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Art brings us together

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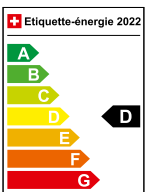
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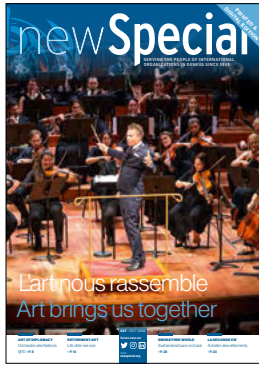
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GARRY ASLANYAN
Editor-in-chief /
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Art brings us together

In the age of multiple global crises, communities all over the world are in need of something to bring us together. Art could help us identify with one another and begin to truly understand each other as a global community. We bring you an issue which has great stories of what art is, and what it can do, and how we, as United Nations employees, have set a great example of our contribution to that unifying role of the art.

The summer seems to be over, but we can still take advantage of the great outdoors or cultural events around us in order to recharge. After all, the global crises can only be solved with our healthy and productive work. Our contributors share some great examples of nearby travel or art events you can enjoy. Geneva is in this respect a unique city by its architectural and artistic richness as well as its landscapes and environment. Or go on a virtual tour through their stories. And we have a lot more for you.

Enjoy reading this issue! ■

L'art nous rassemble

À l'ère des crises mondiales multiples, les communautés du monde entier ont besoin d'un lien pour se rassembler. L'art est ce vecteur qui pourrait favoriser cette liaison et créer des interactions destinées à nous comprendre en tant qu'une communauté mondiale. Nous vous présentons un numéro qui contient de belles histoires sur l'art, ce qu'il peut réaliser, et de quelle manière nous, en tant qu'employés des Nations Unies nous pouvons contribuer, à notre manière à ce rôle unificateur de l'art.

L'été semble terminé, mais nous pouvons encore profiter des grands espaces ou des événements culturels qui nous entourent pour éveiller notre fibre artistique. En effet, les crises mondiales ne peuvent être seulement résolues avec notre travail sain et productif. Nos contributeurs partagent d'excellents exemples des voyages ou d'événements artistiques proches dont vous pouvez profiter. Genève est à cet égard, par sa richesse architecturale, artistique, ses paysages et son environnement, une ville unique au monde. Vous ne pouvez ou ne souhaitez pas sortir? Accomplissez alors une visite virtuelle à en parcourant nos colonnes. Et, comme toujours, laissez vous guider en découvrant nos articles qui vous donneront certainement des idées.

Bonne lecture de ce numéro! ■

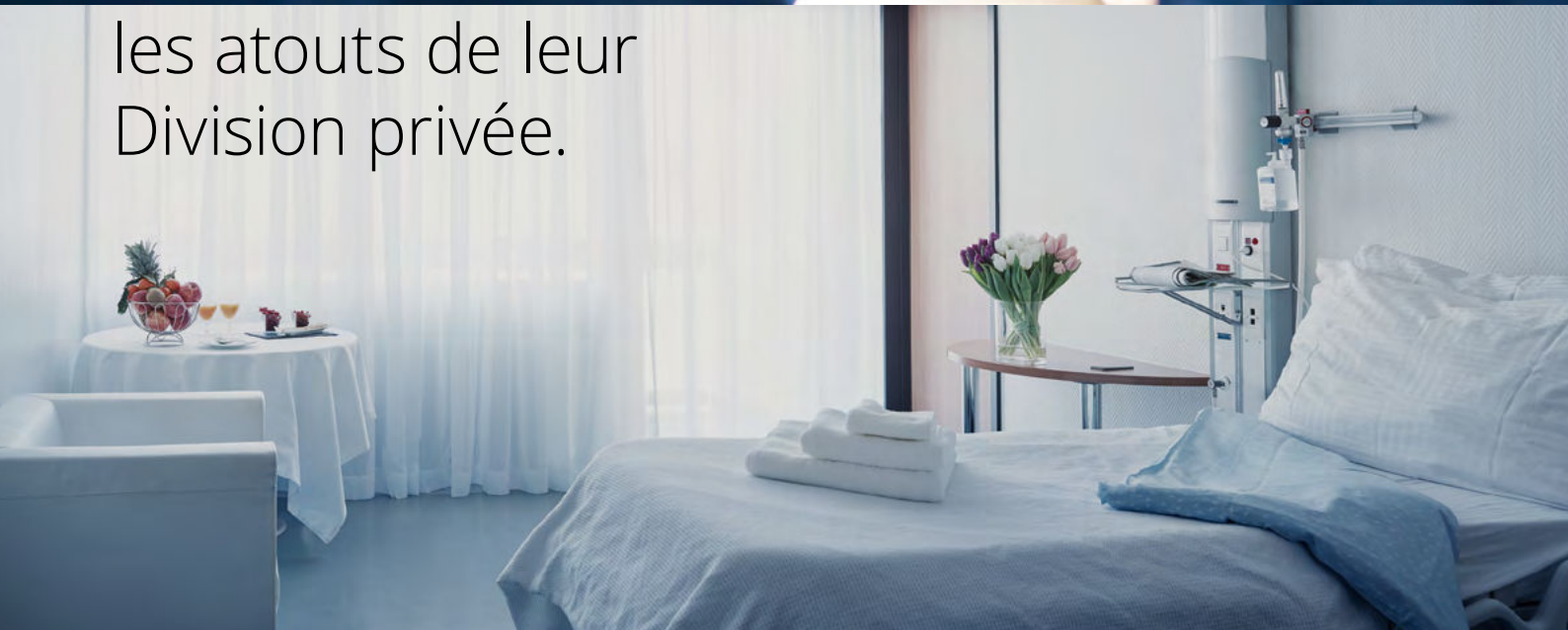
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What is art?

Entire books have been written about this question by learned philosophers and researchers, and I do not seek to summarize those, nor even offer any definitive answers, rather a few thoughts.

MY NAME IS CHARLES SAATCHI AND I AM AN ARTOHOLIC

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ART, ADS, LIFE, GOD AND OTHER MYSTERIES – AND WEREN'T AFRAID TO ASK...

PHAIDON

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

The reality is that art is many things, to many different people, which is all part of creating meaning, its mystery, but also some fun.

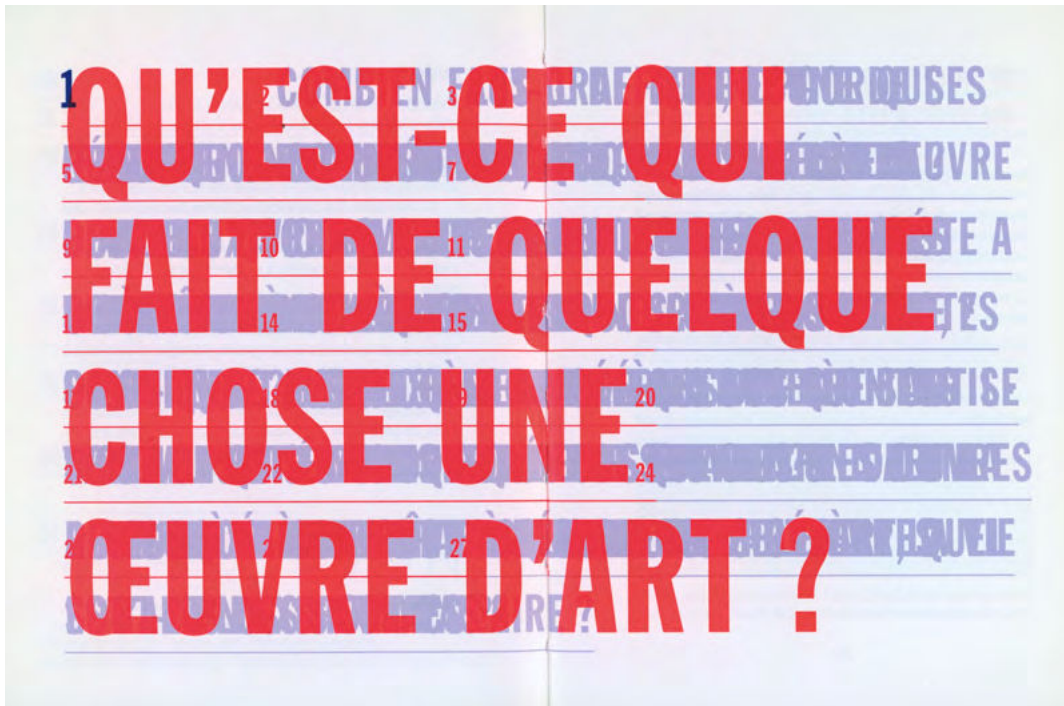
The earliest examples of art include indigenous rock carvings or engraved stones and shells, which can be notoriously difficult to date (relying on estimations of erosion rates). The oldest engravings in the world are thought to be those in Blombos cave in South Africa, the cradle of Homo sapiens, around 100,000 years old (dated by aging the stalactites and the geological layers in which these engravings were found).

Cave paintings are somewhat more recent, with the paintings from El Castillo Cave in Spain dating to around 40,800 years old. The age of the famous Lascaux cave paintings is also disputed, but considerably more recent – the animals depicted are consistent with the fauna of the Upper Paleolithic era in the area at the time, some 17,000 years ago. These famous cave paintings reflect our ancestors' imagination and curiosity in the world around them, maybe a celebration of a successful hunt and a prayer or plea for the future food, vital to their survival of the tribe. The Venus figurines of Europe

date to around 20,000 years ago, and clearly venerate fertility.

Art fulfills many different purposes depending on its context and civilization. The pyramids and vast temple statues of Egypt are still impressive, celebrating the divine status of pharaohs, but also an early form of state propaganda, transmitting power and might and imposing themselves on the landscape for miles around. The funerary tomb art of the Ancient Egyptians was never intended to be seen again, but offered tribute, safe passage, comfort and memories to the dead royalty and aristocrats in the afterlife. The exquisite relics buried with the relatively minor Pharaoh Tutankhamun can only leave us wondering about the lost treasures of great Pharaohs such as Ramesses II or Khufu.

Greek (and subsequently Roman) art venerated beauty and aesthetics with their accurate and finely proportioned paintings, engravings and sculptures, creating many of our notions even today of what an 'ideal' body looks like. Such art also sought to be educational and inspiring for new generations carrying forward Greek glory and imperial history. The Romans exploited the power of impressive public buildings to



The book "L'art, c'est quoi?" edited by the Fondation Beyeler in Basel offers interesting thoughts on this theme.

the full, as statements of imperial power and symbolism.

The mass spread of organized religion saw religious art being used for unity, prayer, conversion and education. However, while Christianity moved from early symbolism (the fish and cross) to iconography and depictions of God, Judaism and Islam have generally not permitted iconography. Islam in particular developed calligraphy and inspired and influenced impressive monuments and buildings, including many world-famous mosques and the Taj Mahal.

Some societies have inspired their own art movements (e.g. Renaissance Italy or Impressionism from France), as well as some political philosophies (e.g. Soviet statues celebrating the might of humble workers). Historically, entire 'schools of art' saw the development of different styles and movements, often with a number of artists contributing to the popularity of any one style or school. More recently, however, individualism and creativity saw artists reject conformity and seek to be original and unique. Indeed,

if some forms of art sought to create unity, some forms of propaganda and revolutionary art sought to question prevailing beliefs and stir controversy, from humble political cartoons to dead cows.

Accompanying the expansion in education, the growing popularity of art was associated with knowledge and self-improvement. The Musée du Louvre first opened the former French royal collection to the public in 1793 as a result of the French Revolution, popularizing the principle of art for public access and admiration in the modern era. Modern ideas of art as part of national heritage and history are evident in the debates over the Elgin Marbles or the howls that accompany auctions of important paintings abroad.

More recent 'modern art' has also sought to inspire, entertain, celebrate and sometimes shock or provoke or raise questions. The recognition that (some, but not all) graffiti can be art is perhaps emblematic of modern art. Emojis and some Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are now recognized as art forms – they can

be communication in its simplest form, although even here, there is room for error (I recently learned the difference in meaning between the smiley face with hearts all over it, as opposed to the smiley face blowing the heart).

Most art is an expression of creativity involving an artist, an era, a background and (sometimes) an audience, although it can clearly be used for many different reasons and purposes. Art as nowadays accepted sometimes seems to encompass everything and anything, which perhaps comes back to the idea that art means many different things to many different people. And that perhaps is the true beauty of any art – it can mean different things to us all, and yet be unique to each of us. Art is what we choose to make it. ■



THE NEW X7



Emil Frey SA

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L'art de la diplomatie

Le dixième anniversaire de l'Orchestre des Nations fait vibrer de plaisir le Victoria Hall.

ZAHİ HADDAD, ÉCRIVAIN

L'Orchestre des Nations (ODN) l'a annoncé et il l'a fait! Le 2 septembre 2022 au Victoria Hall de Genève, sa soixantaine de musiciens et ses deux maestri, Antoine Marguier, son fondateur, et Roberto Benzi, invité d'honneur, ont communiqué avec leur public à l'occasion de leur dixième anniversaire. L'ODN aime les grandes occasions, les grandes rencontres et il a créé l'un de ces moments magiques qui restent dans l'histoire. À marquer d'une pierre blanche. Mais avant la fantastique apothéose qui mit fin à ce concert exceptionnel, sur le coup des 22h30, il y eut une succession de petits événements hors du temps.

Après les discours d'usage de Pauline Chappuis, membre du conseil de fondation de l'ODN, puis du maire de Genève, hôte de la soirée, d'un représentant de l'Office des Nations unies à Genève, et de la présidente des Amis de l'Orchestre, Roberto Benzi prit possession du podium. Lui et son

incroyable expérience débutée à l'âge de onze ans lorsqu'il dirigea son premier orchestre. Du bout de sa baguette, il a emmené ses musiciens à la conquête de la Pastorale de Ludwig van Beethoven. Avec une légèreté déconcertante et une gestuelle épurée, il a reconnecté l'audience à la nature. Sans donner l'air d'y toucher, tellement il connaît et maîtrise cette sixième symphonie. À croire qu'il profitait de l'instant, les yeux fermés, planant sous le plafond d'or du Victoria Hall, mythique havre de culture. Le sage de quatre-vingt-quatre ans en a vu d'autres. À croisé la route et les regards émerveillés de nombreux autres aficionados en quête de sensations fortes.

Vivent les amateurs!

