



PRESS KIT
MIR

EXHIBITION
ONCE UPON MANY TIMES
EVE, NOAH, MOSES & MANY OTHERS

JANUARY 25TH – MAY 19TH 2019



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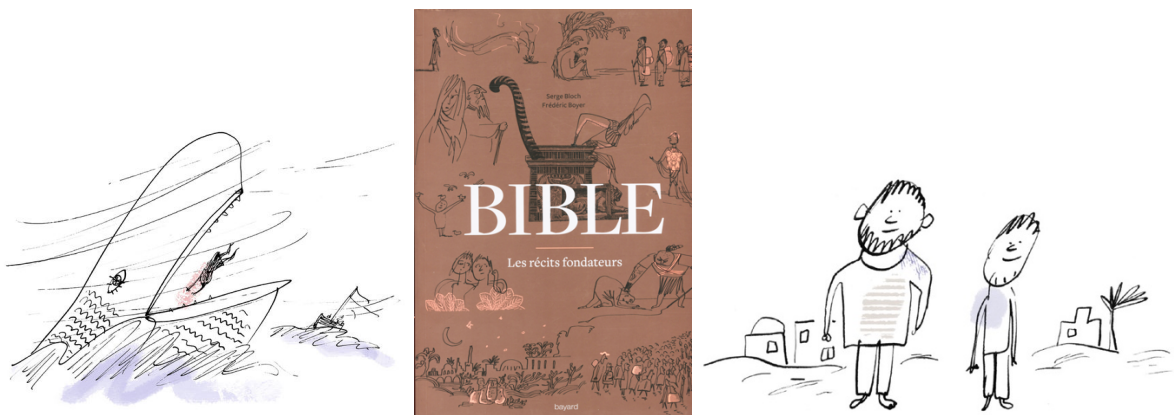
January – May 2019

1. ONCE UPON MANY TIMES - Eve, Noah, Moses & Many Others

How to recreate the poetic and narrative imagination of the great writings of the Old Testament?

This challenge was taken up by **writer Frédéric BOYER and illustrator Serge BLOCH** with the publishing in 2016 of their book **"In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament"**. **Thirty-five of the major Old Testament stories unfold under our eyes in drawings and in words**, in a combination that makes them accessible to all readers. To Frédéric BOYER and Serge BLOCH, the texts of their book constitute as many access points to a tradition where the beginnings of humanity are told in ways as diverse as the many stories that make it up: ONCE UPON MANY TIMES.

This project seeks to extract the contemporary meanings of these founding narratives, and to depict today's world by adapting these stories to the present time and creating voluntary anachronisms. The spiritual dimension of these founding myths of Western culture is addressed in a clear and poetic way, with lightness and humour. In a language that is both simple and suggestive, Frédéric BOYER highlights the essential stories that Serge BLOCH's drawings illustrate, at the crossroads of comics and works of art.



The exhibition **ONCE UPON MANY TIMES** intends to familiarise the public with the great texts of the Bible, which are often reduced too unilaterally to their spiritual dimension. For Protestants, the Bible is central: it is at the heart of a vocation that consists in adapting more than two-millennia-old texts so that contemporary readers can appreciate their singularity and modernity. "In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament" generated several artistic and audio-visual adaptations that led their creators to combine them into an exhibition.

Eleven four-minute stories in animated films are shown at the MIR, told by renowned actor André DUSSOLIER and set to music by French composer Mathieu RIBOULET. They are integrated into the museum's collections, which also exhibits frescos, drawings and original texts by Frédéric BOYER and Serge BLOCH on the occasion of the exhibition.

ONCE UPON MANY TIMES allows a dive into the greatest stories of the Old Testament while addressing the questions they have raised in the past and still raise today.

This new reading of Biblical myths, devoid of dogmatism, is accessible to all. It tells of the life stories of many iconic characters from the Bible, such as Moses, Noah or Abraham.

The exhibition presents significant episodes of the Bible with no chronological or narrative order. The visit can be made along various itineraries, depending on visitor preference.

A SELECTION OF VISUALS IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING LINK :

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/z6qirom4ded0wqt/AADjSzyb56TzgXSXspwkQBtKa?dl=0>



Scenography	Serge BLOCH & Frédéric BOYER
Curation	Gabriel DE MONTMOLLIN & Samantha REICHENBACH
Illustrations and design:	Serge BLOCH
Texts	Frédéric BOYER
Selected Biblical episodes & figures	The creation of the world (film) The Garden of Eden (film) Cain and Abel (film) The Flood and Noah's Ark (film) The Tower of Babel (film) Sara's Laughter (film) The Sacrifice of Isaac (film) Moses (illustration) The Exodus from Egypt (film) The Fall of Jericho (film) David & Goliath (illustrated story) Jonah (film) Job (illustration) The Song of Songs (film)

A six-meter "totem" will greet visitors in the Museum's courtyard, with various elements written and drawn on it: four words in Hebrew, a woman representing Jerusalem, and sketches of Moses.

