpies | Untitled, 1962–1963, mixed media, 31 x 3.5 m
(on two walls, each 15.5 metres long)**

Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information Office, 1998





Coghuf | Untitled, 1962–1963, glass window
Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information Office, 1998



Coghuf | Untitled, 1962–1963, tapestry (realised by Silvia Valentin)
Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information Office, 1998

From this central hall in the Main Building we move back, and go outside onto the terrace to view the other buildings in the complex, each with its own function. The Aula stands obliquely across from the Main Building – the art project there is the result of a closed competition with four artists. It has the same façade of iron-and-glass windows and concrete struts as does the Main Building, yet has more of a festive character thanks to the glass window with a sculptural texture that cuts across three sides and is the brainchild of Basel-based **Coghuf** (Ernst Stocker, 1905–1976) – inside it offers an intense, ceremonial sense of colour. A large tapestry woven by **Silvia Valentin** on commission for Coghuf emulates the colours and shapes of the glass window.

This colourfulness contrasts with a subdued blue and grey ceiling relief made of wood and cement that responds to the glorious colours like some intellectual, dematerialised reflection.

The entrance to the ecumenical room of worship is on the side with the main doors into the auditorium, with its façade structured carefully by Walter M. Förderer. Beneath a large brass cross, which is part of the design, stairs lead up to the interior, devised completely by **Otto Müller** (1905–1993). His idea embraces the architecture of the plain, sparingly lit room with symbolic fittings that range from selected colours for the walls and even the design of the liturgical vestments.



Otto Müller | Design for the room of worship,
1966, different materials

Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and
Information Office, 1998



François Stahly | “**Brunnenbaum**”,
1963, bronze

There is a narrow terrace round the lecture theatre affording a view down to the two building sections below, grouped round the former sports ground, namely the old sports hall, the present cafeteria and the student administration. At the lower end, the square is delimited by trees from the old park. Against this opulent green backdrop stands a stele that is not part of the world of flora. **François Stahly** (1911–2006) placed his “**Brunnenbaum**” in the border between the park and the architecture such that the quiet purling of the water dripping down is lost in the dense foliage.

The bronze figure of the fountain is formed by seven rod-like elements that interlink and in the middle of which the water rises up, spilling out over the stylised shapes of leaves. Stahly moves between free figuration and pure geometry, evoking nature’s shapes, always placing them in a disciplined geometric arrangement.



Walter Bodmer | Untitled, 1963, coloured glass, metal

The highlights in the sober, no-frills space of the former cafeteria are the metal reliefs by **Jean Baier** (1932–1999) (page 65). The hard-edged elements, in combinations of various reds, blacks and greys, are mounted on the ceiling and walls and on columns, with their gleaming faceted surfaces reflecting the incoming light. They break with the smooth wall sections like so many huge colourful crystals, nesting around the room like so many cheeky shards. On the upper floor, a gallery with a central skylight, we find the suspended sculpture by **Walter Bodmer** (1903–1973), which hovers above the opening to the lower floor like some 3D drawing. The iron piece, with the panes of coloured glass set in it, catches the light from above.

Outside the building on a cosy piece of green directly adjacent to the Kirchhofer manor house, are three “**Pliages**” in primary red, yellow and blue, the work of Zurich-based sculptor **Gottfried Honegger** (born 1917), gifted to the collection following completion in 2011 of the expansion and modernisation of the HSG campus.

The three sculptures, carefully positioned on a small lawn close to trees, are a pleasant contrast to the cubic, sober concrete architecture of Förderer, Otto and Zwimpfer. They have a sense of radiant gaiety about them without dominating the surroundings. It is the gaiety of an artist whose eye has matured with the privilege of age without forfeiting the freshness of youthful astonishment.



Gottfried Honegger | Three “Pliages”

C 111 (yellow, 2000); C 111a (red, 2002); C 112 (blue, 2002), metal, epoxy, each 250 cm high

The “Pliages” clearly reveal that before being made in iron or steel, the models were cut from carton, as their underlying geometry attests to the irregularity of the free hand that shaped them, dispensing with a compass or straight edge in the process. And more playfully than ever before in his oeuvre, Honegger relies on light and colour to bring their stain surfaces to life.

From the 1950s onwards, Gottfried Honegger’s concrete, non-figurative oeuvre hinged on horizontals, verticals, and diagonals, on squares, circles and triangles, on cubes, spheres and cylinders; he was taught by Otto Müller, who is also included in the collection. For Honegger, geometry is the constructive basis of all life and of the cosmic order. Yet he also accepts that life likes to act against its own laws, by chance and irregularity. These offer an indispensable “emergency exit from the Absolute”. In his paintings and sculptures he does not betray geometry, but points up chance and the irregular, the “unfitting”, for example by casting dice to decide proportions and readily accepting the resulting arbitrary properties.

Coghuf | Untitled, 1962–1963, tapestry
(realised by Silvia Valentin) (see page 56)



Zoltan Kemeny | Untitled, 1963, brass relief (see page 41)





Alicia Penalba | Untitled, 1963, concrete, 11 (see page 42)



Max Oertli | Untitled, 1971, bronze, 255 x 90 x 75 cm (see page 64)







Max Oertli | Untitled, 1971, bronze, 255 x 90 x 75 cm

Photo | Beatrix Kobelt, University of St.Gallen, 2013

Later, he was uneasy about the invisible and dark interior of the sculptures, be they solid or hollow bodies. He felt the urge to devise sculptures not as volumes but as surfaces that hide nothing from the viewer. He came up with his “Pliages”, which allow him to render the metal’s folds, bends, milling, welding and screws tangible to the senses. This wish for “transparency” goes hand in glove with a moral, indeed political stance that expects artworks to behave analogously to the open and democratic society, irrespective of whether they are located in private rooms or in public spaces.

After crossing Varnbuelstrasse you encounter a bronze sculpture by **Max Oertli** (1921–2007), at the entrance to the sports grounds – it was not part of the original art programme and was gifted to the HSG in 1971. With its interlocking, smooth and fissured surfaces, reminiscent of so many boulders coarsely shoved together, it creates a strong image of primordial forces.

The path past the sports ground leads to a new sports hall, on the large right concrete wall of which hangs the monumental canvas “**Red Self-Portrait**” by **Yan Pei-Ming** (born 1960) facing out over the action. The face reveals no emotions, lodged in silent concentration. Its presence is impressively poignant, not only does the dominant red of the large rectangle stand out radiantly from the fair-faced concrete of the wall, but the interior gleam and resulting astonishing depth of



Jean Baier | Untitled, 1963, Aluminium

the face intensify its presence in the hall. The facial traits seem to have been hewn from the paint with expansive strokes, the hair and clothing is merely intimated. For all the portrait's immediacy, the face reveals nothing, remains foreign and unapproachable. For Western viewers this impact may bring cross-cultural dialogue to mind, where it is hard to guess the other person's intentions and motives, as the cultural background is so different.

Yan Pei-Ming comments on his preference for monochrome white, grey or red by saying "that's all I need". This form of self-limitation gives him "enough power and simplicity" and underpins his penchant for red: "For the Chinese red means good fortune, for Europeans danger, for me violence."

Born in Shanghai, the painter relocated to Dijon in 1982 and came to fame not least for his unusual formats and the reduced palette, not to mention his masterful use of impasto. Alongside numerous self-portraits he has created incisive and not rarely unsettling portraits (usually series) of Buddha, Mao Zedong, Pope John Paul II, his father and, to mention only two of the numerous celebrities in his oeuvre, the legendary Bruce Lee and erstwhile French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. Yan Pei-Ming is also interested in icons of European art, such as Jacques-Louis David's "Death of Marat", which he has reinterpreted in his unmistakable





Yan Pei-Ming | “Red Self-Portrait”, 2007, oil on canvas, 350 x 350 cm



**Teresa Hubbard & Alexander Birchler | “Falling Down”, 1996,
8 C-prints, 80 x 120 cm**

style, dissolving the image of the inanimate human body in the painting and mercilessly placing it in the limelight.

Yan Pei-Ming’s importance in contemporary art can be gauged from his countless solo shows in Asia, Europe and elsewhere, his participation in various Biennales and the numerous famed museums that own his works. He was present for the installation of the monumental painting during a sports class in the hall – the event become an art happening in its own right.

On the way back to the campus, in the new cafeteria we come across a series of eight C-prints entitled “**Falling Down**” (1996), created by US-Swiss duo **Teresa Hubbard & Alexander Birchler** (born 1965 and 1962) – at almost the same time as we see the Gottfried Honegger sculptures. The images stage, construct, point up and simulate everyday objects falling down.

