

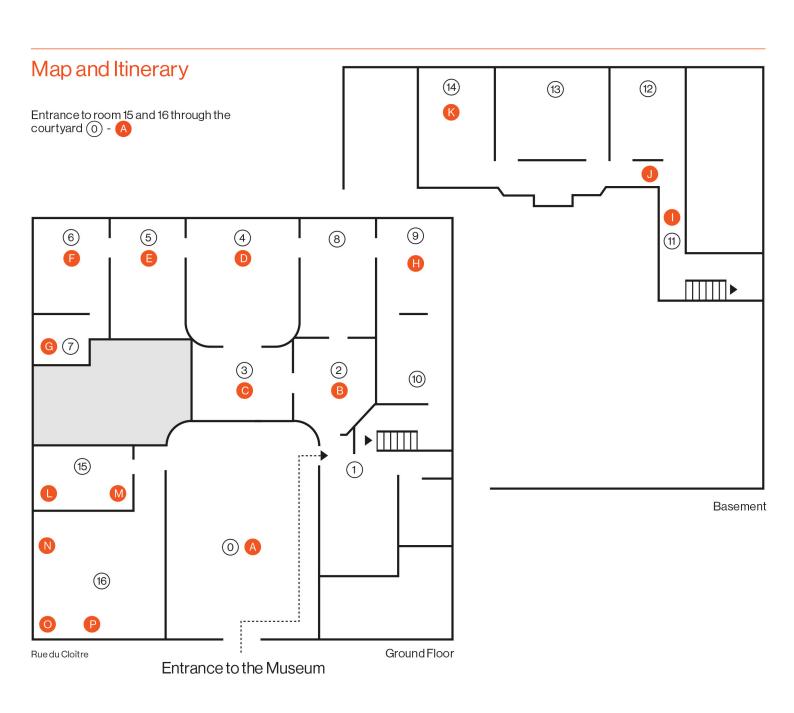
A long time ago,

nearly 3000 years, a small unknown people stuck between the great empires of the ancient Orient - Egypt, Sumer, Persia, Greece related an incredible series of stories that would cross the ages and cultures. They would form what is called the Torah, or the Old Testament. We have expressed these epic stories in 35 chapters of a book, and as many animated short films. Fifteen of them are to be discovered today through words, pictures and sounds. The book is brought to life. From exiles, displacements and encounters, this epic tale becomes ours.



Serge Bloch and Frédéric Boyer

Serge Bloch and Frédéric Boyer



Itinerary

The itinerary includes information on both the permanent collections (written in black and indicated by numbers) and the temporary

Once Upon Many Times exhibition (written in red and indicated by letters).

(0) Museum Courtyard

A Visitors are welcomed by a six-meter high totem presenting on its sixteen sides drawings of Abraham, the beautiful city of Jerusalem, Moses and words of Creation.

1 Ticket counter and museum shop

The Museum shop offers a wide selection of items and books linked to Geneva, the Reformation and the temporary exhibition « Once Upon Many Times ».

(2) The Bible

This room reminds visitors that the Bible is at the core of the Reformation. A display dedicated to Martin Luther emphasizes the singularity of his message.

B General introduction to Once Upon Many Times. The Bibles in the room are open on the sections transcribed in the exhibition's animated videos.

(3) Polemics

The Reformation took place against a backdrop of controversy. Opponents would use drawings and caricatures whose originals are presented in this room.

The rotating stand at the back of the room features Job on a pile of rubbish, wondering why he has to suffer.

(4) The salon

The introductory film to the Museum has been deactivated to give way to

The Garden, or Why Leave Paradise?, a beautiful evocation of the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden.

(5) Barbier-Mueller room

Through a prestigious collection of sixteenth-century book and engravings, generously donated by art collector Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller, this room retraces the expansion of the Calvinist Reformation in France and the ensuing conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

E The animated short-film Jericho or The Bloody Saga of Land Acquisition echoes with this war-themed room.

6 Calvin and Geneva

Geneva in Calvin's time became a city of refuge for thousands of exiled Protestants from France, the Netherlands, Scotland and Italy. Everyday life in 16th-century Geneva is evoked through portraits, books by Calvin, views of the city and many other items.

Moses brandishes majestically the Tables of the Law, in synergy with Calvin, the other great legislator of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

(7) Music room

This space usually devoted to the hearing of nine Psalms of the Reformation is turned into a dark room where one of the most beautiful and famous tales of the Bible is shown.

