

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1981)

**Heft:** 1775

**Rubrik:** The Arts

### **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:** 18.04.2026

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

HARDLY anything has suffered so little change between yesterday and today as naive art.

Styles, trends and tendencies may change or alternate, for in general the artist is always seeking new modes of expression in line with the currents of thought of his time.

But this is not true of the naive painter. He restricts his pictures to the milieu in which he grew up, to the familiar world in which he has his roots, to objects, people and animals with which he has a personal relationship. The world of the naive painter encompasses only the realities of his life and of the life of his immediate environment.

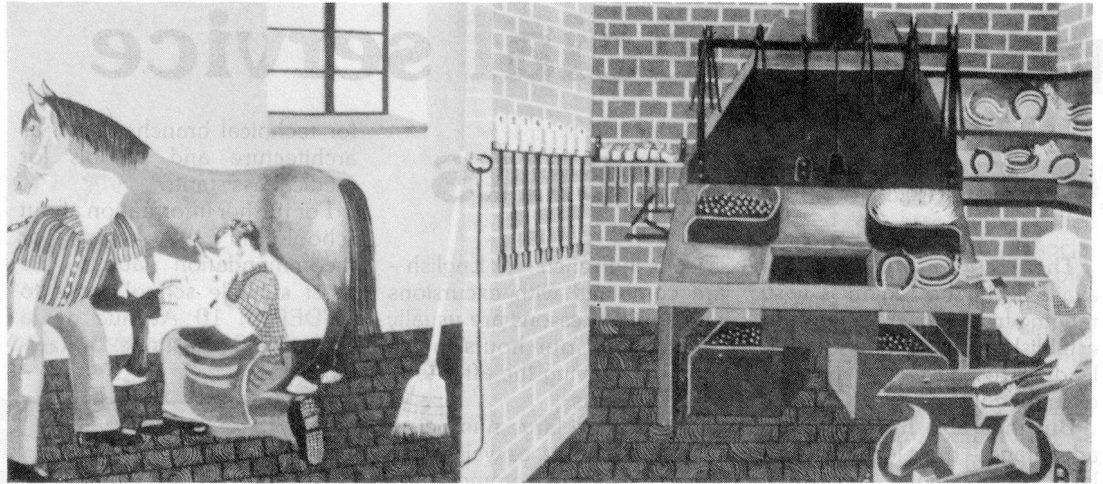
The naive artist seeks neither intellectual confrontation nor the means to give artistic effect to an intention.

He gives spontaneous expression to what he can grasp with his mind and uses the resources he has to hand. That is why naive art never changes as a genre.

Naive art is a great deal older than its name. The term "naive" for this form of art was not coined until the turn of the century in Paris.

At that time the pictures painted by the Douanier Henri Rousseau were attracting the attention of an artistic and literary circle round Pablo Picasso. This circle realised the special quality reflected in the originality and power of Rousseau's paintings but also saw that this painting could not be straightjacketed into any epoch nor assimilated to any previously known style, let alone be taught or learned at any academy of art.

It did not make sense to label



A contemporary example of naive art, "Forge," by Swiss painter Arthur Sollberger

## The naive painters of the Appenzell

this painting with some modified form of "ism", and so the Picasso circle concocted the term "peinture naïve" for Rousseau's painting.

Originality, spontaneity, sensitivity, vitality and expressive power are the hallmarks of naive art, just as they are the hallmarks of every other type of art. The difference lies in the motif and thus in the tendency. In naive art the motif and

tendency are "realistic."

Rousseau remains the starting point and standard for naive art.

Very few examples of European naive art of the 19th century have been preserved, and for these few we are indebted to folklore.

In the Appenzell, amid the Alpine foothills, far away from the events of the great world and the intellectual currents of Europe, a markedly original

culture, language, music, draft-work and painting grew up, based on peasant practices, traditions and way of life.

During the last century the peasants of the Appenzell began to paint pictures spontaneously and without any fixed purpose. These pictures fall into the category of naive art. Along with painting on furniture and other utility articles, they have been included in folk art under the heading of "Appenzell peasant painting."

