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Contents

The Segantini Atelier in Maloja	2
German Swiss and French Swiss	3
Humanitarian Tradition put to Test	6
Alasca in Switzerland	8
Official Communications:	9
– The Federal Authorities 1986	
– The new matrimonial law and the Swiss abroad	
– Duty-free allowances	
Local News	11–15
Communications from the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad:	16
– 64. Assembly of the Swiss Abroad	
Museum of the Swiss Abroad	17
Governor of Vermont/USA	18
Book reviews	20
Looking back on 1985	21

Front Page:

The linguistic frontier

(Photo: Erling Mandelmann)

The painter Giovanni Segantini

(Photo: Plattner, St. Moritz)

Interior of the Castle of Penthes

(Photo: François Lagarde)

The Geneva Summit (Photo: Bild + News)

Tamilis in Berne (Photo: M.v. Graffenried)

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The Segantini Atelier in Maloja

One of the most important works of Giovanni Segantini, the Triptychon «To come into existence, to be, to pass away» – Birth – Life – Death (Natura – Vita – Morte) acquired by the Gottfried Keller Foundation, Zurich, has been in the Segantini Museum in St. Moritz since 1908 as a donation. This Triptychon was a contract given to Segantini for the World Exhibition of 1900 in Paris. With a «full-scale Alpine Symphony» one wanted to advertise for the Upper Engadine in the Swiss Pavillon, at the time of the up-coming Alpine Tourism. This proud project failed, thereupon, due to lack of finances. The Swiss



The Atelier Segantini in Maloja (Photo: Plattner)

Pavillon in Paris was conceived as a dome-shaped construction. Therefore the Rotundas in St. Moritz and in Maloja.

The Atelier in Maloja can be defined as a counterpart to the Museum in St. Moritz. This studio, the «Atelier Giovanni, Gottardo and Mario Segantini», in short, «The Atelier Segantini», has been accessible to the public since Summer 1985. Swiss Francs 200,000 were made available by various parties for the restoration of this rotund-construction.

The Segantini Family has lived in Maloja since 1894, and from time to time also in Soglio in Bergell. There Segantini's work «Life» came into being and there also emerged the initial, simple, rounded construction made from fir-wood, which was later on transported to Maloja. Giovanni Segantini's painting was always



Giovanni Segantini: «To pass away» (3rd part of the triptychon)

an «open air painting». His fibrous, compact, thin brushstrokes are typical and are known as «Divisionism». Francesco Arcangeli writes about him: «His inclination towards the Alps was for him much more natural than the longing of van Gogh for the Provence and the partiality of Gauguin for Tahiti. Nevertheless, all these poles of attraction lead back to the same meaning: to break out of the civilised world and find a way back to a pure life.»

Segantini died in 1899 on the Schafberg, where he had climbed to work on the Triptychon «Natur». Never had he painted in the Rotunda in Maloja. On the other hand this round construction was later used by his sons Gottardo and Mario as a studio. The commemorative chamber in Maloja with the works of the three painters can be visited daily until October between 3.00 and 6.00 p. m. except on Mondays. ●

Marika de Martinis