G Jonah or The Sadness of a Minor Prophet. Jonah, thinking he could escape his destiny, fulfils it in spite of himself and manages to save his worst enemies from God's wrath.

(8) The Reformation in the 17th and 18th century

The question of predestination to salvation or damnation was one of the central – and most controversial – ideas of the Reformation. This room recreates a virtual banquet convened by John Calvin. An intruder slipped in. During the temporary exhibition, the sound device will be deactivated.

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the desert and the refuge

This room recounts the persecution endured by French Huguenots as well as other effects of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The movie on the Exodus from Egypt –
The Liberation of the People or The
Night of the Passage – links 18th-century
exiles to the ancestral genealogy of the
Biblical Exodus.

10 The Reformation in the 19th century

Several famous painters illustrated episodes of the Reformation. This gallery evokes 19th-century artists' "heroic" vision of the Reformation in paintings like "Calvin on his deathbed" by Hornung and the portrait of Calvin by Anker.

(11) The good works train

transforms itself for the duration of the temporary exhibition.

The corridor of David.

Drawn from "In the Beginning:
Illustrated Stories from the Old

Testament", this is the story of how young David slew the huge Goliath.

12) The 19th century continued

During this century of industry and science, colonial ambitions and emergent nationalism, Protestant thought fragmented into several strains, ranging from a return to the Reformation through personal conversion to a radical critique of Christian dogma.

The film on **The Tower of Babel** highlights the delusions of grandeur that came with the many disruptions of the 19th century, especially the industrial revolution.

(13) The 20th century

In this century of extremes, Protestantism kept pace with modernity: the first women pastors, a theological renewal represented by Karl Barth, heroes like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a victim of Nazism.

14) The 21st century

The usual audiovisual display of several Christian services on various continents is replaced by a famous story from the Bible.

Cain and Abel. The very first murder, the very first expression of evil, is a fratricide.

(15) Laughing and sacrificing

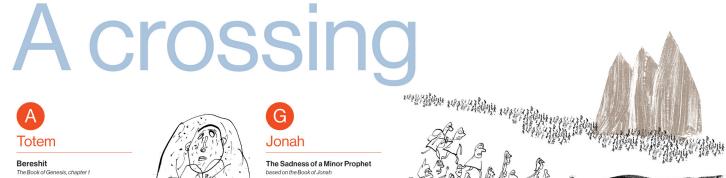
This small room proposes the projection of films which have for themes two famous episodes of the epic of Abraham, a guardian figure of the Hebrew people:

- Sara's laughter recounts the playful surprise of Abraham's wife at the announcement that she will conceive a soneven though she is over 90 years old;
- M Isaac's sacrifice relates the ordeal inflicted on the patriarch to whom God asks to sacrifice his son Isaac.

(16) Creation, the flood and a song

On three walls of this large room, the visitor immerses himself or herself in three legendary stories:

- N The creation of the world depicts the early times of the world, according to the Bible;
- The flood pours down on visitors who are fortunate enough to embark on the ark with Noah and the animals;
- P The Song of Songs celebrates loves on the delicately intertwined symbolic and verbal modes.





Rereshit

According to Jewish interpretation, the first words of the Bible *be reshit* (in the beginning) refer to the First Fruits of the harvest that were given to God as an offering. The first things needed to make a hospitable world.

By agreeing to leave his land and his family to answer the promise of God, Abraham initiates a new beginning An odyssey to a promised land that he will not own

Often in the Scriptures (Ezekiel, Hosea Song of Songs...), Jerusalem is compared to a young girl, an abandoned child who was taken care of by God. Sometimes, she grows into a seductress, and she can even be compared to a prostitute when she refuses to obey God's will.



Introduction to the exhibition

Once Upon Many Times

A long time ago, nearly 3000 years, a small unknown people stuck between the great empires of the ancient Orient Egypt, Sumer, Persia, Greece - related an incredible series of stories that would cross the ages and cultures. Artist and illustrator Serge Bloch, writer and trans illustrator Serge Bloch, writer and trans-lator Frédéric Boyer picked 36 of those wonderful stories to be expressed in their own way, through drawings and texts, and corresponding to as many chapters of a book (In the Beginning: Illustrated Stories from the Old Testament, Bayard, 2016) and animated short films. You are invited to discover fifteen of those stories brought to life in words, pictures and music, in this In-ternational Museum of the Reformation, of which the Bible is one of the cornerstones.

