



PRESS KIT

MIR

PRINT! THE FIRST PAGES OF A REVOLUTION
AN INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION
FROM 4 JUNE TO 31 OCTOBER 2017



1. **2017: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the printing revolution**
2. **PRINT! and the Gutenberg Galaxy**
3. **Interview: three perspectives on PRINT!**
4. **Four contemporary artists and PRINT!**
5. **Selected images**
6. **Additional information: the press and the best-sellers**
7. **2017 events programme and practical information**
8. **About the MIR**

mir.ch

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June–October 2017

1. 2017: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the printing revolution

Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther rebelled against his Church, penning 95 theses in which he criticised the sale of indulgences to the faithful in exchange for their salvation. Thanks to printing, this dispute within the church had unexpected wide-ranging repercussions – and so the Reformation was born! To commemorate the 500th anniversary of this movement, the **International Museum of the Reformation (MIR)** is taking a closer look at a technology that both transformed Christianity and profoundly changed attitudes.

The **Gutenberg Revolution** was as influential in its time as the invention of the Internet is today. Without printing, the Reformation would probably not have spread so widely or so fast. The movement initiated by Luther and his contemporaries has been described as the **first media campaign in history**. The reformer from Wittenberg – himself a wildly successful author – saw printing ‘as the greatest and most extraordinary act of Divine Grace’. An estimated **300,000 copies of his works were in circulation between 1517 and 1520**, and **around 3,700 editions were published** in the 30 final years of his life.

The Reformation was not the only beneficiary of this seminal invention: many other cultural movements or currents of thought took advantage of it as well, radically transforming our relationship to education, science, literature and religion.

2. PRINT! and the Gutenberg Galaxy

PRINT! The First Pages of a Revolution, explores the historical significance of the invention of printing, the greatest revolution since the invention of writing 5000 years ago and before the digital revolution of today.

Over 130 days, from 4 June to 31 October 2017, an entire Bible will be hand-printed using period techniques, on a replica of a Gutenberg press built especially for the exhibition and placed inside a spectacular glass cube. **The text of the anniversary Bible follows *La Bible des écrivains* (Bayard, 2001) a recent French version** jointly translated by a group of biblical scholars and famous writers, including **Frédéric BOYER, Olivier CADIOT, Emmanuel CARRERE, Jean ECHENOZ, Marie NDIYAE and Valère NOVARINA.**

Visitors are invited to participate in the printing and observe as **a single copy of the Bible emerges from the press page by page, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, before being bound on 31 October 2017, the last day of the exhibition.** The 800-page anniversary Bible will feature original illustrations created directly on the press by four well-known contemporary artists: **John ARMLEDER, Marc BAUER, Vidya GASTALDON and Maitu PERRET.** Each in their own way will reinterpret the role played by the great illustrators of the Renaissance, such as Lucas Cranach or Hans Holbein.

In addition to the imposing press, **the exhibition presents 17 best-sellers from the first decades of printing, in a space illuminated by reproductions of the stained-glass windows** created by Sigmar Polke for Zurich's Grossmünster Cathedral, an allusion to Luther's contemporary Ulrich Zwingli, the reformer of Zurich. Visitors will have an opportunity to discover first editions of Luther's *95 Theses*, his 1524 German translation of the New Testament, Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, the Catholic Church's *Index of Prohibited Books*, and Montaigne's *Essays*. These great works bear witness to the influence of the Gutenberg press on the literary, philosophical and religious life of the time. **Artworks by the illustrators of the MIR anniversary Bible displayed alongside the rare books symbolise the relevance of the Gutenberg galaxy today.**

A programme of **lectures, guided tours, and appearances by public figures** will punctuate the 130 days of the exhibition. **UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, Geneva State Councillor François Longchamp, and comic-book author Zep** are just a few of the celebrities who will take turns turning the handle on the press to print a page of the 500th anniversary Bible.

