

NOT YOUR TYPICAL SWISS
BY HEINKE JENSSEN
PORTRAIT OF FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
BY STEPHAN HANSLIN

FRITZ GOTTSCHALK

THE ZURICH OFFICES OF GOTTSCHALK & ASH INTERNATIONAL ARE LOCATED IN A QUIET DISTRICT OF THE CITY, ONE WHERE MANY CREATIVE PEOPLE AND ADVERTISING AGENCIES HAVE COME TO SETTLE. THE FIRST THING THAT FACES THE VISITOR IN THE CORRIDOR IS THEIR NEW SWISS PASSPORT—ALL NEAT AND TIDILY FRAMED BEHIND GLASS. MUCH MORE CONSPICUOUS THAN THIS, THOUGH, IS A POSTER WITH THE SYMBOL OF THE ZURICH TOURIST OFFICE AND SUPERMAN. AS I LATER FOUND OUT FROM FRITZ GOTTSCHALK, IT IS ONE OF THE POSTERS THAT ARE CREATED EACH YEAR—IN AN EDITION OF SIX TO TWENTY-FOUR COPIES—FOR THE ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER OF ALL GOTTSCHALK & ASH BRANCH OFFICES, THEY ARE ALWAYS PRODUCED IN THE HOST COUNTRY AND INEVITABLY CONTAIN ELEMENTS FROM THE VARIOUS ASSIGNMENTS UNDERTAKEN THAT YEAR. IN THIS CASE, SUPERMAN IS AN ARCHITECTURAL GRAPHIC SYMBOL FOR THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONTRAVERS COMPANY, AND THE BLUE TRIANGLE IS THE SYMBOL OF THE ZURICH TOURIST OFFICE. A PRODUCTION BY GOTTSCHALK & ASH IN MONTREAL SHOWS THE “SMOKED MEAT SHOP” ON THE CORNER OPPOSITE THEIR OFFICES WHERE MANY A TIME FRITZ GOTTSCHALK HAD MET WITH HIS COLLEAGUES. □ HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN, AND WHY DID GOTTSCHALK LEAVE MONTREAL WHERE, AS A YOUNG MAN, HE HAD FOUNDED A DESIGN STUDIO WITH STUART ASH? THE WEEK GOTTSCHALK ACTUALLY MOVED TO MONTREAL TO RUN PAUL ARTHUR'S SECOND OFFICE, ASH STARTED WORKING FOR THE SAME FIRM IN OTTAWA. THEY GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER THROUGH THEIR WORK AND SOON DISCOVERED THAT THEY SHARED SIMILAR AIMS AND IDEAS OF WHAT CONSTITUTED GOOD DESIGN. ASH HAD BECOME INVOLVED WITH EUROPEAN DESIGN DURING HIS COLLEGE DAYS WHEN HIS HEAD WAS BURIED DEEP IN COUNTLESS BOOKS ON THE SO-CALLED SWISS STYLE—THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE. (INCIDENTALLY, WALTER BALLMER, ONE OF THE SWISS

*"THE AMERICANS GET AN IDEA,
THEN THEY SELL IT. THE EUROPEANS GET THE
IDEA, THEN THEY MAKE THE PRODUCT, THEN
THEY TEST IT TO PERFECTION"*



(ABOVE) THE LIVING ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF GOTTSCHALK'S FOUR-STORY CONDO (BELOW) OVERLOOKING THE VILLAGE OF MEILEN.

founders of this design school, is now working in the Milan office of Gottschalk & Ash International). Their mutual credo, in a nutshell, runs, "Good design is functional and beautiful." Gottschalk puts it this way: "The message must be conveyed without embellishment and without any unnecessary ballast but not without imagination. The recipient should be informed of the most vital characteristics of the product and services without any gags or sales tricks. We show our clients the right way to go about this so that their communications are perfectly aligned with the quality of their products. This is our greatest challenge—and our deepest satisfaction. We also look upon this as our contribution to a better environment."



□ The young Montreal team was successful from the beginning, but the mood in that city—so open and international back in 1965—gradually changed. A francophile tendency was becoming more and more evident. Fritz Gottschalk considered moving to New York. For several months he weighed the pros and cons before finally deciding on Switzerland. Many of his colleagues had warned him that his style and philosophy, although likely to be successful in New York, would never be accepted in Switzerland. Switzerland would mean a completely new beginning for him, a jump headfirst into the water—not knowing whether it would be hot or cold. "It was the most exciting decision that I ever had to make," he says in retrospect. And he's glad that he took that first step. Since then he's never hesitated in the face of any risk. □ You can well believe it. He is open, straightforward and radiates an infectious enthusiasm. He is someone who lets you know straight out what he thinks, be it with a client, an employee or a friend. At the previously mentioned annual

