"A Fairy-Tale Affair...!"[1]
Bally Shoes at the Swiss National Exposition of 1939[2]

Katharina Tietze

The Fashion Pavilion at the 1939 Swiss National Exposition (styled "LA39" and known colloquially as the "Landi") stood in the tradition of world expositions that included fashion design[3] long before it would ever be exhibited in museums. Having been swift to grasp the historic importance of shoes and the potential of featuring them in exhibitions, *Bally* participated at the very first Swiss national expositions, or "expos", in Zürich (1883), Geneva (1896), and Bern (1914). *Bally* also had a presence at a number of world expositions.[4] However, it is *Bally's* presentation at the LA39 that particularly stands out for its show-stopping quality.

In this essay, I will look back to this presentation of *Bally* shoes in order to reflect on the economic, political, and aesthetic aspects of trade shows.

Branded "Clothes Make People",[5] the Fashion Pavilion was situated in the modern section of the exposition on the left-hand side of the lake. The visitors entered through a fourteen-metre-tall façade, adorned with a *sgraffito* mural by Maurice Barraud showing an allegory of textile art. Visitors stepped into a world of dramatic artifice, a *mise-en-scène* with a surprise waiting to delight them around every corner. The route through the exposition kicked off in the 1000-square-metre machine hall with a very nuts-and-bolts look at fashion, including live demonstrations of the manufacture of certain fabrics. Visitors then walked through a series of about 30 rooms devoted to a variety of themes, including displays that showcased materials such as linen, straw, and artificial silk.

The exhibition was remarkable for its varied design, which was interspersed with a number of spectacular moving elements, and provided visitors with regular opportunities to digest what they'd just seen, with verdant plant-filled courtyards breaking up the route. Having first taken in the display of fabrics, both

traditional and innovative, in the Textile Hall, visitors proceeded to the manufacturing section. The route concluded with displays of different accessories—including *Bally* shoes.

The building complex was designed by Karl Egender in collaboration with Bruno Giacometti. In addition to the main building—a block-like structure—the complex also comprised three round buildings with sugarloaf-shaped roofs, and the "Fashion Theatre". The latter played host in the afternoons and evenings to fashion shows and fashion-themed vaudeville performances. Even before the official opening of the LA39, the press eagerly reported on the twelve fashion models who had been specially selected and trained for the event. As the accompanying text for a publicity photograph entitled the "Day of the Lady" [FIG. 1] proclaimed: "Today, everything the modern woman requires to be 'suitably dressed' from the moment she rises to the time she goes to bed is produced by the Swiss fashion industry." Each item of footwear featured in this picture is a

[1] "Day of the Lady"; photo: F.A. Roedelberger (from Landesausstellung im Werden, Zürich 1939, p. 621)

Bally product, as were the shoes worn by the performers at the Fashion Theatre.

The *Bally* Room

Making displays of shoes look interesting comes with certain challenges. Shoes often have an appealing quality as prized and intricately crafted objects. While dresses require a form on which to be displayed, this is not the case with shoes. For the body's form is already present (in the sense of a negative) filling the space inside the shoe, which thus derives a sculptural quality. However, shoes are ordinarily in contact with the ground and are usually seen at "foot level". Displaying shoes at eye level removes them from their day-to-day context—unless they happen to be stored in a shoe closet. And since they all have broadly similar dimensions, shoes can take on a somewhat homogeneous form when displayed *en masse*. Furthermore, shoes in exhibitions are often displayed without an accompanying ensemble of clothing, which deprives them of meaningful context. Conversely, when displayed as accessories for an outfit, it is easy to overlook the shoes entirely.

For the exhibition of *Bally* footwear at the LA39, it was decided to address these issues by presenting the objects less as ordinary shoes and more like items of jewellery. The effect was achieved in a variety of ways. A room with a mirrored ceiling and one mirrored rear wall formed the backdrop for showcases whose contents were indirectly illuminated and framed with decorative cords [FIGS. II, III, IV]. Reminiscent of a Baroque picture gallery, the room appeared to stretch to infinity through the reflections of the mirrored ceiling and panelling. Even the mirror mounts, decorated with a stilettoed pump that merged with a letter "B", kept to the wider decorative theme. The shoes were positioned on transparent trays that were fitted into slots in the wall. While there was more of an emphasis on women's footwear, the display also included shoes for men and children (as well as sports shoes). A particularly eye-catching element was formed by the golden and silver-coloured evening shoes, whose dramatic effect was further enhanced by the play of mirrors. A description of the display appeared in the expo's catalogue, entitled (appropriately enough) *The Golden Book of the Landi:*

[II, III] The Bally Room
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

"The shoe cabinet—what a fairy-tale affair! A treasure trove in the very truest sense. [...] The gold and silver evening shoes glisten like jewels."[6]

The design legacy of Karl Egender is today held at the gta Archives at the ETH Zürich. The archive includes several pictures that illustrate the evolution of Egender's design for the *Bally* Room. One gouache shows a room with rounded corners, where variously shaped display cases are interlinked by *Bally* logos in large silver lettering [FIG. V].

