

«Joggeli, Pitschi, Globi... Popular Swiss Picture Books»

02 November 2019 – 15 March 2020

## Tour of the exhibition

### INTRODUCTION

#### Swiss picture books 1900 – 1967

From 1900 on, Switzerland saw the rise of a series of astonishing illustrated books. They were marked by the art styles of the era and reflected current social as well as political issues. After the Second World War, Swiss picture books attained international renown, owing not only to the illustrations' artistic quality but also to the motifs' symbolic value. Towards the end of the 1960s, the contents of the books as well as the publishers' portfolios became more international. The books presented in the exhibition have been reissued repeatedly, enjoy popularity across generations, and are reminders of many a fond childhood memory.

### TOPIC TEXTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

#### 1. Picture books and Art Nouveau

Before 1900 illustrated Swiss children's books were practically unheard of, with Struwwelpeter and Max und Moritz, both published in Germany, being essentially the only picture books known to Swiss families. Across Europe, Art Nouveau became the driving force in picture book design. The first picture books as we know them today were published in Munich, Leipzig and Vienna, albeit still in the shape of expensive art books. The Bernese illustrator Ernst Kreidolf, too, published his first fairytale worlds in Germany. His pictures set new standards.

# Forum Schweizer Geschichte Schwyz.

## 1.1. Ernst Kreidolf (1863 Bern – 1956 Bern)

The pioneer of the illustrated art book trained as a lithographer in Constance before enrolling at the Munich Art Academy. For health reasons he moved to Partenkirchen in 1889. The family of one of his art pupils, Princess of Schaumburg-Lippe, granted him a loan so that he could personally illustrate and publish his *Blumen-Märchen* in 1898. After returning to Bern in 1917 he published all his picture books in Switzerland. His honorary doctorate from the University of Berne and the Youth Book Award of the Swiss Teachers' Association are evidence of the standing Ernst Kreidolf enjoyed already during his lifetime.

## 1.2. Lisa Wenger (1858 Bern – 1941 Carona)

Lisa Wenger took painting classes in Basel and studied art in Paris, Florence, and Düsseldorf. In 1881 she opened a chinaware painting studio for women and girls in Basel. She only began writing – for adults as well as children – at the age of forty-six. In the 1930s she was ranked as one of Switzerland's most renowned authors. Today she is associated above all with her granddaughter, the artist Meret Oppenheim. After the death of her husband she moved to Carona TI where she befriended, among others, Hermann Hesse, Lisa Tetzner, and Kurt Held. Her most successful book, *Joggeli söll ga Birli schüttle*, has gone through numerous editions over the last 110 years.

## 1.3. Soldiers in picture books

Youth books had always served the purpose of patriotic education; now they were joined by picture books. Foreign illustrations frequently depicted battle scenes, while the *Schweizer Bilderbuch* praised the Swiss militia system. During the First World War, picture books began sympathizing for one or the other side. With his *Hurra – ein Kriegsbilderbuch*, the Bernese illustrator Herbert Rickli openly sided with the Central Powers. In 1918, the year of peace, the pacifist picture book *So ist der Krieg!* was published in Berne.

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## 2. Picture books from advertising departments

In the crisis-ridden interwar period, less than ten picture books were published per year on average in Switzerland. Colour print was expensive and not many families had the money to spend on children's entertainment. Advertising departments in companies like Maggi and Nestlé saw in this a chance to catch young people's attention and win them over in the long run by issuing stickers and loyalty points. Graphic designers like Eugen Hartung and Marcel Vidoudez contributed to the early success of this marketing strategy by creating idealized images of everyday life in Switzerland.

### 2.1. Brand mascots and kids clubs

To mark the 25th anniversary of the department store Globus, marketing boss Ignatius Karl Schiele, developed the iconic brand mascot Globi in 1932, who is still going strong today. Kids were reached by means of a monthly magazine; the first of many Globi books was published in 1935. From the 1920s on, many companies relied on kids' sticker albums. In Switzerland, the albums of Nestlé, which included the merged chocolate companies Peter-Cailler-Kohler, were very popular. The movie afternoons organized by the newly founded Fip-Fop Club soon became a sensation.