Concentrés sur leurs instruments, les virtuoses-amateurs n'ont, quant à eux, rien lâché. Ils ont partagé leur âme sur chaque note pour ne pas les laisser se distordre, se perdre dans l'infini, laissant filtrer, à

la fin de chaque mouvement, un sourire de soulagement et de satisfaction. «Amateurs! Ils aiment la musique et c'est réciproque!», selon l'expression favorite d'Antoine Marguier que lui avait soufflée Armin Jordan, un autre de ses mentors. «Ils ont tous et toutes poursuivi des études instrumentales poussées avant de s'orienter vers des horizons professionnels différents. Ainsi, ils représentent toutes les branches de l'activité humaine: physique, sciences, économie, journalisme, santé, droit, enseignement, restauration. C'est à pleurer de voir leur joie à la fin d'un concert, parce qu'ils réussissent à déclencher de fortes émotions et beaucoup d'énergie en se donnant tous à 100%!»

Lorsque Roberto Benzi clôt la balade bucolique, l'audience explose une première fois. Aux anges. Sous le charme. Sous l'effet Benzi, dont elle reconnaît l'immense talent, l'immense carrière qui l'a vu dirigé les

orchestres les plus renommés de la planète. Sous les applaudissements et la clameur, le chef tire sa révérence. Jovial dans sa queue de pie rappelant les galas d'un autre temps. Faisant revivre une certaine nostalgie.

Sans oublier Bugs Bunny

Mais, déjà, Antoine Marguier apparaît dans son costume sombre. La joie en bandoulière. La tension qui crispait son visage dans les coulisses se libère. Disparaît. Le chef retrouve son élément. Ses amis. Cette formation si chère à son cœur qu'il a mis deux ans à constituer «avant de pouvoir jouer la première note» et de l'emmener un peu partout dans le monde, vantant les mérites du dialogue et de la paix. À l'instar de ce concert presque irréel donné en 2016 dans la zone démilitarisée entre les Corée du Nord et du Sud. Une splendide réussite de la «diplomatie culturelle». Presque une folie.

Lancé vers la scène, le corps d'Antoine Marguier s'offre à la musique. Dicte les premières mesures pour voler de surprises en surprises. Avec les bandes originales de plusieurs chefs-d'œuvre du cinéma. «La Belle et la bête», «Légendes d'automne», «Pirates des Caraïbes», «Chevaliers de Sangreal», autant de partitions qui ravissent les quelque 800 spectateurs présents, satisfont toutes les générations, des têtes grisonnantes aux jeunes enfants épatés de se retrouver à pareille fête. D'ailleurs, le spectacle n'est pas terminé puisque l'ODN a également décidé de rendre un hommage frénétique au monde du dessin animé, à Bugs Bunny et à ses compères, tous stars du septième art. Antoine Marguier n'y tient plus, il danse sur son podium, saute, virevolte. Se projette vers ses musiciens. Une kyrielle de bonheurs qu'il partage, heureux de ce qu'il a accompli en plus de dix ans et des émotions qu'il procure.

Happy birthday, Mr ODN

Jusqu'à l'inattendu. Le public en redemande. À l'unisson, il tape des pieds, applaudit, réclame. Fait trembler le sol de la vénérable institution. L'ODN se lance alors dans un savoureux «Happy birthday». Suspendue à la baguette d'Antoine Marguier, l'assemblée relève le défi et chante les célèbres paroles festives. Plus de doutes, c'est vraiment dans la poche. L'ODN a rempli sa mission. Encore une fois, il a parfaitement réussi à «démocratiser la musique, à dépoussiérer les standards qui voudraient parfois encore réserver le classique à une élite, explique Antoine Marguier. Après tout, les grands compositeurs étaient des saltimbanques». En guise de clôture de cette folle soirée, Antoine Marguier, clarinettiste de formation, ajoute la bande originale de «Missions» qu'il interprète au saxo soprano, histoire de prolonger encore un peu la communion avec son auditoire.

Lorsque le dernier projecteur s'endort, la salle, ravie, se vide calmement. Silencieusement. Presque religieusement. Elle sait que les amateurs de l'ODN l'enchantent à nouveau prochainement, avec des solistes d'envergure comme Maxim Vengerov, Gautier Capuçon ou Khatia Buniatishvili qui viennent régulièrement jouer à Genève. Avec celui que l'on appelle désormais «le plus petit des grands orchestres». ■

Encore 10 ans!

Toujours dans le cadre de son 10^e anniversaire, l'ODN donnera un concert avec le guitariste Miloš Karadaglić, le 7 février 2023, dès 20h, au Victoria Hall. Au programme, le concerto d'Aranjuez.

Encore plus d'ODN

Pour jouer avec l'ODN, le suivre ou devenir membre de l'Association Les Amis de l'Orchestre: www.orchestredesnations.com, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn. Et pour le soutenir IBAN: CH27 8020 6000 0037 8158 1



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The art of retirement

Interview with Evelyn Kortum, former President of WHO HQ Staff Association and WHO staff member on the life after international civil service



© Evelyn Kortum

GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO

Evelyn, you left the WHO in August 2021 and had promised to let us know what evolution (as opposed to early ‘retirement’ – Serena Williams) looks like. Some colleagues are uneasy about the transition from international civil service. What are your early learnings from the process, and what advice do you have so far?

Any change is difficult. From my 30 years of human study at WHO, I understand that we are all different and some might be more anxious when facing change than others. For me, it is exciting, and I always saw it as an adventure.

It is essential that you meet with the services you will need in the future. You need to be in touch with all the people you meet during the presentations organized for future retirees. I had my pension calculated and decided that I can live well on mine, even though a year longer would have brought me more. It was just time for me to move on, and so I set my priorities, which was not money in this case, but freedom. Freedom to do what I wanted to do and when I wanted. That was worth a lot to me.

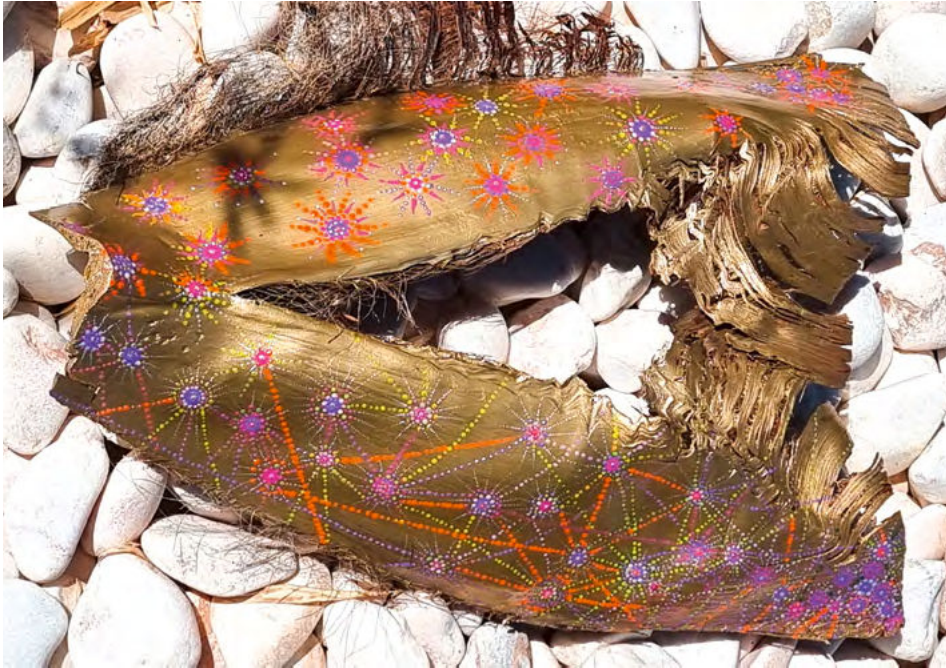
Plans for the future are important. I had planned a move from my home in Geneva to the South of Europe. Together with my husband I now live in Tavira, Portugal and commute to our apartment in Estepona, Andalusia, Spain when we want to. Soon, our daughter will move close to our home in Tavira, and we will

get to see our six-month-old granddaughter grow up. How wonderful and exciting!

Please also don't be scared that you will be lonely. If you are open to meeting people, you will. We have met the most wonderful people in both places and, although we miss our friends in Geneva, we are very happy with our new circle of friends. There are so many people in this world who are interesting. Can you imagine, in Tavira, I even met a lady from Zimbabwe, who was present when Dr. Tedros named Mugabe ambassador to WHO? I could learn from her what the atmosphere was like, and she learnt from me what it was like in Geneva. She lost her farm and her home, and ended up in Tavira. The world is really a small place. So do not be scared and throw yourself out there, organized, with a plan, but with joy and a feeling of excitement.

What were your last responsibilities before you left WHO?

For the last two and a half years, I was seconded to the Federation of International Civil Servants (FICSA) as their General-Secretary. I had wonderful colleagues and a busy time. I would say I had enough time to modernize the organization and build up efficient communication with its members. I have good memories, and this is another thing you should have before you leave WHO. Find something positive to remind you of your time there. There is no use in spoiling your precious years with feelings of anger due to whatever you might have felt while working. We can all create our own happiness, and this is what I recommend.



© Evelyn Kartum

Do you continue to be active in your area of expertise in Occupational Health?

Actually, yes. When at WHO, with my international collaborators, I created the Healthy Workplace Model. An award was created thereafter, and I follow in the large footsteps of Dame Carol Black, and have taken over her tasks as European Judge for the awards. That is a lot of voluntary work, but it is also my area of passion.

I also work as a visiting scholar at the University of Nottingham, attend conferences, chair sessions and present on my topic. In addition, I am frequently asked to present keynotes or opening speeches for international conferences. It is a lot of work, but I do enjoy it.

How did you organize your life after leaving WHO?

The first thing you want to be is 'unorganized'. Stay up late, sleep in, eat whenever you are hungry. I call it de-structuring the structure that had dominated me for over 30 years. Not easy,

and quite strange at first, but then you slowly really start reorganizing your life according to what you want and think you need to do. For me, it was sports, yoga, swimming, biking, walking along the beaches... It was also getting used to seeing your spouse all the time, although Covid-19 already gave us a taste of that, and so the transition was smooth.

Basically, I now again organize each day with all the things I want to do, including those I never had time to do. No day is long enough for me.

You have been involved to a very large extent in staff representation while you were working at WHO. Do you miss it?

I was already wondering if this work had entered my DNA. I keep taking on responsibilities as president of our owners' community in Estepona and for environmental issues in Tavira. Given all the work this entails, it must be some mental masochism, but I am always

happy when I see things moving into the right direction, and when my persistence bears fruit.

Do you have other major projects apart from your academic and scientific involvements?

Indeed, I do. I have always been a fan of art, including aboriginal art. I like shapes and natural canvasses. Therefore, part of my time goes into searching nature for palm bark, eucalyptus bark, bamboo sticks, etc. The other part of time goes into creating the art. It is like meditation for me, and I don't see the time pass, which means I must enjoy it. As mentioned above, I met really nice people in the neighbourhood and beyond. So I met my models, who have become good friends, and I met Monika, who used to be a star photographer in Miami. All in all, a good mixture, which led to my first project entitled 'Contemporary Amazons and Art'. I also created an 'About the Artist'.

I did not want to give my name, which mostly relates to occupational health issues, so I just created another one which is e.wasserhase. The idea comes from my Chinese Zodiac sign, which is 'water rabbit', but as I spend a lot of time in water, I felt it was very suitable. I now have my own brand, logo, two publications, and I even joined Facebook and Instagram as e.wasserhase. As you can see, I can use both sides of my brain, the creative and the analytical, because now I have enough time to do so. Everything worked out well for me. If you keep a positive mindset, life will do the same for you.

Thank you Evelyn, we wish you continued success in all of your future endeavours. ■

The art book can be found here: https://issuu.com/e.wasserhase/docs/art_and_amazons_art_book

The artist profile is here: https://issuu.com/e.wasserhase/docs/artist_catalogue_web


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Associations

Les temps sont durs, faites-vous du bien et « méningez-vous » !

Le milieu associatif a, de tout temps, été confronté à des difficultés inhérentes à sa particularité de fonctionnement.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Pour l'équipe qui gère, il faut tout d'abord se rendre disponible puis participer activement à la création puis à l'entretien d'une dynamique visant à entraîner à la fois les membres du bureau et les adhérents. Cette activité génère certes une contrainte pour ceux qui assument la direction et la logistique, mais elle recouvre aussi de nombreux avantages. Entre la connaissance de nouvelles personnes et le renforcement du lien social, le renforcement et la mise à jour des connaissances acquises, l'acquisition de savoir-faire, le développement de contacts, tout contribue à une ouverture d'esprit et à au maintien d'une acuité intellectuelle visant à s'adapter et à trouver les bonnes solutions et les bons référents.

Et puis, quel plaisir de travailler en groupe pour résoudre un problème qui paraissait insoluble au début et dont l'horizon peut s'éclaircir grâce à l'aide et les connaissances communes apportées par l'équipe.

C'est bien connu, lorsqu'on parle d'associations, les phrases qui sont le plus évoquées sont: «ce sont toujours les mêmes qui travaillent» et «la critique est facile, mais l'art est difficile». Il est vrai que dans toutes les associations, certaines personnes qui les rejoignent, enthousiastes au départ, trouvent

parfois, au fil du temps, toutes les excuses pour ne pas répondre présentes lorsque le besoin s'en fait sentir et la charge de travail qui aurait dû être répartie se concentre au contraire toujours sur les mêmes. Il est également constaté que d'autres personnes (ou les mêmes) donnent parfois des leçons d'efficacité sans pourtant participer ni prendre le temps de connaître l'intégralité des paramètres propres à la résolution du problème.

Pour les adhérents, cette possibilité d'appartenir à une communauté est également particulièrement importante, notamment pour les personnes qui cessent leur activité suite par exemple à la retraite. Une sensation d'isolement peut très vite se mettre en place. Les repères et réflexes qui ont été appliqués tout au long d'une vie professionnelle ne sont plus utilisés. La perte du lien social entre collègues peut également générer des conséquences au niveau du moral de la personne qui se retrouve isolée.

En effet, il est unanimement reconnu que nos fonctions cognitives qui nous permettent d'interagir avec autrui restent en effet essentielles au maintien de notre santé physique, intellectuelle et morale. Ces fonctions restent activées si nous accomplissons une

activité qu'elle soit associative, ludique, artistique ou sportive.

Dans ce cadre, la technologie peut faciliter les interactions et elle a été abondamment utilisée pendant ces pandémies. Pourtant, les leçons de ces épisodes récents démontrent que rien ne remplace l'efficacité des échanges «traditionnels» d'une rencontre directe, conviviale, d'une réunion, d'un repas ou d'un café partagé.

Les dernières années que nous avons connues ont été particulièrement éprouvantes. Nous pouvons légitimement nous demander ce qui nous attend dans le futur. Les pandémies et les nouvelles alarmantes se succèdent. La crise climatique, avec toutes ses conséquences, est désormais réellement perçue par tous. La vie en communauté impose des actions solidaires à initier et à poursuivre dans la durée. Dans ce cadre, les associations ont, plus que jamais, leur rôle à jouer.

