

ooo Ringier

DOMO

“You can really
see something
good and great
growing together.”

Ladina Heimgartner, CEO of Ringier Media Switzerland,
about her plans for the company, her third workplace
and her new hobby.

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Always on the move

Ladina Heimgartner, CEO of Ringier Media Switzerland (RMS), has made Zurich's tram line 2, which connects the two Ringier locations Pressehaus and Medienpark, one of her workplaces. DOMO Magazine went along for the ride and found out where the journey with RMS is going.

Five on the Secret Trail of Phone Scammers

Izzy is a young brand of Ringier Media Switzerland, and in their videos, they practice a new way of storytelling in their videos. Their latest product is the 80-minute film «Die Einzeltrick-Betrüger» which became a huge success. Who are these 5 journalists and how do they work?

«A lighthouse project»

Ringier has been developing an ESG concept since 2021 and recently published its first ESG Report. Roman Bargezi, member of the Ringier Board of Directors and member of the ESG Board, explains what this means, why it is important and where the focus lies.

Hero with a heart

Comic-books and appearances in heroic costumes: these are Michel Fornasier's tools to promote self-confidence in children and to prevent bullying. He is the best role model for this because he himself has a supposed weakness that he now uses as a strength.

A yearned-for reality

Publisher Michael Ringier uses the example of Kate Middleton to reflect on real and fake photos and the scandal caused by the fake pictures of the Princess of Wales. And he points out that the whitewashing of photos is an age-old problem.

Speaking out and taking off

Meeting people, immersing oneself in topics, writing stories and sharing them. That's what originally made me want to become a journalist, and that probably goes for most people working in the media. But there are other reasons, too, for embarking on a career in journalism. A deadly disease, for instance, as in the case of Selena Ribić. This Serbian woman was working as a PR and event manager, 24 years old and full of zest, when she fell ill and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She began to rail against her fate, to fight it – and to write. This became her lifeline and eventually her passion. Today, Selena is healthy and writes for various media of Ringier Serbia, preferably about taboo issues such as women-specific forms of cancer or menopause (page 32–33).

Victims of phishing, computer fraud and phone scams also tend to be reluctant to speak out about their experiences. Those having been scammed are often embarrassed because, firstly, their money is gone, and secondly, hindsight is 20/20. No reason to feel shame, says the team of Izzy, a young media brand of Ringier Media Switzerland. The five-person crew's innovative video storytelling has been stimulating a large community excitement. In their 80-minute film «Die Enkeltrick-Betrüger» (Grandparent Scammers), their front man Cedric Schild pranks professional phone scammers. The film was a great success with audiences as well as media professionals, because the creative minds at Izzy blend documentation with comedy and serious investigation with humor, thereby enriching the journalistic playing field (page 12–13).

Never mind the love of experimentation: journalistic formats, however innovative, are only successful if they operate on a sound entrepreneurial basis. Which brings us to our cover story: the merger of the Blick Group and Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz into Ringier Media Switzerland (RMS). On a tram ride with Zurich's line 2 from one Ringier location in this city to the other, DOMO accompanied Ladina Heimgartner, CEO of Ringier Media Switzerland, and asked her what drives her and where she will be taking her company (page 8–11).

Best wishes,
Katrin Ambühl, DOMO Editor-in-chief



«Blikk» turns 30

Thirty years ago, Ringier Hungary founded the daily Blikk. The very first issue landed on March 1st, 1994, that is to say, it literally fell from the skies: An army helicopter dropped a whole pallet of newspapers above Budapest's Városliget ice rink. Thirty years later, Blikk is celebrating its anniversary with various activities. A limited-edition special issue features a review of the daily's most exciting stories, and a virtual exhibition of press photos presents 30 outstanding photographs from Blikk's history.



Here is the link
to the virtual
exhibition



What would you do with a million interns?

Nils Körber

Managing Director
of Ringier South Africa

At Bangkok's PPW Conference trade fair in March, more than 150 experts from the field of online marketplaces came together. The above statement is one Nils Körber borrowed from a former Google presentation. Nils gave a presentation on the development towards AI supported marketplaces at Ringier, and the quote was voted the best question of the event by the fair management. What did he mean by it, and what are the interns or trainees for? Nils was emphasizing the importance of learning how to master strategic prompting. Among other things, he recommends splitting a project up into small work steps that the AI can work on after it has been trained. And since AI is known to be a fast learner, these trained digital assistants will soon become a huge army of employees...

Honored by the oldest sports medium



Przegląd Sportowy is both Poland's only and oldest sports paper. It was founded in Krakow in 1920 and is now part of Onet, which in turn belongs to Ringier Axel Springer Poland. Last January saw a great Sports Champions Gala at which the country's foremost athletes were given awards. The athletes had previously been selected by means of a readers' poll. The biggest award went to Polish tennis player Iga Świątek.

Remembrance

On the 6th anniversary of the deaths of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová, thousands of people came together at several events commemorating the murder of this Ringier journalist and his partner, including an occasion organized by Aktuality.sk. At the same time, a book written by the Aktuality.sk journalist Laura Kello was published, entitled «Vražda Jána a Martiny – Vyšetrovanie» (in English: The Murder of Ján and Martina – An Investigation).



Record upon record

Sixty-five million page views in February 2024, a more than 25 percent increase over last year. That is only one

65^m

record number reported by GSP.ro, the Romanian online sports-media channel of Ringier Sports Media Group (RSMP). The number of unique users also went up, to 3.92 million, i.e. a 12 percent increase over last

year. One major reason for these successes is the offer of popular video content on GSP.ro, which was massively expanded - by 200 clips compared to last year. Speaking of videos: We will soon get to celebrate the birth of a new video format, «La féminin, by GSP», a series that will introduce female users to major female athletes from all around the world of sports.

The future of the job market

For the sixth time, Jobberman Nigeria organized an event about the challenges of the future job market. This time, it focused on the so-called informal sector, meaning private work activities not registered by the government. The event's motto was «A pathway to sustainable economic transitions for young people». In Nigeria, close to 90 percent of newly created jobs belong to the informal sector. At various panels and a roundtable, experts discussed the enormous economic potential that this sector has for young job seekers. The event took place in Abuja on March 28th.



Recommended listening



The »New York Times« podcast is about the future that is already here.

Every week, »Hard Fork« tackles the most pertinent, exciting and complex issues relating to digital technologies and their effects on companies and society. The episodes are always released on Fridays – I listen to them in my car, on walks or while jogging.

Topics discussed in the last few episodes include:

- The A.I. Election, Bitcoin's Wall Street Debut and TikTok's Doodad Era
- The Times Sues OpenAI, a Debate Over iMessage and Our New Year's Tech Resolutions
- Google's Epic Loss, Silicon Valley's Curious New Subculture and How 2023 Changed the Internet
- What's Next for OpenAI, Binance Is Binanceled and A.I. Is Eating the Internet
- (Yet Another) Emergency Pod: Sam Altman Is Back

For those interested in the latest developments in the world of technology, the New York Times podcast »Hard Fork« is highly recommended. The program is hosted by the experienced tech journalists Kevin Roose and Casey Newton. Roose is best known as the New York Times's award-winning tech columnist and author of bestsellers such as »Future-proof«. Newton, however, is a renowned American tech journalist, who used to be senior editor at The Verge and is the founder and editor of the tech newsletter Platformer.



These topics show both the range and the depth of the discussions that Roose and Newton feature on their podcast. Each episode offers insights into the latest trends and developments in technology, enriched by the expert opinions of these two seasoned journalists.

Enjoy this audio treat!

Marc Walder
CEO Ringier AG

Laurels galore

Several Ringier Media Switzerland titles at once had reason to celebrate in March. That's when the trade magazine «Schweizer Journalist» bestows its awards in various categories of journalism each year. In the most prestigious category, «Journalist of the Year», the first prize went to Fabian Eberhard. The Deputy Editor-in-Chief of SonntagsBlick was praised for his excellent investigative stories, including his investigation into FIFA. «Where others would stop investigating, he gives it another go. Fabian is courageous, meticulous in his work, a tireless «digger,» Steffi Buchli, Chief Content Officer of Ringier Medien Schweiz said about Fabian. She herself placed third in the «Editor-in-Chief» category, incidentally. And here are the other Ringier employees who also won awards: Sermin Faki, Blick (3rd place in «Politics»), Dominique Strebel, Beobachter (2nd place in «Editor-in-Chief» and 3rd place in «Editorial Office of the Year») and Cedric Schild, izzy projects («Video Journalist of the Year»; see page 12).



From left to right: Dominique Strebel and Steffi Buchli were awarded in the category «Editor-in-Chief» for Beobachter and Blick respectively.



Fabian Eberhard (left) is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of SonntagsBlick and was voted «Journalist of the Year». Fibo Deutsch has worked for Ringier AG for over 65 years and has now been honored for lifetime achievement.