The PRINT! team

Director and exhibition curator

Gabriel de Montmollin

Art direction

Juri Steiner, Lausanne

Exhibition design

Fjolla Rizvanolli, Zurich

Project assistant and coordinator

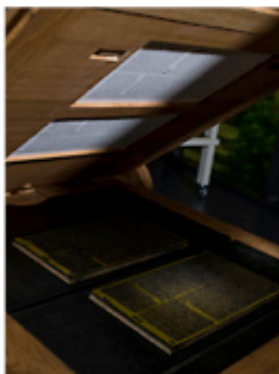
Simona Sala

Press design and realisation

Pierre-Yves Schenker, Yverdon-les-Bains

Lending institutions

Fondation Bodmer (Cologne), Bibliothèque de Genève, Galerie Andrea Caratsch (St Moritz), Galerie Francesca Pia (Zurich), Galerie Bartschi (Geneva), Private collection (Geneva).



3. Interview: three perspectives on PRINT!



Joint interview with Gabriel DE MONTMOLLIN, Juri STEINER and Frédéric BOYER

MIR, May 2017

My first is a theologian, publisher and, since January 2007, the director of the International Museum of the Reformation. My second is a cultural entrepreneur, former director of the Paul Klee Museum in Bern and organiser of the Dada Centenary in Zurich. My third is a Parisian writer, translator and, as director of the Bayard publishing house, the mastermind behind the *Bible des écrivains*, a new French translation by contemporary authors published in 2001. My whole is an original interactive exhibition marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

In a joint interview, they explain the idea behind *PRINT! The First Pages of a Revolution* and the questions addressed by the exhibition.

Is the focus of *PRINT!* on history, contemporary issues or art?

Gabriel de Montmollin - We aim to appeal to several different audiences. The radical transformations that took place of the 16th century are in many ways similar to those we observe today, with the digital revolution. Understanding what happened back then may help us better understand what we are experiencing today. When addressing the printing revolution, the fact that the Reformation was first and foremost a 'confession of the book' presents another challenge. Luther turned believers into readers; what will be the fate of Protestantism if and when the book disappears into the digital galaxy? We saw replicating the basic physical process of printing as a way to explore the future of the Reformation.

Juri Steiner - History and art resonate powerfully with each other in this exhibition. The ancient Greeks viewed every aspect of human knowledge as a type of technique – *techne* in Greek – in other words a combination of skill, know-how and craft. The Gutenberg Press that forms the pivot of the exhibition perfectly illustrates this perspective. Historiography and artistic creativity both require skills comparable to those you need to build a press and print a Bible. The juxtaposition of manual and intellectual skills has the potential to sublimate the effort of designing and organising an exhibition, provides you get the mix right. For me, the project is about art, because art never tells you what to think but rather what to think *about*.

Why focus on this somewhat peripheral aspect of the Reformation rather than explore its Lutheran roots, which are less well known in French-speaking Switzerland and France than its Calvinist counterpart?

Gabriel de Montmollin - Because to understand Luther's remarkable success one needs to take into account the tool he used to achieve it, though at first he had no idea of its potential impact. Thanks to the multiplier effect of printing – a technology that in 1517 had been around for less than a century – Luther was able to rally followers throughout Germany and Europe and respond to their questions through a continuous flow of revolutionary writings. The Gutenberg Press was to Martin Luther what the Internet is to Julian Assange!

Is the content of the Reformation less important than how it was spread?

Gabriel de Montmollin - The rediscovery of Antiquity during the 16th century led to rise of humanism, which in turn created a worldview favourable to emancipation. That return to the sources incited theologians to reevaluate the Bible, which became a sort of portable Church combined with a manual for independence. As a result, Church discipline was put on hold, at least for a while, though Protestants soon realised that publishing the tens of thousands of Bibles in the vernacular did not suffice to bring about revolution. By printing an entire Bible on a Gutenberg Press, in 2017, we hope to gain some insight into a key aspect of the 16th-century Reformation while underlining the complexity of the revolution that facilitated its emergence.

In what sense was it complex?