Two variations of this design are detailed in Egender's perspective drawings. The first sets out a curved design [FIG. VI], while the other shows the design that was ultimately selected for a right-angled room [FIG. VII]. The spectacular visual effect created by the mirrored walls was without doubt a key factor in this selection.

Even at this preliminary stage, both versions show the display cases framed with decorative cords. Iterations of the cord's arrangement appeared at various points throughout the pavilion, where they were used in the signs for the "Fashion Theatre"

[IV] The Bally Room
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

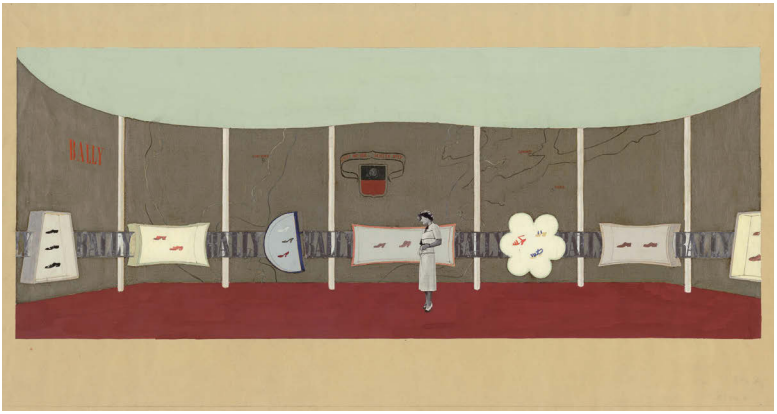
and to frame the window displays in the round outbuildings located in the Fashion Pavilion's courtyard.

The archived documents also include a diagrammatic drawing detailing the arrangement of the shoes [FIG. VIII] and the final plan, dated 31 January 1939, for the design's implementation [FIG. IX]. These designs continue to include the *Bally* logo on the floor, although this detail was omitted when the pavilion was eventually built. The floorplan and profile both underline the scrupulous attention to detail in fitting the display cases to the walls. The edges of the rear panels were rounded off so that they could not be seen from the inside of the display cases, with the result that the shoes appeared to "float" on their transparent supports.

Bally shoes were thus presented in a purpose-built space that combined loving attention to detail with some eye-catchingly original design concepts.

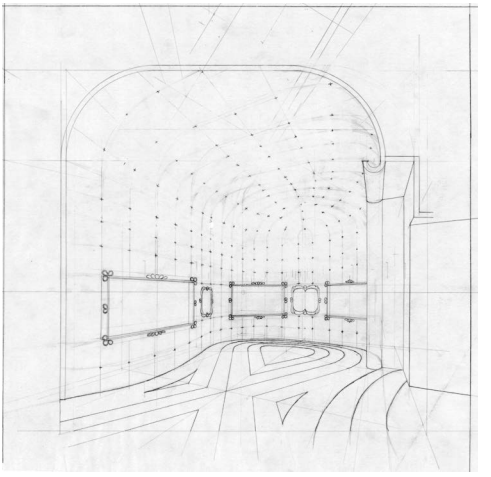
Other Swiss shoe companies were also represented at the expo, including in one of the round pavilions. Unlike *Bally*, these presentations emulated classic commercial window displays. There is no photographic record of these rooms, which would suggest that *Bally's* display created the biggest visual impact and grabbed the most attention.

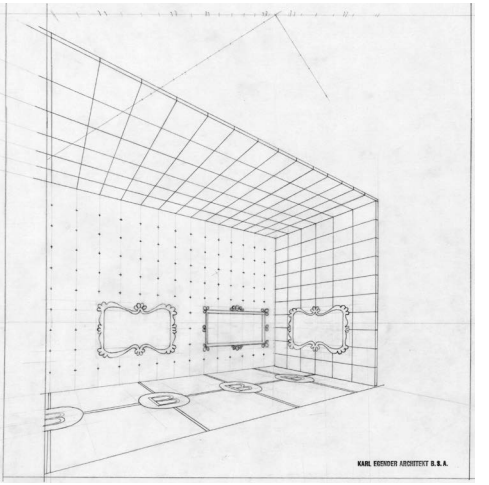
It was also possible to see *Bally* shoes beyond the confines of the Fashion Theatre and mirrored hall. As *Mitteilungen*, *Bally's* in-house company magazine, proudly reported:



[v] Karl Egender
(© gta Archives / ETH Zürich, Karl Egender)

We were delighted to see our products displayed on the Höhenstrasse [main exhibitors' avenue]: The Work and Business section featured shoes from our museum; one of our beautifully quilted boots was shown in the section on the Swiss Woman; the section on Promoting Commerce included two models [of Bally shoes] in a display showcasing Swiss exports, while two others were used as examples of "beautiful form" in the Hall of Fame. We showed Bally shoes in a display case located in the foyer of the Fashion Theatre, presenting two especially outstanding examples from our museum and current collection. And





[VI, VII] Karl Egender
(© gta Archives / ETH Zürich, Karl Egender)

let us not forget the Bally shoes shown at previous events, from the Swiss National Expos of 1883, 1896, and 1914 through to the World Expo in Paris in 1937. […] The company was even represented in the Expo Village, where a number of carp from the Bally Park [in Schönenwerd] could be seen swimming in one of the fish ponds—probably for the first time in front of such large audiences.[7]

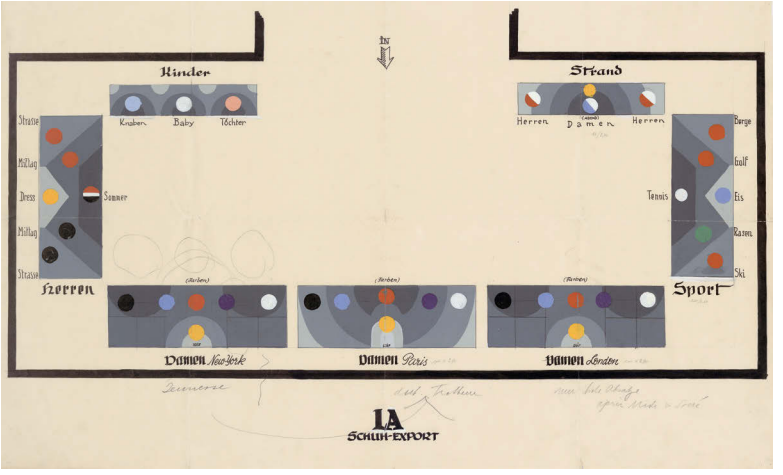
Exports and Their Significance

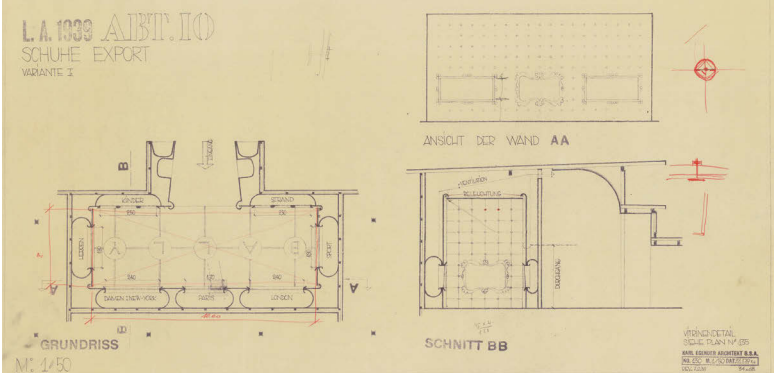
The models of *Bally* shoes shown in the Export Pavilion were without doubt a far cry from the footwear sported by Swiss women in this period. The more international emphasis was already clear from the names accompanying the shoes in the display case: "Florida", "Paris", "London", "New York", and "Bally College U.S.A.". Having been given the day off to visit the LA39 expo, *Bally* employees were provided with reading material for the outing's journey to the venue. The text offered some important insights: "Our current daily output of around 11,000 pairs of shoes is only possible if a considerable portion is distributed abroad. Hence exports are of vital importance to us."[8] The article continues: "We are well aware that it's no easy task working in simple rural settings making shoes destined for spoiled and demanding city dwellers. If this visit to the National Expo helps raise awareness and improve understanding [of the role of exports], then it will have served its purpose." As the article goes on to explain:

> Just as our company is dependent on exports, so too is our entire country: it is by manufacturing products to higher standards than is possible in other countries that we earn the money needed to feed our population. If we Swiss have nothing left to offer people abroad that they cannot already procure elsewhere, then our exports will dry up and—once the nation's savings are depleted—so too any means of importing the food and raw materials needed to sustain the Swiss population. Unemployment and hunger would be the direct consequences.[9]

