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Voices of Strength

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SERVING THE PEOPLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA SINCE 1949



WHERE
COMPANIES
BECOME
BRANDS



VOICES OF STRENGTH

As international civil servants, we work at the crossroads of crises, innovation, diversity, and global solidarity. Each month, our community reminds us that meaningful change begins with listening, empathy, and the courage to broaden our understanding of each other. This issue brings these values to life through stories that illuminate how inclusion is not just a principle, but a daily practice that shapes stronger institutions and healthier societies.

Inside these pages, colleagues share deeply personal reflections on disability inclusion, mental health, equity, and the gaps that still remain. Their testimonies challenge us to rethink our assumptions and to recognize the invisible barriers that can transform an impairment into a disability. Their openness is not only inspiring; it is a reminder that compassion and trust are powerful tools of change in our workplaces.

Innovation also plays a central role this month. Whether through new approaches to procurement, digital learning, or the integration of emerging technologies in global education, we see how creative thinking can expand access, empower individuals, and reinforce fairness and dignity.

This first April issue of 2026 also celebrates the richness of cultural expression, from artistic inspiration and poetry to the preservation of global heritage. Art remains one of the most universal languages of connection, capable of healing, provoking reflection, and reminding us of the shared humanity that unites us beyond borders.

As we move through 2026, let us continue to champion inclusion, embrace innovation responsibly, and nurture the human connections that sustain our collective mission. May these stories encourage each of us to reflect, engage, and act so that the values we uphold as a community are fully lived in our everyday work.

Enjoy your reading, share widely, and take inspiration from the voices that make Geneva's international ecosystem so vibrant. //

VOIX DE LA FORCE

En tant que fonctionnaires internationaux, nous travaillons au carrefour des crises, de l'innovation, de la diversité et de la solidarité mondiale. Chaque mois, notre communauté nous rappelle que le changement véritable commence par l'écoute, l'empathie et le courage d'élargir notre compréhension les uns des autres. Ce numéro donne vie à ces valeurs à travers des récits qui montrent que l'inclusion n'est pas seulement un principe, mais une pratique quotidienne qui façonne des institutions plus fortes et des sociétés plus saines.

Dans ces pages, des collègues partagent des réflexions profondément personnelles sur l'inclusion du handicap, la santé mentale, l'équité et les lacunes qui persistent encore. Leurs témoignages nous invitent à repenser nos suppositions et à reconnaître les barrières invisibles qui peuvent transformer une déficience en handicap. Leur ouverture est non seulement inspirante; elle nous rappelle que la compassion et la confiance sont des outils puissants de changement dans nos milieux de travail.

L'innovation joue également un rôle central ce mois-ci. Qu'il s'agisse de nouvelles approches des achats, de l'apprentissage numérique ou de l'intégration de technologies émergentes dans l'éducation mondiale, nous voyons comment la créativité peut élargir l'accès, renforcer l'autonomie des individus et consolider l'équité et la dignité.

Ce premier numéro d'avril 2026 célèbre également la richesse de l'expression culturelle, de l'inspiration artistique et de la poésie à la préservation du patrimoine mondial. L'art demeure l'un des langages de connexion les plus universels, capable de guérir, de susciter la réflexion et de rappeler l'humanité commune qui nous unit au-delà des frontières.

À mesure que nous avançons en 2026, continuons à promouvoir l'inclusion, à adopter l'innovation de manière responsable et à cultiver les liens humains qui soutiennent notre mission collective. Puissent ces récits encourager chacun d'entre nous à réfléchir, s'engager et agir, afin que les valeurs que nous défendons en tant que communauté prennent pleinement vie dans notre travail quotidien.

Bonne lecture, partagez largement, et laissez-vous inspirer par les voix qui rendent si vibrant l'écosystème international de Genève. //



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Avril 2026

N°847

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Do I have a disability, and does it matter?

NO BARRIERS, NO DISABILITY



TEXT ERIC STENER CARLSON,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Hi, my name's Eric. I've been working for the International Labour Organization (ILO) for twenty-five years, ten of which on disability inclusion. I'm the ILO's Focal Point for the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), and I help coordinate the ILO's Disability Champions Network.¹

The ILO sent out a survey a few years ago, asking how many of us staff had disabilities. Without getting into the statistics, a few of us responded that we had disabilities, but many more of us said we weren't sure.

Now, that sounds a bit odd, doesn't it? I mean, you should know whether you have a disability or not, right?

Well, I'm one of the colleagues who said he didn't know, and I'll tell you why.

For at least as long as I've worked in the UN system, I've had chronic anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder - also known as OCD. You may (or may not) know other UN colleagues who speak so openly out about their psychosocial impairments². But, trust me, I'm not alone. As the UN writes:

"Comparative studies have shown that the reported levels of symptoms consistent with mental health conditions are higher at the United Nations (at approximately 50 per cent) than in the general population. In successive staff well-being surveys, it has been highlighted that the longer people work for the United Nations, the more likely they are to experience negative mental health outcomes. Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress and hazardous drinking have a negative impact on the quality of life of thousands of United Nations employees...³"

I'm not going to pretend I "represent" all persons in the UN with psychosocial impairments. That covers a broad category of conditions, identities and experiences, and everyone lives their impairment in a different way.

In my case, anxiety can make me feel an overwhelming sense of danger. I get prickly skin and shortness of breath (sometimes it feels like I'm having a heart attack), and this is where the OCD part comes in: obsessive thoughts that can go on for days, weeks and even months - in recurring, massive waves, that hit the shore of my mind like a 24-hour-a-day tsunami.

I'm also not going to assume that we all get triggered by the same things. But we've got to admit there are plenty of usual suspects in the UN: there are the constant moves, uprooting of our families, the lack of local support networks, threats of terrorism, attacks on UN officials... the list goes on and on.

What really triggers me is seeing people in situations of cruelty, extreme poverty and exclusion. And that's part and parcel of our daily work.

We serve decent people all around the world who often find themselves in indecent conditions: workers whose lives are threatened because their HIV medication is cut off; women who are forced to sell sex for a bag of rice to feed their families; job applicants who are denied work, because their boss thinks their disability equals inability.

The best part of my job is helping these people access safe, dignified working conditions (I have seen real, lasting success, and that's where social justice comes alive). But it can also be the worst part, because, for all the success, I feel I can never quite do enough.

Maybe it's my OCD, or maybe I just believe the ILO Constitution when it says that the war against want requires us to work with "unrelenting vigour". So, I'm unrelenting with myself - I find myself working nights and weekends, I think too much, and I stretch myself beyond the breaking point, just to try and tip the scales of justice the right way. And all of that has a negative impact on my mental health.

So, given all that, why am I still not sure I have a disability? I'll give you the reason. In fact, I'll give you four: **Stefan; Jürgen; Aria; Beatriz.**

These are the names of my colleagues I work with in the ILO's Disability Team. Every day, they help make my workplace a kind, empathetic and fun place to be. In my team, it's okay for me to have a bad day, and no one's going to judge me for it. It's okay for me to take ten minutes just to sit quietly and collect my thoughts. It's okay for me to be open about my mental health concerns.

My team members look in on me, they take me to lunch, they make sure I'm taking care of myself. We celebrate our victories together, and we're there for the losses, too. Because of this unconditional support, I can be the best version of myself at work - I can help write policies, and draft legislation, I can facilitate courses, and make speeches, and go on missions, and put in the long hours that all of us do, and I feel less anxious about it. Basically, they don't put barriers in my way. And that's a big deal.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) has what I like to call it "*The Magic Formula*": **Impairment + Barrier = Disability.**

That is, impairments are just impairments. They're actual things in the actual world. Deafness. Blindness. Schizophrenia. Dyslexia. Anxiety. But those impairments don't stop us from being workers and parents, friends and leaders in our communities. However, if our bosses or co-workers or neighbors put up barriers (these can be physical, cultural, attitudinal), if they block us from being our best selves, if they exclude us or ridicule us or make us feel unworthy, then they disable us.

So, to answer the question, "*Do I have a disability?*", well, that depends on the context and the time of day. In my team, I don't face barriers, so, when I'm working with them, I don't feel I have a disability. However, many other times during the day, in many other contexts, I do face barriers, so I do feel disabled by society.

But what about the rest of us? Why, in spite of this crisis of psychosocial impairments within the UN family, very few of us identify as a person with a disability?

It may have to do with a lack of information about disability. It could also be fear of stigma and discrimination - because, even after six years of implementing UNDIS, some colleagues still think "*disability*" is a bad word. Or maybe it's a lack of role-modelling - not many of us with psychosocial impairments are "*out*", so the rest of us may think that things like anxiety and depression are just part of the job, and we should suffer in silence.

That's the reason I wrote this article. I just want to say, that, if you work in the UN system, and if you have a psychosocial impairment, it's okay. You're in good company. You take a lot on your shoulders, and sometimes it's hard, and you shouldn't feel ashamed about it.

If you want to come out, come out. Look for support at work, find peers, talk to people you trust, and get the help you need. If you're not ready to come out, don't worry either! Identifying - privately or publicly - as a person with disability is your choice, and when (or if) you do it is completely up to you.

As for me, the next time the ILO sends out a survey on disability inclusion, I think I'll probably check "*Yes, I have a disability.*" Because there's nothing wrong with that, because it's part of my identity. At that same time, it's not all my identity. I have anxiety and OCD, but I'm also a husband, a father, a brother, a son, a spiritual person, a horse and dog enthusiast, a novelist, a philosopher and an ILO official.

Speaking of being an ILO official, now that I've cleared that up, it's time for me to get back to doing the job I love. No barriers, no disability. //

- 1 *The ILO has a Disability Champions Network, currently with around 100 Champions. These Champions, all throughout the ILO - at Headquarters and Field Offices - promote disability inclusion within their sphere of work. It's all about generating change wherever they are and sparking dialogue with colleagues.*
- 2 *"Impairment" means something you actually have, like blindness or deafness - those are called sensory impairments. A "psychosocial" impairment has to do with your personal headspace - with psychology - but it also picks up on the sense that the impairment occurs within, and is shaped by, society.*
- 3 *United Nations. United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy for 2024 and beyond (2024) page 15. https://hr.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-10/UN_system_mental_health_and_well_being_strategy_for_2024.pdf*

ILO Disability Champions Network (DCN): My Results Narrative

INCLUSION IS BUILT ON LISTENING AND RESPECT

Hi. My name is Quazi. I'm a member of the Disability Champions Network¹ of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Bangladesh.

WELCOME TO MY WORK

In this article, I'll explain a bit about my journey to advance disability inclusion in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment sector and Footwear Manufacturer. My approach focused on making disability inclusion part of Better Work Bangladesh³ systems, rather than creating parallel initiatives. And the most important thing of all was putting front and centre the voices and experiences of persons with disabilities.

This ensured that inclusion became part of routine workplace dialogue and practice. The work aligned with international labour standards, the Bangladesh Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. It also took into account the practical realities of workers and management.

LIVED EXPERIENCE

A critical part of the work involved actively consulting persons with disabilities. During one multi-stakeholder forum, workers with disabilities shared how workplace decisions were often made 'for' them, rather than 'with' them. Several workers described how well-intended support sometimes limited their independence.

These conversations prompted reflection among factory management. One manager shared a key realisation:

"We thought we were being guardians. But we now understand that the individual is best placed to suggest what helps them. We need to practice more dialogue."

This shift marked an important change. Inclusion was no longer viewed as protection or charity, but as a process built on listening and respect.