Gabriel de Montmollin - The influence of printing was not limited to Protestantism. In literature, science and philosophy, too, the Gutenberg revolution brought ideas that were once the preserve of elites to a much wider audience. This is clearly explained in a section we decided to call 'The Gutenberg Galaxy' in tribute to Marshall McLuhan, where we present 17 best-sellers from the 16th century, including several priceless first editions generously loaned to us by the Fondation Bodmer and the Bibliothèque de Genève. We also invited four contemporary artists to illustrate our hand-printed Bible. In Luther's time, Bibles were often illustrated by famous artists following an imposed model. Those constraints no longer exist, and we look forward to seeing how these artists will freely reflect the complexity of the Bible today.

What version of the Bible will be printed on the Gutenberg press built especially for the exhibition?

Frédéric Boyer – The *Bible des écrivains*, originally published by Bayard in 2001. This is new French translation by a group of around 50 contributors comprising biblical scholars, translators of biblical languages, and contemporary French writers. It is neither a new edition nor a revision of an existing translation but an entirely original re-translation of all the books of the Bible. It is contemporary also in its collaborative and non-denominational approach: the translators and writers who participated in the project – novelists, poets, playwrights – included Catholics, Protestants and Jews, women and men, believers and agnostics.

Were you deliberately trying to recreate the conditions that led to the 16th-century Reformation, a main goal of which was to translate the Bible into the everyday language spoken by its readers?

Frédéric Boyer - Our goal was to revisit an essential insight of the Renaissance and the Reformation, namely the importance of translating the Bible into the vernacular of the time, for the 20th century. Not just to renew the way the Bible is received but also to experiment the plasticity of contemporary French. Can we still receive and transmit the scriptures in French as it is used today? The Bible has always adapted to the languages in which it was received, from the Septuagint to the Vulgate to the first European translations of the 15th and 16th centuries. One of the contributors to the *Bible des écrivains*, the poet Jacques Roubaud, quoted the 16th century translator Sébastien Castellion, who explained that he 'used very common and simple language' to address 'idiots' who could neither speak nor read scholarly tongues. It was also an eminently literary project in that it aimed to explore how contemporary styles of storytelling and poetry could be applied to the biblical text. The question we asked ourselves, for instance, was not only 'how should we translate the Psalms?' but also 'what lyrical form is the best fit with contemporary writing styles?'

Is the Gutenberg Galaxy in the process of imploding?

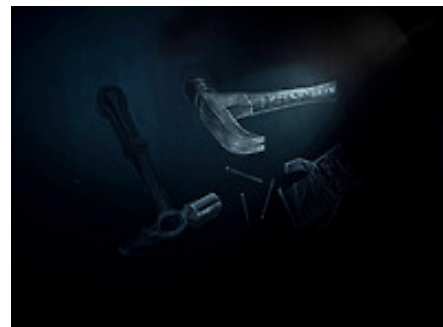
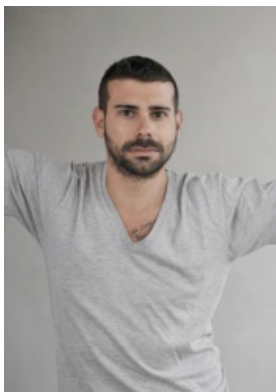
Juri Steiner - Remember that Buggles song from the late seventies, 'Video killed the Radio Star' ? Today they would be singing 'Google killed Gutenberg'! Looking at *PRINT!* from the perspective of Marshall McLuhan - the inventor of the term 'Gutenberg Galaxy' and the expression 'the medium is the message' - I think you have to agree. Thanks to Wikipedia and a host of other online resource, any question you have can be instantly answered. No need to reach for the dictionary or step foot in a library. The vastness of the omniscience this represents defeats the imagination. Yet unless the lessons we learn from the Internet go beyond access to knowledge, we will feel dissatisfied, I think. This was true for the Gutenberg Bible, too; the book was a raw material, but one which nevertheless changed the way people thought; after Gutenberg, thought became more linear, more uniform, more accessible and therefore easier to share than in the Middle Ages. The book was a formidable facilitator of emancipation from existing forms of authority. McLuhan explains how seeing became more important than hearing. I can hardly fathom how 'Big data', and the Internet of things and values, will change how we act, how we think, how we are. In the era of 'fake news', the Reformers' rallying call of 'Sola Scriptura' seems more relevant than ever.

