



# Swiss National Library

## Annual Report 2025



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Swiss National Library NL**



Layers of women's lives



### Layers of women's lives

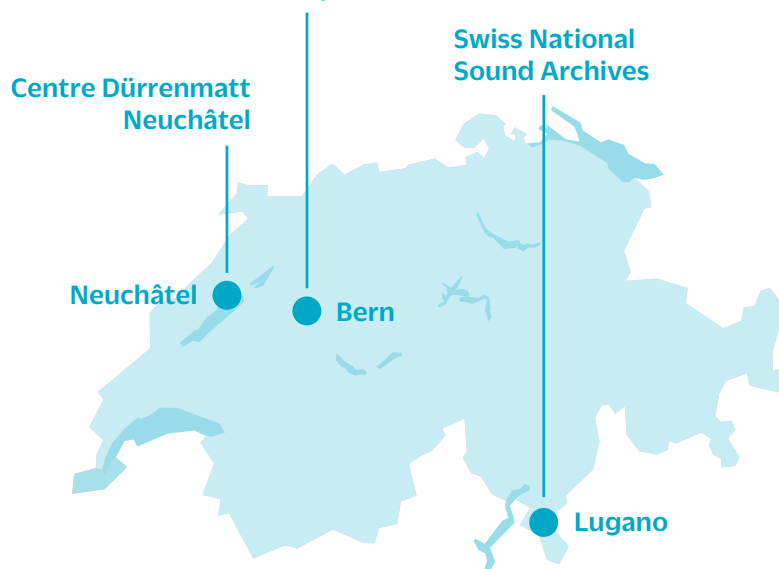
The Swiss National Library presented the exhibition *Layers of women's lives – Looking back at collaborative collages from 1975* from 8 March to 14 June 2025 to mark the 50th anniversary of International Women's Year. The retrospective combined art and social reflection. Visitors were invited to help design a new collaborative mural at the interactive exhibition inviting dialogue between two epochs.



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#### Swiss National Library

- Exhibitions and events
- Library (General Collection)
- Prints and Drawings Department
- Swiss Literary Archives



| 2024 | 2025 |
|------|------|
|------|------|

Media Holdings

Physical collections <sup>1</sup>

|                                                                                        |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Library (General Collection holdings), publications<br><small>in million units</small> |       |
| 3.111                                                                                  | 3.147 |

|                                                                                                                                                           |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Prints and Drawings Department, holdings including special collections and Federal Archive for Monument Preservation<br><small>in million units *</small> |       |
| 1.842                                                                                                                                                     | 1.864 |

|                                                              |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Swiss Literary Archives<br><small>in million units *</small> |       |
| 1.661                                                        | 1.703 |

|                                                                                                                                         |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Swiss National Sound Archives<br><small>number of audio carriers (including audio media in historical holdings and collections)</small> |         |
| 594,896                                                                                                                                 | 705,689 |

|                                                               |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel<br><small>number of works</small> |       |
| 2,526                                                         | 2,528 |

Digital collections

|                                                                           |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Library (General Collection)<br><small>number of archive packages</small> |         |
| 565,209                                                                   | 584,074 |

|                                                                            |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Swiss National Sound Archives<br><small>number of archive packages</small> |         |
| 112,905                                                                    | 118,241 |

Archive holdings

|                                                                         |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Swiss Literary Archives<br><small>archives and literary estates</small> |     |
| 455                                                                     | 463 |

|                                                                                                                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Prints and Drawings Department<br><small>archive holdings (including special collections and Federal Archive for Monument Preservation)</small> |     |
| 292                                                                                                                                             | 292 |

User Services

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Active users |       |
| 2,929        | 3,007 |

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| Individual loans |        |
| 50,881           | 50,221 |

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Information retrievals |        |
| 14,169                 | 15,400 |

|                                                                                           |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Exhibitions, events, guided tours, training sessions<br><small>number of visitors</small> |        |
| 27,159                                                                                    | 32,238 |

Digitalisation

|                                                                                                  |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Library (General Collection)<br><small>number of digitised pages of Helvetica collection</small> |           |
| 776,806                                                                                          | 2,506,000 |

|                                                                                                            |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Swiss Literary Archives and Prints and Drawings Department<br><small>number of digitised documents</small> |       |
| 205                                                                                                        | 7,886 |

|                                                                                 |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Swiss National Sound Archives<br><small>number of digitised audio files</small> |        |
| 50,427                                                                          | 62,111 |

Catalogues

|                                                                                                   |                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Helveticat (library catalogue (General Collection))<br><small>total bibliographic records</small> |                        |
| 2,214,821                                                                                         | 2,206,873 <sup>2</sup> |

|                                                                      |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Swiss Poster Catalogue<br><small>total bibliographic records</small> |         |
| 107,010                                                              | 110,186 |

|                                                                                                                                               |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| HelveticArchives (catalogue of Swiss Literary Archives and Prints and Drawings Department, excluding posters)<br><small>total records</small> |         |
| 852,167                                                                                                                                       | 891,029 |

|                                                               |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Swiss National Sound Archives<br><small>total records</small> |         |
| 330,121                                                       | 333,656 |

Resources

|                                                                   |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Employees<br><small>full-time equivalents, annual average</small> |       |
| 148.6                                                             | 150.3 |

|                                                      |        |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Operating expenses<br><small>in CHF millions</small> |        |
| 39.960                                               | 39.205 |

|                                                    |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Operating income<br><small>in CHF millions</small> |       |
| 0.723                                              | 0.651 |

Printed monographs acquired by the National Library

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Monographs from the book market |        |
| 14,067                          | 13,088 |

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Non-commercial monographs |       |
| 2,546                     | 2,519 |

\* Solid estimate (based on CatCount project)

1 The result of the CatCount project was used as a basis on which to determine the size of the various collections.

2 The reduction results from about 51,000 records of the Swiss Association for Standardization (SNV) being deleted from the digital collections in 2025 and therefore also being deleted from the Helveticat catalogue. They will be reentered and catalogued in better quality in 2026.