The vivid force, the intense colours and the unsettling artificial touch to the images stems not least from the use of analogue studio photography. The eight objects are all caught frozen in free fall, not as you might think by computer animation, but thanks to extremely careful and elaborate preparations. The objects floating in



the foreground are suspended from invisible nylon strings, behind them the actors (Hubbard and Birchler themselves) posing, and using the old technique of back-projection it is all staged in front of an artificial backdrop. This 'fake' does not prevent us from giving ourselves over fully to the illusion, whereby everything seems slightly exaggerated, theatrical, indeed mysterious. Each object, halted in puzzling almost perfect free fall attracts the eye. By contrast, the figures seem strangely detached from the objects, not emotionally involved, remote, unconcerned. The carefully selected and precisely lit props, the actors' clothing, each square centimetre of the set, is controlled and synthetically reconstructs something trivial.

About half the seemingly unreal themes bond with their new surroundings and are especially symbolic in a business university: the falling coins or the falling book, the cup and the bread in the cafeteria. The remaining images tell stories that are a far remove from the HSG context – into the heart of American movies, perhaps. These may be film stills from the 1950s or 1960s, of simple decidedly petit-bourgeois people and the effect vacillates between ironic distance, irritation and at times misery.



Julian Oliver (*1974, Whakamarama) is an artist originally from New Zealand and currently living in Berlin, who describes himself as a “critical engineer”. He created his “Transparency Grenade” in the form of a replica soviet F1 hand grenade and equipped it with all kinds of technical instruments: microcomputer, microphone, antenna etc., which enable interception of data traffic in the immediate surroundings, provided that passers-by give their consent by logging into the same WiFi network as the Grenade. Subsequently the contents of the smartphones, notebooks or tablets are anonymously projected onto the wall, and then deleted from the WiFi network upon their withdrawal. User and host names, IP addresses, decrypted emails, websites, pictures and voice recordings will thereby be visible and give a local impression of constant, automated and individualised global networking.



**Julian Oliver | Transparency
Grenade (2012/17) Resin, silver,
technical equipment**

This artwork provides a concrete starting point for the discussion of the transparent citizen, while simultaneously embedding itself in extensive, overarching themes relating to needs, utility, availability, security, surveillance, protection of personal information, access to information and freedom of opinion, but also continuity and change. For the artist, it is of particular relevance to project, and thereby make visible, those very processes which play out in the background on our smartphones without our knowledge.

Corresponding to the topic and in contrast with conventionally static “art in architecture”, the “Transparency Grenade” appears in various locations across the campus – here and there and most of all: unexpected.



Antoni Tàpies' deep connection to St.Gallen stemmed among other things from his collaboration with Franz Lareses' and Jürg Janett's Erker Galerie as well as Urban Stoob's lithography workshop. The artist also had his personal doctor in St.Gallen. That Tàpies created his 32-metre-long panel across two walls in the former library on the main building's top floor was also a reason to hang the lithographs in that same complex of buildings, as a complement to the other work, along both walls of the ground floor next to the entrance to the cafeteria. Additional prints can be found on the top floor of the building at Tellstrasse 2: Dentelle, a bodice made from brilliant yellow lace as a homage to St.Gallen as a place of textile production, and the academically themed *Le lecteur*.

Suite 63x90 (1980), a sequence of ten pieces, can be inspected along this passageway between the main building and the cafeteria by students and staff; the motif of footprints reflects the act of passing by. The Greek "Alpha" refers to the walk around the works; the letters, as well as thea on the larger individual piece *Initiales* around the corner, create a clear reference to the HSG's world of symbols. Tàpies' use of A and T has a double meaning, referencing both his initials and the bond between him, Antoni, and his wife Teresa.

Antoni Tàpies | Suite 63 x 90 (1980), 10 coloured original lithographs, Rives laid paper, 63 x 90 cm and Initiales (1987) coloured original lithograph, 75 x 105 cm Photos | ©Marko Seifert



Tàpies' spiritual and philosophical knowledge was nourished by Zen Buddhism and (Spanish) mystics. He searched for “the twilight, the light from dreams and our inner selves.” The ostensibly insignificant, everyday and banal is lauded, for example a chair, a pair of scissors, or a pair of shoes is placed in a cosmic context. In the barren colours of grey, brown, beige and black, we recognise constrained motifs that reference a metaphysical dimension: the symbol of the cross (for universality, a representation of the world, wholeness), human body parts, here above all feet and legs, letters and numbers, geometric reflections across axes, twin symbols. Deciphering the characters and symbols allows the observer to linger in a state of meditative and associative contemplation.



**Alejandro Díaz | “happiness is expensive”,
2010, neon on Plexiglas, 390 x 45 x 10 cm**

**Walter Förderer | “Nicht betretbare Räume”, 1988, aluminium, mirror,
400 x 120 cm Photo | University of St.Gallen, Press and Information
Office, 1998**

The underground corridors toward the Library Building take us past the 2010 line of neon writing “**happiness is expensive**” by **Alejandro Díaz** (born 1945). It is reminiscent of a door arch leading to a pleasure garden or pleasure temple. However, there is no entrance, just the line of script. Paradise remained locked away.

The text initially evokes stereotypes that are all too frequently projected onto HSG: the promise of happiness and the threat of expensive products, attractive and repugnant at once. Is the promised thing desirable or the threat to be feared? Does the text refer to the teaching and research at the university, whence we come when walking down the corridor and encountering the artwork, or to the cafeteria, where we want to slake our hunger? Is the happiness physical or mental? Should we associate “expensive” with money, or does it refer to the intellectual effort and involvement required of students and teachers at a university in order to gain knowledge and fulfilment? Or is it actually only about the expensive happiness of owning an artwork? Then there’s a possible theological interpretation: The easy path leads to ruin, the tougher one to Paradise: “Happiness is expensive”. There is an additional element introduced here



by the reference to neon and Plexiglas, both typical materials of an affluent society, one critical of the consumer and advertising worlds.

In Díaz' immediate Latinos world, many of whom enter the United States as immigrants, living under precarious conditions, the sentence on the price of happiness or the "American Dream" has quite different connotations. In line with Díaz' roots, the sentence and its shape also evoke dry southern landscapes that contrast sharply with the grey concrete of the corridor and the coarser climate in St.Gallen.

While there are various quite different possible interpretations to the work, it enters into dialog with its surroundings, gaining additional sides. Alejandro Díaz' piece encounters fertile ground at the HSG. A business university focuses on the meaning of engaging in trade and the distribution of goods, fields of central importance in the economics, law, philosophy and business ethics departments at the HSG.

Roman Signer | 14 video works, 1988–2011



Not just neon art, but also video has taken its place in the passageway from the cafeteria to the Library Building. The video pieces by **Roman Signer** are publicly accessible from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., combining suffering and joy, comedy and tragedy, tension and relaxation. A disturbing memento mori linked to liberating laughter; sacred humour and calm make us covert accomplices of the artist. This ambivalence becomes apparent in the film with the 50 toy helicopters, which like flies endure a fight to the death; or in the video of the martyrdom of a chair attached to a mill wheel. The videos capture Nature's caprices, its movement, often once-off actions, events, and installations.

However spectacular Roman Signer's explosive actions may be, the unobtrusive, straightforward camera work cautions us to be intrepid. Usually, the video creates excited tension, and yet after watching the successful action you cannot help asking yourself what was contingent and what was the result of planned test phases, precise practice. The accuracy of the old "Tschätterhand", of the brush on the canvas or the experiment with the hat are only superficially the product of chance.



The videos are projected in a loop onto a large wall and attract more attention from students than any other works in the collection. Hardly anyone would walk past them unheeding them. Students and staff always grant the moving images at least a fleeting glance and at times tarry while watching the videos.

After seeing these new works in the now exposed 'catacombs', we turn into the passageway linking the Main and Library Buildings, where there is a small foyer boasting a tower bursting from the ground: **Walter Förderer's** (1928–2006) sculpture "**Nicht betretbare Räume**", a constructivist piece by the architect, who also worked as a sculptor. His sculptural abilities are highlighted in this cabinet of mirrors, which reveals a playful side to Förderer when compared to the architecture of crude concrete blocks for the Main Building.