In another factory, an accessibility audit was conducted alongside interviews with workers with disabilities. Through this discussion, we found there were no toilets accessible for persons with mobility impairments; this affected their dignity at work. Following the audit, the factory installed an accessible toilet.

The intervention was simple, but the impact was meaningful. For the workers concerned, it signalled recognition, respect, and belonging. For management, it demonstrated how listening can lead to practical and effective solutions.

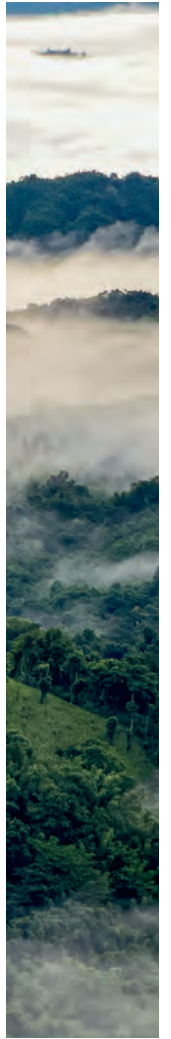
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

In collaboration with the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN), a member of the ILO's Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN), I supported awareness-raising initiatives for employers and worker representatives. These initiatives focused on non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation⁴, and inclusive workplace practices.

The collaboration was enabled through a Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO Country Office Bangladesh and BBDN. Under this partnership, I supported the planning and delivery of jointly organised webinars. These webinars helped employers translate national legislation and international standards into practical factory-level actions.

BBDN's outreach was extended to factories with previously-limited experience with disability inclusion. I engaged with these factories to build on these partnerships. The focus was on practical steps related to inclusive recruitment, workplace accessibility, and human resources.

TEXT: QUAZI SABETUL ISLAM², ILO COUNTRY OFFICE, DHAKA;
ENTERPRISE ADVISOR, BETTER WORK BANGLADESH
PHOTO: ISTOCK



Better Work Bangladesh reaches approximately one million workers across around 500 factories with more than 40 international apparel brands. Therefore, working with our factory partners in this way means scaling up disability inclusion.

KEY RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

These interventions contributed to greater disability inclusion awareness among employers and worker representatives. Factories showed increased confidence in discussing non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation.

As we promoted disability inclusion within Better Work Bangladesh's advisory services, factories began adopting more inclusive, sustainable approaches as part of everyday work.

Through the wide reach of Better Work Bangladesh, these efforts contributed to gradual cultural change in the Ready-Made Garment sector. Disability inclusion is now a part of conversations on decent work, productivity, and workplace relations.

Most importantly, persons with disabilities are becoming active partners in making change happen. //

- 1 *The ILO has a Disability Champions Network, currently with around 100 Champions. These Champions, all throughout the ILO - at Headquarters and Field Offices - promote disability inclusion within their work. It's all about generating change wherever they are, and sparking dialogue with colleagues.*
- 2 *The author used support from AI in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure in writing this article.*
- 3 *Better Work Bangladesh is a flagship program of the ILO-Bangladesh. This is the 7th country programme of the ILO-Better Work project.*
- 4 *Providing reasonable accommodation means making changes to the workplace - to the physical environment, ways of working, work schedule...etc. - so individuals with disabilities can work in equality with others.*

Listening to all voices help us navigate the path to disability inclusion.

Learning to Ask the Right Questions: Disability Inclusion from Inside the ILO

WHO ARE WE DESIGNING OUR PROJECT FOR,
AND WHO ARE WE MAYBE LEAVING OUT?



Hi. My name is Farjana. I'm what's called a Disability Champion in the International Labour Organization (ILO) in our Country Office in Dhaka¹.

However, I didn't start my work in Bangladesh thinking of myself as a Champion.

Like many UN colleagues, I believed in inclusion. I supported the principles of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). But, if I'm honest, disability was not always the first thing I thought about when planning meetings, drafting workplans, or aligning priorities with our partners.

Then things changed.

THE MEETING THAT MADE ME THINK

Then something happened during a coordination meeting - and it's stayed with me every since. We were discussing priorities for the year ahead - social protection, data, policy reform. Everything sounded right. The language was solid. The intentions were good.

And yet, as the discussion moved forward, I realized something was missing.

No one mentioned persons with disabilities.

This wasn't because anyone was opposed to inclusion. It was simply because, when everyone's busy, inclusion is often assumed rather than checked. That realization made me uncomfortable. And it forced me to ask a simple question: who are we designing this for, and who are we maybe leaving out?

That question changed how I approach my work.

FROM PLANS ON PAPER TO ACTION IN REAL LIFE

In Bangladesh, UN agencies have strong Disability Inclusion Action Plans. They align with global commitments and national priorities. On paper, a lot is happening.

But in practice, I saw how easily good work can become fragmented - for example, different agencies consulting with the same organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). Sometimes OPDs are asked to attend meeting after meeting, with little clarity on what would change as a result.

Being part of the UN Disability Inclusion Task Team, we had to confront this reality. We had to move beyond sharing updates and start making decisions together. That required trust. It also required reflection about what was working and what wasn't.

LEARNING THAT INCLUSION IS A SYSTEM-WIDE JOB

One of the biggest lessons for me was that disability inclusion is not just about targeting specific groups. It's about how systems work.

When we talk about social protection, the real question is not just about whether persons with disabilities are included in one programme or another. It is also whether the system itself is accessible and responsive to their needs.

The same applies to data. Disability-related data is often treated as a technical issue. But working closely with colleagues and partners reminded me that data is about visibility. It's about being counted. It's about being recognized.



Once we started framing disability inclusion as a system-wide job, the way we worked changed. Partners engaged differently. UN colleagues began to see inclusion not as an extra demand on their time, but rather as business and usual.

LISTENING CHANGED EVERYTHING

If there is one thing that has shaped my understanding of disability inclusion the most, it is listening.

Listening to representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities when they told us consultations felt rushed or inaccessible. Listening when they explained that participation without influencing the final product is not meaningful. Listening when they challenged our timelines and assumptions.

Those conversations weren't always comfortable. But they were necessary.

They reminded me that inclusion is not about speaking on behalf of others. Rather, it is about creating space and then stepping back.

SMALL CHOICES, REAL CHANGES

Progress came through small, consistent choices:

- Making meetings accessible;
- Clarifying roles across agencies;
- Aligning priorities, not duplicating efforts;
- Focusing on outcomes instead of activities.

Over time, disability inclusion became part of how decisions were made.

What surprised me most was how this improved everything else. Coordination became easier. Partnerships became stronger. The work became more grounded in reality.

WHAT BEING A CHAMPION MEANS TO ME NOW

Being a Disability Inclusion Champion in the ILO is not about having all the answers. It's about being willing to ask better questions:

"Who is missing?"

"Who is being asked to adapt, and who is not?"

"What would inclusion look like if we designed things differently from the start?"

In Bangladesh, our way of working is still evolving. There is more to do. But I have learned that when inclusion is treated as daily practice rather than as an add-on, real change is possible.

Once you start working that way, it's hard to go back. //

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- 2 The author used support from AI in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure in writing this article.

A group photo of presenters at the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2025 celebration in Dhaka, Bangladesh. (Author second from right.)

What does procurement have to do with disability inclusion? Actually, a lot!

PARTNERSHIPS MAKE IT POSSIBLE



Hi there, I'm Julia. I work on sustainable procurement for the International Labour Organization (ILO), promoting decent work and human rights due diligence in our supply chains.

What's one of my earliest memories of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)?

Around the time of the COVID pandemic, I was on a call with our procurement department chief, and he was asking us, *"What does disability inclusion have to do with procurement?"*

FAIR QUESTION.

The answer, as we all learned these last six years implementing UNDIS, is *"A lot."* UNDIS Indicator #8 on procurement details many ways that procurement can promote disability inclusion and remove barriers. For example, it requires UN entities to have a relevant policy, make our platforms and documents accessible, measure progress of our disability-inclusive tenders, and more.

In fact, it was so much that, for the first couple of years, we rated ourselves at *"Missing"* for Indicator #8¹. This is because, we did not have the policy, processes, tools, accessible platforms or documents in place to make it to the *"Approaches"* rating. But throughout those years, we were putting together the building blocks, for the ILO to engage in - and promote - disability-inclusive procurement.

It felt like a gargantuan task, especially considering how many other departments, functions, and tools were implicated. Many of the UNDIS sub-indicators depended on other ILO departments and even other UN agencies that manage some of our digital tools.

We got help from colleagues across the house, with particularly incredible support from our disability inclusion specialists who were with us in the trenches throughout the process of translating disability inclusion ideas into practical tools, technical specifications, terms of reference, evaluation criteria, interview questions, contractual clauses, and much more.

Together, we were able to embed disability inclusive procurement as a part of our overall policy. We redesigned our Procurement Manual and tender templates into an accessible format. We created a dedicated sustainable procurement guidance on disability inclusive procurement, and we invited all procurement staff to participate in the ILO's Disability Equality Training (DET)².

One of the most creative collaborations was with our Human Resources Talent Team (HR Talent), to establish Long Term Agreements (LTAs) with suppliers that were evaluated for disability inclusive facilitation and coaching services. This means that, for the first time, we were having a dialogue with possible suppliers on disability and sending a strong message that the ILO is committed to inclusion (These resulting LTAs are currently available on the UN Global Marketplace (ungm.org) for piggyback by UN sister agencies).

As a part of our ILO accountability and transparency mechanisms, we conducted debriefs with unsuccessful bidders, and we were amazed by their reactions - they gave us feedback that our disability inclusion questionnaire and interview questions helped the companies further consider the importance of accessibility in their services. Some companies even discussed the issue with their senior management, so they could be better prepared for tendering with the UN in the future, and to consider accessibility more thoughtfully in all their company operations.



Disability-inclusive procurement
is a team effort.

A procurement officer does not typically get to see this kind of social impact through what our tenders communicate to the market. This tender will always remind me of the power of procurement in conveying an organization's values.

Combining our in-house technical and operational expertise gives us the opportunity to walk our talk.

I hope all of us in the UN system take the valuable lessons learned from UNDIS and apply them to other areas of social sustainability, including combating human trafficking and forced labour in supply chains, gender responsive procurement, the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and inclusion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

In the current context, where we are being asked to do more with less, collaboration across our agencies, and across the entire UN system, is our strength. If we can build those partnerships, then we will better deliver for our beneficiaries.

Which brings me to one of my most recent UNDIS memories.

Our ILO Office in Buenos Aires reached out to me. It turns out, the Province of Buenos Aires Procurement function wanted to exchange ideas on disability inclusive procurement.

YES, YOU READ THAT CORRECTLY!

I could not believe it! We are here to serve the needs of our constituents, and there is so much to be learned and exchanged between different national and international public procurement functions. I was so glad we had the technical know-how to respond so readily to the request.

We delivered an online training session in Spanish for all staff involved in procurement processes for the Province of Buenos Aires. It was a great opportunity to share what we have learned thus far in the UNDIS process, and to understand their challenges and opportunities as well.

So, getting back to the question I posed at the beginning: *“What does disability inclusion have to do with procurement?”*

ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING

This experience in implementing UNDIS has shown me incontrovertibly how we can support social sustainability through our procurement, in a thoughtful and impactful way.

I am deeply privileged to contribute to the work of UNDIS, and I encourage all of us (whether we work on procurement or not) to actively seek opportunities to walk our talk by applying disability inclusion throughout our programmes and operations.