Some of the early naive Appenzell painters were Bartholomäus Lämmli (1809-1865), Johannes Zülle (1841-1938), Johann Jakob Heuscher (1843-1901), Johannes Müller (1806-1897) and Franz Anton Haim (1830-1890).

MHM

### Exhibition on the move

THE Alberto Giacometti exhibition moved from Manchester to Bristol on February 28, and can be seen at the city's Museum and Art Gallery until March 8.

The exhibition consists of 80 paintings, drawings and sculptures, including one of Giacometti's best known group sculptures, La Fôret.

It goes to London next month.

Another exhibition, "Paris sans fin," this time consisting of lithographs by Giacometti, is being held at the School of Art, Norwich, from March 2 to 21.

## March holds much for music lovers

**Charles Dutoit** conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with Pierre Amoyal, violin.

Works by Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky.

Sunday, March 1, 8pm, Royal Festival Hall.

**Heinz Holliger**, oboe, is the soloist in a concert with the Orchestra of St. John's Smith Square.

Works by Sammartini, Bach, Pergolesi and Arensky.

Wednesday, March 4, 7.30pm, St. John's Smith Square.

**Heinz Holliger** with The

Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Mozart's Oboe Concerto K314.

Sunday, March 8, 7.30pm, Theatre Royal, Glasgow.

**Nikita Magaloff** plays works by Markevich, Schumann and Chopin in a piano recital.

Thursday, March 5, 7.45pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Saturday, March 7, The Vyne House, Hampshire.

**Manola Asensio** dances leading roles in London Festival Ballet's season at the London Coliseum.

Saturday, March 7, 2.30pm, Romeo and Juliet.

Wednesday, March 11, 7.30pm, Romeo and Juliet.

Thursday, March 26, 7.30pm, Giselle.

Saturday, March 28, 7.30pm, Giselle.

Tuesday, March 31, 7.30pm, Giselle.

Thursday, April 2, 7.30pm, Giselle.

Saturday, April 4, 7.30pm, Giselle.

**David Josefowitz** conducts

the new Symphony Orchestra, with Bernard Roberts, piano.

Works by Beethoven.

Monday, March 23, 7.45pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall.

**Erich Schmid** conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Thursday, February 19, 7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (Works by Schubert and Bruckner).

Tuesday, February 24, 7.30pm, Birmingham Town Hall (Works by Debussy, Mozart and Brahms).

# Writer with a probing talent

AMONG the many congratulations showered on Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt when he celebrated his 60th birthday recently were messages from Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany and Swiss Interior Minister Hans Hürlimann. This appreciation of the author was broadcast recently by Swiss Radio International.

IF YOU met him without knowing who he is, you might well take him for an antique-dealer, or the owner of a bookshop – genial, relaxed, stout. If you were then told that this same man has written some of the most profoundly unsettling books and plays of recent years, that he has probed with a talent that may even be genius into the depths of mankind's situation, that he is a visionary – if you were told these things about this unassuming and kind man, you would very likely refuse to believe them.

And yet, that is Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

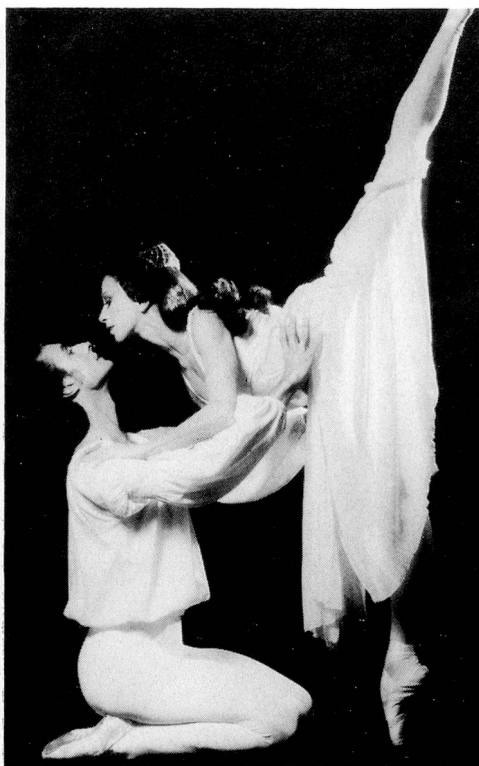
He was born in 1921 in a small town in the region of the Emmental, not far from Berne. Friedrich attended one of Berne's best schools. He was good at the subjects that interested him, such as literature and geography, but in science, for example, he took no interest and dug in his heels.

