

The Architect's
Newspaper
[Johnston Marklee is
designing a new
flagship space for the
Swiss Institute in
Manhattan](#)

By Daniel Jonas Roche
June 30, 2026

The Architect's Newspaper

"Living Ecosystem"

Johnston Marklee is designing a new flagship space for the Swiss Institute in Manhattan

By Daniel Jonas Roche



The Swiss Institute team outside of 250 Bowery (Lee Mary Manning/Courtesy Swiss Institute)

SI

Swiss Institute

Contemporary Art

38 St Marks Place
New York, NY 10003

+1 (212) 925-2035
info@swissinstitute.net

swissinstitute.net
Free and open to the public

The Swiss Institute (SI) has acquired the ground floor and lower level of 250 Bowery to host its new flagship. [Johnston Marklee](#) will [renovate](#) the [Lower Manhattan](#) building for the nonprofit arts organization.

Today, SI is located at 38 St. Mark's Place inside a former bank cleverly reworked by Selldorf Architects. The 4-story building packs a lot into its squat, 7,000-square-foot footprint: exhibition space, room for education and public programs, a library, and a rooftop.

250 Bowery affords the Swiss Institute more space with 11,000 square feet to host programs and exhibitions related to the visual and performing arts, design, and architecture. The relocation to 250 Bowery also coincides with SI's 40th anniversary.

"Owning our own space for the first time in the institution's impressive history allows us to secure the foundation for an even more generative future grounded in experimentation and support of artists," affirmed Swiss Institute director Stefanie Hessler.

The street-facing facade at 250 Bowery will be redesigned for greater visibility into the space, and a more "accessible public presence on the Bowery," SI said.

Inside, Johnston Marklee will design flexible and modular spaces, and make sure to creatively reuse existing mechanical systems and furnishings. Reclaimed materials, energy-efficient lighting systems, and reusable exhibition infrastructure will be deployed.

The goal is to transform 250 Bowery into a "living ecosystem" SI said for artists to work independently or together and to invite in the public.

"We have always admired SI as a place that is experimental, global, and rigorous while generous towards ideas and people, where artists come first," Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee said in a joint statement.

"Our vision for SI on the Bowery is as a kind of laboratory dedicated to artistic presentations, education, and community engagement," Johnston and Lee continued, "while fostering the sense of intimacy that defines SI for us."

The new location at 250 Bowery better positions Swiss Institute in proximity to other cultural institutions, such as the New Museum, recently added onto by OMA.

Construction work will begin this fall. Swiss Institute at 250 Bowery is expected to open to the public spring 2027.

Johnston Marklee has extensive experience working with Switzerland-related clients. Beyond previous teaching appointments at ETH Zurich, the firm is collaborating with Christ & Gantenbein on the expansion of the Kunstmuseum Basel. The offices also worked together on Swiss House Mission Street in San Francisco, with the goal of uniting the Consulate General, Swissnex, Switzerland Tourism, and Switzerland Global Enterprise with one shared front door.