

Swiss Grand Award for Design 2017 13–18 June 2017

Messe Basel, Hall 3

An exhibition by the Federal Office of Culture

Press preview

12 June 2017, 10 am

Opening

12 June 2017, 7–10 pm

Award ceremony

13 June 2017, 6–10 pm



Swiss Grand Award for Design 2017 goes to David Bielander, Thomas Ott and Jean Widmer

The Federal Office of Culture has named jewellery designer and artist David Bielander, comic-book artist and illustrator Thomas Ott, and graphic designer and art director Jean Widmer as the winners of this year's Swiss Grand Award for Design. With its selection, the Federal Design Commission recognises the work of three outstanding designers who have played a defining role in cultural creativity in Switzerland.

David Bielander translates simple everyday objects into exceptional pieces of artist jewellery, opening up unexpected lines of communication for both wearer and viewer. Thomas Ott is a master of storytelling whose dark, wordless comics are universally comprehensible and visually unmistakable. Jean Widmer, meanwhile, is one of the first Swiss graphic designers in Paris, whose clear, precisely coloured designs were ahead of their time. He has created the visual identity of cultural institutions including the Centre Georges Pompidou, the Musée d'Orsay and the Institut du Monde Arabe.

The award winners will receive their honours on Tuesday 13 June 2017 in the Swiss Design Awards exhibition. The exhibition, which runs in parallel with Art Basel and DesignMiami, will also feature interviews and photographic portraits of the award winners.

Launched in 2007 and endowed with CHF 40,000 in each case, the Swiss Grand Award for Design highlights the work of well-known designers that exemplifies the quality and relevance of Swiss design practice nationally and internationally.

The laureates

David Bielander, b. 1968 in Basel Artist and jewellery designer, Munich

David Bielander (born 1968) develops intriguing jewellery pieces that defy user expectations and push the limits of what an ornament can be. Following apprenticeships in Basel and Schwäbisch Gmünd, Bielander enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he studied under professor Otto Künzli. He has since developed an unconventional, self-lead path where experimentation abounds, precious materials are subverted and pushed to the limit, and the user is intentionally pushed out of his comfort zone. Bielander lives and works in Munich, and his work has been shown in galleries and museums around the world.

The Confederation grants Bielander a Swiss Grand Award for Design in recognition of unconventional point of view and his critical method, which yield unconventional and striking results that set him at the forefront of international jewellery design. Prior to the Grand Award, Bielander has won the Swiss Design Award in 2012.

Thomas Ott, b. 1966 in Zurich Illustrator and comics artist, Zurich

Thomas Ott (born 1966) is a Zurich-based comics artist and illustrator who creates immersive and unique dark worlds. Following his studies at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich, Ott's work has appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines throughout Europe. From his first book *Tales of Error* to his latest tome, *A Hell of a Woman*, he has refined his use of the scratchboard as a medium, creating striking characters and scenes with painstaking detail and clarity. Simultaneously, Ott's wordless stories have become more layered and complex, giving rise to kaleidoscopic narratives that are both violent and mesmerizing.

The Confederation grants Ott a Swiss Grand Award for Design in recognition of his unique place in the Swiss comics and illustration scene, as well as his unmistakable international appeal. The distinction of his work marks the first time the Award is bestowed upon a comics artist. Prior to the Grand Award, Ott has won the Swiss Design Award in 1986, 1989 and 1993.

Jean Widmer, b. 1929 in Frauenfeld Graphic designer and Art Director, Paris

Jean Widmer (born 1929) is a graphic designer and art director based in Paris. He studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich, under Johannes Itten, and shortly afterwards moved to Paris, as part of a group of Swiss designers which were to fundamentally influence graphic design in France in the second half of the twentieth century. Widmer was art director at Galeries Lafayette and fashion magazine Jardin des Modes, transforming the graphic outputs of both. Later, his posters for the Centre de Création Industrielle created an unmistakable style, which came to full fruition in his image for the Centre Pompidou and other cultural agents in Paris, as well as in important signage work for the French motorways and tourism signposts throughout the country.

