



Press release

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The 27 Most Beautiful Swiss Books of 2011

The competition *The Most Beautiful Swiss Books* exists since 1943, and is coordinated by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture since 1999. A five-member jury awarded a total of 27 books published in 2011. The Jan Tschichold Award, which honours excellence in the field of book design, goes to a printer for the very first time: Erich Keiser of the Druckerei Odermatt in Dallenwil (canton of Nidwalden), Switzerland.

Swiss Federal Office of Culture organizes the competition *The Most Beautiful Swiss Books* on an annual basis. It thereby recognizes excellence in the field of book design and production, as well drawing attention to remarkable and contemporary books by Swiss designers, printers and publishers. The independent, five-member jury presided by Manuel Krebs, awarded a total of 27 books from a total of 392 submissions as the most beautiful Swiss books of 2011.

For the first time in nine years, two children's books were awarded: *Oskar Tiger* by Dieter Meier and Franziska Burkhardt (Kein & Aber) as well as *Ghost Knigi* by Benjamin Sommerhalder (Nieves).

The jury takes into account each book's overall concept, graphic design and typography, and pays particular attention to innovation and originality. Further criteria include the quality of the printing and the cover, the binding and the materials used.

Jan Tschichold Award bestowed on a printer for the first time

Every year the jury bestows, independently of the books submitted for the competition, the Jan Tschichold Award in memory of the typographer Jan Tschichold, on whose initiative the Swiss book design competition was conceived in 1944. The Federal Department of Home Affairs entrusted the jury in 1997 with the task of annually awarding this honour to an individual, a group or an institution for outstanding book design achievement.

This year, the Jan Tschichold Award, which is endowed with 15,000 Swiss francs, was awarded to Erich Keiser, of the printing company Odermatt in Dallenwil (canton of Nidwalden), Switzerland. It is the first time that the jury awards a specialist from the printing domain. The jury also wishes thereby to stress the importance of the partnership between printers, designers and publishers. Erich Keiser manages, in an exemplary fashion, to facilitate an overall collaboration along the interfaces of publishing, design and production. This expands the potential for unconventional and top-quality outcomes. It is a fact that

technical know-how is strongly linked to production facilities, and that these, owing to the economic situation, are now increasingly being sought outside of Switzerland. This advancing brain drain is a development which the jury feels necessary to draw attention to.

A printing press with an international reputation

Since 1998, already fifty publications printed by Odermatt have been awarded with the prize of *The Most Beautiful Swiss Books*. Erich Keiser's commitment to the highest standards of printing quality, his openness for and support of unconventional projects and solutions are indisputable. Keiser is known as a specialist and consultant who tries to make individual solutions possible and who continuously questions and optimizes the technical process. Often, it is he who facilitates certain design decisions and thereby he influences the look and feel of a book much beyond the printed execution. The Odermatt printing company plays a pioneering role in printing techniques, and is also known abroad for the excellent quality it delivers. For example, reputed galleries in London and New York have their elaborate catalogues printed by this small printing house in Dallenwil.

Exhibitions and awards

From 5. to 8. July 2012, the *The Most Beautiful Swiss Books* of 2011 will be exhibited at the Helmhaus Zürich, alongside the simultaneous publication of the catalogue showcasing the competition (design: Aude Lehmann). On the occasion of the exhibition opening, the Jan Tschichold Award winner will receive his award.

In the autumn of this year, the books will be presented, for the first time, at ECAL/University of Art & Design Lausanne. As in the previous year, all the submitted books entered into the competition will be displayed alongside the award-winning titles. The books will also travel to Paris (Centre culturel Suisse), Lavin/Grisons, and St. Gall.

Further information and documentation

- List of the awarded books of 2011
- Biography of the Jan Tschichold award winner Erich Keiser
- Exhibition dates 2012
- Press images:

<http://www.bak.admin.ch/aktuelles/01832/02328/04468/index.html?lang=de>

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The Most Beautiful Swiss Books 2011

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