

ooo Ringier

# DOMO

“The  
metaverse will  
bring the next era.”

Petra Ehmann, Chief Innovation Officer Ringier AG

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## Into the Metaverse

Petra Ehmann is the new Chief Innovation Officer at Ringier. «The metaverse will bring the next era of storytelling for the media industry», she says in our interview. She also tells us what she learned from her time at Google.

## Interview in numbers

Swissprinters AG prints 9,000,000 A4-format pages per hour, that is 45,000 tons of paper per year. Alfred Wälti, the printing plant's CEO, also comes up with impressive numbers relating to pizza and sports photos.

## “I want to feel their fire”

Peter Hossli explains in his interview with DOMO why he teaches old-fashioned journalism as the new head of the Ringier School of Journalism, what he expects from a class and why he usually wears a suit.

## The vicious click circle

Brittany Kaiser calls herself a data rights activist. This new member of the international EqualVoice Advisory Board says it will not suffice simply to tally the mentions of women in media texts.

## The Bored Ape becomes a big yawn

At the NFT.NYC conference, publisher Michael Ringier observed the formerly hyped crypto art's downfall. In his column, he talks about art and technology.



# Did you know?

**This is the story of how, a hundred years ago, a competitor tried to beat the (even then) number one illustrated weekly «Schweizer Illustrierte» by providing sports coverage, of all things – which had previously been frowned upon by Ringier!**

Let's go back to 1925, when the weekly magazine «Schweizer Illustrierte» was the flagship of the Ringier printing and publishing company in Zofingen. In addition, riding the wave of its success, Ringier had expanded the weeklies «RUB Ringiers Unterhaltungsblätter» (Ringier's entertainment magazines) and launched the French edition «Illustré» in the western part of Switzerland. The company's supremacy in Zofingen was a

challenge to the Zurich publisher Conzett & Huber, which boldly retaliated by throwing its hat into the ring with a rival magazine entitled «Zürcher Illustrierte» (ZI). The main attraction for new readers was to be a hitherto rather neglected topic: sports! The ZI was the first publication to promote itself with the promise of «illustrated sports reports, with up-to-date, dynamic sports pictures». And it proved successful, soon selling tens of thousands of copies. In Zofingen, publisher Paul Ringier, known as a headstrong patriarch, was enraged by this and whipped up a response. Within a mere four weeks, Ringier launched a rival product, also featuring eight pages of sports coverage, the «Neue Illustrierte am Montag» (The New Illus-

trated Magazine on Monday) – with no consideration for his own company's «Schweizer Illustrierte». While the «Zürcher Illustrierte» held its own in the market, Ringier's copycat counterpart met with little love. Due to a lack of readers and advertising, Ringier changed the magazine's concept again by 1929, now focusing on women's topics, lots of fashion and light fare and giving the paper the new title «Sie & Er» (Her & Him). The «Zürcher Illustrierte» existed until 1949, when Conzett & Huber sold the title and its readership to Ringier for 408,000 Swiss francs. The sad publisher's announcement: «After years of competition, ZI has dropped out of the race.»

**Fibo Deutsch**



“The Hungarian magazine «Kisregyed» celebrated its 30th birthday in April. This magazine is a true legend. Launched in 1992, it became an incredible overnight success. To mark its anniversary, the digital version kisregyed.hu was launched this year and by May reached an average of 150,000 users per day, which is remarkable, given the size of the market. The magazine's topics revolve around home, household and family.”

**Klára Bokor**  
Editor-in-Chief Kisregyed

## Recommended Reading

«Lean UX» by Jeff Gothelf and Josh Seiden is a good read for anyone who wants to gain insight into contemporary Internet product development. The bottom line: products need to be developed experimentally in the market, in close collaboration with final users.

**Dr. Kilian Kämpfen**

Chief Technology & Data  
Officer and Member of the  
Ringier Group Executive  
Board





### **Petra Ehmann, what is the metaverse?**

No unified definition of the metaverse has been established as yet. I would describe it as a merging of the real world and the virtual world that opens up a new and augmented world to us. In this regard, I feel it is helpful to distinguish between virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), which differ in terms of the degrees of intensity of real and virtual information: VR is the one extreme, in which we are 100 percent immersed in a completely virtual world. At the other extreme, we face each other in reality – as we do now –, where we make no use of virtual information. And between these two extremes lies AR, in which we do perceive the real world, but our perception is enriched by virtual information. In this sense, then, there is a broad

cess to these worlds. For example, if we find ourselves in a new supermarket looking for gluten-free dark chocolate, AR can help us find it easily and quickly by placing a filter over reality that saves us the trouble of studying lists of ingredients in small print.

### **Augmented reality was your area of expertise at Google. What economic opportunities will the metaverse present for the media world?**

Technological progress from text to audio and photos to video has always created richer forms of communication. The metaverse as an even more immersive medium can therefore be of particular interest to the

# INTO THE METaverse.

**What is the metaverse all about? Are we already experiencing its beginnings without realizing it? A conversation with Petra Ehmann – Chief Innovation Officer of the Ringier Group as of September 1st – about a new, augmented (and better?) world.**

**Interview: Rahel Zingg |  
Photography: Mirjam Kluka**

spectrum of augmented and virtual realities, in which there are hardly any limits to our imagination regarding possible applications.

### **Are we to some extent already living in the metaverse today?**

Yes, the possibility to do this has existed for some time. Ringier's Group Executive Board, for example, has already held its first meetings in the metaverse. In addition to these early applications in business, however, the metaverse is currently already in full service to the gaming industry: On online gaming platforms such as Roblox, for example, more than 200 million active users are already operating in a virtual universe – with two-thirds of them belonging to Generation Z. This ratio is relevant because research shows that Generation Z can have a decisive influence on the behavior of older generations.

### **Is one world not enough?**

It is interesting to note in this context that the eye is often described as our most powerful sensory organ – followed by hearing and touch. Virtual and augmented realities primarily appeal to the visual sense, but also to the latter two, offering immersive and intuitive ac-

media and entertainment industry – for example, in storytelling: News and stories about sporting events or natural spectacles can be experienced in almost physical proximity in the metaverse. At the same time, the metaverse offers interesting possibilities for entertainment: Justin Bieber has already given his first concerts in the metaverse. The reach of the metaverse means that it is possible to reach not only local visitors but interested people from all around the world. Storytelling and entertainment are just two examples of interesting applications.