meetings, the work of the individual branches (Montreal, Toronto, Milan and Zurich) is discussed and criticized. All those participating have most likely become accustomed to this style, even if it isn't always easy and can lead to bouts of ill-humor. Some employees whose names appear on the posters displayed are now no longer with the firm. Ken Carbone & Leslie Smolan, for example, have now established their own successful firm in New York. They decided to follow their own style and left Gottschalk & Ash after nine years of successful cooperation. With them, as with all former employees, there is still a friendly connection. □ Typically characteristic of the man is the story of how Fritz Gottschalk found his house in Meilen, near Zurich. Quite by chance he saw an estate, the architecture of which immediately excited him. Spontaneously, he rang one of the doorbells at random—and got lucky. It was the architect's son who stood in front of him. He put the matter directly to him there and then. The architect, Theo Hotz, had already made a name for himself with other unusual projects in Zurich, like a vast complex for the Swiss Telephones and Telegraph (PTT). That's how Fritz Gottschalk now lives in rooms that are "just right"—as everything else must be "just right" for him—or must at least come very close to his longing for perfection. □ Fritz Gottschalk is no typical Swiss, even if the thorough and intensive method of working suits him. "What really appeals to me in Switzerland is that you can go deeper than in North America. You

*D*ESIGN IS LIKE AN ONION. YOU

HAVE TO SKIN MANY LAYERS TO GET TO THE
HEART. THE MORE LAYERS YOU PEEL AWAY,
THE MORE POTENT THE EFFECT

.....

have a different relationship with your clients. For example, the North Americans get hold of an idea. Then they sell this idea—before the product exists. They are convinced of its success and carry out the necessary advertising and everything else. But the product that ensues isn't always good. With the Europeans it's the other way around. They get the idea. Then they make the product and test it till it works 100 percent perfectly—and only at this stage do they start on the communications and advertising. The clients here regard the designer as an integral part of their company philosophy. They have a better feeling for and understanding of design.” □ And yet, as someone used to American spontaneity and who feels much the same way himself, he finds the extremely restrained reaction to a job delivered totally alien. So, Fritz Gottschalk merely picks up the phone and says, “You've got the goods. Don't you think they're marvelous? Aren't you delighted with them?” □ Gottschalk & Ash International in Zurich has about a dozen accounts on their books. And these come from the most varied quarters: there is Balzers (a manufacturer of hi-tech products), several institutions, the City of Zurich, the news agency Reuters, EniChem of Milan, various banks, the PR firm of Wirz & Partner, and Orell Füssli, among them. None of these do very much advertising—but they do produce a lot of communications materials. Which for Fritz Gottschalk means working from the bottom up. “It's crucial to have a ‘good feeling’ at the outset. If the foundations are solid



(ABOVE AND BELOW) ADDITIONAL DETAILS FROM GOTTSCHALK'S HOME IN MEILEN. DESIGNED BY THE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM THEO HOTZ AG

it's relatively easy to do advertising.” □ Many of the communications are destined for overseas. Currently there are brochures in six languages, sometimes even in twelve languages. (And in these Fritz Gottschalk has managed to prevent linguistic howlers that would have led to hilarious or embarrassing results.) □ At first sight there would seem to be some discrepancy between Fritz Gottschalk's work and his personality. On one side there is the polished and thoroughly thought out communications work; on the other this spontaneous, frank man from whom one expects something spectacular or even crazy to emerge. But there is an intensity, an enthusiasm for his work, and a respect for things. He says: “Design is like an onion. You have to skin many layers to get to the heart. And I want to get to that heart. It isn't enough for me to only peel off a couple of skins. The more layers you peel away, the more potent the effect. I want to see what the insides look like. It's only in this way that I'm able to offer the client a professional and honest job.” □ In his opinion there are rules for every-

thing—whether it's a matter of food, a chair, a tree or the color of a house. It's all a question of having respect for the object right through to its relativity. “If something is a certain size then it's got to have a certain lightness. Otherwise it will be too heavy, heavier than its size.” There is no basic discussion for him. You must be able to master the grammatics, the fundamental rules. “I am absolutely convinced,” he says, “that it very rarely happens in life that things are exactly right. Very few man-made things are perfect. What makes our work so wonderful is that we're always aiming at perfection. You say to yourself, ‘Now I've got it!’—and then you get that nagging feeling that you've got to do the next job even better still.” ■





