



History

The Generali Foundation was set up in 1988 as the nonprofit art association of the Generali Group Austria. Its purpose is to support contemporary visual art. Initially installed in a small exhibition space in central Vienna, it moved in 1995 to an early-twentieth-century ensemble, the Habighof, a former millinery factory, where the architects Christian Jabornegg and András Pálffy built the Foundation's new home, including an exhibition space, underground storage facilities, Study Center, and administrative offices.

Sabine Breitwieser, the Foundation's founding director, led the institution from 1988 to 2007, succeeded in 2008 by Sabine Folie, who headed the institution until March 2014. In 2008–2009, in an effort to cut costs, the BAWAG Foundation was invited to share the building on Wiedner Hauptstraße for its art projects. From 2010 to 2014, the Generali Foundation has once again had exclusive use of the premises. In the spring of 2014, the Generali Foundation was given on permanent loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg. The cooperation agreement stipulates that the Museum der Moderne will present works from the collection on an ongoing basis in order to introduce wider audiences to the Generali Foundation's collection. The location in Vienna will be shut down at the end of 2014.

The institution, with all its facilities and activities, is funded from private sources. The members of the Generali Foundation are Generali Holding Vienna AG, Generali Versicherung AG, Generali Rückversicherung AG, BAWAG PSK, Europäische Reiseversicherung, and the Austrian branch of Generali Real Estate S.p.A.

Contemporary architecture in a historic setting

The Generali Foundation's home, which was inaugurated in 1995, has a total floor space of 2,000 sq m (ca. 22,000 sq ft). It is located on premises formerly occupied by Habig Milliners in central Vienna, near other major art institutions such as the MuseumsQuartier, the Secession, and the Albertina. In the substantial historic core, the architects have created a modern building that meets the aesthetic as well as technical challenges of a contemporary exhibition and museum operation. The building was designed by Christian Jabornegg and András Pálffy in collaboration with Georg Schönfeld; the interior architecture is the work of Jabornegg and Pálffy alone.

The exhibition space features unobtrusive allusions to postmodern eclecticism by working with asymmetries and reflecting the white cube while also offering reminders of the original industrial architecture. A dynamic resonance builds between the space and the Generali Foundation's exhibition program, which emphasizes Conceptual art. The asymmetrical floor plan and elements dominating the space such as the thirty-meter (hundred-foot) concrete wall define the exhibition display and pose a productive challenge to the work of the curators and the exhibition design.

The primary architectural intervention consists of a linear constructive element that helps distribute new static loads, subdivides the exhibition floor into differently lighted areas dedicated to various purposes, and masks undesirably cramped corners. All structurally necessary new elements have been realized in sharply edged concrete volumes; the irregular surfaces of the original building are covered with plaster. Light enters through the roof, the only exterior surface of the building, which is embedded in a medium-scale commercial compound typical of the area.

Divided into three areas, the exhibition space with a total space of 900 sq m (9,700 sq ft) is located on a single ground-level floor and illuminated by daylight and artificial lighting. The underground facilities include a generous depot for the collection and the workshops. The upper floors house the administrative offices and the publicly accessible Study Center with our library and media library.

Total floor space, Generali Foundation 2,000 sq m / 21,500 sq ft

Exhibition space (ground floor) 900 sq m / 9,700 sq ft

Administration and Study Center (1st floor) 160 sq m / 1,700 sq ft

Administration (5th floor) 180 sq m / 1,900 sq ft

Underground storage, workshops (basement) 760 sq m / 8,200 sq ft

The Generali Foundation is the art association of the Generali Group, based in Vienna; its purpose is the support and promotion of contemporary art. Members are the Generali Holding Vienna AG, the Generali Versicherung AG, the Generali Rückversicherung AG, the BAWAG PSK, the Europäische Reiseversicherung, and the Generali Real Estate S.p.A., Branch Austria.