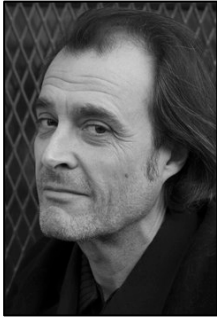
Gabriel DE MONTMOLLIN, head of the **MIR**, about the upcoming exhibition:

"The exhibition was designed for the vast area of the Centquatre-Paris cultural center, and was then set up in the large medieval halls of the Chartreuse in Avignon. It was there that I discussed with Frédéric BOYER the idea of adapting this exhibition to "immerse" it in the Museum.

The 11 videos are set up according to thematic content: "The fall of Jericho" is projected in the room dedicated to the wars of religions in France, the Exodus episode is shown in the Exile and Refuge room...As for Jonah swallowed by the fish, the belly of the animal is recreated in a padded room. Connections have been made between the exhibition and items from the Museum's collections: a drawing from Serge BLOCH has been inserted in a glass window, where an old book usually stands; all

the 16th-century Bibles will be opened on specific passage selected among the 11 featured in the exhibition's animated films. Serge BLOCH will create original frescoes on the walls of the Mallet house, inspired by the place. Such elements will foster synergy between the exhibition and the permanent collections."

2. The author and the illustrator



Frédéric BOYER authored the texts featured in the **MIR** exhibition, for which some were specifically written, while others originate in "In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament", Chronicle Books, 2017. Born in 1961, French-born Boyer is a writer, a translator and a publisher. He supervised the publication in 2001 of the "Bible des écrivains", the "writers" Bible, used by the **MIR** for its « PRINT! The First Pages of a Revolution» exhibition in 2017. He took over the prestigious Parisian publishing house P.O.L. in 2018.



Serge BLOCH, born in 1956, writes and draws for the media and communications industries. He co-authored the famous « Max et Lili » children's book collection (117 volumes), and had his work published by the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, the New York Times or l'Obs. He illustrated "In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament" and handled the **MIR** exhibition's scenography, which included several original works.

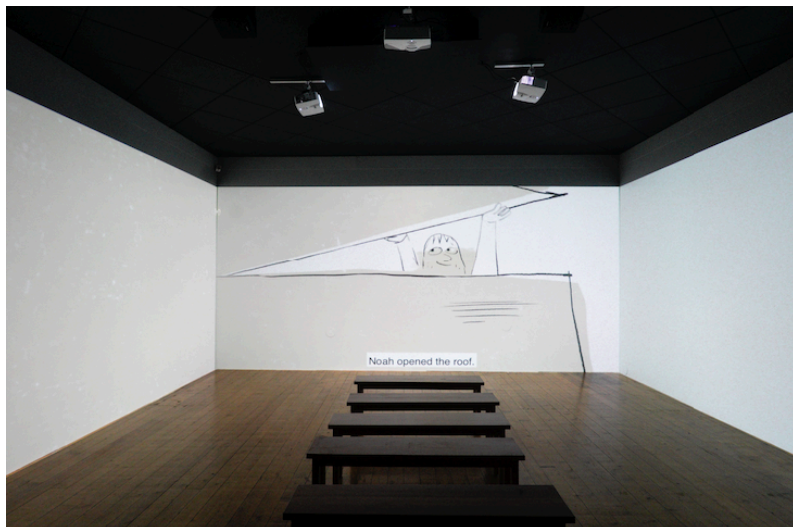
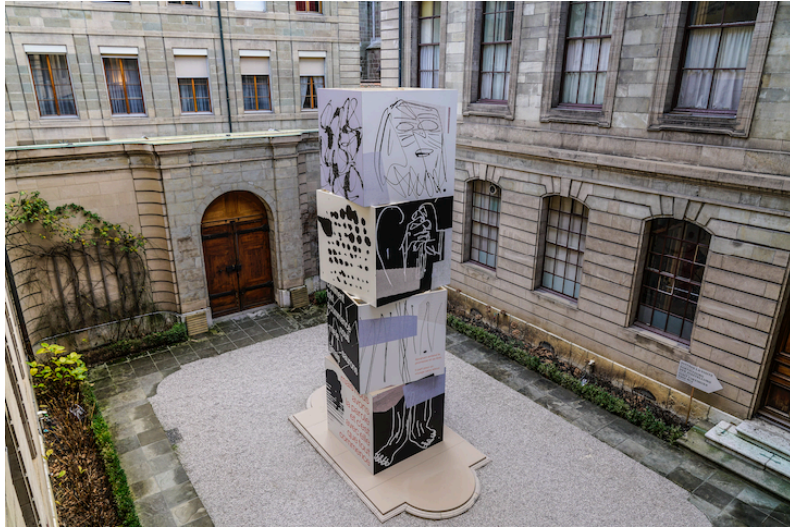