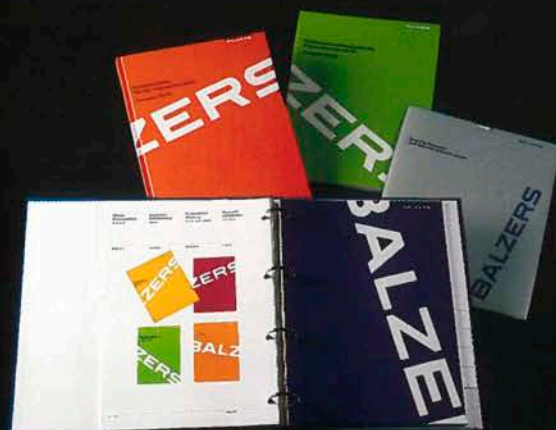
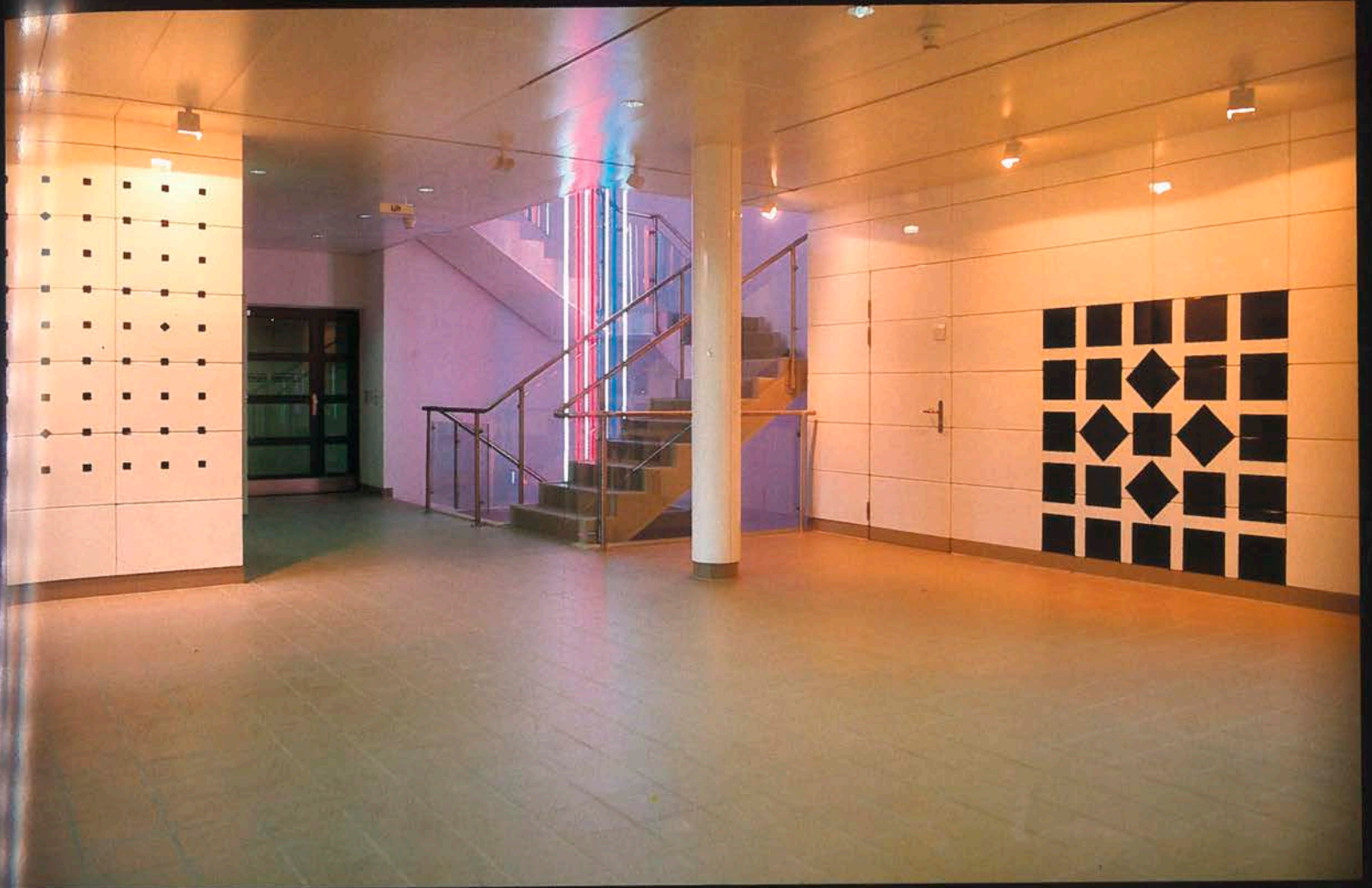
TITLE:
CORBAWA
HEADQUARTERS
WALLISELLEN,
ZURICH
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
ERICH GROSS
ARCHITECT:
BRUNO E. HONEGGER
DATE:
FALL 1989

(OPPOSITE)
INTERIOR ARTWORK:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
LOCATION:
CORBAWA
HEADQUARTERS,
WALLISELLEN,
ZURICH
ARCHITECT:
BRUNO E. HONEGGER
LIGHT SCULPTURE:
CHRISTIAN HERDEG

TITLE:
BALZERS EXHIBITION
PROTONIC 88, PARIS
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK,
ERICH GROSS
DATE:
1988



(OPPOSITE BOTTOM)
TITLE:
BALZERS DESIGN
MANUAL AND VARI-
OUS CATALOGUES
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
DATE:
1984-90





Das Puzzle

Das Puzzle

Farbe

Gullocken

Interess & Geldfragen

83B059112

Advanced Technology Banknote

83B059112

Design: Gottschalk + Ash Int'l

(OPPOSITE TOP)

DESCRIPTION:
BROCHURE ON THE
ART OF PRINTING
BANKNOTES
DESIGNER:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
DATE:
1983