**The modernising  
amendment to  
the Swiss Library Act  
establishes a contemporary  
legal basis for our work.**

*Damian Elsig, Director*

# Formative influences on documentary cultural heritage

*Damian Elsig, Director*

As a memory institution of national importance, the Swiss National Library is responsible for Switzerland's cultural heritage. It gathers, catalogues, preserves and shares information about Switzerland. 2025 was a year of major acknowledgements and structural positioning, which sustainably strengthened our ability to perform this task.



The inclusion of the estates of [Annemarie Schwarzenbach](#) and [Ella Maillart](#) in the UNESCO *Memory of the World* Register was a particular highlight of 2025. The decision by the UNESCO Executive Board acknowledged two outstanding pioneers of the travel diary and underlined the international significance of their work. The holdings in the Bibliothèque de Genève, the Musée Photo Elysée in Lausanne and the Swiss Literary Archives in the National Library impressively document the artistic and critical stance of both authors with regard to the defining conflicts of the 20th century. These testimonies are now part of the *Memory of the World* Programme in recognition of their relevance and the longstanding collaboration among the institutions involved.

The passing in parliament of the updated National Library Act was a pioneering step. It provides a contemporary legal basis for our work,



**Annemarie Schwarzenbach**

in front of her Ford in the company  
of a local in Kabul,  
Afghanistan, 1939–1940



**Ella Maillart**

loading her car in Meshed (Mashhad),  
Iran, 1939–1940

so we can broaden our activities to include the gathering, cataloguing, preservation and dissemination of electronically accessible information with a connection to Switzerland in future. The National Library is responding to the digital

conversion of the publication and remembrance culture by expanding its *e-Helvetica* platform. In doing so, we take great care to uphold the rights of creative artists: any non-freely accessible content is only made available following the expiry of the relevant retention periods and in restricted form. The National Library also makes an annual contribution to the cultural fund of a copyright collective.

These developments show that preservation and renewal are inextricably linked. We are creating the conditions to secure Switzerland's cultural memory over the long term under evolving technical and societal conditions. We would like to thank everyone who made this possible most sincerely for their commitment. We are working together to make the National Library a reliable centre of knowledge, remembrance and cultural responsibility both now and in the future.

# A new digital long-term archive for the National Library

The Swiss National Library's new digital, long-term archive has been operational since November 2025. The archive offers redesigned access to the National Library's digital collections, thereby making Switzerland's digital, documentary cultural heritage tangible. This represents a major milestone after six years of work.

The National Library has been collecting and archiving digital Helvetica in text format since 2007 at its main building in Bern. The Swiss National Sound Archives in Lugano have been collecting audio heritage in digital format since 2006. The digital long-term archives previously managed at these two separate locations have now been merged and replaced by a new system. This places the archiving and preservation of digital Helvetica on a stable and expandable foundation going forward. As a result, those digital items in the collections of the Prints and Drawings Department and the Swiss Literary Archives that were almost hidden will be more accessible in future.

The systems for depositing new publications and collecting webpages were renewed and enlarged as part of the merger of the two archives.

Access to the National Library's digital collections is also new. The overhauled access platform *e-helvetica.nb.admin.ch* offers previews of audio documents as well as display windows for current themes and a collage of Swiss webpages. These innovations have made Switzerland's digital documentary cultural heritage tangible.



## Library (General Collection)

The automation of cataloguing and the search function for new Helvetica is gaining momentum and the Swiss National Library experienced pleasing growth in the number of visitors to its exhibitions and events. Users and researchers have access to almost 15 million pages from 209 digitalised historical newspaper titles, offering them a fascinating insight into Switzerland's documentary cultural heritage.



## Collection

At the end of 2025, the General Collection had 3,147 million physical documents (2024: 3.1 million) and 575,900 original digital archive packages (2024: 557,078). The revision of the acquisitions guidelines was completed. These guidelines now also extend to the collection of publications issued by international organisations based in Switzerland.

The **return of Kardex** to Kardex Holding AG for its company museum marked the end of an era: the entirely analogue tool had ensured the complete collection of periodically issued corporate publications over the years. As a result, the analogue management period of this unique collection came to an end.

Two display windows were added to the digital collection for the Eurovision Song Contest and the Women's European Football Championship – both having been held in Switzerland in 2025.

A semi-automated search tool for Helvetica outside Switzerland in foreign bibliographic databases was launched as part of an interdisciplinary, agile process. The Swiss book industry and publishers' association (SBVV) held its General Assembly for the fifth time, and the association for Western Switzerland, Livre Suisse, for the third time in the National Library. These events are in return for the contractual free delivery of the printed works of all the association members and are in recognition of the good collaboration between publishers and the National Library.