If you are interested in learning more about disability inclusive procurement at the ILO or our sustainable procurement activities, please feel free to reach out to me, Julia, at gin@ilo.org.

Let us keep working together for a more accessible UN! #UNDIS2.0 //

- 1 Under UNDIS, each year UN entities rate themselves as “Missing”, “Approaches”, “Meets” and “Exceeds”, depending on set criteria.
- 2 DET is the ILO’s “go to” training on disability inclusion. It’s a learning journey, focusing on shared experience, language and values regarding disability, to create an accessible, inclusive culture.

Orthoconcept : chaque pathologie nécessite une approche sur mesure

GENÈVE, CHEMIN DE LA GRAVIÈRE,
FRÉDÉRIC BERSCHY, DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL D'ORTHOCONCEPT,
ME REÇOIT DANS UN BUREAU-ATELIER.

SAVOIR +

Orthoconcept



Dans ce lieu d'exposition sont entreposés divers matériels destinés au handicap. Plusieurs collaborateurs sont concentrés sur l'adaptation de prothèses dans les ateliers qui disposent de tout le matériel nécessaire. Pêle-mêle, je peux y voir des moules en plâtre, des rouleaux de carbone, ainsi que tout un échantillonnage de matériel exposé. Le tout allie la technologie la plus récente au savoir-faire traditionnel.

VOULEZ-VOUS VOUS PRÉSENTER ?

Je suis très attaché à mes racines fribourgeoises. Je suis d'ailleurs très impliqué dans différents événements qui mettent en valeur cette région. Âgé de cinquante deux ans, je suis marié à Christelle et j'ai deux enfants, l'aîné est maître fromager (gruyère AOP), le cadet est médiamaticien, un nouveau métier créé par Swisscom.

J'ai fait un stage dans l'orthopédie à 14 ans, j'ai ensuite commencé mon apprentissage à 16 ans. J'étais vraiment très motivé par le côté créatif et le facteur humain. Dans un premier temps en Suisse Allemande, j'ai profité d'une opportunité pour revenir dans ma région, mon patron de l'époque m'a donné des responsabilités et j'ai pris le relai quand il est parti à la retraite. Orthoconcept est né à ce moment.

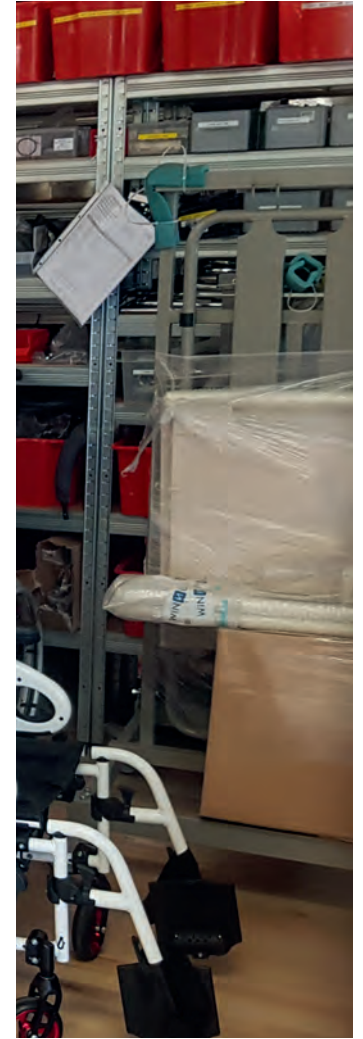
COMMENT AVEZ-VOUS ÉVOLUÉ ?

Nous nous sommes diversifiés et développés à Fribourg, Vevey, Lausanne. En 2014, je me suis inquiété pour l'avenir du métier. Il faut savoir que ce sont les assurances maladie qui décident du prix et nous devons nous adapter pour être rentables. L'union fait la force et, pour bénéficier des meilleures opportunités, notamment d'achat, nous avons étendu notre démarche. Au-delà de l'aspect financier, j'avais des inquiétudes sur la pérennité de l'entreprise. Les orthopédistes de ma génération sont très polyvalents grâce à leur for-

mation et leur pratique. Afin de maintenir cette polyvalence, je l'ai recherchée via la synergie avec d'autres entreprises. Il fallait également optimiser les coûts de production sur un secteur qui reste très technique, voire technologique et nécessite un investissement important pour l'achat des machines et la mise à jour constante face au progrès et aux innovations. J'ai trouvé des fonds d'investissement en Europe qui permettent de financer, par exemple une imprimante 3D de plusieurs centaines de milliers de francs, et dont bénéficient toutes nos filiales. Il s'agit donc d'optimiser le fonctionnement pour répondre à la demande et offrir le meilleur service tout en pérennisant l'entreprise dans un contexte concurrentiel.

COMMENT AVEZ-VOUS TROUVÉ VOS PARTENAIRES ?

J'ai longtemps cherché en Suisse, en vain puis des collègues m'ont parlé d'une entreprise toulousaine du nom de Lagarrigue dont le président Jean-Pierre Mahé est devenu un ami. Nous nous sommes entendus et avons entamé un partenariat fructueux basé sur des valeurs professionnelles et humaines. L'idée était de favoriser une croissance externe et organique. Nous avons racheté des sociétés concurrentes sur le papier, mais nos relations étaient correctes et basées sur la recherche de qualité, ce qui a facilité les choses. De 2017 à 2023, nous avons ainsi intégré avec une holding, neuf sociétés, soit 180 personnes avec 18 points en Suisse. Nous avons créé une start-up, nous permettant de monter des projets avec des jeunes ingénieurs. Parallèlement, une fondation (Asha Bengal) a été créée par des collaborateurs de notre entreprise (F.Meylan, Tim Baudin...); elle envoie des techniciens en Inde pour former et amener du matériel que l'on n'utilise plus. Fabian Meylan, qui est prothésiste à Lausanne, organise les missions. Dans le même domaine, Orthoconcept est membre d'un groupe d'orthopédistes dans le monde, et participe à Eqwal fondation, créée en 2022.



Quelques 3000 orthopédistes dans le monde interviennent de façon directe et traçable pour venir en aide à des personnes en situation de handicap.

QUELLES SONT LES ACTIVITÉS D'ORTHOCONCEPT ?

Nous avons quatre secteurs d'activité :

- L'orthopédie technique : prothèse, orthèse, corset tout est fabriqué sur mesure. Certains produits sont préfabriqués, comme les petits bandages, nous les achetons auprès de nos fournisseurs.
- La Podologie (Pieds / chaussures) nous produisons 13000 supports plantaires pour des patients, sportifs, etc. Quelques 500 paires de chaussures sur mesure sont proposées. Dans ce dernier domaine, nous utilisons, en fonction des besoins, la 3D mais aussi la cire et la couture. Nous adaptons enfin des chaussures, achetées à des fabricants.
- La lymphologie, compression médicale externe : pour les gens qui ont des problèmes de contention, des oedèmes. Il s'agit d'un secteur qui explose. 25 personnes sont spécialisées dans les vêtements compressifs, prothèses mammaires et ne font que ça. La sédentarisation explique en partie l'augmentation des cas.

Nous achetons les chaises roulantes et les adaptons au patient. C'est vraiment du 100% pièce unique. Par exemple pour une personne tétraplégique qui présente une lésion haute et n'a aucune stabilité du tronc, chaque millimètre du fauteuil a un impact sur sa mobilité. A cela vient s'ajouter les commandes, comme la commande au souffle ou au mouvement des yeux qui nécessite une connaissance de la domotique. Nos équipes interviennent en utilisant des matériaux ultra modernes destinés à éviter les escarres. Nous savons que pour quelqu'un qui souffre d'une sclérose en plaque, nous devons anticiper l'évolution de la maladie. Il est donc indispensable que la pathologie de chaque patient soit examinée avec une rigueur extrême.

Nous travaillons essentiellement en Suisse et orientons les personnes étrangères grâce à nos réseaux.

POURQUOI VOUS DÉMARQUEZ-VOUS DE VOS CONCURRENTS ?

Une seule structure achète les matériels, ce qui optimise les coûts. Grâce à notre polyvalence, nous anticipons par rapport aux spécificités des demandes et par exemple, nous envoyons des collaborateurs en formation chez des partenaires étrangers qui disposent de telle ou telle expertise. Nous n'avons aucun souci à admettre qu'ils sont plus forts que nous pour des pathologies comme le rachis, le dos, les amputés de bras. Nous privilégions le bien du patient avant le business et n'avons aucun problème si nous estimons qu'il est préférable qu'il soit envoyé à l'endroit où il bénéficiera des soins adaptés. Tous les deux ans, nous organisons des réunions avec tout le réseau. Nous avons monté une start-up (Orthovoxel) dédiée aux nouvelles technologies afin de déterminer avec précision les évolutions et le matériel dont nous avons besoin.

Nous collaborons avec le corps médical qui propose une démarche, par exemple un casque évolutif pour les nourrissons dont la tête est déformée et nous les accompagnons pour trouver les solutions techniques appropriées.

COMMENT VOUS POSITIONNEZ-VOUS EN TERMES DE COMMUNICATION ?

Nous sommes présents sur les réseaux sociaux. Nous accompagnons des événements comme des tournois de tennis en fauteuil. Nous allons proposer "les journées suisses du pied" les 3 et 4 décembre prochains à Morges, les futurs intervenants ont tous accepté. Nos équipes préparent des présentations. Nous organisons régulièrement des soirées fondues pendant lesquelles nous présentons une nouveauté. Chaque invité reste le temps qu'il veut. Nous avons remarqué que ce principe satisfait tout le monde. Un "apéro papote" a réuni tous les professionnels du secteur, nous avons débattu sur l'approche vis à vis du patient. Nous offrons des journées bateau à des personnes en situation de handicap. Toutes ces démarches sont évidemment des actions marketing mais pas que, nous offrons quelque chose.

PARLEZ-MOI DE L'INNOVATION.

La technique 3D offre des perspectives exceptionnelles en précision, capacité de création mais manque de visibilité sur la résistance, l'usure. Nous maîtrisons sur certains appareillages mais pas sur tout. Il est important de souligner que ce métier ne s'improvise pas : si nous ne savons pas faire de l'orthopédie traditionnelle, nous sommes incapables de faire de la 3 D.

L'arrivée de l'intelligence artificielle rebat également les cartes et nous l'intégrons au niveau marketing, mapping, domotique et la communication interne. L'avenir du métier passe par la maîtrise de tous ces paramètres.

UN DERNIER MOT SUR VOS ÉQUIPES ?

Nous avons la chance de disposer de collaborateurs qui possèdent des savoir-faire complémentaires et qui en plus partagent leur expérience. L'artisanat, la couture, côtoient la technologie innovante et le tout reste incontournable pour assurer la qualité des produits. Nos équipes sont fabuleuses, passionnées, à l'écoute et donnent le meilleur pour accompagner et satisfaire le patient. Je leur rends un vibrant hommage et j'adore travailler avec leur énergie et leurs expertises. //



Collection d'œuvres d'art des nations unies

UN PATRIMOINE ARTISTIQUE OFFERT AU MONDE

SAVOIR +

Un Stamps



La collection de Dons des Nations Unies est un ensemble d'œuvres d'art, d'objets historiques et d'éléments architecturaux officiellement offerts à l'Organisation des Nations Unies par des États Membres, des fondations et des donateurs individuels depuis 1950.

Cette collection reflète la diversité des cultures et des périodes historiques. Les œuvres d'art sont esthétiquement impressionnantes et symboliquement appropriées, elles présentent une grande valeur artistique et sont originaires des États Membres qui les ont offertes, tout en restant en rapport avec les activités de l'Organisation des Nations Unies.