The book sets itself in motion: from exiles and displacements to encounters and and displacements to encounters and discoveries, the Biblical odyssey becomes ours. "Once Upon Many Times" invites us to join this visual and sonorous adventure. Linked throughout the rooms by the coloured, displayed harmoniously with the museum's priceless collections in glass cases, on the walls, floors and ceilings. Job, Adam, Eve, Joshua, Moses, Jonah, Cain, Abel, the Shulamite, Abraham, Sarah and Noah come to life to embody universal experiences: love, jealousy, war, life together...All first beginnings.



The Scandal of Innocence

"Then Job complains, In his sorrow he still has something priceless: speech He wants to know why he suffers".

Job never existed, it's only a parable, explains the Jewish exegetes, adding: every time the Jewish exegetes, adding; every time there's a crisis in the history of the world that has been caused by human responsibility in the face of evil, the problem of Job comes up. "Our world is like old Job, overwhelmed and covered with sores on his pile of dung", claims French writer Georges Bernanos in his Diary of a Country Priest



Why Leave Paradise

on the Book of Genesis, chapter 3

In the beginning there was a garden, and

In the beginning there was a garden, and in this garden there were two trees. The tree of life and the tree of « the knowledge of good and evil » or, to be more literal, the tree of the experience of flavours, of what is good and what is bad (Book of Genesis,

chapter 2, verse 9). The biblical prohibition

and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall sentence yourself to death ») indicates that to eat of this tree is to experience a mortal and desiring

condition. The myth tries to express our

and of death. We experience happiness

and frustration, jealousy and love

Jericho

The Ten

The Paths to Liberty

The Bloody Saga of Land Acquisition

In which the Promised Land is conquered

by the intercession of a foreign woman, a prostitute. And the invincible walls crumble from the call of a trumpet.

Commandments

"Moses tells the people: Take charge! I cannot do it on my own. And God gave Moses ten commandments.

The Ten Commandments were carved in

stone and given to Moses, and condense the teaching or the law (forah), the directions given by YHWH to his people. Moses as legislator is a common figure of the

Christian tradition. Tables of the Law were

a systematic feature of French reformed

churches until the revocation of the Edict

of Nantes (1685). As a legislator who put greater emphasis on the law than other Reformers, Calvin would be compared to Moses. He identified three purposes of

the law: it allows to rule society even as it

golden calf (Book of Exodus, chapter 32.

verses 15 through 28) and Calvin would play an active part in the burning at the stake of Michael Servetus, which could be blamed on his living under the old law

instead of submitting to the law of Christ,

according to Sebastian Castellio.

Ten commandments for living as one.

human condition. We are beings of desire

(« of the tree of the knowledge of good

Jonah

The Sadness of a Minor Prophet based on the Book of Jonah

In the Hebraic version of the Bible, Jonah's whale is described as a « giant fema fish ». Jonah's fall (yarad, in Hebrew) ends in its belly, after he tried to escape What kind of forgiveness is this? The kind that Jonah refuses to see granted to the whether guilty or hostile, even those, as the Scriptures have it, "who may not even





The Liberation The Garden of the People

The Night of the Passage

In which Moses and Pharaoh engage in a power struggle, and the people, in the middle of the night, learn of their liberation and, later, of the price of freedom



The corridor of David

Drawn from «In the Beginning. Illustrated Stories from the Old Testament», the story of young David slaying the huge Goliath is outlined on the walls, along with a Psalm, a survivor's prayer that expresses both distress and consolation. Tradition claims that it was proclaimed by David himself.



The Tale of Totalitarian Folly.



"A tower so tall it will touch the stars. A tower so tall it will touch the stars.
And rival the sun and the moon."
The story of a great tower that would shelter all peoples shows up throughout Mesopotamia over 4,000 years ago, as the myth of a gathered and unified hunder that the start of the manity that already expressed a fear of difference. The excessive nature of this structure is associated with the dream structure is associated with the dream of a single language, of a single voice that all should obey. "And the whole Earth was of one language (sâphâh), and of one speech" (The Book of Genesis. 11:1). This ancient text denounces the totalitarian follies of our world and the illusion of transparent communication.
The story of Babel opposes our wish to be rid of the effort required from us to translate and understand each another. Language diversity is therefore not a bad thing and should be valued



Cain and Abel

Murderous Jealousy

To Bossuet, Abel's murder by his brothe was « the first tragic act of mankind ». Th biblical text ventures a deeply troubling nessage: the very first murder, the very first expression of evil, is a fratricide Inst expression of evil, is a fratricide.