There were previous attempts, at the beginning of the sixties, to bring one of Hans Josephson (1920–2012) works to HSG. In the HSG archive there is a correspondence to this end between the architect Walter Förderer, Prof. Eduardo Nägeli and Josephsohn. Since 2017, the revival of this plan has stood by the rear entrance of the engineering wing of the main building, in the form of “Baumann”, a larger-than-life sculpture of a worker that bears the name of the model it was based on. The varying perspectives – on one side from Curti-Strasse, on the other from the entrance of the engineering wing – create distance and close proximity to the sculpture. The concrete backdrop provides the figure with an optimal platform and in turn “Baumann” affords the thoroughfare an intense atmosphere through his strong physical presence. The worker was created at precisely the same time that the main building was constructed and inaugurated, in 1962. The fact that the bronze sculpture fits so symbiotically into this environment thus rests on a historical coincidence.

The choice to place the worker here is intended to sensitise students to this strong, physical concept, one alternative to their study at the university and their digital activities: Baumann’s posture shows that he carries the burden of a long, physical working life on his back. The powerful and simultaneously stooping physicality of the figure of the worker with slumped shoulders asserts itself convincingly in the cool concrete of its surroundings.



**Hans Josephson | Untitled, 1962 Standing Figure
(Reg. no. 6069), Bronze, 220 x 70 x 55 cm**

The lifelong attitude of Hans Josephsohn, characterised by his independence of and distance from the art market, is also an important message for the students and reflects the idea that from the very beginning the project was not about art as an object for investment or trade, but the long-term integration of the works into the everyday life of students at the university, who do not necessarily have an affinity for art.

The casting was undertaken by the local Sitterwerk artistic foundry, following Josephsohn's precise instructions. The foundry is internationally renowned for its high quality and artistry. It worked closely for many years with the artist and looks after his legacy.

In his younger years, HSG Professor Hans Christoph Binswanger, who passed away in January 2018, often discussed art and above all economics with his neighbour Josephsohn in Zurich, which even influenced him to pursue his course of study. From the many discussions about art the young Binswanger obtained from Josephsohn numerous ideas, including how to recognise the sculptural quality of the heads on figures: "You have to look at the ears and take note of whether the head and the ears form a single entity or if these have simply been stuck on. That speaks volumes".

Günther Uecker | On the Silence of Writing or Speechlessness, 1979, 21 sheets, 45 x 45 cm, 17 offset and handmade screen prints, following photographic transformations, 3 handwritten facsimile pages of text, 1 page of text from Eugen Gomringer, 50 x 50 cm (gift from the Erker-Galerie to HSG)

Sociopolitical concerns connect the art of Antoni Tàpies and Günther Uecker – the revolt against totalitarianism and fascism. Uecker experienced existential threat and violence early on in his life. The quote from the Russian writer Vladimir Mayakovsky, “Poetry is made with a hammer”, was practically a leitmotif for him. He used the hammer repeatedly for the one of his pieces’ most important elements, the nail. In turn, he used the nail “as seismographs for his inner mental state”.

The graphic work *On the Silence of Writing or Speechlessness* consists of reproductions of photographs taken by Lothar Wolleh in 1978 in Galerie Rekermann, during the exhibition of Günther Uecker’s *Silence Sculpture* in Cologne, and painted over by Uecker himself. The loose sheets are placed in the stairwell of HSG’s provisional teaching space in such a way as if to suggest that they were specially designed for this space. They show a “reading room” that, among other things, contains a table, a lectern with an open book, nine reading desks along the wall and six blocks of newspapers. The entire surface of the table is strewn with nails whose points are directed upwards. Paper sheets, which have been rendered unusable by perforations from the nails, are displayed on the reading desks along the wall. Even the book and the newspapers have been nailed, thus preventing the possibility of reading them. Writing, that is the transformation of language into symbols, is denied, extinguished.



Instead, silence is given a pictorial form and becomes a sensory experience. A space for perception, reflection and communication emerges here, outside the spheres of influence of writing and language, outside the corset of syntax and semantics, of ideology and doctrine. Günther Uecker's scepticism of writing and speech manifests itself as a prerequisite of all types of ideological criticism. "In the beginning was the word", so begins the Gospel of John, but the dominance of the word was constantly suspect for Günther Uecker.

Library Building

Even if the Art Committee aspired back then to continue the art concept realised in the Main Building, it is easy to see that the changed state of things in the art world would lead to a quite different outcome. The works of the 1980s no longer derive from an aesthetic formal idiom such as Modernism spawned. Now art's site specificity occasionally gives way to a more symbolic character, with the art's expressive reference to a place giving way here and there to a more symbolic character, the expressive, self-contained shape of an open, narrative structure. As the same trends can also be discerned in architecture, instead of there being a deliberate contrast in the well-composed programme, there is generous intermingling of art and architecture. When paintings extend across entire walls and sculptures get in the way, or occupy the centre of a room, it is all done informally, as the architecture provides sufficient space to do so. Whereas in the Main Building the desired wholeness of art and architecture, the Gesamtkunstwerk was created in a dialogue with precise positions, in the Library Building this occurs in mutual penetration, with the suspension of boundaries. The strict canon of Modernism that still determined the Main Building, gives way to the playful treatment of forms, materials, and references. As such there is much that unexpectedly looks different, for example the small bronze plaques inlaid in the floor with the names of the artists, the works, and the sponsors. Here the labelling of the art works does not create a distance to the observer, but rather gives the latter an opportunity to get involved, as he has long since recognised the historical relativity of exhibiting art.

Having left Walter Förderer's sculpture behind and having passed an connecting corridor, we reach the Library Building. We enter the expansive, bright, though seemingly not very high hall. Our gaze wanders along the radial structure of the floor, moves on to the corresponding concrete ribs of the ceiling, and is drawn into the room. The foyer consists of various segregated zones through demarcated structures on the floor and ceiling. The entrance area includes a cafeteria on the left hand side next to a window recess.

Lothar Baumgarten (1944–2018) chose the rear wall of the "Auditorium Maximum", which curves right round a cloak-room, as the starting point for his work "**Steinschlag**". He adapted six plinth-like wall screens to the curvature. Baumgarten attached surrounding strips of enamel panels to this fragmented wall, some of them labelled: They read "Schubfetzen", "Schneegrenze", "Malachit", "Leitgestein", "Onyx" and "Malmzeit", well-known to unfamiliar sounding terms from local geology, meteorology and mineralogy. When he first discovered the sprinkling of snow covering the higher regions in the hilly surroundings of St.Gallen, he thought of the stratification of the rock, of the movements, which in prehistoric times created the topography, of the colours that change with the seasons and of the schematic structure of geological maps. In an abstract way, "Steinschlag" reminds us of this history.



Lothar Baumgarten | “Steinschlag”, 1996–1997, enamel panels
 Photo | **Werner Bieri**, 1998



Configured differently, above the long bench in the cafeteria grey plaques display the names of heavy and precious metals: “old”, “Iron”, “Titan”. As if on a conveyor belt, the plaques seem to be continually rotating. On the wall to the right of the entrance, rectangular monochrome plaques visualise proportions and crystal-line growth. In his work, Lothar Baumgarten is like a traveller who imbibes impressions impartially before spreading them out in front of us. What at first seems like a puzzle is a work fully engaging with the context. To a certain extent, Baumgarten follows the tradition of Romanticism and Enlightenment, combining science and art in his oeuvre.

To the left of the cloakrooms, a narrow corridor on the left leads to an entrance to the Auditorium Maximum. Beyond this entrance the corridor widens into a small lobby, the foyer of the two lecture theatres halfway beneath the terrain. With regard to artistic interventions we encounter different positions in two spaces that in terms of architectural concept are almost identical. In the Senatsraum on the left **Martin Disler** (1949–1996) created a work entitled “**Usura**”, two murals painted directly on the concrete not with brushes but using hands, which emerged in an ecstatic ejection of amassed energy following intensive investigation of the place in a single night. To the left and right, splurges of red and blue paint flank the room. From this riot of colour, fragments of figures and



bodies occasionally emerge which, no sooner has one recognised them than they dissolve again before reappearing in another form. The images are reminiscent of a Baroque descent into hell, but can also be seen as a metaphor for the act of painting itself, as the representation of the creation of a picture that is never concluded. As the third part of the work, Disler attached a head made of plaster to a column before the glass front, above the lettering "USURA", which, is also emblazoned, back-to-front, on the forehead of the grotesque mask. Usura means interest and usury, but also excess and could be interpreted as a principle of Disler's oeuvre, as the "extra" that emerges between what went into the work intentionally and what is only revealed in the production process.



