

The Doll's House Museum will be presenting:

Has anyone seen Noah?

A Special exhibition of "Wheeled Soft Toy Animals on the Ark"

From 21 April to 7 October 2007, soft toy animals on wheels will be gathering for a special exhibition in the Doll's House Museum Basel where they will board a Noah's Ark built for the occasion. It measures three metres in length and 1.70 metres in height. The wheeled animal pairs on display date from the period between approximately 1910 and 1960.

Representatives of the African animal world will be present as well as our native forest and farm animals. Although the display always features two examples of the same species, there are individual differences in size, colouring or in the wheels.

Some history experts are of the opinion that the wheel was already invented in prehistoric times in Asia. It is a fact, however, that this invention – probably one of the most important ever for our civilisation – also appeared for the first time in children's toys at the end of the 19th century. For more than a hundred years, felt, mohair and plush toys on wheels have proved a source of fascination for children. The exhibition displays animals produced by different manufacturers. The majority of the exhibits originate from the Margarete Steiff GmbH in Giengen. Other well-known manufacturers are Hermann, Bing and Schuco. In France, F.A.D.A.P. produced very attractive animals (e.g. giraffe in the exhibition). Mention should also be made of Merrythought and Chiltern from England. There were of course also a number of American manufacturers.

Steiff launched its first wheeled animal at the end of the 19th century. Around 1890, the model railway manufacturer Märklin helped Steiff solve the problem of securing the wheels and the metal frame to the animal. The first wheels were made of cast iron and either left in their

original colour or painted bronze. On the smaller animals, the wheels were generally attached to the feet. With large animals, an axle was mounted in addition, enabling children to sit on them and be pulled along. Later, the cast iron was replaced by wood which was much quieter running. At first the wheels were only varnished, but then they gradually began to be painted in colours, mostly in blue, green or red. Finally in 1930, the expensive wooden wheels were replaced by metal discs with rubber tyres. These are still used today.

The special exhibition in the Doll's House Museum Basel shows a representative survey of the world of these charming "pull-along toys", that always appear in pairs as an unusual feature. To this day, animals on wheels are still popular playmates with children. Collectors value them as mounts for their old teddy bears or simply admire them for their beauty.

Opening Hours

Museum, Shop and Café: daily from 10:00 to 18:00

Admission

CHF 7.– / 5.–

Children up to 16 years are admitted free of charge, and only if accompanied by an adult.

There is no additional entrance fee for this special exhibition.

The whole building is accessible to wheelchairs.

Doll's House Museum, Basel

Steinenvorstadt 1
4051 Basel

Telephone +41 (0)61 225 95 95

Fax +41 (0)61 225 95 96

www.puppenhausmuseum.ch