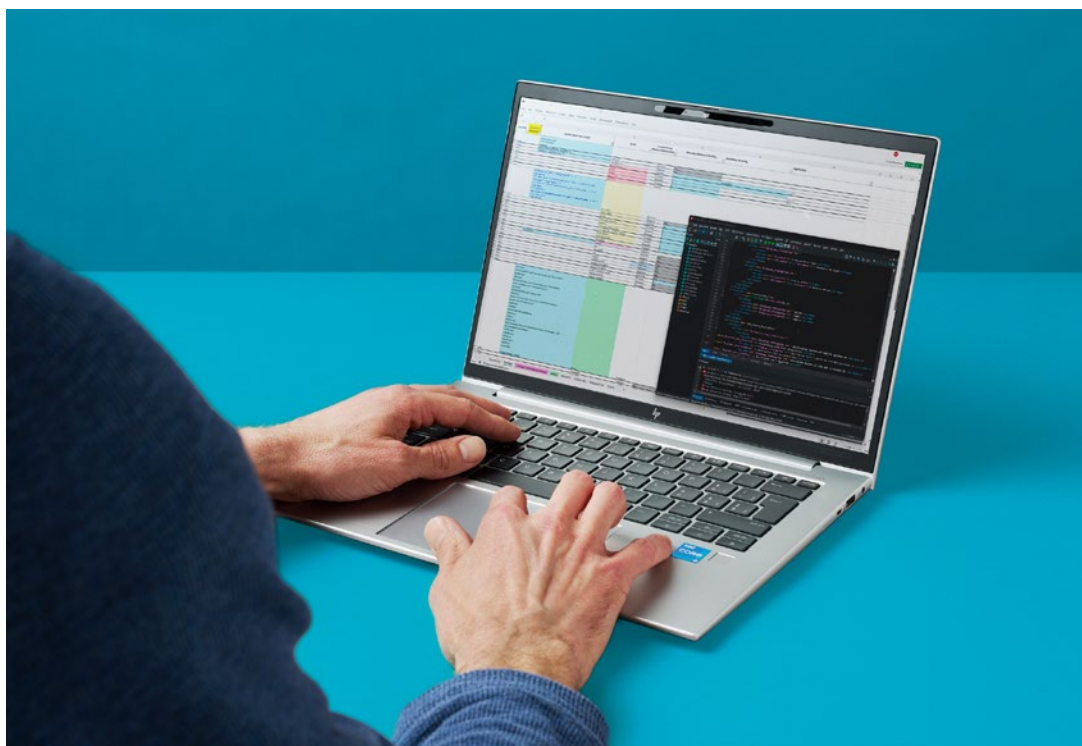
## Catalogues

At the end of 2025, *Helveticat*, the library catalogue, comprised 2,206,873 bibliographic records (2024: 2,214,821). This equates to a 0.4 % decrease and results from an extensive data cleaning exercise, which has sustainably improved the quality of the bibliography. The reduction is due to the deletion of erroneous bibliographic records.



**Return of the Kardex**

The end of analogue administration



### Mappings

for the automatic enrichment of metadata

The competencies for creating **mappings** to automatically enrich metadata were expanded and integrated into the normal course of business.

French and English terms were added to the records of the Integrated Authority File GND in cooperation with the German National Library. The *Bibliography of Swiss History* will be managed exclusively as an online database going forward; there will be no more annual PDF versions.

### Preservation and conservation

49,645 new acquisitions underwent conservation treatment in 2025 (2024: 46,314). The air quality was reviewed in all the floors of the East and West underground stacks in connection with the renovation of the air conditioning system. The recorded concentrations of harmful

gases such as nitric oxide or formaldehyde – from the outside air or emissions in the building – were minimal and pose no threat to the holdings. Tests carried out in 2010 yielded the same positive results.

Storage is planned at  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  for the long-term preservation and **conservation of the photographic holdings**. In 2017, destroyed and second-hand samples were hermetically sealed and frozen in various freezer packs for the purpose of long-term testing. The samples – including cellulose nitrate and acetate-negative, coloured slides as well as humidity indicators – were defrosted and examined in June 2025. This enabled the identification of suitable packaging to reliably protect the holding from humidity over the long term, including in the event of unplanned defrosting.



### Conservation of the photographic holdings

Second-hand samples in freezer packs

### Circulation

In 2025, the National Library had 1,608 active users of its General Collection (2024: 1,477), which equates to an increase of 9 %. The number of loans came to 40,847, which was just 1 % lower than the previous year (41,261).

### Information retrieval

The number of information and research requests came to 10,114, which corresponds to an increase of 13 % (2024: 8,925). Users were also introduced to the new login for *e-newspaperarchives.ch*. Interested visitors participated in 25 **tours of the library**; the new visits to the underground stacks proved particularly popular.

### User services

*e-newspaperarchives.ch* offered at the end of 2025 access to 209 digitised newspaper titles (2024: 190), which equates to 14,785,560 pages (2024: 12,680,113). The biggest contributors were the Geneva press (Tribune de Genève, La Suisse, Courrier de Genève) and Thurgauer Zeitung. 517,216 page visits were recorded (2024: 512,037), an increase of 1 %. The platform for digitised journals *e-periodica.ch* operated by ETH Library Zurich and supplied by the National Library among others counted 367,227 visits (2024: 125,956) and 112,548 downloads (2024: 83,430).

The website *nb.admin.ch* re-recorded 156,085 visits in 2025 (2024: 169,110), which corresponds to an 8 % increase. In total, 20,932 persons (2024: 20,413) followed the National Library on its German and French-speaking Facebook pages at the end of 2025 as well as 8,212 on Instagram, an increase of 5 % (2024: 7,842). The National Library

posted its activities on X (formerly Twitter) during the reporting year.

*Helveticat*, the catalogue of the General Collection, was accessed 392,848 times (2024: 362,891). The *Swiss Poster Collections Union Catalogue* had 85,891 hits (2024: 77,087). The *Bibliography on Swiss History* was consulted 18,577 times (2024: 28,712). *HelveticArchives*, which describes the holdings of the Swiss Literary Archives and the Prints and Drawings Department, was consulted 311,414 times (2024: 64,790). The unusually high number of catalogue requests compared to 2024 was due to a bot from China, which started its activity in August. The average number of hits from January to July show a similar usage level of the *HelveticArchives* to 2024.