Another highlight, finally, was the «Lifetime Achievement Award». It went to one of Ringier's truly old hands: Hans Jürg (Fibo) Deutsch. In his appreciative laudation, Karl Lüönd acknowledged the many offices Fibo held in the course of his long career.

Among other things, he co-founded SonntagsBlick and spent many decades working in various positions at Ringier AG, eventually joining its group management. What were Deutsch's own highlights and low points in his years with Ringier? The 84-year-old honoree remembers: «Apart from the launch of SonntagsBlick in 1969 and the all-time high of Schweizer Illustrierte when I was its editor-in-chief in 1978 and we

reached a certified circulation of 309,000 copies, I am most proud of my part in giving birth to commercial television in Switzerland in 1984. That was a historic turning point for our thus far traditional printing and publishing company. The beginning, with the local TV channel Zürivision, together with the Swiss media trailblazer Roger Schawinski, was followed by important ventures involving TeleZüri, the pay-TV channel Teleclub, Sat1 Schweiz, the sports TV channel DFS, Presse TV and the founding of Ringier TV with its own production. There are three flops I was sadly unable to prevent: In 1981, I was obliged to bury the news weekly Die Woche after just one year. In 1988, my project for a local edition in Basel, Basler Blick, also failed. And to this day, I regret that, in all those years, I did not manage to launch an enduring media platform for the important topic of health with Ringier.» ●

Photos: Walter Bieri

Always on the move

A lot has happened since the Blick Group and Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz merged to become Ringier Media Switzerland (RMS). Zurich's tram line 2 links the two locations Pressehaus and Medienpark – and the tram has meanwhile become CEO Ladina Heimgartner's third workplace. DOMO Magazine went along for the ride.

Text: Daniel Riedel
Photos: Philippe Rossier

Not missing the bus is easier to do on Zurich's public transport than it is in the world of media. The number 2 tram line commutes between the Pressehaus and the Medienpark every seven minutes. It's 13 stops, and if everything runs smoothly, the ride from Opera House to the Kappeli stop takes no more than 21 minutes. Very feasible, easy to plan.

In her role as CEO of Ringier Media Switzerland (RMS), Ladina Heimgartner finds that things don't always go according to plan. «It would be odd if it weren't so,» says the head of RMS. Since the end of last year and the merger of the Blick Group with Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz to form Ringier Media Switzerland, her job has been to lead 20 top media brands into the future – allowing for all contingencies, in a complex market environment and with global competitors like Google, Meta and their ilk.

Take-off at [Opernhaus](#). The ride begins, time for culture. «At the RMS Townhall in the Corso cinema, we talked with employees about the individual heartbeats of the different units, editorial offices, sectors and teams. That's wonderful and healthy and important for each title, but it's just as important to find a common, powerful rhythm for our entire media company. That will require creating a proprietary culture for RMS that offers all of

our 1,000 employees a perspective.» How is that supposed to work? «It will begin on a small scale with shared Slack channels, an RMS newsletter, employee events, our podcast or surveys with which we want to keep our finger on the pulse of RMS periodically and listen.»

Next stop: [Bellevue](#). Does 2024 offer a fair view? «The beginning of the year was very challenging for all of us. New teams, new processes, new faces and responsibilities. I think we've gradually got the hang of it and can celebrate some first successes. The new spirit is also tangible, for instance if you look at the new newsroom with its RMS Superdesk and see how well the titles are already collaborating and cooperating. You can really see something good and great growing together.»

At [Bürkliplatz](#), the sun is shining. To the right, the Limmat river flows, to the left, Lake Zurich glitters. «Almost like a cheesy postcard,» says Heimgartner. The lake relates to her newest passion: boating. «I'm getting my license to drive power boats. I got my Spanish driver's license within three days last year. The Swiss license takes significantly longer. But as a result, I'll – hopefully – be a better navigator.»

Sometimes there are
creaks and it gets bumpy.
The main thing is to keep
moving and not to lose
sight of our goal. ”



On we go: **Kantonalbank**. The perfect place to mention RMS figures:

- some 1,000 employees
- 20 of Switzerland's top media brands
- 3 million print readers
- over 700,000 subscribers
- some 2.9 million digital unique users (per day)
- adding up to a total of some 4.6 million readers and users

«If you put all of that together, we are reaching around 66 percent of the Swiss population above the age of 14. A crazy figure that proves how strong we are and how much power our titles and brands have.»

At **Paradeplatz**, we're still on track for figures. How are we doing in business terms? «We are seeing that advertising clients are operating at short sight with respect to marketing expenditure. And that has to do with several factors: the two wars, rising energy prices and living costs, partly inflation. And sure, our users and readers may also find themselves thinking twice about the cost of a subscription.»

At **Sihlstrasse**, her iPhone rings. «I don't really talk on the phone much in the tram, I'd rather listen to music. My current favorite: Beyoncé's 'Texas Hold'em'. And sometimes a podcast.» Her professional tip: «I quite like to listen to them at 1.5 times or twice the normal speed.»

different capacities, finally as Deputy Director General. That was very formative.» But? «I'm feeling at home at Ringier, and after all, Ringier Media Switzerland is the beginning of a new journey, and I still find this new task with all its associated challenges enormously exciting. I'm also very fond of the people at Ringier – the work is very demanding and sometimes very stressful. So, it helps to be surrounded by great colleagues.»

A brief snack at **Kalkbreite**: nuts. «I often don't find enough time to eat – at least during the day. In the evenings, however, I really enjoy cooking or trying out new restaurants etc. with my partner and her and my friends. I'm currently also trying to be more consistent in terms of eating healthy. I do allow myself one great exception: drinking a cola once in a while.»

Next stop: **Lochergut**. What was the actual idea behind the merger of Blick and the former Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz titles? «The basic idea is that we will be able to play more specifically to the individual strengths of our brands as well as combining them. On the one hand, having Blick as Switzerland's first stop for news and sports with its already huge digital power. On the other hand, our great magazines and weeklies with their more extensive

Opernhaus

Bellevue

Bürkliplatz

Kantonalbank

Paradeplatz

Sihlstrasse

2

Tram jam at **Stauffacher**.

How many e-mails clog up the RMS CEO's inbox per day?

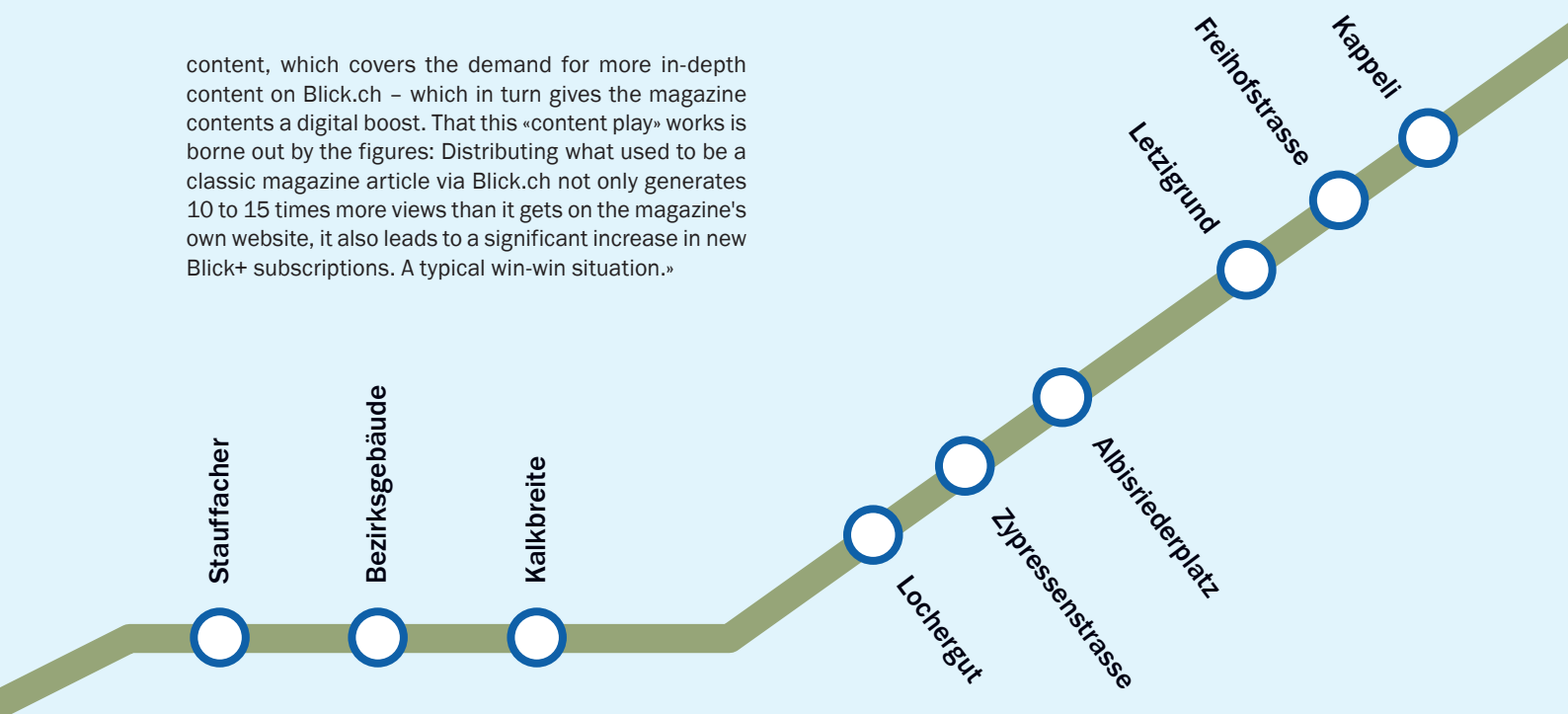
Heimgartner laughs: «I'm very consistent in processing my e-mail, deleting and moving rigorously. There should never be more than 100 unprocessed e-mails in my inbox at any time. On Monday mornings, I start out with 20 e-mails at the most in my inbox, by Friday I tend to reach that 100-e-mail limit. But my colleagues know that if it's urgent, a WhatsApp message will do the trick.»