Martin Disler | "Usura", 1989, mixed media, three parts, 11.4 x 3.5 m



95 x 19 cm



Max Bill | “verdichtung gleicher farbquanten”, 1991–1992,
acrylic on canvas, two pictures, 300 x 60 cm

The situation in the adjoining, somewhat smaller lecture theatre, which the St.Gallen Foundation for International Studies (ISC) at the HSG donated together with the art, is totally different. In it two oil paintings by **Max Bill** (1908–1994), “**verdichtung gleicher farbquanten**” (1991–1992), likewise created specifically for the location, make a very distinct mark. These are two small pictures with bright colours hanging opposite each other; the way they are structured with triangles facing in opposite directions produces the same quantity of coloured spaces. Max Bill was present as they were hung, high up close to the exit, as he desired. To a certain extent the two pictures enjoy a special position in the Library Building’s art collection, as we recall that the Art Committee was hoping that the works for the new Library Building would represent the embodiment of non-rational thought. Bill, on the other hand, was of the opinion that in art it was possible to apply a “logical method”, in which “each part of the creative process corresponds step by step to logical operations and the examination of the logic behind them”. That does not mean, however, that Max Bill’s pictures are self-sufficient arithmetic exercises; he was far more concerned with using art as a means of making elementary structures and forces sensually perceivable.

Leaving the lecture theatre we see that the solitary wooden figure balancing precariously in a kneeling position on its sphere in the small foyer illuminated by a sole skylight is part of a group of



Josef Felix Müller | Untitled, 1989, three parts, wood and mosaic, mixed media

works by **Josef Felix Müller** (born 1955). The male figure is peering in the direction of the narrow corridor connecting the Auditorium Maximum and the library. At the end of the corridor it catches sight of a counterpart positioned on a small balcony of the upper-storey gallery. This figure is female and anchored firmly to its crude pedestal. It is not alone, standing back to back with a second male figure on a coarsely hewn tree trunk. Looking back from here we see above the figure on the sphere a blue wall piece with a star which, behind a platform bridging the corridor, rises like a piece of an artificial, emblematic sky. Only when we get closer do we see that the star is a mosaic made up of different parts. This calls to mind a hero's story from Greek mythology, in which on the advice of the Goddess Athena, Kadmos used the teeth of a slain dragon as seed. The dragon seed produced armed warriors. One might ask which seed of man the mosaic with the teeth of cattle, horses, deer and sharks references.

The entire group of works appears as encrypted and self-referential as the star's symbolism: The two figures staring at each other are at an unbridgeable distance from one another and define the space between them, while the third, male figure is turning away and cannot communicate with the female figure to the back of him.



We now proceed along the connecting corridor and pass through a glass door on the left into the large new library. The bookshelves and workstations extend across two floors, with various areas in the open space meeting the students' needs. Surrounded by reading desks, in the middle there stands a painted bronze sculpture by **Mimmo Paladino** (born 1948), "**Giardino chiuso**" (p. 82). It is directly beneath the tip of the glass pyramid in the middle of the room such that, especially when viewed from the gallery on the upper storey, it is an eye-catcher. It is no coincidence that in the midst of books and interpreted texts there is an extremely pictorial sculpture with a pronounced narrative texture. By means of diffuse symbolism and vague formal borrowing from African art, it references the Greek legend of Charon and Dante's description of him. According to legend, Charon, the old ferryman, carried the souls of the newly deceased across the River Styx to the world of the dead. A reference to the finite nature of all that is terrestrial in the centre of the library.

Four sets of stairs connect the two floors of the library with each other, while the wide staircase opposite the main entrance leads to the Auditorium Maximum. Having reached the last step we now encounter a large, two-part picture, a vibrating colour surface,



Gerhard Richter | “St.Gallen”, 1989, oil on canvas, bipartite

“Illusionen” by **Gerhard Richter** (born 1932). A few years ago the artist gave the picture a new name: “**St.Gallen**”. The colour of the painting, which is almost as big as the wall, is if anything restrained, at least as far as the final coating, which was applied vertically in black and white, is concerned. In innumerable places, however, the surface is torn and scratched, such that the coloured layers of sediment beneath the picture are visible. On the left-hand side of the picture the exposed places reveal a fiery red which breaks through the outer layers of paint, while on the right the turbulent colouring slowly gives way to a duller brownish red, an ochre hue, and green.

It is well known that Gerhard Richter repeatedly revises his works in a lengthy process, each condition representing an independent development, which he examines, without, however, planning the further steps. Richter has not only painted abstract pictures, on the outside his output is characterised far more by constant change and apparent caesuras. In the 1960s he began painting pictures based on photos from magazines.

In the by no means artistic photographs Richter found a way of liberating himself from the compulsion of intentional aesthetic creation. This process is reminiscent of the strategy that Marcel Duchamp developed in his ready-mades.



**Mimmo Paladino | “Giardino chiuso”, 1982,
bronze (acquired 1993)**

In contrast to Duchamp, who abandoned painting, Richter attempts to open up new possibilities for himself in precisely this field. He does this by emptying the mimetic content of figurative pictures in his oeuvre, and by taking the physicalism of colour, which refers to nothing other than itself, to absurd levels. Though as of the 1970s the focal point of his interest seemed to shift to abstract painting, he never on this account stopped painting figurative pictures as well. In this sense, he never differentiated between representational and non-representational paintings, as neither can ever be similar to the object they represent. Realistic works are often just symbols and have a referential character aimed not directly at what is portrayed in the picture, but at something that lies behind. They are not different from abstract pictures, as these can both refer to cosmic orders and represent colour spaces, or be colour that celebrates itself in the act of painting. If the referential character is already so fragile, what if anything can one rely on in a picture? Aesthetic experience, as Gerhard Richter’s pictures teach us, is not geared towards the recognition of reality, we do not learn anything about the world by observing art. It is, however, one of man’s independent assets. Art guides us to reflected judgements and shows us our own possibilities of perception.



Luciano Fabro | “Anima”, 1990, coloured cable rods, metal

Turning round we will see on the section of wall above the stairwell leading to the ground floor the wall piece “**Anima**” by **Luciano Fabro** (1936–2007). Thin, coloured metal rods of unequal lengths are collected as a bundle and fastened to a piece of the wall covered in white plaster. On the right, the weight bends the longer ends of the rods downwards to create a springy arc, shaped by a light touch. On the left, toward the window, colourful, slightly bent metal strips have been attached to the rods as a counterweight, hanging vertically downwards. The fine, golden wires that lead from the point where these shorter pendulums link to the longer rods up to the left upper corner of the wall are as good as invisible. The wall piece evolves using sparing, but highly effective means, whereby the essential element that constitutes it is the weightlessness of balance. The rods are deliberately garish in colour, making the piece seem bright and transparent, so that it looks as bodiless as possible in the incident daylight. Luciano Fabro was initially associated with “Arte Povera”, albeit not just using plain, but also decidedly precious materials.

Thanks to the elegance of the gestures and the lively colours, “Anima” has a radiant sense of lightness about it, all too easily making one forget that in his almost intangible piece, which repeat-



edly takes on new, unexpected shapes, Fabro addresses fundamental questions of human existence and explores the metaphysical properties of the artwork. The title “Anima” perhaps alludes to this, referencing the Latin for a breath of air, for breath, an appropriate attribute for the way the work seems to float above the stairs, and to the same word as the designation of the soul as the source of organic-sensory life as opposed to intellectual inspiration.

As in the entrance hall, on the upper floor the foyer along the curved real wall of the main lecture theatre is also accessible, whereby along the gallery railing there are comfortable chairs inviting you to tarry awhile, with windows in front providing ample light. From here there’s a great view of the centre of the mural by Enzo Cucchi (born 1949). The painting is composed of a layer of plaster and honey and spreads across the entire length and breadth of the wall. The curvature in the composition is discernible when you look at the image’s central figure – an embryo-like being with an outsized double head; with its back to us it steps into the depths of the picture. It appears at this point to both scatter the pictorial content and to hold it together. The notion of a stable axis is emphasized by the drop-like shape made of tar, which descends upon the above described figure and the cloverleaf emanating from its head. This is



Enzo Cucchi | “Untitled”, 1988, mixed media, 18.8 x 3.4

Photo | Carsten Seltrecht, 1998

highlighted by the other elements in the image (three staggered rows one behind the other, likewise of head shapes divided in the middle and nine drops or rays tapering toward the edges) again intimating a movement that accelerates outwards and which we viewers associate with the curve of the wall. Enzo Cucchi’s pictorial world thrives on portrayals of archetypes that he seems to cull from some collective unconscious. Perhaps he also refers ironically to the activity behind the wall in the lecture theatre, where students with hypertrophic brains sit in rows of seats staring captivated at the centre, whence the knowledge radiates outwards. In his large-format paintings with their complex compositional schemes, Cucchi manages to conjure up enigmatic visions of the end of time from the depths of his own intuition.



