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Art at the service of tourism marketing: from the mountain hare to the ski girl basking in the St. Moritz sun

Art has always played a key role in tourism marketing.¹ Poster designs by well-known artists established and later enhanced the image of many travel destinations and promoted their recreational activities. For example, the targeted use of artists' aesthetic ideals and creative skills contributed to Switzerland becoming internationally known for its glamorous winter sports resorts such as Davos, Gstaad, Mürren and St. Moritz.² Idyllic mountain locations like these became desirable destinations for city dwellers seeking action, adventure and relaxation, with St. Moritz in particular becoming a popular hotspot. To this day, members of high society meet here to enjoy both skiing and après-ski activities.

My lecture focuses on the development of poster advertising for winter sports in Switzerland, with particular emphasis on the marketing activities of the St. Moritz tourist office. Having recognised early on that striking posters could be a highly effective marketing tool, it commissioned outstanding artists and graphic designers such as Alois Cariget (1902–1985) and Walter Herdeg (1908–1995) to develop attractive new designs. With the aid of selected tourism posters from the 1920s and 30s, I explore the creative means (photography, photomontage, etc.) and the subject matter used by these artists to define the new image of Switzerland, and specifically that of St. Moritz, and examine how they contributed to the growth and success of the travel and tourism industries. The evolution of the St. Moritz advertising logo serves as a useful example in this context. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, promotional measures for St. Moritz had been based around the motif of a mountain hare, but in the mid-1930s the director of the St. Moritz tourist office, Walter Amstutz, decided to launch a new marketing campaign. He replaced the traditional symbol with a more modern one: the now-famous logo featuring the sun and the words 'St. Moritz'. The new trademark was not only the only

¹ Karin Rase, 'Vom Vergnügen zur Athletik. Der Skisport in der bildenden Kunst', in Markwart Herzog (ed.), *Skilauf – Volkssport – Medienzirkus. Skisport als Kulturphänomen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), pp. 187–205; Karin Rase, *Skisport in Kunst und Design* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 2009).

² Bernd Evers (ed.), *Ein Jahrhundert im Weltformat. Schweizer Plakate von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2001); Karl Wobmann/Willy Rotzler, *Touristikplakate der Schweiz 1880–1940* (Aarau, 1980).

thing that made St. Moritz appealing as a cosmopolitan winter sports resort, however. Images of radiant female skiers in scenic Alpine surroundings also played a key role, as illustrated by the elegant, sporty figures seen basking in the St. Moritz sun in the carefully staged poster designs produced by the St. Moritz tourist office.³

Karin Rase / Translation by Jacqueline Todd

³ Karin Rase, 'The depiction of female skiers in the context of art and design', in Halvor Kleppen (ed.), *Winter sport and outdoor life*, Morgedal, 2011, pp. 131–145.