Driver change at **Bezirksgebäude**. Change? Wasn't that in the air recently? «You mean the Director General's job at SRG, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation?» Yes, exactly. «Given my SRG past, I did realize that I was a likely candidate when the resignation of the incumbent, Gilles Marchand, was announced. In some ways, I am an SRG child and spent almost a third of my life working there in



Ladina Heimgartner likes to use the tram ride for listening to music or podcasts. «Linie 2» (line 2), incidentally, is the name of a podcast that she herself initiated and which discusses the merger of the Blick Group and RASCH into Ringier Medien Schweiz.

content, which covers the demand for more in-depth content on Blick.ch – which in turn gives the magazine contents a digital boost. That this «content play» works is borne out by the figures: Distributing what used to be a classic magazine article via Blick.ch not only generates 10 to 15 times more views than it gets on the magazine's own website, it also leads to a significant increase in new Blick+ subscriptions. A typical win-win situation.»



Emergency brakes, the alarm bell rings, an involuntary stop just before **Zypressenstrasse**. «That, too, is familiar: Sometimes there are creaks and it gets bumpy. The main thing is to keep moving and not to lose sight of our goal.»

At **Albisriederplatz**, the tram fills up. «I live in the northern district of Zurich Seebach and use public transport a lot, I'm almost an expert,» Heimgartner grins. Meaning? «I know when, where and how best to get on and I actually enjoy even the somewhat bustling commuter experience in the mornings and evenings. I leave the car at home so I can make better use of my journeys to work and back.»

The **Letzigrund**, home base of the Zurich soccer clubs Grasshoppers and FCZ, lends itself to a question about teamwork. «I am proud and happy that Ringier Medien Schweiz not only allows me to work with around 1,000 great employees but that I also realize every day how everybody is pulling together and being open for new things. The best example is people's curiosity and the interest in AI tools, which are already being used intensively throughout the company – and partly make our jobs a bit easier.»

Nearly there: **Freihofstrasse**. We are still on AI. «The main thing is that we as a media company don't miss the bus on this issue. In our industry, we have already paid dearly twice for that mistake. The internet didn't really interest us at first, and we also missed the breakthrough of social media as a result of the launch of the iPhone. Right now, we are in the midst of a third phase of transformation, and user behavior with regard to our content is about to change radically. That is why our cooperation with Google with respect to chatbots is so crucial – and that is why we need to embrace the new possibilities that AI offers us with open arms and real passion. Not based on the premise that Artificial Intelligence will eventually



It is only a few steps from the tram stop Kappeli to the Medienpark. The journey from Pressehaus, respectively Opernhaus station, takes 20 minutes. A route on which Ladina Heimgartner currently often commutes back and forth.

replace us completely, but with the goal of presenting our great and innovative contents in such a way that we as a media company will be still able to justify our existence in the future.»

Arrival at Medienpark, the **Kappeli** tram stop. So, what will matter most? Heimgartner ponders, the tram keeps rolling down the track. «Actually, that's quite a fitting image. At Ringier Media Switzerland, we will also have to get a lot of things on track, maybe change direction sometimes, tap the brakes if necessary and get back up to speed as fast as possible.» Because the goal is clear: to become the most innovative and powerful media company in Switzerland. ●



The team are funny, brave and cunning. Izzy is a young media brand of Ringier Media Switzerland, and in their videos, they practice a new way of storytelling: a blend of reporting and comedy. Their latest exploit, the film «Die Enkeltrick-Betrüger» (The Grandparent Scammers), blasted onto the Swiss media landscape like a bombshell. We visited the Izzy team's Famous Five and looked into their bag of tricks.

The Izzy team at their home base, a Zurich apartment. Left to right: Florian Scholl, Larissa Langone, Aurelio Simione, Cedric Schild, Milutin Draskovic.

Text: Katrin Ambühl
Photo: Julian Metzger

Five on the Secret Trail of Phone Scammers

The Izzy principle

«This movie is packed with everything we learned over the past five, six years,» says Florian Scholl, one of Izzy's five creators. He is referring to videoclips with investigative exposés – funny and serious at the same time. For example, Izzy's front man Cedric Schild phones a military training area posing as an army major and obtains sensitive information easy as pie. Or the team secretly make a crop circle, and almost all of the other media fall for the fake news and come up with all sorts of absurd speculation. Many of Izzy's ideas don't make it to the production stage. «We lay a lot of tombstones in our work,» Cedric points out. Because Izzy's team is always juggling several different topics at the same time. «It's like being on a carousel where one topic suddenly breaks away while the others keep going round in circles,» says Milutin Draskovic, another team member. The grandparent scam was one example. The video journalists already wanted to do a story about it four years ago. «It was the usual thing: We felt that the idea might work and that this wasn't a story you could tell in five minutes,» Aurelio Simione explains. But back then, the project failed to clear a bureaucratic hurdle: Buying fictitious landline numbers with fake names, a necessity for a phone-scam investigation, was not to the phone company's liking. And so, the grandparent-scam topic spent a few more years going around in circles on the carousel of ideas. Only when it became possible to enter new landline numbers into the phone directory online did they say: Action! That was a year ago.

The film

The grandparent scam involves giving people shocking news over the phone, then gaining their trust and finally promising a solution to the problem by means of a quick handover of cash. The professional gangs deliberately target senior citizens – on the assumption that they hoard cash and valuables at home and are more susceptible to manipulation. Izzy's plan was to pose as potential victims and to bait and hoodwink the phone scammers or, better yet, catch them in the act. Izzy registered countless fake phone numbers with made-up and old sounding names, as that is precisely what the gangs look for. And then, the long wait began. «When, after three months, the first call did come, I almost shat myself, because I knew the mafia was on the other end,» Cedric Schild remembers. He has a background in acting and comedy, which is why he took on the role of phone decoy and played the victims. But phone scammers, «tuskers» in Swiss police jargon, are cautious and clever, and at the first few tries they smelled a rat and hung up. It took several attempts before the first handover happened.

The figures

Thanks to the film «Die Enkeltrick-Betrüger», five couriers were arrested. Within some 12 months, Izzy recorded more than 1,200 minutes of real shock phone calls. «When it came to the first cash handover, I had just come back from a holiday in Thailand. So, when the «tusk» asked us to count the money, we used my leftover baht,» Larissa Langone grins.

Apart from the phone conversations with the scammers and the fake cash handovers, the editing of the film proved to be another major challenge. «We screened the raw footage ad nauseam and re-edited it again and again after our weekly team discussions,» Aurelio recalls. «There were 22 versions of the film,» adds Larissa, who teamed up with Aurelio to turn the footage into a film with an identity of its very own – without any outside assistance. «We do our own thing, we didn't want to make a traditional documentary or a mainstream movie but to tell the story in our own way,» explains Larissa. Within the first 24 hours of the film's launch at the beginning of February, 2024, Blick.ch

and the Blick app clocked 17,000 paid streams as well as over 300,000 page views. And Izzy's social-media channels now number more than 700,000 followers. At this year's ceremony honoring Switzerland's «Journalists of the Year 2023», Cedric Schild was voted Number 1 in the Video category. However, Izzy is anything but a one-man-show.

The team

Risky situations and tensions were frequent during the making of the film. What about fear? «No. The moments when the handovers actually happened were more like a showdown,» Milu demurs. And the more they succeeded, the more they developed a certain hard-boiled and relaxed attitude.