The Confederation grants Widmer a Swiss Grand Award for Design in recognition of the fundamental relevance of his work and career, his important contribution to design education in France, and his role as a pioneer in a generation of Swiss practitioners who changed the course of graphic design in Europe in the 20th century.

Publication

Swiss Grand Award for Design 2017
68 pages (German/French/English)
With texts by Francois Barré, Hazel Brugger,
A.C. Kupper and Suzana Rozkosny as well as
interviews by Vera Sacchetti
Design: Jonathan Hares, Lausanne
Photos: Gina Folly, Basel

Exhibition

Press preview

Monday 12 June 2017, 10 am
Hall 3, Messe Basel

Opening (together with Swiss Art Awards)

Monday 12 June 2017, 7 – 10 pm
Hall 3, Messe Basel

Award ceremony Swiss Grand Award for Design and Swiss Design Awards

Tuesday 13 June, 6 – 10 pm
Hall 3, Messe Basel

The Swiss Design Awards 2017 exhibition is open from
13 – 18 June 2017, daily from 10 am – 7 pm, Sunday 6 pm
Admission is free

More information on the
www.swissdesignawardsblog.ch

Visual materials on the award winners are available for
download on the website: <http://www.bak.admin.ch/sgpd>

Instagram:
[@swissdesignawards/#swissdesignawards](https://www.instagram.com/swissdesignawards/)

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/sdaswissdesignawards

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Media services (for interviews with the laureates and accreditation
for the press preview and/or award ceremony in Basel)

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Swiss Grand Award for Design

In addition to the Swiss Design Awards, the Federal Office of Culture has, for the last eleven years, presented the Swiss Grand Award for Design to individual designers or established design firms that contribute to the renown of Swiss design nationally and internationally. The Swiss Grand Award for Design originated as a means of encouraging, supporting and ultimately honouring the Swiss design scene. The prize communicates and indicates the traditions of Swiss design.

Laureates 2007 – 2016

2016

Claudia Caviezel (textile designer)
Hans Eichenberger (product designer)
Ralph Schraivogel (graphic designer)

2015

Luc Chessex (photographer)
Lora Lamm (graphic designer)
Team'77 (Erich Gschwind, André Gürtler, Christian Mengelt, typographers)

2014

Erich Biehle (textile designer)
Alfredo Häberli (product designer)
Wolfgang Weingart (typographer)

2013

Trix and Robert Haussmann (product designers)
Armin Hoffmann (graphic designer)
Martin Leuthold (textile designer)

2012

Franco Clivio (product designer)
Gavillet & Rust (Gilles Gavillet, David Rust, graphic designers)
Karl Gerstner (graphic designer)

2011

Jörg Boner (product designer)
NORM (Dimitri Bruni, Manuel Krebs, graphic designers)
Ernst Scheidegger (photographer)
Walter Steiger (footwear designer)

2010

Susi und Ueli Berger (furniture designers)
Jean-Luc Godard (filmmaker)
Sonnhild Kestler (textile designer)
Otto Künzli (jewellery designer)

2009

Robert Frank (photographer)
Christoph Hefti (textile designer)
Ursula Rodel (fashion designer)
Thut Möbel (furniture design)

2008

Holzer Kobler Architekturen (Barbara Holzer, Tristan Kobler, exhibitions designers)
Albert Kriemler (AKRIS, fashion designer)
Alain Kupper (graphic designer, musician, artist, gallerist)
Walter Pfeiffer (photographer)

2007

Ruth Grüninger (fashion designer)
NOSE (communication design, service design)
Bernhard Schobinger (jewellery designer)
Cornel Windlin (graphic designer)

Federal Design Commission

Chair

Lionel Bovier
Director, Mamco (Musée d'art moderne
et contemporain), Geneva

Members

Laurent Benner
Visual designer, London and Zurich

Nicoletta Cavadini
Director, m.a.x.museo, Chiasso

Christoph Hefti
Textile designer, Brussels

Aude Lehmann
Graphic designer, Zurich

Renate Menzi
Curator, Design collection,
Museum für Gestaltung Zürich

Heidi Wegener
Design consultant, Meilen