

# Landesmuseum Zürich.

## Zauber Berge

### Switzerland as energy centre and sanatorium

26 March – 15 August 2010

Temporary exhibition at the National Museum in Zurich

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## Magic Mountains at the National Museum in Zurich

**Mountains, safe cities and trains running on time are all part of Switzerland's image. So are healthy air and pure water, mountain resorts, spas and naturally produced food such as Alpine milk and Birchermuesli, which is one of the few Swiss-German words in international usage.**

What is the story behind Switzerland's reputation as a health paradise, as a 'magic mountain' or 'world sanatorium', as it's described in the spa almanac of 1886? The exhibition, curated by Felix Graf of the Swiss National Museum and Eberhard Wolff of the Medical-Historical Institute and Museum of the University of Zurich, spans a range of topics from Haller's Alpine poem via the 'life reform' colony on Monte Verità, to the mountain clinics in Leysin and Davos, to Ricola and Ovomaltine, the cult of fitness in gyms, and Hermann Haller's monumental sculpture 'the sun worshipper', on the Zurich Landiwiese. The 19<sup>th</sup> century health reform movement and today's eco-landscape are both emblematic of Switzerland.

The impetus for staging the exhibition came from the recently published biography of the medical doctor Dagmar Liechti-von Brasch (1911–1993). She was the niece of the nutrition pioneer Max Bircher-Benner, and from 1948 to 1980 a successful and internationally known medical director of the clinic founded by her uncle in 1904. What was originally planned as a biographical exhibition about two prominent Swiss pioneers of holistic medicine developed, as research progressed, into a comprehensive exhibition about the image of Switzerland as a paradise of health. The Swiss health landscape, beyond the operating theatres, is closely linked to Swiss identity. It is no coincidence that in 1939, Hans Erni chose the now virtually forgotten open-air school of the physician Auguste Rollier in Leysin (VD) as one of the motifs for his monumental wall mural 'Switzerland, holiday country of

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the nations'. The plate referring to this, from the collection of the Swiss National Museum, is the guiding object of the exhibition which throws new light on an important chapter in Swiss history.

## **Publications for the exhibition**

Zauber Berge. Die Schweiz als Kraftraum und Sanatorium, Felix Graf, Eberhard Wolff (ed.), Baden: hier+jetzt 2010, 184 pp. 83 illustrations CHF 38.- ISBN 978-3-03919-162-8

Lebendige Kraft. Max Bircher-Benner und sein Sanatorium im historischen Kontext, Eberhard Wolff (ed.), Baden: hier+jetzt 2010. 200 pp 73 illustrations, CHF 48.- ISBN 978-3-03919-163-5

The books are published by hier+jetzt and are available in the museum shop, in bookshops or via [buchbestellung@snm.admin.ch](mailto:buchbestellung@snm.admin.ch).

## **[www.zauberberge.landesmuseum.ch](http://www.zauberberge.landesmuseum.ch)**

You can find more information about the exhibition and the supporting programme on this Website.

**All media texts and a selection of images can be downloaded from the homepage at [www.zauberberge.landesmuseum.ch](http://www.zauberberge.landesmuseum.ch) under «Presse».**

## **For further questions, please contact:**

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