

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 32 (2005)  
**Heft:** 1

**Vorwort:** Culture : a Swiss export  
**Autor:** Eckert, Heinz

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 22.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



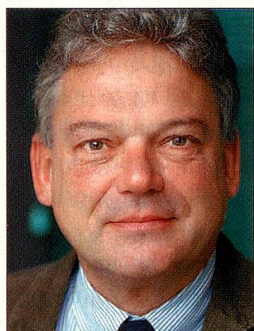
## Culture: a Swiss export

Virtually no other country boasts such a rich and broad-based range of cultural offerings as Switzerland. Up and down the country, subsidised theatres and orchestras as well as numerous first-class museums vie to outdo each other with top-quality collections and repertoires. Added to this is a calendar of festivals that is virtually in a class of its own in terms of quality and variety. Fortunately, Switzerland is a rich country, and can afford to indulge in culture; because anyone aiming to offer world-class Western culture needs money. Indeed, some institutions (for example, the Zurich Opera) need so much cash that they can no longer maintain their traditional standards without private sponsors. According to the last statistical survey in 2001, Swiss companies supported culture through sponsorship to the tune of CHF 320 million a year.

In times when the state purse is empty, appeals by politicians to cut costs hang like the sword of Damocles over the cultural sector. The storm in a teacup over Berne artist Thomas Hirschhorn's exhibition in Paris put the wind up the Swiss cultural scene. What was the problem? Hirschhorn's exhibition, supported with a CHF 180,000 subsidy from Pro Helvetia, mocked Switzerland, Federal Councillor Blocher and direct democracy, prompting the Council of States to take unprecedented punitive action by summarily cutting Pro Helvetia subsidies by CHF 1 million.

While art critics were agreed that Hirschhorn's Paris exhibition could not be counted among the highlights of Swiss artistic creativity, the political reaction and associated sanctions triggered a broad-based discussion on artistic freedom and – once more – the existence of Pro Helvetia, whose actions are repeatedly questioned and debated by politicians. Thus the anger and punishment meted out by the Council of States was aimed more at Switzerland's most important cultural institution than at the political objectives of artist Thomas Hirschhorn.

Art and culture are favourite sources of controversial debate. What is art? Where does it end, which interpretation is correct, does it truly reflect Shakespeare's original intentions, what is art permitted to address and what should it leave alone, how much freedom should an artist be allowed, or should artists be subject to no constraints at all? Criticism is also frequently aimed at Pro Helvetia, which, by dint of its remit as a cultural promoter, continually supports cultural activities in Switzerland and exports such activi-



Heinz Eckert

### Interest in Swiss culture is very high throughout the world.

ties to the world. The cultural foundation's task is not an easy one, and any judgement is always a question of personal standpoint and taste. Yet despite all the criticism, Pro Helvetia is an integral part of Swiss cultural life.

This issue of "Swiss Review" focuses on the activities of Pro Helvetia abroad and its task as a global ambassador of culture. In an interview, Pro Helvetia Director Pius Knüsel explains the aims of his foundation and author Martin R. Dean describes the experiences he acquired in Europe, Asia and the USA as a writer and linguistic ambassador at the invitation of Pro Helvetia. Cultural promoters are unanimous in the belief that interest in Swiss culture is very high throughout the world, and that Swiss artists are very welcome wherever they go. It is important that this asset continues to be leveraged to the hilt. *Heinz Eckert*

Translated from German.



#### FOCUS

Culture: an export hit **4**

#### POLITICS

Negotiation package with the EU **9**

#### DOSSIER

A radio channel goes off the air **10**

#### OFFICIAL NEWS

Upgrade for Passport 2003 **12**

#### OSA NEWS

Swiss Abroad and Unspunnen **14**

#### PORTRAIT

King of the powder snow **16**

#### MAILBAG

**18**



For 20 years, Swiss freerider Dominique Perret has been gliding down untouched slopes all over the world and has been named Freerider of the Century. Freeride skiing has become an important segment of the winter sports sector.

COVER PHOTO: Mark Shapiro

**SWISS REVIEW**  
www.revue.ch

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 25 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 360 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

**Heinz Eckert** (EC), Editor-in-Chief; **Rolf Ribi** (RR), **Alain Wey** (AW), **Gabriela Brodbeck** (BDK), responsible for the Official News, Swiss Abroad Service EDA, CH-3003 Berne. **René Lenzin** (RL), reporting from parliament. Translation: **Nicolette Chisholm** (English), **Helga Blöchlinger** (Spanish), **Jacques Lasserre** (French) and **Georges Manouk**.

**Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising:** Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 6, Tel. +41 31 356 6110, Fax +41 31 356 6101, Postal Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9.

**Printed by:** Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St.Gallen.

**Change of address:** Please advise your local embassy or consulate – do not write to Berne.

Single copy CHF 5.–

**Internet:** <http://www.revue.ch> **E-mail:** [revue@aso.ch](mailto:revue@aso.ch)