DESCRIPTION:
COVER FOR
BROCHURE ON
PRINTING BANK
NOTES
DESIGNER:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
DATE:
1983



DESCRIPTION:
CORPORATE
BROCHURE
CONTRAVERS AG
"THE INNOVATIVE
TEAM"
DESIGNER:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
FREDERIC BURBACH
DATE:
1986



DESCRIPTION:
COVER AND
SPREADS OF
BROCHURES FOR
ALUSUISSE ITALIA
S.P.A.
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
STEPHAN WASSMER

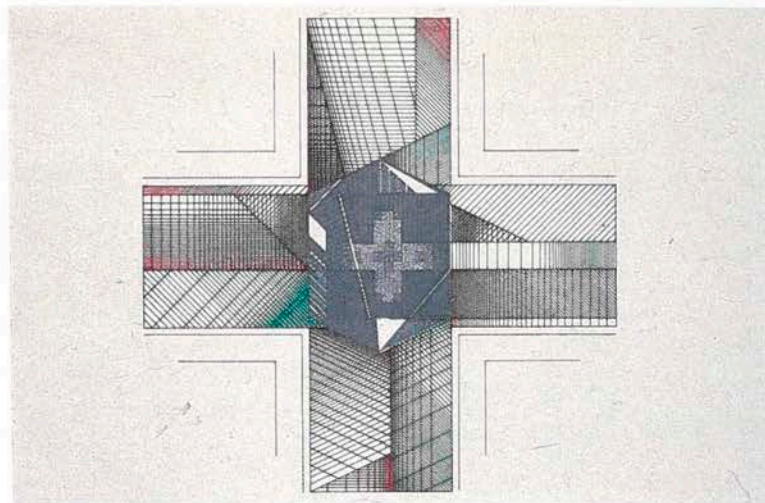
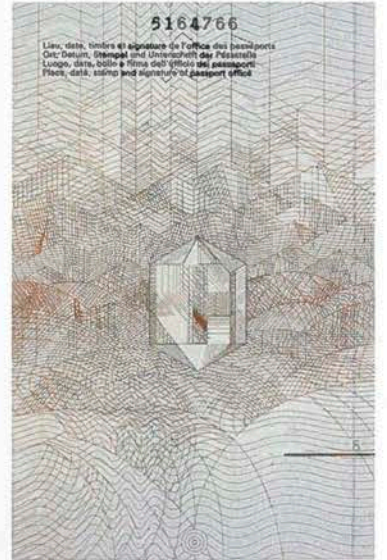
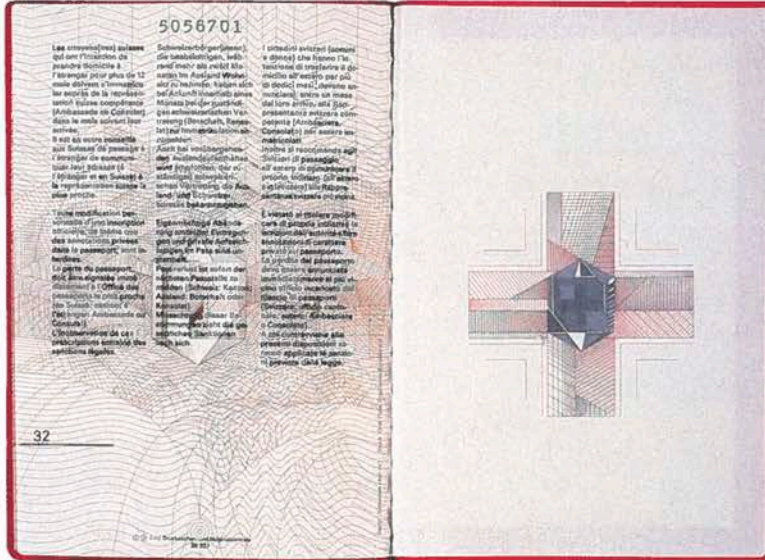
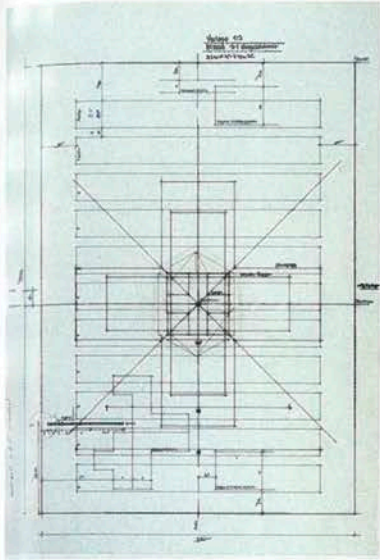
(OPPOSITE BOTTOM)

DESCRIPTION:
SAMPLE BANKNOTE
CONTAINING THE
LATEST SECURITY
FEATURES THAT
WILL BE INCORPO-
RATED IN FUTURE
BANKNOTES.
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
YOLANDA LUTHY
DATE:
1989



