



Reinzeichnung, Tukan, 1959
Gestaltung: Jacques Plancherel
Auftrag: Zoo Zürich, CH
Material/Technik: Kalkpapier
48.2 × 38.5 cm
Donation: Jacques Plancherel
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

For decades, the pictograms of the Swiss graphic designer Jacques Plancherel (1926–2011) have shaped the visual identity of the Zurich Zoo. Starting in 1959, he designed on the basis of a convincing formal concept a world of pictographic symbols that, despite their universal readability, reveal his personal approach.

Pictograms must be quickly grasped and understood. They are graphical icons based on abstracted objects reduced to schematic form. They create a visual information system in a minimum of space, forming a bridge between language and the real world. In this case, it is the world of the Zurich Zoo that Jacques Plancherel (1926–2011) reduced to pictographic symbols. The Swiss graphic artist, book designer, image editor, and long-time teacher and head of the graphics class at the Schule für Gestaltung in Lucerne—today the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU)—designed the first pictograms in 1959 in connection with the construction of the primate building. He developed these in accordance with a uniform formal concept: clear, precise lines, deep black surfaces, white recesses, and the circle as a basic element.

Plancherel emphasized the specific physical characteristics of the animals and made them actors in the signs. With their body language and their body parts protruding out of the ring, the animals point the way for visitors: the toucan points with its magnificent beak to the right, and the lemur's arm points diagonally downward. Despite their universal intelligibility, the pictograms have a distinct visual language that has shaped the image of the Zurich Zoo for decades. Even today, the toucan pictogram adorns the zoo's letterhead, and Plancherel's pictograms are still in use in unchanged form in the primate house and the seal enclosure. (Vanessa Gendre)

<https://www.eguide.ch/en/objekt/tukan/>