

Passing of Dr. Roland Scotti (1957–2025), distinguished art historian and curator

Former Director of the Kirchner Museum Davos and the Heinrich Gebert Kulturstiftung Appenzell, and free Author. His legacy continues to inspire.

BERLIN, GERMANY, September 12, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The art world mourns the passing of Dr. Roland Scotti (1957–2025), a leading art historian, curator, and author. Scotti served as Director of the Kirchner Museum Davos (1997–2006) and the Heinrich Gebert Kulturstiftung Appenzell (2006–2022). He was widely recognized for his publications on Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Hans Arp, and for curating nearly 200 exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, most recently presenting contemporary artists such as Nesa Gschwend, Miriam Cahn, Andrea Ostermeyer, Markus Weggenmann, and Hanna Roeckle.



Dr. Roland Scotti 2017 Photo: Carmen Wueest, Appenzell

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Roland Scotti combined precise scholarship with a deep joy in art. His legacy remains an open field for discovery, inspiring future dialogue between institutions, artists, and audiences.”

Jana Noritsch

Scotti studied art history, East Asian art history, and Romance studies at Heidelberg University (M.A. 1985, Ph.D. 1991). Born in Ludwigshafen and later a French citizen, he pursued from the mid-1980s onward a multifaceted career as curator, television editor, writer, and co-founder of art spaces.

He held institutional positions at the Mannheimer Kunstverein (1984–87), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen (1986–91), and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1994–96). He directed the Kirchner Museum Davos (1997–2006) and from 2006 to 2022 the Heinrich Gebert Kulturstiftung Appenzell (Kunstmuseum / Kunsthalle

Appenzell). Scotti also taught at the University of Zurich and served on the board of the Fondazione Arp, Locarno.

His critical voice extended to questions of art mediation, institutional practice, and the reception of expressive tendencies in Switzerland.

In his pastiche "Abgerissene Geschichten" (Broken Narratives: [On the Reception of Expressive Tendencies in Switzerland](#), Kettler 2023), he examined the marginal position of expressive art in Switzerland, attributing it to cultural exceptionalism, conservative institutions, artists' self-perceptions, and geographical peripheries. He called for a renewed evaluation of such art today.



Roland Scotti 2020 Opening Reception Filmstill
AppencellNow, Credit: Thomas Karrer

Over four decades, he combined scholarly rigor with curatorial practice. His more than 200 publications spanned art mediation, the classical avant-garde, photography, and contemporary art. Recent projects included the essay "Eigene Blicke, versuchsweise" (A Gaze of Our Own, 2024) and the forthcoming volume "Elsa, Erna & Ernst – Leerstellen" (Küsnacht, 2025).

In "On the Understanding of Art. A Letter" (2025, forthcoming) Scotti critiques the fetish of singularity in current discourse while remaining focused on the artwork. He transforms this tension into a methodological, post-hermeneutical dialectic of work, context, and reception:

"For me art is one of the most beautiful means of creating community—because in our disputes over what art actually is, we can argue with such openness and depth. Dispute as a source of warming friction [...] until we recognize that understanding art presupposes understanding others, the foreign, the unfamiliar. So I know that art is essential—for understanding myself and for understanding others."

He maintained a long-standing collaboration with Steidl Verlag, resulting in publications such as "Wasser / Farbe – Colour / Water" (2010), "Hans Arp – Skizzenbücher" (2015), and the exhibition "Magic on White Paper. Steidl Book Culture" (Kunstmuseum Appenzell, 2021).

Dr. Roland Scotti's passing leaves a profound void. His contributions to art history and curatorial practice will continue to resonate. A detailed record of his exhibitions and publications is available at www.rolandscotti.com

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