



What image comes to mind when you hear the name South Africa? We immediately think of culture in all its variety. Pro Helvetia has been working intensively with local artists and cultural practitioners for 10 years. To mark the tenth anniversary of our liaison office in Cape Town, we want to show what can be achieved by such cultural exchange. Hundreds of artists from South Africa and its neighbours as well as from Switzerland have benefited from our support and cooperation over the past ten years, during which around 500 projects have been realised. An anniversary programme will present a pick of these projects.

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10 years Pro Helvetia Cape Town

Pro Helvetia opened a liaison office in Cape Town in 1998, several years after the fall of the Apartheid regime. The office fosters cultural exchange between Switzerland and South Africa with an annual budget of roughly CHF 600,000. Marking the tenth anniversary of its South African venture, Pro Helvetia will be presenting some of the highlights resulting from this cooperation in creative work. Dance with Thomas Hauert, Panaibra Gabriel and CulturArte, hip hop with Rogue State Alliance, jazz with the Swiss-South African Jazz Quintet and Beat Bag Bohemia, as well as a Lolo Veleko exhibition. Further information [here](#)



«China 2008-2010»: Pro Helvetia picks 9 projects

In connection with its «China 2008-2010» programme, Pro Helvetia sent out a call for cultural projects that are to be realised together with Chinese partners. 117 Swiss artists or groups applied. A Swiss-Chinese jury has now picked the 9 most interesting and convincing projects, including the theatre company CapriConnection and the musicians Lingling Yu and Thomas Demenga. In the course of this two-year programme, Pro Helvetia will work intensively on strengthening the cultural ties between Switzerland and China. More at: www.prohelvetia.ch/china0810



Echoes festival: folk culture for tomorrow

To round off its «echoes» programme, Pro Helvetia plans to outline its future promotional policy for folk culture and put it up for public discussion. This will be one of the items at the echoes festival at the Lokremise in St. Gallen from 19 to 21 September. The highlight of the event no doubt will be presentation of the ten award-winning projects of the echoes competition. The plays, installations and concerts selected all, in one way or another, bridge the gap between traditional folk culture and contemporary art. There will also be an exhibition documenting the five large-scale projects implemented by several cantons and towns in connection with the two-year «echoes» programme. Festival details at: www.echos-festival.ch



PROJECTS

Mischa Käser: «Rote Asche»

Swiss composer Mischa Käser has made a name for himself with his interdisciplinary projects. «Music theatre biotope» is what he calls his latest piece, where singers, actors, musicians, dancers and a conjurer combine to evoke a poetic world of sound, image and motion. «Rote Asche» (red ashes) premieres at the Theater Rigiblick in Zurich (4-7 September) and will be on show at the Gare du Nord in Basel on 1

November. Details at www.theater-rigiblick.ch



Writers and translators in Bellinzona

The third edition of the literature and translation festival «Babel» will be held in Bellinzona from 18 to 21 September with the support of Pro Helvetia. A number of American authors have been invited as special guests. Also represented are writers from the linguistic minority of Rhaeto-Romance speakers. One of the highlights will be the appearance of the Tiger Lillies, a cult three-piece band. The event promises exciting intercultural, transalpine and transcontinental encounters and discussions. Details at: www.babelfestival.com



Christoph Büchel in Kassel

Christoph Büchel, a reputed and controversial Swiss installation artist, has been invited to stage a solo exhibition at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel starting 5 September, the kick-off to the Kunsthalle's autumn season. Entitled «Deutsche Grammatik», Christoph Büchel's work reflects on elements of recent German history as well as on the country's social and political structures. Viewers are drawn into the world the artist creates, becoming part of the installation themselves. A scientific support programme featuring well-known experts will be accompanying the exhibition, which lasts until 16 November. Further information at: www.fridericianum-kassel.de



La Bâtie festival

The «La Bâtie» festival has been a late-summer fixture for over thirty years. Dance, theatre and music productions, large-scale and small-scale, from Switzerland and abroad, will be on show between 29 August and 13 September at various venues in Geneva and across the border in France. On 3, 10 and 11 September the spotlight will be on productions from French-speaking Switzerland. Event managers can contact pro@batie.ch. For programme details and tickets go to www.labatie.ch



ZOO/Thomas Hauert in Johannesburg

Marking the tenth anniversary of his ZOO dance company, Swiss choreographer and dancer Thomas Hauert will be going on tour to South Africa with his «Modify» and «Cows in Space» acts. First stop will be the «Arts Alive Festival» in Johannesburg (12 to 14 September), where he will also be holding workshops. Pro Helvetia's liaison office in Cape Town is staging a reception for the company at the Dance Factory on 13 September on the occasion of its own ten-year anniversary. The tour then continues to Maputo (21 September). www.prohelvetia.org.za



PUBLICATIONS

Folk culture in Switzerland

The Swiss tend to have an ambiguous attitude to their own cultural traditions. Innovation is considered the domain of contemporary art and is not usually associated with customs, traditional crafts and folklore. Yet the boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, as is demonstrated by the book entitled «Rückkehr in die Gegenwart - Volkskultur in der Schweiz.» (Back to the present - folk culture in Switzerland). The book summarises the current discourse on folk culture and offers a solid basis for future discussions, drawing on the experience and insights gained in Pro Helvetia's «echoes - folk culture for tomorrow» programme. Further details at: www.pro-helvetia.ch



CALL FOR PROJECTS

Possibility to apply for composition commissions

Pro Helvetia will again be commissioning compositions for 2009, allowing for all kinds of music. The composers selected must be resident in Switzerland and are expected to have a national track record and international potential. The overall budget is CHF 150,000. Commissions in jazz are covered by Pro Helvetia's «High Priority Jazz Promotion» programme. The aim is to have the resulting compositions performed as premieres at a major festival or in a well-known series of concerts. The deadline for applications is 31 December 2008. Details at: www.prohelvetia.ch

FOCUS

Symposium: «10 Years of Hip Hop and Jazz»

As part of its ten-year anniversary, Pro Helvetia Cape Town is organising a public symposium in Basel together the University of Basel's Centre for African Studies. From 11 to 13 September, musicians, event managers and other specialists will discuss the role that hip hop and jazz play in international cultural exchange. Participants include music experts David Coplan (SA), Adam Haupt (SA) and Daniel Künzler (CH) as well as hip hop artists Black Tiger (CH) and Nkuli Mlangeni (SA). The symposium will be held in English. For further information and registration go to www.unibas-zasb.ch



Reading in Lebanon

«Un pays qui lit, un pays qui vit». This is the motto under which the Lebanese Minister of Culture launched a broadly based programme to promote reading in early 2008. UNESCO, moreover, has named Beirut as the World Book Capital City for 2009. Prompted by the Swiss Embassy in Beirut, Pro Helvetia is contributing 400 picture books and books for adolescents to ten major Lebanese libraries, giving youngsters not only fodder for reading but also a glimpse of life in Switzerland.



New editor for folk culture blog

Martin Sebastian, chief editor of the magazine «Alpenrose», is now in charge of the internet platform that Pro Helvetia launched last year for discussions on folk culture. The folklore expert will be spotlighting the folk culture scene and asking pertinent questions. Why are yodelling festivals becoming ever more popular? Is the whole festival hype doing more good or harm to yodelling, alphorn music and flag swinging? You can publish your own opinions at: www.blog-volkskultur.ch



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Read the latest edition of the cultural magazine Passages:
www.prohelvetia.ch/passages/en

Projects supported in 2007 at a glance: www.prohelvetia.ch/report07

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Pro Helvetia supports and promotes Swiss culture in Switzerland and throughout the world.

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