Here we see a resounding argument in favour of exporting fashion products, a cause passionately championed on numerous occasions during this period by Ivan Bally (1876–1965), a grandchild of the company's founder. The shoe industry had suffered

in the early 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression, later exacerbated when access to export markets was curtailed by the protectionist policies of countries like France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Then came the Second World War (the expo was still ongoing when Germany invaded Poland in September 1939). Although the war initially brought a spike in demand for utility shoes, it ultimately led to the blocking of the very trade routes on which Swiss exports depended, as Switzerland's neighbours were drawn, one by one, into the conflict. Not only were commercial considerations directly politicized, they were also (owing to *Bally* products' enhanced visibility at the expo) lent a new aesthetic dimension. Alongside his role as





[VIII, IX] Karl Egender
(© gta Archives / ETH Zürich, Karl Egender)

company spokesman, Ivan Bally also acted as chairman of *Bally Schuhfabriken AG's* executive board from 1921 to 1954. Among his considerable additional responsibilities, Ivan Bally represented his canton by serving as a member of the Swiss Council of States from 1937 to 1943. He also authored the article on shoes that appeared in the most important publication to accompany the LA39: *Switzerland through the Mirror of the National Exposition.* Having opened with some insights about utility footwear, Ivan Bally then offered the following reflection:

> As a fashion item, the shoe aspires to go one level higher. For its ambition is to be (in a thousand variations of form and colour) a miniature work of art. Visitors to the shoe exports pavilion were left wide-eyed and with jaws hanging at the sights on display. If, on top of that, they also kept their ears peeled, they would have heard the kind of gasped reactions one usually only encounters at modern art exhibitions, ranging from "Wow, how beautiful!" to "Yuck!"[10]

Here, I suspect, the "controversy" surrounding shoe art was a distraction from the real issue. Certainly, a contemporary response that appeared in the Swiss shoemakers' trade journal would appear to support this view:

> There is a surprising wealth of forms and models on display here, including the latest fashions with outright bizarre designs—strapped shoes on raised cork supports (described as "buskins"), heels in forms that technically no longer qualify as heels. It is hardly credible that the "destitute" shoe industry can still afford such "gimmickry" while smaller factories and artisanal businesses are neither able nor willing to keep up with their designs.[11]

The reason the shoes proved so divisive was probably more to do with their luxurious quality at a time of looming austerity. The author goes on to pay tribute to the other participating shoe manufacturers and shoemakers more generally, before concluding with some comments on the theme of exports: "In 1938, the average value of imported shoes was 6.80 Swiss francs per pair, compared to nearly double that—12 francs—

for those exported. These figures alone give an idea of the emphasis we put on quality in this country." The writer describes the shoe as a "worthy ambassador of Swiss craftsmanship", and the LA39 as "the most effective trailblazer for our country's exports".[12]

The Landi offered Switzerland a way to forge its own national self-image. By participating at LA39, the *Bally* company was clearly asserting its identification with Swiss export culture and the international values it represented.

Fashion and Movement

Despite his analogy to modern art, Ivan Bally was most convinced by the economic benefits of featuring at the expo. However, the company also broke new ground in the presentational forms it employed at LA39. This could be seen, for example, in the approach taken to the theme of movement. A problem common to all fashion exhibitions is that clothes are displayed in a frozen state, even though, in reality, the human body is constantly moving. There were moving elements throughout the pavilion: the Textile Hall's display of Swiss fabrics (silks and St Gallen lace in particular) featured moving mannequins. Gliding as though by some magical force along a fixed path, the mannequins offered visitors a 360-degree view of their elegant dresses. One mannequin even lifted the hem of its skirt in order to give a glimpse of the petticoat beneath. As one contemporary commentator wrote: "There is not a single straight line to be seen in the interior design of this room, which is all about gentle movement."[13] The installation was designed by Robert Piguet, a Swiss *haute couture* designer who had headed his own fashion house in Paris since 1933.[14] Clothes in the Manufacturing Hall were mounted on folding panels and revealed at regular intervals in an alternating sequence of womenswear and menswear. Hats in the millinery section emerged on stands from openings in the wall. Visitors comfortably ensconced in armchairs could admire a series of hats passing before their eyes as though on a conveyor belt before vanishing back into the wall. And, as previously mentioned, visitors could see textile machines operating in the first room of the exhibition. The show was also brought to life

with demonstrations of traditional handicrafts such as knitting. Headlined "The Technology of Presentation", a contemporary review in *Das Werk* magazine noted that movement "lent a more vivid quality to many of the exhibits".[15] The displays stood out for their sheer inventive variety.

