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opening ceremony would be a great spectacle which would be held simultaneously on all five exhibition complexes and express "the contrast between near and far, regional and national, local theatre and global television". As with the 1999 Vintners' Festival in Vevey (VD) which he also directed, Rochaix intends to employ a huge mass of amateurs alongside professional actors. 

# A sneak preview of Expo

*A year before Expo.02 opens its doors, we lift the lids to see what's cooking in some of about 40 projects on the four "arteplages".*

BY ISABELLE EICHENBERGER

**IT IS IMPOSSIBLE** to ignore the preparations for next year's major national "happening". It is even more impossible to ignore the disputes, avidly reported by the media, which pointedly illustrate the difficulties Switzerland encounters in finding a shared vision. But a peep into former archives reminds us that the birth of Expo.64 was not without its complications, either.

Admittedly the risks and financial obligations for sponsors and organisers are significant. As a result, the selected projects are faced with the huge challenge of weighing the scales in favour of surprise, festivity and collective Utopia. This article presents four of these projects.

## "Onoma" in Yverdon-les-Bains

"Where is my place in the universe?" This and other soul-searching questions on identity, sexuality, sport, tourism, leisure, physical and mental health are posed to visitors to the arteplage in Yverdon-les-Bains.

According to those responsible for the concept, the Onoma project (derived from the word "onomastics", the study of the history of proper names) on Swiss communities "promises to be one of the main attractions of Expo.02". Visitors to Expo 64 may remember the "Pyramid of flags of Swiss communities". The "Landi" national exhibition of 1939 also gave communities their rightful place with its "high road".

The 2002 event will have no flags, but here you will be able to find the names of approximately 3000 Swiss cities and communities. Onoma is the contribution from the Swiss Association of Cities, the Swiss Association of Communities and Swiss Post. At the time of printing, 1035 cities and communities had confirmed their financial contribution. If every community and city par-

ticipates, 70 percent of the budget of CHF 6.8 million will be assured.

The project started with the University of Neuchâtel setting up a database to determine the relationships between different communities' names. Around 600 of these, selected by linguistic criteria, are to be found on 150 three- to six-stage routes throughout Switzerland, presented in a film directed by Christoph Schaub. The others are represented in the form of "Identification arcs" which present the community and its links with other communities with a similar name.

The point of departure for the Onoma project, which uses state-of-the-art techniques such as computer-aided large-screen projections, is the visitor's birthplace, domicile or place of residence. This is followed by a presentation of the community with explanations on the origins of its name and video sequences featuring a member of the community talking about local characteristics and customs.

In parallel with this, a recording studio set up in the Onoma Pavilion will broadcast live interviews with Expo guests, gradually adding to the mosaic of community portraits. The first thing the visitor will see on arriving at the arteplage in Yverdon will be these interviews projected on a large screen.

## Blind man's buff in Murten

The Murten arteplage offers "Events and exhibitions on the apparent contradiction between instant and eternity".

Visitors can join in the game of "Blindekuh" (Expo dans le noir, die Expo im Dunkeln, Expo al Buio) in the area between the Old Town and the lake. A sort of "Initiation course for the senses" in the dark will allow the seeing guest and blind guides to exchange roles, so that encounter and collaboration are encouraged and the outsider status de-emphasised.

## The Fifth Switzerland at Expo.02



Keystone

The Fifth Switzerland will mark its presence at Expo.01 in the same way as Swiss cantons: At the Bienne arteplage on 10 August 2002, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) will present the diversity, globality and identity of our compatriots abroad. In addition to serious intellectual discourse the event also addresses the senses and emotions. For further details, check out the OSA home page under [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch). LS

Not only is the project an amusing experience which tests the limits of each individual, but its humane, social and cultural dimensions (20 of the 30 staff here are visually impaired) make it highly attractive. It is therefore one of the stars of the exhibits funded partly by the government (the budget is CHF 4 million, 2.5 million of which is assured by a major health insurance company).

The idea is the brainchild of a group of visually impaired and blind persons who opened the cultural venue "Blindekuh" in Zurich in September 1999. "Blindekuh" ("Blind man's bluff") is a restaurant and bar where everything is done in the dark. Such is the success of this unique experience that finding a free table is almost impossible. Fearing excessive queues and crowding, the organisers have decided to open the Murten exhibition only during the week.

