

AICHI

Clothing for the Personnel at the Swiss Pavilion in Aichi,
2005 Christoph Hefti & Lela Scherrer

The visually defining and unifying element of the outfits at the Swiss pavilion is the fabrics, which were printed exclusively for the exhibition in Aichi. They are a result of the implementation of old print screens from the archives of Swiss textile manufacturers, used in a new way and put into a current context. By combining selected screens and altering the printing procedure, Hefti and Scherrer created new designs and chance patterns, making each piece of clothing one-of-a-kind. Trends and ideas from past eras were 'recycled' into fabrics which are completely new. They are the unmistakable eye-catchers of the clothing for the Aichi personnel and are to be found at least once in each outfit. Printing as an artistic means, as exemplified by the 'printed mountain' in the pavilion, was adopted and transferred to the medium of textiles. The colours were inspired by Swiss landscape, and contrasted with a palette of the grey and silver tones of the mountain. An image of Switzerland emerged.

By varying the printing and including diverse elements, each outfit is unique, and not a uniform. The look is fresh and fashionable. Colorfulness and repetition (of prints, accessories, and emblems) guarantee visual unity. High demands are placed on this clothing, which is located where aesthetics and functionality, fashion and work clothes meet. The clothing must make the personnel visible, and simultaneously it should convey the message of the exhibition to the visitor. The clothes make a strong symbolic statement. Therefore, it was desirable to include textile design in the project. One of the oldest still-existing branches in Switzerland, the textile industry is also a symbol for an ever-changing Switzerland. It connects two faces of Switzerland, a traditional and conservative, with a modern and innovative one. The products range from the traditional scarf from Glarus and lace from St.Gall, to haute couture fabrics and novel fibres like velcro and lycra. For this reason, the Swiss textile industry should be the point of origin for the staff's clothing in Aichi.

The clothes for the exhibition personnel must fulfil aesthetic demands, particularly because it is known that the Japanese have a strong sense of fashion. Men shall wear form-fitting suits with polos. These shirts have sewn-on patches and accents of colour on the collars and cuffs, and are combined with solid-coloured ties. This is consistent with the trends outlook for S/S 2005. Accessories, some of which are also printed, top off the look. The visual recognisability of, for example, printed scarves and hip bags, makes these items ideal for marketing. In line with the basic concept of the pavilion, the clothes for the personnel play with stereotypical images of Switzerland. Mountain emblems and the traditional belt from Appenzell, for example, were included, but in a new and unique way.

Lela Scherrer and Christoph Hefti joined forces to create the clothing for the personnel in Aichi. They met each other in the fashion city of Antwerp, where Christoph, a creative assistant, designs all fabrics for the internationally-known designer Dries van Noten. Lela works for various designers, including van Noten. It was logical that the two would cooperate in the realisation of the clothing for Aichi 2005. Scherrer and Hefti are both Swiss citizens who live abroad and thereby have a view of their homeland from a distance and an image of Switzerland as it is seen abroad. Most importantly, however, their personal qualities complement each other in their fashion design.

Text: Titus Dürst

<http://lelascherrer.com/portfolio/aichi>