Performance

By adopting a number of diverse and original approaches, the performances staged at the Fashion Theatre [FIG. X] managed to integrate movement while also responding to the challenges of exhibiting shoes as described previously. The very notion of a "Fashion Theatre" was itself unique. The theatre section of the building—indeed, the entire Fashion Pavilion—was financed by the Swiss textile industry and based on an idea originally outlined by Edgar Grieder (1891–1942), owner of the Zürich clothing store that bears his name. Addressing the organizing committee of the Swiss National Exposition in 1938, he wrote:

[x] Fashion Theatre
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

The guiding principle should be to create displays that bring the fashion industry to life. Relying on a rigid format to present "fashion" as the epitome of transformation is an absurdity in and of itself; nor would there be any sense in requiring fashion houses such as ours, which already owns a store front on Bahnhofstrasse, to hire additional display windows at an exhibition—only then to use the space for displaying the same fashions over a period of several months (changing the display on a weekly basis, as demanded by the fashion columns to which our industry is beholden, is not possible due to technical reasons). The only suitable and entertaining way to present anything "fashion"-related is therefore to stage a daily changing programme of fashion shows featuring real-life models.[16]

In addition to putting these ideas into practice, Grieder also determined the organizational and financial form ultimately assumed by the project when he proposed the creation of a cooperative.

The theatre seated 280 people and was equipped with a revolving stage configured so that no one in the audience would find themselves sitting more than ten metres from the performers. The stage was draped in grey artificial silk and illuminated by 1500 small lights. The roof was retractable, and "in the adjoining bar, there was an attempt to bring together elements of Baroque plaster moulding with Surrealist painting".[17]

All the performers wore *Bally* footwear, which meant the shoes could be seen fulfilling their intended function: as accessories complementing particular "looks". When used as props—in a suitcase full of shoes, for example—they played a more active role, almost becoming characters in the performance. Shoes also occupied a key role in the narrative. In contrast to the exhibition of luxury shoes, the performances addressed a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. In one song, a shoe-shiner describes his all-consuming work: He dreams about having to polish a thousand pairs of shoes and is resigned to there being no respite to his work even in heaven. The refrain lists various types of shoes—small and large, old and new, shoes with well-worn heels, and shoes for dancing. The rather melancholy ditty concludes in loose translation: "And I clean 'em all, all, all / But it's *Bally* I like best of all."

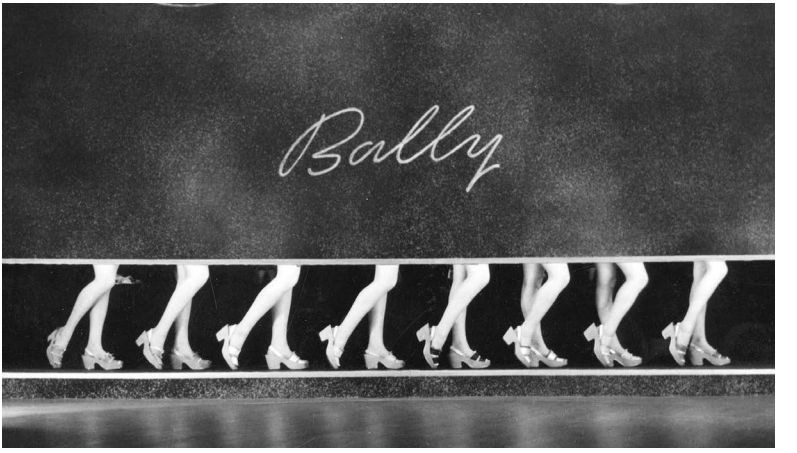
The second performance included another shoe-related musical number, this time about the importance of suitable footwear. Two elegantly attired couples are all set to head for the mountains, but are lucky enough to be stopped before venturing onto a glacier without the necessary mountain shoes [FIG. XI]. The story finished with a song whose title translates as "Heel in the Snow", sung by Zarli Carigiet [FIG. XII], which is about pairs of shoes and how they make the perfect match. The song concludes with lines that read something like this: "Take that good old climbing boot, for example. All it needs is the same as the [lady's] shoe: the *Bally* stamp!"

Shoes were also the visual centrepiece of the third vaudeville act, where they appeared in a format that called to mind a TV screen (a cutting-edge medium in this period). Legs appeared together in a frame, each pair showcasing a different pair of shoes. "An ingenious display of shoe fashions, which often left visitors unable to decide what they found more attractive—the shoes, or the beautiful legs […]"[18] [FIG. XIII]. Accompanying the "television" performance was music originally composed by Paul Burkhard.[19] A woman places an order over the telephone, having had her interest piqued by an advertisement promoting shoes with names like "Blue Nile" and "Firebird". She comments guiltily: "This will be the death of me!"—to which the saleswoman on the line quips: "Shoes couldn't possibly be the death of any-

[XI, XII] Scenes from the Fashion Theatre with Zarli Carigiet (Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

one." The woman then telephones her lover, whom she calls by turns "George", "Alexander", and finally even "Othello". He in turn serenades his beloved with a song, which concludes: "You're my happiness, my salvation. But look a little closer and you'll see, what I love is not so much you—but your shoe." The young woman is not only characterized by her love of shoes and flirtatious nature, but also by her familiarity with the latest technology—the telephone.