«Once we had shot two or three feigned handovers, we knew that from now on, we could only «high-grade», and that made us loosen up,» Cedric says. It took a healthy dose of respect, good preparation and exchanges with professionals to make the whole endeavor as safe as possible, Flo adds. «There are so many journalists in other countries who do far more radical stuff and deliberately court danger.» Danger, crises, tension: Things that normally put a strain on a team seem to be what drives Izzy. «When things get intense and hard, we all pull together. I think you can see that in the film, too,» says Larissa, adding: «There is a lot of mutual trust in the team, we have similar ideas about what makes for a good project and we also get on fine on the personal level. That's a huge bonus.» Stress and tension require a counterpoint, and

that is particularly well developed at Izzy. «Our play instinct is enormous,» says Aurelio with an impish look in his eyes. «After all, we mustn't stop enjoying our work...» ●

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We wanted
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story in our
own way.”



The 80-minute film «Die Enkeltrick-Betrüger» can be streamed in German for CHF 3.90 at enkeltrickbetrueger.ch.

“Switzerland to be a
lighthouse
project”



Making economic activity sustainable is growing more and more important. It is in this context that the United Nations established the Environmental Social Governance (ESG) initiative in 2006 with the purpose of encouraging companies to incorporate sustainability factors into their management. Since 2021, Ringier has also been developing an ESG concept and recently published a first ESG Report as part of the 2023 Ringier Annual Report. The info box on the following page summarizes what it is all about and describes the focus areas of Ringier's ESG strategy. We asked Ringier Board Member Roman Bargezi, who is also on the ESG Board, what the strategy means to Ringier, to the employees and to himself personally.

Interview: Katrin Ambühl | Photo: Simon Habegger

Why does the subject of Environmental Social Governance (ESG) matter so much to you personally?

I regard what matters to me and what matters to Ringier as one and the same. Assuming social responsibility is part of Ringier's DNA, and there are many examples of this. As a family member, I grew up with these values.

Could you give us some examples from the company's history?

In 1936, my great-grandfather Paul Ringier established the «Stiftung Familienhilfe Paul Ringier» (Paul Ringier Family Assistance Foundation) in Zofingen to support employees in need. That was before there were even old-age pension schemes in Switzerland! In 1981, the foundation was restructured and became the «Humanitas Stiftung». Then, there's the Hans Ringier Stiftung, a foundation that supports the fostering of journalism. Traditionally, we have always also been involved in small-scale social projects at the local level. There is a risk that by looking at the whole world with its many crises we lose sight of problems and needs in our own backyard. That is why local issues matter a lot to me. A fine example of a Swiss social project is the foundation «SOS Beobachter», which has been supporting people afflicted by poverty for 40 years. So much the better that it emerged from a Ringier publication.

What were Ringier's reasons for launching an ESG initiative?

Well, the legal requirements in this area keep growing and we want to be prepared for that. But, as I said, we have always engaged in social commitments and been concerned with sustainability. We always did that to the best of our knowledge and belief, but there was never a structured process for this. And that is precisely what we want to achieve with ESG: to structure, analyze and measure our commitments. We want to track our efforts and make them visible.

What happened between the first discussions of this subject 3 years ago and the publication of the ESG Report in May 2024?

We included internal and external stakeholders in an assessment of what the most pertinent topics for Ringier would be. We also analyzed how well we are doing in the area of human resources, for example, and how far we have come in terms of environmental

measures or diversity and inclusion. Based on these results, we worked out the four ESG focus areas, the so-called clusters. They are: Environment and Natural Resources, Diversity and Inclusion, Pillar of Democracy and Good Corporate Citizen, and Desirable Place to Work.

What came out of that?

We would like to expand Ringier's existing commitment in the area of energy and the environment even further and to communicate it more actively. We have been doing quite a lot in that respect, for instance by establishing recycling points at our locations, as well as in terms of reducing food waste and using green energy.

And where is Ringier already well positioned?

With respect to diversity and inclusion, for instance. The EqualVoice initiative is a model project.

Coming back to the topic of the environment and energy, where there seems to be some catching-up to do. What will happen there?

We are currently calculating our Corporate Carbon Footprint (CCF) for the year 2023. We are doing this in partnership with the «myclimate» foundation. That will let us see where we stand and what measures we will take in future. We have to remember that all these activities also need to be economically bearable and beneficial for the company.

Will Ringier employees also be involved in ESG activities?

Absolutely! The ESG initiatives will not simply be imposed top-down, we are dependent on our employees' participation. We can only make our company better by pulling together.

How will you create this exchange in concrete terms?

We started off with the Ringier Green Week in April, 2024, a series of interactive live sessions with external environmental experts as well as in-house speakers highlighting some of Ringier's environmental concerns. The first step is about creating awareness and communicating various initiatives to the employees and, later, to stakeholders and the public. Incidentally, employees from different sectors were already involved in developing the ESG concept, as members of the ESG Task Force.

**Ringier is a very international company.
Is there a way to plan ESG activities for such
diverse countries?**

For now, we are clearly focusing on Switzerland. Planning on an international level right away would be far too complex. Our vision is for Switzerland to be a lighthouse project. Once we have established that, we will gradually expand our activities to the other 19 countries in which Ringier is currently operating. At the same time, we are engaged in a lively exchange with them, as we can learn from them on behalf of Switzerland. In addition, some of our companies, e.g. in the EU, already have certain ESG reporting obligations.

**One of the four clusters/focus areas in the
ESG Report is: Desirable Place to Work. That sounds
great, but what does it actually mean?**

For one thing, of course, to provide agreeable facilities. What is even more important, however, is the working atmosphere, the corporate culture. Offering complimentary apples is not enough to create a desirable place to work. That requires a good working atmosphere, a practiced culture. Because people thrive in a good working environment.

But that is hard to control...

The difficulty is that there is hardly any way to measure it. What it takes is a lot of communication inside and outside. Our Code of Conduct is certainly an important guideline in this regard. To me personally, it is also important that we as employers consider our employees as more than a mere workforce. Our employees need a good work/life balance to have spare time and time for their families. We don't want anyone to burn out at Ringier. It also takes good management, which we can support by providing leadership training, for example.

**Is the art at our locations also part of a desirable
workplace?**

Absolutely: Art is part and parcel of Ringier's identity, its corporate culture. Art stimulates our minds, it gives us food for thought and invigorates us.

**Speaking of art: Not too long ago, you trained to
be a photographer. Is that more of a hobby or a
profession to you?**

I spend about ten percent of my time working as a photographer, preferably on topics that have to do with people, I also like to do weddings. And incidentally, I am currently working on a photo feature for a fall issue of Landliebe... ●

Environmental Social Governance (ESG) is a way of describing the sustainable economic operation of companies. It calls for businesses not only to achieve success and growth but also to be mindful of their positive impact on the world around them. These aspects are of growing importance to employees, customers and stakeholders. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors have been a long-standing focus of Ringier's. In order to consolidate Ringier's efforts in these areas and to make them visible and measurable, Ringier AG has developed an ESG concept for the entire Group and conducted a materiality assessment to identify the most essential sustainability topics for Ringier. A survey among stakeholders based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) topic standards in 2022 resulted in four strategic ESG focus areas: **Environment & Natural Resources, Diversity & Inclusion, Pillar of Democracy & Good Corporate Citizen**, and **Desirable Place to Work**. Ringier intends to launch specific activities in

these four areas in the future. Concrete measures currently planned include the calculation of the Corporate Carbon Footprint (CFF) for the year 2023 and evaluating it in conjunction with the myclimate foundation. In addition, Ringier will apply for an EDGE Certification, a global standard for workplace diversity, equity and inclusion, and the HR initiative Ringier Explore, an exchange program for employees of Ringier companies, will be developed further.



Here is the link to 2023 Ringier Annual Report including the ESG Report.

In January 2024, the film «Jakobs Ross» was released theatrically. It is based on the homonymous novel by Silvia Tschui.



Text: Katrin Ambühl
Portrait shot: Jessica Keller

Silvia Tschui (*1974), editor at Blick, has been writing since 2004 with a focus on the environment, science and technology. She holds a BA in Literary Writing from the Swiss Literature Institute and a First Class Degree in Graphic Design and Animation from the Central Saint Martins College, London. Her literary works «Jakobs Ross» and «Der Wod» won her awards from the Canton and the City of Zurich, and in 2019, she was nominated for the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann Prize.

Silvia Tschui alternates between the newsroom, her writer's den and the stage. She writes for Blick, authors novels and is currently working on a libretto for the Zurich Opera House. How does she do it? What drives her? An approach in three acts.

Fit for the silver screen

In January of 2024, Elsie was brought to visual life. She is the protagonist of «Jakobs Ross» (Jacob's Horse), a film about a 19th-century farmgirl with a great voice and big dreams. Her circumstances, however, are more like a nightmare – harsh and bitter. The movie «Jakobs Ross» is based on the homonymous novel by Silvia Tschui, published in 2014 by Nagel & Kimche. A film adaptation of one's own book: is that the dream of any writer? «Absolutely, it's almost like winning the lottery,» says Tschui. «For the story to move on and reach a new audience is surely something any writer would wish for.» She sold the film rights to her book – but letting go of it turned out to be not so easy. «Eventually, though, I decided to let Elsie and the horse gallop away, not least because I was already working on my next novel,» the author says. The first thing she most appreciated about the film project was that a whole team was engaging with something she had thought up, and the second thing was: «People got to pay their rent, buy clothes for their kids, put food on the table, just because some synapses in my brain crossed in a creative way – now, that's what I call magic!»

