Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nativity Scenes

A nativity scene is a depiction of the birth of Jesus as described in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. While the term "nativity scene" includes two- dimensional depictions in painting, printmaking and other media, the term popularly refers to static, three-dimensional, commercial or folk art dioramas, or pantomimes called "living nativity scenes" in which real humans (and sometimes animals) participate.

rate and ever more elaborate static exhibitions with wax and ivory figurines garbed in rich fabrics set against intricate landscapes.

All over the Christian world we find the main figures in varying sizes, carved in wood, formed in clay or papier maché, felted or created in any other conceivable material. They are displayed during the Christmas season in churches, homes, shopping

later we made the whole set ourselves, in clay, with some artistic licence; one of our Magi arrived by elephant…

Those of us who went to school in Switzerland might remember the Swiss version of living nativity scenes, the Krippenspiel, performed mainly at school, with angels losing wings and halos, shepherds forgetting their lines and their cardboard sheep, Magi draped in motheaten velvety curtains, Mary stumbling over her feet, unholy pride for being chosen over a rival as Joseph – and still, it was all part of Christmas and added to our excitement!

from the internet and tb

Traditional "Brienzer Holzkrippe"

Nativity scenes exhibit at least figures representing the infant Jesus, his mother Mary, and Mary's husband Joseph. Some nativity scenes include other characters from the Biblical story such as shepherds, the Magi, and angels. Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223, a "living" one, intending thereby to cultivate the worship of Christ. The scene's popularity inspired communities throughout Christendom to stage similar pantomimes and eventually to create elabo-

malls, and other venues. The Vatican has displayed a scene in St. Peter's Square near its Christmas tree since 1982, and the Pope has for many years blessed the mangers of children assembled in St. Peter's Square for this special ceremony.

Nativity scenes have a long tradition in Switzerland, too. I remember the cut out figurines we placed in the twigs under the Christmas tree (and fighting over the arrangement: surely the shepherds have to be closer to the Holy Family than the Magi!), and

Secretaries: Please send in your club notices for the February edition of Helvetia by January 15, 2010