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Prints and Drawings Department

There was again major growth in modern and contemporary prints as well as the portrait collection during the year under review. The archive of wood-cutter Emil Zbinden was enlarged through a donation, his graphic prints are now fully catalogued. Besides activities related to the anniversary of the 1848 Federal Constitution, outreach mainly involved the unique mushroom illustrations by Hans E. Walty plus the birthday of poster designer Claude Kuhn.



Collection

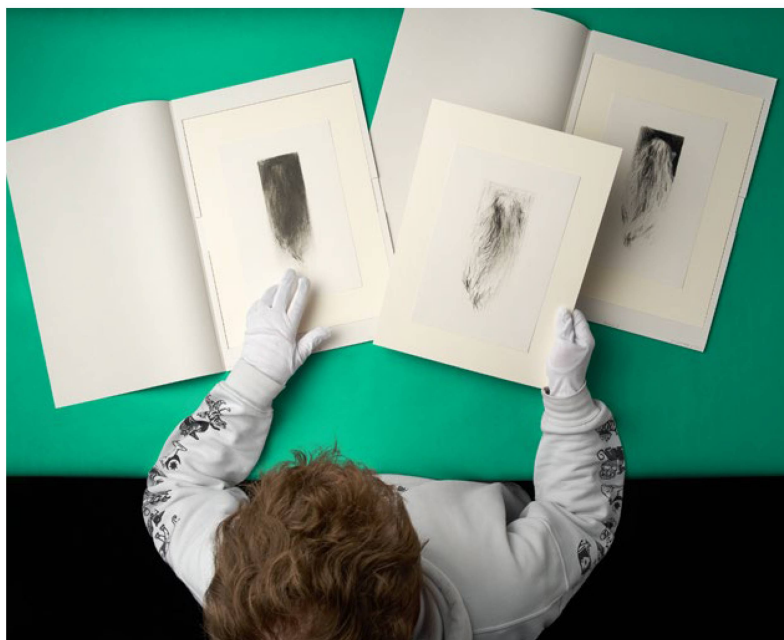
A collection of 80 works was acquired including many first prints by largely forgotten Bernese artist **Hans Eggimann** (1872–1929), an exponent of the Magic Realism movement during the 1920s. Works by contemporary artists were acquired in the art market, as represented by the 2020 series *Apotheke* (A) featuring four cyanotypes by Daniela Keiser (*1963) or the *Murmeli* works of 2023 in coloured pencil by **Christian Denzler** (*1966). There were some notable additions to the portrait collection: besides some graphic individual portraits (e.g. Jean Tinguely and Luciano Castellini), over 100 photographic portraits were added to the collection. They were taken by Basel photographer Beat Presser (*1952) (incl. Clown Dimitri, Bruno Ganz), Zurich photographer Christian Scholz (*1951) (portrait series by Markus Raetz, 2007) and **Fiorenza Bassetti** (*1948) from Ticino. 90 copies spanning



Hans Eggimann
Mein Atelier, etching, 1917



Fiorenza Bassetti
Portrait of Anita Spinelli (1908–2010),
photograph, 2007

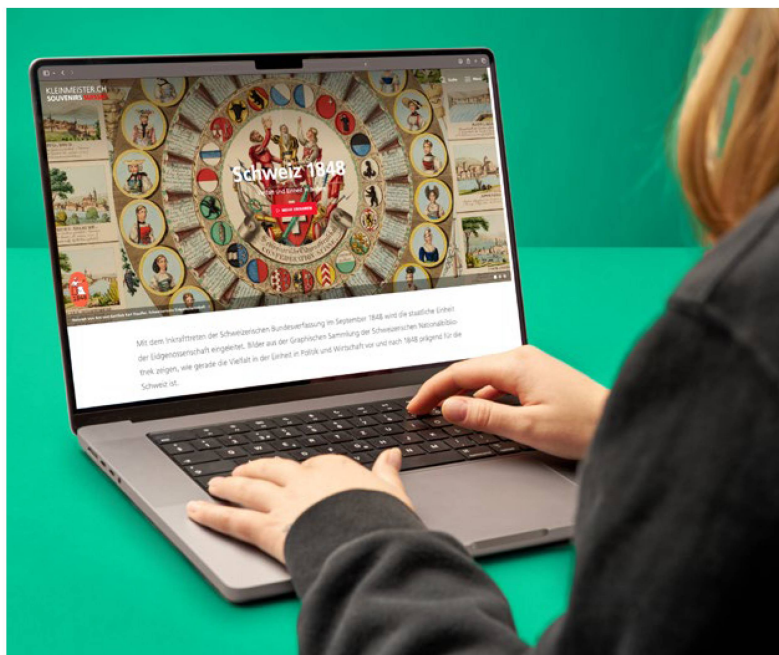


Christian Denzler
Murmeli, coloured pencil on paper, 2023

four decades of portrait photography (incl. Mario Botta, Manon, Anita Spinelli) were donated.

