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Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

With three temporary exhibitions, six concerts and a variety of other events the visitors of the *Centre Dürrenmatt Centre Neuchâtel* (CDN) were offered a diversified program. The public and the press responded positively. Visitors to the CDN numbered 9'172.

Amongst other things the year 2008 was marked by research and university education. For the third time the Summer Academy of the Swiss Literary Archives took place in the CDN. This time students and speakers from throughout Europe explored the relationship between theatre and society. Another big theme was caricature. In the two exhibitions *Topor – Encyclopédie du corps* ('Topor – Encyclopaedia of the Body') and *Paul Flora – Scènes royales* ('Paul Flora – Royal Dramas') artistic works were presented.

In *Topor – Encyclopaedia of the Body* caricatures from the volumes *Toxicologie* (Toxicology, 1970), *Tagträume* (1975) and *Therapien* (1983) were exhibited. In these works Roland Topor directs an un pitying gaze on humans and their bodies. The black humour of the French artist and his often-disturbing representation of the human body were the focus of the exhibition.

The exhibition *Paul Flora – Royal Dramas* showed caricatures from the volumes *Königsdramen* (1966) and *Premiere* (1971). The figures and situations depicted in these works allude to the glorious imperial past of Austria of which through the perspective of the artist, however, only a hollow and pathetic shell still remain.

In relation to the exhibition *Paul Flora* the evening event *Top Dogs: ein modernes Königsdrama* ('Top Dogs: A Modern Royal Drama') explored questions of power and power relations in contemporary times. Beyond this a symposium was devoted to the controversial relationship between caricature and religion.

On the occasion of the European Football Championship the CDN released a postcard series with football caricatures by Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

The exhibition *Prague 1968* was concerned with the 'political' Dürrenmatt. It presented literary documents from Felix Philipp Ingold's Bohemica Collection. Further the exhibition illustrated Dürrenmatt's engagement for the *Prague Spring* and the reception of his dramatic works in Czechoslovakia. Actual witnesses from the former Czechoslovakia who were shaped by the past events of the *Prague Spring* in 1968 including authors, politicians and intellectuals participated in a roundtable discussion.

In 2008 music once again played an important role. The series *Résonances* ('Resonance') was continued with the percussionist Paul Lovens, the guitarist Christy Doran and the pianist Katharina Weber. Three further concerts were organised in cooperation with the NEC (*Nouvel Ensemble Contemporain*). Bilingual readings and various other events were also included in the program, as well as sculptural and visual art. On the terrace the monumental sculpture *Blau Miau* ('Blue Meow') by the artist Carin Grudde could be viewed.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt's library, which includes approximately 4'000 volumes, is currently being catalogued in the context of the NL project 'Authors' Libraries'. At the end of 2008 approximately 800 titles were described in *HelveticArchives*. In addition, a project dealing with the restoration of old books was started together with the Conservation Services of the NL.



Views of the exhibition *Prague 1968*, © David Perriard



Dürrenmatt's living room library