

PRESS RELEASE

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The Swiss Transdisciplinarity Award goes to the Project "Power of Images"

Which images influence decisions about sustainable development? This question was examined by the project that is awarded the "Swiss Transdisciplinarity Award" for outstanding transdisciplinary research. The project "Power of Images" excels with its exemplary cooperation between different disciplines and with an innovative inclusion of the public. The prize money of CHF 50,000 is funded by the Gebert Rüf Foundation and the award is made by the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences' Transdisciplinarity-Net (td-net). The 2006 award will be presented on 10 November at the «Living in Metropolitan Switzerland: How to Organize Urbanization» conference in Bern.

The concept of sustainability is widely used – but how do people argue for sustainability? This question is addressed by the project "The Power of Images". On the basis of two successful examples (UNESCO World Natural Heritage Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn and UNESCO biosphere reserve Entlebuch), it examines how sustainability can be achieved. It examines which images from the mass media influence decisions about landscapes. The analysis is based on results from Marketing, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, Semiotics and Political Sciences, which are integrated in an exemplary way. The connection between a research project at the Geographical Institute at the University of Zurich and an interactive exhibition is particularly innovative. The exhibition has been developed jointly with the "Seminar für Kulturwissenschaft und Europäische Ethnologie" at the University of Basel. It was first shown in the areas of study, and later on in Zurich, Basel and Bern. It enables visitors to look into their own and other people's images and emotions about sustainable development. It thus opens scope for communication about and shaping of sustainability. The last opportunity to see this innovative exhibition will be an exhibition at the Swiss Alpine Museum in Bern which lasts until August 13.

Transdisciplinary research needs to be promoted. To this end, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences have established td-net (network for transdisciplinarity in sciences and humanities, www.transdisciplinarity.ch). The Swiss Transdisciplinarity Award highlights outstanding contributions by transdisciplinary research to the resolution of problems in the areas of society, technological development, the economy, the environment and health. The award was made possible by the generous support of the Gebert Rüf Foundation. The 2006 Swiss Transdisciplinarity Award will be presented to the recipients on 10 November at the conference « Living in Metropolitan Switzerland: How to Organize Urbanization» in the Kursaal Bern (www.sagw.ch, www.satw.ch, www.scnat.ch).

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