The figure for the *e-Helvetic* Access portal to the digital collections was 28,956 (2024: 32,703). This reduction stems from interrupted access due to the activation of the new long-term archive. The comprehensive catalogue *HelveticAll* was consulted by 77,178 persons (2024: 58,437).

## Cultural outreach

In Bern, 12,726 people attended exhibitions and events on site (2024: 9,695), while 981 took part in exhibition tours (2024: 929). The 31 % increase in people who visited exhibitions and events is a reflection of the efforts to increase awareness of Switzerland's documentary heritage as well as to make it meaningful to people and let them be part of it. The exhibition *Layers of women's lives* experimented with a new participative format addressing a broad public. It showed a series



## Library tours

A look at the underground stacks



### Collective work

Visitors are collaborating on the collage

of collages from the National Library's collections from 1975 about the situation of women. Users were invited to help design a **collective work**. The exhibition reached a broad public: children on the *Fäger* holiday and recreation programme made collages, school classes studied the subject of the collage as an art form and the situation of women; the head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs used the exhibition room for her speech on Women's Day and senior citizens recalled their own past. In its *Swiss Press Photo 25* exhibition, the National Library presented the best Swiss press photos for the second time in partnership with the Reinhardt von Graffenried foundation.

### IT

In February the National Library completed its conversion to the Microsoft 365 cloud-based productivity platform as part of a nationwide migration programme and has since been using its tools for digital cooperation.

The Swiss National Sound Archives systems completed their lifecycle in 2025. The specialised application environment was subsequently overhauled: hardware was replaced, network access redefined, the catalogue software updated and the future operation defined.

*e-newspaperarchives.ch* was subjected to many automated attacks in 2025 aiming to download large quantities of data to, for example,

train AI models in contravention of the Terms of Use. Various defensive measures were employed and the introduction of a reverse proxy (Cloudflare) to check access patterns and block automated downloads was an integral component of that.

## Building

The National Library participated as a user in the planning exercise by the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics for the complete renovation of the National Library at Hallwylstrasse 15 in Bern. The construction project phase followed the completion of the pre-project phase. On the user side, the future use of the building had to be outlined in detail, and the requirements of the public, workshops, spatial distribution, technical outfitting and security were defined.

Preparation work started in parallel for the move of the entire library to an administrative building at Monbijoustrasse 72–74 in Bern scheduled for the end of 2026.

## Innovation

The international project consortium **Real versus Digital (ReVerDi)** met in Bern to discuss results and exchange research strategies. Attendees from the United Kingdom and Netherlands gained insights into current themes at the National Library during their visit. The project aims to establish a basis for optimising sustainability in national libraries.

The project for cataloguing posters with AI was approved for implementation. It enables the automatic cataloguing of digitised posters.

The cooperative Library Lab supported automated research for the acquisition and development of tool tracking software and the transcription of audio cultural heritage.



**Real versus Digital (ReVerDi)**

The international project team at work



## Prints and Drawings Department

The main highlight at the Prints and Drawings Department during the reporting year was the expansion and processing of the collection of art prints that has accumulated on paper since 1895. A special outreach programme on the topic of friendship in the arts was also initiated at the *weekend of graphic art* in addition to activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of *European Architectural Heritage Year*. The weekend was coordinated by the Prints and Drawings Department in conjunction with various partner institutions in Bern.



## Collection

The collection of modern and contemporary prints by Swiss creative artists was expanded by almost 200 items (works by, among others, Carla Ferrioli, Béatrice Gysin and Georg Gessler). A multi-year project was also initiated in which just under 20,000 art prints from historical holdings are being registered in accordance with international image indexing standards.

More extensive print collections were made accessible through the *HelveticArchives* archive database: the political caricatures of Alexander M. Kaiser alias A.M. Cay (1887–1971), the complete prints of Bern artist **Peter Stein** (1922–2015), the printed portraits of artist Suzanne Waldvogel-Hürzeler-Erb alias SHE (1926–2022) plus the sketchbooks of Stephan Landry (1960–2009).

The photo documentation of national borders during the corona pandemic (Jan Sulzer, *Abgeriegelt*, prints: Atelier Tom Blaess, Bern) from 2020 was added to the photograph collection. The photo portrait



**Patricia von Ah**

Photo portraits of Christian Kracht, Lou Spichtig and Pedro Lenz, 2014/15

collection was updated with works by photographers Susanne Esche (Meret Oppenheim) and **Patricia von Ah** (Chandra Kurt, Lou Spichtig, Christian Kracht, Pedro Lenz and Milo Rau).

40 works were added to the collection of artists' books, including works by Serge Chamchinov, Stéphanie Mohnhaupt and Carla Neis. A high-quality adaptation of the novel **L'Histoire du Soldat** by Ferdinand Ramuz was received as a gift: puppeteer Hans Wirth produced various volume designs in 1990 with bilingual text including illustrations by Bern graphic designer Heinz Jost (1934–1997).

The output of Basel **postcard publisher Gustav Metz** is now documented in the Prints and Drawings Department in addition to the major postcard publishers Photoglob-Wehrli, Kopp and Guggen-



**Peter Stein**

Printed works from between 1965 and 2000



### L'Histoire du Soldat

Artist's book based on a concept by Hans Wirth with illustrations by Heinz Jost, 1990



### Postcard publisher Gustav Metz

Picture postcards spanning five decades

heim. The lithograph postcards numbering just under 3,000 cover the years from 1890 to 1942.

