

Rendez-vous next summer

Autor(en): **Messerli, Patricia**

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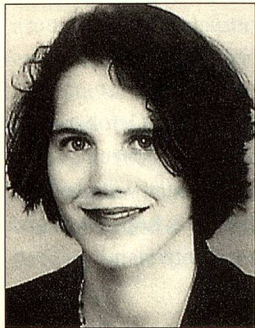
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Rendez-vous next summer

On a sunny winter's day a few weeks ago I found myself in Magglingen, a village above Bienne. As I was admiring the beautiful alpine panorama, my gaze settled on a wooden platform on the shore of Lake Bienne. A friend explained that this was an "arteplage", one of the four exhibition complexes for Expo.02. In just under a year, a major Swiss event will be held on this and three other arteplages in Murten, Neuchâtel and Yverdon-les-Bains!

Most Swiss living in Switzerland are familiar with the world expos which have been held regularly throughout the world since the mid-19th century. The Atomium in Brussels and the Eiffel Tower in Paris are only two of the many well-known attractions and leitmotifs of such expos. The "resonance box" designed by Swiss architect Peter Zumthor – Switzerland's contribution to Expo 2000 in Hannover – attracted much attention and praise from foreign and Swiss visitors.



Patricia Messerli

"Every national exhibition has created a myth for a section of the population"

By contrast, most Swiss of my generation cannot remember any national exhibitions in Switzerland. This is hardly surprising since the last Swiss National exhibition was held in Lausanne in 1964, several years before my birth. All I know is that the legendary submarine Mesoskaph, constructed by Jacques Piccard, was the main attraction.

The first national exhibition was held in Zurich in 1883, followed by one in Geneva in 1896, Berne in 1914, Zurich in 1939 and Lausanne in 1964.

All these national exhibitions had to struggle against problems. None of the first three exhibitions was completely finished on the opening day, and in every instance it took several weeks for all exhibitors to finalise their contributions. And, just like Expo.02 at the moment, Expo 64 was strongly criticised in the preliminary stages.

Yet every national exhibition held to date has created a myth for some section of the population, according to an interview with Martin Heller, Artistic Director for Expo.02.

For this reason I do not intend to miss my first Expo. And to make the time go faster until then, I aim to follow progress on the construction of the wooden platform in Bienne closely. See you at Expo.02?
Patricia Messerli

PS: Want to find out more about the projects for the upcoming Expo? Details are available on the Expo home page at www.expo.02.ch!



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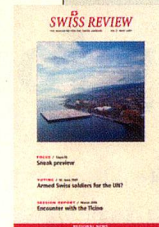
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Neuchâtel, one of the four sites of Expo.02 which will be held in the three-lakes region at the foot of the Jura mountains from 15 May to 20 October 2002. (zvg)

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