3. About the Bible

The term « Bible » comes from the Greek *ta biblia*, « the books ». The Bible is divided into two parts: first, the Old Testament, which is written in Hebrew (with the exception of some passages in Aramaic), and from which are drawn all the stories presented in the exhibition "Once Upon Many Times". It corresponds to what is called the Hebrew Bible. It should be noted that the canon of the Old Testament, that is to say the list of books that appear in it, varies according to religious traditions: a Protestant or Catholic Old Testament will not be strictly identical, the Catholic canon integrating texts that are not part of the Protestant or the Jewish canon. The texts that make up the Old Testament are very diverse: there are poems, prayers, narrative or even apocalyptic texts ... The Old Testament was not written in one go or by one author but over several centuries, so it is impossible to give a precise dating of the editorial process, but scientists agree to situate it between the 8th and 2nd century BC.

The second part, the New Testament, focuses on Jesus Christ and is therefore only part of the Christian Bibles (whether Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox). It should be noted that Jesus left no writings: consequently, the whole content of the New Testament is made up of testimonies about his person, his teaching, as well as about the birth of the first Christian communities. It is much shorter and more recent than the Old Testament: it is estimated that the books it comprises were written between the second half of the first century and the second century of our era. The New Testament is written in Greek but also contains a few sentences in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus. It includes the four Gospels, which record elements on the life of Jesus, chronicles of the first years after his death among nascent Christian communities (the Acts of the Apostles) and epistles, including the famous ones from Paul which are the oldest documents of the New Testament.





4. Bibliography and websites

- **Bloch Serge & Boyer Frédéric, *In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament***, Chronicle Books, 2017 (*BIBLE. Les récits fondateurs*, éd. Bayard, 2016, for the original French edition).
- **Bayard Publishing House** set up an information site based on the book *In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament*. In addition to video excerpts, the site features a Q&A section that addresses the difficult questions any reader of the Bible today is confronted with:
<http://www.bible-recits.com>
- **YouTube channel « Bible récits fondateurs »** features Bloch's animated films as well as interviews of the authors, the production team and specialists of the Bible:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCGtiU-9wMxBiBZ4njDeOA>



Illustrations are from "*In the Beginning. Illustrated stories from the Old Testament*", Serge Bloch, Frédéric Boyer, Chronicle Books, 2017 (Bayard, 2016 for the original French edition).

Pictures@ Nicolas Righetti / lundi 13

5. Visitor information

Musée international de la Réforme (MIR)

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ONCE UPON MANY TIMES Exhibition

- **From January 25th to May 19th 2019**
- **Tuesday – Sunday, 10 A.M. – 5 P.M.**
- The visit lasts approximately 60 minutes
- Special opening hours on Easter Monday

Fees :

Full : CHF 13.-

Reduced : CHF 8.- & CHF 6.-



The MIR, a private institution

The MIR is a private institution which relies solely on the generosity of private donors.

6. The History of MIR



The **MIR (International Museum of the Reformation)** was founded in 2005 to showcase the history of Geneva and the Reformation. It traces the origins of both an idea and an ambition.

In the 16th century, John Calvin set out to turn Geneva into a model for a new way of living the Christian life, to serve as an example to the world. This impetus gave rise to the ‘myth’ of Geneva and explains its international reputation.

The aim of the MIR is to present the history of the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther, John Calvin and many others. Through objects, books, manuscripts, paintings, engravings and state-of-the-art audio-visual displays, the museum tells the story of the movement that spread from Geneva during in the 16th century and grew into one of the main families of Christian churches.

The MIR is located on Cour Saint-Pierre, in the magnificent Maison Mallet, a historic dwelling built during the 18th century on the former site of the cathedral cloisters where the Reformation was voted in 1536. In combination with the cathedral and its towers, the IMR offers a unique cultural experience in Geneva, known as ‘Espace Saint-Pierre’.

Twelve rooms constitute a chronological journey from the 16th to the 21st century, where 620 documents, objects and interactive devices present the Reformation and its impact over more than 500 years. A hand-written document from Luther, the signature of King Henry IV of France, the original record of a meeting between Calvin and pastors, a clandestine Bible hidden in a headdress or an authentic letter from German martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer embody the milestones of Protestantism.

In April 2007, the MIR was awarded the **Council of Europe Museum Prize**.

More information on mir.ch