

Media Release, October 15, 2019

## Special exhibition in the Basel Historical Museum – Barfüsserkirche **Übermensch – Friedrich Nietzsche and his Afterlife**

To mark Nietzsche's 175<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his appointment to Basel University, the Basel Historical Museum presents many facets of Friedrich Nietzsche in a special exhibition: as a respected professor, as a travelling thinker, as a lover and a sufferer. The exhibition requires no prior knowledge and investigates the following questions: who was Friedrich Nietzsche? A war-glorifying intellectual precursor of the Nazis, a misogynist, a madman? Or was he not rather an anti-anti-Semite, a committed European and a champion of individualism and self-fulfillment, from whom we have a lot to learn about the challenges of the present? The exhibition runs from October 16, 2019 to March 22, 2020 in the Barfüsserkirche.

The cosmos that was Friedrich Nietzsche is brought to life by means of some 75 exhibits, light boxes with selected quotes, audio and video stations, as well as animations and film extracts. The exhibition is divided up into three areas: 'Everyday Life', 'Conceptual Life', and 'Afterlives'.

In the **'Everyday Life'** original letters tell the story of the exceptional student, Friedrich Nietzsche. Who was this man who already became a professor in Basel aged 24? In his private life, the passionate love triangle with Lou von Salomé and Paul Rée reached a high point. After health problems forced Nietzsche to give up his professorship, he devoted himself entirely to writing philosophy.

In the **'Conceptual Life'** key Nietzschean terms are explained in an easy-to-understand way. These include 'Will to Power', the 'Eternal Return' and the 'Overman' [Übermensch]. Framed by rare first editions from the Nietzsche House in Sils Maria, video stations feature prominent experts offering insight into well-known works. In a few words, they elucidate the contents, giving guidance on the relevance of Nietzsche for present-day issues.

The **'Afterlives'** begins with Nietzsche's complete collapse in Turin in 1889. The famous 'Letter of insanity' to Jacob Burckhardt is presented, as are the moving scribbles of the mentally deranged man from the period he spent on a psychiatric ward, and a newly found death mask of Nietzsche, presented here for the first time. The epoch-making effects of his work were sensed by Nietzsche, though he no longer experienced it himself. Initiated by the activities of the Weimar Nietzsche Archive, which was run by his sister Elisabeth, an ever-greater reception of his thinking developed throughout Europe from around 1900 onwards that has lasted to the present day. Besides that, the exhibition contains the misuse of his writings for propaganda purposes in the First and Second World Wars, for example, as well as the usage of Nietzsche as an advertising icon. The show is rounded off with a cinema section playing countless examples of Nietzsche quotes found in Hollywood films.

The exhibition is supported with high-quality objects made available by numerous loaners from Switzerland and abroad. Many of the sensitive originals from Basel University Library, the City Archive of Basel City, and the German Literature Archive in Marbach are exhibited here in public for the first time in decades.

With the friendly support of Dr. Peter Buser, Asunción.

Lectures in conjunction with the exhibition:

19.11.2019 6 pm: Nietzsche's Superhuman and the Consequences, Prof. Dr. Katharina Grätz, Freiburg i. Breisgau

21.01.2020 6 pm: What concern of ours is it that Herr Nietzsche became well again? Health as a philosophical metaphor, PD Dr. Sebastian Kaufmann, Freiburg i. Breisgau

18.02.2020 6 pm: Like Petrels before the Weather Disaster –Karl Jaspers on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, JProf. Dr. Philipp Schwab, Freiburg i. Breisgau

17.03.2020 6 pm: Nietzsche in Ore. The Philosopher and his Philosophy Reflected in Medals, Prof. Dr. Urs Sommer, Freiburg i. Breisgau

The lectures are held in German.

Basel Historical Museum – Barfüsserkirche

Barfüsserplatz 7, 4051 Basel

Tues – Sun 10am – 5 pm

[hmb.ch](http://hmb.ch)

**For photos and additional information on the exhibition:**

[www.hmb.ch/service/presse](http://www.hmb.ch/service/presse)

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