As one account put it: "It was no small task to solve the problem we had set ourselves: namely, putting on a *theatrical advertisement* that was easy on both the eyes and ears. […] This was advertising dressed up to the nines in its most elegant dress: dazzling in its variety, sparking with effervescent humour."[20] Swiss fashion manufacturers provided the raw material for individual scenes, with the products explored as dramatic themes. The performances functioned as a kind of performative display window—a live advertisement, as it were. Advertisement or not, *Bally* made sure to cast stars from Switzerland's cabaret and entertainment industry who were big names, delivering polished acts. The result was a unique genre that synthesized art and commerce. As for the building itself, the Fashion Theatre was an entirely unique concept; then as now, fashion shows were held in rooms normally used for other purposes.



[XIII] Fashion Theatre
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

Fashion and Architecture

Five years previously, the Fashion Pavilion's architect, Karl Egender, had designed the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zürich (today part of the ZHdK, Zürich University of the Arts)—a wonderfully functional building designed in the International Style. From an aesthetic point of view, the "Clothes Make People" pavilion diverged in a number of ways from this earlier building. Yet there were also similarities: For example, both buildings boasted bright passageways connecting the interior to outdoor spaces (which were in turn filled with plants and sculptures). Attached to the building on the LA39 site and set within a garden, the three round structures could be described as the pavilion's "landmark" feature, visible from afar. They were built of wood, like the majority of buildings at the LA39. Topped with cone-shaped roofs dotted with small cutouts in the form of rhombuses, their form was strikingly enigmatic. The shape, not unlike a tajine, lent the buildings an air of exoticism. Erected in the gardens in front of the expo pavilion, the buildings had a sculptural appearance reminiscent of billowing skirts. The rhombus pattern might be interpreted as a reference to lace (which was, after all, one of Switzerland's major textile products) [FIG. XIV].

Contemporary Reactions

Prior to attempting to interpret the architecture, it is first useful to have some idea of the character of "Landi style" (as the prevailing aesthetic at the exposition was termed). A comprehensive overview of this style was presented in a review of the Swiss National Exposition published by *Das Werk* magazine. The review's author was Peter Meyer, who, in addition to editing the magazine from 1930 to 1942, was himself an extremely eloquent architectural critic. A significant motivation for Swiss architects in this period was the urge to take a symbolic stand against the monumentalist architecture of the country's fascist neighbours. One aspect of this was the idea of favouring open spaces over enclosed cubes, as exemplified in the combination of internal courtyards and building annexes seen at the Fashion Pavilion. Furthermore, the Fashion Theatre boasted a retractable roof and hence an "open space" in its most literal sense.

The pavilion's design adopted other trademark "Landi style" features. For example, true to the guiding principle that enjoined architects to create "an entrance—not a portal", visitors entered the pavilion through a simple door rather than some grand ceremonial gate. Even then, and in keeping with the style's systematic avoidance of symmetry, the doors were not positioned centrally. The design was also characterized by its emphasis on movement, airiness, and transparency. As an example of the sort of floating ceilings that conveyed these qualities, the article refers to the Fashion Pavilion's "light-blue ceiling that undulates over the long corridor". There was also an airy quality to the "disembodied supports"[21] that functioned as an architectural alternative to Neoclassical columns. The review also praises the "varied surface structures made up of battens, grids, and geometric patterns".[22] Thus, for example, board-and-batten sidings were used for the outer walls of the conical wooden buildings. The battens under the roof were singled out for having a "directly proportional relationship to the human body, being of a width that roughly matched the size of the human hand".[23] Battening was also one way of making structural materials visible at the surface, substituting ornamentation, which was to be avoided. The only ornamentation to speak of was the

[XIV] Fashion Pavilion
(© Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv, F Fb-0021-42)

"surface patterning in the form of rhomboids painted in straight lines at perspectival angles".[24] This was another innovative design element that could be seen incorporated into the Fashion Pavilion.