4. Four contemporary artists and PRINT!



JOHN M ARMLEDER (Geneva, 1948). After graduating from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Genève, John M. Armleder co-founded the ECART group, a Swiss extension of the Fluxus movement, with Patrick Lucchini and Claude Rychner. In 1979, he began his *Furniture Sculptures* series, which brings together abstract painting and furniture. Armleder's work interrogates how the status of a work of art is transformed by the way it is perceived and received. The complex relationship between a work of art and its various environments, and the interactions it incites, are central to Armleder's work.

Work included in PRINT!: John M Armleder, *Illico, argent doré*, 2011. Galerie Andrea Caratsch (Saint-Moritz).



MARC BAUER (Geneva, 1975) lives and works in Berlin. After graduating from the École supérieure d'arts visuels de Genève (HEAD) in 1999, Marc Bauer exhibited his drawings and sculptures at the attitudes contemporary art space in Geneva (2001). returned in 2007 for a first solo exhibition, *History of Masculinity*. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organised at Mamco in Geneva (2009), Frac Auvergne (2009), Kunstmuseum St Gallen (2010), as well as the Kunsthaus Baselland in Muttenz, the Musée d'art de Pully, and La Station in Nice (2012).

Work included in PRINT!: Marc Bauer, *Iconographie, dessins muraux, fusain et craie noir, dimensions variables*, 2017.



VIDYA GASTALDON (Besançon, 1974) has progressively developed a visual universe inspired in equal parts by a psychedelic, hippie aesthetic, new age philosophy and abstract minimalism. Her paintings and sculptures explore 'states of conscience' that transcend established forms and theoretical criteria, and breathes new life into the idea of pleasure and experience.

Work included in PRINT!: Vidya Gastaldon, *La Vie de Jésus*, collage, aquarelle, gouache, crayon couleur, mine de plomb sur illustrations, 2009. Galerie Bartschi (Genève).



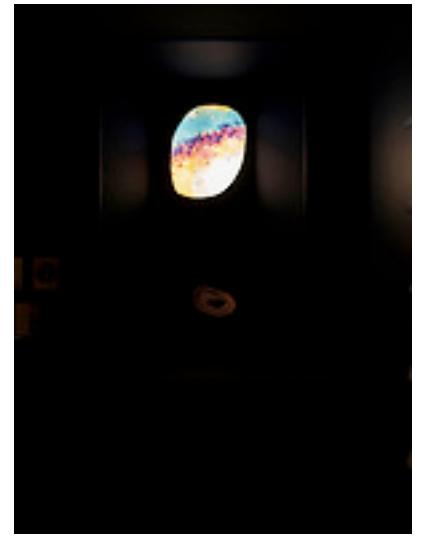
MAI-THU PERRET (Geneva, 1976), is a French-Vietnamese artist who has been working since 1999 on a series entitled *New Ponderosa*, which explores an imaginary women's commune in New Mexico. Each work develops an aspect of the story of this utopian community, through representations of its daily objects or characters from its mythology.

Work displayed in PRINT!: Mai-Thu Perret, *Untitled, Neon (blue No. 0, Argon)*, 2007. Galerie Francesca Pia (Zurich).

5. Selected images



The press created for the exhibition *PRINT!* by the cabinetmaker Pierre-Yves Schenker, from Yverdon-les-Bains (3 m high by 1.5 m wide and 4 m long, and weighs 400 kg)



The Gutenberg Galaxy, exhibition PRINT!

6. Additional information: the press and the best-sellers

THE PRESS

The press created for the exhibition by the cabinetmaker Pierre-Yves Schenker, from Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland, is a partial reproduction based on several 16th-century originals. Like them, it is made entirely of wood, mainly oak and walnut (for the screw). The structure is based on several existing presses, especially one in the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, as well as drawings from Diderot d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. However, artistic considerations determined its size and exact proportions. Designed to serve as a functional museum exhibit, the press measures 3 m high by 1.5 m wide and 4 m long, and weighs 400 kg. Unlike its 16th-century ancestors, it does not use movable print. Printing and entire four-million character Bible in only 130 days was a huge challenge, which could only be achieved by using nyloprint relief plates. These page-size plates were produced in collaboration with the Paper Museum in Basel, which also hand-printed the preview pages of the 500th anniversary Bible. The press is designed to both spectacular and easy to use thanks to a few small modifications.

