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Autor: [s.n.]

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"THE INSTITUTE OF INCORPORATED PRACTITIONERS IN ADVERTISING" EXHIBIT SWISS POSTERS.

As mentioned in our issue of March 31st (No. 1133) an exhibition of Swiss Posters was recently held at 93, Park Lane, W.1, financed by the national institution "Pro Helvetia," sponsored by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade and organised by the Advertising Creative Circle in conjunction with the Swiss Legation.

We are glad to report that this exhibition was visited by a great number of the British public. A good many of our compatriots too, took this opportunity of paying a visit to this most interesting exhibition, which was very favourably commented upon by the English Press.

Some of our countrymen expressed their disappointment to us, that amongst the 126 Posters exhibited, only a limited number of well-known and pleasing Tourist centre advertising posters were on view; passing these complaints on to the proper quarters, we were told that the reason for this omission was, that this exhibition should not be suspected of being a propaganda stunt for the Hotel and Tourist industry in another guise, hence the relatively small number of posters falling under this category. This explanation, which we consider is fair and has its merits, should satisfy those who seemed to be disappointed.

Encouraged by the success of the recent exhibition, the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising, expressed the wish to show these posters to their members and an exhibition at the Institute's Headquarters at 44, Belgrave Square, S.W.1, was arranged and opened by the Swiss Minister, accompanied by Madame de Torrenté, on Friday, April 14th, 1950.

The President of the Institute, Mr. H. T. Appleton, in expressing thanks to the Minister for having enabled the Institute to acquire this collection of posters for exhibition purposes, paid a warm tribute both to the artists and printers for their outstanding achievements.

Monsieur H. de Torrenté then addressed the numerous company as follows:—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by acknowledging a debt which Swiss Poster artists owe to this country; especially to men like Beardsley and Beggerstaff. Swiss art — and I include herein the art of poster design — allows itself to be influenced by foreign tendencies and yet maintains the power to absorb them. So, apart from English painters, Swiss poster artists were also disciples of Frenchmen like Toulouse, Lautrec and Jules Chissel.

The birth of modern Swiss poster art may be said to have taken place about 40 years ago, when Ferdinand Hodler, the most outstanding Swiss painter of those days, laid the foundation of a simple, striking and powerful poster style.

That it was a famous artist who did so, seems to me significant of the fact that, with us, poster design was never considered as an inferior occupation, as a poor and despised relation of real art. From its beginning it attracted and does still attract our best painters, nor do they feel ashamed of having their works exhibited on hoardings. They realize that no other medium makes their work accessible to such

large numbers of spectators and our people certainly do respond. Just as in the London Underground you may hear a man ask his neighbour: "Did you see the last ballet? the latest play?", so in Switzerland you may overhear the remark: "Did you see the latest poster by Carigiet or by Leupin or Erni?" Truly in Switzerland art, in the form of posters, has entered the squares and streets and so becomes available to all the people and not only to the few who visit galleries. The Swiss Government, by giving awards for the best posters, naming artists, printers and advertisers, has contributed in no small way to this development.

I grant you that over-enthusiasm for posters might well spell danger. Switzerland is small and over-crowded. It could easily be disfigured by oversized and over-many posters. Even lakes and mountains can be killed by giant hoardings. Thanks to an innate sense of proportion, we luckily recognized the need for limitation. We limited the size of posters, giving democratically the same opportunity to each. Designers were forced to concentrate on essential features, to use their imagination within a given space. The temptation to attract by size alone was ruled out of bounds, printer and artist alike have to concentrate on quality, excellence of colour and originality of design.

Popular interest would soon flag if the same posters remained on view for any length of time. They would become part of the scenery and be passed by unnoticed. A poster's life at any given hoarding is therefore limited to a mere fortnight. This assures a continuous, almost kaleidoscopic change — a commercial poster will be replaced by a political one, followed by one advertising a cultural event — but whatever the sequence, the walls and hoardings will remain bright and radiant with colour. The Director of the Belgian National Gallery described them poetically as "the walls who sing."

I would like to thank the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising for having offered their hospitality to these "walls who sing" and declare this exhibition open.

After the official opening the party adjourned to have some refreshments, after which the Posters were viewed with great interest.

ST.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

OPEN MEETING

Tuesday, May 16th, 1950, 7 p.m.

Discussion of questions concerning "Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger" Lausanne, 1st-3rd September, 1950.

Please bring your suggestions for discussion.

At the Vienna Café,
Berkeley Arcade, Baker Street, N.W.1.

All Swiss and Friends are heartily welcome.