Over 2,000 posters were added to the collection in the year under review, most of which were gifts (APG, Goldbach Neo, Uldry printers, etc.). The exhibition activity of **Galerie Art + Vision**, which specialises in wood engravings, documents the full collection of posters from 1973 to 2025. The designer Eugen Bachmann submitted several poster designs from the 1980s.



### Galerie Art + Vision

Posters of wood engraving exhibitions

## Outreach

Part of the *Schweizer Ansichten* collection (11,000 images) was released on the German portal *Graphikportal*, which contains prints from 26 international collections.

Moreover, 10,500 pictures from the Prints and Drawings Department were uploaded to the Wikimedia Commons (WMC) platform during the reporting year, including photos by textile producer Rudolf Zinggeler (1864–1954). This brings the total number of freely available images to 48,265. The number of annual hits also rose again to 23 million (2024: 20.5 million). Another writing workshop was held in 2025 in conjunction with Wikimedia CH.



### Heritage days

Tour of the Kirchenfeldquartier / Museum District, Bern

During the national **heritage days** (13/14 September) the work of the President of the Federal Commission for Monument Preservation Alfred A. Schmid (1920–2004) was addressed during well attended architectural walks. Schmid, whose archive is in the Prints and Drawings Department, notably coordinated the *European Architectural Heritage Year 1975* campaign, which was a reaction to the growing threat posed to architectural heritage by waves of modernisation.

The events held as part of the **weekend of graphic art** (8/9 November) marked the occasion of the 100th birthday of Jean Tinguely (1925–1991) to focus on his close artistic friendship with Bern iron sculptor and etcher Bernhard Luginbühl (1929–2011). There was a small exhibition featuring printed work by both artists plus staged



### Weekend of graphic art

Niklaus Talman reads texts by Bernhard Luginbühl

readings from the diaries of Bernhard Luginbühl in the premises of Galerie Kornfeld.

### User services

There were 776 information and research requests, similar to the previous year (2024: 774). There was demand for documents from all parts of the archives and collections, especially from the Federal Archive for Monument Preservation. The number of users on site was higher than in prior years at 155 (2024: 111).

There were notable loans to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in La Chaux-de-Fonds (*Doris Stauffer. Je suis un chasse-neige*), to the Franz Gertsch Museum (*Shin-hanga. Japanese wood engravings*) and to Grisons Museum of Fine Arts Chur (*Daniel Spoerri. Wenn alle Künste untergehn...*).



# Swiss Literary Archives

The year 2025 featured major expansions to the collections of the Swiss Literary Archives and diverse outreach formats. The estate of French Nobel Prize for Literature winner André Gide as well as prominent holdings of contemporary literature were entrusted to the library. The Annemarie Schwarzenbach holding was added to the UNESCO *Memory of the World* Register. Soirées, conferences and publications reached a broad public, cooperation was expanded with cultural and research institutions. Irmgard Wirtz Eybl went into retirement after almost 20 years as head of the Swiss Literary Archives. Her successor is Lucas Marco Gisi.



## Collection

The collection of the Swiss Literary Archives (SLA) was enlarged considerably during the year under review. The extensive estate of the dedicated and well-travelled Nobel Prize for Literature winner **André Gide** (1869–1951) opened the door to numerous outreach and research opportunities (donation by the Catherine Gide Foundation in 2024). The early passing of Ruth Schweikert (1964–2023) brought the archive of a notable author of contemporary literature to the SLA Archives. Friederike Kretzen (\*1956) also donated her wide-ranging literary archive including 60 letters by W. G. Sebald (1944–2001). The holding of Martin Dean (\*1955), a prominent contemporary author and essayist was also added to

the collection. The archive of Russian-Swiss writer Mikhail Shishkin (\*1961) brings an outstanding international voice of Russian exile literature to the collection. The SLA incorporated a total of nine archives and collections including the archive of Romansch author Toni Halter (1914–1986) plus two substantial collections to complete the Annemarie Schwarzenbach holding.

The extensive works of, among others, Lukas Bärfuss (\*1971) and Christina Viragh (\*1953), Jürg Laederach (1945–2018) and Vincent O. Carter (1924–1983) were catalogued and placed online.

## Outreach

The SLA reached a broad public with its outreach formats. There were six soirées in the stylish ambience of Villa Morillon, notably including Elisabeth Bronfen (\*1958), Christian Haller (\*1943), Thomas Strässle (\*1972) and actor Max Hubacher (\*1993). An evening with famous French writer Gérard Macé (\*1946) was dedicated to André Gide and his travels in Africa. The creative period of Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985) while living in Bern was the subject of a soirée in the National Library with curator Bice Curiger (\*1948) and biographer Bärbel Reetz (\*1942).

**Nora Gomringer** (\*1980) and Michael Lentz (\*1964) delivered outstanding performances of the works of Eugen Gomringer (1925–2025) in honour of his 100th birthday. A series of six lunch-time spoken-word performances accessible to a wide audience livened the entrance area to the National Library and featured Beat Sterchi (\*1949), Ariane von Graffenried (\*1978) and **Michael Fehr** (\*1982).



**André Gide**

Portrait of the daughter Catherine Gide,  
manuscript and medal



**Nora Gomringer**

Soirée for the 100th birthday  
of Eugen Gomringer



### Two SLA publications

*Quarto* and anthology *Zukünfte der Philologien im Medienwandel* (The future of philology in a transitioning media)



**Michael Fehr**

Spoken word event  
in the National  
Library

**Two SLA publications** came out at the end of the year: a *quarto* on the topic of “illegibility” plus the anthology *Zukünfte der Philologien im Medienwandel* (the future of philology in a transitioning media), summarising the results of four conferences in cooperation with Justus Liebig University Giessen and illuminating interfaces between the inception of works, archives and the public.