### 2.2. Marcel Vidoudez (1900 Bex – 1968 Hermance)

He ranks as one of the most popular French-Swiss illustrators in the first half of the 20th century. Vidoudez trained at the Schools of Applied Arts in Berne, Lausanne, and Paris. After returning to Switzerland he worked as an advertising artist, decorative painter, and illustrator of youth and children's books. Thousands of schoolchildren in the French part of Switzerland in 1950s and 1960s learnt to read and write with his spelling book *Mon premier livre*. Vidoudez also produced cartoons for Julius Pinschewer's ad film studio in Berne. He was also successful with his erotic drawings, which, however, were sold only under the counter.

### 2.3. Eugen Hartung (1897 Wäldi – 1973 Zürich)

Eugen Hartung created the pictures for *Chömed Chinde, mir wänd singe*, better known as the Maggi song book, and the internationally successful cat postcards. Still, very few people have heard of his name. He trained at the Zurich School of Applied Arts, conducted study trips to France and Italy, and painted landscapes as well as children's portraits. After creating several murals in Zurich, Hartung began working as a graphic designer in 1938. He contributed illustrations to the magazine *Der Globi* and created stage sets for the Zurich Theatre as well as school posters.

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## **3. Avant-garde in picture books**

For many years women had little opportunity to work as illustrators on a contractual basis. This, on the other hand, allowed them to keep an open mind and experiment with new techniques and methods. With the exception of Lisa Wenger they did not create works with a similar lasting impact but if you go in search of innovative approaches and design forms, you will soon come across a number of female artists. Many of them created designs for SAFFA 1958, the second Swiss Exhibition of Women's Work.

### **3.1. Berta Tappolet (1897 Zürich – 1947 St. Moritz)**

After attaining her apprenticeship certificate as an embroidery draughtswoman she enrolled at the Munich School of Applied Arts, together with Luise Strasser. The two friends opened a textile studio in Zurich in 1917 and, later, a shop where they sold their ceramic and textile works as well as pictures. Together they created murals for various kindergartens and for the National Exhibition of 1939. As a book illustrator Tappolet went her own way; she illustrated folktales and poems as well as legends and fairytales for children. Her picture book *Der Leuchtturm* is an outstanding example in terms of content as well as artistic expression.

### **3.2. Suzi Pilet (1916 La Tour-de-Peilz – 2017 Lausanne)**

The photographer devoted herself to various topic fields: she portrayed people, illustrated travelogues, and experimented with motifs edging on Surrealism. Throughout her life she worked in black-and-white. She was friends with various French-Swiss artists and writers such as Corinna Bill, Maurice Chappat, and, above all, Alexis Peiry, the former priest and later professor of literature. As from 1951 they together created the picture books featuring little Amadou, relying on staged photographs as illustrations.

### **3.3. Warja Lavater (1913 Winterthur – 2007 Zürich)**

Shortly after attaining her degree from the Zurich School of Applied Arts, the young graphic artist created a number of famous token symbols, for example, the memorable three keys for the Swiss Bank Corporation, and opened a studio together with her husband Gottfried Honegger. Between 1944 and 1958 she illustrated the magazine *JugendWoche* and designed an oversize wall painting for SAFFA. Impressed by US signboards and symbols, Lavater began experimenting with pictograms in 1962. She published her own fairytales and stories under the title *Folded Stories*. While her concertina folds became famous in France, they remained an insider tip in Switzerland.

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## **4. Homeland and global success**

From the 1930s until well into the 1950s pictures featuring national motifs were very popular. After the Second World War, Swiss picture books benefitted from the decline of publishing in Germany. The political- cultural movement heralding so-called spiritual national defence joined forces with the longing for a world of happy children. Switzerland's three most famous illustrators – Felix Hoffmann, Alois Carigiet, and Hans Fischer – successfully carried the image of a country rooted in tradition out into the world

### **4.1. Alois Carigiet (1902 Trun – 1985 Trun)**

After training as a house painter and decorator in Chur, Carigiet worked as a freelance graphic designer in Zurich. He designed more than a hundred posters and co-founded the Cabaret Cornichon for whom he also created the stage sets. In 1939 he moved to Platenga in the Grisons Mountains to focus on his painting and printmaking projects, but continued to take on assignments in Zurich. His worldwide popular picture books grew from the collaboration with the Engadine writer Selina Chönz.