Certaines associations disparaissent, d'autres, par manque de volontaires, de dynamique ou pour s'adapter à la demande, sont contraintes de fusionner pour renforcer leur dispositif et leur efficacité. L'essentiel est qu'elles puissent offrir une action identique et répondre aux demandes de leurs membres.

L'AAFI-AFICS a été créée en 1955 à Genève avec pour but statutaire: « d'étudier, proposer et prendre toutes mesures tendant à promouvoir et sauvegarder les droits et les intérêts des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux et de leurs survivants. »



L'AAFI-AFICS

L'Association est une organisation sans but lucratif, régie par les articles 60 et suivants du Code civil suisse et dont les buts sont d'étudier, proposer et prendre toutes mesures tendant à promouvoir et sauvegarder les droits et les intérêts des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux et de leurs survivants. Son siège est à Genève.

Afin d'atteindre ces buts, les fonctions de l'Association comprennent un appui à l'œuvre des organisations du système des Nations Unies, la représentation de ses Membres auprès des organes compétents de ces organisations, la fourniture de conseils, la promotion de contacts sociaux et amicaux entre Membres et la diffusion d'informations.

Appel à Volontaires

Un mot d'Odette Foudral Présidente de l'Association des anciens Fonctionnaires Internationaux. Nous pouvons dire que nous sommes à la croisée des chemins. Plusieurs routes s'offrent à nous:

- Un ronronnement en publiant quelques bulletins par an, faisant une assemblée générale de principe..., ce qui est d'ores et déjà compliqué par les restrictions d'accès au Palais des Nations.
- Un refus de modifier les habitudes pour laisser l'association mourir doucement, sans bruit!

- Une approche dynamique avec plus de séminaires et d'activités sociales. Oui. Mais là nous avons besoin de plus de membres jeunes et motivés au sein du Comité (voir l'appel de candidature).

Notre association a un vrai rôle à jouer surtout pour aider les retraités laissés pour compte par la marche forcée vers le tout informatique.

Ressourçons-nous, réinventons-nous. On nous attend vraiment si on en juge par le nombre d'adhésions qui a marqué ce début d'année. ■

Site web: <https://afics.unog.ch> Adresse mail: aafi-afics@un.org (secrétariat)





Some of the trains travelling around Switzerland.

SBB, CFF, FFS

175 years of Swiss railways

How often do you take a train somewhere? Are you quite pleased and proud of how efficient and punctual Swiss trains are? Do you think you'd like to learn about their history?

LISANNE HOPKIN,
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, NEWSPECIAL

On August 9th of this year, the company called Chemins de Fer Fédéraux (CFF), celebrated its 175th birthday. CFF is probably how most people refer to Swiss trains, at least in the French-speaking part. But back in 1847, the first railway line, the 'Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn' was run by the Schweizerische Nordbahn, and wasn't officially named SBB, or CFF, until 1902.¹

Cutting down travel time on journeys has always been a part of what Swiss trains do; a journey in 1847 from Zurich to Baden (22.5 km), went from three hours down to 45 minutes². Trains are efficient, punctual, and recently, they have been redesigned and are even nicer to sit in than they were before. It is said that Switzerland is 'one of the countries with the densest railway network in the world [...] and in no other

European country, do people use the train so much'.³

Not only are we reducing the time it takes to get from one place to another, but we are also reducing CO₂ emissions. 'A plane like a Boeing 747 uses approximately 4 litres of fuel every second'.⁴ Whereas, a passenger train consumes just under eight litres of fuel every kilometre.⁵ And though planes can usually cover distances much quicker than trains, 'choosing the train over flying cuts CO₂ emissions per passenger by 90%'.⁶

The website full of information for the 175 years of CFF, is running throughout the whole year of 2022, so if you're worried that you've missed out on all the events, there are a few that are still on before the end of the year! The last 'weekend' events take place on October 22nd and 23rd, and are located

in the 'south-central' region of Switzerland. Amsteg, Bellinzona, Erstfeld, Lucerne, Piotta, Pollegio, Samstagern, Stansstad, and Wassen are all places where there are events taking place over that weekend.

There are also events aside from the ones taking place in the south-central region of Switzerland. There is a special exhibition open in Baden until October 16th, a train ride in Gotthard on October 8th, a journey from Huttwil on October 9th. In Martigny, there are celebrations ongoing until October 9th, and if you fancy being a part of the experience of breaking a world record, mark your calendars for Saturday 29th October in Preda. A train featuring a hundred carriages with a length of 1910 metres is something you definitely do not want to miss! ■

1 "Swiss Railways Celebrates 175 Years." Swiss Federalism, Swiss Federalism, 2022, website.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 "How Much Fuel Does an International Plane Use for a Trip?" HowStuffWorks, HowStuffWorks, 1 Apr. 2000, website. Updated May 19, 2021.

5 Talaiekhosani, Amirreza. "Average Fuel Consumption by Train Type per Kilometer." ResearchGate, ResearchGate, Mar. 2017, website.

6 "15 Reasons Trains Are Better than Planes." Rail Europe, Rail Europe, blog.

For more informations

If you want to find out more about the 175th anniversary celebrations of CFF, visit their website at <https://175-ans.ch/>.



CHF 860'000.-

PERLY (GE)

APPARTEMENT RÉNOVÉ

Charmant 4 pièces traversant / 80 m² + 6 m² de balcon / Cuisine aménagée et agencée / 2 chambres / Parking / Box / Cave.

Réf. 35746



CHF 1'360'000.-

VERSOIX (GE)

EXCLUSIVITÉ ! 5 PIÈCES TRAVERSANT

Lumineux / Idéal pour famille / 3 chambres dont une parentale avec salle de bains / Une salle de douche-wc / Grande cuisine équipée habitable / Grand séjour / Balcon / Cave / Box au sous-sol / Un parking extérieur / À voir absolument !

Réf. 36226



CHF 1'760'000.-

LES PÂQUIS (GE)

SUPERBE 5 PIÈCES PROCHE DU LAC

128 m² habitables sur la rive droite de Genève / Beaux volumes / Poutres apparentes / Matériaux de qualité / Vaste et lumineuse pièce à vivre avec séjour / Cuisine ouverte et entièrement équipée / 3 chambres et 2 salles de bains / Possibilité place de parking en sus.

Réf. 35997



CHF 2'080'000.-

GENÈVE (GE)

ATTIQUE AU COEUR DE LA RIVE DROITE

Magnifique vue dégagée / Immeuble des années 1930 / 3 terrasses / Salon traversant avec cheminée / Cuisine ouverte / Une chambre / Salle de douche / Chambre principale traversante / Salle de douche en suite.

Réf. 35879



CHF 2'250'000.-

COLLEX-BOSSY (GE)

MAGNIFIQUE MAISON DE VILLAGE

225 m² habitables / 8 pièces dont 5 chambres / Entièrement rénovée en 2020 / Beau jardin avec piscine chauffée / Un jacuzzi et une terrasse complètent ce bien.

Réf. 36112



CHF 2'350'000.-

LE GRAND-SACONNEX (GE)

AGRÉABLE MAISON MITOYENNE

Dans quartier résidentiel et prisé / 155 m² sur 3 niveaux / 6 pièces dont 3 chambres et 2 salles d'eau / Cuisine agencée, équipée ouverte sur partie jour donnant accès au jardin / Terrasse avec pergola / Piscine chauffée / Combles offrant un espace polyvalent / Box fermé et 2/3 places de parkings extérieures.

Réf. 36187



CHF 3'150'000.-

VERNIER (GE)

LUMINEUSE VILLA MITOYENNE EN PIGNON

Sur parcelle de 620 m² dans quartier résidentiel / Grands volumes sur 3 niveaux / 4 chambres et 2 bureaux / 4 salles de bains / Magnifique cuisine entièrement équipée / Salle à manger / Séjour avec cheminée / Grand garage double / 3 parkings extérieurs. À voir absolument !

Réf. 36080



CHF 4'500'000.-

CONFIGNON (GE)

SUPERBE MAISON DU XVIIIÈME SIÈCLE

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Réf. 36235



CHF 5'500'000.-

LE GRAND-SACONNEX (GE)

MAGNIFIQUE TOWNHOUSE AU CALME

Au coeur du quartier des Organisations Internationales / Génèreux townhouse de 11 pièces d'env. 370 m² / Parcelle arborée de 900 m² / 3 niveaux dont un sous-sol / Bel ensoleillement / 6 chambres / 4 salles d'eau / À découvrir.

Réf. 35817

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Planned obsolescence and the *right* to repair?

How many of us have had the experience of a product breaking down “just” after the warranty period ended? Certainly, an annoying experience, and according to some, “planned”.

MARKO STANOVIC, UNCTAD

Planned obsolescence, as it is called, is when a manufacturer knowingly produces a product with parts that are expected to break down after a certain amount of time, rendering the product unusable, and this is usually when the warranty period expires. Others for example, keep producing software updates that require increasing amounts of device resources, eventually making the device – a computer, mobile phone, etc. – “obsolete” after several years.

Or, for example, on bicycle gear transmission cassettes, why not make the cogs reversible so that when one side wears out, the user can just flip the cog and continue using the gear for several more years?

All these disappointments could be avoided, but manufacturers want us to keep buying their products over and over again, and unfortunately, there is an inherent incentive for some of them to engage in unethical practices.

In Europe, France is leading the way in combatting planned obsolescence. The practice was made illegal in France in 2015 in its law on the *Transition to Energy for Green Economic Growth*¹. In particular, its *Consumer Code* Articles L441-2 and L454-6² make planned obsolescence a criminal offence punishable with fines of

up to EUR 300,000 per violation, which can be increased to up to 5% of corporate annual sales, as well as prison sentences of up to two years for company directors.

As a result, Apple – the maker of iPhones – was investigated and has eventually reached a settlement agreement with the French government in 2020 in the amount of EUR 25 million following allegations of planned obsolescence.

And in Italy, Samsung and Apple were each fined EUR 5 million in October 2018 by the Italian competition authority, because their software updates were said to slow down older models of Apple phones.

More recently, France’s Circular Economy Law of February 2020 (Law n°2020-105 dated 10 February 2020 relating to the fight against waste and the circular economy³) made it mandatory for producers, importers and retailers of electrical and electronic products to publish a “repairability” index for their products. It also prohibited any technique, including software programming, which makes it impossible for a manufacturer to repair an appliance without using its approved suppliers. Finally, manufacturers are required at the time of purchase to inform consumers of how long software updates will be provided.

The anti-planned obsolescence movement is gaining steam in the European Union as well. Under the EU’s *Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees Directive* (Directive 1999/44/EC), EU consumers are entitled to repair or replace their goods which are not fit for purpose or do not match the description given by the seller. However, these remedies are only available within a two-year obligatory guarantee period. A new sale of goods directive (Directive 2019/771) will apply from 2022, but the warranty period remains the same.

The European Commission has recently published its *Circular Economy Action Plan*. The plan envisages to revise consumer law to provide consumers with trustworthy and relevant information on products at the time they buy them, such as how long the products are expected to last and their repairability. It will also consider strengthening consumer protection against premature obsolescence and will work towards establishing a new “right to repair”, with Electronics and ITC industries identified as key areas.

In the past, manufacturers were expecting their products to last a long time and be repaired multiple times during their service life. For example, in 1970s, Marantz—a U.S.A. audio electronics manufacturing company—made available



© Marco Stanovic
Marantz 4270 quadrophonic receiver.

to the general public detailed service manuals for their products. They were intended to be used by independent service centers or even customers themselves to repair and align Marantz audio equipment. This contrasts with many current manufacturers who do not make available sufficient information on how to repair their products, but instead

require customers to send them back to the manufacturer for service. Frequently, the products are not even repaired, but replaced with a new one. The reason often given is that it is less expensive to replace the entire product rather than spend service time trying to repair it, which is labor-intensive and relatively more expensive. This business model, of course,

creates increasing waste and pollution globally, which is a problem on its own.

Policy initiatives in Europe and around the world could effectively counter planned obsolescence and help reduce electronic waste globally. They can also put more money into consumers' pockets since when required to disclose their product's life expectancy and reparability, the manufacturers will naturally try to improve on these characteristics.

Consumers have a role to play too. They can put pressure on manufacturers through social media on ending planned obsolescence, the right to repair and disclosure, which will provide incentive for companies to build well-designed and quality products. Finally, consumers should demand from businesses to reduce electronic waste globally and help achieve sustainable development goals. ■

- 1 Loi n° 2015-992 du 17 août 2015 relative à la transition énergétique pour la croissance verte, art. 99, LEGIFRANCE.
- 2 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/texte_lc/LEGITEXT000006069565/2022-09-04/
- 3 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000041553759/>

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The MEIG Programme helps to build a career in International Geneva



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AUGUSTINE SOKIMI

My name is Augustine Sokimi and I am a graduate of the Master of Advanced Studies in European and International Governance (MEIG)¹ at the University of Geneva. This is the story of my professional journey to International Geneva.

I arrived in Geneva on 31 December 2017. My wife was posted as a diplomat based in Geneva and hence, our decision to move here together. We hail from Fiji (which rests somewhere in the centre of the Pacific Ocean), a long way away from Geneva. I have lived my entire life by the sea. Coming to Geneva was a very new experience, Switzerland being landlocked, and Geneva being surrounded by mountains, and the sea nowhere in sight. The first time I saw the Geneva Lake, I thought to myself: “how beautiful, but it is not the sea”.

Homesick was how I started my journey, yet I was optimistic that I would find my place in Geneva with renewed purpose. I left Fiji as an aspiring legal practitioner, having finished my first five years of practice. They were good years which allowed me to delve into diverse areas of law and steadily progress professionally. Accordingly, upon arriving in Geneva, I was confident that I would find

an opportunity to advance professionally in my career. In this regard, the first three years of my stay in Geneva proved quite difficult. Simply put, I could not find a job that was right for me.

Since there were no work opportunities forthcoming, I decided to reorient myself professionally. In September 2018, I decided to complete a university programme and at the same time, I interned with the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations in Geneva, assisting with its work at the Human Rights Council (HRC). In early 2020, the then Fijian Ambassador suggested I apply to the Master of Advanced Studies in European and International Governance (MEIG) at the University of Geneva. The MEIG combines the academic excellence of the University of Geneva, the *Centre d'études juridiques européennes*² and the Global Studies Institute (GSI)³ with the expertise of practitioners from diverse international organisations and bodies in Geneva and Brussels. It comprises ten thematic and methodological modules followed by an end-of-study project. After two core modules on the functioning of the United Nations system and European Union institutions, the MEIG covers a wide set of thematic fields such as human rights and migration; peace, security, and humanitarian affairs; digital governance; international trade and development; etc. Convinced by this particular curriculum and the excellence of the faculty as a means of advancing in my career, I applied accordingly and embarked on my learning journey in September 2020.

