

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

One of Zaha Hadid's Last Projects Is Complete

The late architect designed the exhibition space for a Kurt Schwitters show at Galerie Gmurzynska in Zurich

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Works by Schwitters hang on curved walls.

Kurt Schwitters may not be as recognizable as other key Dada figures—such as Marcel Duchamp, Hans Arp, or Max Ernst—but his contribution to the artistic movement (which was born in Zurich in 1916 by a group of creatives as a way to protest the atrocities of World War I through art, performance, and writing) was nevertheless substantial. His work has influenced such icons as David Bowie, Damien Hirst, Ed Ruscha, Robert Rauschenberg, and the late architect [Zaha Hadid](#), whose firm is responsible for the exhibition design for a current Schwitters survey at Galerie Gmurzynska in [Zurich](#). On view through September 30, “Kurt Schwitters: Merz” features about 70 sculptures, paintings, reliefs, and collages from the 1920s to 1945, from an early collaged self-portrait to a late-career abstract relief. The retrospective marks the centennial of Dada in an important way: The building it’s hosted in was the site of Galerie Dada, where the first Dada exhibition was held 100 years ago.



A Zaha Hadid chandelier crowns the gallery.

Schwitters's works are set against the swooping curves designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, which Galerie Gmurzynska tapped to do the project a year and a half ago. "The idea was to show classic Schwitters with a very avant-garde design by Zaha Hadid," explains Mathias Rastorfer, the CEO and owner of Galerie Gmurzynska. "Zaha was majorly influenced by Schwitters's Merzbau, which was a famous architectural structure that got destroyed during the Second World War."



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Although the exhibition design was incomplete at the time of her death, Hadid did give the gallery—and Patrik Schumacher, a partner at Zaha Hadid Architects who has been with the firm since he was a student—a clear picture of the concept. "We brainstormed the whole idea together with Zaha when she was still alive," said Schumacher. "We're taking a lot of our preexisting furniture and objects, as well as a series of Schwitters's works, and creating a constellation or swarm formation. Then we're binding it together with this connective tissue of the newly fabricated white elements." *Through September 30; gmurzynska.com*