### **And what are the risks of this in-between world?**

Every technology comes with its advantages and disadvantages, and so does the metaverse, which brings social, environmental and legal risks, for example. Social risks we already know from the internet, such as addiction, fraud or harassment, can also exist in the metaverse. Furthermore, due to the enormous amounts of data and computing power involved, the metaverse requires a lot of energy, which can entail ecological risks such as additional greenhouse-gas emissions. Finally, we also face jurisdictional challenges because, for example, it has not yet been conclusively decided in each case which laws can actually be applied and enforced in these new, virtual in-between worlds.

### **Why did you choose to join Ringier?**

Ringier is considered one of the most progressive media houses in Europe. One remarkable fact in this context is that Ringier has been able to increase the digital share of group revenues from 14 (2011) to a whopping 60 percent (2021) over the last ten years. In this respect, Ringier has become a leading digital media company, and this is interesting to me as a former









Googler. I come from a Google department that was operating at the forefront of digital innovation, technical feasibility and user focus. So, I'm particularly excited to bring and continue to contribute my digital expertise, my experience in business development and my work in the field of innovation in my role of Chief Innovation Officer. Last but not least, I find Ringier exciting because my own family also runs a family business that will soon be 200 years old, and at the same time I get to serve as a board member for Bossard, a listed and family-run company. That is why I feel very much at home in an entrepreneurial environment.

**Ringier is internationally positioned.  
That helps with thinking big...**

Exactly. What shaped my thinking at Stanford and at Google was the courage to tackle big ideas – the key words being «think big» and «think at scale». That's why I consider Ringier's international orientation a welcome challenge. After all, maintaining an international focus was also a crucial component of my many years with the tech giant Google, and I am aware of the complexities of international markets and business development.

**You have also been on the EqualVoice  
Advisory Board since May of last year.  
What does this initiative mean to you?**

I see the initiative as an opportunity to achieve gender equality. It helps us to break away from stereotypes and give validity to talent regardless of gender by using analytics. Beyond the analytics, images send other important signals: Whether a photo shows a successful man squeezing breakfast juice for his children or a woman cooking for her family sends different messages that influence our behavior patterns accordingly. That's where Ringier, as a media company, has an important role to play. EqualVoice combines a great vision with successful implementation.

**What is your most  
important message here?**

We are faced with major crises all over the world: the migration and climate crises, war, famine, gaping inequality between rich and poor. To solve problems of this scale, we need the best talent at the top, regardless of gender, origin or faith. And it is not enough for us to fish talent from just one pond; we need to attract the best from all ponds. •



## Personal

**Petra Ehmann's real world is also big. Born in Germany, she grew up in Bolivia and studied at ETH Zurich and Stanford University.**

**Her professional career took Ehmann to Mexico for Bosch, to China for Hilti and to Brazil for an internet start-up, among others, before the tech giant Google managed to draw her to Switzerland for almost nine years. She is also a member of the board of directors at Bossard, a global engineering and logistics services provider, which makes her one of the youngest female board members of a listed company in Switzerland. Petra Ehmann was named one of Switzerland's «Top 100 Women in Business» and «Top 100 Digital Shapers» and speaks four world languages fluently (German, English, Spanish, Portuguese). She is now starting out in the newly created role of Chief Innovation Officer at Ringier and as a member of the extended Executive Board. It's time for the future.**





«Blikk» journalist Brigitta Csikasz with her daughter Lili.

# Bugged

**C**riminal law, court cases and public life issues are her thing. Among other things, Brigitta Csikasz devoted a series of articles to the disappearance of EU funds in Hungary. A «Blikk» journalist, she used to work for «Atlatszo», Hungary's first non-profit investigative journalism organization and a non-governmental organization promoting transparency, accountability, and freedom of information in Hungary, as the NGO describes itself. And as an investigative reporter, she was apparently suspicious to some powerful people. As it turned out, before her time at «Blikk», which belongs to Ringier Hungary, she had been monitored over the span of eight months with Pegasus spy software.

This software controls the target's mobile device by accessing all data – even that from encrypted messaging apps –, and activating audio and video recordings. Pegasus was developed by the Israeli company NSO for use against terrorists and felons. But last summer, a consortium of news outlets, including the British newspaper «The Guardian», revealed that a number of journalists in Hungary had

been targeted with the software. «I was not at all surprised when Szabolcs Panyi, a journalist at the newspaper «Direkt36», told me that I had been monitored with Pegasus for longer than anyone else. For ten years now, police chiefs have been warning me to be careful when talking on the phone,» Brigitta says. She is under no illusion. «An investigative journalist probably has to live with being wat-

**«I don't write in order to make the chief of police like me.»**

ched and bugged. Here in Hungary, the biggest problem is that they can do this limitlessly and unsupervised due to the legal regulations.» But she is not deterred by this. When a police spokesman once told her that one of their bosses didn't appreciate what she had written in her latest article, she replied, «I don't write in order to make him like me.»

Brigitta herself had previously worked for the police as a communicati-

ons specialist and press officer, shortly after studying history and communications at the University of Szeged. Because she earned a mere pittance, she switched to journalism. She started out writing for the police journal «Zsaru magazin» and then worked for almost nine years at «HVG», a liberal weekly business magazine.

After that, in 2015, she joined «Atlatszo». In 2019, she did a short stint at a print medium: «Pesti Hírlap» had poached her, and she says this job was a challenge for her in today's online world. Since October 2020, she has been writing for «Blikk», where she still tackles hot-button issues. «I won't give in whatever happens, for as long as there is any hope that the abuses and incredible misappropriations of funds can be stopped, my work will have been worthwhile,» she says, feisty as ever. Now 48 years old, she takes her mind off her work by engaging with her four-and-a-half-year old daughter Lili. And then there is that homeless cat that recently moved in with her kitten and keeps Brigitta on her toes. NH●



# With joint forces



**SMG – three letters that stand for one of the largest digital enterprises in Switzerland. This joint venture unites the online marketplaces of TX Markets and Scout24 Switzerland under one umbrella. Robin Lingg, representing the sixth generation of the Ringier family, played a key role in the founding process of the Swiss Marketplace Group.**

Text: David Torcasso | Illustration: Annie Wehrli



**T**his is unprecedented in the world of Swiss media: In late 2021, two leading media companies and the largest private insurer agree to establish an independent joint venture under the name SMG Swiss Marketplace Group, with the support of the globally active growth investor General Atlantic.

SMG is to take on a digital pioneering role in Switzerland. The focus is on Swissness, simplicity, growth ambition and digital innovation. Swissness is of primary importance, because this concentrated power is meant to stand up to the foreign competition. After all, the big tech companies operate marketplaces of their own. When it was founded in November 2021, SMG emphasized that online marketplaces also need to be transparent about the countries where their offers originate. SMG's roots in the Swiss market should allow users to find better products, and in-house transactions should be processed without any complications.

