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*We are pleased to present an interview with Director of the Liechtenstein National Gallery Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Dr. Malsch Friedemann*

*Dr. Friedmann Malsch, has been cooperating with Russia for more than 15 years in organizing and conducting exhibitions, preparing publications. He is actively engaged in educational and publishing activities. In 2018, with the support of the Liechtenstein Museum, a translation of the book dedicated to the Black Square painting by Kazimir Malevich was released. At the presentation, Friedman Malsch called this book a publication that turns the prevailing ideas about the icon of Suprematism. The architecture of the new building of the Liechtenstein State Museum in Vaduz, which opened in 2000, interprets in its own way the plastic idea of Suprematism, the idea of a black square. The creation of the Swiss architects Meinrad Morger, Heinrich Degelo and Christian Kerez with a very complex and extensive internal infrastructure from the outside is a combination of two laconic volumes: a white and black cube.\* Material for the construction is taken from the vicinity of the city.*

*We thank Dr., Professor Alexander Lavrentiev for professional support and assistance in arranging the interview with Dr. Malsch Friedemann*

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\* The Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein building, a black cuboid opened in 2000, was designed by the three architects mentioned. The white exhibition building of the Hilti Art Foundation by Morger + Dettli Architects was added to the Kunstmuseum in 2015 (note Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein).

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Director of the Liechtenstein National Gallery  
Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Dr. Malsch Friedemann's  
Interview with the Editor-in-chef  
of the Burganov House. Space of Culture Journal

**Maria A. Burganova:** *Dr. Malsch, The question of a new format of museums has constantly been raised since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. We see that museums are moving forward to new content due to the construction of new buildings, which in itself is very important. Today museums are developing not only as an institution preserving the heritage.*

*What are the new goals and objectives of a new museum institution?*

**Malsch Friedemann:** For a newly built/established (publicly financed) museum there is a range of primary goals to give answers to. Which task is given by the owners (state, city etc.), i. e. collection, education, representational

aspects? To what extent the museum's topics correspond to which segments of possible publics? To what extent the museum has to finance itself?

The answers to those questions define the framework of possibilities the new museum can act in and develop its programs. Today a new museum has to develop a sharp profile in order to be able to address any kind of public, since it usually has to compete with already well established museums of the same "genre". The times that museums might be encyclopedic within their content fields are gone, there is a highly developed competition, if not to say: concurrence, in order to attract public attention (which is not equal to the amount of entries!).

**M.B.:** *To what extent does a museum define contemporary cultural space?*

**M.F.:** I am not sure if I understand well this question. Seen from a museum of modern and contemporary art contemporaneity comes somehow by its nature. The question may concern more the educational activities, which always have to go along with the specificities of the philosophy of each single museum.

**M.B.:** *What is the new image of a museum: is it a safe with treasures, an educational class or is it a place for rest and entertainment?*

**M.F.:** Something of all of these aspects, depending on the mix of percentage of each of them. I would also add a very old-fashioned function, which today sees a slight



*Dr. Malsch Friedemann, Director of the Liechtenstein National Gallery Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein*



*Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein*

renaissance: the museum is also a place of research and reflection. Reconstructing the famous Worker's Club of Alexander Rodchenko within the museum space we did not intend to create another museum remake of this exhibit of the Paris 1925 L'exposition internationale des Arts Décoratifs et industriels modernes (The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts). Our intention was to bring to life Rodchenko's idea of a universal space for different types of activity, create a space for meetings for the local community and museum visitors.

**M.B.:** *In Europe, migration processes are strong. People with their own cultural platforms arrive.*

*To what extent is a museum a space without borders, and how does this affect modern museum policy?*

**M.F.:** Again: I only can answer from the point of view of a museum of modern and contemporary art. In this perspective the museum reflects always also the realities of the society the museum is part of. Therefore it has to be aware of the social complexity and reflect on this in a constructive way. I am convinced that a museum for modern and contemporary art has to be a platform for all parties within a society, but a platform which gives freedom to expression according to the Code of Ethics by ICOM.

**M.B.:** *What responsibility do the state and society bear before a museum?*

*To what extent is a museum responsible to society and the state?*

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**M.F.:** State and society have the responsibility to guarantee the freedom of the museum within its competence, i. e. content, reflection and research. Therefore they have to guarantee also the financial possibilities for the fulfillment of the museum's tasks.

The museum on its side has the responsibility to respond to the intellectual needs of the society and to offer innovative thinking and experimental practices in order to contribute to a good further development of both, state and society.

**M.B.:** *The dialogue between the viewer and the work of art is taken to a new level. It is facilitated not only by captions for exhibits but also by informative publications. You are actively working in this field. What is the role of publications in modern museum activities? Who are they for, who is their reader?*

**M.F.:** In today's reality a lot of publications are means to (re-)finance the museum's activities. Many of them are purely commercial and address the broader public. This is not a bad thing per se, but the museums should not stop here. If we still understand the museum as a place of social experimentation and at the same time a place of reflection and research, publications should also be done in these fields. Those publications address specific and specialized publics. It is a good idea to dedicate publications specially to single masterpieces or some culturally important objects. Some of our special publications dedicated to works of the Russian avant-garde have the unified serial layout which helps to form a kind of a library. Concentration on one masterpiece helps to show the wide cultural context on one side and deep involvement into the intentions of the artist on the other. That was the reason for the museum to publish and promote the research of Irina Vakar, an art historian from the Tretyakov Gallery on the "Black Square" by Kazimir Malevich.

**M.B.:** *Your Russian projects produce a huge impression. Could you say what the impetus for their appearance was, and what the possibilities for their development are?*

**M.F.:** With the end of the Cold War Europe got a new geographical and geopolitical shape. The Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein as a new museum for modern and contemporary art opted from its beginnings to have whole Europe in view. It was somehow logic to approach Russia as South-East Europe in order to establish in the museum the possibility to get the full picture of what Europe actually is and has been in the early 20th Century. Exhibitions involving Russian material, carefully curated, helped to demonstrate universal topics of art history of the 20s century: origin of the artistic tendencies, visual creative principles, international interrelations.