Felice Varini | Dix disques évidés plus neuf moitiés et deux quarts, 2014, acrylic and film



A piece from Felice Varini, an artist living in Paris but originally from Ticino (*1952 in Locarno), was installed in the top floor of the library building in 2014. “Dix disques évidés plus neuf moitiés et deux quarts” challenges and sharpens our perception of dimensions, shifting it from three to two and then back, whereby our visual acclimatisation is well and truly scrambled. It also pleases the illusionist Varini if we do not even discover the two-dimensional resolution and the floating planes, thus failing to solve the riddle.

The concept of ‘art in architecture’ is perfectly embodied here – in between installation art and painting. Felice Varini works in open space with simple geometric forms and primary colours, which reveal themselves to the observer from a single point. A small movement is enough to resolve the system. Together, the supposed fragmentary chaos and the geometric, static order contained within only reveal the dialectic whole in an endless loop of de- and reconstruction. It is always possible to return to the one point and escape the chaos. Upon the first encounter with the red fragments in the three-dimensional space, we inevitably ask ourselves whether there is something there which we have yet to notice. Varini consciously chooses simplicity of form and colour, because our steps and perception already create a sufficient sense of unease that surrounds the artwork.



The red, painted on backgrounds, is complemented by transparent film on the windows, which further intensifies the playful, distortive effects created by the invasion of light and finds new spaces through the illuminating red projections, even on the ground floor. Across thirty years of creativity and counting, Varini finds surfaces on which to cast his projections almost all over the world on walls, façades, floors, concrete piers, gates, windows, balustrades. His entirely personal dramaturgy, an anamorphosis, soon teaches us that all insight is a matter of perspective.

Closely coupled with the architecture, the installation creates an unexpected connection to another artwork in the neighbouring main building. The red mobile by Alexander Calder, with its organic forms, is constantly moving and generates various constellations of sculptures and pictures in two and three dimensions – both autonomously and through the constantly changing perspective of the observers passing by. The red pliage by Gottfried Honegger at the Kirchenhoferhaus also changes markedly with each step we take, generating a different geometric figure.

**Bernhard Luginbühl | “Ankerfigur mit Rolle”,
1993, iron (acquired 1997)**

Executive Campus HSG

Transparent and light, possibly a little futuristic – those are some of the terms one hears when the talk turns to Bruno Gerosa’s design for the Executive Campus at the University of St.Gallen. Playfully Baroque on Zollstrasse, from the front it resembles a UFO that has landed in a meadow. So, what kind of artwork could a building, that inspires such comparisons, house without detracting from them? Initially, only one: a floor piece by Jan Dibbets that referenced the architecture, and given the WBZ’s perfectly white walls and glass fronts, it seemed this would remain the case. Eventually, the Art Committee at the time decided that in addition to outdoor spaces only the no-frills functional cafeteria called for an artistic intervention.

On our tour, we approach the WBZ from Holzstrasse – it stands somewhat apart from the other university buildings – and what we first encounter is an ensemble of rural idylls. An old farmhouse, a massive lime tree, in front of it a martial sculpture by **Bernhard Luginbühl** (1929–2011) and the Executive Campus’ extension wing, which juts out like a block into the countryside. The farmhouse is home to offices and a goods lift to the underground car park. The circus with the lime tree forms the border line between the section rooted in tradition and the experimental, new. Seen thus,



this is the right location for Bernhard Luginbühl's **"Ankerfigur mit Rolle"**, dating from 1993. The bulky monument consists of a huge sphere on a comparatively dainty plinth; an anchor, swinging out at an angle, seems to balance the weights.

Luginbühl's inexorably rotating sculptures are made of industrial waste, but they do not embody some apotheosis of the history of technology. Instead, they somehow resemble remnants of a long extinct archaic culture. In these primordial, cloddish titans, which nevertheless often perform incredible balancing feats, we do not encounter the machine aesthetic that tells euphorically of the dawning of a new age but instead a pointer to the transience of human achievements, however great they may be.

After this sombre beginning and the passage through the WBZ building, which blocks off the countryside, a new, more joyful scene awaits us: the Executive Campus HSG proper gleams brightly in its white marble cladding. Long is the avenue running up to it and the courtyard, crossing lightly sloping terrain, until you reach the revolving door to the entrance and the central dome behind it. Two transparent foyers mark the end points of the two wings, and feature glass façades with the wave-like curves.



Tony Cragg | “St.Gallen”, 1996, bronze, 490 x 200 x 145 cm (acquired 1997)

In front of the foyer, to the right of the somewhat longer wing and positioned at an angle that emulates the movement of the glass façade, lies the long shape of the bronze sculpture “**Early Forms**” by **Tony Cragg** (born 1949). At first glance, one could be forgiven for thinking it is a quite traditional sculpture – a classic material used in an organic, plant-like idiom. It is thus with slight irritation that one spots the structure of an bowl of everyday use that forms the basis of this elegantly laid out body, whipped up into spiral-like turns. In his work, Cragg uses not only bronze but also likes to include trivial everyday items made of plastic, combining them to form new configurations. His interest is in the object as such, and in how society handles the objects, it is constantly producing. He studies the objects, investigates their visual properties, and tries to place them in a context that enables us to experience them anew in an original way. The way we treat objects today is emphatically careless, leads to their wear and tear; Tony Cragg seeks to restore the autonomous dignity they once had when we still knew how they were made and circum-spectly sought to advance those “early forms” entrusted to us. His efforts therefore do not focus primarily on the aesthetic of the material or the form, but on the social mechanisms, that in the final instance, most enduringly change the objects.



On a sunny day, visitors are greeted by an almost dazzling light inside the Executive Campus, for the bright stone and white walls give even greater power to the sunrays – and much sunlight enters the building through the transparent dome and the glass walls. What strikes the eye is that the foyer is defined by round shapes: curved or radial walls, flowing staircases, the semi-spherical domes, and exactly beneath them the circular openings that pierce through the floor and offer a view of the storey below, which houses the café and bar. If we bend over the railing and look down, we can see why Dutch artist **Jan Dibbets** (born 1941) was inspired by these shapes when creating his piece on the floor of the lower story. The circular shape of the opening has been projected onto the floor. The harmonious system of circles gets interrupted, but square floor plates made of the same stone as the rest of the building have been inserted into the predefined circle to create a cruciform with a black outline that breaks out of the circle. Dibbets has made a minor emendation to the structure set by the building, namely the symmetry and the circle, that predominate within the WBZ building, creating a slight shift. The cross, having slid from the centre of the circle, can be read as a kind of axis for coordinates that somehow evade the gaze of the viewers above and introduce a quiet moment of irritation to the perception of the space.

Jan Dibbets' works often focus on minute changes, sparing interventions, leaving us wondering about the main perspectives in a



Jan Dibbets | “Untitled”, 1995, floor piece, in stone

given space. Photographic montages undermine a clear vantage point. Essentially, Dibbets is indebted to a painterly tradition, given the way he explores angles and the viewer’s position. However, he does not address these issues in an illusionist’s pictorial space, but transposes them into the three dimensions of space in order, as it were, to invert them: Instead of constructing a figurative illusion on canvas, he deconstructs the perspective of real space.

The spacious volume of the two-storey foyer functions as the Executive Campus’s communicative and ostentatious heart. This lobby links the lecture halls, the seminar rooms and the admin offices on the ground floor with the café bar, the restaurant and the teaching rooms on the lower floor. Here the paths to the individual lecture rooms intersect, but people / one do not / does not just through, not looking left or right; the foyer is a forum in the classical sense, a space for meets, chats and greets. It is a place, where people like to sit on the black Philipp Starck armchairs or the famous Landi chairs out on the terrace in front of the large glass façade. The gaze wanders from the gallery out into the countryside, inspired by the architecture that has created such a cultured climate. In conscious contrast to this, the seminar rooms have been designed simply as “labs” for concentrated study. We can end the tour by visiting one of the hospitality rooms, the “Intermezzo” restaurant on the lower floor, located in one of the two circular wings that define the end points of the foyer on either side.



**Günther Uecker working on woodblock at
Stoob stone printing studio, St.Gallen.**
Photo | © Franziska Messner-Rast (2012)



The framed woodcuts by Günther Uecker (*1930 Wendorf/Mecklenburg) in the stairwell of the Executive Campus establish a direct dialogue with the dominant colours in the building, black and white, in particular with Jan Dibbets' floor inlay and similarly with other artworks, such as Tony Cragg's sculpture *Early Forms*, displayed outside the building. Their placement takes into account the progression of the stairs, allowing the observer a number of vantage points to view the works up close and from a distance.