### User services

The contents of the SLA were accessed many times in all national languages, documents by Alice Ceresa, Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Agota Kristof, among others, were often viewed in the reading room; there were also many research queries involving the holdings of André Gide, Annemarie Schwarzenbach, Patricia Highsmith and Blaise Cendrars. In total, there were 966 users of the SLA reading room (2024: 896). The number of information retrievals was 3,760 (2024: 3,857). A total of 143 holdings were consulted (2024: 130). The digital inventories of the estates were consulted over 100,000 times, with particular interest in the digitised travel photographs of Annemarie Schwarzenbach.

### Networking

The estates of Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1908–1942; SLA) and Ella Maillart (1903–1997; Bibliothèque de Genève and Photo Elysée Lausanne) were added to



### Memory of the World

Event marking the inclusion of the Schwarzenbach holding in the UNESCO register with Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider

the UNESCO **Memory of the World** Register. The travel literature holdings of the SLA are gaining in significance as shown, for example, by an editing project in partnership with the SLA on Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Kleine Formen und Briefe* (small shapes and letters).

The *Alpen im Wandel* conference addressed literature from Graubünden in cooperation with the Institute for Cultural Research Graubünden and the University of Zurich in the form of a soirée with **Flurina Badel** (\*1983), **Romana Ganzoni** (\*1967) and **Andrea Paganini** (\*1974).

A research project on the holding of academic Jonas Fränkel led to the *Lesen und Schreiben im Verborgenen* (reading and writing in secret) conference held with ETH Zurich and the Walter Benjamin Kolleg academic department of the University of Bern.

An Italian language summer school addressed central archive-theoretical issues in co-

operation with the universities of Florence and Bern.

The SLA hosted a workshop on an often unfairly neglected phenomenon: white spaces on a page layout, in cooperation with the *Weißräume. Textbilder der Moderne* (white spaces: text images in the modern era) project by the University of Konstanz.

Irmgard Wirtz Eybl led the Swiss Literary Archives for almost 20 years and developed it into an established institution, strategically expanding its holdings and embedding it on a long-term basis in research, instruction and outreach. The number of archives and estates grew under her watch from 215 to just under 450. Moreover, she mainly advocated increased emphasis on the estates of authors and sustained cooperation with foundations and the Society for the Swiss Literary Archives. In September the Swiss National Library nominated Lucas Marco Gisi, previously co-head of Research and Outreach, as the new head of the SLA.



### Flurina Badel, Romana Ganzoni and Andrea Paganini

Soirée on literature in Graubünden



# Swiss National Sound Archives



The Swiss National Sound Archives acquired prominent collections in 2025, including those of Guy Demole and Willy Bestgen. The preserved archives continued to attract strong public interest. The database registered 474,410 hits during the reporting year.



**Guy Demole**  
Audio collection

## Collection

The National Sound Archives acquired 937 new audio carriers in 2025 (2024: 1,075) and added 3,677 new bibliographic records to the catalogue (2024: 7,043). The acquisition of the audio collection of Genevan **Guy Demole** containing extremely rare classical music and jazz recordings is worthy of particular mention. Equally noteworthy is the acquisition of the estate of Bern jazz musician **Willy Bestgen**.

## Outreach

The National Sound Archives loaned out its works through a range of collaborative ventures during the reporting year: for example, for the *Im Schatten des Krieges* exhibition in Prestegg Museum, for the *Volksmusik* exhibition in the Forum of Swiss History in Schwyz and for the **On Displaying Violence** exhibition in the German Historical Museum in Berlin.



**Willy Bestgen**  
Collection of the Bern jazz musician



### On Displaying Violence

Exhibition in the German Historical Museum, Berlin



### Podcast

on the activities of the National Sound Archives

RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera was also provided with various audio documents for the *Millevoci* and *Arpeggi* programmes, as was the Department of Musicology of the University of Freiburg for the *Music and Political Imaginaries in 1930s Europe* conference as well as the Schwabe-Verlag publishing house in Basel for the publication of the *Josef Reinhart und die Musik* volume.

The National Sound Archives in Lugano participated in the *Echi di storia* international festival from 10 to 13 April. On 22 August the news programme *TG5* by Italian broadcaster Mediaset showed a report on the National Sound Archives including a presentation of audio-visual technology. The institution experienced another highlight on 12 September when it was the main guest in the RSI radio programme *Millevoci* – which went out on *Swiss Music Day*. On 23 Sep-

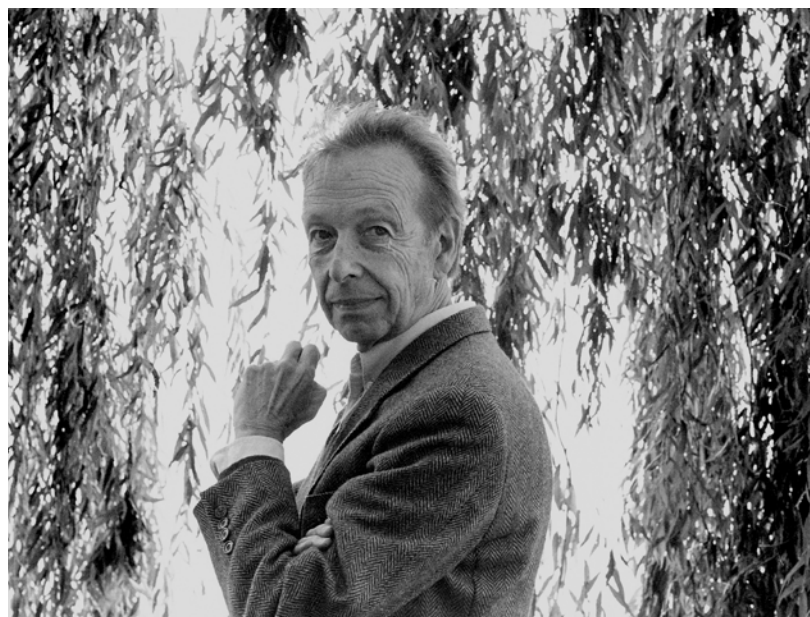
tember, it began the new *Portraits Swiss Jazz* series comprising studio concerts streamed live on the National Sound Archives' YouTube channel: the first concert featured duo Bruno Spoerri (saxophone) and Roger Girod (piano). The National Sound Archives published a **podcast** on various online platforms on 27 October to mark UNESCO World Day for Audio-visual Heritage: the podcast in co-operation with the Markus Zohner Arts Company vividly presents the activities of the National Sound Archives to the public.