"Only the hand of my equal will kill me »,
echoes 20th-century Russian poet Ossip
Mandelstam. To shed the blood of a man
is to kill a brother. The story of Cain raises
the issue of who is master and keeper, the
murderer asks God - Am I my brother's keeper? ». But to fulfil this role, one has to master their own heart and control their violent urges. It is in relation to Cain himself that the Hebraic term hat-tāt, which could be translated as sin, is used for the first time in the Scriptures. But the culprit is not abandoned to the vengeance of the others A wandering fugitive placed under God's protection, Cain will end up founding a city



Abraham and Sara

Laughter Made Flesh



The Test of the Ties of Blood

With Abraham and Sara, the promise that ties God to his people hangs upon laughter An incredulous laughter from Abraham 100 years old, and Sarah, 90 years old upon hearing that they will be given a child. upon hearing that they will be given a child. This issue fascinated all the great Jewish and Christian commentators. As the radical of the verb *tzehok* expresses mor mockery than delight, they have tried to find the reasons behind this laughter surprise, revolt... The Hebrew verb, through a play on words, becomes the child's name: Isaac/vitz'hak (literally, "He will laugh"). And this child of laughter is the very one that will have to undergo the worst of ordeals, to perish by the knife of his own father upon divine order. Regardless of God's covenant with Abraham and his nise of numerous progeny..



Noah

The Last Temptation of God on the Book of Ge

This great Flood tale, which derives from the Mesopotamian tradition, is a surprising story to read. Mankind had become the terror of all creation, and was doomed by its Maker to be destroyed by water.
Only Noah found favour in his eyes. What was it that set Noah apart from the rest of humankind? He is the first one in the Bible to be designated as righteous and innocent tsaddig in Hebrew. He starts building a



foreign and distant, become close and alive when we understand that the stories they have bequeathed to us also speak of humanity today. The beginnings are before us". strange construction ordered by God.

"These worlds, those times that are



The First Words on the Book of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2

All the great civilisations of the world have All the great civilisations of the world haw sought to describe the beginning of the world and the creation of mankind. How can the beginning be described when, by definition, no one was there when the world began? The Bible responds to this ** dilemma in a very original way: the world was made in six days

was made in six days:
To name is to bring to life. These texts were probably written during the Persian era (538-333 BC), and were partly based on Babylonian and Sumerian myths. In the first account of the creation, the adam created from the dust of the earth, is in Hebrew a singular collective noun (an Hebrew a singular collective noun (an adam), both male and female. Humanity does not come into its own until the second account, with the male/female distinction perceived as what brings human solitude to an end. It is worth noting that those most ancient times followed a vegetarian diet.

A box. The Hebrew term tèvah is used to describe both Noah's boat and the «basket» in which Moses was found by the river. In which Moses was tound by the river.
The Lattin arca (arceo: that which contains, which encloses) gave the English word "ark". From the age of the Catacombs, Noah's ark has been represented as a kind of box or coffer. The use of the word box suggests a small device braving the catas trophe, a small wooden shelter from raging vaters. The Book of Wisdom confirms waters. The book of wisdom confirms this (10.4): "When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood." The surviving humanity will have to learn to live with its own violence, and the awareness of its weakness.



Love Scenes

Love as Strong as Death



The Song of Songs is probably the most mysterious book of the Bible. It is first and mysterious book of the Bible. It is first and foremost a love poem based on erotic poetry from the Ancient Near East, with Sumerian and Egyptian influences. Some hold this small book to be made of disparate texts, while others consider it to be a dramatic poem with a theatrical structure It is taking place in Jerusalem, King It is taking place in Jerusalem, King Solomon's City, But it is hard to decipher the identities of the protagonists, and why this love story is being thwarted. From its very inclusion among the Jewish and Christian sacred Scriptures, this book has en at the core of many disputes



«Texts are not to be read, they are to be told»

How did you collaborate? What roles did you play as members of a small team?

Frédéric Boyer: "We did not work on the same aspect of the book as such. We both sought to tell the other one a story: I would use words, while Serge would use drawings. This is what makes this work so specific. And what makes it part of a greater Jewish and Christian tradition of biblical texts reception, which purpose is to tell people about what is written in the Book. We have never limited ourselves to read or listen to the texts, what motivated us was to tell the stories: "This is what the book of Jonah is all about...". And to illustrate them! Serge's drawings have their own way of telling a story. Texts and drawings echo each other."