Le site web des dons aux Nations Unies vise à préserver et à promouvoir l'héritage artistique et culturel qui a été confié par les États membres au Secrétariat, au siège des Nations Unies à New York. Pour plus d'informations, veuillez consulter le site <https://www.un.org/ungifts/fr> pour découvrir les dons actuellement exposés au siège des Nations Unies.



LES DESIGNS

78 ¢

O Pensador (Le Penseur)
Artiste: Mpambukidi
(Cadeau de l'Angola)
Bambara (cadeau du Mali)

1,70 \$

Structures
Artiste: Napoleon V. Abueva
(cadeau des Philippines)
Zun de Paix (cadeau de la Chine)

1,00 CHF

Fille à la lyre
Artiste: Ivan Mestrovic
(Cadeau de la Croatie)
Épopée de la mer de Lituanie
et de la femme et la nation
Artiste: Stanislovas Kuzma
(Cadeau de la Lituanie)

1,90 CHF

Mosaïque des Quatre Saisons
(Cadeau de la Tunisie)
L'humanité et l'espoir
Artiste: Henrik Starcke
(cadeau du Danemark)

1,25 €

Guerre
Artiste: Candido Portinari
(Cadeau du Brésil)
Paix Artiste: Candido Portinari
(Don du Brésil)

2,00 €

Forme allongée
Main: Henry Moore
(Don de la Fondation Henry Moore)
Tapisserie d'après « Femme sur l'échelle »
Artiste: Pablo Picasso
(Don de la Fondation Albert et Mary Lasker)

International Women's Day

BALANCING THE SCALES FOCUSING ON JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN NEEDS EMPHASIS ON GIVING MORE



TEXT DR SHANTA GHATAK, WHO SEARO
PHOTO ISTOCK

International Women's Day (IWD) 2026, the main theme promoted by the official IWD website is "Give To Gain", encouraging generosity and collaboration to foster gender equality promoting related campaigns like "Balance the Scales", focusing on justice and economic empowerment. These themes are good and drives an emphasis for collective action, whether through resources, advocacy, or time, to advance women's rights and opportunities globally, with a strong call for real action.

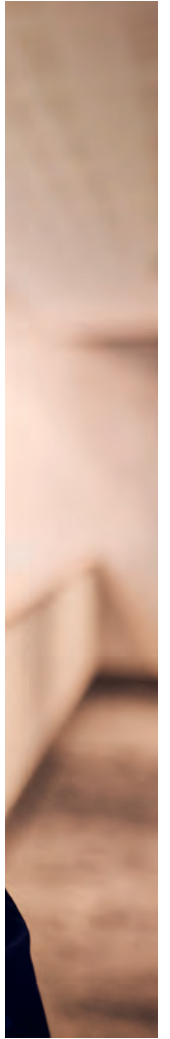
But "calling" is not action or any change in attitudes or a paradigm shift – it is of course encouraging to find a new window for GIVE TO GAIN but when have women stopped giving when women were averse towards acceptance amidst torments tornadoes or tortures and why women are still not at the head of corporations where it matters most. Women have suffered, women are struggling and women are fighting for justice and a platform where they can be heard – where they can speak without fear and where it will have a legit audience that would be in full support no doubt is required. Absolutely and it must begin today, now 8th March 2026 – without further delay – should we say a clarion call for action in favor of Women? Legislations and policies to roll out with clarity and proven sustainability frameworks.

Conflicts, wars, fragile contexts, emergencies, outbreaks, development forums: everywhere in every corner women make up a relatively large part of the field work force or shall I say the frontline health care workers who are not so educated not so talented and never really got the opportunity to excel. Most married early out of compulsion poverty and try to make ends meet for their immediate families to get going. Somehow. Landing in trouble or keeping out of harm or trying to create favors with the boss has been showing cracks for some years but then plenty of capacity building and HR SOPs have been generated that are documented and signed before one takes up a position.

Personally my grand-mothers both maternal and paternal never quite saw the daylight as large joint families with 60 to 70 persons to feed and cater to each day with guests, festivities and family gatherings took up all their energy and time and

whatever diplomacy they could take advantage of to get through their lives. Their lives and livelihoods were all intertwined and then later on I gather both my mother and mother in law never got away with anything better but they did see some outdoors like the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta & watched some biographies of National Leaders, visiting the Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture in Gol Park, Calcutta which was almost round the corner from our rented house. Well: being an only girl child in both families had its merits because all these women wanted me out for higher education, demerits were both the grandfathers wanted to marry me off to their own subjects of choice where education and money was a combined complicated package. To come to the point where women makes a silently strong work force – relying on the softness the way the tiny rivulet makes its way through the rocky grassy mountain sides – gurgling and laughing all the way to as if meet the friends at the sea.

We moved to larger mansion with a great garden and compound with many coconut trees and overpowering scent of the evening gardenia blooms and the tiny mangoes stirring up the courtyards after the norwesters. Still no respite for the women folk. This time the kitchen and the cleaning place was in an outhouse which forever bustled and rustled with women calling for spices or asking someone to wash plates or clean the clothings. Maids crushed cinnamon, ginger and coriander for freshly prepared curries and guests & friends loved the delicacies served. "Bahu"s served and all basked in the family glory: Women Power to be in the backdrop – not one in sight mostly. My maternal grandfather had a mansion built with the money from his earnings as the Rifle Factory Manager and had been travelling internationally... he spoke highly of the European culture and how the women and girls live there. But nothing much reflected in the house where 4 more of his brothers their wives and sons made up something like a ceremonial congregation each afternoon and night. For me everything was kind of permitted – and that was a blessing partially it helped pacify my grandmothers and partially both the families needed to showcase the fact that they are growing with modern times – empowering women! So bingo I study to get myself enrolled into medical school to the great pride of almost everyone ex-



cept my cousins who were always told to try and follow my footsteps.

This happened in the sixties and seventies and eighties and I never heard Beatles before my son introduced me to the Yellow Submarine while going to the early morning school he attended in the small vehicle I purchased with my own money after paying off considerable expenses towards cancer treatments for both my inlaws... that would be in the nineties.

During my field missions I delved into stories and lives of women in high position as well as not so high positions only to find internally they have been struggling - all of them in some way or the other - be it with flexi timings or antenatal care or breast feeding practices or being a sole bread earner or the sole care giver to a child or the elderly adult. Women and girls felt devastated if anyone hinted or suggested at going for legal systems or even to a therapist and it still continues. Safe houses remained safe for a while safe house mothers tended to give in to charming and not so charming moneyed muscle men and I witnessed under aged children whisked within no time to distant shores - for I never could follow up after a few weeks - The bunch always changed - the

same story: THEY fled. So accountability never could be inculcated and house mothers remained unconvinced that they could prevent these lapses. My years of trying to hold even lady medics, nursing staff, attendants and paramedics accountable had difficulties in implementation and ER / Labor room procedures had to be dealt with immense clarity and networking with resourcefulness. The darkest moment has been when an orphanage with mostly female children and young adults were torched after more than 80% tested positive for STDs.

Women are still in similar situations still with similar arbitrations and aspirations but my guess is they are still struggling internally to come up in a world where gender doesn't gel well where intelligence may not be the only passkey where cosmetics shape up a substantially large chunk of the acceptance and high heels click the right notes. More objectively the ratio may be skewed at certain times in few projects - but then these are my own observations through the years when I never had access to a good quality mobile camera stooping forever on analysis and reports with the key boards clattering away into the late news sessions and a cup of cold black coffee near the upper right hand corner of the wooden table. //

Empowerment, empathy,
education enable giving to gain.

How AI is changing the IB

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

AI is a fantastic revolution but how will it change the way we learn? How can we ensure that AI compliments rather than destroys learning. And most specifically for this article, how will the International Baccalaureate adapt and how will this affect the over 2,000 students that follow the programme every year in Switzerland and the 200,000 that follow it worldwide? Sebastian investigates!

Artificial Intelligence is not just a tool but a generative technology. It creates material – we can almost exclaim “*It’s alive!*” as Dr. Frankenstein did. AI is an incredible and useful resource, but where learning is concerned, particularly where teenagers are asked to create assessed material in their free time, it presents a serious risk. Coursework mimics what we have done to develop ideas throughout history-by encouraging thought, research, and making conclusions. To avoid risking losing this, we will need to keep one step ahead of technology and the way we teach and assess students will need to change and change rapidly.

Most of us do not really remember the exam we passed but we do remember the project we worked on. I remember doing a project when I was 12 on how plants make use of CO₂ in photosynthesis. I grew two plants: one I left as a control, and one where I put baking soda and vinegar in a dish every day to produce CO₂. The one with CO₂ grew noticeably more vigorously. I then showcased the results by bringing the two plants into school and on a large A3 sheet of paper explained the method and results. The other 20 students in class had different projects and it was a creative and fun experience.

I also remember when I was 17 I had to write an extended essay for my History A level. Being of Polish ancestry, I decided to write about General Józef Piłsudski and the early years of independent Poland after WWI when Poland reappeared on the map after 200 years of occupation. I framed the piece as a question: was he a hero or a right-wing dictator? I then had to find 20 to 30 authors who had written about him, read their opinions and reasons, formulate my own view, and finally put it all into a coherent structured essay. I am sure you can think of your own examples.

A strength of coursework is that it is often done in groups. Group work forces students to do something exams rarely demand: coordinate, negotiate, explain, and compromise. Apple was co-founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak at Jobs’ parents’ home in Los Altos. Google was first formulated as a dorm-room idea and became a university project of Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

Allow me a brief diversion. My paternal great-grandfather owned a café called the ‘Scottish Café’ in Lwów in the early 20th century. Today the city is Lviv in Ukraine, but at the time it sat within Austrian Galicia in the Habsburg Empire.

In those days the city had a large Polish Catholic and Jewish population, with Ukrainians a major part of the wider region. Early 20th-century census figures place the city’s Jewish community at roughly a third of the population, with Roman Catholics (largely Polish) forming most of the rest.

The Scottish Café became famous because intellectuals, including mathematicians associated with the Lwów School of Mathematics, would meet there to discuss ideas in a relaxed setting. Mathematicians such as Stefan Banach, Hugo Steinhaus, Stanisław Ulam and Stanisław Mazur would argue over problems, propose solutions, defend them, and have them tested by peers.

This would often have been done over a coffee – or over something stronger – and arguments could no doubt get heated in the Slavic way.

They even kept a notebook in the café, later known as the Scottish Book, where problems and partial solutions were written down so the day’s progress was not lost (they had previously written in pencil directly on the café’s marble table tops). The key here is the learning method: discussion, rationalising, debating, explaining, defending, analysing, and eventually coming to a conclusion.

This kind of “*café learning*” has been rediscovered in modern times, intentionally designed workplaces and meeting and working in cafés, to encourage that mix of informal conversation and focused work. We often work best in informal settings, cue the apple falling from the tree for Newton.



Coursework tries to emulate the same process. It turns learning into something closer to real thinking: you explore, you discuss, you revise, you justify. That is what we risk losing if coursework becomes generated. Today's tools can do in five minutes what used to take days or weeks.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) has publicly chosen adaptation over prohibition. In its statement about ChatGPT and artificial intelligence (published 1 March 2023), it says it will not ban AI tools, but it also insists on academic integrity: AI-generated material is not automatically the student's own work and must be acknowledged and referenced appropriately.