The marketplaces of TX Group, Ringier and La Mobilière have shown strong growth in recent years, both in terms of user numbers and the range of offerings. However, these platforms operate in an extremely challenging environment. Constantly mounting customer demands as well as international competitors – from globally operating platforms to fast-growing disruptive start-ups – make for increasing market dynamics. Joining forces to form one of the largest digital enterprises in Switzerland makes it possible to create a competitive Swiss marketplace offering and thereby operate as a pioneer in the Swiss market.

The Group, led by CEO Gilles Despas, offers Switzerland a promising digital perspective in an increasingly international competitive environment. Bringing together the leading marketplaces permits the promotion of their further growth. The key to successful development is establishing an all-round service for users: The merger aims to offer far more than mere marketplaces for cars, real estate, finance or new as well as used consumer goods in the future. SMG's vision is that a user will receive the best offers for his or her search and also be able to combine various services that suit the product in question. In other words, anyone who finds an object on one of the marketplaces today will also receive the appropriate insurance or financing at the same time, with Ricardo providing simple payment and processing as well. «We

have the fervent ambition to innovate and improve and to create only the best products and services for our valued customers and users in Switzerland. We want to be a pioneer among European digital enterprises and the most flexible and attractive employer in Switzerland's tech industry,» says Gilles Despas.

#### **Successful realization after several run-ups**

The idea of jointly operating the marketplaces of TX Group and Ringier in Switzerland has been mooted for several years. Robin Lingg, former Head Global Marketplaces at Ringier AG, tells DOMO: «Digital marketplaces have always been an area of consolidation. This issue has not only become a concern due to the activities of Google or Facebook. That is why we had discussed with TX Group on various occasions, and with varying

degrees of intensity, the idea of working on a joint platform and thus creating a counterweight to the US giants.» He continues, «For years, Ringier has been doing well with its «Partnering with the Best» approach. So why not make a joint effort in digital marketplaces for real estate, vehicles, financial services and general marketplaces?» Sometime in the course of 2021,

he said, the moment had finally come to get down to brass tacks and establish the joint venture.

SMG is working on THE digital platforms of tomorrow, which will do much more than they already do today. This will probably include the increased use of technologies such as virtual or augmented reality, for example, to provide users with even better support when choosing their property or vehicle. The user interface and the customer journey will henceforth become far more important in marketplaces.

Pooling the individual marketplace assets on the SMG platform will immediately provide business customers with increased efficiency. Investments in product development and the implemented technology can be bundled under the SMG umbrella.

**«We want to be a pioneer among the European digital companies and the most flexible and most attractive employer in the tech industry in Switzerland.»**

**Gilles Despas, CEO SMG**

## Clear structure and organization

However, in order for this vision of the shareholders to be realized, the basis for a functioning company with a clear structure and organization first needs to be established. Jessica List, Chief Corporate Officer at SMG Swiss Marketplace Group, is in charge of this. Her work focuses on post-merger integration, legal & compliance, corporate governance and corporate communications. In addition, she is responsible for the task force that is to carry out the company's IPO in about three years' time. Jessica List originally comes from Ringier, where she held various management positions in finance, most recently as Head of Group M&A and Strategic Projects. «We have a unique opportunity to create a completely new enterprise – the building blocks we have at our disposal are the best marketplace brands in Switzerland and the brightest minds in the industry,» List says. That's exciting, she adds, but also challenging.

## A hurdle named Corona

SMG's operational launch was caught up in the second year of the Covid pandemic. «Forming a new team with members only seeing each other onscreen is a challenge,» says Jessica List. No physical townhall meetings are possible, she says, and neither are informal meetings in the hallway or at the coffee machine where people can get to know each other.

Moreover, SMG's approximately 900 employees are spread out across six locations in Switzerland and four locations abroad. The Zurich crews currently work at the Medienpark in Altstetten and at the TX Group's offices on Werdstrasse. As of spring 2023, there will be a new co-working space in Zurich Oerlikon, where some of the employees will work together under one roof. «We won't be building run-of-the-mill offices, but meeting areas and co-working spaces, in keeping with the post-Covid workspace models that many companies have now adopted: Employees should find – when they are not working in remote mode – a good climate for creative exchange,» says Jessica List. «We don't want to set guidelines for our employees about how much time they are to spend at the office in future, but offer them a great work environment that they're welcome to trade for «remote locations».»

## SMG Swiss Marketplace Group

Among other assets, TX Group brings the TX Markets platforms Ricardo, tutti.ch, Homegate and Car For You into the new joint venture. Ringier and La Mobilière for their part are contributing their jointly held Scout24 Schweiz Group, which operates the platforms ImmoScout24, AutoScout24, MotoScout24, FinanceScout24 and anibis.ch. The goal is to create the largest Swiss digital enterprise in the fields of real estate, vehicles, financial services and general marketplaces.

TX Group AG holds 31 percent of SMG, Ringier AG and La Mobilière 29.5 percent each, and General Atlantic 10 percent. Voting rights were allocated in equal shares, namely 25 percent each. General Atlantic supports the Group with its many years of expertise in the strategic development of digital business models – most specifically in the online classifieds business – as well as with the planned IPO.



# 11



## Questions for Alfred Wälti, CEO Swissprinters

**Swissprinters AG prints 9 million A4 pages per hour, that is 45,000 tons of paper per year. But Alfred Wälti also comes up trumps with impressive figures when it comes to pizza and sports photos.**

**How long have you been working at Swissprinters?**

For **22** years, and I have been CEO for **12** years.

**How many magazines, catalogs, newspaper inserts, etc. does Swissprinters print?**

Swissprinters prints around 90 different periodicals (depending on the day of the week). When all the presses are running, we print

**9,000,000**

A4-format pages per hour.

**How many days in total did you get away on your last vacation?**

Over Whitsun, I spent

**4** days

in Turkey with a sports team taking pictures.

Apart from my job at Swissprinters, I am passionate about taking sports photos.

**How many tons of paper are printed per year?**

We print around

**45,000**

metric tons of paper per year.

**When do you get up in the morning?**

Weekdays at

**5.20** a.m.

**How many presses per day are in operation at Swissprinters?**

We have

**4** big presses running

**24** hours a day,

**5** days a week.

Sometimes even on the weekend.

