

Editorial

HANS-JÖRG HEUSSER, Managing Director



The future has begun for SIK-ISEA! The process of transforming ourselves into an Institute for Advanced Study, which has kept us busy since 2005, is now almost complete. My own mission as Managing Director is drawing to a close, as I shall be stepping down on grounds of age. I am delighted that Dr Roger Fayet has been elected as the new Managing Director, for now there is a successor ready to replace me on 1 September 2010.

2009 was another successful year for SIK-ISEA. The Institute came through the economic crisis largely unscathed, and we were able to achieve the year's key objectives in full. Our schedule for becoming an Institute for Advanced Study is on track, and the Institute's numerous research projects, including the tremendous enterprise "Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918). *Catalogue Raisonné* of Paintings", have continued without suffering crisis damage. In addition to this, new projects have been planned or, indeed, already initiated. Project fundraising has also been extremely successful, in the light of the fiercer competition that the crisis has unleashed. Once again, the Institute has managed to balance the annual financial statements.

By becoming an Institute for Advanced Study, SIK-ISEA has, from the outset, sought its repositioning within the Swiss higher education landscape. The decisive new feature that makes SIK-ISEA an Institute for Advanced Study is the Research Promotion Programme. In its present form, which is still experimental, it has brought three professors, three assistants and six doctoral students to the Institute to conduct research. During their projects, all of which have been designed to last three years, they will work closely with SIK-ISEA's own research team on major studies related to our focal themes: the "Art Sector" (or *Kunstbetrieb*),

“Art History” and “Art Technology”. In the reporting year, Professor Oskar Bächtli and Professor Beat Wyss worked with us as professorial fellows, along with their assistants and doctoral fellows, and in 2010 we will be joined by a third professor, the natural scientist Jaap Boon, who works for the Institute for Atomic and Molecular Physics (AMOLF) in Amsterdam. We can already say that the research conducted at our Institute and our cooperation with universities have been significantly strengthened by the work our professorial fellows are doing and the focus projects they are carrying out. A new, long-term “Convention” has been signed with the University of Lausanne (UNIL), the home of our *Antenne romande*, our satellite in French-speaking Switzerland. Promising negotiations on a similar agreement have been conducted during the reporting year with the University of Zurich – our second “domicile university” – involving both the President’s Office and the management of the Institute of Art History. Lively cooperation has evolved with the professors at Zurich, resulting in a number of joint events. SIK-ISEA is integrating quickly and successfully into the higher education system in Switzerland without jeopardising its autonomy as an independent institution.

For many years, SIK-ISEA has been investing hard work in international networking. One highly visible indication of this was my election in 1998 as Founding President of the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA). Becoming an Institute for Advanced Study has drawn us into a fresh dimension of international networking and into cross-border research cooperation. All the Institute’s projects continue, nevertheless, to engage with the history of art in Switzerland and with this country’s art business and artistic assets. At the same time, however, our research is now increasingly delving into issues that are likewise of international interest.

Our Institute’s success during 2009 has been a team success; in fact, that is how things have always been at SIK-ISEA. In the reporting year, however, this is all the more noteworthy, because it was important to integrate our academic guests into the very specific culture underlying SIK-ISEA operations. We also owe it to our guest researchers, of course, if they have made this their home so quickly and so effectively, because they have adapted fully to their new environment. But I would also like to thank my colleagues in management and all the staff at the Institute for seeking and finding cooperation with our guest researchers in such an exemplary manner.

At the end of this year, I am moved more than ever to extend my warmest thanks to the Board of Trustees, the Academic Committee, the Finance Committee and the Board of the Association for the Promotion of SIK-ISEA. It was my good fortune, during the many years I have held office, to work together with all these bodies in an amicable spirit. I regard this as a rare privilege, for which I am most grateful. I extend a very special thank-you to the President of our Board of Trustees, Anne Keller Dubach, who has also performed an outstanding and committed service on behalf of SIK-ISEA as chair of the committee set up to identify my successor.

Last but not least, I thank our great benefactor, Annette Bühler, the kind guardian angel who has accompanied me and the Institute throughout all my years as Managing Director with friendship and support. My sincere gratitude also goes to all the foundations, companies and private individuals who have enabled us to pursue our work unabated in the difficult climate of 2009: they are listed by name in the Acknowledgements in this year’s Annual Report.