By January 2021, I was offered a one-year engagement as Third Secretary with the Fiji Mission in Geneva. Fiji had taken the HRC Presidency and I was recruited as an expert to take on their human rights portfolio for the duration of their presidency. This was the first real job that I had in three years and it came midway through the MEIG. With work and studies running concurrently, I worked a lot of late nights to balance my professional and academic commitments.

I also found what I had learned with the MEIG spoke to the work that I was engaged in. While I was familiar with the HRC, I came to realise that over the years I had developed a sort of human rights focused “tunnel vision”. The MEIG allowed me to look at the international organisations in Geneva holistically, assessing where my work was relevant in various fora. I began seeing the relevance of human rights discourse in international governance beyond the HRC and its relevance to the work of the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, among others. I began to draw on the work of these organisations in formulating my advice and found that it made me more effective in my role as the Fiji Mission’s human rights expert.

In December 2021, my work with the Fiji Mission came to an end and by then I had successfully completed the MEIG. I graduated in July 2021 and

was awarded the MEIG Geneva International Prize 2021, supported by Caran D'Ache, for having scored the highest average for the cohort. Presently, I am engaged in consultancies with the Permanent Mission of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations in Geneva and the Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI).

As Legal Counsel to the Marshall Islands Mission, I deal specifically with their efforts to address their nuclear legacy. Between 1946 and 1958, sixty-seven nuclear bombs were tested on the Marshall Islands while administered under a United Nations trusteeship. These nuclear weapon tests have had devastating impacts on the environment and intergenerational adverse impacts on the health of the Marshallese people. In this regard, the MEIG has greatly assisted in my work given

the importance of translating the Marshall Islands' priorities in the context of international governance. The MEIG has equipped me with the expertise to provide sound advice on the available international governance mechanisms that can assist in its efforts to address the nuclear legacy. For instance, at the current 51st HRC session, we intend to present a resolution seeking technical assistance to address the human rights implications of this nuclear legacy.

As CTI's Pacific Adviser, my work focuses on assisting Pacific Island States that have yet to ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) in advancing their efforts towards ratification. In this regard, the MEIG has greatly assisted in my assessments on how to harness greater regional commitment

to UNCAT ratification. Universal UNCAT ratification requires consideration of various regional and national priorities in devising effective strategies. This falls squarely within the MEIG which trains participants to consider governance questions holistically from the national to the regional and international levels.

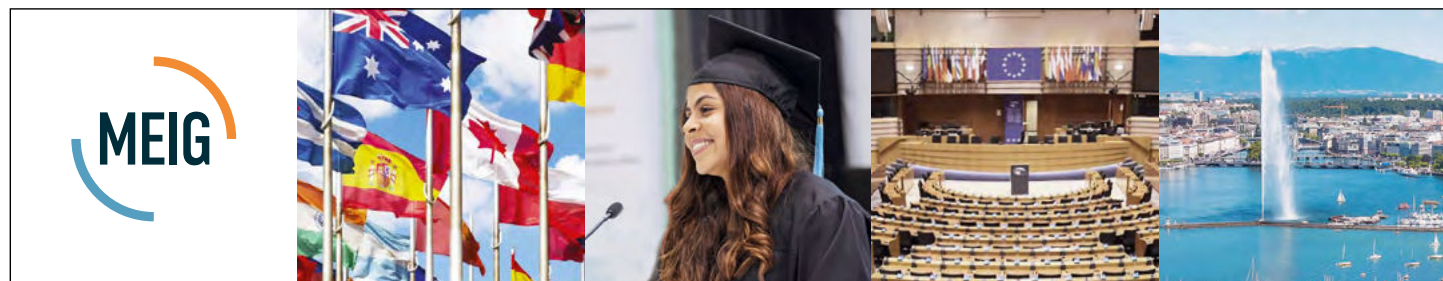
I am fortunate to have participated in the MEIG. It contributed greatly to my career development in International Geneva and I would strongly recommend it to anyone who envisages a career focused on international governance. This executive education programme features distinguished professors and practitioners as guest speakers, coming from different institutions and top universities in Europe and beyond, selected based on their expertise relevant to the core subject of each module. A distinct feature of the

MEIG is the organised study trip to the EU institutions in Brussels and the sessions held at the various international organisations in Geneva, which takes the learning experience well beyond a theoretical discussion on European and international governance to foster a practical understanding of how these systems function in reality. ■

1 More information about the programme at www.meig.ch/ and www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/meig

2 More information at www.ceje.ch/en/

3 More information at www.unige.ch/gsi/en/home/



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The Tauredunum event: tsunami in Geneva

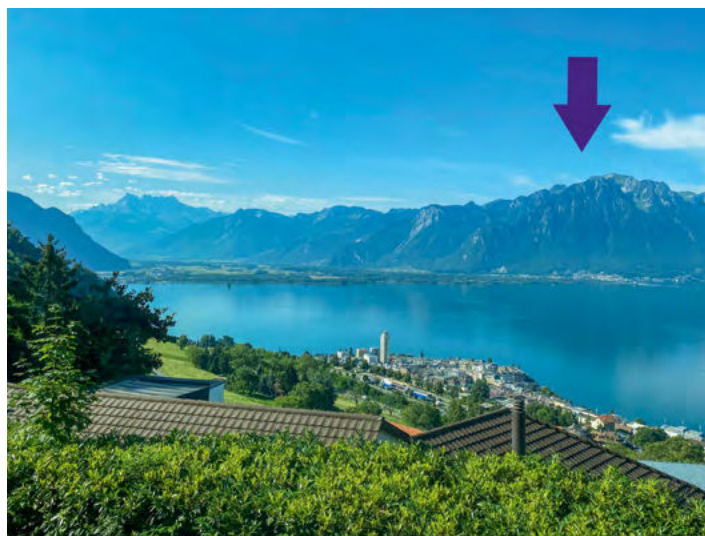
In the 6th century, an eight-metre-high wall of water struck Geneva, rushing over the tops of the city walls, and causing substantial loss of life and destruction of property. Research over the last decade has shown that the event may not have been an isolated one, and that the city remains at risk (albeit a small one) from future lake tsunamis.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

In his *Chronicle*, the historian Marius of Avenches (a Gallo-Roman writer who became Bishop of Lausanne) detailed Burgundian and Franconian history in the 5th and 6th centuries. He recorded the traditions and stories of the corner of Vaud in which he lived, at that time under the control of the Kingdom of Orleans. His work recounts a dramatic incident in AD 563 that he described as follows:

“The great mountain of Tauretunum, in the territory of the Valais, fell so suddenly that it covered a castle in its neighbourhood, and some villages with their inhabitants; it so agitated the lake for 60 miles in length and 20 in breadth that it overflowed both its banks; it destroyed very ancient villages, with men and cattle; it entombed several holy places, with the religious belonging to them. It swept away with fury the Bridge of Geneva, the mills and the men; and, flowing into the city of Geneva, caused the loss of several lives.”

The event is also recorded in the *Historia Francorum* (History of the Franks) by the writer Gregory of Tours who particularly noted that the water overtopped the city walls and that the landslide occurred near to the place where the river Rhône flows into Lac Léman. It forced water back



Most likely location of the landslide, Le Grammont mountain.

up the river and affected villages along its banks.

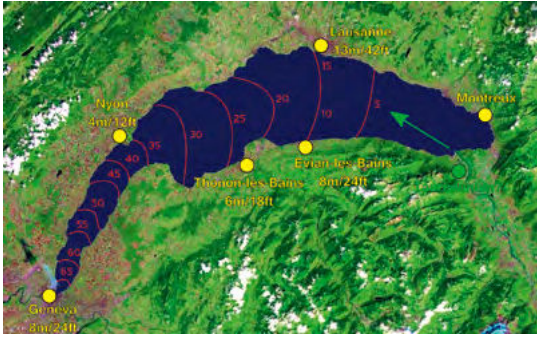
It was in this area at the eastern end of the lake that academics from the University of Geneva concentrated their research in 2012. They were mapping the sediment using seismic reflection, sending waves into the lakebed, and detecting reflections from the different layers using a principle similar to sonar.

The data did reveal an unusual and distinct layer beneath the lakebed, deposited very quickly at some time between AD 381 and AD 612. The material was five metres thick and covered around 50 square kilometres in a lens shape, but surprisingly it was found in the centre of the lake and not close to the presumed location

of the initial rock fall. It seemed a good candidate, however, for a link with the historic cataclysm.

The discovery of the sediment suggested that the landslide into the lake's water was not the whole story. The hypothesis now tested was that the collapse of the mountain side had a knock-on effect in which it displaced a large volume of sediment sitting at the east end of the lake and deposited there by the Rhône. The sediment was forced from the river delta into the middle of the lake, accentuating the displacement of the water to create the tsunami that the chroniclers described.

Computer modelling of the shape and bathymetry of the lake predicted that the tsunami wave would have been 13 metres high



Tsunami wave propagation times and height from computer modelling.



A simulated 8-meter water rise in central Geneva.

when it reached Lausanne after 15 minutes and was eight metres high when it struck Geneva, some 70 minutes after the initial rockslide. That is the length of a London double-decker bus stood on end washing over the city. Waves as high as 16 metres may have occurred in some locations and no part of the lakeshore was unaffected.

Furthermore, sediment analysis showed other rapid-deposition events deeper than the presumed Tauredunum layer and dating back during the last 10,000 years. This hints that AD 563 was not an isolated phenomenon and that such landslides and their associated tsunamis may be a regular, although long-cycle, feature of life around Alpine lakes.

Further lakebed penetrating analysis and sediment drilling is

needed to build up a more comprehensive picture to understand the risk more completely, and this would also be supported by studies of the stability of the mountain slopes around the lake's basins to predict where the next event might occur. Needless to say, that a similar tsunami today would have much more serious consequences along the densely populated shoreline of 2022.

Since the shocking television images of the 2011 tsunami that hit Japan, most people are familiar with the phenomenon of ocean tsunamis and the incredible damage they can do. The idea that such waves can occur in a landlocked body such as Lake Geneva is much less well known however and less studied.

Although it may not happen for thousands of years. ■

Archaeological excavations in 2019 near the town of Noville in Vaud uncovered a Gallo-Roman house at the eastern end of the lake, which also appeared to confirm the location for the landslide. The blocks and mortar of the walls had been displaced and everyday items were strewn in the mud and fixed in place as if instantly buried. Tellingly, no further artefacts were found above this level.

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BRAZIL

Leca Araujo...

... artist-philosopher in search of shared emotions

- *São Paulo, 1973*
- *Art – The Circuit Café-Culture*
- *“An organized Tower of Babel!”*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his recently-published book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”.

We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

“It is in the deep blue of the oceans that the fish reveal their colors best.” Her light green eyes almost lost in her memories, Leca Araujo relives the difficult moments of her life. Devastating, repeated miscarriages upon emigration from her native Brazil. These intense experiences, as painful as they are, stir up her creativity. As therapy, Leca will reopen her paint cans in 2011. After a long parenthesis, to splash the world with color... and a little black to portray contrast.

Born into a family of artists, Leca spends hours painting in her grandfather’s office. She is six years old and explores the brushes and his watercolors. “It was a dream!” At ten years old, she pursues her artistic imagination, using different techniques: oil painting, pyrography, charcoal. When choosing her academic path, Leca opts for IT in Rio de Janeiro, “because art does not pay!” As a graduate, she creates a company specializing in business management systems, like Oracle or SAP and it is a success.

Leca then follows her husband, who is transferred to Geneva. He is a trader. She is a business owner requiring regular travel to Brazil to keep an eye on her company. Two years later, motherhood blesses her with a son. But at the same time her husband is dismissed. So Leca finds a project manager position at The Kudelski Group in Lausanne, a digital security and media firm. She must spend several hours commuting to work each day, but it does not stop her from being creative. Since 2015, Leca increases the number of her exhibitions. Individual or collective. Geneva and Rio, of course, but also, Basel, Barcelona, Berlin, Florence, Lausanne, Miami, Paris, Porto, Vaduz, Vienna. And to crown Leca’s success, the Brazilian consulate opens its doors to her and then those of the UN in Geneva, where Michael M.ller, Director General at that time, also rolls out the red carpet for her.

A remarkable recognition for this art ambassador who takes a part of Geneva to each exhibition. Leca asks the question with her

soft, slightly shy voice. “Do you know God? This is the force that sustains me in life.” Spirituality is present in all of Leca’s works. So is black, portraying the dark, troubled moments. Her use of black also wants to unite everyone, in the same boat and thus underline our similarities, whatever our origins, our skin color, our name. It grazes and scratches through to the soul and reveals beauty. Black finally highlighting the color.

Leca creates two major collections. The Gardens extirpate us from the increasingly invasive “screens” and invite us to breathe. To contemplate. To see what we seed and grow in our own lives and in those of people around us. The Marias are extraordinary tributes to women combatants, pioneers, inspirers. Carolina Maria de Jesus, an author who comes from a Brazilian favela and gives voice to the Afro-Brazilian community. Thérèse-Christine de Bourbon-Sicules, renowned empress and mosaic artist. All with shimmering faces, full of strength and good humor. All of

these canvases are laid on different supports: plugs, buttons, cables, tiles, nails, stone, fabrics. So many materials that recall the ecological fiber of Leca.

Far from running out of steam, Leca has since 2017 been offering a haven, Circuit Café-Culture in Brazil, Switzerland and France. The aim is to combine beauty, peace and pleasure and invite lovers of different cultures, professions and social conditions to meet around works of art. To merge their emotions. ■

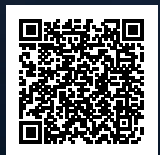
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Four blueprints for peace

The current war in Ukraine was an eminently avoidable war. Indeed, if diplomacy and common sense instead of ideology and intransigence had prevailed, humanity would have been spared the killing, the material devastation, the energy crisis, the global economic dislocation and the famine that will surely ensue.



President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill seated on the quarterdeck of HMS Prince of Wales for a Sunday service during the Atlantic Conference, 10 August 1941.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

At present, the blaming game brings us not an inch further. Nor is the popular idea of prosecuting individuals for war crimes and crimes against humanity particularly timely, except for propaganda purposes. The priority must be an end to the fighting and effective programs for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Criminal law is always *ex post facto*, does not bring people back to life and does not help the victims of war and structural violence. What is crucial is to avoid escalation, develop preventive strategies to avert future conflict and most urgently to build bridges not only for the belligerents to escape without losing too much face, but to build bridges *between* the belligerents so as to facilitate dialogue and compromise.