The time conundrum

Making money is something she also needs to do, the writer points out, for herself and her son. Time management is therefore an everyday concern for Silvia Tschui – and it involves the constant juggling of various projects, both for her

A Woman of Many Talents



work and as a mother. «On my first book tour for Jakobs Ross, I was always accompanied by my son, who was a toddler at the time, and by my mother,» the author says, looking back. And she feels that the schedules of book publishers are not exactly kind to women or families. «If you don't deliver a second novel within two years after your first book, you're out,» she says from experience. For her sophomore effort «Der Wod», she had to start all over and go from door to door to find a publisher. Her second novel was eventually published by Rowohlt Verlag. The author won a stipend from the City of Zurich to help her finish the manuscript. Tschui used this paid time out to devote herself entirely to writing her novel in peace. Her time management was less relaxed during her stint at Blick, when she was still on early shifts. Her workday would begin long before the daycare opened. «It was only feasible because my mother always came to my home at 5 o'clock every day of the week. Without her, I couldn't have done

it.» Today, she no longer has that problem, but Tschui still needs spare time for her various endeavors and jobs – and her employer obliges again and again: «I really have to give a word of praise to Ringier at this point. I have twice been allowed to take time out to work on my own projects. It's not every employer that is so flexible, and I really appreciate it,» says the journalist.

1,000 things on her mind

She is currently working for Ringier at 90 percent of full-time employment, mainly for SonntagsBlick's magazine supplement. «The wonderful thing about his job is that it gives me a voice, that I can reach a wide readership,» says Tschui. «And I get to write about subjects that I find relevant.» And she is not afraid to take a radical approach. One example is her report on slaughterhouses from 2017, in which she observed butchers at work and personally tried her hand at gutting the animals. A stirring and visually expressive self-experiment which raised the question whether carnivores ought not to learn (again) what it takes to get a steak onto their plate. A strong visual sense and action inevitably characterize her fiction. This may be due to Tschui's training in graphic design and animation in London, where she also worked in animated film. «I like the visual dimension, and to me, writing is like filming,» Tschui says of her work. «My mind is always going in ten different directions, I like a fast pace.» Which is why she is currently writing for Blick as well as for the Zurich Opera House while working on a script for a TV series. And on top of that, her head is already buzzing with the theme and plot of her next novel. ●



Hero with a Heart

The one-handed man has super-powers. He can fly, is as strong as an ox and on a constant mission, which is: showing children that they can turn a supposed weakness into strength, supporting their self-esteem and thereby making them more tolerant towards others. He does this as Bionicman on visits to schools and as a storyteller with his own comic-book series.

Text: Katrin Ambühl

Michel Fornasier welcomes me high up, as one might almost expect of a superhero: in his apartment on the 16th floor of a high-rise in the Zurich suburb of Stettbach. The first thing that catches my eye is not his missing high-tech prosthetic hand, which had a defective contact and is currently being repaired in Sweden. Nor is it the far-ranging view over the Zurich's Glattal region; it's the superhero costume in the corner of the room. This is what Michel dons to become the Bionicman hero when he goes to preschools and schools to talk about self-esteem, tolerance and being different. On my visit, however, he is simply Michel, even though the comic-book character and the person are basically one and the same. «Bionicman is not a part I play, I become him,» he says, and quotes Peter Pan, whose saying is his own motto: «Believe in yourself and never grow up (entirely).» His positive attitude and his conviction that his weakness is his strength did not come overnight, however.

He knows how it feels to be different, because he was born without a right hand, a condition called dysmelia, which is not as rare as one might think. In Switzerland, between 200 and 300 babies a year are born missing a hand or an arm. Little Michel only realized that he was different when he was engaging with other children. «The first time I visited the orthopedic technician when I was seven was like a horror movie,» Michel, now 46, recalls with regard to the first flesh-colored prostheses he saw at the time. Later, on dates, he would sometimes cheat by wrapping his prosthetic hand in a bandage and faking a sports injury. «For 35 years of my life, I hid the stump on my right arm,» he says.

After having worked in the financial sector for a long time, he switched to various NGOs like Amnesty International or Unicef before establishing his own foundation, «Give Children a Hand». It gives children access to prosthetic hands from 3D printers, which are precisely not the flesh-colored prostheses he had as a child. «We would like the children to collaborate on the design of their prostheses, whether it's a pink hand with unicorns or one with cars on it,» Working for his foundation, he grew aware that children not only need physical aids but also mental support and positive role models. The inspiration for his hero character came from the children themselves. «When the kids saw my high-tech hand, they asked whether it gave me superpowers,» says Michel. Bionicman was born. And he not only performs at schools and sports camps, he also stars in the comic-book series Bionicmania.

The latest issue, entitled «Awaken Your Superpower», contains 15 short stories created by various artists and

pencillers, some of whom are big names who also work for Marvel and DC Comics. Unlike in the first issues, Bionicman now is no longer the only savior but part of a family, the Bionics. Just as Michel is the man behind the character Bionicman, the heroine Bionica also has a real-life role model: Gina Rühl. This 24-year-old German woman lost her left arm in a bad motorcycle accident in 2019. After she had recovered from this blow of fate, she applied as a candidate for the Miss Germany pageant and was voted Vice Miss Germany in 2022. Today, she is not only the female counterpart to Bionicman; she also joins him in performances in hospitals and schools. The comic-book family also includes Biog, the dog, and Biau, the pirate cat, who also wear prostheses and have superpowers. Together they have adventures in which they stand up for diversity, humanity and tolerance – issues that are not only important to children with disabilities. «Even ears that stick out, a port-wine stain or a gap between teeth may be considered flaws by

children and lead to exclusion,» Michel says. That is why his non-violent comics and his performances appeal to all children. «The Bionics can't stop mobbing, but they can strengthen children so they can rise above mobbing,» Michel says with conviction.

«Schools ask Gina or me for appearances,» says Michel Fornasier and points out: «Bionica's and Bionicman's performances are more than mere entertainment, they are edutainment. That's why it's



Michel Fornasier and Gina Rühl, aka Bionicman and Bionica, use their visits in schools and their comic-books to support children's self-esteem and promote tolerance.



Michel Fornasier and his hero costume, which turns him into Bionicman on visits in schools. Incidentally, the M on the chest does not stand for Michel, but for Menschlichkeit (humanity).

important for the schools to discuss mobbing and exclusion by way of preparing the performances and following up on them.» Companies also book him for talks or moderations on the currently hot topics of diversity and inclusion. In those cases, he does not appear as Bionicman but as Michel. Performances, moderation, creating comics as well as his foundation «Give Children a Hand» have become a full-time job, but not only that. «What I get to do is both a vocation and a matter close to my heart,» says Michel, who has many projects lined up: His next comic-book, for instance, is set to come out at the end of August, and this jack-of-all-trades is also working on an animated film of Bionicmania.

Maybe it's the positive energy that Michel exudes, maybe it's the superhero costume. But I can almost believe that Bionicman in his heroic outfit is about to take off from his 16th-floor apartment and fly up, up and away to carry his message of more humanity and acceptance out into the whole world – just as he does in the comic-book stories. ●

www.bionicmania.com

Confidence Shield

The latest project that Michel Fornasier has helped launch is the Confidence Shield. The product of the same name, a bracelet that can be worn by any child as an accessory, is available for purchase. It is meant to be a symbolic protective shield, a good-luck charm or a source of courage, a constant companion for children which reminds them that everyone is a superhero. Because in their everyday life, children often experience difficult or overwhelming situations, especially when they are subjected to mobbing, exclusion or violence by other children. This initiative is backed not only by Michel Fornasier and his foundation «Give Children a Hand» but also by Gina Rühl (Bionica in the comics) and macu4. This startup, which develops new concepts for orthopedic aids, has been producing the Confidence Shield since the beginning of 2024.

www.confidence-shield.com



A little insight into the latest comic-book from the series «Bionicmania», which will be published at the end of August. All the short stories are about fair play and tolerance.

Give us this day our **DAILY** Show

The international political situation is no laughing matter – or is it? Comedian Jon Stewart on The Daily Show turns the US presidential election and other political tragedies into barbed jokes.



Since February, 2024, Jon Stewart has been back on The Daily Show after a hiatus of nine years. On Mondays and until the election in November, he tackles Trump and Biden and much more.

