



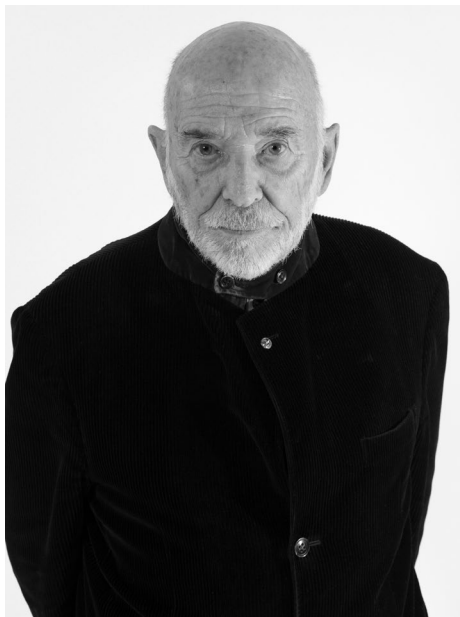
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Swiss Grand Award for Design 2021

Federal Office of Culture: outstanding designers honoured

Swiss Grand Award for Design 2021 goes to
Julia Born, Peter Knapp and Sarah Owens



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Federal Office of Culture: outstanding designers honoured

The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) has selected the graphic designer Julia Born, photographer and art director Peter Knapp, and educator and researcher Sarah Owens as the recipients of this year's Swiss Grand Award for Design. The award is conferred on the recommendation of the Federal Design Commission. The winners work in a wide range of fields, and their excellence mirrors the rich spectrum of Swiss design.

Julia Born (b. 1975) is one of Switzerland's most highly regarded graphic designers. She trained at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and is best known for her work in the cultural field. She has designed visual identities, publications and exhibitions for international institutions such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Kunsthalle Basel, documenta 14 in Kassel/Athens, the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Brücke-Museum in Berlin. She regularly works with artists and personalities from the worlds of fashion and photography. Julia Born has achieved a rare feat within the world of graphic design, creating an unmistakeable signature without employing an easily identifiable style. She has taught graphic design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam for many years, and has worked at various international schools and universities. For the last three years, she has also been teaching at the École cantonale d'art Lausanne (ECAL).

Photographer and art director Peter Knapp (b. 1931) is one of the most globally successful Swiss fashion photographers. From 1946 to 1950 he studied graphic design at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich, where he was influenced by the design principles of the Bauhaus. He began taking photographs early on, and in 1953 was appointed art director of the magazine *Nouveau Fémina*. He is especially well known for his work as art director of the fashion magazine *Elle* in Paris (1959–1966, 1974–1977). Over the course of his career, he has photographed for prestigious publications such as *Vogue*, *The*

Sunday Times Magazine and *Stern*, and has received seventeen awards from the Art Directors Club. Numerous exhibitions have been devoted to his work, including a major retrospective at the Paris Art Center in 1986 and, most recently, at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris as well as a range of art galleries in Switzerland and France.

Sarah Owens (b. 1977) is a design educator and researcher. She has been working for more than a decade at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), where she is currently a professor and chair of the Visual Communication subject area. After studying communication design she embarked on an academic career which took her to the Royal College of Art in London and the University of Reading. Her research and practical work in the discipline are characterised by an interdisciplinary approach and an expanded definition of design. Her research projects, publications and activities are making a major contribution to a new, more inclusive and diverse conception of (Swiss) design. Her discursive practice influences both public perceptions and a new generation of young designers. As a result, her impactful work, both within Switzerland and beyond, is more topical and relevant than ever.

Launched in 2007 and endowed with CHF 40,000 in each case, the Swiss Grand Award for Design highlights the work of well-known designers that exemplifies the quality and relevance of Swiss design practice nationally and internationally.

Julia Born, b. 1975, Zurich Graphic Designer



Julia Born. *Title of the Show* (2009), installation view Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, in collaboration with Laurenz Brunner. © Stefan Fischer

Julia Born lives and works in Zürich. After completing her studies at Amsterdam's Gerrit Rietveld Academie in 2000, she worked on various projects between Switzerland, Amsterdam, and Berlin. Her work focuses on editorial design for a variety of cultural clients such as the Stedelijk Museum or Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, Kunsthalle Basel, ICA Miami, Guggenheim Museum New York, Hamburger Bahnhof, HKW and Brücke-Museum in Berlin and documenta 14 in Kassel and Athens. The work, developed in close dialogue with institutions, curators and artists, includes publications, identities, exhibition design and more. Apart from commissioned work she has continuously collaborated with other designers and artists on investigative projects, with – among others – photographer Uta Eisenreich, fashion designer JOFF, and performance artist Alexandra Bachzetsis. These projects revolve around the subject of language and representation.

Aude Lehmann, member of the Federal Design Commission says about Julia Born's work: "Julia Born is one

of those rare professionals who paves their own way. As a pioneering force, she has long been revered and treasured by students, collaborators, clients and colleagues alike, be they artists, curators, or designers.

Artistic authority, technical precision and an unflinching eye, not to mention her long-standing teaching activities, have long established her as a role model, here and abroad. Yet she remains quietly focused on her practice away from any self-congratulatory social media pomp.