Uecker's woodcuts fundamentally correspond to his objects and reliefs. Material, surface, structure, movement, and light and shadow stand in the foreground here. The prints *Man and Woman* and *Seven Trees* were created using a printing block (wood, for example an old, weathered tabletop) that has been worked with an axe (see photo). Lacking a suitable printing press for the oversized format of 290 x 150 cm, Uecker worked for days on end using his own body weight for the printing process. The woodcuts were then finally peeled off by hand.

Günther Uecker created his pieces through intensive bodily exertion, often using axes, hammers and nails. The aggressive action, the violation of the materials, the sharp contrast of black and white ultimately refer to the great existential themes, with which Uecker has concerned himself from the beginning: people and society, nature and technology, life and death, growth and decay, danger and liberation, the visualisation of aggression.



**Günther Uecker | Man and Woman, 1990, woodcut on laid paper, 290 x 150 cm each, signed, edition of 40, Erker-
Presse St.Gallen
(gift from Erker-Galerie to HSG)**

**Günther Uecker | Seven Trees, 1985, (Tree I – IV), woodcut on laid paper, 105 x 75 cm each, signed, edition of 20, Erker-
Presse St.Gallen
(gift from Erker-Galerie to HSG)**



60 x 180 cm



120 x 180 cm



120 x 180 cm

Anselm Stalder (born 1956), who has placed his “**Lo sguardo raddoppiato**” here, felt the room was “cool”, as the tone of the interior of the restaurant is determined by white walls, glass and epoxy aluminium. Its footprint is a ring segment, with the back wall formed from glass tiles, and on the valley side five windows open out onto the countryside. For Anselm Stalder this room is in movement. He compared it to a section from the platform of a carousel and his piece is intended to heighten this impression of imaginary spinning. He has positioned glazed, unframed passe-partouts between the windows. Their different sizes all reference the mass of the windows. Stalder describes the passe-partouts’ colours as “yellow ochre, light rose, dusty green, anthracite, dusty green again, deep radiant ultramarine, and then at the end yellow ochre again.”

This row of colours is strongly accentuated on the wall to the foyer, where the side lengths of a square in “intense warm red” replicate the diameter of the only small round window. The sequence of colours gives rhythm to the space, infusing it with movement. When the eye returns from the last yellow-ochre surface back to the first, it really seems as if still dazed from the spinning of the carousel, the sudden standstill comes as a slight backwards Turn. The movement arises on the basis of an illusionary perception of things. All the passe-partouts contain small drawings based on press photos that “float like a handful of scattered stars in colour fields”. Anselm



Anselm Stalder | “Lo sguardo raddoppiato”, 1997, mixed media, ten parts

Stalder’s poetic description reveals that he is no artist dedicated solely to a conceptual and constructive world. His monochrome surfaces do not obey a colour system, but on closer inspection are the bearers of intimate messages and stories that tempt viewers to move closer and study them.

In conclusion, we leave the main Executive Campus building and walk to the Hans Ulrich Hall, at the end of which the last two of a total of seven new acquisitions are located: Félix de la Concha’s “WBZ Panorama” and Elisabeth Nembrini’s animal projections.

Anyone walking up the stairs to another floor in the Executive Campus’s Hans Ulrich Auditorium at St.Gallen University, crosses motion sensors that trigger the temporary daylight projection onto the wall of various slides: There’s a budgerigar with wings widespread; a poodle with a putto; a fox with a walking stick and pipe. While the sudden appearance of an image is itself surprising, the very size of the shots is most certainly so: approx. 3.5 x 2.5 metres and thus far beyond the natural scale of the respective theme, such as the budgerigar, transforming the cute household pet doomed to live in a cage into a free and menacing “bird of prey” flying toward users of the stairwell. And the way the poodle has been shorn, arbitrarily to fit some human taste, is off-putting: be it the miniature putto attached somehow nonsensically to its hind legs, be it the pose the dog has adopted, somehow risible and yet pitiful, in an attempt to assert itself, visible only thanks to this



Elisabeth Nembrini | “Milky Way: Wellensittich, Pudel, Fuchs”, 2012, 3 glass plates, each 29.9 x 29.3 cm, coated in emulsion with the drawing scratched into them, using a daylight projector (with motion sensors), projection size approx. 350 x 250 cm

extreme enlargement. The fox exits the animal kingdom world – walking upright and with utensils definitely not associated with it, entering the world of fable, of humans but still in an animal form.

The respective slide screened is based on an image that **Elisabeth Nembrini** (born 1960) either herself photographed or borrowed from other sources, for example magazines or the Internet. The original image is then computer-reprocessed artistically, reducing it to the essential substance and in design terms of pure chiaroscuro. Nembrini then projects the image onto a glass plate coated in white emulsion and, using a little wooden rod, carefully scratches away the paint in line with the outline and hatching. While the artist originally conceived of the resulting drawings on glass as independent works hung on the wall, she then moved on to the logical idea of reproducing the drawings on an expanse of wall using a daylight projector; this second projection not only gives the subject matter an intensified presence, but given the outsize proportions also creates a more alienated image.

When selecting and processing the themes chosen, which on principle cover everything visible in the outside world, Elisabeth Nembrini is primarily interested in alienation and surprise, in the enigmatic and the unsettling, the oscillating state of the moment with no reference to what went before or comes after, free association and “surreal friction”. At the same time, the visible does not dissipate in



the incomprehensible, as the attentive viewer will discern in these slide images of budgerigar, poodle and fox prior to domestication, indeed the animals' degradation by Man. What reason can there be for placing a stuffed fox standing upright with a walking stick and pipe on a gambling machine and, discovered and recorded photographically by Nembrini, then placing it in a display window? A vague allusion to Reynard the Fox? What cause can there be for transforming a hunting dog into a sappy dog and then disfiguring its fur with fashion threads such that the original wild and dignified canine is no longer to be recognised? And does the budgerigar, however much it is bred, not defy the narrow confines of its cage and "remember" the expanse of its indigenous country of Australia?

Nembrini is not focussed on animal rights, but on creating critical aesthetic attention for all those phenomena of contemporary reality, be it in our real surroundings, be it in the media. Elisabeth Nembrini refers to the image that we make of reality and on how it can be cast into question by the images she creates and places next to it.

Further education helps you expand your horizons, helps you modify your existing angle on things and gain new ones. Thus, a panorama such as that created by **Félix de la Concha** (born 1962) is metaphorically predestined for its location here. Based in Iowa, the Spanish artist has developed a marvellous visual circle for the HSG, which on the one hand and true to vision presents the realities of



**Félix de la Concha | “WBZ Panorama. Through the Looking-Glass”,
2012, polyptych consisting of 10 panels, oil on canvas, 960 x 136 cm**

what is to be seen close up and far away with great precision and mood, incorporated into a stunning curvature. On the other, the viewers' customary ways of seeing and expectations are playfully subverted. Accordingly, the panorama is duplicated in the loggia portrayed and at the same time it is not quoted in the outside view of the Executive Campus. Various viewer vantage-points are ingeniously combined to form a flow of images while synchronically different phases of time are established in the work's here-and-now. The time spent developing the panorama from the first sketch to the complete ten-part painting is thus subtly stored within the image thus created.

The image in the image in the image as a pirouette of perception: being in the loggia, the broad canvas before your eyes, the real world at your back, your points of orientation unsettled. Looking back and forth, comparing reality with the depiction, all the clever compositional hard cuts and all the skilful distortions of perspective Félix de la Concha conjures up. Each of the ten pictorial elements is intrinsically coherent and subject to a strict compositional regime: The lines of the horizon and the central axes coincide with the themes underlying the images and poignant details – the artist left nothing to impressionist chance and seduces visitors and students alike with this multi-faceted pictorial aperçu of the seat of learning.