There were several acquisitions from Bern gallery Art+Vision, which has been a strong advocate over the past 50 years for contemporary wood engraving as a significant printing technique actively pursued by many artists in Switzerland (e.g. Francine Simonin (1936–2020), **René Fehr-Biscioni** (*1958), Peter Wullimann (1941–2016). The Prints and Drawings Department has the archive of one of Switzerland's most famous wood engravers, Emil Zbinden (1908–1991). Zbinden's prints numbering over 2,000 were re-ordered, catalogued and thus made accessible.

Repeated donations by poster production companies APG/SGA and Goldbach Neo are in the *Swiss Poster Collections Union Catalogue*, which also includes 5,500 posters from the collections of Lausanne History Museum.

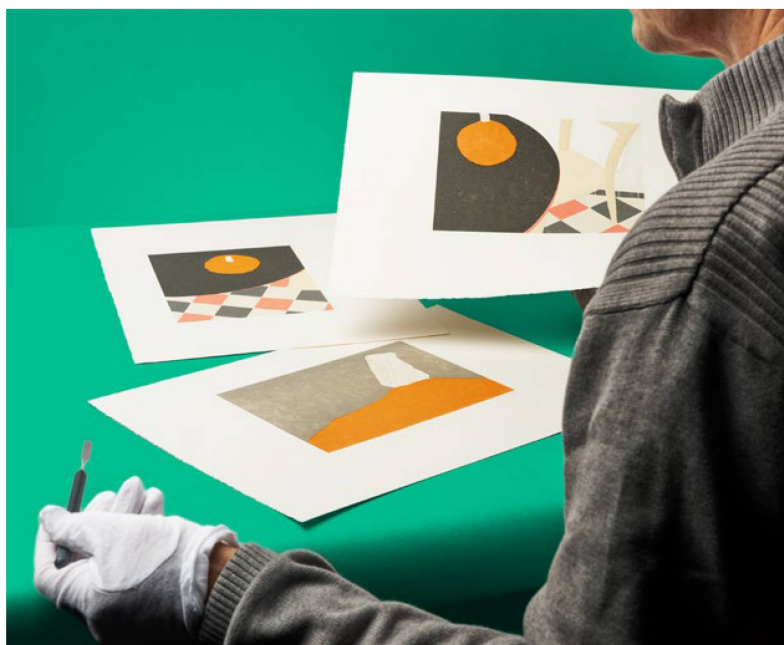


Virtual window

Switzerland 1848: Diversity and unity in pictures at kleinmeister.ch

Outreach

In the 175th year of the Swiss Federal Constitution, a **virtual window** featured on the website kleinmeister.ch with a view of the year 1848. Prints of politics and persons, architecture and caricature were brought together under the title *1848. Einheit und Vielfalt in Bildern* (1848. Unity and diversity in pictures). The window was also displayed at the *Offene Bundesmeile* celebration (1/2 July 2023), organised by the Confederation to mark the 175th anniversary of the Federal Constitution.



René Fehr-Biscioni

Heute gibt's Suppe, wood engraving, 2004



Hans E. Walty

Mushroom drawings, watercolour illustrations,
ca. 1925–1930

The *Pilztafelwerk* by **Hans E. Walty** (1868–1948) from Lenzburg was presented to the public via several channels in 2023: the 382 watercolours of domestic mushrooms painted in bold colours were fully digitised and placed on Wikimedia Commons. Walty's *Pilztafeln* (mushroom illustrations) plus accompanying textbook form the basis of a, still to be published in its entirety, *Pilztafelwerk*, or guide to mushrooms, which would have proved highly popular in Switzerland. Museum Burghalde in Lenzburg exhibited some of these works for the first time with the title *Herausragende Pilze. Die Aquarelle von Hans E. Walty (Marvellous mushrooms. The watercolours of Hans E. Walty)* from 3 September to 26 November 2023.

To mark the 75th birthday of poster designer Claude Kuhn (*1948) from Bern, an extensive

selection of his work was exhibited in a public room. In parallel, the Prints and Drawings Department organised a talk whereby Claude Kuhn explained his early printed work plus some completed and uncompleted posters.

User services

The number of information and research requests was identical to the previous year at 745. They again related to all the collection areas and, in particular, documents from the Federal Archive for Monument Preservation, the graphic holdings as well as reproductions of posters and photographs. The number of visitors on site was higher than the previous year at 125 (2022: 116).

During the year under review, just under 7,300 pictures from the Prints and Drawings Department in the public domain were uploaded to the Wikimedia Commons (WMC) platform (total number of National Library pictures on the WMC: 23,000). The development in the number of hits versus the prior year was very positive at 16.8 million (2022: 13.5 million). The number of visitors to the *kleinmeister.ch* website also rose, due in particular to the new virtual windows looking onto the *Schweizer Chalet* and the 175th anniversary celebration of the Federal Constitution (*175 Jahre Bundesverfassung*).