**What percentage of the paper is made up of recycled paper?**

The percentage of recycled paper varies according to the type of paper but on average, it is about

**50** percent.

**What type of training is incorporated in your background?**

I have done

**4** apprenticeships. I started out as a mechanical engineer, then I was an operations specialist, then

I worked in human resources as a human resources specialist. After that, I did further training in finance and controlling. Before I became a boss myself, I'd reported to

**3**

bosses.

**How many pizzas do you bake per year?**

At our home, we make about

**400 to 500**

pizzas a year, because we live right next to a sports field, and we like to invite the sports teams to our place to grab a pizza after practice.

**How many sports photos do you shoot per year?**

I take at least **20,000** sports photos a year and I've already uploaded a total of more than

**100,000** pictures to the Web. Some of

them can be found on my Instagram channel

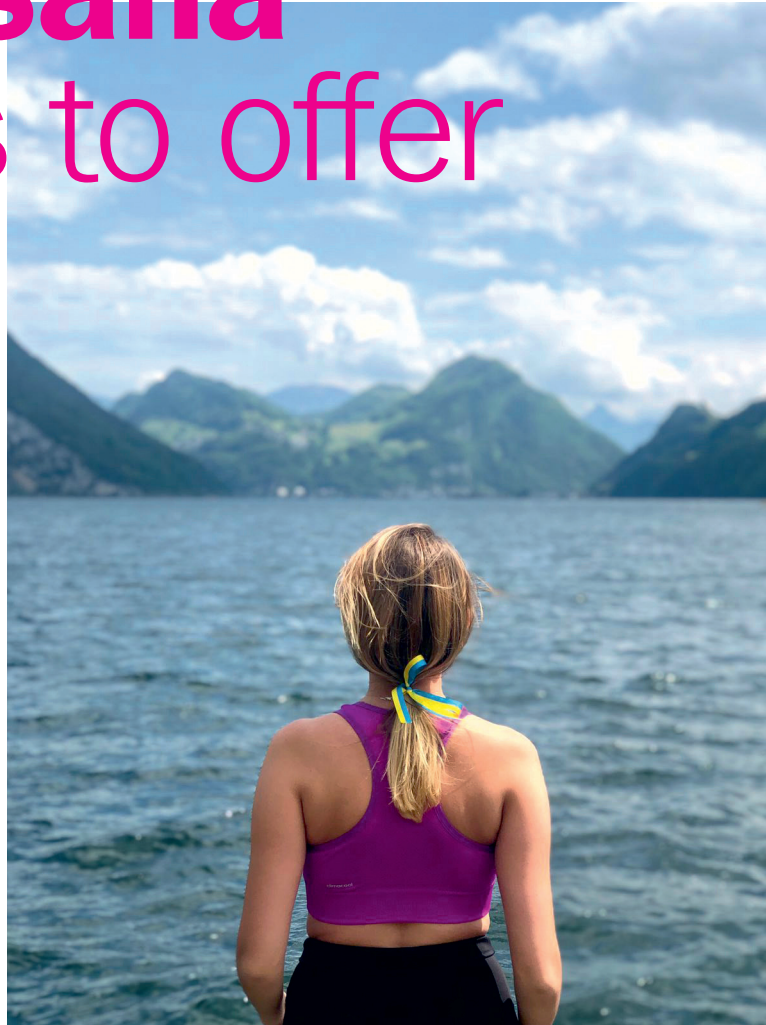
@alfredwaelti and elsewhere.

**How many pairs of shoes do you buy on average per year?**

I buy an average of **5** pairs of shoes a year, all from the same Swiss sports shoe brand. In addition, I surprise the

**18** people in management at Swissprinters every year by gifting them shoes of this brand, to make sure they're always at the top of their game on the shop floor. (laughs)

# What our new roommate **Oksana** has to offer



In early April, we welcomed a young woman from Ukraine as a guest in our shared apartment in Zurich. Our kitchen has been enriched by borscht and convivial gatherings.

Text: David Torcasso



When the war in Ukraine broke out at the end of February, my roommate and I agreed that we wanted to offer a refugee a roof over their head. Since we like to cook, we spend most of our time in the kitchen anyway and can happily do without the living room.

In addition to an official form from the city of Zurich, which I filled out, I left my contact details on the platform [icanhost.org](https://www.icanhost.org). I didn't hear back from the authorities for several days, but numerous private individuals and families got in touch via WhatsApp and Instagram. Finally, we decided to offer accommodation to a young woman called Oksana. She dropped in that same evening – and two days later, she moved in with her sparse luggage. We feared that our sofa bed might be too spartan a temporary home after all, to which she smiled and said, «I've done a lot of couch-surfing, in Italy, Greece and in Germany, I like it.» Her travel experience at twenty-two impressed us. The welcome was warm, the ice soon broken. We were able to converse in English. My roommate cooked risotto, one of his favorite dishes. Oksana commented, «Just like in Italy.»

### Goodbye to father and brother

Oksana comes from a town near the Belarusian and Polish borders, located in a recreational area and on the large Lake Svityaz. For three days, she heard Russian tanks and helicopters thundering past her house before deciding to leave the country. Her father did not want to come, her brother was not allowed to come. Her parents live apart, she is rarely in touch with her mother. So, she set off on her own. First to Poland, then to Istanbul and finally by plane to Switzerland. For three days, Oksana lived in a refugee shelter and shared a room with families from Syria and Afghanistan. Then she found accommodation with a family in Küsnacht, and now she lives in our shared apartment in Wiedikon, a borough of Zurich. The 22-year-old was studying land-

scape architecture in her home country. In Zurich, she pitched in from day one at the refugee shelter, helping wherever she could, distributing food and looking after the children of the refugee families. Oksana is a self-confident and independent person. Sometimes, however, even she needs support. Friends gave us a laptop for her, and bedding. Her most pressing problem was her braces, which she urgently needed to have fixed. My roommate arranged for her to see a dentist in Zurich. The doctor, who co-



Shared dinner on the balcony with David, Oksana and Vitalina

mes from Iran, could relate to Oksana's situation, and treated her free of charge.

On another occasion, I accompanied Oksana to the office of immigration. She was waiting for her ID, she already had the protection status S. I told Oksana that my employer Ringier Axel Springer Switzerland pays me 500 francs a month for taking in a refugee from Ukraine, and I gave her the money.