There will be no victors in this war, only losers, and the best way out of the crisis is through mediation, an imperfect *modus vivendi* among all parties in the proxy war, a *quid pro quo* to enable a cessation of hostilities.

Wars have been a scourge of humanity for thousands of years. Alas, we have learned little from prior blueprints for peace. Let us revisit only four such blueprints: Wilson's 14 Points¹ to end World War I, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms"², the Churchill/Roosevelt "Atlantic Charter"³ of 1941, and General Assembly Resolution 2625, the "Friendly Relations Resolution."⁴

If implemented in good faith, two of Wilson's 14 points would have sufficed to prevent the resumption of the world war in 1939:

"III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions"
"XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

FDR's "Four Freedoms" provided an excellent basis for the coexistence of nations. The first freedom – freedom of speech – necessarily entails the freedom to access all pertinent information, the freedom to know, to develop

our own judgment. Freedom of speech is not limited to echoing whatever nonsense we hear on CNN or BBC, but requires access to the opinions and arguments of our rivals. Blocking access to RT and Sputnik is incompatible with FDR's first freedom and with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In order to make peace, we must know how the other guy interprets the situation.

The draconian sanctions imposed on Russia are incompatible with the third freedom – "Freedom from want", which translated into contemporary terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants. This entails food security, access to water and sanitation, affordable energy, freedom to engage in trade and freedom of the seas.

FDR's Fourth Freedom, "freedom from fear" would have helped prevent the Ukraine conflict. It is remarkable that the Human Rights Council or for that matter NGO's like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have not focused on *Peace as a Human Right* or on *disarmament for development*. Article 6 of the 1968 Non Proliferation Treaty⁵ commits all States parties who possess nuclear weapons to negotiate in good faith toward nuclear disarmament. But it seems like the nuclear powers, whether NPT members or not – including China, Russia, US, UK, France,

Israel, India, Pakistan, are bent on imposing fear and terror on the rest of humanity.

The Atlantic Charter of 16 August 1941 has not lost its relevance in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Some of its provisions could be directly applied, e.g.

1. Territorial adjustments must be in accord with the wishes of the people concerned (e.g. by referendum in Crimea and Donbas). If some countries hesitate to recognize the fact that the vast majority of the Crimean population does NOT want to live in Ukraine after the unconstitutional 2014 *putsch*, they should invite the UN to organize and monitor a new referendum. Back in March and June 1994, I was the UN representative for the parliamentary and presidential elections in Ukraine. Without a doubt, the population in Crimea and Donbas speaks and *feels* Russian.

2. All people have a right of self-determination (e.g. in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo – but similarly in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria). This right of self-determination was incorporated into the UN Charter and countless Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions. It is also common article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

3. "Trade barriers must be lowered." The current sanctions regimes are destroying the benefits of globalization for millions of people, dislocating the supply chains and energy sources, leading to a drop in international trade, gross domestic product, bankruptcies and unemployment.

General Assembly Resolution 2625 provides a "restatement of international law" and has considerable relevance today:

"States shall conduct their international relations in the economic, social, cultural, technical and trade fields in accordance with the principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention;"

"By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the *Charter of the United Nations*, all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development".

It is unfortunate that reasonable discourse about disarmament, diplomacy, self-determination and compromise is decried by the warmongers and war-profiteers as cowardly "appeasement" or even treason. As it happens, "appeasement" is the only road humanity can take in the nuclear age. It is the road that our ancestors mapped in the UN Charter⁶, when "we the peoples" demanded measures to

spare succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In contravention thereof, some politicians are simultaneously provoking two nuclear powers who possess vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons and means to deliver them. This is not only dangerous, but also highly undemocratic, because people are not being consulted whether they really want to risk war and consent to provocative policies. People want and are entitled to peace and prosperity.

What is particularly preoccupying is that sedate voices like those of emeritus Professor Richard Falk at Princeton, Professor Jeffrey Sachs at Columbia University or Professor John Mearsheimer at the University of Chicago, are being drowned by the fake news and the propaganda disseminated by "narrative managers" in the mainstream media, who seem to prefer the role of attack dogs over that of watchdogs.

It is the tragedy of the post-World War I generations that the noble principles contained in President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points were flouted in the Treaties of Versailles, St. Germain and Trianon, leading directly to World War II. It is the tragedy of the post World War II generations that the goals proclaimed in the Four Freedoms and in the Atlantic Charter were abandoned. It is the tragedy of our post-Soviet Union generation that our leaders did not keep

their 1989-91 promises made by James Baker to the late Mikhail Gorbachev, Nobel Peace Prize laureate⁷, and preferred the path of NATO expansionism, ultimately leading to Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine and the proxy war being fought by NATO against Russia – till the last Ukrainian.

Alas, the war in Ukraine also reveals multiple violations of the 1970 "Friendly Relations Resolution" by all parties to the conflict.

It is deplorable that our leaders failed to heed the advice of George F. Kennan, Jack Matlock, Richard Falk, Jeffrey Sachs, John Mearsheimer and Henry Kissinger.

In order to get out of the mess to which our leaders have brought us, United Nations mediation is urgently needed, mediation based on the UN Charter and international law. This includes organizing and holding referenda to know exactly what the concerned populations want. Only thus can we secure durable peace. ■

1 <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-woodrow-wilsons-14-points>
2 <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/four-freedoms>
3 <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/atlantic-charter>
4 <http://un-documents.net/a25r2625.htm>
5 <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/hpt/>
6 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/preamble>
7 <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1990/gorbachev/facts/>

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Tobacco control at the Walk the Talk: The Health for All Challenge, 2022.

Tobacco advertising ban after the popular vote Switzerland on track for the WHO Framework Convention

CHRISTIAN PAULETTO¹

This column of your magazine reported on the successful Swiss popular vote of 13 February 2022 to ban tobacco advertising that reaches youngsters and children.² Now the next legislative step is in full gear in Switzerland.

The tobacco advertising ban was made possible through a popular initiative, which means, under the Swiss constitutional rules, that it takes the form of an amendment of the Federal Constitution. Thus, in order to be implemented in effect, the new constitutional norm needs to be transposed into a legislative act. This is because, at the federal level, an initiative cannot directly propose a new legislative norm. The first step towards a new legislative norm has now been completed: on 31 August 2022, the Federal Council (Swiss Government) adopted a draft set of amendments to the Law on Tobacco Products and

sent it into public consultation. Swiss cantons, political parties, associations and civil society organisations have a deadline until 30 November 2022 to submit comments to the draft. After that, the Federal Council will review its draft, publish a summary of the consultation outcomes, and submit the draft to the Parliament.

With this draft, the Federal Council aims to have a Swiss law that would make it possible for the country to ratify the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2003. An earlier draft law submitted to the Parliament in 2015 already had this aim, but MPs have watered it down so much that ratification was no longer possible. Now, the voters have rectified the domestic legal situation.

In short, the draft sets out the legislative details of the advertising

ban and, additionally, introduces a transparency obligation for the tobacco industry in respect of their expenditures for tobacco and e-cigarette advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

Advertising ban

The ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship for tobacco and e-cigarettes set out in the draft derives strictly from the text of the popular initiative, especially the terms “notably” and advertising “that reaches youngsters and children”. While the present law already prohibits some aspects of advertising, promotion and sponsorship, the main amendment proposed in the draft is a general ban in the printed press and on the Internet. Based on a quite convincing set of arguments, the Federal Council argues that for advertising through those two media not to “reach” young people, there is no other avenue than a general

ban. Actually, one of the criticisms made by the opponents to the initiative during the voting campaign was precisely that the initiative was, in their view, pretending to protect children only, but *de facto* could only be implemented through a general ban, because of the broad meaning of the term “reach”. Let us hope that in the coming parliamentary process, the same groups will not attempt to turn the argument the other way around and argue that the draft overshoots the constitutional mandate.

For the sake of accuracy, since Switzerland respects the principle of territoriality, journals and magazines printed for export will not be subject to the Swiss ban. It is noteworthy that the Federal Council proposes the same treatment for printed media and for Internet contents: even though the term “technological neutrality” has never been mentioned in the context of this issue, the approach proposed clearly amounts to a technologically neutral implementation of the constitutional mandate, and this is undoubtedly a sound direction.

Another amendment in the draft law is the ban of tobacco and e-cigarette promotion and sponsorship in national and local public events, which goes beyond the present ban applied only to events of international character. The proposed ban will also apply to shops.

The above does not mean, though, that advertising, promotion and sponsorship for tobacco and e-cigarettes will be banned altogether. In line with the letter of the initiative, advertising that unequivocally targets an adult will be allowed. This may apply to events or premises that exclude minors from admission, strictly professional newsletters or journals, or postal or electronic mail addressed specifically to

an adult. This is why Switzerland will not qualify, under the FCTC, as a country implementing a “comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship”. To date, 182 States are parties to the FCTC, and 128 of them notified that they implement a comprehensive ban. 37 States notified a partial ban (and others have their notification pending). The fact that Switzerland would belong to this small group has a practical implication, which relates to the transparency obligation. Where any kind of advertising and promotion for tobacco and e-cigarettes is banned, it is assumed that the industry spends virtually nothing for this purpose. However, where a partial ban is implemented – such as in the case of Switzerland – the FCTC contains an additional transparency obligation, to which we now turn.

Transparency obligation

As Switzerland will not belong to the 128 countries implementing a comprehensive ban of advertising and promotion for tobacco and e-cigarettes, it will have to apply article 13(4)(d) of the FCTC which requires “the disclosure to relevant governmental authorities of expenditures by the tobacco industry on advertising, promotion and sponsorship not yet prohibited”. Because the intention of the Federal Council is to be in a position to propose a ratification of the FCTC, it had to include such provision in the draft law. Actually, the earlier draft of 2015 already contained that provision, but it was one of the many items rejected by MPs in the parliamentary process. Now, with the clear popular backing provided by the Swiss people, the Government is in a strong position to come back to it. The proposed provision offers two options to the industry: reporting by an individual company, or reporting by several companies or an association. In both options, data are provided

to the Federal Office of Public Health, but in the latter option the data is aggregated already before it is provided. Whatever the option, the raw data received will remain confidential and not subject to the Swiss Law on Transparency (which allows persons to access government-owned information).

We stated that the proposed law is technologically neutral. When it comes to monitoring and enforcement, however, things may be different. Here, Switzerland’s federal structure needed to be considered. In the Swiss federal system, monitoring and enforcement of this legal act would fall within the competence of the cantons, for example in respect of printed media produced on their territory. But would it make sense that 26 cantons monitor the Internet? Obviously not, and the Federal

Council acknowledges that. It proposes that in the case of this legal act, the monitoring of Internet advertisement be done centrally by the Federal Office of Public Health. In case of an alleged infringement, the Federal Office would report the case to the canton where the company is established, and that canton would then handle the case.

Several steps are still necessary to finalise the new law, and an entry into force is not expected before 2025. ■

1 Member of the Board and lecturer on the Swiss Political Institutions at the Université Populaire du Canton de Genève.

2 “Votation suisse du 13 février: Interdiction de la publicité pour le tabac qui atteint les enfants et les jeunes”, *newSpecial*, March 2022, Issue 817, pages 20-21, by Christian Pauletto.



Acheter des vêtements de seconde main

Une expérience inoubliable



DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

ET JULIE BLANCO DE LA GARDE ROBE DE JULIE 1920

Depuis quelques années, ma plus grande fille de 17 ans n'achète que des vêtements de seconde-main. Je ne suis pas une fan de shopping et j'achète rarement mais pour soutenir l'écologie (et l'initiative de ma fille) et parce que j'avais aussi besoin d'acheter des vêtements pour des sorties cet été, je l'ai suivie dans quelques magasins du canton de Vaud. Malheureusement je n'étais pas convaincue: soit j'ai trouvé les prix trop élevés soit c'était juste impossible de trouver ma taille. En plus, je me demandais s'il y n'avait pas une économie derrière tout cela qui profitait de ma conscience écologique.

Alors, je n'étais pas très excitée quand mes amies m'ont invité à une «vide dressing» mais j'ai quand même décidé d'y aller. Devinez ma surprise! Je me suis retrouvée dans un lieu chaleureux avec des vêtements de haute qualité, des conseils ciblés, le tout dans une ambiance fun. Et quel bonheur quand j'ai découvert que le profit de la vente était destiné à une œuvre de charité. Ce fut une expérience magnifique que j'ai envie de répéter!

Pour mieux naviguer dans ce monde d'achat de vêtements de seconde main, j'ai décidé de demander des conseils à l'organisatrice du vide-dressing: Julie Blanco de «La Garde-Robe Julie 1920¹».

Entretien

«Bonjour Julie, comment expliquer la différence entre acheter des vêtements de seconde main, directement dans un magasin ou dans un vide dressing, et quels conseils pourriez-vous nous donner?»

La tendance actuelle de la seconde main, résulte fortement des attentes de la nouvelle génération qui dispose de moins de moyens et se tourne vers les fripes. De ce fait, un élan grandissant de l'envie de consommer différemment a vu le jour et a entraîné une vraie prise de conscience.

Les marques qui jusque-là étaient frileuses, se sont tournées vers une production écologiquement plus équitable, et ont offert l'opportunité à leurs clients qui consiste à déposer les vêtements «en fin de vie» pour les transformer et leur redonner une seconde vie...

Depuis quelques années un engouement réel est apparu pour le troc, l'échange de vêtements et la possibilité de mettre en place un marché parallèle.

Il existe une vraie possibilité de trouver la perle rare et de se faire plaisir à moindre frais.

Ce concept défini comme vide-dressing a trouvé sa place dans nos sociétés occidentales et il est devenu un vrai mode de vie...

Le vide dressing permet de trouver la perle rare vestimentaire à petit prix dans d'une jolie ambiance et dans un lieu sympathique, atypique et éphémère et qui donne essentiellement et bien évidemment une seconde vie aux vêtements.

Si vous voulez trouver un vide dressing, il faut tout simplement rester attentif aux réseaux sociaux, beaucoup sont inscrits sur Instagram, Facebook... Les quartiers affichent très facilement ces rendez-vous la et le bouche à oreille constitue parfois le meilleur canal d'information.

Pour créer votre vide dressing, il faut avoir de quoi alimenter celui-ci en vêtements,

bien évidemment, mais aussi en accessoires, chaussures, bijoux.

Il faut aussi disposer d'un endroit sympathique et stylé afin qu'il soit attractif!

Votre domicile, la location d'un lieu différent, l'inscription auprès de la ville sur l'agenda des marchés proposés pendant l'année, mais surtout amusez-vous!

«Et pourquoi chercher un Vide Dressing qui donne ces recettes d'ailleurs?»