Through cleverly devised concepts and sophisticated interplay of her chosen elements and strategies, Julia distills each of her projects to its fundamental essence, yet always adds her own crucial twist. She effortlessly succeeds in surprising and convincing, challenging the viewer by purposefully embedding distinctive, often personal touches without succumbing to the temptations of a signature style."

"Characterised by critical awareness, Julia Born has created a diverse, potent set of methodologies and developed a unique language for their use. The resulting objects are invariably delightful: intelligent, authentic and genuinely beautiful."

Aude Lehmann, member of the Federal Design Commission

Julia regularly teaches graphic design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and ECAL, Ecole cantonale d'art de Lausanne, and is visiting lecturer at international art and design institutes, a.o. Yale School of Arts, RISD Rhode Island School of Design, University of

Seoul, CCA San Francisco, Werkplaats Typografie in Arnhem. From 2003 to 2007 she has been a jury member of 'The Most Beautiful Swiss Books' competition. On the occasion of the Inform Award for Conceptual Design, she produced her first solo show and the cata-

logue *Title of the Show*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig, Germany. Among other prizes she received the Charlotte Köhler Prijs in 2008, the Jan Tschichold Prize in 2011, the Swiss Design Award in 2003, 2007 and 2018.

Peter Knapp, b. 1931 in Bäretswil, lives and works in Paris and Klosters
Photographer and Art director



Peter Knapp, Courrèges, collection «Space Age», Paris, spring-summer 1965. © Peter Knapp

Photographer and art director Peter Knapp is one of the most globally successful Swiss fashion photographers. From 1946 to 1950 he studied graphic design at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich, where he was influenced by the design principles of the Bauhaus. In 1951 and 1952 he attended the drawing class at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. At the start of his career he was also a painter, which led to his first solo exhibition in Paris in 1958. Peter Knapp began taking photographs early on,

and in 1953 he was appointed artistic director of the magazine *Nouveau Femina*; in 1955, aged just 24, he also became artistic director of the department store Galeries Lafayette. While art director of the fashion magazine *Elle* in Paris (1959–1966, 1974–1977), he gave up painting to concentrate on fashion photography. He worked closely with the fashion designer André Courrèges for more than 20 years.

“Peter Knapp achieves the remarkable feat of breaking seemingly immutable codes in order to invent new ones, so that his novel and even unusual propositions are immediately given permanence in reference works and teaching programmes. The power of his images reveals evidence that has long been invisible or ignored, brings it to the fore and, naturally, reawakens our gaze.”

Tatjana Franck, member of the Federal Design Commission

Peter Knapp's style was completely new: he liberated fashion photography from the rigid constraints of studios and carefully rehearsed poses. Inspired by cinema, he played with movement and outdoor scenes. His photographs were highly influential at a time when women were experiencing liberation and reinventing themselves. In the 1970s he was a freelance photographer working for high-profile publications such as *Vogue*, *The Sunday Times Magazine* and *Stern*. Peter Knapp has also designed

stage sets, produced films (including “Van Gogh, derniers jours à Auvers-sur-Oise”) and was one of the first to create conceptual photo series.

Since his first solo exhibitions in the late 1950s, Peter Knapp has presented his work as a painter, photographer and graphic designer all over the world: in 1975 at the Galerie Denise René, in 1988 at Photokina in Cologne and in 1990 at the Art Center in Tokyo; in 2008 with a comprehensive retrospective at the Maison Européenne de

la Photographie in Paris; in 2009 at the Musée Nicéphore Niépce in Chalon-sur-Saône; and in 2018 at the Cité de la Mode et du Design, Paris, to name but a few.

Between 1983 and 1994 Peter Knapp taught image design and photography at the École supérieure d'Art Graphique in Paris. Over the course of his career, he has received no fewer than seventeen awards from the Art Directors Club.

Sarah Owens, b. 1977 in Heidelberg, lives and works in Zurich
Design Educator and Researcher



Sarah Owens in conversation with Roxane Gay,
Literaturfestival Zürich, 2019. © Johanna Saxen

Sarah Owens is a design educator and researcher whose biography resists neat narratives: it is best imagined as a map whose regions have porous borders. After graduating from the University of Applied Sciences Augsburg with a degree in communication design, Sarah Owens worked as an editorial and corporate designer in Munich and Stuttgart. She then embarked on an academic career that took her first to the Royal College of Art in London and then to the University of Reading for her dissertation.

The underlying interests in her research – notions of expertise, knowledge, identity and othering – would constantly resurface throughout her career.

Sarah Owens lectured at universities in the UK before developing an academic career over more than a decade at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), where she is currently Professor and Chair of Visual Communication.

"Sarah Owens is a generous and committed design educator and researcher: through her inclusive, open and interdisciplinary practice she is shaping the next generations of designers, and contributing to foster the intellectual discourse on design in Switzerland, inside and outside academia."