### «Do you like borscht?»

The first time Oksana cooked for us, I had to confess that I had never eaten borscht before. This signature Ukrainian soup with beets, potatoes and meat tasted delicious. That evening, she invited her good friend Vitalina, who used to live in Kiev and had previously travelled together with Oksana. The two often meet here in Swit-

zerland, listen to Ukrainian music, and go swimming in the river Limmat. Oksana also keeps meeting more refugees from Ukraine because she is an open and curious person. The fact that she has friends here gives her support and confidence. From the very beginning, we did not consider Oksana a refugee from Ukraine, but a new roommate from Ukraine. As housemates, we hardly ever discuss the war. Oksana rarely watches the news, preferring to follow a YouTuber who makes fun of the Russians. In the

first days, we got to know Oksana as a cheerful and easy-going person. Only once did her mood dim, when she couldn't reach her father because he was away for a longer period of time. There is no fighting in the area where he lives, but the fear that something will happen is always there.

Life in Switzerland soon became routine for Oksana, and she wanted to work as soon as possible. «I want to have a regular daily routine, like everyone here,» Oksana told me one morning. Oksana knows plants and loves the outdoors, but she said she also has experience in the hospitality industry, having worked at a lakeside restaurant in her home country while studying. My roommate and I activated our social media channels. It turned out that a friend with a flower shop needed someone to help her out, and she was immediately excited about Oksana. That was the first of several more pursuits that allow Oksana to get by.

When Oksana is not working, she goes on excursions in Switzerland with Vitalina, initially free of charge on public transport thanks to a Swiss railway campaign in support of refugees. Now, she's equipped with a general public transport pass for youths. She has already travelled to Lugano, to Geneva and to Zermatt. «Unfortunately, it was cloudy and we couldn't see the Matterhorn,» she told us afterwards. Over a beer on our balcony, she raves about nature, then says: «I like Switzerland. But sometimes I wish more people were a little more open here.» •



Ringier Group

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A  
**selection**  
of images



**L'illustré** Art Direction: Julie Body, Colorization: Susana Martinez de Tejada Marti  
In June, L'illustré was honored with an Award of Excellence in the photography category by the Society for News Design for four works from 2021.  
Also award worthy is the novel idea of celebrating the British monarch's Platinum Jubilee by colorizing photographs of the young queen.

**Schweizer Illustrierte:**

Photography: Peter Lueders

Photo Editor: Regula Revellado

Swiss artist and party queen Susanne Bartsch has lived in New York's legendary Chelsea Hotel for forty years, and has now been awarded the Grand Prix Design by the Federal Office of Culture.





**Interview by Ringier:** Photography: Mathilde Agius, Photo Editor: Susanne Märki  
Moroccan-French artist Latifa Echakhch represents Switzerland at the Venice Biennale. In the second issue of the magazine «Interview by Ringier», she talks to curator Bice Curiger about her work «The Concert».







**SI Sport:** Photography: Flavio Leone. Photo editor: Uli Glantz  
Ticino star swimmer Noé Ponti – bronze medal winner at the  
2021 Olympics – wades through the apocalyptic scenery of the  
empty Verzasca reservoir. The water has been drained for the  
first time in 70 years to permit renovation work on the dam wall.





**Elle:** Photography: Ștefan Dani, Styling: Irina Hartial  
Coordination: Domnica Mărgescu

The photo is from the «Elle Girl» series, a project for promoting young talent:  
Young photographers and stylists were invited to submit their work – the best pictures were published in the May issue of Romanian Elle.





**Caminada. The magazine:** Photography: Gaudenz Danuser, Photo Editor: Susanne Märki

In a perfect world, donuts are arranged like this and taste as good as they look. Incidentally, the recipe by celebrity chef Andreas Caminada – he refines the little pastries with lemon zest – is available online at [caminadamagazin.ch/rezepte/donuts/](http://caminadamagazin.ch/rezepte/donuts/). Just don't eat too many of them if you don't want these sugary yeast rings to wind up as «love handles» on your hips!









**Libertatea:**

Photography: Vlad Chirea. Photo-Editors: Mihaela Radu and Ion Mates  
Young immigrant Ataur seeks shelter from the night in a building in the Romanian town of Timișoara, the gateway to the West. This picture won Vlad Chirea Romania's most prestigious photography award, Super-scieri, in the News Photography category.



A full-length portrait of Peter Hossli, a man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a blue checkered suit over a white shirt. He is standing in a modern office or lecture hall with large windows in the background showing greenery. A long table and chairs are visible behind him.

“I want to  
feel their  
fire”

Journalist, book author and head of the Ringier School of Journalism: Peter Hossli wants to instill a passion for the profession in his students – sometimes by throwing them in at the deep end.

Interview: René Haenig | Photo: Maurice Haas



**Peter Hossli, 53, shows up for the DOMO interview at the Villa Römerhalde in Zofingen, canton of Aargau, wearing a suit. The only sartorial element he eschews on this hot June day is a tie. This journalist and book author, who started his career at the news magazine «Facts», is the new head of the Ringier School of Journalism.**

**Peter Hossli, how does one become the head of the Ringier School of Journalism?**

My predecessor Hannes Britschgi and I talked about it. I had been teaching there ever since he had become head of the school. Hannes and I have known each other for many years.

**Sounds pretty unspectacular.**

Actually, I had always had my eye on the School of Journalism and knew that it might be an option for me at some point. But I assumed that Hannes would stay on until 2024. Two years from now, the School of Journalism will celebrate its 50th anniversary. At some point, talks began, with Hannes and with Frank A. Meyer, the chairman of the board of trustees. Since he took over the school 35 years ago as chairman of the board of trustees, he has defended it with vigor, for which he deserves a lot of credit. The fact that Michael Ringier continues to finance the school to this day is due in large part to Frank A. Meyer. And he is committed to something that I like: that at least half the students should be women and non-academics.

**You have officially been in charge of the Ringier School of Journalism since May 2022. What have you done since then?**

Besides putting together the classes, I contacted lecturers who will be teaching in Zofingen and met with all the editors-in-chief who have students at the school. And last, but not least, I thought about what kind of journalism I wanted to teach these young people.

**So, what kind will it be?**

The base will be «old-fashioned», traditional journalism. Once you have mastered this, you can build everything else on that. If you know how to tell a story, how to re-

search and investigate, how to create emotions, you can do contemporary, digital journalism. Without this base, you can't create a good Instagram story.

**You've taken over the school. What are you going to change?**

Hannes Britschgi handed over the school in excellent condition. He had developed an attractive curriculum. I want to make adjustments in the teaching staff, where I am striving for rejuvenation and would like to make use of my network. However, the basic principle that the school teaches practical and theoretical learning will remain unchanged.