LE PARTAGE, n'est-il pas un très joli mot? La réponse est contenue dans la question, se faire plaisir non seulement pour soi, mais aussi pour les autres, cela donne une

autre dimension à son achat, on se sent non seulement bien parce que cette petite paire de chaussures dénichée est superbe, mais au-delà, notre achat participe aussi à améliorer quelque part le bien être de tout un chacun.

Lier le plaisir au partage constitue peut-être le futur de l'humanité en étant heureux si l'autre l'est aussi! ■

¹ Instagram: @lagarderobedejulie1920/@vies_de_dressing_julie_co

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Associate Professor, Global Health and Development in the College of Public Health, James Cook University

RENZO GUINTO
Chief Planetary Health Scientist, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Sunway University

At the Sydney Opera House

Call it instantly the pinnacle of modern art,
a happy paroxysm, Jacobin revolt of heart:
Jørn Utzon's architecture wakes our appetite
for sculpture in design, our love for height and light.

Shells rise from azure shores in pristine white.
Or are they swollen sails in stormy flight?
Archangel wings that waft in winds and skim
the surf to rise in high harmonious hymn?

Jørn Utzon's shells are sails and wings and snowy
mountains:
Forms composing function, flowing fountains
of imagination rushing from this water place
into the universe of time and space.

Close by, the Royal gardens germinate and sing
archaic melodies of life renewing.
See: a sacred Lotus greets the day,
a water lily floats into the bay.

Where rolling surf breaks on the shore
and foaming waves surge with a mighty roar,
roofs rise and slope off, dressed in fine ceramic tiles
criss-crossing and competing in aesthetic lines.

Beneath the broken eggshell tent
breathe varied forms of man's enlightenment.
Symbolic canvas cover concrete walls,
beguiling aboriginal design enthrals.

This emblematic, genial site is home
to ancient Muses. Here the soul can roam
and lose itself in sound and ecstasy,
for here is vision, faith, integrity.

Outside the silhouettes evolve with light and shade –
the sunrise, sunset, starry skies are made
for lovers, young and old. Inside we feel, we dream,
we hear sopranos sing that things are what they seem.

God blessed his architects and engineers:
Sir Avo Arup shares Jørn's honours and the cheers.
Together they composed this symphony in stone;
they orchestrated waves and naves that Psalms intone.

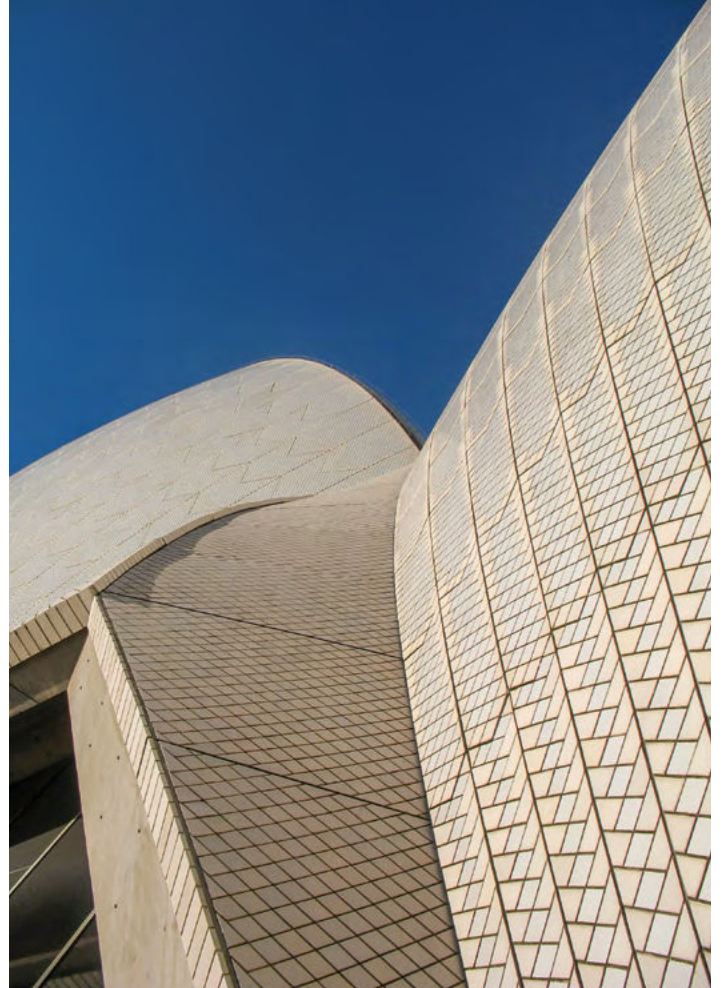
Cathedrals and Basilicas boast marble stairs.
In Sydney *mélomanes* sport concrete steps to airs
of Verdi, Wagner, Strauß, Puccini, Debussy,
whose sacred tunes proclaim man's yearning and
esprit.

Cathedrals are indeed like poetry in stone;
here too, stone prayers make this music temple zone
of spiritual transcendence, terpsichorean shrine
of ballet, thespian arts, of opera and choirs divine.

Not just Australian, Danish or Pacific:
This eclectic house is hieroglyphic,
primal, mystical, a common heritage
of humankind, a promise and a pledge.

On magic nights a myriad coloured lights explode
above these hallowed domes as in a pantheistic Ode
to Joy embracing in D-major all creation:
This is Sydney's kiss of cosmic affirmation.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS



Silent earth

Averting the insect apocalypse

A book by Dave Goulson, professor of biology at the University of Sussex.

PHILIPPA BIGGS, ITU

This hard-hitting book recounts a chilling tale of how insects are slowly, silently, but steadily, and maybe inexorably, disappearing from nature and from our gardens, fields, towns, lives and world. Building on the legacy of Rachel Carson's renowned book, *Silent Spring*, 'Silent Earth' is a love story for our natural world, written by Dave Goulson with passion and enthusiasm for the myriad of creeping, crawling, flying, swimming, varied wonders of our natural world that make up the insect world, but also the basis of our many natural ecosystems.

With all our recent worries (including COVID and armed conflict), how many of us have even noticed that insect populations are collapsing, both around us, and elsewhere in the world? Worse still, among those of us who may have noticed, how many of us care?

And yet, as Dave Goulson sets out very clearly and succinctly, this silent, creeping catastrophe has huge implications for us all. Insects in fact account for the vast majority of species on Earth, and form the basis of all terrestrial and freshwater food chains and food webs (including human food in a number of Latin American, Asian and African countries). Insects also help aerate the soil and act as nature's own undertakers, actively eating, dismembering or otherwise helping

decompose invasive plants, fallen leaves, organic matter or animal corpses, recycling nutrients and helping make them available once more for plant growth. Insects also perform a vital, if often unappreciated, role in pest control, with predators such as ladybirds, earwigs, wasps and hoverflies helping keep populations of crop pests down.

87% of all plant species require animal pollination, mostly delivered by insects. Three-quarters of the crop types we grow need pollination by insects. It is fashionable in some countries to worry about eating strawberries out of season, but in future, fruit such as strawberries, cherries or blackcurrants may become very rare or unobtainable, as farmers have to resort to hand-pollination of crops. The world already under-produces the full amounts of fruit and vegetables for everyone to have a healthy diet, but without pollinators, it will become impossible to produce the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables we all need.

In short, a world without many insects is a world in trouble. And yet, despite their vital importance, Dave Goulson presents the latest evidence from different regions of the world to suggest that natural insect populations are collapsing or declining very fast, with catastrophic consequences for us all, as well as for the many plant and animal species that depend on insects for their food, nutrients, health and reproduction.

The causes are varied, and vary in importance from country to country, but among the main culprits are – loss and degradation of natural habitat, loss of plant biodiversity, climate change, the use of pesticides and herbicides, intensive farming methods, including monoculture farming, various parasites or diseases, light pollution, importations of foreign or invasive species in non-native habitats (intentional or accidental), among others. That is a long list. Any one of these factors could prove harmful for a long-established native species of insect, and yet, taken together, it is easy to see why insect populations are suffering around the world.

Dave Goulson cites a revealing analogy from the American biologist, Paul Ehrlich, who famously likened loss of species from an ecological community to randomly popping out rivets from the wing of an aeroplane. Removing one or two rivets is not necessarily a problem, as the aeroplane has been designed for resilience and will continue to fly. However, continuing to remove multiple rivets successively in combination means that at some point, catastrophic failure will occur and the aeroplane will fall from the sky. Essentially, the loss of both natural habitat and natural biodiversity means we are engaged in a 'rivet-popping' exercise with our natural ecosystems. We can also call it roulette with our international food supply.

Dave Goulson writes with honesty, alarm, moral indignation and imagination. One chapter sets out the life of a family in 2080, once insect populations have vanished, and food is rare, limited and endangered. The chapter on climate change in particular is one of the most frank and honest and uncensored I have read recently, in which this eminent scientist sets out the obvious – our world is changing very fast, for insects as well as for us, with little scope for any soft landing.

In his book, Dave Goulson sets out both the problem of insect genocide, as well as various solutions and actions we can all take, as individuals, organizations and authorities. Yes, this book is the point of view of one scientist, not a Commission, but it is his hard-hitting, honest opinion, and we should all take note. If you would like to know more about the often hidden, magical world of insects all around us, dive in and take a look – you may be interested, you may become alarmed, but you will not be disappointed. ■

Cząstki kobiety

Pieces of a Woman

28.11 – 02.12.22

At Comédie de Genève

Directed by Kornél Mundruczó, Theatre / Poland

A birth, a tragedy, and then what? Two acts tell the story of the reconstruction of a woman in pieces who goes through her pain with the detachment of a ghost, without a tear. *Pieces of a Woman* takes us – we are almost in immersion – into a hyper-realistic aesthetic that borrows first from the cinema, then from the theatre to present the story of a woman, or of women should we say, who fight against all odds to patch things up.

Kornél Mundruczó is both a sculptor and a goldsmith. He works meticulously, surrounded by actors and actresses on a knife edge, highly strung, close to themselves and their characters. ■



© Natalia Kabanow



© Natalia Kabanow

© Natalia Kabanow



One of my favourite shows: Rob Mudge: *My Son's A Queer, But What Can You Do?*

© Lisanne Hopkin

A festival like no other

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is packed full of shows throughout the month of August. Let me tell you all about it.

LISANNE HOPKIN,
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, NEWSPECIAL

The summer is a great time of year to be exploring new places and trying new things, especially since lockdown restrictions eased almost completely over the summer. This year, I had the absolute privilege of finally going to Edinburgh to experience the Fringe Festival. I've been wanting to go for years, and my family had actually booked something last year, in the hopes that we would go. Unfortunately, this did not happen, so we pushed it back a year to August 2022. If you haven't ever heard of the Fringe Festival, it's basically a whole month full of performances in the centre of Edinburgh. There are magic shows, stand-up comedians, musicals, theatre, street performers. There is everything you could think of!

If you've never been to Edinburgh before, like I hadn't, it can be a bit overwhelming. There is so much happening all at once, and you're not really sure where to go, or what you should do first. However, if you would like to take the opportunity to explore Edinburgh a bit more, then it is something you can do! The month of August in Edinburgh may well be famous for the Fringe Festival, but if you're also there for the sights and culture, you can get to know more about Edinburgh and its history. My family likes to go on tour buses whenever we visit somewhere new, mostly to get a sense of direction and familiarise ourselves with wherever we're visiting. But the tour buses always provide history, so if you want to get a layout of the land and learn about where you're staying, I would definitely

recommend going on a short trip on a tour bus. I enjoy sitting on a double-decker bus and just watching the world go by and appreciating everything around me. You get sights, culture and history all in one!

When August finally rolled around this year, I was so excited! I think the great thing about being able to go to the Fringe is that I had no idea what to expect. I had heard from friends about how much they had enjoyed being at the Fringe Festival in previous years, and I knew that so many stand-up comedians and shows that were now well-known had initially begun as performances at the Fringe, but I wasn't aware of what the experience would really be like. In a way, I think when you have no expectations that need to be met, that is the



Jonathan Sayer and Henry Lewis in the *Mind Mangler*.



The beauty of Edinburgh.

best way you can enjoy something new.

I went to Edinburgh as part of a family holiday, which in itself was really lovely, because I really like being able to spend time with my family. We all had different kinds of shows we wanted to see... My uncle was much more interested in stand-up comedians, whereas I really wanted to see theatre itself. Having grown up attending an amateur theatre school, and having seen and been in quite a few productions over the years, that was really what I wanted to see. I also kind of wanted to see a musical or two, but I knew that would be a challenge as the only other person who would want to watch a musical would be my mum, and I didn't want to drag her around with me to all the same shows. That's another brilliant thing about the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. There are literally hundreds of shows on throughout the month of August. On the day before our last day, I think we ended up with a programme book, which listed every single performance that was on at the Fringe. It felt like holding a dictionary, or a phone book, it was so massive! Like I said,

you could see a magic show, a children's show, a musical, some theatre, a stand-up routine. Anything that you were vaguely interested in, you could probably find a show to see. You could go by yourself, you could go with a couple of friends, or you could go as a whole group! The sky really is the limit! If you had the money, and the time, you could spend the whole month just going to see different kinds of shows. Personally, I think my favourite days were when I got to see about four performances in one day. And that was only from early in the afternoon into the evening. I'm convinced you could see about six productions in a day if you figured out the right timing. Maybe even more. You could spend ten hours of your day watching different performances. Honestly, that is my kind of dream.

If you are even slightly interested in going to Edinburgh to experience the Fringe Festival, I would strongly recommend booking somewhere to stay as soon as possible. Everywhere gets booked up pretty quickly, and the longer you leave it, the less likely you are to find somewhere to stay, and that is affordable too. I personally

recommend staying somewhere near the Royal Mile, right in the city centre, as you will most likely walk to every show while you're there. The shows are dotted around everywhere; you could be in a bar, in a theatre, in a gymnasium, in a conference room, in an upside down purple cow. Honestly, my best advice is to probably just embrace it all! You might end up seeing your all-time favourite show. I even got to see Sir Ian McKellen perform Shakespeare live! And he was so close to me, it felt so surreal.

Of course, the one important thing you should know about the Fringe Festival is that anyone is allowed to put on a show. And I mean anyone. Yes, you may get to see acting greats like Sir Ian McKellen, but you may also see the lowest of the lows and end up wishing you could just erase the memory of a performance from your brain. You may not even get to see the lowest of the lows if you're lucky, but do bear in mind, that that is the thrill of going to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. No one can guarantee you that you will enjoy all of the performances that you decide to see. After all, the Fringe is a place where artists get to explore

anything and everything. You, the audience member, are just part of the ride. And with everything in life, try to be respectful when you see shows. Even the terrible ones. Clap politely while you're there, and then tell whoever you were with how awful it was once you're out of earshot. They may not think it was bad, or they may think it was even worse than you thought, but don't tell the performers. They may be actors who get paid to pretend for a whole month, but they are humans, too. Everyone has feelings.

