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Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

2014 was an exceptional year for the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel (CDN). Three major exhibitions were organised, while in November Madeleine Betschart succeeded Janine Perret Sgualdo as the institution's head. The CDN recorded 10 772 visitors last year, an average of 50 per day.

The exhibition cycle on the theme of the labyrinth, which was launched in 2013, was completed last year. *Balades avec le Minotaure* examined the motif of the bull-headed creature in the works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt and artists such as Goya and Richard Long. It included works on loan from prestigious collections and closed with a reading of Dürrenmatt's ballad *Minotaurus* by Jean-Luc Bideau.

Le labyrinthe poétique d'Armand Schulthess at the CDN was the largest exhibition yet devoted to this practitioner of art brut. Armand Schulthess (1901–1972) gave up his job as a civil servant at the age of 50 and retired to Ticino, where he transformed his garden into a fantastical world of knowledge: a “total work of art”, revealed in the works and photographs on display. The exhibition was staged in association with the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne.

The third exhibition of 2014, *The Hidden World – Jim Shaw Didactic Art Collection with Jean-Frédéric Schnyder & Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, was curated by Marc-Olivier Wahler and investigated the concept of belief. It showcased the collection amassed by Jim Shaw (*1951), comprising thousands of objects and illustrations commissioned by sects or secret societies. The exhibition confronted it with religious-themed works by Jean-Frédéric Schnyder (*1945) and Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990).

For the first time in its history, the CDN presented three major exhibitions in succession. All attracted a wide audience and were very well received in the media. Publications and events including round-table discussions, readings and conferences as well as cultural outreach programmes complemented the exhibitions.

Music was also represented, with a 1st August concert featuring Samuel Blaser and Pierre Favre as well as a musical theatre evening with works by Peter Maxwell Davies. In June, the 6th Summer academy on Swiss literature organised by the Swiss Literary Archives examined the interrelationships between literature and religion.

Janine Perret Sgualdo, Director of the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel since its foundation, retired in November. More than thirty exhibitions and an extensive programme of events related to the visual arts, literature, music and scientific research were organised under her auspices. She positioned the CDN as a top-flight interdisciplinary museum institution.

Madeleine Betschart was appointed as the new head of the CDN. An archaeologist and art historian by training, she directed the Museum Schwab Biel and subsequently the Alimentarium in Vevey. She has also held important responsibilities at the Werner Oechslin library in Einsiedeln and at the Swiss arts council Pro Helvetia. Madeleine Betschart will continue the work started by Janine Perret Sgualdo and develop a concept for the CDN's future operations.



Armand Schulthess exhibition,
30.3.–3.8.2014



The Hidden World exhibition,
24.8.–7.12.2014