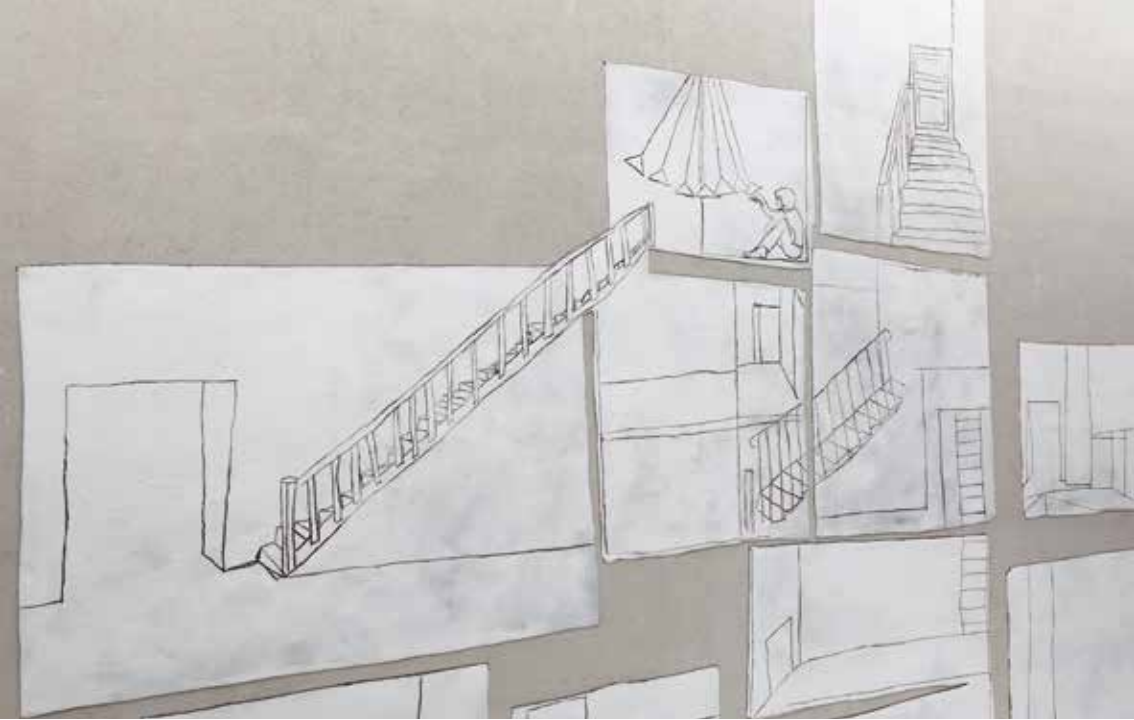


Zilla Leutenegger | “**Staircase: Lonely at the top**”, 2018, drawings on 11 tableaux in sgraffito technique, 10.5 m x 9 m and a wooden ladder, veneered in white

For the first time, the well-known Swiss artist **Zilla Leutenegger** (born 1968) has used her newly acquired sgraffito technique on a large wall of one of the atriums at Müller-Friedberg-Strasse 8. The work “Staircase” covers three (5th to 7th) floors. The artist scratched off the upper plaster layer, thus exposing the underlying layer of a different color. The sparse, archaic line of Zilla Leutenegger’s drawings ideally combines the sgraffito method.

On the one hand, the motif of the staircase takes up the architecture inside the building, where various stairwells and corridors rhizomatically connect a three floors labyrinth. On the other hand, this networking may reflect a cipher to interdisciplinary encounters in interstices, passages and corridors, or to direct collaboration inside the building. While the beholder of the artwork mostly spots only sections, the eye finds it difficult to grasp the big picture.

The subtitle “Lonely at the top” refers to the figure of Zilla, a kind of alter ego of the artist who, sitting alone in a space on the top floor, plays with the light cone of a lamp. In the manner of her video drawings, Zilla Leutenegger is planning to produce a video installation to animate and project the oscillating light cone of the lamp. Just as ironically as Randy Newman sings his song of the same title “Lonely at the top” (1987), the artist also refers to the loneliness of leaders who might receive their training at the University of St.Gallen and climb up several career ladders.





In addition to the long-term concept of “art in architecture”, the HSG was able to organize a more dynamic, temporary exhibition. Every year, five artists from all over the world showed their work in the University building next to the railway station, at Tellstrasse 2. The idea was developed together with the same HSG alumnus, who fully financed the project. The exhibitions, mainly curated by Tamar Ette, followed the model of providing the artists with the opportunity to gain more visibility outside the marketplace and in the context of a renowned university collection. The prerequisite for the emerging artists to apply was not (yet) to be represented by a gallery. In response to the first call, 740 artists applied, of whom five were selected to come to St.Gallen from Mumbai, New York, São Paulo, South Korea, and Sosnivka/Ukraine. In 2016, *art@tell* (later *U/Art*) experienced a boost of dynamism: with a selection of 5 out of a total of 15 artworks shown to date, the project went abroad for the first time and offered a guest exhibition on the campus of our partner University, WU Vienna.

At the end of the five-year cycle, the patron donated one of the works to the HSG, Raúl Rebolledo’s “The Fool’s Gold”, which can now remain in St.Gallen permanently, besides three other temporary loans. The artist from Guadalajara first confronts students and employees of Tellstrasse with gilded surfaces, and then takes the



Raúl Rebolledo | The fool's gold, 2014, 3 handgefertigte, geprägte Papierarbeiten, je 100 x 100 cm, vergoldetes Keramikobjekt, Durchmesser Ø 25 cm
Photos | ©Marko Seifert

traditional value systems of our time to absurdity by three framed *tableaux*. He himself set the price for each of them, independent of galleries, secondary markets, or speculation: ten thousand Mexican pesos. This corresponds to the cost of 25.06 g cocaine, the Mexican minimum wage of 169,262 VSM (*Veces Salario Mínimo*), or 625 cartridges, caliber 7.62 (AK-47 automatic rifle). These hardly discernible equivalents are delicately stamped onto the handmade papers. Thus, Raúl Rebolledo not only picks up on the cliché of the Mexican image (drugs, poverty, violence), but also places the highly topical question of the value of art in a conceptual tension that nevertheless hits the hard ground of reality.

Art Committee President
Prof. Dr. phil. Yvette Sánchez



**Postscript by the president of the Art Committee,
Prof. Dr. phil. Yvette Sánchez**

The art in architecture of the HSG is a phenomenon unique worldwide in a public university. Superb art pieces have been installed in the last fifty years and unpretentiously accompany students and staff in their working routine. Nevertheless they, who are not per se art-affine, get sensitised for the cause and get into close and low-threshold contact with art. Some explicit and implicit effects on students of a business school are undeniable, not only since the art market has become so relevant, and art is more and more integrated into management trainings. The high-calibre collection, which is also permanently accessible to the public, reflects the HSG's holistic educational approach.

For 57 years, artists have been invited to cultivate the connection between science, art, and architecture and to create their works. The more than 50 important pieces by regional and international artists would be a credit to any museum. The architecture has a lot to offer, also with buildings planned for the future.

Since 2011, we have been in the fourth phase of expanding our site-specific artworks. After the successful modernisation of the Main Building, the HSG Campus on Rosenberg was extended, and the extension wings to the Executive Campus HSG Holzweid commissioned. In a relatively brief period of time, we have acquired several new pieces, and others will follow, also for future buildings, e.g. the Learning Centre.

The Main Building was opened in 1963, the completion of the Library Building followed in 1989, and the first tract for the Executive Campus in 1995. Each of them has stimulated new acquisitions. The current Art Committee aspires to push ahead the collection in the spirit of the pioneering trio, Prof. Dr. iur. Eduard Nägeli and archi-

tect Walter Förderer, with the support of curator Harald Szeemann. The new buildings will be furnished with artworks in line with the founders' concept; these artworks will not be staged as if in a museum but 'simply' are an essential part of everyday campus life. International and regional artists are invited to realise site-specific pieces at the HSG. Some of them were lucky strikes: Alberto Giacometti, Georges Braque, Hans Arp, Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies, Gerhard Richter, or Roman Signer are among the names that resonate strongly. It is noteworthy that no tax money has ever applied for the purpose of these acquisitions. Instead, they were financed from the very beginning by private donations. The Art Committee is responsible for fundraising in order to acquire each of the selected pieces.

Projects are elaborated on site by the artists, thanks to personal contacts with them. This close relationship is apparent in some of the photos in the present brochure, showing the artists at work, and illustrating how the projects evolved.

As the collection, so has the number of coincidental or intended linkages between the individual works grown. Several artworks depend strongly on perspective.

From a distance, Gerhard Richter's painting or Pierre Soulages' tapestry look so very unlike what you see when studying the painting or weaving technique at close range. A self-reflecting landscape dissolves when you stand directly in front of Richter's painting into a complex structure of countless layers of paint. A first glance from afar sees Soulages' immense brushstrokes, but on closer inspection they turn out to be a matter of minutely controlled, millimetre precision. His black calligraphy-like symbols create a connection with the signs in Joan Miró's tiled frieze. With each of our steps, Alexander Calder's (intrinsically moving) mobile changes, just as Gottfried Honegger's plagues then become to the viewer a constant

work in progress. This effect reaches the most intense variant in Felice Varini's anamorphosis.