Text: Katrin Ambühl

His show makes everyone look like an old fool, most of all Biden and Trump. Stewart derides the US elections with these dotards as «elective dysfunction», a nasty allusion to «erectile dysfunction», and on The Daily Show, he twists democracy into «democracy». He also has a ball at mocking his colleague Tucker Carlson. This US TV host did a so-called interview with Vladimir Putin at the beginning of February and emerged as such a feckless journalist that it made most western viewers' heads spin. Putin's worst distortions of history, such as regarding the causes and the course of World War II, had Carlson nodding approvingly like a puppet, not a journalist. A bonanza for Putin and Russia, where the interview is now shown as propaganda material in schools.

“
I won't censor myself to comfort your ignorance.

Stewart will keep hosting The Daily Show on Mondays until the elections. The 61-year-old actor and comedian had already hosted the show from 1999 to 2015. Then he switched to Apple TV+, where he created the show «The Problem with Jon Stewart» until it was canceled in fall of 2023. The reason: Stewart had been asked to please refrain from too much criticism of China. But if there's one thing Jon Stewart dislikes it's a gag order. «I won't censor myself to comfort your ignorance,» he had already stated in 2016. This has remained his attitude to this day. At the beginning of 2024, after a nine-year hiatus, he returned to the independent TV channel Comedy Central, where he now hosts his late show on Mondays. Sometimes with guests, sometimes without, but always with topics that polarize the public, whether it's the war in Gaza, the leaky border with Mexico or the debate on abortion. While many politicians take a clear political stance, positioning themselves either decisively on the left or on the right and always with their campaign on their mind, Stewart loves the in-between. And in this intermediate space, he whirls and skips around – with the eloquent punch of a boxer and the satirical grace of a dancer. ●

Ebenezer, my friend and driver

Nicolas Horni, in training at the Ringier School of Journalism, chose Ghana for his internship abroad. The 24-year-old joined Ringier's editorial team at Pulse Africa in Accra as a sports reporter and spent a lot of time on the road. This allowed him to get closer to the secrets of the city and its people.

Text and photos: Nicolas Horni

“
That's what life is
like here. I like my
big family.”



Accra is chaotic. Accra is exciting. Accra is different. I get that within minutes of my arrival at Kotoka Airport: Even though my hotel for the first few nights is said to be just a short walk away, it seems to be quite impossible for me to get there on foot. I quickly resort to Bolt – a minimally cheaper alternative to Uber – and order a cab to take me safely to my lodgings. Even now, after two months in this city, I am glad of this option for getting around.

Because any destination further away than the supermarket around the corner is generally too far to walk to – or too dangerous. Not so much due to crime but rather for traffic-safety reasons: Most of the areas in the city lack sidewalks. And if there are any, they often end without warning, and you find yourself in the middle of the street. That's why anyone visiting this country on the Gulf of Guinea or indeed any local who does not want to brave the chaotic traffic themselves is constrained to use some means of transportation. The locals usually take minivans called “trotros”, but I have never ventured into one of these, as I have yet to figure out when and where I can get one and where they go. I do go to work on foot now, as this roughly 25-minute walk avoids the major thoroughfares. For pretty much any other trip around town, I order a driver.

A conversation about Swiss soccer teams leads to friendship

One of these drivers is Ebenezer. I still don't know his surname. I met this rather short man with small ears, a high-pitched voice and a contagious laugh during my first week in Accra – he drove me back from the city's waterfront to my studio apartment. For close on two years, Ebenezer has been driving his clients through the streets of Ghana's capital in his little white Daewoo Matiz, which is showing its

age. On that half-hour drive, we talked about soccer, which is probably the best way to start a conversation with any man in Ghana. Everybody has an opinion about their country's embarrassingly bad national soccer team or the English Premier League. But Ebenezer knows more than that: He asked me how the team of Sion in the canton of Valais were doing, and we discussed the current slump of the Basel team. In Accra, most people's knowledge of Switzerland's Super League is limited – it tends to begin and end with the St. Gallen team's Ghanaian goalkeeper, Lawrence Ati-Zigi. I was surprised and delighted to find that Ebenezer is different. We stayed in touch, and on the subsequent weekend, the two of us drove to a soccer game outside Accra. Since then, I have spent many hours in Ebenezer's slightly rusty car, and thanks to him, I not only got to know Accra from a different perspective but also to find out more about Ebenezer himself.

Getting by on 28 dollars a day

Ebenezer was raised by his mother, a street vendor, and his father, a bank clerk, in simple conditions on the outskirts of Accra. His parents split up when he was young, his father found new partners and his mother now also has a new husband, which is why Ebenezer, at the age of 32, is now the eldest of 14 siblings. “That's what life is like here. I like my big family,” he explains with a mischievous grin.

When he graduated from high school at a boarding school outside Accra, he returned to the capital to study procurement and logistics at the University. After that, he did his alternative service at a bank and tried his hand as a hotel cleaner before investing his savings in a pig farm. Why? He can't really explain it himself. It must have sounded like a



Left page:

Nicolas and Ebenezer on a trip to a botanical garden north of Accra.

Right page:

At the first soccer match that Nicolas and Ebenezer attended together in Accra.

Nicolas Horni is 24 years old and has been with Ringier since 2020, first as an intern and later as an editor and programmer at Blick TV. In 2022, Nicolas, who studied business management, began to attend the Ringier School of Journalism, a course that took him from Blick Sport, Blue Sport and Blick's celebrity desk to his job as sports reporter for Ringier Pulse's editorial team in Accra. Sports, incidentally, also loom large in Nicolas' spare time. He spends a lot of time in soccer stadiums all around the world. Upon graduating from the Ringier School of Journalism in fall of 2024, Horni will be working for Blick Sport.

good deal. When this venture did not really get off the ground, he switched to driving taxis. 12,000 Ghanaian cedis, around 840 dollars, got him that Daewoo Matiz, and he has been cruising around Accra ever since. Ebenezer, who incidentally calls himself an independent entrepreneur, has to make around 28 dollars a day to get by. That money covers the gas, his food and the rent for his little room. He already showed me his abode on the way back from that first soccer match we attended together. His little realm borders on an interior courtyard where elderly, friendly acquaintances of his live and offer him a place to sleep for about 30 dollars a month – as long as he doesn't have a woman by his side.

«Here, a woman only costs time and money»

For Ebenezer is single. By choice, he says. His nearest and dearest are not sympathetic. His parents are pushing him to get married soon, not least because many of his younger siblings are married already. Ebenezer's views on relationships are clear: He disapproves of women who like to party and feels that a man needs to take care of his wife and surely not the other way round. «Here, a woman only costs time and money. First I want a great job, then we'll see,» is his current position. In conversations like this, I tend to change the subject. I'm too worried that our opinions are so different as to cause an unbridgeable rift in our friendship. I don't want to risk angering him. I have never discussed the rights of homosexuals and trans people in Ghana with him – for the same reason. So, for the time being, Ebenezer focuses on driving – which will not make him rich. He keeps looking around for other job opportunities, not least because the traffic jam, which is all but constant in certain parts of Accra, bugs him. And the partly lousy condition of the roads is hard on his car. In the logistics business, which he actually

studied for originally, there are hardly any job openings. Only recently, someone told him one could make a fast buck in Singapore, he says. And shortly afterwards, he tells me he has applied for a barkeeper's position on a cruise ship. What he really wants is something he doesn't even know himself. «The main thing is that I make good money.»

It is uncertain for how much longer Ebenezer will go on cruising around in his Daewoo Matiz. Either some new job will put an end to his career as a driver, or his jalopy will bite the dust. Ebenezer's dream of a different life and big money, however, will remain. He doesn't seem unhappy about where he is and where he stands in life. I don't want to take Ebenezer's dreams away. It may sound a bit patronizing, but the childlike naiveté with which he approaches the hopelessness of his existence pains me a bit. Maybe his idea of «a good life with lots of money» is a bit too simple? To Accra, Ebenezer remains one of the city's countless drivers for now. To me, he is a brief but intense and beautiful conduit into a life lived by so many people here in West Africa. Always searching for a rosier future – and yet with a somehow freer mindset than so many people in Europe. ●

Ringier Group

A selection of images



Beobachter, Switzerland. Photography: Joel Hunn
These mysterious mountain creatures are so-called analog astronauts on a simulated deep-space mission. This venture was organized by six students at different universities and took place in the Gotthard massif. The photo feature placed second in the «Swiss Stories» category at the Swiss Press Photo Awards in April 2024.

Bolero, Switzerland. Photography: Eva Baales,
Casting & Production: Susanne Märki
Art and fashion are a match made in heaven,
as photographs like this one prove. It is part
of a photo shoot in the March issue of Bolero,
the magazine supplement of the business
weeklies Bilanz and Handelszeitung.
The setting was provided by the Museum
Küppersmühle Dulsburg with its sacral
and sensuous spaces.



L'illustré, Switzerland.
Photography: Gabriel Monnet
No, this image was not generated by AI, it's actually real. Alain Roche is not only an adventurer from Valais, he is also a pianist and a poet. He has his grand piano and himself hoisted almost 30 feet above the ground by a crane to play, in an unusual position, a composition of his own, which he keeps varying throughout his six-month tour.