DESCRIPTION:
BROCHURE ENICHEM
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
HANS GRUNINGER
DATE:
1986





(OPPOSITE AND ABOVE)
 DESCRIPTION:
 NEW SWISS
 PASSPORT
 REPRODUCTION:
 COURTESY OF SWISS

FEDERAL OFFICE
 FOR POLICE MATTERS
 DESIGNERS:
 FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
 JENNY LEIBUNDGUT
 DATE:
 1985



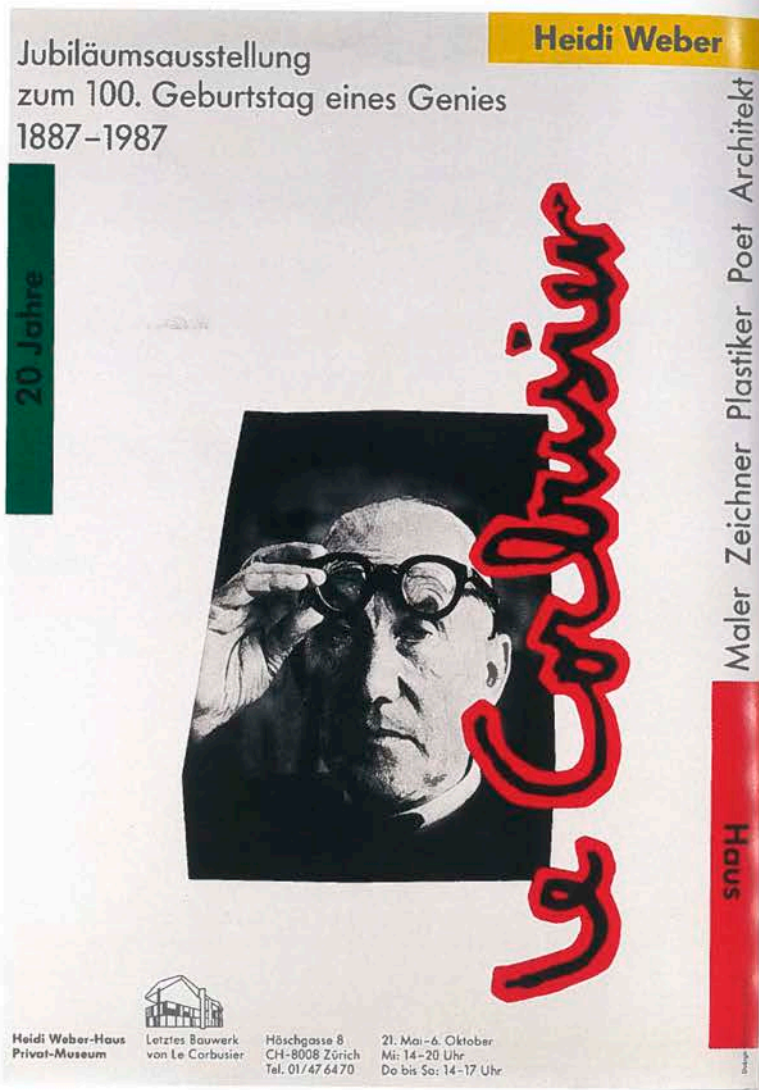
Eisen 89

Prospettive
 dell'arte
 plastica in ferro
 1934-1989
 Perspectives
 de l'art plastique
 en fer
 1934-1989
 Schweizer
 Eisenplastik
 1934-1989

Dietikon Zürich
 20. Mai - 20. August
 Gross-Skulpturen
 im Freien
 Pioniere in der
 Ausstellungshalle
 Dienstag bis Freitag
 11-19 Uhr
 Samstag und Sonntag
 10-17 Uhr
 Montag Halle
 geschlossen

89

Dieses Plakat ist ein Kultur-Engagement der SKA



Heidi Weber

Jubiläumsausstellung
 zum 100. Geburtstag eines Genies
 1887-1987

20 Jahre



Le Corbusier

Maler Zeichner Plastiker Poet Architekt

haus



Heidi Weber-Haus
 Privat-Museum
 Letztes Bauwerk
 von Le Corbusier
 Höschgasse 8
 CH-8008 Zürich
 Tel. 01/47 6470
 21. Mai-6. Oktober
 Mi: 14-20 Uhr
 Do bis So: 14-17 Uhr

DESCRIPTION:
 SWISS IRON
 SCULPTURES
 EXHIBITION POSTER
 DESIGNER:
 FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
 DATE:
 1989

DESCRIPTION:
 EXHIBITION POSTER
 FOR LE CORBUSIER
 DESIGNER:
 FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
 ERICH GROSS
 DATE:
 1987