The National Sound Archives also published a number of articles on some of its holdings on its website during the reporting year, including those of Engadine poet Peider Lansel (1863–1943), Locarno

author Angelo Casè (1936–2005) and the Schaffhausen and Willisau jazz festivals.

The website also displayed the phonographic collections of some luminaries of Swiss culture, including Bern composer Anny Roth-Dalbert (1900–2004) and Vaud author **Philippe Jaccottet** (1925–2021).

Moreover, the National Sound Archives published many videos and clips on its YouTube channel for its various sections, such as *Sound Machine of the Month*, *Thoughts and Words*, *Interviews* and *Live Concerts* (Bruno Spoerri).



**Philippe Jaccottet**  
Author from Vaud

## User services

Public interest in the National Sound Archives remains very strong: the database received 474,410 hits in 2025 (2024: 528,000). Of the 57 institutions with one or more audiovisual workspaces offering access to the database of the audio collection, a total of 137,947 audiovisual documents were consulted during the reporting year (2024: 239,739). The database was enlarged by 5,494 hours of audio material digitised by the National Sound Archives (2024: 7,280) and 317 hours of video material (2024: 487).

## Networking

The National Sound Archives strengthened its national and international network by participating in various conferences and congresses. In September, it was represented at the annual conference of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) in Honolulu (Hawaii). In October, it presented the workshops *Recovering the unrecoverable* and *Preserving the past: the critical role of playback machine maintenance in sound archives* at the annual conference of the Audio Engineering Society (AES) in Long Beach (California). Finally it also took part in the annual conference of the IASA Germany/Switzerland country group in Eisenach (Germany) in November. Experts from all over the world attended the conferences.

# Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel

The Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel (CDN) celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025 with an exceptional programme, which met with great interest from the public. There were three exhibitions during the year, a new permanent art installation and many cultural occasions. Another major event was the retirement of Madeleine Betschart and the appointment of Gabriel Grossert as the new head of the CDN.



## Outreach

The **festivities** marking the 25th anniversary of the CDN started with a celebration attended by many prominent personalities, including Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider. Friedrich Dürrenmatt's office was also opened to the public on every Sunday as well as the usual opening times on Saturdays to mark the anniversary.

Schools from all over Switzerland were able to attend workshops and tours free of charge. An interactive terminal on the architecture of Mario Botta and a display window for the Dürrenmatt play *The Visit* were also added to the CDN.

There were three temporary exhibitions during the year. **Lotti & Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Music** shed light on a not so well-known dimension of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's work. It also acknowledged his first wife Lotti Geissler, especially by using her piano at concerts. This was followed by the **Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Football** exhibition covering the passion held by the



**Lotti & Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Music**

A look at the temporary exhibition



**Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Football**

A look at the temporary exhibition



**Festivities**

for the 25th anniversary of the CDN



**Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Collective**  
A look at the temporary exhibition

writer and painter for the sport including his works on football and links to Neuchâtel Xamax football club. The year closed with the **Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Collective**, an exhibition by young creative artists to mark the conclusion of the first three years of a residency programme run by the CDN, Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) and the Académie de Meuron. In 2025, a new installation entitled **Havel's Place** was also added to the CDN. The art project includes a tree of peace and is dedicated to Václav Havel, dramatist and first President of the Czech Republic. It is in memory of the friendship between Václav Havel and Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

The year featured numerous events organised with various partner institutions. The highlights included a day of celebration in the name of *Science and Culture*, a talk by Salomé Saqué and nine concerts, four of which were connected to the exhibition on music. The CDN also hosted a number of



**Havel's Place**  
Inauguration of the art installation at the CDN

theatre performances including *Pour Václav Havel* and *F.C. Helvetia 1291* by Omar Porras as well as the choreographic and musical creation *Le Tambour du Minotaure*. The programme was rounded off by many animated meetings including a discussion on the translation of Dürrenmatt's works, a Slam evening, a podium discussion on the connections between football and literature as well as blindfolded tours. In addition, the CDN hosted the *Prix du Public* from the RTS (audience award).

Madeleine Betschart went into retirement in 2025 following ten years at the helm of the CDN. Under her leadership the CDN became known as a place of creation, research and outreach related to the work of Dürrenmatt. She organised three anniversaries with her team and developed several innovative projects including the opening of Dürrenmatt's living quarters, about 30 exhibitions and just as many publications, the renewal of the permanent exhibition, international projects, the publication of a reference work, the development of an outreach offering and the introduction of new media.

In November, the Swiss National Library appointed Gabriel Grosert, an academic employee at the CDN, as the new head of the CDN.

