

Prints and drawings department

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Annual report / Swiss National Library**

Band (Jahr): **97 (2010)**

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

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Prints and Drawings Department

A new collection concept has been devised for forward-looking, continuous enhancement of the Prints and Drawings Department (PDD). Its new organisation makes services more user-friendly and permits speedier cataloguing of the collection.

Collection

The PDD is the collection at the NL with the most diverse contents, comprising prints, portrait and landscape photographs, postcards, posters, artists' books, editions, portfolios, artists' archives and the Federal Archives of Historic Monuments (FAHM). A synopsis offering a systematic overview of the entire collection was first produced in 2007, followed in 2010 by a collection concept setting out guidelines for future development and an ongoing acquisition policy.

While completeness is the aim when it comes to collecting posters in conjunction with other Swiss institutions, other categories of documents are for the most part collected more selectively and with an eye to their fit with existing holdings.

Landscape photography may serve as an example, for which the research project "Archives of Place", completed in 2010 in collaboration with the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), sets out a model procedure. The development of two Swiss regional landscapes – the research project involves Schlieren and the Upper Engadine – is to be periodically documented in photographs, making use of the craft's entire palette, from art photography to the new digital forms, including amateur deployment of the latter. The result will be documentation not only of an evolving landscape, but of the development of the medium of photography itself. The project's findings, together with the PDD's collection concept, were presented and discussed among specialists at a conference; the ZHdK also offers online access.¹³

The year in review additionally saw the development of key elements in cataloguing the PDD's holdings. The *HelveticArchives* catalogue now comprises – and makes available for use – 5900 photo portraits. Where copyright allows, catalogue entries will very soon be supplemented with preview images. At year's end, *HelveticArchives* comprised 48 706 entries on documents in the PDD (2009: 40 747). For its part, the Swiss Poster Collection comprised 56 072 records in 2010 (2009: 54 473).

User Services

As of early 2010, with the aim of improving conditions for users, the PDD now occupies new premises in the NL. All staff are thus for the first time optimally located in the immediate vicinity of study areas. All requests for consultation of documents are now centrally registered, facilitating use and reducing processing time. In 2010 information was provided on 583 occasions (2009: 491), 133 of those instances regarding FAHM documents (2009: 148), while reproduction permission was granted on 2497 occasions (2009: 2475), 820 of which regarding FAHM documents (2009: 1923).

Guided tours were performed on request, and, as in previous years, met with special interest on the part of universities of the arts.

The celebration of the 80th birthdays of both Karl Gerstner and Daniel Spoerri, a tribute to the two artists and friends on the part of the National Library's PDD and further recognition of the donation of their archives, was received with particular enthusiasm among specialists in the field.



Schlieren gaswork grounds:
Gordon Bennett balloon races,
photo Photoglob AG, 1909



St. Moritz, aerial photograph of
the Hotel Suvretta-Haus in winter,
photo Swissair Photo and
Vermessungen AG, Zurich,
around 1920



Upper Engadine around 1960,
photo Andrea Pitsch AG
Bauunternehmung, St. Moritz