The Institute

The Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) was founded in 1951 and has become a centre of competence in art history and art technology with an international reputation. Our core activities are research, documentation, the dissemination of knowledge and the provision of services in the world of the fine arts. Our focus lies with the production of art in Switzerland from the Middle Ages until the present day.

SIK-ISEA is incorporated as a public-interest trust, and this non-profit status ensures our independence as a research establishment. SIK-ISEA is partly funded by notable contributions from the Swiss Confederation, the Canton and City of Zurich and other cantons. Other, equally important sources of revenue are competitively acquired research funds, the sale of services, and donations from foundations and benefactors. Financial and moral support is provided by the Association for the Promotion of SIK-ISEA.

The headquarters of our Institute are housed in Villa Bleuler in Zurich, built in 1885–1888 to a design by Alfred Friedrich Bluntschli. Since 1988 SIK-ISEA has maintained a branch in francophone Switzerland, our «Antenne romande» at the University of Lausanne. For Italian-speaking Switzerland, the Institute opened an «Ufficio di contatto» at the Museo Vincenzo Vela in Ligornetto in 2010.
Research

SIK-ISEA implements research projects in the fields of art history and art technology. The Institute is advised by an Academic Committee made up of experts from home and abroad. Our projects draw on a wide range of methods to investigate issues of systemic relevance to Swiss art that are also of interest to an international research community.

In the course of this research, SIK-ISEA engages in lively exchange with universities, colleges, museums and acknowledged experts. The Institute belongs to the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS) and the Swiss National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM Switzerland) and it is a founding member of the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA).

We offer a Fellowship Programme, funded by third parties, to underscore our partnership with higher education in the field of postgraduate studies. It is open to academics from home and abroad alike and enables researchers to spend varying periods of time at our Institute. SIK-ISEA is also committed to furthering the careers of young academics by offering trainee positions and fixed-term student employment.
Publications

SIK-ISEA prizes the quality of its publications, which include scholarly lexica, catalogues raisonnés and volumes of essays on the history and technology of art. The Institute publishes several series, long-established reference works for the discipline, including the «Catalogues Raisonnés of Swiss Artists», «Catalogues of Swiss Museums and Collections» and «KUNSTmaterial». The series «Museums of Switzerland» is tailored to the interests of an art-loving readership, while our «outlines» target a specialist audience by publishing conference proceedings in a practicable format.

Lectures, workshops, conferences

SIK-ISEA pursues the dissemination of knowledge among both scholars and the general public by organising a variety of events. The Institute provides a forum for specialist exchange and the discussion of research findings, open to both experienced experts and young academics.
The Swiss Art Archives

The Swiss Art Archives at SIK-ISEA are a specialist resource accessible to the public, offering a unique collection of letters, photographs, sketchbooks, diaries and records relating to works and exhibitions of Swiss art from the 19th to the 21st century. There are two sections: the Document Collection and the Fonds Collection. The Document Collection holds directories on more than 19,000 artists and institutions. The Fonds Collection contains more than 200 sets of personal papers relating to well-known Swiss artists.

The Swiss Art Archives publish artist data and documents about the art sector in Switzerland on the Web in the online lexicon SIKART and in what we call our “virtual showcases”. Regular guided tours and talks on selected documents provide deeper insights into the archive holdings. Our team are on hand to explain how to make best use of the archives. They retrieve documents for viewing, subject to advance request, and are available to answer questions about artists’ papers.

The Art Archives can be visited by prior arrangement
T +41 44 388 51 04
www.schweizerischeskunstarchiv.ch
SIK-ISEA online and SIKART Lexicon

SIK-ISEA uses its website to post details about current activities, services and projects. A key component is the free online lexicon SIKART, which is regularly updated by its academic editors. It contains data on more than 16,000 Swiss artists past and present, over 14,000 reproductions of works, some 1,500 in-depth biographical entries, videos and digitised documents. This resource is enriched by detailed information on exhibitions, awards and relevant literature. Combined search options and a link to SIK-ISEA’s digital catalogues raisonnés make SIKART an innovative, scientifically founded research vehicle for anyone with an interest in Swiss art. SIK-ISEA also manages european-art.net, the online network of European art and archive databases.

www.sik-isea.ch
www.sikart.ch
The Library

The SIK-ISEA Library is open to the public for reading on the premises. It specialises in the art and art history of Switzerland and contains some 116,000 volumes. The entire collection can be searched online via the integrated NEBIS catalogue or artlibraries.net.