**Are you nervous to begin?**

It's more like joyful anticipation. It's a great class with people from all over Switzerland with different backgrounds. I want to instill a passion for the profession in these young people, to make them see that you never stop being a journalist, that you have your feelers out for stories 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. And that you can always go the extra mile to make a story even better.

**Can you tell us more about the class?**

We had 40 applications and accepted 13. The two youngest students are 18 and have just graduated from high school; the oldest, at 27, has a degree in political science. A female hairdresser submitted an excellent application. There are some who will attend the school having gained their first experience at «Blick», others at a radio station. There's a certain lack of people with an immigrant background. I would like to pay more attention to that in terms of recruiting in the coming years.

**With regard to the keywords «diversity & inclusion»?**

It is the job of journalism to represent society in its entirety. In our country, this includes immigrants and thus their stories. When people write about Kosovo Albanians today, it's still too often in a negative context or perhaps in relation to soccer.

**«The School of Journalism fostered my pre-existing «shameless» curiosity about the world, awakened my passion for people and their stories – and, if nothing else, opened the door to the best job ever.»**

Silvia Binggeli | Class of 1997/98 | Editor-in-chief of Schweizer Illustrierte





**Did you graduate from journalism school yourself?**

No. I started writing film reviews when I was 16, and while I was still at university, I began working as a film critic for the newly founded news magazine «Facts». There, I studied the world of cinema from up close and I realized that a film festival in Cannes works in a similar way to a UN conference in New York or the WEF in Davos. So, I soon found myself writing for other departments such as «Society», «Politics» or «Business».

**In past years, you were a teacher at the School of Journalism. Will you go on teaching as the head of the school?**

I will continue to pass on everything I know about journalism that I am sure will benefit the students. My office door will be open so that everyone can come and see me. Whether I will teach reporting and an interview course has not yet been definitively decided.

**Publisher Michael Ringier wants «journalism of excellent craftsmanship and style that is committed to the truth». What does this phrase mean to you?**

A trenchant statement. Michael Ringier is a wonderful stylist; he has a way with words that cuts to the heart of the matter. With respect to truth, I would make a slight adjustment: Journalism should get as close to the truth as possible. There is probably no such thing as absolute truth.

**During the recent pandemic, the media were accused of fear-mongering. Does something need to change?**

That's a difficult question. It bothers me when politicians berate the media. Our job is to keep close tabs on politicians. If we do a bad job, our products don't sell. The market decides whether journalism is good or bad. Readers are smart enough to know what good journalism is.

**... so-called quality journalism?**

An irritating term. Either reporting meets journalistic standards, or it doesn't. A well-researched story in «Blick» is better than a poorly researched one in the «New York Times».

**Despite the rejuvenation you are striving for – do you still stand by the principle «learn from the best»?**

Of course! Our «Jouschu» students learn from 40 to 50 different lecturers. I try to keep bringing outstanding people to the school. In addition, the school is to become a kind of think tank for Swiss journalism as a whole. The foundation charter of the Hans Ringier Foundation – which funds the school – calls for the promotion of Swiss journalism.

**What does this look like in practice?**

I am planning a festival of Swiss journalism, where our industry will come together in Zofingen to exchange ideas about journalism. The idea is not to complain about the overall conditions. This has become an occupational disease. Rather, I am hoping to talk about stories and investigations. And I would like the industry to take this opportunity to discover what an outstanding school Ringier has. There is no other publishing house in Switzerland that has anything like this to offer.

**Speaking of Swiss journalism, you worked in the US for many years. Are there any differences to American journalism?**

Personally, I have an Anglo-Saxon journalistic background, which I would like to impart to students. There is good journalism in the United States. Media professionals there are less afraid of people in power, they make deliberate use of the freedom of the press enshrined in the US Constitution. Rights imply responsibilities. Commentary and research, for example, are



**«Insatiable curiosity, the pleasure of debate and the constant search for the best story: the Ringier School of Journalism encouraged all this and thereby ensured that I still enjoy my profession today.»**

Rita Flubacher | Class of 1977/78 |  
Business editorial department Tamedia

much more clearly separated than in German-speaking countries. There is less activism than in European media.

#### **How come?**

This certainly has to do with the history of journalism in Switzerland. There used to be a lot of party newspapers here. Ringier, as an independent publisher, was one of the pioneers by comparison. Moreover, some journalists feel they need to change the world. But our job is to describe the world. If you want to change the world, you need to change jobs and either go into politics or join an NGO. We are not activists. We are journalists!

#### **Many journalists, however, are stuck on the idea that the media represent the «Fourth Estate».**

I can't do anything about that. I don't like the term «fourth estate». The media is neither a part of government nor a political power. We are observers. I like the notion of a service provider. Journalism is a service to society. We keep tabs on politicians and business leaders, and we explain issues. But we are not a political power.

#### **While we're on the subject of terms: Where did the belittling nickname «Jouschu» (pronounced «shoo-shoo») for your journalism students originate?**

I don't particularly like these kinds of Swiss nicknames, but on the other hand there is something endearing about the term. I will try to find a better expression. There is one upside to it: Jouschu is gender neutral.

#### **What do you look for in applicants?**

I want to feel whether they have fire in their belly for this profession. For some years now, I have been observing, with some concern, a «9 to 5» mentality creeping into journalism. Sure, you can always talk about how difficult the job has become. But let's face it: Phy-

sical labor is more exhausting than journalism. We are practicing a privileged profession. That's why I expect students to be fired up for the work.

#### **And what else is important to you?**

Language. I listen carefully to the applicants, to see if someone can express something with language – be it written, spoken or expressed in pictures and films. I consider it equally important for someone to have an open mind. We journalists need to get people to talk. In order to do so, we must be open to things we don't know ourselves. That's why I like to throw my students in at the deep end by sending someone who interned in the sports department to the newsroom, for example. Journalism means constantly stepping outside your comfort zone and doing stories about subjects you're not familiar with. That forces you to present the matter in a more comprehensible way. Curiosity is the lubricant of journalism.

#### **You yourself often literally jump in at the deep end, you even go swimming in winter. Will you go for a cold water swim in Lake Zurich with your students?**

(Laughs.) No, that would be too intimate for me. But it's true, I do my laps in Lake Zurich every day.