For Jürg Flück, one of the designers and himself blind, it is important, "that people don't come here just to have a drink at a blind bar, but to appreciate that this is an exhibit in the dark". Amidst the hectic of Expo, Blindekuh invites visitors to "give our tired eyes a rest for a moment and discover inner visions. We offer seeing people the opportunity to share our lives for several minutes and test their perceptions without the sense of sight."



The element of water is the theme addressed by the cantons of Eastern Switzerland.

The exhibition will be held in a "house within a house". On the outside is a hall (designed by the famous French architect Jean Nouvel) with an airy, panelled facade interspersed by narrow windows. On entering, the visitors slowly acclimatise to the dark before a blind guide welcomes him and he is led into the total darkness of the inner building. This consists of heavy, raw materi-

als, cement and stone. The visitor enters via a spiral staircase and finds himself disoriented in a secret room, where he is confronted with different sensual and acoustic impressions which are directly associated with the water-dominated environment of the Murten arteplage.

Ultimately this route, along which visitors feel their way, leads to an invisible bar where one is served in the dark. Here visitors will be astonished at the incredible dexterity of the blind staff. In short, just "turning out the light" is enough to reverse roles and highlight differences and inequalities.

**Watery tales in Neuchâtel**

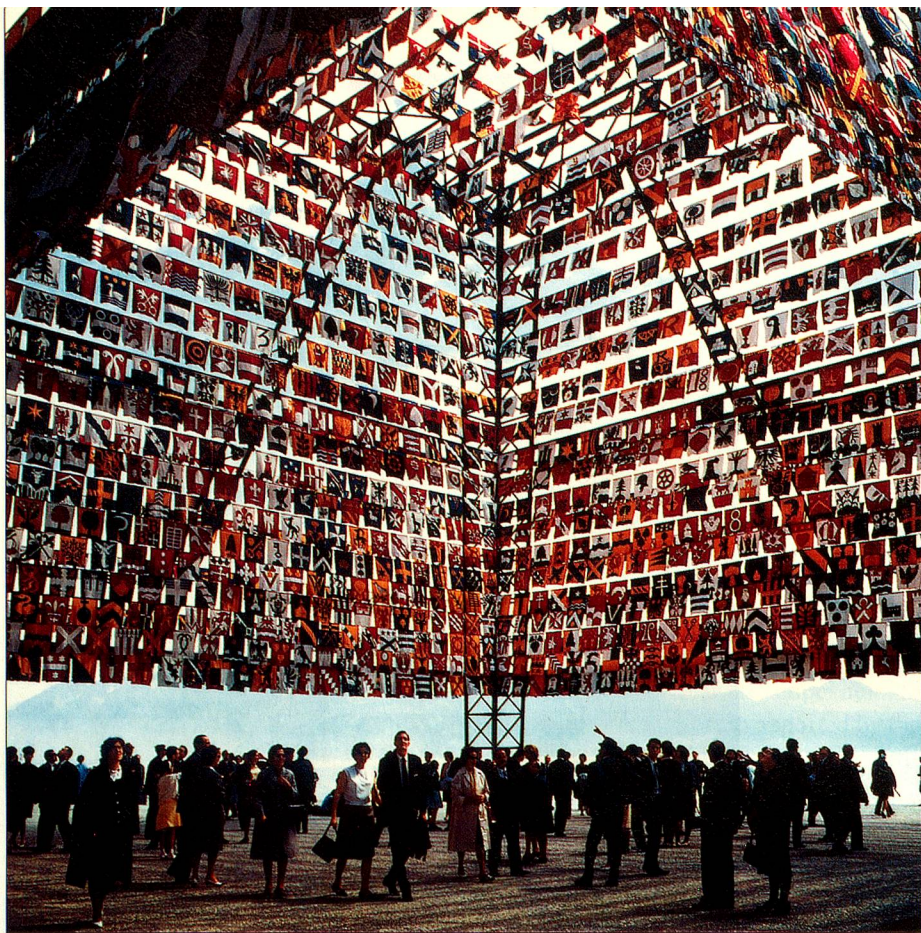
The aim of the Neuchâtel arteplage is to illustrate "how apparently clear limits can become blurred, and how the artificial can become natural".