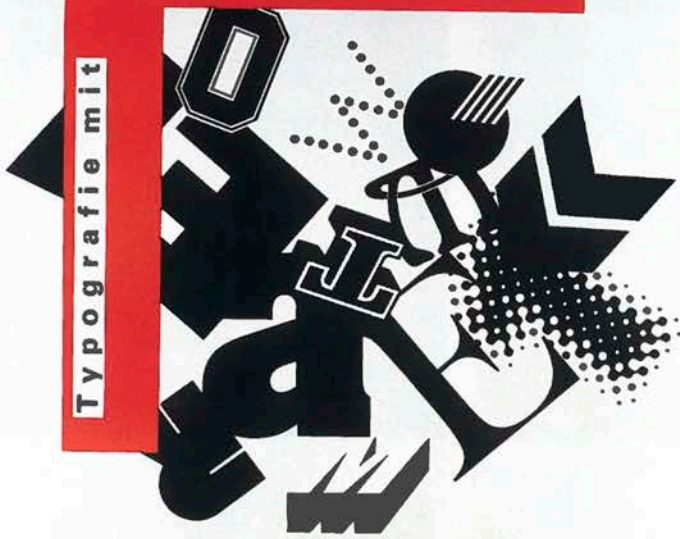
DESCRIPTION:
 POSTER FOR
 TYPOGRAPHY SHOW
 DESIGNER:
 FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
 DATE:
 1979

DESCRIPTION:
 POSTER FOR SWISS
 ALUMINUM COMPANY
 DESIGNER:
 FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
 DATE:
 1988

Zur Diskussion
gestellt:

Typografie mit

Letraset



Kunstgewerbemuseum
der Stadt Zürich
Ausstellungsstrasse 60
11. August bis 23. September 1979

Der Besucher kann in der Ausstellung
mit Letraset-Anreibebuchstaben
experimentieren

Di-Fr 10-12, 14-18 Uhr
Mi 10-12, 14-21 Uhr
Sa, So 10-12, 14-17 Uhr
Mo geschlossen