All in all, I think that sums up the basic information of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. I really hope that I've managed to convince some of you to already make plans for August next year. I know where I'll be next August. Be open-minded and have fun! ■



© Olga Fontanella

Hike to Aletsch Glacier

The imposing Aletsch Glacier, UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a great reward for this easy hike offering a first-class view of the snow-capped Alps. The hike to the Aletsch Glacier is one of those hikes considered a “must” in Switzerland.

OLGA FONTANELLAZ

When we say “we go hiking”, it means we are going to sleep in the mountains. This time, doing our research about hiking the region of the Aletsch Glacier, we somehow overlooked an obvious option – Gletscherstube at the Märjelensee. This time, we sleep in a village at the bottom of the mountains.

Our hike starts from the village of Fiesch with its typical Wallis wooden houses burnt by the sun. A cable car brings us to Fiescheralp, from where we hike to Eggishorn through the alpine pastures. The first part of our hike is very easy and fairly flat, going through gentle slopes covered with flowers and views of the mountain peaks.

Soon, we have a choice – hike around the Tälligrat on the trail

offering a view of the Fiesch Glacier or take a one-hour shortcut through the Tälligrat Tunnel (“Unnere Tälli”). We decide to see the Fiesch Glacier in addition to the Aletsch Glacier, the goal of our hike.

The hiking trail to Lake Vordersee, through rocky meadows, is very easy, and the lake is splendid. Its blue-green water colour contrasts with its green banks covered with flowers, mainly cotton grass, with its white tufts looking like cotton. A friend of ours, who joined us for this hike, must have taken his origins from the Arctic penguins. He decides to go for a swim in the lake’s glacial water. Soaking feet is more than enough for me.

Taking the path leading to Lake Märjelen, or Märjelensee, we come across a place that could have been our home for a night

– the Gletscherstube. Its location is impressive, right near the lake and the glacial tongue of the Aletsch Glacier. But we haven’t booked, and improvising doesn’t work in the Swiss mountains.

We take a trail to the lake, a small reservoir of melting water that appears and disappears as the glacier moves. Last efforts and we can touch the ice giant. Instead, we enter inside an ice cave, an ephemeral cavern with splendid blue colours. And here again, our friend takes his second bath of the day before continuing our hike.

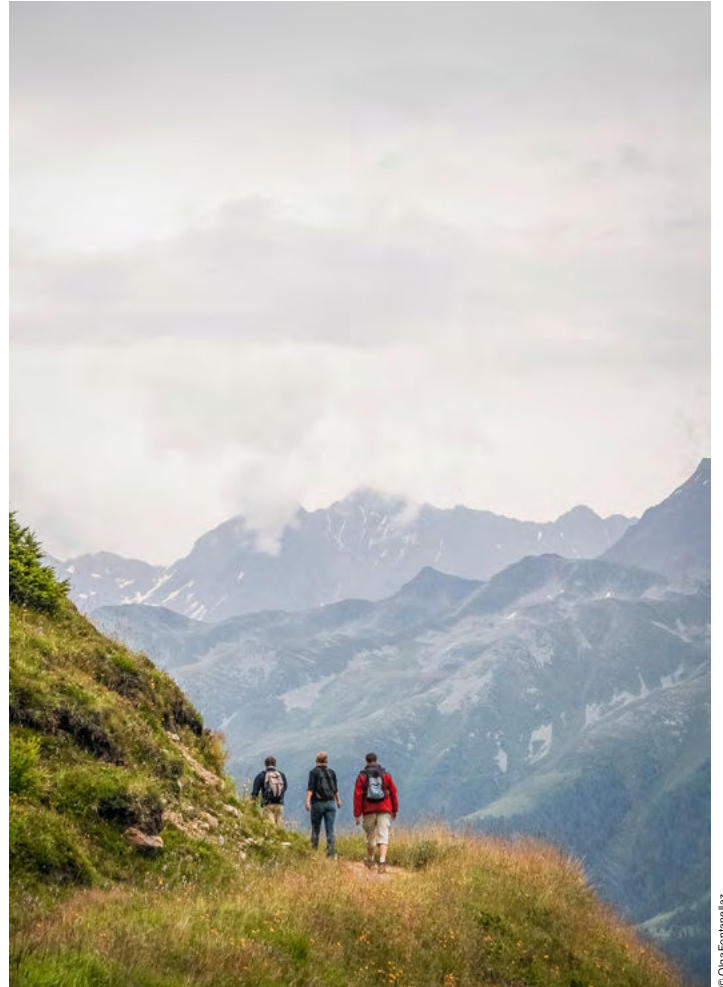
Although going through large blocks of rock, the trail towards the Eggishorn station with its famous views of the Aletsch Glacier has no great difficulties. This time we go through the Tälligrat Tunnel saving us one hour of hiking time. At 1,500 m, the tunnel is



© Olga Fontanelaz



© Olga Fontanelaz



© Olga Fontanelaz

surprisingly long. Finally, reaching the Eggishorn station, located at 2,869 m, we have spectacular views of the Aletsch Glacier. The Aletsch Glacier is the largest glacier in the Alps, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Unfortunately, the glacier has dramatically receded since 1880, and the decline has accelerated since the 1980s. However, this river of ice remains impressive.

A glass of wine on the sunny terrace of the mountain restaurant Horli-Hitta with its majestic view of the Aletsch Glacier in all its length, with its rough and cracked surface, and snow-capped peaks, is something that you cannot forget. ■

Practical information

Access: The Aletsch Glacier is located in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. It can be reached from Fiesch by taking a cable car to Fiescheralp (or hiking for 3 hours) and then hiking to Eggishorn (you can also take two successive cable cars from Fiesch to Eggishorn). It's a relatively easy hike (T2).

Accommodation: In Fiescheralp: hotel Alpina, hotel Eggishorn and hotel Jungfrau. In Märjelensee: Gletscherstube hut <http://www.gletscherstube.ch/> is open from the beginning of July to mid-October.



© Olga Fontanelaz



© Carla Edelembos

La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

Canton de Glaris: Betschwanden

Une série de 26 impressions de lieux
plutôt inconnus – loin du tourisme.

CARLA EDELEMBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Le canton de Glaris est composé de trois grandes communes: la capitale Glaris, Glaris Sud et Glaris Nord, créées en 2011 par fusion des villages. Nous avons choisi de visiter Betschwanden, un petit village rural d'à peine 200 habitants situé dans la commune de Glaris Sud, dans la vallée de la rivière Linth et bordé de collines verdoyantes. Dans la même commune de Glaris Sud se trouve aussi le village de Braunwald, un lieu montagnard touristique sans voiture.

La première mention du village de Betschwanden dans un document officiel date de 1240 sous le nom Beswando. Les experts ne sont pas sûrs si le nom se réfère au mot gallique pour bouleau ou celui pour bataille, ou encore s'il s'agit du prénom Betto. Personnellement

je préfère Betto, c'est sympa et qu'un endroit porte le nom de la personne qui y habite était quand même très courant. Jusqu'au 19^{ème} siècle les habitants vivaient surtout d'agriculture et d'alpage. En fait, seule est bâtie une toute petite partie de Betschwanden, les terres se trouvent surtout sur les flancs des montagnes jusqu'au sommet de Hanenstock à 2561 mètres d'altitude. La vie ne fût pas toujours facile dans ce village et en 1478 une des cloches de l'église fut même vendue pour pouvoir nourrir des familles.

Depuis 1989 le village est coupé en deux par la route cantonale, qui mène de la ville de Glaris au col de Klausen (1948 m), vers le canton d'Uri. Au cœur du village, quelques maisons anciennes avec des jardins fleuris et vergers entourent une petite place. Sur celle-ci, nous pouvons admirer une fontaine qui date de 1855 et

qui se trouve ainsi séparée par la route de l'église et de la gare. Heureusement, la route n'est pas trop fréquentée, sauf par un rallye de voitures anciennes qui suscite l'admiration des habitants, confortablement assis devant leurs maisons, et des quelques passants comme nous. Apparemment depuis 1993, des courses de voitures anciennes y sont régulièrement organisées et nous avons la chance de voir des bagnoles nostalgiques telles que des vieilles Ford, Mercedes, MGs et Austin Martin.

A l'entrée du village, juste à la frontière avec le village voisin de Diesbach, se trouve l'ancien moulin datant de 1778 (maintenant une maison à louer pour des groupes) qui profitait de l'eau du torrent Diesbach, qui chute depuis les pentes. C'est le point de départ de plusieurs randonnées pédestres, on peut



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© Carla Edelmann



© Carla Edelmann

monter pour admirer la cascade depuis en haut et continuer pour le sommet avec un magnifique panorama de la vallée du Linth. Le Diesbach est une de rares chutes à Glaris encore à l'état sauvage et qui n'est pas utilisée pour la production d'électricité. Mais, comme beaucoup de torrents alpins, le Diesbach n'est pas seulement un plaisir pour l'œil du touriste. Déjà en 1629, et de nouveau en 1750, 1762 et 1764 le ruisseau a inondé les villages de Diesbach et Betschwanden, causant beaucoup de dégâts. À la fin des années 1940 des protections contre des inondations furent construites. D'ailleurs, la rivière Linth, dans laquelle le Diesbach se jette, menaçait également régulièrement d'inonder le village, jusqu'au 1963 quand un barrage fut construit en amont.

L'église de Betschwanden a été fondée autour de 1300 et a pris

sa forme actuelle autour de 1493. Elle est devenue réformée depuis 1528, sur l'initiative du pasteur glaronnais Fridolin Brunner, élève de Ulrich Zwingli, l'important réformateur suisse. Bien sûr elle a été rénovée plusieurs fois, surtout à l'intérieur ou presque rien ne rappelle son âge réel. Mais un panneau explique que l'extérieur de l'église n'a pas de tout changé depuis la fin du XV^{ème} siècle. Ce qui est intéressant est que cette église est orientée vers le sud au lieu de l'est comme le veut la tradition, en raison probablement de la composition du sol qui est très meuble à l'est à cause de la rivière et donc peu apte à être bâti.

A la gare de Betschwanden (le village est relié au réseau ferroviaire depuis 1879) l'ancienne salle d'attente et les bureaux du chef de gare ont été convertis en jolies chambres d'hôtes originales. De

l'autre côté des rails nous apercevons les chapiteaux colorés d'un cirque: c'est le cirque Mugg qui a fait de Betschwanden son lieu de résidence. D'anciennes baraques ont été converties en classes d'arts de cirque pour le plus grand plaisir des enfants qui y participent. Les grandes tentes de cirque se trouvent au milieu des roulottes utilisées comme kiosque et buvette. Pendant les vacances, le cirque offre des camps aux enfants où ils apprennent l'art du cirque pendant une semaine entière et dorment dans des roulottes authentiques. A la fin de la semaine le tout est couronné par un vrai spectacle de cirque devant un public enthousiaste de fiers parents et amis. Mais si vous cherchez quelque chose de moins long, vous pouvez aussi juste réserver une journée de formation ou acheter des billets pour une soirée de variété et vous émerveiller devant ce monde du

spectacle en vous amusant devant les arlequins. Nous n'avons rien prévu de tout cela, mais nous ne résistons pas à l'offre de prendre place dans le carrousel pour boire un verre et nous faire doucement tourner la tête. Quel bonheur de faire revivre les plaisirs de notre enfance! ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de St. Gallen et sortez à Zürich, où vous prenez le train en direction de Linth pour sortir à la gare de Diesbach-Betschwanden. Durée du trajet: 4 heures et 26 minutes.



Construite à flanc de falaise, Limone sul Garda est surtout connue pour son association historique avec l'industrie du citron et des agrumes.

© Claude Maillard

Italie du Nord (2/4)

Lac de Garde

Entourée de montagnes, dont le Monte Baldo qui culmine à 2218 m à la Cima Valdrizza, la partie septentrionale du Lac de Garde, longue et étroite, fait penser aux fjords norvégiens, alors qu'au sud, il s'épanouit dans la plaine

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Grâce à un micro-climat méditerranéen poussent sur ses berges vignes, orangers, citronniers, palmiers et oliviers.

Ici il règne une ambiance de Dolce Vita; les températures sont douces toute l'année. Le lac de Garde fait la transition entre les Alpes et la plaine du Pô. Le plus grand des lacs italiens est si vaste qu'on n'en voit pas le bout. Ni le fond d'ailleurs avec une profondeur qui atteint 346 m. Sa forme allongée témoigne de son caractère post-glaciaire. Long de 55 km et d'une largeur de 4 km, il s'étend sur 370 km². Les montagnes fournissent une toile de fond exceptionnelle au lac dont l'écrivain britannique David Herbert Lawrence (célèbre notamment pour son roman «*L'Amant de lady Chatterley*») en faisait l'éloge: «*Les eaux de ce*

lac présentent la plus belle couleur que l'on puisse imaginer: violacées à l'ombre et vert émeraude lorsqu'elles se brisent sur les roches blanches».

Châteaux, jardins luxuriants, palais à la vénitienne, charmants villages et sentiers de randonnée se succèdent sur ses rives au charme très Riviera: les paysages sont spectaculaires.

Le plus grand lac d'Italie

Le jour se lève sur Salò (voir le *newSpecial* du mois passé). Créée sous l'Empire romain, la cité a été de 1943 à 1945 la capitale de la République sociale italienne dirigée par Benito Mussolini. La ville historique est construite autour de sa cathédrale de style gothique fondée au XV^e siècle et dédiée à Santa Maria Annunziata. Le Palazzo della Magnifica Patria, palais du XVI^e siècle qui abrite

un musée relatant l'histoire de Salò, vaut également le détour. Côté lac, une longue promenade offre une belle vue sur les environs; l'occasion pour déguster un *caffè espresso* ou un *Gelato* à l'italienne en terrasse de l'un des nombreux bistrotts avant de partir à la découverte des attraits du Lac de Garde.

Une trentaine de kilomètres plus au nord, toujours sur la côte lombarde, après avoir traversé Gardone Riviera (ville célèbre par le «*Vittoriale degli Italiani*», la monumentale demeure du poète Gabriele d'Annunzio) et Toscolano (le bourg le plus ancien du Lac de Garde), Limone sul Garda se profile à l'horizon. Avec son atmosphère typique d'un village de pêcheurs, l'endroit est enchanteur. La culture du citron a donné son nom à ce superbe village construit à flanc de falaise. Après avoir visité

l'église San Pietro qui abrite des fresques des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles, une pause rafraîchissante à la Limonaia del Castel (La maison du citron) s'impose.

