

Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

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Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

5 January 2021 marks 100 years since the birth of Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The CDN took advantage of this anniversary to explore some less-known facets of the writer and painter, focusing in particular on the dialogue between his pictorial and literary works.

In preparation for the Friedrich Dürrenmatt centenary, the CDN's permanent exhibition was reorganised during the closure from August 2020 onwards, with the aim of making the full breadth of his work even more accessible through a newly designed display and interactive stations. Visitors can now appreciate the reach of his work in Switzerland and around the world on a globe. A lavishly illustrated introductory film traces the biography of an author who was born in Bern and wrote in German but spent more than half of his life in Neuchâtel. A further innovation is a visible storage area in which visitors can open some of the drawers to gain a more in-depth insight and view additional images. The other section is reserved to accommodate parts of the collection under the best conditions for the objects concerned.

Dürrenmatt's 100th birthday was also chosen as the occasion to open up some previously private rooms to the public and use them for events. Dürrenmatt's study in Villa 2 can now be viewed on a guided tour. The items on display include his telescope, on loan from Mario Botta, and the desk at which he drew and wrote. After an absence of 30 years *Die Heilsarmee*, painted by Dürrenmatt's artist friend Varlin, hangs on the wall once again, on long-term loan from the Kunsthau Zürich to mark the anniversary.

Workshops for schools now take place in Dürrenmatt's painting studio, also in Villa 2. The new educational programme is aimed at all ages and is offered in German, French or both. The swimming pool in the garden has been converted and will now be used as a venue for artistic and musical performances. The City of Neuchâtel has laid out a new, idyllic walking trail leading through the Botanical Garden to the CDN.

Scientific work in 2020 focused on preparations for the three-volume, bilingual publication *Wege und Umwege mit Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Das bildnerische und literarische Werk im Dialog*, to be released by the CDN in association with the publishers Steidl and Diogenes and with the involvement of 16 prominent Dürrenmatt specialists.

A number of exhibitions in close collaboration with the CDN also took place outside its walls in 2020. The Spiez Castle Museum presented *Dürrenmatt als Zeichner und Maler. Ein Bildwerk zwischen Mythos und Wissenschaft* (4.7.–25.10.2020). It was accompanied by a two-day conference concluding with a publication. The anniversary was also celebrated through humour in exhibitions outside Switzerland. The Tomi Ungerer Museum – International Centre for Illustration in Strasbourg staged *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. La satire dessinée* (3.7.–31.10.2020). In Heidelberg, the Kurpfälzisches Museum presented *Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Karikaturen*, unfortunately only for two weeks owing to the pandemic (the planned dates were 18.10.2020–7.2.2021).

As a result of the closures necessitated by renovation work and the pandemic, the number of visitors fell sharply year-on-year: 3106 people attended exhibitions or events at the CDN in 2020 (2019: 12282).



The visible storage area is an integral part of the permanent exhibition.



Friedrich Dürrenmatt's office and the objects that were important to him



Interactive stations provide information about the pictures on display.