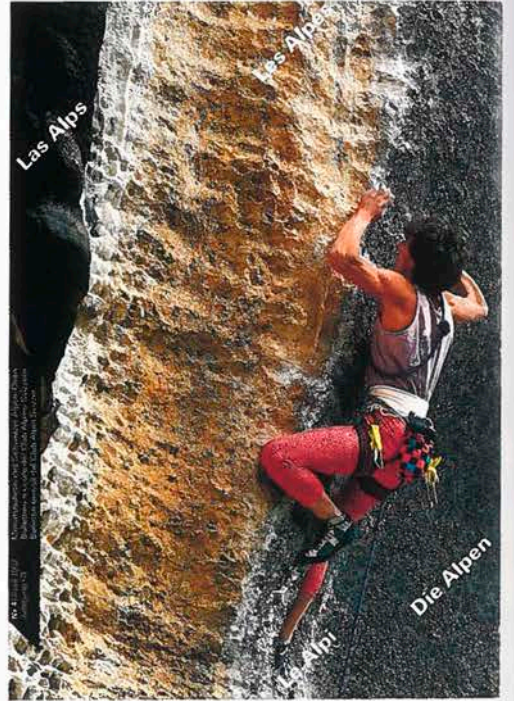
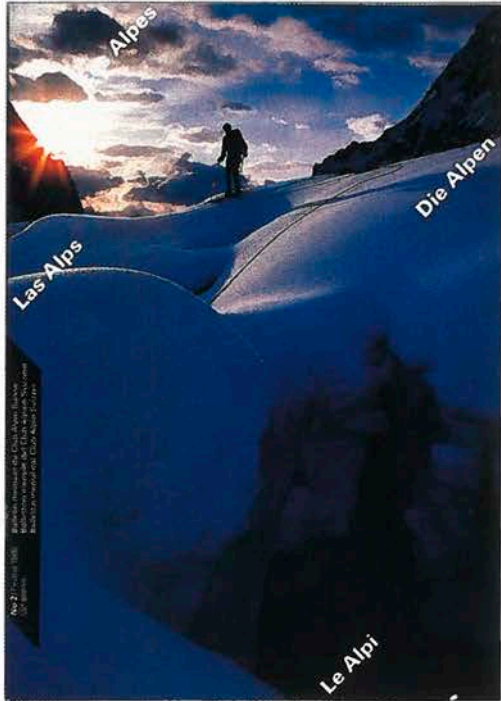
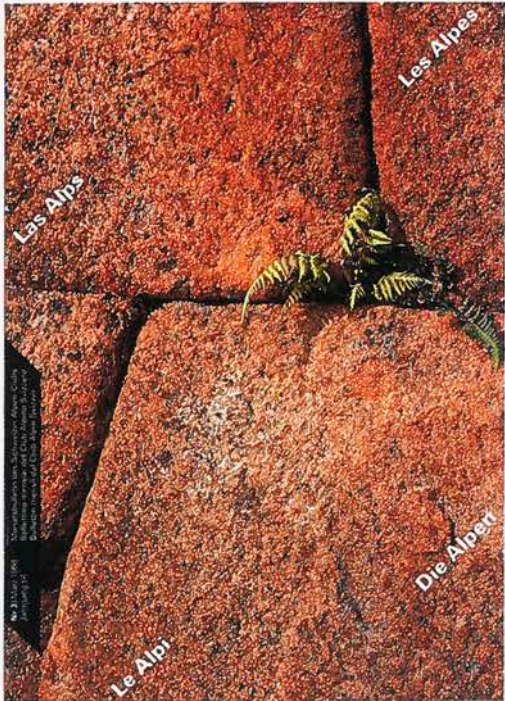
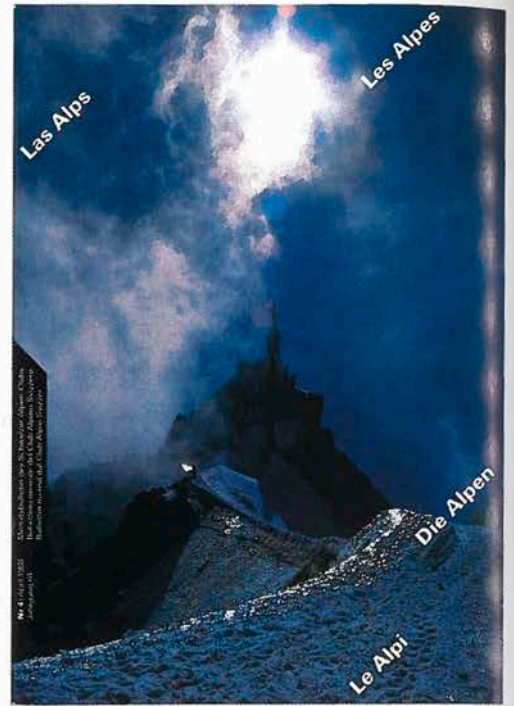
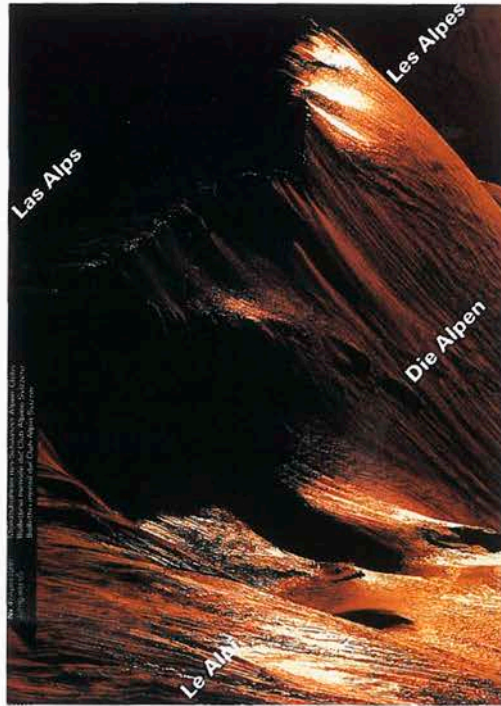
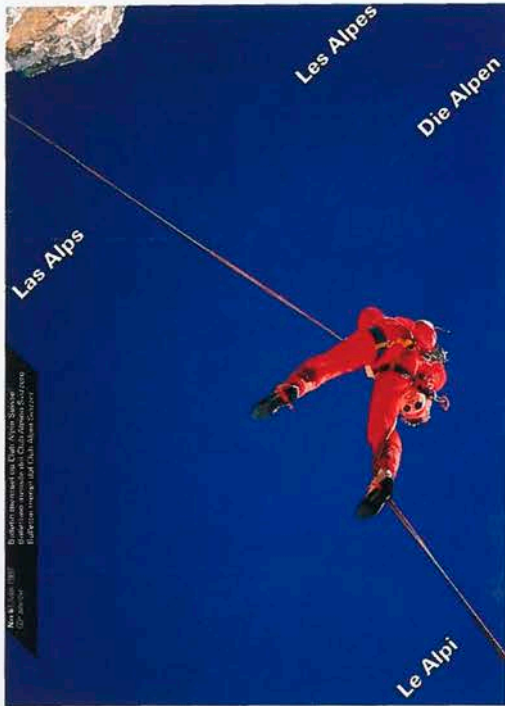
Aluminium in and out