Another article praises the exhibition's "thematic principle". This did not allow for decorative forms, "or rather, only as exceptions that merely emphasized the rule—on display for example at the Fashion Pavilion, where the theme of playfulness and luxury is the very point of the exhibit". On the other hand, the article notes: "The use of movement in a number of displays fosters a greater sense of immediacy." The mannequins and revolving wall panels were cited as examples of this approach.[25]

The article was more critical of the way visitors were channelled into a "compulsory route", complaining that "in the Fashion Pavilion […] one occasionally felt as though one had fallen into a trap". The article goes on to bemoan how "anyone wishing to show Bally shoes to an acquaintance has first to walk a good few kilometres through all the fabrics displays".[26] It was perhaps inevitable that critical responses would not be universally positive in view of the experimental spirit in which the pavilion was constructed. But overall, as a theme, fashion was particularly well suited to seeing new architectural ambitions put into practice.

Artistic Contributions

Another aspect of the Swiss National Expo that attracted responses from critics was the relationship between free and applied art. "Abstract art—applied: Practically all formal elements of 'non-representational' art have been incorporated into the detail of the decor",[27] wrote Meyer, in a comment that left no doubt about his scepticism towards abstract art. However, LA39 does appear to have been more a celebration of applied art than "free" or fine art. The various sculptures (including a large number of female nudes) and murals tended towards the very monumentality that the architecture strove to avoid. A more modestly scaled contribution from a major Swiss artist was rejected. Bruno Giacometti, one of Karl Egender's assistants, had hoped to display a sculpture by his brother, Alberto, in one of the inner courtyards. Alberto Giacometti proposed using one of

the pedestals to display a very small figure, arguing "it matters not whether a figure is big or small, the only important consideration is that it should dominate the space".[28] However, the proposal was rejected in favour of another of the artist's works, *Cube* (1933), which, according to his brother Bruno, was the sole example of abstract sculpture anywhere at the expo.[29] There are tellingly no photographs of this courtyard, as perhaps befits its status as an aesthetic outlier. However, there are pictures of another courtyard where a monumental head by Cornelia Forster was displayed in front of wooden slats that, by a trick of perspective, appeared to be mounted on the wall, and at whose centre was a Surrealist-inspired picture. Commissions were awarded to visual artists whose works then contributed to the overall aesthetic impact—to the point where it was not always possible to hone in and distinguish the "art" from the "design". Just as this creative divide was bridged, so too were the respective responses of specialist and lay audiences. As Peter Meyer remarked: "For the first time, the unholy chasm dividing 'experts' (that is, artists, architects, and art-savvy intellectuals) on the one hand, and the 'general public' unversed in art criticism on the other has begun to close."[30]

Conclusion

The practice of exhibiting consumer products began with the World's Fairs of the mid-19th century. The first to include contemporary fashions was probably the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where visitors could admire the latest designs at the Pavillon de la Mode. The exposition in Paris was also the setting for the Palais de la Costume, which marked the first attempt to create a global narrative of fashion and costume history. Visitors to the pavilion could see wax figures dressed in reproductions of historical clothing, displayed in settings designed to evoke the respective period.[31] These early displays only included footwear as accessories, and it was not until the 1930s that the history of shoe exhibitions began in earnest. In 1934, the Ferargil Galleries in New York held an exhibition on the theme of feet and shoes. Visitors to the venue (a private gallery, and thus in essence a salesroom of sorts) could admire drawings, paintings, and sculptures alongside shoes designed

by André Perugia.[32] In 1941, the Museum of Costume Art (the future Costume Institute of New York's Metropolitan Museum) organized an exhibition of 18th-century shoes, stockings, and other accessories. To date, however, there have been no publications on the history of shoe exhibitions.

It was not until the turn of the millennium that fashion exhibitions attracted any significant academic scrutiny.[33] Bulking large in this field are the respective histories of the important fashion departments at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Two exhibitions in particular stand out as seminal moments: In 1971, Cecil Beaton curated *Fashion: An Anthology* in London,[34] then two years later came the opening of Diane Vreeland's *The World of Balenciaga* in New York.[35] As Gertrud Lehnert has underlined, commercial and non-commercial shows—expos of trade and industry and curatorial retrospectives—have continually served as mutual sources of inspiration and influence, to the extent that it is nowadays not always possible to make a clear distinction between the two.

Having hosted an exhibition entitled simply *The Shoe* back in 1915, the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich (now Museum für Gestaltung) was early to recognize the shoe's potential as a museum exhibit. It also held the exhibition *The Shoe: The History of Its Manufacture and Use* in 1936/37. The majority of the exhibits at both shows was either *Bally* products or shoes loaned from the company's collection of historical models.[36] The latter formed the basis for the *Bally* Shoe Museum in Schönenwerd, which opened in 1942 at the former home of the company's founder and finally gave members of the public the opportunity to see this comprehensive (and, still today, remarkable) collection. These various initiatives enjoyed a symbiotic relationship, as institutions continued to accumulate experience and draw lessons from different approaches to exhibiting.