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY BEST-SELLERS

The exhibition **highlights a selection of 17 influential books and documents** whose genesis or distribution illustrates the important role of printing in the 16th century.

Antitheses: Christ versus the Pope, Simon Du Rosier, 1557

Mercator's Atlas, Gerardus Mercator, 1585

Ostrog Bible, Ivan Fedorov, 1581

Antwerp Polyglot Bible, Christophe Plantin, 1568-1572

In Praise of Folly, Erasmus, 1511

Essays, Michel de Montaigne, 1588

Gospel in Arabic and Latin, Antonio Tempesta, 1590

The History of the Animals, Conrad Gessner, 1558

Catholic Index of Prohibited Books, 1599

The City of God, St Augustine, 1474

The 95 Theses, Martin Luther, 1517

Manuals of Surgery, Abroise Paré, 1564

Pantagruel, François Rabelais, 1542

Placard against the Mass, Antoine Marcourt, 1534

Huguenot Psalter, Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze 1554

Luther's Sermon, 1523

December Testament, Martin Luther, 1522

7. 2017 events programme and practical information

LECTURES SERIES

THURSDAY 4 MAY 2017, 12.30, Société de lecture de Genève

“How will the Internet change our lives?”

With **Alexandre LACROIX** editor-in-chief of Philosophie Magazine (in partnership with Société de lecture de Genève)



THURSDAY 8 JUNE 2017, 6.30 PM

“Luther: Product or actor of the Reformation?”

With **Pierre BÜHLER**, professor emeritus, University of Zurich



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2017, 6.30 PM

“Writing the Bible out loud”

Frédéric BOYER, Olivier CADIOT, Jean ECHENOZ and Valère NOVARINA, co-translators of the Bayard Bible, read from their translation.



TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2017, 12.30 AM, Société de lecture de Genève

“Gutenberg: The hidden facets of a galaxy”

With **Roger CHARTIER**, book historian (in partnership with Société de Lecture de Genève)



TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2017, 12.30 AM, Société de lecture de Genève

“Who wrote humanity’s first text? Who read it?”

With **Clarisse HERRENSCHMIDT**, archaeologist and ancient historian (in partnership with Société de Lecture Genève)



THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2017, 18.30 PM

“Was the Reformation useful?”

With **Charles MOREROD**, Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg



TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2017

Official presentation of the 500th anniversary Bible on the last day of the temporary exhibition



UPCOMING

‘Turning the Screw’ - public figures at the MIR

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, Geneva State Councillor François Longchamp, and comic-book author Zep, are just a few of the celebrities who will take turns turning the handle to print a page of the 500th anniversary Bible.

“Illustrating the Bible: Mission impossible?”

A conversation with contemporary artists **John ARMLEDER, Marc BAUER, Vidya GASTALDON** and **Mai-Thu PERRET**.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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- Open **Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** as well as the following public holidays: Pentecost Monday, August 1st (Swiss National Day), Jeune Genevois Thursday and Jeune Fédéral Monday.
- Free audio-tour in French, German and English
- Guided tours in several languages by reservation
- Free admission for visitors with reduced mobility

Admission:

Adults : CHF 13

Discounted: CHF 8 and CHF 6

“Espace Saint-Pierre” combined ticket:

- MIR

- The Cathedral and towers

- Archeological site

Adults : CHF 18

Discounted: CHF 12 and CHF 10

The MIR is private museum

The MIR is a private institution that relies on the generous support of its donors and sponsors.

8. About the MIR



The **MIR (International Museum of the Reformation)** was founded in 2005 with the aim of showcasing the history of Geneva and of 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 audiovisuals, 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’.

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

More information on mir.ch