

Press release

07 May 2013

Lenbachhaus Museum reopens

A ceremony has been held today, attended by German Culture Minister, Mrs Wanka; the Mayor of Munich, Mr Ude; Lord Foster and Dr Helmut Friedl, Director of the Lenbachhaus Museum, to mark the completion of a major project to transform the experience for visitors.

The Museum's historic buildings have been carefully restored and the exhibition spaces augmented by a spectacular new wing, which provides an ideal environment for viewing the magnificent 'Blue Rider' collection. As well as radically improving the buildings' environmental performance, the remodelling has created a new entrance and social spaces, including a restaurant, terrace, education facilities and a dramatic full-height atrium, where the old is articulated within the new.

Built in 1891 as a studio and villa for the artist Franz von Lenbach, the Lenbachhaus Museum has been gradually extended over the last century. However, its buildings were in need of renewal and the museum lacked the facilities to cater to a growing audience of 280,000 people a year. Redefining circulation throughout the site, the project has transformed a complex sequence of spaces of different periods into a unified, legible museum that is accessible and open to all.

Peeling away the unnecessary historical accretions, a 1972 extension has been removed to reveal the wall of the original villa, which has been sympathetically restored in ochre render. The different historical elements are then unified along Richard-Wagner Street by a new gallery pavilion, containing two levels of exhibition space. The new building is intended as a 'jewel box' for the treasures of the gallery – it is clad in metal tubes of an alloy of copper and aluminium, their colour and form designed to complement the villa's rich ochre hue and textured facades.

Inside the new building, a sequence of intimate galleries display the Museum's internationally-renowned 'Blue Rider' collection of early twentieth-century Expressionist paintings, echoing the domestic scale of their original setting in the villa Lenbach. As many of the works of art were painted in 'plein-air', indirect natural light has been deliberately drawn into the upper level galleries to create the optimum environment for their display.

A new entrance has been created adjacent to the restaurant, accessed via a new landscaped piazza to the east of the museum – this move reclaims the courtyard garden, turning it from a pedestrian thoroughfare into a tranquil space for visitors. The restaurant is open outside of the Museum's opening hours and its seating continues outside, helping to enliven the surrounding streets and attracting new visitors into the galleries.

The new social heart of the building is a dramatic top-lit atrium, with ticket and information desks, access to a new temporary exhibition space on the ground floor and a grand, cantilevered stair to the

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upper level galleries. Clearly articulating the old within the new, its impressive volume incorporates the ochre exterior wall of the original villa and is scaled to accommodate large-scale works of art. The Museum commissioned the artist Olafur Eliasson for a site specific work titled Wirbelwerk. During the day sunlight washes the white walls via a long, slender opening at roof level and horizontal louvres cast changing patterns of light and shade within the space.

As well as repairing the fabric of the existing buildings, one of the main aims of the project has been to radically improve the museum's environmental performance. A water-based heating and cooling system within the floors has been implemented – using significantly less energy than an air based heating, this represents an innovative step in a gallery context. Rainwater is also collected and recycled and lighting has been replaced and upgraded with low-energy systems.

"Our main challenge has been to maintain the same amount of exhibition area, within the museum's footprint, while creating new circulation and visitor spaces. Given the way that the different parts of the museum had evolved, there was no such thing as a typical space – every corner is unique and required individual attention and different design decisions. This has been a fascinating process. Another important aspect of our design has been creating new opportunities for works of art to be exhibited outside the traditional confines of the gallery, such as in the atrium. This space develops the idea of the 'urban room' – it is the museum's public and social heart, and point of connection with the wider city."

Norman Foster, Founder and Executive Chairman

Notes to editors:

Lenbachhaus Museum

press information: www.lenbachhaus.de/presse

Credits

Lenbachhaus,
Munich, Germany
2002-2013

Client:

City of Munich,
Cultural Department and Building Department

Architect:

Foster + Partners

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Facts and Figures

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Lenbachhaus,
Munich, Germany
2002-2013

Client: City of Munich,
Cultural Department,
Building Construction

Appointment: 2002
Construction Start: 2009
Completion: 2013

Site Area: Approx. 4,000m²
Area (Gross): 12,328m²

Facilities:

More than 55 exhibition spaces and galleries with a range of lighting systems combining LED and natural light, atrium orientation hall, shop, restaurant/cafe, lecture hall, historic villa, administration, conservation workshop, adult and children's education centre, cloakroom

History:

Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus is the former studio wing and villa owned by painter Franz von Lenbach (1836- 1904).

1887-88 Artist's studio built

1890 Residential villa built for von Lenbach family

1924 Villa and studio bought by City of Munich from widow of Franz von Lenbach to establish new art museum

1929 Garden wing built and new Municipal Art Gallery opened

1958 Gabriele Münter bequeathed art collection including the 'Blue Rider' collection

1962 Elly and Bernhard Koehler Jr donated further work

1972 Extension to museum built on Brienner Strasse

1994 Kunstbau Gallery within the subway station converted

2002 Foster + Partners appointed to redevelop Museum

2009 Lenbachhaus Museum closed for construction work

2013 Lenbachhaus Museum opens 8 May

Art Installations:

'Wirbelwerk' 2012 by Olafur Eliasson

'Lenbachhaus' 2012 by Thomas Demand

Structure:

Main structure new parts concrete and steel (roof of entrance hall) Old parts brick. Facade TECU (new parts) and render (old parts)

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Energy:

Natural daylight use maximised in upper galleries and circulation spaces

LED lights in all public spaces

Heating and cooling integrated into the walls and floors

Use of natural ground water for cooling and heating

Use of rainwater for toilets

Lighting:

LED lights – first installation of LED lighting used extensively in an art museum. Fully controllable lighting with exceptionally wide range of settings in order to display works in optimum conditions.

Energy efficient.

Materials:

External: TECU-Gold Aluminium/copper alloy

Internal: Timber floor

Bronze balustrades

Cost:

Project cost: 59 million Euros

LED Lighting: 4.3 million Euros

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