Matt Glanville, the IB's Director of Assessment, has argued that AI is not a crisis but it is a major change. He emphasises adaptation as the tools improve and become normal in everyday life. In fact, many would argue that these have already become all too normal.

The problem is that generative AI is not just a tool. A calculator is a tool - it speeds up arithmetic - but it does not invent your reasoning. Word and Excel help you present work, but they do not generate the work itself. AI is different: it can produce whole paragraphs, ideas, and styles from very little input.

That difference matters for children and teenagers. Asking them to "use AI responsibly" is asking for self-restraint. Many children are less interested in learning than they are in getting a good grade and having more time for games, social media, and videos. If the goal is to "create good work", students can fairly ask: why not use the thing that creates good work? And the reason is simple: it doesn't allow for learning.

This challenge is amplified by the IB's assessment model. In the Diploma Programme, internal assessment (teacher-marked work that is moderated by the IB) normally contributes between 20% and 30% of the grade and can account for as much as 50% in some courses. That is a big - and worrying - share if material can be generated.

Ludwig Passini, *Künstler im Caffè Greco in Rom* (Artists in the Caffè Greco in Rome), 1856. Watercolor on paper. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Public domain.

Café's have historically been a centre of debate, analysis, and eventually coming to a conclusion, skills coursework at school tries to replicate. With generative AI, schools will need to adapt teaching and assessment to ensure students continue to learn.



Coursework is often developed over time, partly outside exam conditions, and it often depends on drafting, restructuring, and polishing - exactly where generative AI is strongest. Even good teachers may struggle to prove misuse consistently, especially when the final submission looks plausible. Perhaps some teachers might even turn a blind eye to their students dramatically improving grades.

A further complication is that many AI systems can be prompted to write in a chosen voice. Students can ask for an essay *“in the style of a 14-year-old”, “like a 16-year-old girl”, or “like a boy with poor spelling”*. They can also ask the system to sound more confident, less confident, more casual, or more formal.

It becomes very difficult for a teacher to say *“this does not sound like you”*. Assessment must move from judging a polished final product to how the work was developed and whether the student can explain and defend it.

In the years ahead, your child or perhaps the children of tomorrow, will see more emphasis on evidence of process and authorship: More checkpoints and supervision so teachers see work develop over time. More *“explain it”* moments: oral defenses or in-class writing tied to coursework, where students justify choices and methods. More tasks that test judgment rather than polish: evaluating AI-generated work, spotting errors and bias, and reflecting on why an argument is sound. Clearer rules on disclosure: if AI is used, students will need to be transparent about what was used and how. Where permissible, AI shouldn't be discouraged.

It is right that the IB is embracing reality and moving towards governing ethics and redesigning assessment. If coursework is to remain part of learning, and learning continues to embrace the same rigors of independent evaluation just like it did at the Scottish Café, the way we teach and assess work will have to keep up with the times. //

Podcasts

THE GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS PODCAST PROVIDES A FORUM FOR DISCUSSING THE MOST IMPORTANT GLOBAL HEALTH TOPICS OF THE DAY



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the podcast

DIALOGUES

A conversation with **ALEX BREWIS**
on stigma, empathy and equity

and your host,
GARRY ASLANYAN

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

Trailblazers

with Garry

AFRICAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE

with special guest...
JOHN GYAPONG

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

BUILDING THE BRAIN ECONOMY

with your host,
Garry Aslanyan

George Vradenburg
Founding Chairman,
Davos Alzheimer's Collaborative

Rajinder Dhamija
Professor of Neurology and Director,
Institute of Human Behaviour
and Allied Sciences

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GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

Trailblazers

with Garry

WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT, BERLIN

WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT

with special guest...
AXEL PRIES

Hope and Resolve

CIVILIZATION STILL MEANS A COMMITMENT TO LOGIC AND RATIONALITY,
ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONALLY AGREED NORMS



TEXT ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

In chaotic times like ours it behoves us to practice proactive optimism, which is far more than infantile hope or pious faith.

Conscious, vigorous optimism is visionary and builds on our awareness of our human identity and dignity. It expresses our faith in humanity, our resolve to be morally and intellectually honest, our good will.

It is axiomatic that to be constructive and effective, we need access to all information, access to the facts and to a multiplicity of interpretations. Democracy cannot function without reliable information. Therefore, we demand transparency and accountability from our authorities, reject scams, public relations schemes, propaganda and skewed media narratives.

It is time to abandon credulity *vis à vis* our authorities, which all too often have lied to us. Numerous scholarly studies document the ubiquitous false flags and falsifications that are fabricated by the “intelligence agencies”, including the CIA, M16, Mossad, which have their own agendas, do not act to advance our interests but function undemocratically as hostile operatives.

Many of our once trusted institutions have morphed into Orwellian structures engaged in the business of manipulating public opinion and manufacturing consent (Noam Chomsky/Edward Hermann) to justify exploitation of others, sabre-rattling, aggression, kidnapping, even genocide.

We know that leaders whom we once trusted abused our trust, lied about important matters, e.g. the Tonkin Bay, the purported Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, etc. We would be foolish to trust media narratives on Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, Cuba, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, China, Venezuela.

We must endeavour to consult multiple sources of information and compare narratives. Notwithstanding the Latin maxim *mundus vult decipi* (the world wants to be lied to), we must push back against simplifications, amalgamations, extrapolations – and demand hard evidence.

Concerning criminality by many governments, we welcome whistleblowers like Julian Assange, Edward Snowden and Daniel Ellsberg who revealed to us what our governments conceal. We must join our voices to those of all whistleblowers and resolutely shout: *Not in our name!* Meanwhile we remain steadfast, demand truth from our elected officials.

Notwithstanding the chaos that surrounds us – we must reaffirm life and hope in the sense *dum spiro, spero*, (Theocritus, third century BC, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Letters to Atticus 9.10.3 – *dum anima est, spes esse dicitur*, 103-43 BC), as long as we breathe, there is hope.

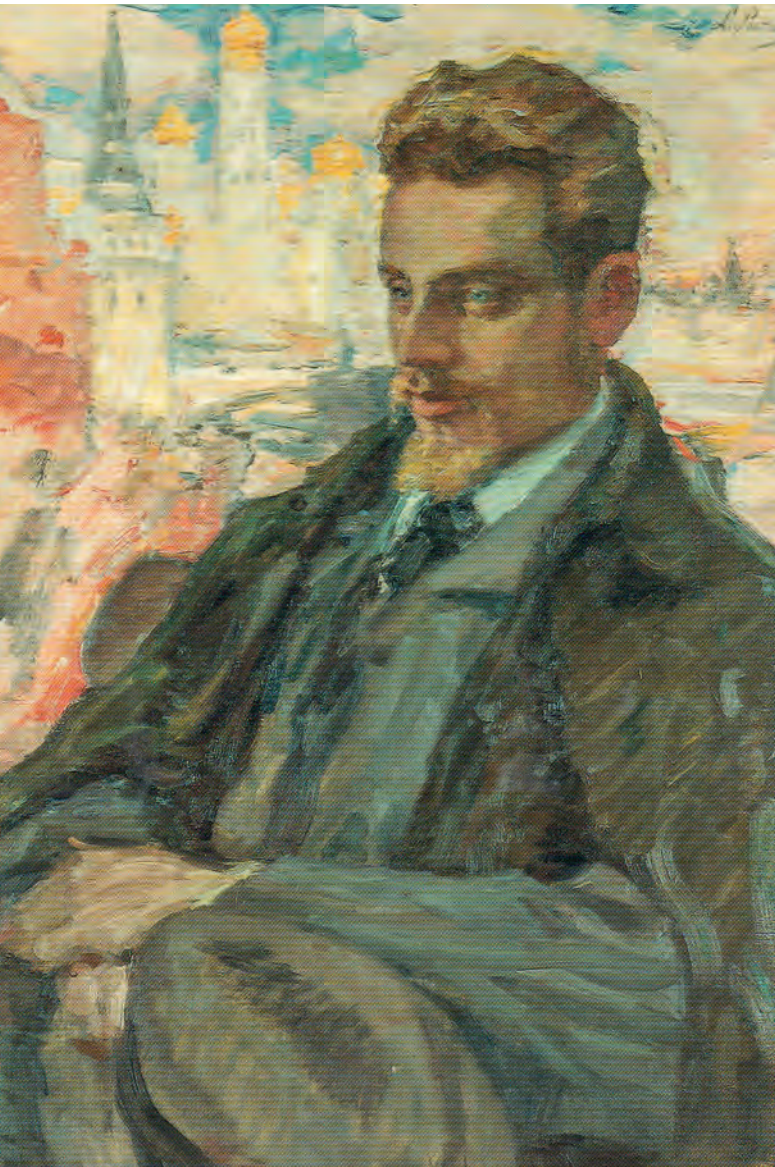
Indeed, “*hope is the last to die*” (Halina Birenbaum).

In these disordered times of wars and terrorism, let us reaffirm our belief in life. As Rainer Maria Rilke, born 150 years ago, wrote: “*Das Leben ist eine Herrlichkeit*” – Life is splendid. Love is wondrous. Family and friends are meaning and substance.

Words do stand for specific concepts, values, things. Language must not be used to destroy meaning, hide ulterior purposes. Orwellian newspeak, relentless propaganda, and enforced cognitive dissonance may eventually obliterate the legacy of Descartes, Erasmus, Spinoza, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kant, Kierkegaard, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Raffaello, Leonardo da Vinci, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and Mahler.

We must reject the corruption and destruction of language, by creating Trumpian/Orwellian “Ministries” such as the “*Ministry of Love*”, to enforce loyalty through fear, “*Ministry of Truth*”, to fabricate propaganda and alter historical records, “*Ministry of Peace*”, to promote perpetual war, and “*Ministry of Plenty*”, to manage famine and rationing. Is Trump’s so called “*Board of Peace*” not akin to a new “*Ministry of Peace/truth/love/plenty*”? This phoney “*Board of Peace*” does not aim at world Peace but instead at replacing the United Nations through United States “*full spectrum dominance*”?





Portrait painting of Rainer Maria Rilke
(4 December 1875, Praag - 29 December 1926, Montreux) by
Leonid Pasternak (Odessa, 4 April 1862 - Oxford,
31 May 1945).

We do not have to play the fatuous game of Humpty Dumpty in his exchange with Alice in *Wonderland in Through the Looking Glass*: “I don’t know what you mean by “glory,” Alice said. Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. Of course you don’t – till I tell you. I meant “there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!”

‘But “glory” doesn’t mean “a nice knock-down argument,”’ Alice objected.

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

Are we going to play Humpty Dumpty’s game and let Trump get away with the farce of his “*Board of Peace*”.

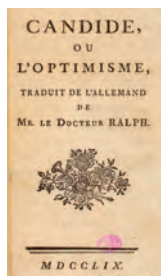
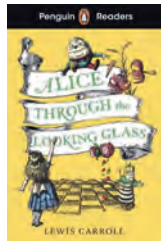
Civilization is not inexorably doomed, but many of our leaders have lost the moral compass and may yet drive us to Apocalypse. Civilization still means a commitment to logic and rationality, adherence to internationally agreed norms, playing by the rules and not cheating. Alas, we have a culture of cheating which may eventually prove our undoing.

That is yet another reason why we should know our own culture and reaffirm the validity of our civilization, recommit to the peace agenda of the UN Charter and the UNESCO constitution, reject fear-mongering, relearn diplomacy as a necessary conflict-prevention strategy, practice intellectual honesty with ourselves and others. Most importantly, we must reject fake news, fake history and fake law disseminated by the media, our politicians, and pseudo-academics.