A la pointe nord du Lac, dans la région de Trentin-Haut-Adige, l'élégante station balnéaire Riva del Garda est surplombée par le Monte Rocchetta haut de 1575 mètres. Surnommée la «*perle du lac de Garde*», c'est un important centre de sports nautiques également riche d'un passé historique à découvrir, comme le Palazzo Pretorio, la Torre Aponale, ainsi que la Rocca, une ancienne forteresse avec douves et pont-levis donnant directement sur le lac. A trois kilomètres de là, situées sur la commune de Tenno, les cascades du Varone, hautes d'une centaine de mètres, constituent une escapade dépaysante à ne pas louper.



Le pont fortifié Scaligero enjambant le fleuve Adige qui serpente dans Vérone date du XIV^e siècle.



Via Cappello à Vérone, la maison de Juliette et son fameux balcon d'où elle écoutait Roméo.

A la frontière de trois régions

Dominée par la silhouette de son château, le *Castello Scaligero*, Malcesine est la porte d'entrée de la région de Vénétie. La ville abrite le magnifique Palazzo dei Capitani avec son jardin suspendu sur l'eau, palais qui hébergeait les seigneurs vénitiens puissants qui régnaient sur la région. Et, pour profiter d'une vue panoramique sur le Lac de Garde, un téléphérique permet en 10 minutes d'atteindre le Monte Baldo situé à 1760 mètres d'altitude.

Pour tous les amateurs de vin, Bardolino est une étape incontournable sur la route qui mène à Lazise. Cette agréable bourgade possède une élégante église romane du XI^e siècle à visiter avant d'emprunter la Strada del Vino, la route des vins des producteurs locaux qui se font un plaisir de proposer à la dégustation leur vin rouge renommé. Lazise est l'une des destinations les plus charmantes à découvrir au Lac de Garde. Encerclée de remparts, la vieille ville avec ses ruelles romantiques et ses petites places regroupe de charmantes maisons colorées à l'architecture vénitienne. Le petit port avec ses

traditionnels bateaux de pêche est tout-à-fait ravissant.

Bâtie sur la rive sud du Lac de Garde, Peschiera del Garda a des airs de Venise avec ses nombreux canaux et ses maisons aux façades multicolores. Les visites de la forteresse *Forte Ardieti* ainsi que du sanctuaire Madonna del Frassino datant du XVI^e siècle s'imposent avant de profiter du coucher de soleil qui embrase le centre historique de cette agréable ville. Située sur une péninsule au sud du lac et considérée comme le plus charmant village du Lac de Garde, la station thermale de Sirmione se distingue par son imposante forteresse (*Rocca Scaligera*) construite au XIII^e siècle pour protéger le village et le port. Depuis les *Grotte di Catullo*, vestiges d'une villa romaine, la vue sur le lac est époustouflante.

La boucle est bouclée, le tour du Lac de Garde prend fin. Mais avant de rejoindre Salò, une escapade à Vérone, située à une quarantaine de kilomètres, est incontournable.

Vérone, sur les traces de Roméo et Juliette

Souvent présentée comme la

rivale de Venise, la charmante cité médiévale de Vérone² regroupe tout ce qui fait la magie des villes italiennes. Sur la Piazza Brà, la place principale de la ville, se dressent les arènes, le troisième plus grand amphithéâtre antique après le Colisée romain et celui de Capoue en Campanie. C'est également le mieux conservé d'Italie. A quelques rues, entourée de maisons Renaissance, la Piazza delle Erbe est quasiment restée en l'état depuis le Moyen-Age. On y flâne parmi les étals de son marché coloré, ou on s'attable à la terrasse d'un café pour savourer l'atmosphère autant que le contenu de sa tasse! A deux pas, au 23 Via Cappello, se situe l'incontournable maison où Roméo venait conter fleurette à sa belle Juliette qui l'écoutait depuis son balcon. Dans la cour trône une statue grandeur nature de la jeune fille dont la croyance incite à en caresser le sein droit si l'on veut être heureux en amour.

Le long du fleuve Adige qui serpente dans la ville, l'imposant Castelvecchio, château datant du XIV^e siècle, témoigne du passé médiéval de la ville de Vérone. Construit en brique rouge, il mérite le détour au même titre

que le Ponte Scaligero, le pont fortifié construit dans son prolongement. Autre magnifique entrée qui donne accès au centre de la cité, l'ancien pont romain Ponte Pietra, avec sa chaussée pavée, demande à être foulé. De magnifiques places offrent une belle vision de cette cité d'art, comme le Palazzo del Mercato Vecchio et la Piazza dei Signori. Près de cette dernière reposent les anciens souverains de Vérone qui régnaient sur la ville au tournant des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles. Chacune des tombes princières est couronnée d'un monument équestre dédié au défunt. Enfin, depuis la colline Saint-Pierre (Colle San Pietro) qui surplombe le théâtre romain construit au I^{er} siècle, la vue sur Vérone est tout simplement magnifique. ■

1 www.gardalombardia.fr

2 www.turismoverona.it

Demain, direction plein sud et changement radical de décor avec Maranello, sur les terres d'Enzo Ferrari. (A découvrir dans le prochain numéro du newSpecial).



Vacances volcaniques pour Nadège et sa petite famille.

© Nadège Kummer

Vacances volcaniques en Islande

Une éruption volcanique a commencé le mercredi 3 août au sud-ouest de l'Islande, au cœur d'une fissure volcanique du mont Fagradalsfjall qui appartient au système volcanique de Krysuvik, situé dans la péninsule de Reykjanes, près de la capitale Reykjavik. Un événement exceptionnel qui attire de nombreux touristes.

NADÈGE KUMMER (UIT)

**AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE
CLAUDE MAILLARD**

L'Islande chevauche la dorsale médio-atlantique, une fissure séparant les plaques tectoniques eurasienne et nord-américaine. Le mouvement de ces plaques qui éloigne progressivement de 2 cm par an les parties ouest et est de l'île est en partie responsable de l'activité sismique intense du pays. On y dénombre 32 systèmes volcaniques actuellement considérés comme actifs, soit le plus grand nombre en Europe. Et, en moyenne, une éruption s'y produit tous les cinq ans.

La dernière éruption du mois d'août a été annoncée par

l'Office météorologique islandais (IMO) dans un secteur où un autre volcan, le Geldingadalur, avait déjà fait parler de lui en 2021. Elle est localisée dans la vallée inhabitée de Meradalir, à 1 km du premier volcan qui était resté en éruption pendant plus de six mois et avait occasionner l'écoulement de 140 millions de m³ de magma.

Avant l'an dernier, la péninsule de Reykjanes n'avait plus été le théâtre d'une éruption depuis près de huit siècles; mais les spécialistes islandais soulignent que la région est entrée dans une nouvelle période d'activité volcanique.

Au pays des volcans

Les images fournies par les différents médias de ce «spectacle» époustouflant sont saisissantes. Le mont Fagradalsfjall n'est pas un volcan classique car il n'est pas pourvu d'un cratère; le magma s'échappe d'une fissure volcanique d'une longueur estimée à 350 m. L'éruption produit des jets de lave en fusion d'une vingtaine de mètres de haut qui se transforment en roche sombre à mesure que la matière refroidit, le tout enveloppé d'une fumée bleutée.

L'écoulement de la lave aux premières heures de l'éruption était estimé à 32 m³ par



Des fontaines de lave d'une vingtaine de mètres de haut jaillissent du volcan.

© Nadège Kummer

seconde, selon les mesures faites mercredi par des scientifiques de l'Institut des Sciences de la Terre trois heures et demie après le début de l'activité. C'est environ quatre ou cinq fois plus qu'au début de l'éruption de 2021. L'éruption actuelle est donc bien plus puissante. La probabilité de cette éruption avait été considérée comme «substantielle» par l'IMO. En effet, l'exploitation de données transmises par les satellites avait confirmé une déformation de la croûte terrestre causée par un afflux de magma à une faible profondeur, à environ 1 km de la surface. Depuis le 30 juillet, une intense activité sismique agitait la péninsule de Reykjanes et un large secteur autour de Fagradalsfjallhraun, le nom donné au champ de lave formé par la plus longue éruption volcanique sur l'île depuis 50 ans, du 19 mars au 18 septembre 2021. Plus de 10 000 secousses avaient été enregistrées par les sismographes de l'IMO, dont deux d'une magnitude supérieure à 5 sur une échelle allant jusqu'à 8. Un épisode sismique similaire de moindre intensité avait eu lieu dans la même région en décembre 2021 sans que la lave sorte de terre.

Une éruption spectaculaire

La zone de l'éruption située dans un endroit difficile d'accès nécessite 90 minutes de marche éprouvante. Cela n'a pas dissuadé les amateurs avides de sensations fortes de venir s'émerveiller à la vue de la lave en ébullition et au bruit du grondement lorsque le magma jaillit. D'après les autorités islandaises, ils étaient près de 2000 sur place au premier jour de l'apparition de la fissure. Différents points de vue offrant un incroyable panorama sur cette nature qui se déchaîne leur étaient proposés. Les autorités avaient pourtant appelé la population à ne pas se rendre sur le site avant qu'une évaluation des risques ne soit menée. Mais jeudi, la protection civile a indiqué que seuls les jeunes enfants devaient se tenir hors de la zone de l'éruption. La police islandaise a quant à elle indiqué que seuls les bons marcheurs pouvaient se rendre sur la zone de l'éruption, car le chemin était très long et périlleux pour y accéder.

Les autorités recommandent néanmoins de faire preuve de prudence aux abords de la zone, l'éruption pouvant rapidement évoluer et s'accroître.

De nouvelles fissures peuvent s'ouvrir, laissant la lave incandescente remonter. Une avancée rapide et soudaine du magma est possible. Par ailleurs, il est déconseillé de rester trop longtemps près de la zone d'éruption en raison de la présence de gaz toxiques potentiellement mortels qui peuvent s'accumuler.

Le ministre islandais des Affaires étrangères a indiqué que le risque pour les zones habitées est considéré comme très faible, ajoutant que la perturbation des vols n'est pas à craindre. En 2010, l'éruption du volcan Eyjafjöll avait donné naissance à un gigantesque nuage de cendres volcaniques qui avait paralysé le trafic aérien pendant un mois et entraîné l'annulation de milliers de vols. Donc, pas de soucis cette fois-ci pour les touristes de retour d'Islande. Nadège Kummer, fonctionnaire à l'UIT, et sa petite famille étaient du voyage. Partis pour une semaine sur l'île, les caprices de la météo sur les côtes du nord les ont obligés à modifier leur programme, ce qui leur a permis de rejoindre la péninsule de Reykjanes située plus au sud. Et ils ne seront pas déçus de ce changement de dernière minute...

De glace et de feu

«Une semaine de vacances en Islande, voyage compris depuis Genève, c'est peu pour découvrir toutes les richesses et beautés de ce pays tellement fantastique pour les amoureux de la nature. Il n'a pas été facile de choisir ce que nous voulions voir. L'Islande n'est pas très grande, mais les distances entre les villes et les principaux lieux touristiques sont longues. A titre d'exemple, la route circulaire N°1 faisant le tour de l'île en longeant plus ou moins les côtes fait 1000 km. Et, au volant d'un camping-car, les kilomètres semblent encore plus longs!

Après avoir tressailli à chaque jaillissement de l'un des plus hauts geysers de la planète situé à Geysir et qui expulse son eau à plus de 20 m de haut, nous avons pu apprécier les spectaculaires chutes de Gullfoss dont la puissance des flots est d'une beauté sans égale. Elles figurent sans trop de difficulté parmi les plus belles d'Europe. Plus au sud de l'île, le glacier Vatnajökull considéré comme le troisième glacier le plus grand du monde (il couvre 10% de l'Islande) nous éblouira tant il est impressionnant. Il laisse s'échapper dans



Au loin, derrière l'étendue de lave crachée par le volcan Geldingadalur en 2021, le mont Fagradalsfjall en éruption.



Atmosphère surréaliste à l'approche du volcan.

l'océan Atlantique des icebergs aux reflets bleutés dont le contraste avec les plages de sable noir sur lesquelles ils viennent s'échouer est tout à fait saisissant. Avant de rejoindre la côte nord de l'île afin d'observer les baleines, le rêve de nos deux garçons Timéo et Valentin, un détour du côté de Blue Lagoon sera au programme. Se baigner dans ses eaux riches en silice, de couleur laiteuse et bleutée et dont la température oscille entre 30-39°C est un pur plaisir. Arrivés au nord, c'est la désillusion; les conditions météo ne permettent pas de sorties en mer. Adieu les baleines, et notre séjour est pratiquement terminé. Retour morose sur Reykjavik... avant que nous apprenions qu'un volcan venait d'entrer en éruption au sud de la capitale islandaise. Il ne nous faudra pas longtemps pour prendre la décision de mettre le cap sur la péninsule

de Reykjanes où le sol venait de s'ouvrir, laissant s'échapper le magma venu tout droit des entrailles de la terre».

La nature en fureur

«Arrivés sur place en fin d'après-midi, nous ne sommes pas les seuls; de nombreux 4X4 sont éparpillés dans les alentours. Nous entamons une marche d'approche qui sera bien plus longue et exténuante que prévu. Beaucoup de pierres recouvrent le terrain au relief escarpé et la fatigue se fait sentir. Mais, l'excitation en voyant au loin le panache de fumée nous tient en haleine et nous fait avancer. Et, au bout de 1 h 30, la récompense est là, devant nos yeux. A la vue du volcan, c'est l'éblouissement total, l'exaltation est à son comble. L'atmosphère est complètement hallucinante. Un frissonnement envahit notre corps. Sur une longueur impressionnante la terre s'est littéralement

déchirée et de gigantesques fontaines de lave s'élèvent dans le ciel. Une fois retombée au sol, cette lave rougeoyante forme un torrent qui s'écoule dans le bas de la plaine avant de se refroidir et de prendre une couleur noire. Depuis le promontoire sur lequel nous sommes installés, le spectacle est féérique, surnaturel. Un grondement indescriptible vient jusqu'à nous ainsi que des odeurs de soufre. Minuit approche, la nuit est tombée mais le ciel est tellement rouge qu'on a l'impression que le soleil est en train de se lever!

Nous aurions bien terminé la nuit à contempler cette éruption volcanique, mais toute bonne chose a une fin; dans quelques heures décolle notre avion pour la Suisse. Longtemps nous nous souviendrons de ces vacances volcaniques en Islande tout à fait exceptionnelles et totalement imprévues pour nous.».

Partie en Islande quelques jours après Nadège, une de ses collègues de l'UIT a constaté qu'un cône volcanique de 40 m de haut s'était formé au-dessus de la fissure. Mais fin août, l'écoulement de la lave du volcan qui était devenu la principale attraction pour les touristes présents dans le pays s'est arrêtée. ■

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