

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Zurich, 6 November 2009

### **The Art Market in Switzerland (19th Century until Today)**

**The Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA), in collaboration with the History Department at the University of Lausanne, is to hold an interdisciplinary colloquium on “The Art Market in Switzerland. 19th Century until Today”. The aim is to explore the history of the art market in Switzerland from the 19th century until the present day, the first time that this has been done, to consider the current state of affairs and to raise questions about prospects for the art market in the era of globalisation . The conference will take place on 6 and 7 November 2009 at the University of Lausanne.**

The art market is the interface between economics and art. It generates aesthetic quality (vouchsafed through market value) and participates in the formation of taste among collectors and institutions. For artists, it has become the key to recognition. In turn, the art market plays a not inconsiderable role in the global economy.

In Switzerland, trading in antiquities and art works took off in the 19th century thanks to the efforts of artists, art lovers and institutions. After many private art galleries opened in the early 20th century, the inter-war years brought a period of growth and professional development in the art market. After the Second World War, recovery was further boosted in the 1970s by the arrival of the two dominant auctioneers Christie's and Sotheby's and the foundation of trade fairs such as Art Basel. This has made Switzerland a major platform of the art business, and it now occupies the fourth or fifth position in the world, depending on the market segment. With heavy media coverage nowadays, the art market has become international, profiting from favourable conditions in the Swiss financial hub and from the country's political stability, neutrality, legislation and tax regime. It is also deeply dependent on the economic climate. In the era of globalisation and direct selling via the Internet, it is also worth reflecting on future prospects for the art market.

Per se interdisciplinary in approach, this conference will encourage perspectives from related disciplines. Speakers from the fields of history, the specific history of art and collections, sociology, economics and Swiss and international law will present recent research, thus providing an historical overview in response to the theme and taking stock of the art trade at the dawn of the 21st century.

### **Open Programme Open Abstracts**

#### **Venue and Registration**

Friday, 6 November 2009: University of Lausanne, Grange de Dorigny, foyer,  
CH-1015 Lausanne

Saturday, 7 November 2009: University of Lausanne, Anthropole, auditoire 2064,  
CH-1015 Lausanne

Attendance is free. **Please register by 23 October 2009** by post using the enclosed reply card, by e mail to [isea@sik-isea.ch](mailto:isea@sik-isea.ch), or by fax to +41 21 692 30 95.

#### **Contact for further details**

Sandra Ruff, Head of Communication, SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32, Postbox 1124,  
CH-8032 Zurich, T +41 44 388 51 36, [sandra.ruff@sik-isea.ch](mailto:sandra.ruff@sik-isea.ch), [www.sik-isea.ch](http://www.sik-isea.ch)