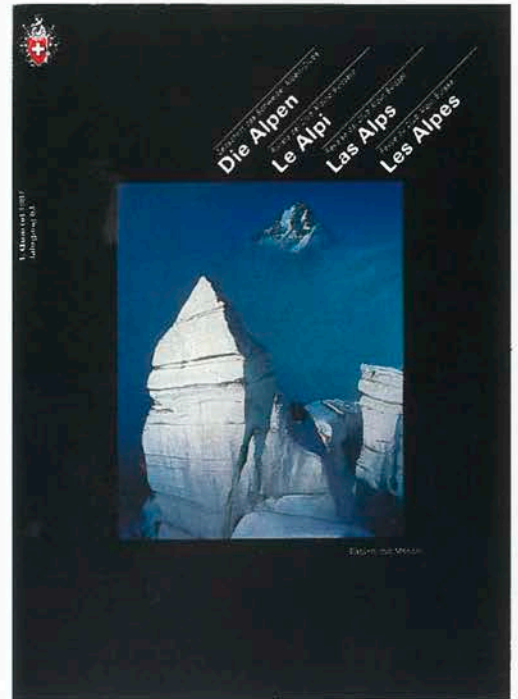
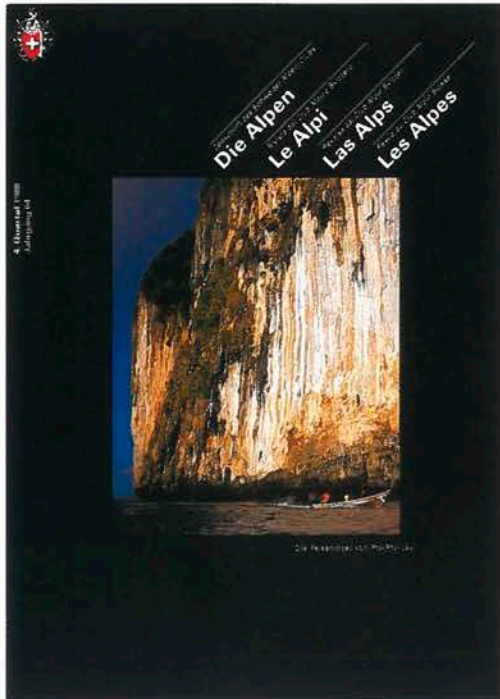
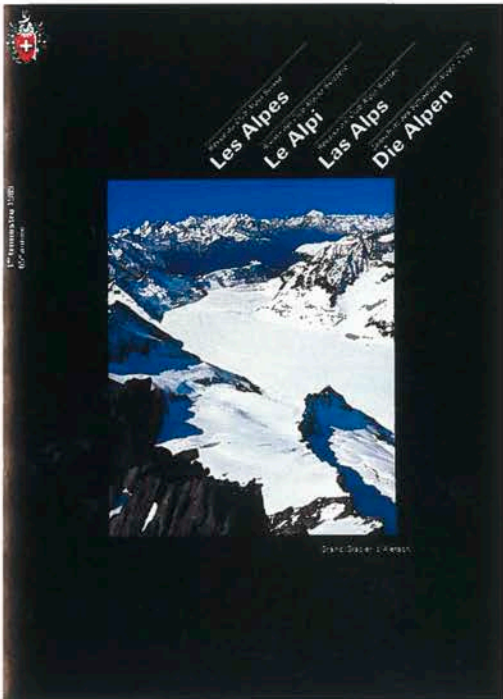
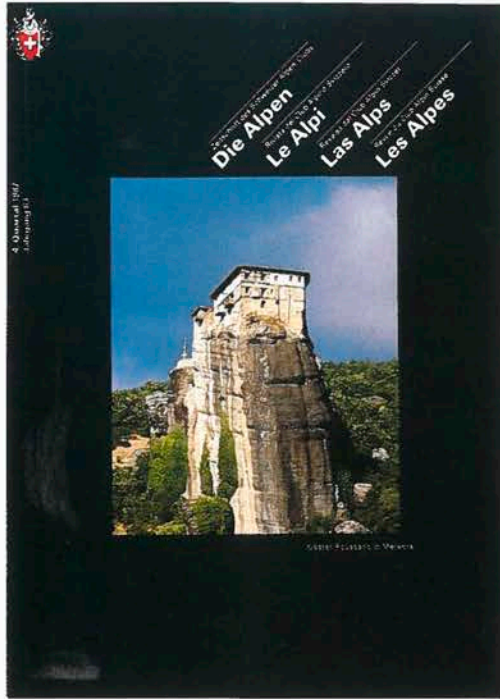
Here and there,
wherever - call us
in Switzerland
for needs worldwide!

Swiss Aluminium Ltd
Metallwerke AG/AG
P. O. Box 455
CH-8034 Zurich (Switzerland)
Phone (01) 258 23 85
Telex 52 487 alu ch
Fax (01) 258 24 90





DESCRIPTION:
COVERS OF
MONTHLY
PUBLICATION
LES ALPES
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
MASSIMO MAZZI
DATES:
1983-90



DESCRIPTION:
COVERS OF
QUARTERLY
PUBLICATION
LES ALPES
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
MASSIMO MAZZI
LINDA GRIMM
DATES:
1983-90

DESCRIPTION:
VARIOUS CALENDARS
FOR ENICHEM
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
MASSIMO MAZZI
DATE:
1987/88



DESCRIPTION:
COVER AND
SPREADS OF
CORPORATE DESIGN
MANUAL FOR
ENICHEM
DESIGNERS:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
THOMAS
PETRASCHKE
DATE:
1988

DESCRIPTION:
TIE, NOTEPAD,
CREDIT CARD SIZE
CALCULATOR
DESIGNER:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
MASSIMO MAZZI
DATE:
1987



DESCRIPTION:
NOTEPAD ON ITS
STAND FOR ENICHEM
DESIGNER:
FRITZ GOTTSCHALK
DATE:
1988