Libertatea, Romania. Photography: Vlad Chirea

Flowers as far as the eye can see. The commune of Adunații-Copăcenii, some 15 miles from Bucharest, boasts the highest concentration of dedicated flower greenhouses in all of Romania. This is where hundreds of thousands of tulips, hyacinths et al. are grown for the domestic wholesale trade and exports to the EU. At the end of February, the toughest time of the year, editor Andrei Crăițoiu explored the flower Mecca and came up roses.



Schweizer Illustrierte, Switzerland. Photography: Kurt Reichenbach

She is Switzerland's most successful female karate champion, winning the silver medal at the World Championships in Budapest and narrowly missing the gold. Schweizer Illustrierte visited Elena Quirici (30) at her home, which of course includes a gym.



Landliebe, Switzerland.

Photography: Flavia Leuenberger Ceppi

A story by Peter Hossli traces the lives of a family of emigrants who journeyed from Ticino to America at the end of the 19th century. Illustrated with pictures from an exhibition at the Swiss Open-Air Museum, Ballenberg.

Photographer Flavia Leuenberger Ceppi selected some of the historical images and shot them in front of a contemporary backdrop. This picture shows Sero Parini, one of the Vanini family's 18 children.



Blikk, Hungary. Photography: Zita Pozsonyi
János Lázár, Hungary's Minister of Construction and Investment, covers some 2.5 miles on his way through Budapest to the Parliamentary Building – on foot. He does this to keep fit, whenever he does not spend the night at home in Hódmezővásárhely but in Budapest. On one of his morning walks from his hotel to Kossuth Square, he gave Blikk Hungary an interview.



When you keep getting
fed false information
you end up believing it

Digitalization expert Anna Mossberg has been a member of Ringier's Board of Directors since 2023 and she is also on the Ringier AI Advisory Board. In the following conversation, she reveals what she wants to contribute to Ringier, where her affinity for technology comes from and how her background has influenced her.

Interview: Barbara Halter | Portrait photo: Karin Heer

Anna Mossberg, you have been a member of the board at Ringier for just over a year.

What did you do in your first year?

When you take on a new job, the smart thing to do first is to keep your eyes and ears open in order to learn as much as possible about the people and the company. And then, as a member of the board, I focus on operating successfully in all my mandates and to do so on the basis of good technology.

You were appointed to the Board in order to expand its digital and technological expertise.

What other experience do you bring?

I have managed companies with many employees and am currently active in very different areas as a member of the board – from communications and the automotive industry to banking. I am very inquisitive, and that is a quality you need nowadays when the world is constantly changing.

How did you get into the technology industry?

In my family, everyone likes mathematics, so I became an engineer (laughs). After my studies, I started out at the telecommunications company Telia in Stockholm. Back then, we were bringing open internet access to countries like the Czech Republic, which was still quite isolated at the time. For the people there, it was a real revolution. When I first realized that this new technology would change the world, I got butterflies in my stomach. And this feeling intensified when I later joined Google in Sweden and began to work with Artificial Intelligence. That was seven or eight years ago – what now feels like a century in terms of technology.

Artificial Intelligence is currently the subject of so much debate that one sometimes tires of hearing about it. How do you feel about this?

There is a hype, I agree. And I am also sensing a certain fatigue regarding this topic. But we are not talking about things to come. The technology is already here and being deployed everywhere. For example, when you superimpose a filter over an image or google the height of the Eiffel Tower. Here in Sweden, the media tend to focus on the risks of AI. Of course, that is a necessary debate, but I miss the positive reporting on the many great possibilities of Artificial Intelligence.

Recently, there was a report that Swedish schools, after having been completely digitalized, have begun to buy schoolbooks again for early readers. What are the limits of digitalization?

What is the right path?

Any process of transformation requires sensitivity. How hard can you push, when should you take a step back? Another key question is: Why are you doing something? What is the goal of digitalization? Artificial Intelligence is meant to serve people. For example, with an app or medication that is individually tailored to one person.

Many people, however, are scared by this topic.

What do you tell them?

I often give talks at universities. One of the most common questions is: «Will Artificial Intelligence take away my job?» I always answer: «No, AI won't take away your job. But if you don't work with it yourself, someone who is using AI will take away your job.» The same goes for companies. We all need to familiarize ourselves with AI and learn to use it wisely.

Where do you see the biggest risks?

Currently, in fake videos and fake news and the fact that people believe them. The problem is: If the human brain keeps getting fed the same video, it automatically perceives the information it contains as true. Ringier plays an important part in labeling products created with AI and in journalistic fact-checking. We are responsible for making sure the data-trained models are provided with correct information. It's the same as with a child: If you keep feeding them with false information, they end up believing it.

You were born in a Swedish village north of the Arctic Circle, where the sun hardly shines in winter. How did this place influence you?

My mother would always say: «Anna, the sunshine needs to come from within.» That is my attitude to life. Growing up in this harsh environment, you quickly learn that you can't survive on your own. You need to get on with people who may be quite different from yourself. That openness is something I'm grateful for. And of course, I used to eat a lot of reindeer meat, which is my favorite. Which makes for a funny topic of conversation at any business dinner around the world. ●

Anna Mossberg, born in 1972, completed her engineering and business studies and began her career at the Swedish telecommunications company Telia in 1996. She has worked for Deutsche Telekom, was a member of the executive team at Google Sweden and managing director at Silo AI, the largest Scandinavian AI lab. Mossberg currently serves as member of the board at Volvo Cars, Swedbank, Swisscom and the internationally operative Norwegian industrial investment company Orkla. She has two daughters, who are 20 and 22 years old, and lives in Stockholm with her family.

At 24, Selena Ribić was given a shattering diagnosis: ovarian cancer. This twist of fate also launched her career as a journalist with Ringier Serbia. Now 28 years old, she talks to DOMO about the strength she needed to fight her cancer and about the fortitude she gained from that struggle.

Text: Katrin Ambühl



As if a meteorite had struck my life

Selena Ribić (28) studied political science in Belgrade with a focus on journalism and communication. She began her professional career working in PR and event organization in the cultural sector. Since 2022, Ribić has been working for Ringier Serbia as a journalist for the online portal Žena.rs and for the weekly magazine Blic Žena. The photo shows the journalist in late 2023 at her Ringier office following her illness.

Selena, how are you now, and do you even want to talk about your ordeal anymore?

I am fine, thanks! And yes, I do still want to talk about it, because I think it's important to raise public awareness about this rare form of cancer.

Your diagnosis coincided with the lockdown. How did you experience that period?

I had various symptoms that made me realize something was wrong. Then came the lockdown, and it took a whole month before I got an appointment for an examination. While waiting for that doctor's appointment, I was filled with anxiety and uncertainty. The diagnosis, a fast-growing malignant tumor in my ovaries, was as if a meteorite had struck my life at full blast. But it also brought clarity, and from then on, I knew what I was up against.

In a moment of shock, one tends to retreat from life...
Retreat was my first reflex, too, and for the first six, seven months, I did withdraw completely into my family.

When did you feel it was time to go public about it?
After the surgery, I began chemotherapy. My nurse at the time said: «Nobody needs to know.» She was referring to

my bald head and the associated feelings of shame. That was like a wake-up call for me: I didn't want to feel shame and hide away, I wanted my story to be seen!

What were your first steps in going public?

I began by sharing my experience on social media and built my own website. That way, I was able to write completely freely, and that did me a lot of good.

You followed up with articles and TV appearances in various Serbian media, from Blic TV to Telegraf. Did you never regret getting that much exposure?

Sure, there were moments of doubt. The worst thing for me was that it destroyed certain friendships. Some of my friends and acquaintances accused me of doing this only for the sake of publicity.

Were you in touch with other cancer victims?

Very soon, yes, especially by way of the organization Progovori, a forum for victims of cervical and ovarian cancer. I have since begun to work for this association as an active member, doing interviews and publishing articles on the subject.

This picture was taken after her cancer treatment, on New Year's Day 2021. When she fell ill in the year 2020, Selena Ribić decided to speak publicly about her illness and her experiences and to show herself as well.



How did your illness affect your own self-perception as a woman?

The worst thing for me was that I would remain childless. On top of that, the loss of my hair and the big scar chipped away at the image of the perfect female body. In spring of 2021, I was asked by an art school whether I would like to model for them. After some initial hesitation, I did, posing in front of the class for hours and feeling how the art students were looking at me: dispassionately, without judging, simply observing what was there. That had an impact on me, and I learned to do exactly the same when looking at myself.

Do you divide your life into before and after?

Oh, yes, those are two entirely different lives. The illness was both a curse and a blessing. Today, I no longer take my life for granted. The awareness of my mortality has brought a new intensity to my life. A blessing, because it gave me a second chance and led me to discover my passion for journalism.

What sort of support did you get from your employer, Ringier Serbia?