"Aua extrema" or "An immersion in the water tank of Eastern Switzerland" is a project organised by the seven eastern Swiss cantons of Glarus, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Innerrhoden, Grisons, St Gallen and Thurgau (among the first cantons to jump on the Expo wagon, by the way). The project features "watery tales" directly associated with the planned Expo →



Keystone

One Expo project is designed by the blind for seeing visitors.



Keystone

A major attraction at the last Expo.64 in Lausanne: the pyramid of community coats-of-arms.

site in the three-lakes region and, naturally, focusing on the subject of water. The budget is CHF 12 million.

“Aua extrema” (aua is Romansch for water): It is the extreme forms of this symbol of life which bind the cantons of Eastern Switzerland together.

The exhibition on a thousand-meter stretch of water is devoted to the thousand stories associated with these waterscapes, focusing on various themes such as the future of the planet, mythology or the mundane mineral water bottle. The visitor (barefoot) first comes across a “water path which shows how water forms a bridge between the seven cantons of the region and their population”. Here one is shown different aspects of water

in the lives of different people: the angler, the snowboarder, the farmer or the tourist.

But water is also a dividing factor. At the centre of the pavilion stands a “greenhouse of ice flowers”, devoted to eternal snow. The harmony of the greenhouse and water panorama is immediately disturbed by a deep glacial divide. The visitor crosses this to reach a global “water house”. Another tale of water as a binding element is related in the mythical atmosphere of the “water forest”. At the end of this adventure-filled route, visitors find the fountain of youth.

#### Cyberhelvetia in the Web and in Bienne

Under the motto “Power and Freedom”, the Bienne arteplage addresses “the dynamic re-

## 10,000 helpers wanted!

The success of Expo.02 depends on its staff.


Around 10,000 staff will be on working on the four arteplages at peak times – as hosts, hostesses, guides, restaurant personnel, sales staff, technicians, security staff, drivers etc.

The most important criteria for a job at Expo.02 are: flexibility, language skills, and that certain “Expo smile”.

Apply to the Expo.02 Job Center:  
[www.expojob.ch](http://www.expojob.ch),  
 Hotline +41 (0)848 82 2002

lationship between the individual and society, between social reality and preconceptions of Paradise” – an all-embracing programme!

The Internet-based creation of “simultaneously public and virtual meeting places which allow visitors to contemplate new aspects of the concepts of identity and community”, a “bridge between the known and the unknown”, between the virtual and real world: this is the ambitious goal of Cyberhelvetia. Developed by a Zurich company and with a budget of CHF 15 million, the project is financed by major banking, insurance and telecommunications companies. To normal mortals the project may seem somewhat complicated, but is not one third of Swiss households connected to the Internet? The interest in Cyberhelvetia lies in the fact that the project is already launched, because even now the public can take part in the construction of the 2002 exhibition.

Cyberhelvetia’s ten Internet portrait machines were installed in major Swiss cities in February, and thirty more are planned by May 2002. With the aid of these photos Internauts taking part in the game ([www.cyberhelvetia.ch](http://www.cyberhelvetia.ch)) can create a virtual identity based on their real picture. Another aspect of the concept is that participants can lead a virtual community life by renting a room in an apartment, sharing it with others and working on an online newspaper. Expo address: [www.expo.02.ch](http://www.expo.02.ch) 

## Eleven winners of a 3-day pass for Expo.02

The following participants in a survey on the Expo.02 National Exhibition (see Swiss Review No. 4/5/1999) have won a 3-day pass worth CHF 99.– and will be notified in writing:

Bernard Aubry, Courbevoie, France; Kurt & Johanna Stump-Diestel, Zapodan Jalisco, Mexico; Gion Risch, Los Angeles, USA; Monique Murbach, Frankfurt/Main, Germany; René Derungs, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Rose-Marie Esser, Madrid, Spain; Christian Nanchen, La Pocatière Gorizo, Canada; Peter Amstutz, Lake Cowichan, Canada; Dr. Peter von Escher, Barcelona, Spain; Sylvie Bosshard, Limonest, France; Walter Plattner, Efringen-Kirchen, Germany.