The municipality of St. Moritz and Serpentine are delighted to unveil a new large-scale graphic installation by American artist Barbara “Bobbie” Stauffacher Solomon (b. 1928, USA) on the shores of Lake St. Moritz. The project has been realised by St. Moritz Tourism, Serpentine and Lady Elena Foster, in collaboration with and with support from von Bartha gallery and with the support of the Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation. Entitled Welcome, the installation marks one of the first public artworks to be displayed in St. Moritz and will be on view until April 2023.

Standing at almost four metres high and 29 metres wide, Welcome is located at the entry point to the alpine town, close to the train station and the lake, acting as a symbol for the town’s hospitality and forward-thinking attitude. Incorporating Solomon’s self-created alphabet and typeface – the ‘BSS alphabet’, which the artist has designed and developed over the years, the installation has been crafted in a way that encourages the viewer to engage with each individual letter. This ‘supergraphic’ is neither lettering nor architecture but a hybrid form that has an astonishing spatial effect. The original idea for the piece came from a project with the artist initiated by Benedikt Wechsler, at the time Consul General of Switzerland in San Francisco, and it has since found its ideal location in the town of St. Moritz.
Based in San Francisco, nonagenarian, Solomon belongs to a generation that popularized the aesthetics of Swiss design and typography in the USA. Solomon’s celebrated career was originally born out of necessity - after the artist became a widow and single parent early in life, she was invited to study graphic design in Switzerland as a means to be able to support her young family. In Basel in the 1950s, she was the first American at the Kunsthochschule, studying under acclaimed designer Armin Hofmann. Moving back to the USA, the artist became involved with the Sea Ranch, an idealist coastal community famed for its stripped back architecture, which the artist’s logo and colourful design helped cement into the hearts and minds of designers everywhere. It was at Sea Ranch where she created her ‘supergraphics’ and went on to become a key figure in the modern design movement of the 1960s and 70s.

Christian Jott Jenny, Mayor of St. Moritz says: “We are very proud to host this work by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon placed at the entry point of our town. The significance of the word WELCOME is an encompassment of our local identity, and its central placement means that we are rightly reminded of this every day. We are fascinated by the artist’s role as an ambassador of Swiss cultural heritage in the USA, and the pioneering philosophy of her work. The work and the artist stand for an enlightened, international exchange which has always been a defining part of our history as a much-loved destination in the Swiss Alps.”

Bettina Korek, CEO, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine said: “Barbara is an inspiration, a legend and a great mentor to us all. We appreciate her commitment to this fantastic project and are grateful to our Chair of the Serpentine Council, Lady Elena Foster, for engineering it. This new piece will be a remarkable contribution to the city and the Engadin region, marked by Barbara’s exploration of the emotional effects of lines and geometry. It’s an honour to present it here in St. Moritz and an inspiring model of collaboration for the future.”

The project has been realised by St. Moritz Tourism, Serpentine and Lady Elena Foster, in collaboration with and with support from the von Bartha Gallery and with the support of the Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation.

The work will also be spotlighted by the Engadin Art Talks (27-29 January 2023).
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**ABOUT BARBARA STAUFFACHER SOLOMON**
The now 94-year-old Barbara Stauffacher Solomon – also known as “Bobbie” or “BSS” - is a graphic artist, designer, architect and painter who lives in San Francisco. She first studied and worked as a dancer, while studying painting and sculpture at San Francisco Art Institute. In the 1950s, she studied graphic design with the well-known graphic designer Armin Hofmann in Basel, where she spent a year tracing the letters of the Helvetica typeface by hand. “Armin’s in my head,” the artist says. “Everything I do is still as if Armin is over my shoulder watching, saying ‘prima’ if it’s good.” Stauffacher later shaped the aesthetics of the legendary Sea Ranch dropout project in California with her super graphics based on the Helvetica typeface, which made her famous beyond the borders. She later studied Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, where she specialized in green architecture and was an instructor at Harvard and Yale. Since 2021, the nonagenarian artist is represented by von Bartha gallery (Basel / Copenhagen).

**KEY PROJECT DATA**
Location: Via Grevas, stone wall on the St. Moritz lakeshore below the railway station
Construction and installation: October and November 2022
Opening: beginning of December 2022
Material and dimensions: 16 steel panels, 3.80 x 29.20 metres in total
Collaborators, partners and sponsors:
Municipality of St. Moritz, St. Moritz Culture Office and St. Moritz Tourism (project management, on-site implementation), Serpentine, von Bartha Basel and Copenhagen, and Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation, Zurich.
ABOUT ST. MORITZ
St. Moritz is a resort where glamour, lifestyle, sports and untamed nature blend to form an exclusive cocktail. International events and culinary delights are the norm here, and the town has an unrivalled concentration of premium-class restaurants. St. Moritz also sets the standard for accommodation, with no fewer than six luxury hotels. As the cradle of winter tourism, St. Moritz has demonstrated its pioneering spirit through the ages. The alpine town is a stage for artists and trendsetters and home to an impressive number of international galleries. St. Moritz boasts Europe’s highest luxury shopping street – a paradise for shoppers and in a class of its own. And there is no shortage of culture to enjoy as St. Moritz has numerous museums, libraries and places of interest to visit. The cosmopolitan Alpine village can be reached by road, rail or air.

ABOUT SERPENTINE
Championing new ideas in contemporary art since 1970, Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time. Across two sites only 5 minutes apart, in London’s Kensington Gardens, Serpentine presents a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architecture, education, live events and technological innovation, in the park and beyond. Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a deep connection with its local community.

ABOUT VON BARTHA
Initially co-founded in 1970 by Margareta and Miklos von Bartha who remain a contributing force in its strategic direction, the family-run gallery has been under the direction of Stefan von Bartha since 2008. Together, the two generations maintain an unparalleled level of expertise. Von Bartha is a trusted destination for its audiences and a place to gain knowledge of the artists and the specialist areas that they represent.

Von Bartha presents a cutting-edge contemporary programme, representing an international roster of artists working across a diverse range of media including Superflex, Terry Haggerty, John Wood & Paul Harrison, Anna Dickinson, Sarah Oppenheimer, and Felipe Mujica amongst others. The gallery nurtures new generations of artists, whilst supporting the continually evolving practice of their established artists. As one of the longest-running international contemporary art galleries, von Bartha continues to support the careers of influential artists such as Camille Graeser, Fritz Glarner and Olle Baertling. It facilitates discovery across the generations, and has a track record of fostering the careers of some of the leading artists of the 20th Century with a focus on Constructivism; Concrete art; and Op art.
Located in Basel, one of the world’s most important centres for the display of art, and Copenhagen, a hub for innovative art, design and fashion, von Bartha brings together international and local art audiences across these two locations. Von Bartha creates a unique platform of events and programming including salons, openings, and exhibitions beyond the walls of the gallery, inspiring and informing audiences by making new connections and offering a fresh perspective. Von Bartha publishes books, exhibition catalogues and its own online magazine “Stories” featuring interviews, essays and insights to the gallery’s work and programme. Read more at www.vonbartha.com/stories