The figures, themes, and genres also forge various links between individual works. Calder's organic structures made of sheet steel refer to Alicia Penalba's organic forms of cement on the lawn outside the Main Building, which in turn point to Jean Arp's near-by "tree of bowls". The latter corresponds to François Stahly's "fountain tree", which leads us to Honegger's pliages, alluding to Walter Bodmer's hanging sculpture in primary blue, red and yellow in the building next door.

Mimmo Paladino's Charon enters into dialogue with the neighbouring three archaic tree-trunk figures by Joseph Felix Müller. These again are counterpoints to the small, tender, well-protected Alberto Giacometti sculpture, horizontal in thrust; heavy and massive, by contrast, Bernhard Luginbühl's and Tony Cragg's non-figurative sculptures outside the Executive Campus. Jean Baier's aluminum wall pieces can be compared to Lothar Baumgarten's enamel panels; just as Roman Signer's videos somehow relate to the studio photographs resembling Teresa Hubbard & Alexander Birchler's film stills in the cafeteria, or Alejandro Díaz's neon-light sculpture with Elisabeth Nembrini's slide images made of the daylight projectors that play an important role in media history. The figurative and very large self-portrait in oil by Yan Pei-Ming speaks to Félix de la Concha's panorama image and Martin Disler's Expressionist painting interacts with that of Gerhard Richter. Such chains of association can be continued at will, also by contrasting characteristics: The strong physical presence of Josephson's worker, taller than life-size, with Julian Oliver's critique of digitalisation in the small form of a grenade.

Regarding the impressive architecture of the Main Building, special mention should be made of the world-famous Henri Cartier-Bresson's photography. In the 1960s, he staged the fascinating, free-hanging concrete staircase in the Förderer building and created a masterpiece. The impressive black-and-white image, which appeared in Swiss magazine *du* (1967, no. 8), the rights to which can sadly no longer be obtained. The photograph skillfully relates the concrete stairs to the random encounter of four male figures that the staging is reminiscent not only of Oskar Schlemmer's famous Bauhaus staircase images, but also of the artistic mood of Alain Resnais' film *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961).

Alongside the overt and covert linkages between the works, it is also interesting to see how some of them not only help shape their immediate architectural surroundings, but also interact with everyday work at the University of St.Gallen. Martin Disler's choice of title "USURA" (Usurious Interest) ironically hints at one of the topics taught at a business school. Alejandro Díaz' neon slogans are a warning aimed at consumerism and advertising. Lothar Baumgarten's equations at the entrance to the Library Building most manifestly address HSG teaching content. We have already mentioned Enzo Cucchi's reflection of what happens behind his back in the main auditorium. And Roman Signer's 'spinning bottles' from an art action in the same auditorium should not be taken too literally, in German, bottle meaning dead loss ...

These and other cross-references within the collection imply the impact the marvelous art-works, permanently accessible to the public, have on students, staff, and visitors alike.

The status accorded to cultural studies at the St.Gallen business school (all students must gain 25% of their credits in this field) is superbly underlined by the Art collection.

Fittingly, the student association proArte seeks to familiarise students and people from outside the university with the artworks.

In general, students tend only to notice the works en passant, yet they regard them with the greatest respect. This can be seen, for example, from the fact that in the 55 years the collection has existed, not a single work has been mistreated in any way. In recent years, student interest in art in their day to day environment has grown sharply; and art is increasingly incorporated into teaching activities.

Roman Signer's 14 video works as well as Felice Varini's anamorphosis probably attract the most attention, not least because this is a genre that directly appeals to the current student generation, raised on moving images. Hardly anyone simply walks past the videos, and instead at least casts a fleeting eye over the projection; many stop and comment on the images. A group of students even played out one of the 14 Signer videos ("Kajak", 2000) in a humorous vein and shot their own video entitled "Blasphemia". The original shows the artist paddling a kayak across a gravel path, accompanied by cows; next to them flows a quiet brook. The students slightly changed the constellation, replacing the cows by a running dog, the gravel path by a meadow; reference is readily apparent.

Staff members and students perceive the collection as a sign of the high esteem in which the institution holds them. The existing works are viewed with pride and admiration.

Visitors are forever surprised by the art, as the collection's status corresponds more to that of a museum than a business school. The publically accessible artworks have dispelled many a prejudice about the University of St.Gallen.

We are grateful to Gabrielle Boller for her texts of the 1998 Art Guide (marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the University of St.Gallen) which we have excerpted for this volume. She also provided a commentary on the architectural renovation and extension undertaken up until 2011. Our thanks also go to the members of the Art Committee for the detailed descriptions of the collection's fourteen new acquisitions. We appreciate Marcel Bischof's and Hannes Thalmann's contribution to this brochure; their photos and graphic deserve a high esteem.

Finally, my cordial thanks goes to all the members of the former and the present Art Committee for their great volunteering contribution and to the Rector, who attentively and generously supports the collection's interests.

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Prof. Dr. phil. Yvette Sánchez | Professor of Latin American and Spanish Cultures and Literatures, University of St.Gallen (President)

Prof. Dr. iur. Thomas Geiser | Professor Emeritus of Private and Commercial Law, University of St.Gallen

Prof. Dr. oec. Roland Füss | Professor of Real Estate Finance, University of St.Gallen (and former student of Gerhard Richter at the Düsseldorf Art Academy)

Dr. Bruno Hensler | Administrative Director, University of St.Gallen

Catherine Hug | Curator of Kunsthaus Zürich

Dr. phil. Uwe Wiczorek | Curator of the Hilti Art Foundation in Schaan, Liechtenstein

Thomas Lehmann | Architect, St.Gallen

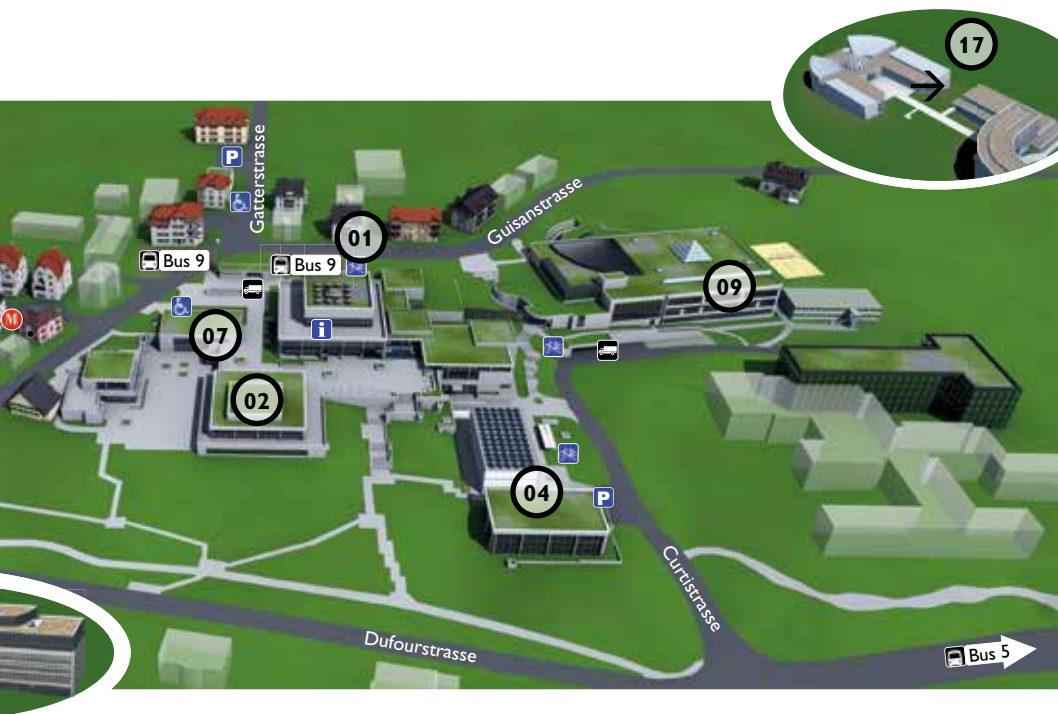
Dr. Annatina Aerne | School of Economics and Political Science, University of St.Gallen

Student representative (periodically changing)

Key



- 01 | Main Building
- 02 | Aula
- 04 | Dufourstrasse 48
- 07 | University Restaurant
- 09 | Library Building
- 10 | Sports Hall
- 17 | Executive Campus
(WBZ-HSG)



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