

**«PREVIEW – Excursion through 20th Century Switzerland»
National Museum Zurich, 5th May – 29th October 2006**

PRESS RELEASE April 2006

The latest collection on display

One thing they have in common, the mobile phone weighing a kilo, the safe weighing a ton, the general's cap worn by Ulrich Wille and the Street Parade: all of them take the museum visitor back to the recent past. By displaying the most diverse items of cultural history, the National Museum invites you to look back at Switzerland in the 20th century. Some 130 exhibits, photographs and paintings in the special exhibition «Preview» do not originate from an archaeological excavation, but from the everyday life of the last three generations. The unconventional exhibition which can be seen from the 5th May to the 29th October in the Ruhmeshalle (Hall of Fame) links the historical past to the personal history of individuals.

This look backwards is also to some extent a look forwards, since «Preview» represents a dress rehearsal for future displays of the most recent past. For 15 years the National Museum has been specifically collecting objects which document the cultural history of the country in the last century. The collection today embraces 28,000 items from the period between 1900 and 2005. In the special exhibition «Preview» the National Museum for the first time shows its «modern treasures» in a comprehensive way, and through the unconventional arrangement raises unexpected questions. The experience gained during this summer will lay the foundation for the corresponding section in the planned New National Museum.

By way of an introduction, «Preview» looks at ten different themes: «Design for living», «Innovation», «Work», «Luxury», «Consumer culture», «Money and finance», «Crises and conflicts», «Ladies first», «Switzerland on show» and «Homeland». The exhibits and groups of objects selected are testimony to important movements, structures and events in the history of society, the economy, the arts and politics.

The unconventional grouping of the objects should not merely inform the public, but also encourage them to take a new look at customary attitudes and engage in a dialogue. The exhibits on the theme «Switzerland on show» look back to the national exhibitions of 1939, 1964 and 2002 and the 700th anniversary celebrations in 1991, as well the most recent world exhibition in Aichi, Japan. The section

on «Luxury» reveals how the term «luxury» has levelled off and changed in consequence of the democratic movements following the 1968 demonstrations. The exhibition architect, Bob Verhelst, has provided a clear and concise structure for the differing messages given by each section.

In addition to the items from our collection in the ten thematic blocks, various loaned exhibits in an additional block called «Alliances» enrich the survey of Switzerland. We thereby underline the importance of our planned closer cooperation with other public and private cultural institutions. In general it reflects the museum's strategic plan to give more prominence to the most recent past in its collections and exhibitions. In addition, «Preview» meets the general desire of the public for exhibitions on subjects of current interest.

Swiss films

Each afternoon in the Salon bleu of the National Museum a half-hour programme of excerpts from Swiss films will be shown repeatedly. The film selection, made with the assistance of the film expert Hansmartin Sigrist, underlines the main themes of the exhibition, and at the same time indicates the range and high quality of Swiss cinema.

Supporting programme

Guided tours such as general tours in the exhibition as well as tours on specific subjects as well discussions and a concert will accompany the exhibition. The detailed programme is available on a separate flyer or at www.preview-ausstellung.ch.

Literature

«Preview – Streifzug durch die Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert»/«Preview – Parcours à travers la Suisse du Xxe siècle». Published by the Swiss National Museum: comprises articles in German and French written by the curators of the Swiss National Museum; Zurich 2006. 104 pages, 40 illustrations in colour (ISBN 3-908025-92-3). Available at the Museum Shop for CHF 18.–.

www.preview-ausstellung.ch

All the texts for the media and a large selection of pictures can be downloaded from www.preview-ausstellung.ch in the media pool.

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