

Press release

and invitation to the opening of the exhibition

May 19, 2014

A joint project by the Salzburg Foundation and the Collegiate Church

"Art and the Church" – a new Salzburg Art Project

Exhibition premiere in Salzburg

"Susan Swartz – A Personal Path"

Opening: May 29, 2014, 5 pm.

Duration: May 30 to July 4, 2014

Kollegienkirche, Universitätsplatz, Salzburg

The artist is present

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

For a period of 10 years the Salzburg Art Project dedicated itself successfully to presenting art in the public space across the city of Salzburg. Together with the Foundation for Art and Culture Bonn and the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy of Salzburg, the Salzburg Foundation is now launching a new project to stage its premier exhibition in Salzburg's Collegiate Church.

For the first time, the American artist Susan Swartz has been invited to exhibit a selection of her works in Austria, in the city of Salzburg. Entitled a "A Personal Path", this show marks a further collaboration between "art and the Church" following their joint presentation of works by Stephan Balkenhol (Kapitelplatz) and Christian Boltanski (Salzburg Cathedral) under the aegis of the Salzburg Art Project.

"Many artists have embarked and are embarking on the path to the Church through the agency of art, and regardless of whether they are designing new windows, creating installations or murals, in essence these artists are always endeavouring to fuse the body, mind and soul - be they a Matthias Grünewald, a Neo Rauch, a Markus Lüpertz or a Gerhard Richter. In this sense, the works Susan Swartz is exhibiting in Salzburg represent a further contribution to the partnership between art and the Church at this hallowed site. Here in the Collegiate Church, the quest for answers – to the meaning of life, to the value of life and death and its impact upon our own self-development and our ability to come to terms with fate takes centre-stage. And the saints, the patron saints of the faculties of theology, jurisprudence, medicine and philosophy are the ideal interlocutors. Whether such consciousness-raising will take place on a purely rational or on a purely emotional level or as a synthesis of both remains one of the explosive aspects of this exhibition, which perceives itself consciously as both a challenge and a stimulus for debate", state Walter Smerling, Artistic Director, and Karl Gollegger,

President of the Salzburg Foundation, explaining the concept behind this renewed collaboration between art and the Church.

Built by the architect Johann Fischer von Erlach, the Collegiate Church marks a milestone in European Baroque architecture, and, following the completion of extensive renovation work in 2013, can now be experienced in its original splendour for the first time in 300 years. Entitled *A Personal Path*, and running from May 30 to July 4, 2014 in the newly renovated University Church, the exhibition describes the personal journey on which the artist has embarked. During the course of her career she has found in abstract painting her own artistic position. At its very core, her work is an illustration of her own personal experience, her beliefs and her interpretations. For Swartz the beauty of nature represents both a stimulus and a challenge which she endeavours to capture and portray. From her profound faith in God, the creator of the universe, nature and Man she draws strength for her daily work. "If God is the creator, all I have to do is interpret," she says.

Those prepared to dwell in contemplation before each work will be afforded a keen insight into the artist's innermost inspiration and experiences. *"The paintings by Swartz hanging in Salzburg's University Church do not illustrate a physical place. (...) In this former Benedictine Collegiate Church, with its clarity and references to Catholic iconography, Swartz's images forge a fascinating dialogue both to the building and to the meaning of a House of God. (...) In the University Church Susan Swartz reveals the true beauty of divine nature"*, explains the exhibition curator Dieter Ronte.

Susan Swartz sees herself both as an artist and an activist. Her decade long struggle with mercury poisoning and Lyme disease transformed her as an artist and as a citizen. She actively supports environmental campaigns that advocate for clean water and air. Swartz also promotes the vision and production of documentary films through Impact Partners, the film organization of which she is a founding member. Impact Partners seeks to shed light on social and environmental injustice; one of her films won an Oscar for the best documentary film, and three further films were Oscar nominated, of which one garnered an award at the Sundance Film Festival.

Accompanying the exhibition is a catalogue with a joint text by Walter Smerling, Artistic Director of the Salzburg Foundation and Karl Gollegger, President of the Salzburg Foundation, together with contributions from the exhibition curator Dieter Ronte and from the entrepreneur and member of the Foundation for Art and Culture Bonn, Jürgen Großmann [64 pages, 40 colour illustrations].

Scheduled to open on Thursday, May 29, 2014, at 5 pm, in the presence of the artist, the exhibition is being mounted in the Salzburg Collegiate Church, to which you are cordially invited.

We great appreciate your coverage of the exhibition.

With kindest regards,

Ulrike Godler

Press photos

Press photos can be freely accessed and downloaded from www.salzburgfoundation.at under "Press". Please take note that publication is only permitted free of charge in conjunction with coverage of the exhibition.

Credits

- (1) A Personal Path (2014), Courtesy of Susan Swartz Studio
- (2) Creation 4 (2014), Courtesy of Susan Swartz Studio
- (3) Emerald Spirit (2013), Courtesy of Susan Swartz Studio
- (4) Peace (2012), Courtesy of Susan Swartz Studio
- (5) Susan Swartz in her studio, Courtesy of Susan Swartz Studio, photo: Mark Maziarz

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