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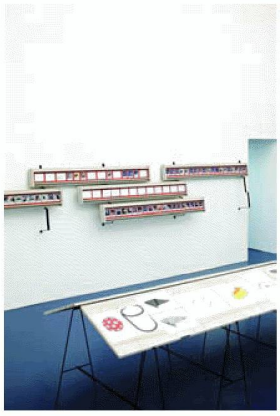
Prints and Drawings Department

With its acquisition of the archives of Ulrich Meister, the Prints and Drawings Department (PDD) can boast another estate of significance to art history. Meister's work was shown in an exhibition mounted jointly by the PDD/NL and Schaffhausen's Museum zu Allerheiligen. – Cataloguing and indexing concentrated on the collection of photoportraits, of which roughly a third was accessible via *HelveticArchives* by the end of the year.



Collections

The archives of Ulrich Meister are the most outstanding among recent acquisitions. Since 1995 the PDD has been collecting works on paper by Meister, a student of Beuys, whose work addresses the relationship between speech and image, a theme in contemporary art of considerable interest to a library collection. Thus yet another estate of a renowned Swiss artist joins the archives of such figures as Daniel Spoerri, Johannes Gachnang and Karl Gerstner in the PDD.

Original documents from the Inventory of Swiss Heritage Sites (ISOS) constitute the most important addition to the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments (FAHM), offering researchers further key documents related to the preservation of historic monuments and the evolution of our built environment. Some 2500 aerial photographs of Roman and medieval settlements and sites, a donation to the FAHM by medieval historian Stuart Morgan, constitute an outstanding supplement.

Cataloguing and indexing is currently focused on the photoportrait collection, comprising roughly 16 000 items. As of 31.12.2009 around 6000 of these had been described in *HelveticArchives*[27] – wherever legally possible with an image. Most of the items are large-format portraits, until now virtually inaccessible. In addition, approximately 6000 photos in the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments, mainly from the Photoglob-Wehrli Collection, have also been catalogued. With the help of Memoriav, the collection's pictures of the most significant sites are being digitised and put online.

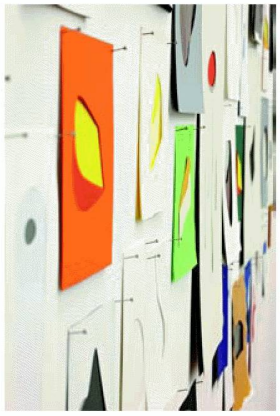
As of the end of 2009, the second of the PDD's key catalogues, the Swiss Poster Catalogue (CCSA),[28] comprised 54 473 records (2008: 51 876), most of them with a digital image. The union catalogue, managed by the NL, is internationally recognised as a model of its kind. The holdings of the major Swiss poster collections are searchable by means of one single common finding aid, regardless of their actual physical location. Participating institutions coordinate not only their cataloguing and indexing of posters, but their acquisition as well.

Ulrich Meister exhibition. Above: Ulrich Meister himself at the exhibition

User Services

Onsite usage declined year on year, for two reasons. Firstly, ever more documents are accessible online; secondly, the PDD, including the FAHM, was closed to users as of October while it moved to its new premises within the NL. During the year under review, replies were made to 491 requests for information (2008: 584) and 2475 reproduction permits were issued (2008: 3420), of which 109 (2008: 164) and 1923 (2691), respectively, by the FAHM. Guided tours were available on request. Of particular note is the interest of faculty at the Bern and Zurich Universities of the Arts, who frequently accompany their students on visits to the Prints and Drawings Department. Another memorable occasion was the Swiss History Association's visit to the FAHM.

The year's major project was the exhibition *Ulrich Meister: Works on Paper*. It was mounted jointly with Schaffhausen's Museum zu Allerheiligen, which hosted a simultaneous show of Meister's paintings and published a catalogue for both exhibitions.



27 www.nb.admin.ch/helveticarchives.
28 www.nb.admin.ch/posters.