

WHAT PAPER CAN DO

NIGHT OF MUSEUMS IN THE NSZL



Continuing a tradition started last year, we organised our programmes around a central topic again in 2010. This time, it was paper ...

The now traditional guided tour of the library, starting every half an hour, was our most popular programme on the June night when visitors were given an opportunity to get to know the history and the work of the library, were allowed to look around the depositories, and were given an insight into paper dyeing and bookbinding techniques. Since we organised additional tours besides the scheduled ones, around 650 people were able to enjoy the rounds of the library. The night was crowned by Magdi Rózsa's booming theatrical concert at 7pm, which was an even greater success than expected. All of those present, from 3-4 year-old children to adults of grandparent age,

immersed themselves and moved with the music. The concert was held in a fantastic atmosphere – and those who could not get into the auditorium because of the very high level of interest were able to follow the performance on the screen in the entrance hall.

Happily for us, our thematically organised series of programmes entitled **What Paper Can Do** was popular with both children and adults browsing the exhibitions enthusiastically. Several educational activities connected to the exhibition entitled *Seven Centuries' Secrets of Paper* awaited young and old alike: paper dipping, watermark assembling and drawing, recognising and printing watermark drawings. Our smaller exhibitions also proved to be refreshing and colourful events. One of them was the exhibition of the Posters and Printed Ephemera Collection entitled the *Thousand Faces of Paper*, while the other on the fifth

The many visitors were also able to watch the Magdi Rózsa concert on an external screen.



floor was called *PORTION – 100 CARICATURES*, a selection of the works from Székelyudvarhely caricaturist Elemér Könczey. Alongside the diligent users of the reading rooms, visitors to the seventh floor could see a selection from the richly illustrated 18-19th century album material from the National Library's main collection, entitled *Mushrooms, Plants, and Animals*, as well as an exhibition called *Adventures in Paper* organised by the Hungarian Philately Scientific Society. Last but not least, The Special



Visitors in the Map Collection room



... and in the depository.

Library for Book History and Library Sciences invited visitors to a creative and interesting poster exhibition called *Buses, Bookworms, Books and Libraries*, where we could get a taste of posters published by foreign libraries popularising reading and libraries.

In the past few years, our library has been trying hard to organise programmes connected to our exhibitions and events that give people the opportunity to progress from being passive onlookers to active participants. At the Night of Museums for example adventurous visitors were able to participate in various interactive programmes. During the programme entitled *These are Music Scores Too!* visitors could get to know unusual scores. The Theatre History Collection organised a very colourful programme entitled *Theatre and Paper – Paper Theatre*: besides looking at scale-models and playbills made of special materials, they

had a chance to assemble their own scale-model scenery as well.

In the Map Collection department, intrepid visitors were given the chance to try out old and modern surveying equipment during an interactive programme entitled *Where can I be?* There was also a steady flow of visitors bustling around the *origami* desk; members of the Hungarian Origami Circle enthusiastically initiated visitors into the art of folding paper. Many also took advantage of the opportunity to have themselves depicted in a distorted fashion by caricaturist Péter Temesi.

Among the continuous flow of visitors a large number of people took the opportunity presented by the event to read and do research in our reading rooms until 2am. Under a special offer that has now become a tradition a great number registered as members or renewed their membership at discounted rates – many of them had just arrived as visitors, but influenced by their experiences during the interesting and colourful night they left as members. Overall we welcomed more than ten thousand visitors, which is a 30% increase on last year's figures. Particularly pleasing for us was that an increasing number of children and young people came to visit and looked around our library with great interest, participating in various educational programmes as well as in other events designed for them.

Edina Szilárdi
edina.at.oszk.hu