

Press release

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Amazingly ambivalent

What is Switzerland? What makes the Swiss tick? Where is our place on the world map? A new exhibition explores how we in Switzerland see ourselves, and how others see us. The exhibition brings us face to face with some divergent views, and aims to prompt visitors to self-reflect.

Switzerland is often described as a perfect country: breath-taking scenery, sparkling clean cities and a highly efficient infrastructure. Food and water shortages? We Swiss only know about those things from the news. Political upheavals happen elsewhere, and humanitarian involvement and “good deeds” are part of Switzerland’s self-image. A little paradise in the middle of Europe.

Or is it? On closer inspection, contradictions emerge. What about all the suspicious people checking up on each other? And what place do the greedy bankers have in paradise? Does the picturesque landscape rob people of their sense of humour? And why does no one want to stand out here, to draw attention to themselves?

So what is it, our little Switzerland? Idyllic paradise, or staid backwater of provincial attitudes? A nation open to the world and all it holds, or a stronghold of conservatism? This question isn’t so easy to answer. It depends not only on the perspective, but also on who’s answering. In addition, there are often a number of facets that may be diametrically opposed. Switzerland is full of bewildering contrasts.

The exhibition “Amazingly ambivalent” examines some of the views held by insiders, and those on the outside, and uncovers contradictory aspects of Switzerland. It aims to encourage visitors to reflect on themselves and their relationship with Switzerland.

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