The pavilion at LA39 exemplified an especially original approach to displaying fashion in general and shoes in particular. There are a number of reasons why the different methods of displaying exhibits were so varied and accomplished. As a company, *Bally* was already a veteran of holding exhibitions, while the involvement of a figure like Edgar Grieder lent real momen-

tum to the project. With an architect at the helm of LA39 and the creative talents of Karl Egender put to work on the Fashion Pavilion, it was possible to break new ground in the realm of exhibition design. Furthermore, the wider geopolitical context created the need to develop a distinct and independent aesthetic idiom—for which the theme of fashion was particularly well suited (hence, for example, the display's focus on the role of movement in fashion). Finally, fashion was of significant value to the Swiss economy, with textile machines, silk, lace, and footwear numbering among the country's major exports. These various factors made for a multifaceted fashion exhibition characterized by a wide array of innovative ideas for which no expense was spared.

It was on the back of these experiences that the Swiss Fashion Week first came into being. Held annually in Zürich from 1942 to 1944, this event similarly benefited from the expertise of Karl Egender as senior architect. Once again, *Bally* shoes enjoyed a prominent place and were displayed with similar creative flair. Moreover, the company's wealth of experience in participating in trade shows and expos would certainly have been an advantage when it opened the *Bally* Shoe Museum in 1942.

In the boardroom, however, enthusiasm for the exhibition was initially rather muted, as is clear from the minutes of a meeting held on 12 October 1938: "Mr Max Bally fails to see how participating at the National Expo will help increase sales to a level that could justify the high costs (probably in the order of 60,000 Swiss francs)." However, when the board subsequently discussed the dissolution of the Fashion Theatre cooperative, members took the view that "the Fashion Theatre [had been] a success […] and without doubt one of the crowning features of the Landi".

1 "Eine märchenhafte Angelegenheit!"; Freitag 1939, p. 157.

2 I have previously described the Fashion Pavilion in an abridged version of this text. See: "Kleider machen Leute. Der Modepavillon auf der Schweizerischen Landesausstellung" in: Jahrbuch ntm; Augsburg 2018.

3 An example of this was the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where the latest fashions could be admired at the Pavillion de la Mode. See Clark/De la Haye 2014, p. 11.

4 For example, the expositions at Chicago (1933/34), Brussels (1935), Paris (1937), and New York (1938).
5 The pavilion's name derives from the title of a novella by Gottfried Keller in which the protagonist's deceptively elegant attire results in him becoming unwittingly embroiled in a confidence trick. Although portrayed in a far from positive light, fashion nonetheless emerges in the story as a force to be reckoned with.
6 Freitag 1939, p. 157.
7 Mitteilungen der Bally-Schuhfabriken A.-G., 15 November 1939, pp. 2f.
8 Ibid., 1 June 1939, p. 2.
9 Ibid., p. 3.
10 Bally 1940, p. 143.
11 Schweizerische Schuhmacher-Zeitung, year 65, no. 12, 15 June 1939, p. 182.
12 Ibid., p. 146.
13 Wagner 1939, p. 140.
14 Christian Dior first cut his teeth as a fashion designer at Piguet's studio, where he worked from 1938 to 1939.
15 Anon. 1939, p. 347.
16 The Edgar Grieder estate, Zürich City Archives.
17 Oboussier 1940, p. 621.
18 Trapp: "Das Modetheater und sein Drum und Dran" in: Festliche Landi, p. 60.
19 Programme booklet, Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG, Schönenwerd.
20 Zuppinger 1940, p. 575.
21 Das Werk, vol. 11, 1939, p. 332.
22 Ibid., p. 334.
23 Ibid., p. 334.
24 Ibid., p. 336.
25 Anon: Die Technik der Darstellung, 1939, p. 347.
26 Ibid., p. 348.
27 Ibid., p. 345.
28 Baumann 2009, p. 45.
29 Küster 2009, p. 93.
30 P.M.: "Die Architektur der Landesausstellung-–kritische Besprechung", 1939, p. 321.
31 For more on this subject, see Clark/De la Haye 2014, pp. 11f.
32 Steele/Hill 2012, p. 39.
33 Lehnert/Kühl/Weise 2014.

34 Clark/De la Haye 2014.

35 Koda/Glasscock 2014.

36 This tradition provided the source materials for a research project, the fruits of which were shown at the exhibition "Bally—Swiss Shoes since 1851" at the Museum für Gestaltung, Zürich.