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**The National Library is  
attracting interest  
from many new visitors  
with its inspiring  
innovative formats.**

*Damian Elsig, Director*

# A meeting place for everyone

*Damian Elsig, Director*

As a memory institution of national import, the Swiss National Library is responsible for preserving Switzerland's cultural heritage and making it accessible and perceptible for society. In 2024, we took another step in that direction with significant developments in cultural outreach and in cooperation with partner institutions. We committed to reaching new target groups and making the National Library a meeting place for everyone.



In 2024, the Swiss National Library focused on many initiatives designed to make the library a lively venue for people to meet and interact.

## **New approaches to cultural outreach**

We achieved major milestones in the implementation of our new strategy in 2024. One key focus area was the development of outreach formats to address a broad public. For example, the major photo exhibition **Swiss Press Photo 24** by the Reinhardt von Graffenried foundation was held in the National Library and will now take place there on a regular basis. The exhibition presented the year's standout Swiss press photos in an exciting mix of News, Daily Life, Swiss Stories, People, Sports and World. It provided visitors with a unique look back at the previous year, thereby showing how visual documentation



**Swiss Press Photo 24**

A guided tour of the photo exhibition



**Das Ganze aber kürzer**

Beat Sterchi gives a reading in the National Library

contributes to reflecting and understanding social and cultural developments. The exhibition made a big impact and brought many interested visitors to the National Library.

We were also able to explore some innovative avenues through new event formats, for example **Das Ganze aber kürzer**. This was when well-known spoken-word artists visited the National Library where they brought texts to life in an informal way and established connections to the holdings of the Swiss Literary Archives. We also expanded the partnership with Villa Morillon in Bern during the year under review. As a result, the villa's grand interior is available to host the literary soirées organised by the Swiss Literary Archives.

The Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel also worked to bring people together. The offer *Le CDN en famille* enabled adults to tour the exhibition while the children took part in an age-appropriate guided tour and were allowed to express their own creativity in a workshop. All these offers help to make our holdings familiar and accessible across the generations.

### **Cooperation in the Museum Quarter Bern**

One of the partnerships also on the strategic axis of the National Library is that with the Museum Quarter Bern. It unites eleven cultural and educational institutions and has now entered the realisation phase following an intensive four-



year development phase. In 2024, it evolved into a dynamic and inspiring cultural platform. Furthermore, the institutions of the Museum Quarter Bern worked closely together to create a common brand, which will be visible in the City of Bern from 2025. Events including the **summer party**, tandem guided tours and pop-up food stalls in the museum garden enriched the cultural scene and attracted visitors from near and far.

For example, the *SUPERPOWERS! cultural hackathon* was held in May 2024, bringing together about 70 participants from within and outside Switzerland to devise innovative formats. The resulting ideas offer new approaches to

disseminating cultural content in a creative and unconventional way.

The cooperation with the institutions in the Museum Quarter Bern unleashes synergies and adds to the variety of the cultural offering. This has also helped turn the Museum Garden into a meeting place, which is valued as a venue for events and recreation.

The initial results from the National Library's adopted approach are pleasing and encouraging. The closer cooperation with partners, such as Museum Quarter Bern, is also a significant step forward. I would like to thank everyone who has made this progress possible with their engagement and innovativeness.



**Summer party**  
in the Museum Garden