Serge Bloch: "Frédéric gave me his texts and explanatory notes, which helped be a lot to understand the topics and key elements of each story. His writing style is light and deep at the same time, it has truly been a pleasure to echo him with my illustrations. I have tried to measure up to those fantastic Biblical stories full of violence, poetry and vision."



How do you switch from youth litterature (the Max and Lili series, Samsam...) to the illustration of biblical stories that have been at the core of the entire history of Western art? How to find one's place within such a legacy?

Serge Bloch: "This is something I do every day, I would work on a children's book and then on an article for a "serious" newspaper like the New York Times or Südddeutsche Zeitung Magazin, on an exhibition and after that on advertisement. I like that freedom. The Bible is a great piece of literature, with many heroes and great fighters. This is where all the superhero stories originate. Even if there are not direct connections between such epic founding stories and little stories like Samsam, both are pieces of literature. As far as the history of art is concerned, only time will tell, as the saying goes... and I do feel very small indeed."

Does having this exhibition displayed at the International Museum of the Reformation (MIR) hold a particular significance to you?

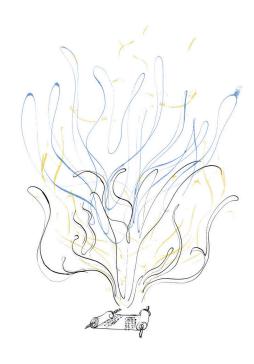
Frédéric Boyer: "For the first time, we are displaying our work of rewriting and illustrating biblical stories in a place that reflects the Bible's role in history and culture, especially those of the Reformation. We want to tell the greatest stories of the Hebrew Bible from the questions they have raised from the origins of their transmission and their reception, and still raise today. And this museum is particularly well-suited to do just that."

Serge Bloch: "To have this exhibition in a Protestant and Swiss museum, based on the book I illustrated and on animated films we have made, using displays we have designed, is a new experience. It has led us and will continue to lead us to make new encounters. It is truly a great pleasure."

Bios

Frédéric Boyer (1961) is a writer, translator and publisher. He was the head of Bayard publishing house for many years. As such, he supervised the publication in 2001 of the "Bible des écrivains", the "writers" Bible, a breakthrough translation used by the MIR for its "PRINT!" exhibition in 2017. He authored numerous novels and essays and took over the prestigious Parisian publishing house P.O.L. in 2018.

Serge Bloch (1956) studied illustration at the Arts décoratifs Institute of Strasbourg. He was quickly noticed by the publishing and news industries, and developed a style that is simple and expressive. He currently works for general and youth media (the New-York Times, French magazine l'OBS, children's book series Max et Lili, Samsam...) and the communications industry.



Events

As part of the temporary exhibition «Once Upon Many Times», related conferences and events are held. Dates might vary: please check our website **mir.ch** and / or our Facebook page for the latest updates.

Friday, January 25th at 10.00 am

« ONCE UPON MANY TIMES»

Tuesday February 26th at 6.30 pm

« RÉINVENTER LA BIBLE? »

Guest speakers: Serge Bloch and Frédéric Boyer, creators of « Once Upon Many Times »

Tuesday, March 19th at 6.30 pm

« AUX ORIGINES DE LA BIBLE »

Guest speaker: Thomas Römer, professor at Collège de France

Tuesday, April 9th at 6.30 pm

« JOB OU LE SCANDALE DE L'INNOCENCE »

Guest speaker: Marion Muller-Collard, theologian and writer

Exhibition credits

Curation:

Gabriel de Montmollin and Samantha Reichenbach

Scenography:

Serge Bloch and Frédéric Boyer **Illustrations and exhibition design:**

Serge Bloch

Texts and Writings:

Frédéric Boyer

Graphic design:

Samuel Bloch and Vicente Granger

Audio-visual design:

Serge Bloch, Samuel Bloch

and Pascal Valty

Music: Benjamin Ribolet Voice-over: André Dussolier

Occasional Andre Dussoller

Communication: Corinne Mentha
Construction: Pierre-Yves Schenker

Electrical work: Alain Mugnier

Painting: Louhan Ramiki

Screening: Alain Laesslé

Translation: Hanna Woodhead

In collaboration with studio CENTQUATRE-PARIS

Plan your visit

Opening hours:

Tuesday-Sunday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. (included Easter Monday).

Admission:

CHF 13.-/8.- (reduced price) CHF 6.- (children aged 7 to 16).

Address:

4, rue du Cloître, 1204 Geneva Tel. +41 22 310 24 31, info@mir.ch.