Voltaire’s picaresque novela *Candide* or *The Optimist* (published 1759) – ends with resignation. His message is to accept the world as it is and to “cultivate our own garden”. It is the novel of an old man who has seen everything and realizes that he cannot change the world and withdraws to his private sphere. Our message must not be one of disillusionment or passivity. We have the resolve to practice proactive optimism.

Therefore, with renewed energy, let us work for harmony, not just for the bogus peace narrative of the collective West as a “*transitional political pact of non-violence*”. We should strive for more than ephemeral cease-fires in the many conflicts that plague the world.

Let us join spirits in building ontological harmony, a harmony of convergence, a spiritual mindset that overcomes arrogance, animosity, deception, greed, hedonism, materialism. Let us live the music of peace, the poetry of harmony, and join efforts to make the future kinder, juster, less bellicose than in recent years. //



Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men

A BOOK BY CAROLINE CRIADO PEREZ

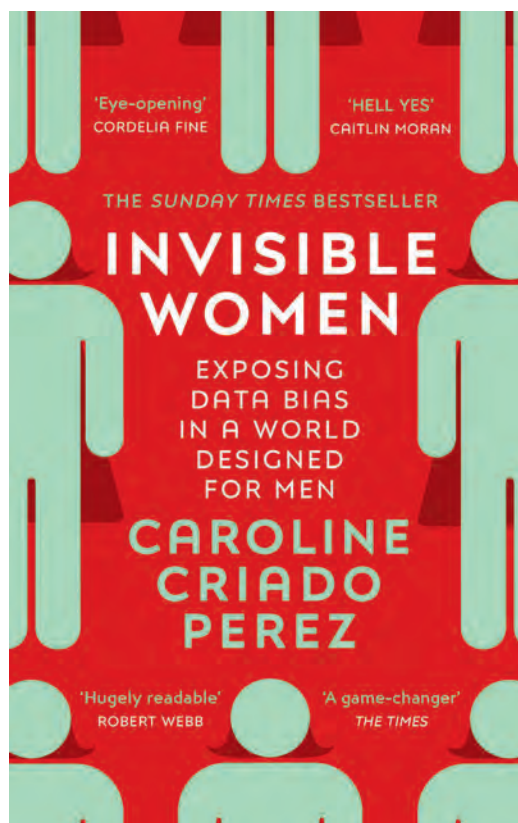
TEXT PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU
PHOTO ISTOCK

This compelling book is more jawdropping, than just eye-opening... Digging into a vast array of evidence, research and insights, the British author and journalist Ms. Caroline Criado Perez takes us with her on a whirlwind journey to learn about the gender implications of a long, long list of activities. The result is a fantastic, thought-provoking series of revelations that deservedly earned Ms. Perez the UK Royal Society's "Science Book Prize of 2019", as well as an FT & McKinsey Business Book of the Year Award.

Ms. Perez's central premise is that women (and women's activities) are systematically ignored in a world largely built for and by men. And she has a long list! Some of these gender biases may be relatively obvious (e.g. design flaws in car seats and shop shelves, the different levels of attention given in the media to men's and women's sports teams), while other forms of bias may be invisible (e.g. prescribed drug doses developed from studies of male subjects; ambient temperature guidelines developed for men & male body temperatures; health and safety guidelines at work).

And yet, this book is NOT a feminist diatribe, it is written from the point of view of raising awareness and asking readers to open their eyes to the world around them. This book is not just written for women; it is written for men as well, asking them to understand and appreciate how situations and designs may be stacked against their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. It is impossible to have a good outcome, when half of humanity suffers real risks, needs different treatments, or experiences the world differently, than what is planned or intended.

For example, using the seemingly simple example of snow-clearing in Sweden, Ms. Perez shows how a process such as snow-clearing may in fact have a highly gender-differentiated impact! In many countries, the majority of cars on the roads may belong to and are driven by men (often to and from work), while pavements and public trans-



port are used in the majority by women, mothers with children and the elderly, who make shorter & more frequent trips to work, school, shopping, medical clinics or elsewhere. Clearing roads from snow first regularly leaves women, children and the elderly at greater risk of personal accidents.

Ms. Perez would like us to write the women back into history, as well as the present. This book is structured in six different parts covering: daily life; the workplace; design; going to the doctor; public life; and when it goes wrong. In virtually every aspect of our history and of our societies, Ms. Perez delves into and uncovers fresh gender angles that deserve attention. The book covers so much ground that it is unlikely all chapters will appeal equally to any individual reader, but this really is a book with something to appeal to anyone, for any curious person.

When women are missing from the numbers, their realities remain unseen and uncounted, in the systems meant to serve everyone.



Economics increasingly recognizes and values the contribution of women's labour to GDP (formal and informal, paid or unpaid), which has historically been largely invisible or absent from economic statistics. Different disciplines have been developed to explain the allocation of resources, both by households, as well as within households. And yet, government policies still routinely prioritize formal, paid work over the less formalized work of caring for young children or elderly relatives. Indeed, some of this is barely recognized as "work" at all in some cultures - more just "what women do".

Even prehistory has tended to focus on "*Man the Hunter*" (possibly because the majority of artefacts that have survived are presumed to have been made and used by men). However, men and women clearly both contributed to the survival of the species, by foraging, feeding and protecting the tribe and children from predators, as reflected in the 1975 essay "*Woman the Gatherer*" by the anthropologist Sally Slocum. Modern evidence suggests that many of the handprints that appear alongside cave paintings in France and Spain may have actually belonged to women.

The book also makes some very important arguments about politics and power. Historically, the focus has been on just getting women to the table in politics. But even once the women have made it to the table, they are often seen as ambitious women, and condemned or interrupted or told to be quiet. It is still essential to consider the gender dimensions of policy, and insist on medical trials including women, labour market policies consulted with women and mothers, peace agreements negotiated with women at the table, empowered to participate (some studies suggest that peace settlements are more lasting and durable, when women were involved in the negotiations).

As we steer towards an increasingly uncertain future, it is vital and worth including women and women's inputs and women's point of view in everything from socio-economic policies to clinical trials - the benefits may far outweigh the costs, in a very wide range of different fields indeed! //

A Dictionary of the English Language

PUT TOGETHER PRIMARILY BY ONE MAN IN HIS ATTIC AND TAKING SEVEN YEARS, THE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WAS A MILESTONE MOMENT FOR ANGLOPHONES, AND A REFLECTION ON ITS ECCENTRIC 18TH CENTURY CREATOR.



TEXT KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

In the mid-18th century with increased travel and trade, there was a growing need to standardise languages and ease communication between groups who may, up until that point, have been speaking various local patois or regional dialects within the same country.

The Académie Française set 40 scholars to work, and the group spent 40 years creating the first definitive French Dictionary. Creating such a work was a monumental task to collect words, identify reliable references, and determine their origin.

In England however, in 1746, a group of publishers responding to the same need and sensing a tidy profit approached the famous man of letters Dr Samuel Johnson and offered him 1,500 guineas to complete the task (about \$ 410,000 in today's money). Johnson estimated that he could complete the work in three years and when challenged on the length of time it had taken the French he replied,

"This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman!"

Johnson was well known at this time as an essayist, literary critic, poet, moralist (he was a strict member of the Anglican church) and playwright.

The task would eventually take him seven years, working essentially single-handedly with only a group of clerks to copy the quotations and sources that Johnson identified.

"A Dictionary of the English Language" was published in April 1755 and is considered the most influential dictionary in the history of English. It was an immense work, printed in unusually large format (the pages were almost half a meter in height!) and the print production of the book cost more than Johnson has been paid for its creation.

The dictionary contained 42,773 words and each was supported by literary references and examples of its use and also, unusual by today's standards, by Johnson's own notes often humorous, on the nature of the word.

Some famous examples of Johnson's wit are: "Oats: a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

"Lexicographer: a writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the signification of words".

And continuing his attitude towards the French (Britain and France would soon be at war again in 1756), "Monsieur: a term of reproach for a Frenchman!".

Johnson worked in the attic of his home at 17 Gough Square, and his method was to read huge amounts of material and underline words of interest that his clerks would copy across for inclusion in the dictionary. He provided pronunciation guides and alternate spellings and arranged the work alphabetically (according to 18th century standards where, for example, I and J were variations of the same letter) and set the format and approach for all other dictionaries that were to follow. He was the first lexicographer to provide references for his words.

The dictionary was not without its critics however and the etymology was largely guesswork. Johnson's close friend and biographer related the funny story of how Johnson was once challenged on an incorrect definition in the work: "A lady once asked him [Johnson] how he came to define pasture as the knee of a horse: instead of making an elaborate reply, as she expected, he at once replied, 'Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance.'"



Portrait of Samuel Johnson commissioned for Henry Thrale's Streatham Park gallery.
Joshua Reynolds - Tate Gallery. Copy held by Pembroke College,
Oxford. Lane, Margaret (1975). Public Domain.



Some of the beautiful words have since fallen out of general use, consider:

1. "Anatiferous, adjective: Producing ducks."
2. "Backfriend, noun: A friend backwards; that is, an enemy in secret."
3. "Cynanthropy, noun: A species of madness in which men have the qualities of dogs."

Johnson suffered financially later in life and was forced to give up his home in 1759. One anecdote tells how he hastily completed a work (*The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*) to pay for his mother's funeral.

The dictionary ultimately saved him, however. In July 1762 Johnson was granted a state pension of £300 a year by the twenty-four-year-old monarch, George III for his monumental monomaniac work in documenting the English language. //

CARL ORFF
**Carmina
Burana**

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Concerto pour deux pianos



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Inspiration : le souffle divin

UNE QUÊTE POUR RETROUVER LA SOURCE DE L'INSPIRATION



TEXTE
ANTONY HEGUET, MÜND, GYREPROJECT.COM

Le propos d'une œuvre d'art est d'émouvoir l'âme, de lui offrir l'énergie nécessaire pour la sortir d'un état de stagnation, et de raviver le feu intérieur qui transmute le chaos en harmonie. Par conséquent, l'intellect ne peut jouer qu'une part minime dans la création d'une œuvre d'art : une part d'accompagnement, de structuration et de captation. En effet, ce que nous appelons l'inspiration n'est pas une source que l'artiste se doit de capter à l'intérieur de lui-même : dans son âme, dans son cœur ou dans son esprit, mais au contraire un flux d'information et d'énergie qui provient de l'extérieur.

Le poète, couché sous un arbre, écoute attentivement le chant du vent qui bruisse dans le feuillage ; ce murmure enchanteur lui provient sous la forme poétique et musicale d'une incantation. Assis sur un rocher au bord de l'océan, le poète écoute le chant des vagues qui s'épandent sur le rivage. Il perçoit les nombreux rythmes et sons qui composent cette divine musique ; ainsi, s'unissant aux vagues, filles du vent et de l'océan, il entre en extase. Ainsi transformé par l'amour, le poète sauvage devient lui-même l'enchanteur.

LE SOUFFLE DIVIN

Car, vous l'aurez compris, ce qui fait vibrer l'âme, c'est le souffle divin : Pneuma, Anima, Aum, Logos.

L'Évangile de Jean proclame : « *Au commencement était le Logos, et le Logos était auprès de Dieu, et le Logos était Dieu* ».

Le souffle divin est ce qui fait frémir l'âme. L'artiste capte ce frémissement et le traduit en sculpture, en peinture, en poésie, en musique et en danse.