#### **Journalists have a reputation for being one of the worst dressed occupational groups. You, on the other hand, are often seen wearing a suit. Will you also give your students sartorial advice?**


I think it's important for journalists to dress well, to be elegant and well-groomed. When I was in the USA on a story in the New York Times newsroom, I noticed that every journalist there wore a tie to work. It's the same in Congress in Washington, and the female journalists there wear either a ladies' suit or an elegant pantsuit. This makes it easier to meet with members of Congress at eye level. If you look smart, you're more likely to be taken seriously – and not just in interviews. •

**«The Ringier School of Journalism provided me with insight into all genres of journalism – from tabloid to TV to magazine journalism. On top of that, I got an infinitely valuable network of contacts to colleagues across Switzerland as a starting kit.»**

Gregor Sonderegger | Class of 1993/94 |  
Chief of Staff, Deputy Head of News SRF





A woman with long brown hair, wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat and a teal-colored dress with puffed sleeves and a buttoned front. She is posing with one hand on her hat and the other on her hip. The background is a dark, textured blue.

# The vicious click circle

Text: Nina Huber

Photos: Jude Edginton / Contour by Getty Images, Thomas Buchwalder

Brittany Kaiser campaigns for everyone to be aware of their rights regarding their personal data and to protect it accordingly. A new member of the international EqualVoice Advisory Board, she thinks it's right to tally the mentions of women and men in media titles, but she also explains why that in itself will not suffice.



«Your data is your most valuable asset!» This is an axiom Brittany Kaiser preaches time and again. She knows what she's talking about. She became famous as a whistleblower at Cambridge Analytica. Along with another former employee, she revealed that this British data analytics company, which no longer exists, «bombarded» swing voters with the help of blogs, posts, articles, ads and websites, in order to influence Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign and the Brexit vote. The company drew its user data from Facebook. In

make the illegal data handling public. She later founded the «Own Your Data» foundation, which aims to empower people to be more aware of their data, better protect it, and use it to their own advantage.

#### **It's not what you say but how you say it**

Onstage at the EqualVoice Summit in Zurich in May, she was quite clear, elucidating the problems that arise when online media merely count the number of clicks: «If an article is clicked on fre-

**«While the other employee, who also went public, was hailed as a hero, I experienced suspicion and skepticism from the media. The coverage was as different as night and day.»**

2019, Netflix released «The Great Hack», a documentary about the scandal, with Brittany Kaiser as the main protagonist.

She is an American endowed with a fair amount of idealism. As a twenty-year-old, she decided to interrupt her studies to become part of the Barack Obama campaign's five-person social-media team. Even then, they were collecting data to target wavering voters and motivate them to vote. Brittany Kaiser says she only saw the upsides of this approach at the time. But when she realized, while working at Cambridge Analytica, how harmful these actions might be, her perspective changed. She left the company in 2018 and decided to

quently, it is further edited and expanded, and similar articles are then suggested to the reader. Unfortunately, since a significant majority of media items are about men, more and more items are about men. It's a vicious circle.»

That's why Brittany Kaiser thinks the EqualVoice initiative is so important, and why she became a member of the Advisory Board. «The problem, however, is not just that men are mentioned much more often than women, but also that genders are represented differently,» says Brittany Kaiser. Women still tend to be portrayed in the stereotypical role of the victim, she says, while men are the heroes, the authorities, the experts. Back from Rome

and a meeting with the Pope, Brittany Kaiser elaborates on these thoughts two weeks later, on a hot summer's day during a private conversation with DOMO over a glass of wine on the banks of the river Limmat: «It may be a good start if an initiative like EqualVoice measures how often women are mentioned and a publication then increases its share to thirty percent. But if twenty-five percent of them mention women in a negative way and five percent comment about the clothes they wore, then frankly, that's not content that should be counted at all. None of it empowers women. We need to analyze the content.» This is where she sees her biggest contribution to EqualVoice as a data specialist: She wants to help implement an algorithm that measures content, in terms of tone and emotionality.



In 2019, Netflix released the documentary «The Great Hack».



Brittany Kaiser (2nd from the right) at the Ringier «Equal Lounge» at the WEF in Davos.



### Data protection means work

She herself experienced firsthand what it's like to be on the receiving end of discriminatory treatment in the media. «While Christopher Wylie, the other employee who also went public, was hailed as a hero, I experienced suspicion and skepticism from the media. The coverage was as different as night and day.» It differed in the way they wrote about her as well as in the choice of the pictures they used. «They published bad photos of me with a shadow over my face, presumably to make me look shady.» She was fully aware right off the bat that her peaceful daily life would be over once she revealed herself as a whistleblower to the media. «No one chooses to become a whistleblower in

Being the master of your own data is not possible without considerable effort. Brittany Kaiser advises that the first thing you do is pick up your smartphone and check what permissions you've given each app. «Access to camera and microphone, maybe even when the app is not in use? Access to contact information? Live location tracking? That's all highly sensitive data that shouldn't be granted lightly.» After that, she says, you need to read the terms and conditions for everything. This is usually an arduous process, because some of them are intentionally 50 pages long and written in a complicated way. Once you've checked all the apps, you will most likely come to the conclusion that you can delete a lot of them. There is an

« **Teenagers, who are in a difficult time of self-discovery anyway, are extremely influenced by social media. In some cases, social media have more influence over young people than their parents.** »

order to be celebrated. You're either thrown in jail or killed afterwards.» Brittany Kaiser feared for her own life and the lives of her loved ones. Feeling unsafe in her country of origin, the US, as well as in her adopted country, the UK, she moved to Thailand for a while.

Since then, she has kept a close eye on her own data. She reveals little about her private life. She would never send photos of her one-year-old son via Whatsapp, let alone share them on social media. And she works without an assistant. «I don't trust anyone enough to let another person read my mails, so I do it all by myself.» Only her sister, who works for her, enjoys her complete trust. She has also accompanied her on the month-long trip to Europe.

app that the Own Your Data Foundation participates in that does the work for you. «Revoke» tracks down all the data breaches involving personal information. In addition, it reveals all the companies that used the personal data for marketing purposes. Through the app, one can a), request a copy of all the data these companies are using, b), deny access and c), request that the data be deleted.