### **4.2. Felix Hoffmann (1911 Aarau – 1975 Aarau)**

After trade school in Basel Hoffmann went to Germany where he refined his woodcut art and learnt to paint. After 1935 he was back in Aarau, working as a graphic designer and painter next to his part-time job as an art teacher. He made a name for himself as an artist above all for his stained glass windows and murals, mainly in and around Aarau. Hoffmann originally illustrated the Grimms' fairytales for his own children, setting the stories in a familiar home landscape.

### **4.3. Hans Fischer, fis (1909 Bern – 1958 Interlaken)**

After studying at the Applied Schools of Art in Geneva and Zurich, Hans Fischer trained as an advertising draughtsman in Paris where he also visited the Académie Fernand Léger, before moving to Berne where he worked as an animator, window dresser, and graphic designer. He also began illustrating for the magazine Der Nebelspalter, later for the weekly Weltwoche. Like Alois Carigiet, fis worked as a stage designer for the Cabaret Cornichon. His first mural for the Dählhölzli Zoo was followed by further assignments. From 1946 on he illustrated playful picture books, which he had originally devised for his children.

## 5. Poster design and book art

Swiss graphic art experienced its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century. As long as they were guaranteed artistic licence, illustrators did not mind working for the advertising industry. Herbert Leupin perfected different poster styles and illustrated his fairy-tale books with great imagination. When photography began impinging on the painted poster towards the end of the 1950s, poster design and book illustration gradually went separate ways. Celestino Piatti was one of the few who remained committed to both media for quite some time.

### 5.1. Herbert Leupin (1916 Beinwil am See – 1999 Basel)

Herbert Leupin trained at the Basel School of Applied Arts before going to Paris on a Swiss national scholarship. He ranks as one of the most famous representatives of the Basel School. Between 1944 and 1949 he illustrated nine fairy-tale books for the publishers Globi. When the style of magic realism went out of fashion in poster art at the end of the 1940s, Leupin began his second career as a full-time book illustrator. His humorous motifs made him world famous.

### 5.2. Celestino Piatti (1922 Wangen – 2007 Duggingen)

Celestino Piatti enrolled at the Zurich School of Applied Arts and trained as a graphic designer. Through a poster assignment for Swiss books, he came into contact with the publishing company Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (dtv). Starting in 1961 Piatti designed book covers and advertising material for dtv for thirty years; with more than 6,300 covers he is the record holder in this field. Apart from that he created picture books, which sold worldwide. Piatti's distinctive lines and contours are a prominent feature of postage stamps, commercial packages, schoolbooks, as well as numerous posters advocating social and ecological issues.

## 6. Out into the wide world

Already in the year leading up to 1968, the wish for social and political change became manifest in the form of protest challenging the reigning conditions. This awakening was also evident in the world of picture books, for instance in the sense that, traditionally, the books' heroes set off on their adventures only to return home at the end. In *Die Reise nach Tripiti* the toy figures leave rainy Switzerland for good in search of a distant place of longing. The offers of the German-speaking publishers also became more international in the 1960s.

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## **6.1. Hans-Ulrich Steger (1923 Zurich – 2016 Maschwanden)**

The cartoonist, object artist and – as he liked to call himself – “writer of letters to the editor” trained at the Zurich School of Applied Arts. Upon recommendation by Hans Fischer he joined Weltwoche in 1945 where he soon became responsible for the cover cartoons. From 1967 to 1997 he worked as a cartoonist for Tages-Anzeiger, temporarily also for Nebelspalter. Active in various protest movements and as a critical observer of his time he published books and magazines. Apart from that he founded the Maschwanden local museum and created award-winning wood designs.