Major sections include catalogues of exhibitions, collections and artists’ works from both Switzerland and elsewhere, international publications on art theory and technology, journals of art scholarship and auction catalogues. In 1999 the Library was able to expand its holdings on European art history when it acquired the “Prof. Eduard Hüttinger Library / Annette Bühler Donation”, which contains around 15,000 volumes.

Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 1.30 to 5.30 pm
T +41 44 388 51 60
Expertise and appraisals

SIK-ISEA performs inventories of Swiss art in public and private collections, either at its own initiative or under commission. This means that the Institute is engaged in taking comprehensive stock of historical and contemporary art production in Switzerland. As a centre of competence in the field of Swiss art, SIK-ISEA provides scientific expertise on paintings and prints by Swiss artists and valuations of single objects and collections for the purposes of insurance or probate. We also provide an appraisal service to ascertain damage or determine value impairments in compensation cases. SIK-ISEA offers consultancy for the evaluation of collectors’ holdings and the formulation of corporate or personal collection strategies.

Inventory: T +41 44 388 51 30
Expertise: T +41 44 388 51 40
Consultancy: T +41 44 388 51 51
Photography and image archives

Professional photography has always been one of our core skills. SIK-ISEA generates digital reproductions of paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, installations, art in the built environment, decorative art, artists’ studios and exhibitions, either in our studio or in situ. SIK-ISEA’s own image archives, accessible to the public, contain more than 100,000 analogue and digital photographs of works by Swiss artists across all eras and genres. Our team can assist with searches in this unique collection of photographs, which is available for the purposes of publication or study.

The image archives can be visited by prior arrangement
Photography: T +41 44 388 51 75
Image archives: T +41 44 388 51 07
Restoration, technological examination and material analysis

Our conservation and restoration workshop provides expert examination and treatment for paintings, sculptures and contemporary art works made from modern materials. The natural sciences laboratory conducts material analysis to support not only our own research, but also external assessments and restoration projects. Other services include certifying the condition of works prior to transportation for exhibition or sale and advising on care and maintenance for entire collections. The clients for our technological services range from public museums and cantonal agencies for the preservation of monuments to galleries and private individuals.

Depending on the nature of the enquiry, the workshop and laboratory at SIK-ISEA can draw on the following analytical techniques: Stereomicroscopy, examination in ultraviolet light, infrared reflectography, X-ray radiography, micro X-ray fluorescence, infrared microspectrometry, polarised light microscopy, direct temperature resolved mass spectrometry, gas chromatography mass spectrometry, Raman spectroscopy, preparation and light microscopic evaluation of paint cross sections, scanning electron microscopy combined with energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy, and high performance liquid chromatography.

T +41 44 388 51 51 (calls are forwarded)
Become a member

By joining the Association for the Promotion of SIK-ISEA you will be supporting the projects and objectives pursued by this Institute – a unique Swiss institution. Besides, membership will give you valuable opportunities to join with other art lovers in making new discoveries and helping to preserve Switzerland’s cultural heritage. During talks and guided tours, you will meet the Institute staff and gain personal insights into art and science.

Your membership benefits:

Friend of SIK-ISEA (CHF 100, Junior CHF 50)
- invitations to talks, symposia and guided tours
- an invitation to the General Assembly and the presentation of a current research project
- our informative newsletter several times a year
- a detailed Annual Report describing all the scientific and cultural activities at the Institute

Sponsor of SIK-ISEA (CHF 250)
In addition to the above benefits:
- an annual book published by SIK-ISEA
- an invitation to the end-of-year reception with a keynote address

Benefactor of SIK-ISEA
Individuals (CHF 1000)
Companies (from CHF 1000)
In addition to all the above benefits:
- visits to private collections and exhibitions
- exclusive cultural tours abroad

For other options, such as becoming a Patron, please contact us:
T +41 44 388 51 32

I wish to join the Association

Please tick:
☐ as a Junior Friend (under 25) CHF 50
☐ as a Friend CHF 100
☐ as a Sponsor CHF 250
☐ as a Benefactor
☐ individual CHF 1000
☐ company (from CHF 1000)

Surname

Forename

Year of birth (Juniors only)

Company

Contact

No., street

Town, postcode

Telephone

Email

Preferred language for correspondence / documents
☐ German ☐ French ☐ English

Place, date

Signature

For more details, to register online or to make someone a gift of membership: www.sik-isea.ch/membership