Vera Sacchetti, member of the Federal Design Commission

In teaching, research and consulting, she adopts an inquiry-based approach that borrows from anthropology: one that attends closely and commits fully to the people and phenomena she encounters, thus allowing for joint conversations to unfold. Many of these had lasting influences on her approach to education, notably leading her to question the influence of myths and narratives within design and to consider notions of inequality, normativity and exclusivity, topics she included in her curricula. Her

aim within design education is therefore to expand the boundaries of design so that students gain new perspectives and an openness to the field. As an educator, she strives to create an educational path that goes beyond teaching skills.

Sarah Owens brings the same boundaryless ethos to cultural activities including literature and film, which allow her to connect more of her interests in images, memory, history and marginalisation. Amongst others, she co-organises the Black Film Festival Zurich.

Her consideration for the full spectrum of knowledge reflects her desire to share and connect with the wider community, addressing issues of representation and visibility outside the university. These activities perhaps define the core of Sarah Owens's biography: a passion for knowledge that is anti-hierarchical, celebrates plurality and focuses on inclusion, but also a career-long engagement to sharing and collectively building that knowledge.

Publication

To mark the occasion of the award, a limited edition book is published annually with in-depth interviews, essays and numerous pictures to honor the winners. Since 2015, a series marking the the best of Swiss design history has thus been created.

The book is published by Scheidegger & Spiess and will be launched in September on the occasion of the Swiss Design Awards exhibition in Basel.

Publisher:
Federal Office of Culture, Bern

Visual materials on the award winners are available for download on the website: www.bak.admin.ch/sgpd

Project lead:
Anna Niederhäuser, Bern

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Photos:
Diana Pfammatter, Basel/Berlin

Online and Social Media

Website:
www.schweizerkulturpreise.ch/design

Instagram:
[@swissdesignawards](https://www.instagram.com/swissdesignawards)

Facebook:
[@sdaswissdesignawards](https://www.facebook.com/sdaswissdesignawards)

Information and contact

Questions on the Confederation's awards policy:

Danielle Nanchen Navi
Head of Cultural Creativity Section
Federal Office of Culture
+ 41 (0)58 464 98 23
danielle.nanchen@bak.admin.ch

Questions on the Swiss Grand Awards for Design and the award winners:

Anna Niederhäuser
Head of Design Promotion
Cultural Creativity Section
Federal Office of Culture
+ 41 (0)79 476 64 74
anna.niederhaeuser@bak.admin.ch

Media services, organisation of interviews with the award winners and accreditation:

Marie-France Lombardo
+ 41 (0)79 832 42 71
design@schweizerkulturpreise.ch

Laureates 2007–2020

2020 Ida Gut (Fashion designer) Monique Jacot (Photographer) Kueng Caputo (Product designers)	2015 Lora Lamm (graphic designer) Team'77 (Erich Gschwind, André Gürtler, Christian Mengelt, typographers)	2010 Susi und Ueli Berger (furniture designers) Jean-Luc Godard (Immaker) Sonnhild Kestler (textile designer) Otto Künzli (jewellery designer)
2019 Rosmarie Baltensweiler (Entrepreneur and product designer) Connie Hüsler (Interior stylist) Thomi Wolfensberger (Lithographer)	2014 Erich Biehle (textile designer) Alfredo Häberli (product designer) Wolfgang Weingart (typographer)	2009 Robert Frank (photographer) Christoph Hefti (textile designer) Ursula Rodel (fashion designer) Thut Möbel (furniture design)
2018 Cécile Feilchenfeldt (textile designer) Felco (manufacturer of pruning shears) Rosmarie Tissi (graphic designer)	2013 Trix and Robert Haussmann (product designers) Armin Hofmann (graphic designer) Martin Leuthold (textile designer)	2008 Holzer Kobler Architekturen (Barbara Holzer, Tristan Kobler, exhibitions designers) Albert Kriemler, Akris (fashion designer) Alain Kupper (graphic designer, musician, artist, gallerist) Walter Pfeiffer (photographer)
2017 David Bielander (jewellery designer and artist) Thomas Ott (comic-book artist and illustrator) Jean Widmer (graphic designer and art director)	2012 Franco Clivio (product designer) Gavillet & Rust (Gilles Gavillet, David Rust, graphic designers) Karl Gerstner (graphic designer)	2007 Ruth Grüninger (fashion designer) NOSE (communication design, service design) Bernhard Schobinger (jewellery designer) Cornél Windlin (graphic designer)
2016 Claudia Caviezel (textile designer) Hans Eichenberger (product designer) Ralph Schraivogel (graphic designer)	2011 Jörg Boner (product designer) NORM (Dimitri Bruni, Manuel Krebs, graphic designers) Ernst Scheidegger (photographer) Walter Steiger (footwear designer)	

Federal Design Commission 2021

Chair	Members	Commission secretary
Jörg Boner Product designer, Zurich	Claudia Caviezel Textile design and development at Akris, St. Gallen Marietta Eugster Graphic designer, Zurich Davide Fornari Professor of Research and Development, ECAL, Renens Tatyana Franck Director, Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne Aude Lehmann Graphic designer, Zurich Vera Sacchetti Design critic and curator, Basel	Anna Niederhäuser (Head of Design Promotion, Federal Office of Culture)