L'ÂME RÉCEPTEUR DU LOGOS

Pour être en état de capter le premier frémissement d'une œuvre nouvelle qui vient à la vie, il faut être silencieux et attentif. Une fois le premier influx capté, l'artiste l'accompagne et le tient en vie, se garde bien de le diriger, mais lui apporte toute son attention, afin que le ruisseau puisse devenir une rivière.

Au début de toute création, il y a le vide, le silence, l'absence de mouvement. Ce processus est parfaitement décrit dans la philosophie spirituelle taoïste. Avant que le monde n'ait été, au tout début, il n'existe qu'un état d'indifférence, de chaos, de silence et de vide ; il porte le nom de Wuji. Le premier frémissement de la vie est une impulsion qui met l'énergie en mouvement sous la forme d'une spirale. De ce mouvement vont naître la polarité : le Yin et le Yang, représentés par le symbole Taiji. Le Taiji est l'état de manifestation, la création de ce qui est visible, palpable, audible. L'artiste, consciemment ou inconsciemment, est lui-même l'accompagnateur de ce processus. Toutes les cosmogonies... reproduisent ce modèle. Notre propre culture... chrétienne emploie le concept de logos. Dans le christianisme primitif ou primordial, si l'on préfère, on parlait du logos, le verbe divin. Au début, il y avait le verbe, et le verbe était à côté de Dieu, et le verbe était Dieu. Et Dieu dit : Que la lumière soit, et la lumière fut. Donc, pour le chrétien primitif, toutes les manifestations de la vie étaient induites par le Logos, souffle divin. Et pour connaître la parole divine, il suffisait de savoir écouter la plante, l'arbre, l'animal, le rocher. Rappelez-vous Saint François d'Assise qui entendait et parlait le langage des oiseaux. Cette façon d'imaginer le monde ressemble étrangement à celle du paganisme et de l'animisme. Les poètes, depuis la nuit des temps, nous disent que leurs incantations et le pouvoir magique du verbe qu'ils détiennent, viennent du fait qu'ils ont su s'isoler dans les lieux loin du bruit des villes pour entendre le chant du vent dans les branches d'un arbre, le murmure enchanteur d'une rivière. Et c'est de là que leur vient leur pouvoir. De même, les tribus de l'Amazone qui ont inventé le curare et l'ayahuasca nous disent que c'est en écoutant les plantes qu'ils ont appris à faire les mélanges savants, qu'ils ont été les seuls à savoir créer, que nous avons copiés et imités ; leur savoir est bien supérieur au nôtre. Pendant longtemps, nous avons résisté, et présumé, que ces paroles ne sont que des fables d'êtres primitifs et superstitieux. Mais plus le temps passe, plus il devient manifeste que ce sont eux qui ont toujours eu raison. Leur façon d'envisager le monde est de loin supérieure à la nôtre. En effet, leur conception nous relie au vivant et nous permet de vivre en harmonie avec tout ce qui nous entoure.



Nadine Rennert,
ink on paper.

C'est ici que je veux faire entrer en scène... l'intelligence dite artificielle. Dès le départ, on peut pressentir dans l'énoncé du nom lui-même, un aspect abscons, voire absurde. Étant donné que nous sommes loin d'être capables de donner une définition satisfaisante de ce qu'est l'intelligence, et encore moins d'expliquer comment elle naît en nous, comment pourrions-nous en créer une forme artificielle, même de qualité inférieure? Nos dits scientifiques commencent à soupçonner que l'intelligence ne naît pas dans le cerveau, qui ne serait qu'un récepteur et un filtre (voir à ce propos l'essai d'Aldous Huxley sur l'effet sur le cerveau des drogues hallucinogènes).

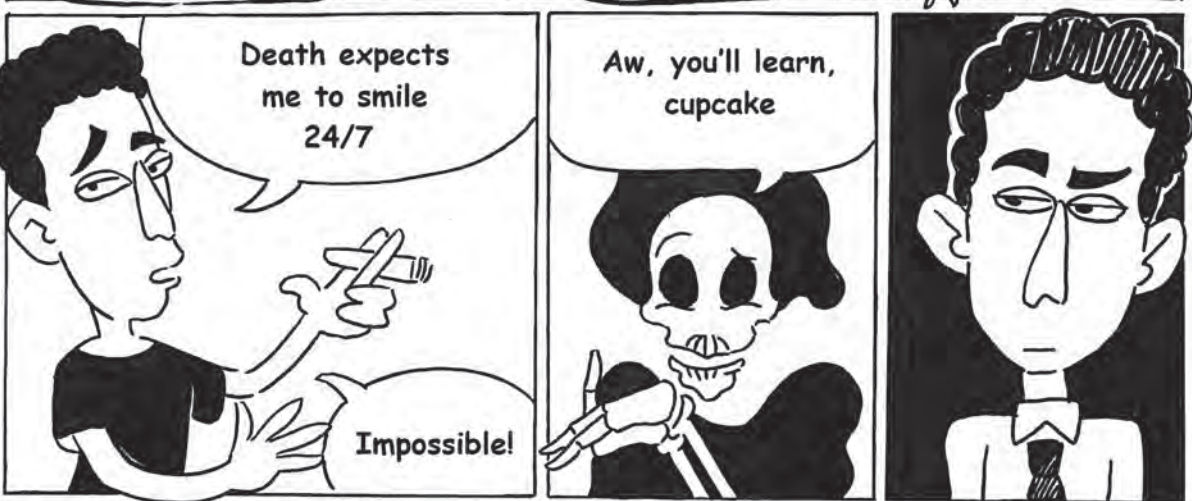
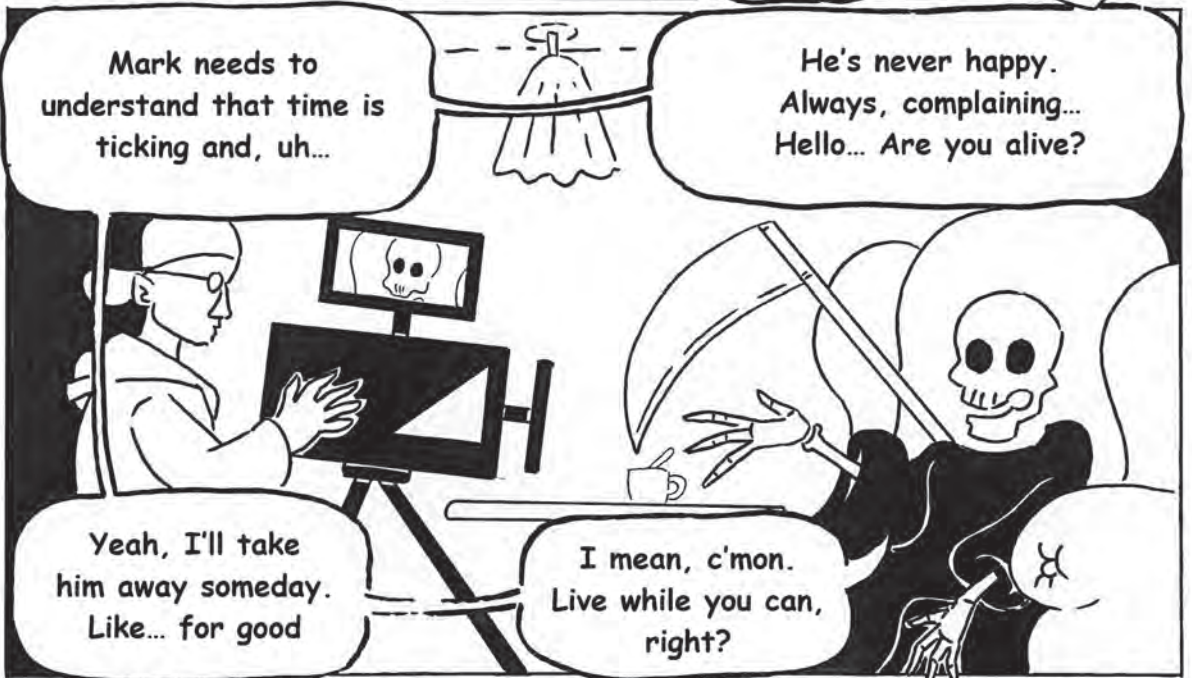
En parfait antagonisme avec le fonctionnement de la créativité humaine, la soi-disant créativité de l'intelligence artificielle viendrait de sa capacité à brasser une quantité titanesque d'informations, créant des brassages et des associations "probabilistiques", éventuellement guidées par les injonctions (dites prompts) que nous lui donnerions, pour arriver à un objet unique: une création. Ce processus est donc exactement l'inverse de celui de la création humaine, qui part du néant pour créer... Le soi-disant processus de création de l'intelligence artificielle est donc le contraire d'une création. C'est une abomination qui pourrait l'atmosphère et détruit l'inventivité qui est le propre de l'humain: Poïesis, un don de Prométhée, volé aux dieux en même temps que le feu.

Il suffit de regarder autour de nous les effets délétères sur les jeunes esprits que produit l'exposition constante aux informations décousues provenant de l'espace numérique. Ils sont de moins en moins capables de formuler leurs idées, d'apporter un regard critique, d'analyser une information; de s'émouvoir même. Car l'espace numérique, c'est le chaos. Un endroit où il n'y a pas d'harmonie ou de forme, où les choses arrivent en vrac et en trop grande quantité pour que l'esprit puisse y trouver du sens. C'est la destruction de l'âme, de sa capacité sensible, qui la porte à s'émouvoir, à être réceptive et donc à être vide.

Je n'en ai pas fini avec ce sujet et compte bien y revenir afin de reparler de la véritable fonction de l'art et de la créativité, source d'un futur meilleur pour l'humanité. //

DRAWING
J. FRANKLIN

BESTIES



LEARN +

Sobre
J. Franklin



I met Death after my coma a few years ago.



Luckily, it wasn't his time



Yes.
Lucky me!



Must admit, Death has helped me focus on the present. I now care about my health and habits



I'm even a better person today thanks to his lessons

Mark is a mess!!! He has no goals, no direction... Nothing!



Hey, I heard you!



J. FRANKLIN

La matière

DANS UN MONDE FAIT DE MATIÈRE, LE CHOIX DES MATÉRIAUX QUE L'ON UTILISE DANS LE DOMAINE DE LA CONSTRUCTION REVÊT DONC UNE IMPORTANCE CAPITALE.



TEXTE
GRÉGORY BAUBIET

Matérialiser, c'est le moment intime entre le passage de la conception à la réalité. Matérialiser, c'est du temps, le temps qu'il faut pour rendre concret une idée. Matérialiser, c'est donner à nos sens ce qui était avant palpable.

Avant même de parler d'aspect, de texture ou de finition, le choix de matière se porte dès la partie structurelle du bâtiment et va dès lors induire la façon de le raisonner et dont il se comporte. Construire par empilement, par assemblages ou par coulage n'a pas les mêmes incidences techniques et peut orienter le choix des autres couches à venir, s'il y en a.

Car aujourd'hui et comme dans beaucoup d'autres domaines, la construction fait face à un paradoxe. D'un côté, la technologie a permis de développer des connaissances très poussées sur les matériaux et de toujours mieux utiliser les qualités de chacun, dans un souci de performances et parfois de démesures : appliquer de la terre sur de la paille, jointoyer des briques avec du ciment, armer du béton avec du métal, sabler du verre, etc. De plus, la meilleure maîtrise et la prise de recul par rapport aux matériaux est allée de pair avec un confort grandissant pour les utilisateurs, paradoxalement parfois au détriment de la question environnementale. Certains matériaux sont désormais ultra-performants en termes d'économie d'énergie dans leur vie à moyen et long terme mais ultra-énergivore dans leur production.