They always had my back, and right from the start, they gave me a platform on which I could write about my illness. In the meantime, my topics have broadened to include other taboo issues such as menopause or childlessness. We are a really cool power team at Blic Žena, standing up for women's issues, women's rights and women's topics.

Do you have dreams and plans for the future?

Yes! The illness has made me more mature, and I want to keep on developing. Writing is my greatest passion. I'm dreaming about publishing a book. I'm already in preliminary talks about it. ●

A yearned-for reality

War is war – but Kate is Kate. That might be the way to describe journalistic categorization in mid-March of this year. The greatest amount of media attention was not devoted to the dead, the bombs or the rockets in either Gaza or Ukraine. The media's main focus was a Mothering Sunday photo of Kate Middleton and her kids – unfortunately doctored rather amateurishly on her own. There was a bit too much blurring, a few odd snippets of hair, a missing bit of cardigan or a finger that had been tampered with – it was a photograph subjected to editing like thousands of others we get to see on Instagram every day. However, the source is what makes the difference here. What any influencer could easily get away with, balloons into a journalistic super scandal when it's the British prince royal's spouse. «Fake Kate», «Kate Gate» or «Cover-up Scandal» were the tabloids' headlines, and the US TV news channel CNN announced that it would review other photos provided by Kensington Palace for signs of editing.

The fact that the publication of the Princess of Wales's cancer diagnosis abruptly ended the discussion, with some commentators mumbling apologies, shows very clearly: Journalistic hyperventilation scarcely serves as a

means of building trust with readers. And to some extent, journalists were even hypocritical in their handling of the story. As in the case of the German columnist who dubbed the picture the «photo of lies» and blamed the Princess of Wales for «making the photo happier than it is. How sad is that?»

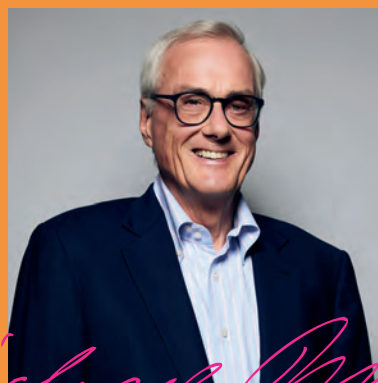
Unfortunately, this comment is preceded by an oversize photo of the columnist looking up at us over his shoulder, his chin leaning on his hand, with a trustworthy look in his eyes. The picture is a completely manipulated self-representation showing how the man in the photograph would like to be perceived. The reality, however, can look quite different. That, incidentally, goes for most of the pictures of us that we choose ourselves. It shows a reality we yearn for and not the reality the bathroom mirror faces us with every morning.

Not to mention the fact that there is a long tradition of the Royals having their portraits edited. That, at least, is what an article by the British arts reporter Richard Whiddington on Artnet points out. «Manipulating portraits is what royal families have always done. The only difference is that in the past they hired a professional.» Hans Holbein the Younger, for instance,

painted Henry VIII significantly younger and fitter than he was, also elongating his legs. The reality, however, showed a monarch whose physical appearance had been greatly diminished by a jousting accident. According to Artnet, Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France in the late 18th century, even had an official portraitist, a woman. In 1787, she painted a picture of the monarch together with her children as a solemn-faced, motherly figure, very modest in jewelry – even though Marie-Antoinette had just been involved in an affair regarding a very expensive necklace.

Painterly self-aggrandization was also par for the course with Napoleon. In a huge painting depicting his consecration and the coronation of Empress Josephine, Napoleon looked larger than he really was. And the Pope, who in the preparatory drawing had his hands on his knees, offers Napoleon his blessing in the finished painting – only after Napoleon's behest to the painter, however.

And even the Ringier family history is not devoid of edited images. In his wedding photograph from 1833, Johann Rudolf Ringier, the founder of the printing shop, had his brother stand in for him. ●



Michael Ringier

Michael Ringier, Chairman of the Board of Directors Ringier



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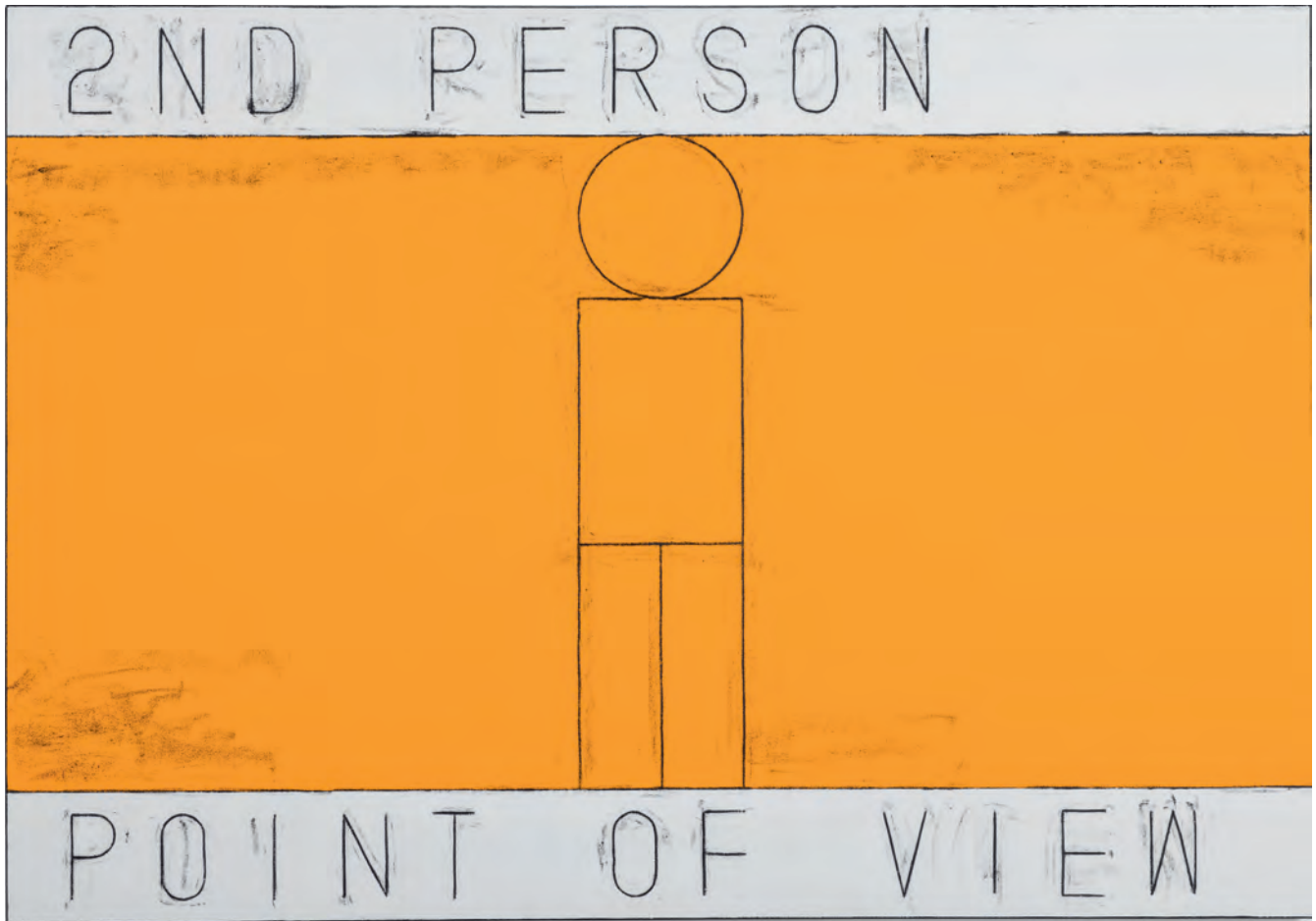
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Matt Mullican, Untitled (2nd Person), 2017, Courtesy of Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich. Photo: Paul Seewer

“Green represents material, blue stands for the everyday world, red for the subjective and yellow for ideas. When you begin to deal with Matt Mullican, you find yourself plunged into a complex system of color codes, pictograms and symbols. All of these elements aim to break the world down into facets, to analyze it and to explain it. Yellow. An idea. At its center, a stick-figure. The idea of a person. Our idea of a person is a limited collection of impressions: their exterior, their scent, their actions, the sound of a voice, their position, past memories. Coupled with our own expectations of this counterpart, a two-dimensional but simplified image emerges – our idea of that person. I read «2nd Person Point of View» – the perspective of a second person, the Other. Suddenly, the picture flips – we are no longer the ones watching a person but looking at ourselves through the eyes of our counterpart. We get an inkling of our external perception, the idea of us. What effect does our exterior have, our scent? How are we acting? Is my voice being heard? What memories do we share? Is my position perceived correctly? Or am I, in the end, nothing more than a stick-figure in the eyes of this counterpart?”

Valerie Stoll works for Blick as Senior Project Manager Format Development / Art Director. In her private life, she engages intensely with digital art, buying her first work of art in 2022.