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PRESS RELEASE

Thomas Pauli-Gabi to become the new Director of the Bernisches Historisches Museum

On 1 May 2020, Dr Thomas Pauli-Gabi will take over as Director of the Bernisches Historisches Museum. The 53-year-old is succeeding Dr Jakob Messerli. Pauli-Gabi was Director of the Museum Aargau from 2008 to 2013 and has led the Culture Division of the Canton of Aargau for six years.

Pauli-Gabi was chosen in a multi-stage selection process that was conducted by a committee under the leadership of Luc Mentha, President of the foundation council of the Bernisches Historisches Museum, with external support. Pauli-Gabi impressed the selection committee and the foundation council with his thoughtful personality, his integrative and motivating leadership ability, his wide-ranging experience – as Director of the Museum Aargau and Head of the Culture Division of the Canton of Aargau – and his outstanding performance and track record in his previous roles. “Thomas Pauli-Gabi won us over with his conceptual vision for a more contemporary development of the Bernisches Historisches Museum. With his breadth of experience and his open and thoughtful approach, he will generate new momentum and take the museum forward,” says Luc Mentha. “He aims to work with the other cultural institutions to shape the innovative idea of the museum district.”

After many successful years as head of cultural affairs at the cantonal level, Pauli-Gabi is now returning to the entrepreneurial leadership of one of Switzerland’s most important cultural and historical museums, a site for creative engagement and the exploration of questions relevant to our place in time and history. “I am highly motivated to lead this important museum towards a successful future in collaboration with the team and the foundation council. For me, this means making the historical wealth of experience available to the general public in the here and now,” says Pauli-Gabi.

As both a specialist and a cultural manager, the future Director of the Bernisches Historisches Museum possesses in-depth historical and archaeological knowledge, acquired during his studies of pre- and early history, classical archaeology and ancient history at the University of Bern and his subsequent Master’s degree in Cultural Management at the University of Basel. He is a sought-after speaker in the field of museum studies at both the national and international level. On 1 May 2020, Pauli-Gabi will take over from Messerli, who has successfully led the Bernisches Historisches Museum for the past 10 years.

Professional success
Pauli-Gabi developed a ground-breaking museum concept with the Vindonissa Legionnaires’ Path, created in Windisch in 2009 to explore Roman history and archaeology in a playful and vivid way. In 2011, the Vindonissa Legionnaires’ Path received the Milestone award, Switzerland’s most important tourism prize, as an outstanding cultural mediation project. Over the course of 10 years, the Legionnaires’ Path has developed into a cultural highlight of the Aargau region, with 40,000 visitors per year from all over Switzerland.

As Director of the Museum Aargau from 2008 to 2013, Pauli-Gabi managed the organisational restructuring of the museum along with the Lenzburg and Hallwyl castles to form the Museum Aargau umbrella brand, as well as strategic reorientation under the motto “Experience history
where it happened”. Other areas of focus for Pauli-Gabi were the introduction of a broad-based participative volunteer programme and the integration of Wildegg Castle into the Museum Aargau. Under his leadership, the Museum Aargau boosted its public profile with innovative annual programmes and proactive communication, which to this day is reflected in the current visitor numbers of around 280,000 per year.

Since 2013, Pauli-Gabi has been Head of the Culture Division of the Canton of Aargau, responsible for promoting, fostering and mediating culture throughout the canton, while managing a unit of 400 employees and a budget of CHF 55 million. He has successfully led various major projects, such as the development and implementation of the cantonal culture concept. Pauli-Gabi fulfilled his demanding responsibilities in a period when the Canton of Aargau faced restrictive general financial conditions that also affected the cultural sector.

Information
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