

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 49 (2022)  
**Heft:** 2  
  
**Rubrik:** Images : sipping from a furry teacup

### **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:** 07.08.2025

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

## Sipping from a furry teacup

Since 1983, Waisenhausplatz (Orphanage Square), just around the corner from the Berne Museum of Fine Arts 200 metres away, has been home to “The Spiral Column” – a fountain that artist Meret Oppenheim (1913–85) created two years before her death. Water drips down the tower-like structure, now covered at the top in plants, mosses and lichens. Icicles form when the water freezes.

Initial reaction to the artist’s work was also chilly. Locals called it the “column of shame”, or even the “urinal”. The fountain was certainly a talking point. It also showed how little the world-renowned Meret Oppenheim cared about

what other people thought of her work. Almost 40 years later, the Berne Museum of Fine Arts has been hosting a retrospective of this incredible woman who lived in the Swiss capital for so long. Entitled “My Exhibition”, the show provides a wide-ranging appreciation of Oppenheim’s immeasurable body of work. Oppenheim used almost every material in the book. It was her 1936 furry teacup (“Object”) that won plaudits from the outset. Oppenheim thought this iconic work was just quite strange, whereas the art world fell over itself to imbue the teacup with meaning.

Meret Oppenheim was labelled a surrealist. However, visitors to “My Exhibition” will dis-



My Nurse, 1936/1967  
Metal platter, shoes, string, and paper; 14 x 33 x 21 cm  
Moderna Museet, Stockholm  
Photo: Albin Dahlström; 2021, © ProLitteris, Zurich



This work was missing from the exhibition in Berne:  
Meret Oppenheim, "Object",  
Paris, 1936. MoMA  
Artists Rights Society, New York / Pro Litteris, Zurich

cover a fascinating array of original works by an artist who refused to be pigeonholed – and who suffered from artist's block for years but never lost her self-deprecating style. One of her works, "My Nurse", shows a pair of women's high-heeled shoes trussed together like a chicken and "served" sole side up on a silver platter.

"Freedom is not given to you – you have to take it," Oppenheim once said. She never veered from this ethos. Her furry teacup was missing from the exhibition in Berne – she probably would have been relieved to hear.

JÜRGE STEINER

Tour of "My Exhibition" by television presenter Ueli Schmetzer (in Swiss German): [revue.link/oppenheim](https://www.revue.link/oppenheim)

After its Berne residency, "My Exhibition" will be housed at The Menil Connection in Houston, USA (25 March to 18 September 2022) before moving to the Museum of Modern Art in New York (30 October 2022 to 4 March 2023).



Spring Day, 1961  
Oil on plastic material and wood with wire basket, 50 x 34 cm  
Private collection  
© 2021, ProLitteris, Zurich



Six Clouds on a Bridge, 1975  
Bronze; 46,8 x 61 x 15,5 cm  
Kunstmuseum Bern, Meret Oppenheim Bequest  
Photo: Peter Lauri, Berne, © 2021, ProLitteris, Zurich



Squirrel, 1960/1969  
Beer glass, plastic foam and fur; 21.5 x 13 x 7.5 cm  
Kunstmuseum Bern  
Photo: Peter Lauri, Berne; © 2021, ProLitteris, Zurich