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Alistair Hudson appointed Artistic-Scientific Chairman of the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

Mayor Dr. Frank Mentrup: “Alistair Hudson is the right person to set the future course for ZKM”

State Secretary Petra Olschowski: “We are impressed by his comprehensive view of art, science and technology as drivers of social innovation and participation”

On 1 April 2023, Alistair Hudson will assume the position of Artistic-Scientific Chairman of the ZKM | Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. The decision was announced on Monday by the Foundation Board. The 53-year-old Briton will succeed Prof. Peter Weibel, who has headed the ZKM since 1999. Besides being in charge of scientific and artistic management, the Chairman is responsible for the conceptual development and strategic course of the Foundation.

Dr. Frank Mentrup, Mayor of Karlsruhe and Chairman of the Foundation Board, on Monday in Karlsruhe: “In these times, which are characterised by global crises accompanied by dramatic social and technological upheaval, we need new concepts and visions for the future. I am convinced that Alistair Hudson is the right person to set the future course for ZKM. He understands art as a tool for social development and as the starting point for social change. His goal is to continue ZKM’s growth as a socially relevant and internationally important institution. At



the same time, he wants to open the centre to all of urban society.” Dr. Mentrup was head of the search commission established by the Board.

Petra Olschowski, Member of the State Parliament and State Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts: “Alistair Hudson is an internationally recognised curator and an experienced museum director. We are impressed by his in-depth expertise in contemporary and digital art, his sensitivity to artistic and social developments, and his comprehensive view of art, science and technology as drivers of social innovation and participation. I am confident that Alistair Hudson, with his many years of leadership experience and skill at bringing people together, will be able to enhance the existing capabilities of ZKM in all of these areas and connect everything to form a whole.”

Alistair Hudson: “It is a real honour to be able to take on this role at ZKM, which has now established itself as one of the principle cultural institutions in the world right now. Most of all, I see it as one of the most relevant centres of the arts and sciences, carving out new horizons as the world changes with exponential speed. It is this which excites me, to continue the work creating a place to convene new thinking, a gravitational centre of ethical propositions, that could have real impact on the trajectory of human and non-human activity in the coming century.

I see a future for ZKM continuing to expand as a key voice in an international conversation about where we go next as a society, in an age of exponential change and how we calibrate the ethics and aesthetics of a future that we do not know yet. This will involve opening up the institution more and more to new networks, communities, partnerships and expertise. ZKM will work locally for communities of the region and internationally, as part of a solutions-focussed agenda for the planet.”

About Alistair Hudson

Alistair Hudson is a curator and museum director with broad-ranging international experience. He combines contemporary curatorial expertise with a profound knowledge of media arts. Since 2018 he has served as director of two museums

in Manchester: the Manchester Art Gallery and the Whitworth. The latter is the museum of the University of Manchester, with collections in art and cultural history encompassing all genres.

Alistair Hudson's concept of a *useful museum* envisions artistic institutions and cultural institutions as centres of social responsibility and transformation. He believes that they should be run artistically, as works in progress in their own right. Together with the artist Tania Bruguera he heads the Asociación de Arte Útil, a growing international network which collaborates with other institutions such as the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and FRAC Poitou-Charentes.

Hudson is a member of many panels. For example, he is on the jury for the Turner Prize and a member of the selection committee for the British pavilion of the Venice Biennale 2021.

In 1994, after completing his studies in art history, he went to work for the prestigious Anthony d'Offay Gallery in London. From 2000 he served as curator for the Government Art Collection, where he gained a deep understanding of the role of public collections. From 2004 he was vice director of Grizedale Arts, an art institution in north-west England's Lake District, and from 2014 he served as director of the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, which has an outstanding collection reaching from the 19th century to the present. His activities generated considerable public attention for both institutions.

Last year, a controversy arose as the result of an exhibition by the British research agency Forensic Architecture (London). Presented by Alistair Hudson in the Whitworth and titled *Cloud Studies*, it called attention to the effects of state violence on ecological systems around the world, including locations in Beirut, Louisiana and Palestine. The presentation had been coproduced on behalf of ZKM for the exhibition *Critical Zones. The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth*, which ran from May 2020 to January 2022 in Karlsruhe. *Cloud Studies* was additionally presented in the UTS Gallery in Sydney, and currently it is being shown at the Berlin Academy of Arts as part of the Berlin Biennale. In Manchester the organisation UK Lawyers for Israel publically protested the presentation. With broad

support from cultural and community partners, he sought a dialogue with various parties and supplemented the controversial exhibition with texts from representatives of both positions.

Although Alistair Hudson's career has taken him to many stations in England, he sees himself as a true European. European culture and philosophy have shaped him profoundly, inspiring him to collaborate with many institutions in Europe and beyond. His methods have focused on the relationships between culture, society, politics and technical progress – originally in the context of Britain's industrial revolution and Empire, but today extending to interactions with our digitalised environment.