So bad were his marks in these – for him dead – subjects, and so great his resistance to them, that he was withdrawn from the school.

Dürrenmatt did better at another school in Berne, and then studied literature and philosophy and – surprisingly enough – science, at the Universities of Zurich and Berne. In the 1940s, when he was 22, he started his career as an author.

Having discovered a talent for easy, agreeable writing, he could have cashed in and become an average writer or journalist. Or he could go after his visions – for there is something of the

Manola Asensio as Juliet and Jonathan Kelly as Romeo in Rudolf Nureyev's production of *Romeo and Juliet* for the London Festival Ballet.



prophet in him – and discipline himself and become an author who says something important for all men. Dürrenmatt chose the second way. But that meant years of hardship.

Difficulties were many – complete failure as a drama critic, his illness (Dürrenmatt has diabetes), and the necessity of feeding his family on hardly any income to speak of. Well-wishers helped.

There was one famous time when he was ill in hospital and got some ready cash by telephoning several publishers and promising them all stories, the plots of which he made up

on the spur of the moment. They all sent advance fees, but none got their novels. Later Dürrenmatt sent the advances back.

He rapidly became an author of world stature. Now he earns very handsomely indeed, and can choose any part of the world to live in if he wants. But he has settled down in Switzerland, in a house with a wide view above the lake of Neuchâtel in western Switzerland.

Why? Because he thinks a writer needs to be at a certain distance from the problems he deals with.

## Art – or plain vandalism?

THE Swiss eccentric, Harald Naegeli, who intrigued some art critics as the elusive painter of some 1,500 graffiti on Zurich walls, has been sentenced to a suspended prison term of six months on charges of damaging property.

The Zurich district court refused to accept the 40 year old defendant's claim that his works were of artistic value and had been intended to create a contrast to what he felt was a proliferation of reinforced concrete in the city.

Naegeli, son of a wealthy Zurich family, was ordered to pay 100,000 francs to meet part of the damages, stated by the city administration to total

206,000 francs in cleaning costs.

For two years, Naegeli had been Zurich's "stranger in the night" before he was caught by a watchman. Roaming about in the dark with a spray can, he drew abstract graffiti of human and animal figures that stirred a lively debate over whether this was art or vandalism.

An art gallery featured photographs of his works and several newspapers featured favourable reviews in their culture sections, with one publicly calling on city authorities to stop washing off what it called "creations of enormous fascination."

A Zurich university psycholo-

## Ballerina to appear in Lausanne

THE London-based Swiss ballerina, Manola Asensio, has been invited to the next Festival International de Lausanne. She will, together with a group of other principal dancers from London Festival Ballet, appear under the name "Ballets philo-classiques de Manola Asensio" and present three ballets, one of which she will choreograph specially for the occasion.

Called "De l'Amour", it is in three parts on music by Pachelbel, Ravel and Prokofiev and will be given its first performance at Lausanne.

## Orchestra's London visit

A NEW Swiss chamber orchestra, the Sinfonietta Helvetica, which was founded in 1980, came to London last month for the first public concert they have given outside Switzerland.

The invitation for the concert, which was given at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, came from the New Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra.

The main item on the programme was Schubert's fifth symphony.

Afterwards the orchestra went to Folkestone to give a further concert.

gist published a book on the graffiti, likening them to prehistoric cave paintings. The book said the artist was motivated by "homelessness in an urban environment which has become hostile."

A local art club awarded Naegeli a 20,000 francs prize but Naegeli turned it down. He has also rejected suggestions that he switch to brush and canvas.

His trial followed 192 criminal complaints and private suits from house owners. He himself did not show up at the hearing but instead had his lawyer read out a statement that his "spray paintings are of importance to cultural history."