

swiss urban design, life and style.

A Foundation, Rochelle School & Club Row,
Arnold Circus, London E2 (Old Street tube station).

19th June – 1st July 2010

Monday-Saturday: 11am-5pm / Sunday: 12pm-5pm / Free Entrance

Switzerland is justly famous for its natural beauty but a new exhibition shows how the country is also at the cutting edge of aesthetic innovation, with Swiss graphic, interior and urban designers making their presence felt worldwide. The exhibition and event discussions are part of a combined initiative by various departments within the *Embassy of Switzerland* in the UK, presenting a vibrant contemporary image under the slogan: 'Think Innovative; Think Swiss.'

Switzerland has a rich heritage when it comes to hugely influential design. Over the last 100 years it's safe to say that designers such as *Max Bill*, *Kurt Thut*, *Otto Baumberger* and *Ralph Schraivogel*, re-invented much of the design landscape of their own time and, more importantly, are still influencing contemporary design.

Switzerland: Design for Life aims to celebrate Swiss interior and graphic design culture, revealing how Swiss designers have influenced urban life worldwide. It showcases a new generation of innovative Swiss designers who reference their rich design history whilst reflecting current concerns around issues of environment and sustainability, as well as working within a constrained financial climate. Overall the event will present an innovative, influential and sometimes surprising image of Switzerland discovered through design culture.

The Exhibition is divided into two parts that will ultimately complement each other. There will also be a bookshop where books containing Swiss design and designers, lithographs, magazines and a newly-designed *Victorinox* Swiss Army Knife will be on display and available to buy.

Part one – Contemporary Swiss Design

Celebrating the work of a new generation of Swiss designers. The exhibition features the work of twelve of Switzerland's most talented young designers; *Laurent Benner*, *Alex Bettler*, *Kueng Caputo*, *Zak Kyes*, *Jurg Lehni*, *Urs Lehni & Lex Trub*, *Loris & Livia*, *Elena Rendina* and *Regis Tosetti*. In a continuation of an exceptional heritage, these forward thinking designers produce innovative, fresh ways of working, creating projects that move across disciplines; by making furniture, designing books and organizing events. Now an important part of the London design scene their work suggests that good design is not a geographical location or rigid national identity but rather a way of thinking. Good design, like an inspirational country, is fluid; with people, ideas and things flowing freely through it. The exhibition is curated by *Vanessa Norwood*, Head of Exhibitions with the *AA Exhibitions Department*. The *Architectural Association* is an institution widely regarded as one of the world's most significant centres of architectural culture and learning.

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/ Part two – Reinventing an Image

Understanding how Switzerland's identity has changed through the decades and concentrating on the key design periods that were pivotal in Swiss poster art. There are more 20th century poster masterpieces from Switzerland than any other country, the reasons for which lie mainly in a vigorous national program to promote the poster and its printers; and a series of great teachers who advanced the art of the poster. The Swiss poster though had its roots in the travel poster. As Switzerland became a popular travel destination at the turn of the century, the need for promotion arose. The exhibition will include *Emil Cardinaux's* 1908 Matterhorn, the first 'modern' poster which stunned the public with its rich colouring and grand simplicity. For two decades, the Swiss continued to create beautiful illustrated posters for their tourism industry and the exhibition will display a range of the most influential and striking. The vintage posters will be put together by *Artifische*, a Zürich based Poster Gallery which has become the leading poster gallery in Switzerland. It's huge collection features Swiss and international vintage posters over the past 100 years.

Ten Swiss graphic designers, curated alongside *ID Pure*, a Swiss magazine of graphic design and visual creation, will present their contemporary interpretation of a Swiss travel poster for today. These designers from various Swiss cities include: *Buro Destruct*, *Nerves*, *Bureau Collective*, *Stefan Jost*, *ID Pure studio*, *Super Position*, *Grotesk* and *GVA Studio*. How will they portray Switzerland and what images will they use now? Will they choose to avoid clichés or embrace them? The new works will be exhibited alongside the original posters.

As part of the celebration of new Swiss design culture, *Victorinox* will be presenting a special edition penknife featuring one design from a graphic artist featured in the exhibition. This penknife will be available to buy on site as well as in the *Victorinox* flagship store on Bond Street store.

Media events

17th June

- Media Launch for the exhibition in conjunction with 'Innovative Solutions towards Sustainable Urban Development: Visions from Switzerland and the UK' conference event. In the presence of the Mayor of Zürich, *Corine Mauch*, the Deputy Major of London, *Sir Simon Milton* and *H.E. Mr Alex P. Lautenberg* the Ambassador of Switzerland to the UK.

18th June – Discover Zürich

- '*Max Bill – Max Bill and Beyond*' (Swiss artist, painter, typeface designer and architect.)
Panellists: *Jakob Bill*, *Arthur Rüegg*, *Karin Gimmi* and others. Discussion on arguably the most decisive influence on Swiss design.
- 5pm-7pm Private Event hosted by *Zürich tourism* with contemporary Swiss cuisine from *Hotel Restaurant Helvetia*.
- 7pm-9pm Public Vernissage 'Switzerland: Design for Life'

The exhibition was conceived by the *Embassy of Switzerland* and *Pace PR*, a UK/CH based consultancy who specialise in promoting contemporary Switzerland.

For further media information on the exhibition contact *Celeste* at Pace – celeste@pace-pr.freeserve.co.uk
For media trips to Switzerland and to find out more about Swiss cities contact *Katja* at Switzerland Tourism katja.walser@switzerland.com

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