### Is good news no news?

Brittany Kaiser complains that there is still too big of a gap between data protection laws, which now exist in most countries, and what companies can get away with. «Unfortunately, companies like Twitter or Facebook still don't consider lies targeting people's fears to be illegal. Still, Donald Trump



simply broke the law with his numerous false claims on Twitter.» She raises her voice. However, she says, things are moving now. On January 1st, 2020, the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), probably the strictest data protection law in the US, came into force in California. Now, the existing regulations of the CCPA will be significantly expanded by the new California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) and will approximate EU standards. Sweden is also exemplary: The government awards certificates to companies that are particularly exemplary in data protection. It is not mandatory for companies to obtain this certificate, but it is a great incentive. «It's moving in the right direction,» says Brittany Kaiser. Much remains to be done. She is focusing on awareness and education, hoping that the next generation will be more aware of the value of their own data. But, as long as a channel like TikTok is one of the most popular ones among kids, that remains difficult. «TikTok is some of the most dangerous stuff: it's an incredibly successful Chinese video portal with a network function that gives the company behind it access to facial recognition, live location tracking, and

everything users do. That can be dangerous, not just for young people, but for their families.» At least, it can be, in countries that have dictatorial regimes. The power of social media is another general problem for young people, she says: «Teenagers, who are in a difficult time of self-discovery anyway, are extremely influenced by social media. In some cases, social media have more influence over young people than their parents.» For Brittany Kaiser, mental health is one of the big issues of our time. She draws a line from social media to traditional media, reminding us once again of their responsibility: «Why exactly does so much negative news get published? Why do the media profit from the fact that negative headlines are clicked on more often? Depression is a worldwide mass disease. We must ask ourselves what kind of world we want. Do we want to drag angry and sad people down even more with bad news, or do we want to do the opposite with positive news?» She takes a final sip of wine and shrugs. «I'm not going to reach everyone with this message, I'm well aware of that.» She won't keep quiet, though. She has made up her mind to speak.●



## Personal

**Brittany Kaiser, 35, calls herself a «data rights activist». She holds a doctorate in philosophy from Middlesex University London, has worked for Barack Obama and Amnesty International and is the author of the book «Targeted», in which she argues for legal control of the data industry. Today she advises the Vatican, among others, on data protection issues. She lives in Texas and Puerto Rico. With her appointment, the Ringier International EqualVoice Advisory Board has been further expanded. New members on an international level include Mathias Döpfner (CEO Axel Springer SE) and Katharina Borchert (journalist and former Chief Innovation Officer at Mozilla), complementing Yann Borgstedt (entrepreneur and founder Womanity Foundation), who has been a member of the Advisory Board from the beginning.**



# The Bored Ape becomes a big **yawn**

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Visitors to the Pressehaus are welcomed by an impressive photograph of the Iguazú Falls in Brazil. Its creator, Wolfgang Tillmans, is said to have invented a new visual language, which is why his work has already been shown in many museums around the world – including the Fondation Beyeler in Basel.

Ugo Rondinone's photomontage self-portraits also adorn the lobby of our headquarters on Dufourstrasse. The Swiss artist has had innumerable museum exhibitions and is currently being honored with a major retrospective in Frankfurt.

The Canadian artist collective General Idea really has cult status among many young artists. The painting «Great Aids» in the Pressehaus lobby is representative of their artistic output in the eighties. Exhibitions in Ottawa and Amsterdam this year are finally honoring the great importance of this trio.

The abovementioned artists may enjoy a high reputation in the art market and can make a good living from their art. But they can't hold a candle to the duo Matt Hall and John Watkinson. You, dear reader, have never heard their names? You had better

know them, though, because their art has already sold for well over a billion dollars. These two «creative technologists», as they call themselves, are the inventors of the «CryptoPunks». These NFTs are among the most successful and most traded non-fungible tokens, and rappers Jay-Z and Snoop Dogg have even adopted them as their Twitter images.

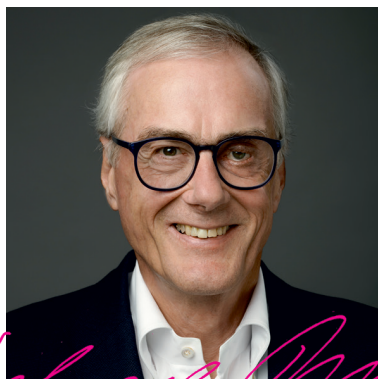
However, the public perception that NFTs might also be art is not due to the «CryptoPunks», but to Mike Winkelmann, better known as «Beeple». His 5,000 little images, combined into a single work, were knocked down to a buyer from the crypto scene for 69 million US dollars at the Christie's auction house 18 months ago. A waddling astronaut by the same creator sold for nearly \$30 million at the same auction house six months later. NFTs had definitely ascended to monetary art heaven.

Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, who has designed bags for Louis Vuitton and whose works sell for seven-figure sums, also wanted to shine in the NFT sky with his flower paintings. What began as a lodestar with a bid of \$260,000 recently died like a burnt-up comet in the art market. His fall was so deep that the artist apolo-

gized to his fans on Twitter after the prices for his flower NFTs wilted away faster than any flower without water.

Even at the fourth NFT.NYC conference, where more than 1,500 speakers tried to pitch their NFTs a few weeks ago, the mood was rather downbeat, according to the industry service «Artnet». Sales on the OpenSea trading platform, where more than \$40 millions' worth of NFTs were traded on good days, plummeted almost as much as the Ether and Bitcoin exchange rates did in the last six months. Prices for «Bored Ape» or «CryptoPunks», the stars of the NFT scene, fell almost as fast as they had shot up. And even journalist and collector Kenny Schachter, himself a producer of NFTs, speaks of the NFT market as the «Wild West» – but many crypto-cowboy horses have lost up to 80 percent of their value.

And what is the lesson here? Technology is not yet a market and certainly not art. Both, however, can certainly be attained again. But, as in real life, through innovation, diligence and perseverance. For the time being, the abbreviation NFT primarily stands for frustration and disappointment: «No Fucking Trophy».



*Michael Müller*





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Thomas Ruff, «Andere Porträt» 1994/1995 © 2022, ProLitteris, Zürich.

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The person appears androgynous to me, and the boundaries between woman and man seem to dissolve quite naturally, which is why I find this work of art exciting, timeless, and very topical. Any society's values are subject to constant change. Just ten years ago, for example, the referendum proposal «Marriage for All» would hardly have been approved so clearly by all Swiss cantons. Women as well as people of the LGBTQIA+ movement are right to take to the streets to stand up for equal opportunities and actively fight against discrimination. I am greatly concerned with issues involving diversity and inclusion, not only as a woman and a member of this society, but also in my job as HR manager. With its EqualVoice initiative, Ringier has made an important contribution to increasing equality in the media landscape, and we must continue to pursue this. Quite apart from the media, however, we as individuals within a society, the economy and politics, in short, all of us are equally required to do our part in creating a more tolerant and colorful coexistence.

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Graziella Beeler, HR Manager at Ringier AG, expresses her thoughts on this work from the Ringier collection currently on display in the lobby of the Pressehaus in Zurich.