## User services

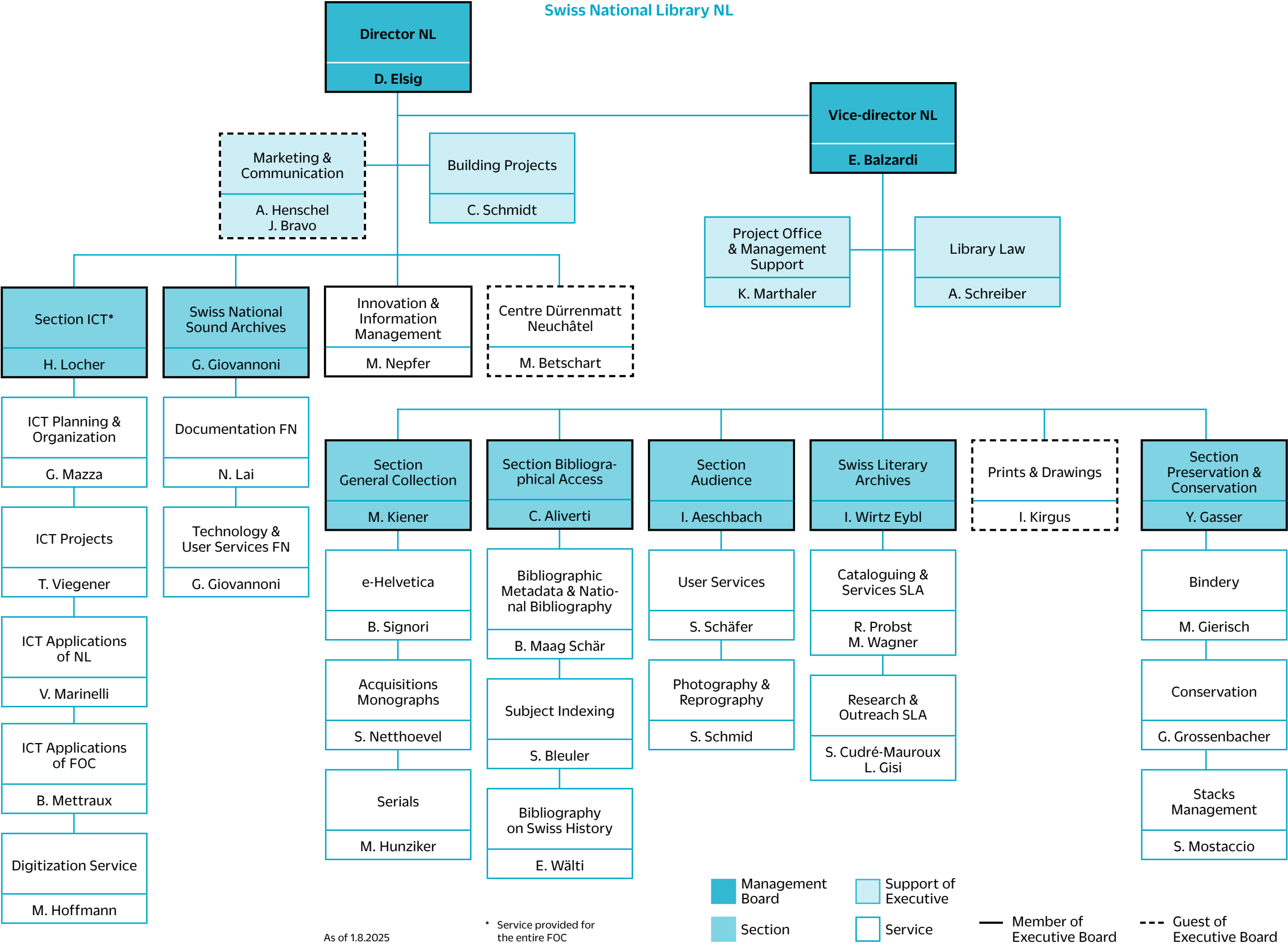
The CDN welcomed 18,435 visitors in 2025 (2024: 16,296). Over the course of the year, the CDN organised 122 public events (2024: 67), 205 guided group tours (2024: 200) and 123 school workshops, which were free of charge for the anniversary year (2024: 55).

## Networking

The CDN fostered many partnerships for its exhibitions and events, including with Club 44, Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève, Conservatoire de musique neuchâtelois, the Association Danse Neuchâtel, Printemps culturel, the Théâtre Kléber-Méleau, the International Centre for Sports Studies, Neuchâtel Football Association, Neuchâtel Xamax, the Jardins Musicaux, the Société de Musique Neuchâtel, the NEC, the Botanical Garden, the University of Neuchâtel, Le Pommer, Les Lundis des mots, Step2blind, the WhiteSpaceBlackBox Foundation, the Neuchâtel-Berlin Association, Neuchâtel Museum of Art and History, the Haus Kunst Berlin, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Switzerland and the Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation VIZE 97 in Prague. Moreover, partnerships with fourteen theatres led to cultural outreach actions.



**Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Collective**  
Theme day of the exhibition



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**25** Markus Zohner

**27** Left: David von Becker  
 Right: Markus Zohner

**28** Yvonne Böhler

### Captions cover

Top left:  
 Artist's book  
*L'Histoire du Soldat*  
 (see p. 19)

Top right:  
 A look at the temporary exhibition  
*Friedrich Dürrenmatt – Football at the CDN*

Bottom:  
 A look at the temporary exhibition *Swiss Press Photo 25* at the NL





### Swiss Press Photo 25

What will people remember from 2024? The Swiss National Library presented the *Swiss Press Photo 25* exhibition from 3 July to 10 October 2025 with the best pictures taken by Swiss press photographers in 2024. The retrospective was organised in partnership with the Reinhardt von Graffenried Foundation and showed the prize-winning pictures of the *Swiss Press Photo Award*.