Le mariage réussi des matériaux laisse le champ libre à la créativité et à la durabilité certes, mais n'oublions pas par exemple les plus vieux bâtiments en bois encore debout de nos jours qui ont été bâtis uniquement par assemblages d'un seul et unique matériau. En effet, le temple de Horyu-Ji au Japon regroupe une série de bâtiments datant pour les plus anciens du sixième siècle de notre ère. Le bois, lorsqu'il reste sous les mêmes conditions, peut servir de pieux à des bâtiments, comme la ville de Venise. Protégés de l'oxygène par la vase, ils constituent un système dense d'une longévité rare.

De l'autre côté, le besoin de revenir à l'essence même du matériau et peut-être aussi un peu par effet de mode engendre un retour aux techniques

de mise en œuvre parfois oubliées. De plus, elles nécessitant moins de ressources et d'énergies pour les mettre en œuvre. Entre les deux, se sont de tout temps développées des techniques de détérioration volontaires et maîtrisées du matériau, dans le but de les rendre pérenne : cuire de la terre, brûler du bois, frapper du métal, etc.

La matière, c'est aussi ce que l'on apporte comme couches sur un papier, sur une toile ou sur un mur, c'est celle avec qui se produit un contact. En tant que peau, elle sert de parement et de protection des autres matières, isolantes notamment. Prenons par exemple la chaux, connue depuis l'Antiquité, elle se révèle encore aujourd'hui être un produit très utilisé avec de larges possibilités d'applications et de rendus. La chaux est en effet imperméable à l'eau mais perméable à la vapeur d'eau, laissant ainsi respirer les murs. Elle peut être soit aérienne, soit hydraulique, la qualification dépendant de son mode de prise. Dans le premier cas, elle absorbe le CO₂ par carbonatation. Elle se rapproche donc d'un matériau à bilan carbone neutre en récupérant le CO₂ qu'elle perd lors de sa fabrication. Dans le deuxième cas, sa prise se fait d'abord à l'eau par mélange puis à l'air. Sa prise est plus rapide et permet de protéger des murs en extérieur aussi bien que des pièces humides. Même en agriculture, la chaux dite vive permet de protéger les plantations des parasites, d'alléger les sols et de diminuer leur acidité. Bien que le produit soit corrosif et pas admissible aux critères de l'agriculture biologique, cela n'en reste pas moins un matériau naturel et efficace.

Bien qu'aujourd'hui les produits qui nous entourent subissent la plupart du temps une longue chaîne de production et de modification, il n'en demeure pas moins que la matière générée est une finalité. Dans le cycle de vie des matériaux, il y a encore beaucoup de travail à accomplir dans l'acheminement, le recyclage et le réemploi. Le vernaculaire revient petit à petit dans le panel des solutions économiques en termes d'énergie au sens large. En ces temps pendant lesquels l'homme consomme et construit toujours plus, il est indispensable de mettre de côté ces chaînes de productions et de revenir à l'essentiel en particulier dans le domaine de la construction, utilisée intelligemment pour elle-même : la matière. //

Trésors du patrimoine mondial UNESCO en Suisse

LE GRAND GLACIER D'ALETSCHE

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World Nature Forum



Lac de Märjelen



Pronatura



La Suisse compte 13 biens inscrits au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, dont 9 à caractère culturel et 4 à caractère naturel. La vieille ville de Bern et l'abbaye de St. Gallen étaient parmi les premiers sites à être reconnus déjà en 1983.

Les alpes suisses Jungfrau-Aletsch entrent en 2001 dans le patrimoine mondial à cause de leur valeur naturelle montagneuse exceptionnelle, comme un exemple remarquable de la formation des Hautes Alpes, incluant la partie la plus glacée des Alpes d'Europe. Après un agrandissement en 2007, la région protégée s'étend sur 82 400 ha, du lac d'Oeschinen à Kandersteg, les chutes du Trümmelbach à Lauterbrunnen, en passant par le Jungfraujoch, jusqu'aux stations de l'Aletsch Arena et Belalp en Valais. Notamment, la région comprend le glacier d'Aletsch, le plus grand glacier d'Europe centrale.

Le glacier d'Aletsch a une longueur de 20 kilomètres et pèse environ 10 milliards de tonnes. Il a une superficie de 78 km² et 11 km³ de volume! Mais le glacier souffre aussi du changement climatique et a beaucoup diminué dans les dernières décennies. En 1860, quand il a atteint son plus haut niveau des temps modernes, il mesurait 3 kilomètres de plus, et était 200 mètres plus épais que maintenant.

C'est à cette époque que les habitants de Fiesch, en contrebas du glacier dans la vallée de Conches, ont commencé leur procession annuelle en milieu d'été vers la chapelle Maria Hilf dans la forêt d'Ernen de l'autre côté du Rhone, pour renforcer leur prière contre la croissance du glacier, serment qu'ils avaient fait en 1678 déjà parce que le glacier menaçait l'existence du village. Il faut dire que leur prière a été entendue, parce que depuis le glacier a reculé et les habitants craignent maintenant sa fonte. Raison pour laquelle ils se sont adressés au Pape en 2009 et ont obtenu une audience au Vatican pour demander l'autorisation d'inverser leur serment et de dédier désormais la procession à la croissance du glacier. Demande accordée en 2010, et les gens du village, accompagnés par des touristes, continuent chaque 31 juillet leur marche de prière, mais maintenant pour faire arrêter le recul du glacier. Espérons qu'ils auront autant de succès que dans les siècles passés!

Le centre géographique du patrimoine mondial Alpes suisses Jungfrau-Aletsch se trouve à la Konkordiaplatz, où la glace a une épaisseur de 800 mètres. Trois glaciers se rassemblent à cet endroit, les glaciers du Jungfrauferm, du Grosse Aletschferm et du Ewigschneefeld, pour former ensemble le grand glacier d'Aletsch. Depuis la Konkordiaplatz, le glacier s'écoule en direction de la vallée du Rhône à une vitesse allant jusqu'à 200 mètres par an.

Au sud-est de la Konkordiaplatz se trouve la fameuse cabane Konkordia, gérée par le Club alpin suisse depuis 1877. À l'époque, le glacier se trouvait à 50 mètres de la cabane, actuellement il faut descendre 200 mètres pour accéder au glacier. Pour faciliter l'accès, les escaliers comptent maintenant 526 marches! Ces difficultés ne dissuadent guère les sportifs, et la cabane reçoit plus de 6000 nuitées par an. La randonnée sur le glacier constitue une excursion très populaire depuis le Jungfraujoch jusqu'à la cabane, à faire avec un guide de montagne.

Pour ceux et celles qui préfèrent des activités moins exigeantes, il y a beaucoup d'autres options. Je fréquente la région depuis une bonne dizaine d'années, et je ne cesse de m'émerveiller de sa beauté. En été, la région qui entoure le glacier est un paradis pour les randonneurs avec de nombreuses opportunités d'admirer cette mer de glace au loin. Depuis Fiesch, on peut prendre le sentier pour le Märjelensee, un but de randonnée très prisé. Autrefois un grand lac était présent à cet endroit, l'eau étant retenue par le glacier qui faisait barrage. Jusqu'à la fin du 19^e siècle, ce lac pouvait se vider soudainement sur le glacier, causant des inondations dans la vallée de la Massa plus bas. Actuellement il faut encore marcher une quinzaine de minutes depuis le lac pour avoir une vue sur le glacier qui se trouve maintenant en contrebas du lac.

À Riederalp se trouve le centre Pro Natura Aletsch, situé dans la villa Cassel. C'est un bon point de départ pour découvrir le glacier et la forêt d'Aletsch, une forêt d'altitude peuplée d'aroles millénaires qui comptent parmi les plus vieux d'Europe. Depuis le centre, en descendant par la forêt, un sentier arrive à un pont suspendu qui traverse la rivière Massa, qui transporte l'eau de fonte du grand glacier d'Aletsch. En traversant le pont, le bruit

TEXTE & PHOTO
CARLA EDELENBOS,
SOCIÉTÉ DES ÉCRIVAINS DES NATIONS UNIES À GENÈVE



Vue sur le glacier d'Aletsch depuis Riederalp.

des masses d'eau se précipitant vers la vallée est assourdissant, il vaut mieux éviter le vertige ! De l'autre côté, le sentier monte par des alpages vers la station de Belalp.

Juste avant d'arriver à Belalp, il faut rassembler son courage pour attaquer la raide montée en lacets vers l'Aletschbord avec sa chapelle d'origine anglicane et son hôtel. Chaque fin d'été des centaines de moutons, après avoir passé des mois sur les alpages de l'Aletsch, finissent leur désalpe en montant ici, spectacle inoubliable dans un décor de rêve et occasion de fête pour les habitants et des touristes. Ce que je trouve toujours étonnant en regardant vers le glacier à cet endroit, c'est que le glacier se trouve bien au-dessous de nous, comme un fleuve.

Un peu au-dessus de l'Aletschbord se trouve la maison qui a appartenu au scientifique irlandais John Tyndall (1820 - 1893). Ce chercheur passionné s'intéressait aux mouvements des glaciers depuis son premier voyage en Suisse en 1849. Il fut aussi alpiniste et réussit la première ascension du Weisshorn en 1861. Dans les années 1870s il a fait construire une villa sur le Belalp et entre 1877 et 1893 il y passait les mois d'été avec sa femme pour continuer ses recherches sur la nature des glaciers. En 1887, la commune de Naters dans laquelle se trouve le Belalp lui a octroyé

la citoyenneté d'honneur. Depuis l'Aletschbord, un sentier amène vers un monument construit à son honneur, avec une belle vue sur le glacier, pour ensuite descendre vers la station de Belalp.

Aucun doute : la beauté du paysage, la diversité de la région et les sommets entourant le glacier laissent une impression inoubliable à chaque visiteur. Le défi est de réussir la protection de ce site d'exception malgré l'augmentation du tourisme. Heureusement, la plus grande partie du patrimoine est quasi inaccessible et les touristes se concentrent dans des endroits bien précis aménagés pour le tourisme comme le Jungfrauoch. Les villages depuis lesquels on peut accéder au site, ainsi que les stations de ski, sont hors du périmètre protégé. À Naters se trouve le World Nature Forum, un musée interactif qui a pour but de sensibiliser les visiteurs à l'importance de la protection de la région. Outre des expositions et des jeux, des films fascinants projetés sur grand écran montrent la beauté de la nature et la place de l'humain dans le patrimoine mondial. Idéal pour des temps pluvieux, quand le glacier est caché dans les nuages !

N'hésitez donc pas de visiter cette région merveilleuse, profitez bien de cette énergie qui émerge de toute beauté, et engagez-vous à la protéger pour les générations futures ! //

Vacationing Down Under

A RHYMED ESSAY



TEXT & PHOTO
ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

An urge of old nomadic restlessness
induces temporary homelessness.
An animus to disconnect by choice
allows a reconnect with primal joys.
Adventuring in endless roads of dust,
accustomed to the laws of getting lost,
we boost our confidence to find the way
at least before the end of any holiday.
The yellow road signs often make us smile,
recurrent wildlife crossings
in Australian style.
Clear hiking panels give the history of sites,
the rules of camping setting forth
the outback's rights.
The coastal winds and surf roar on the shore,
while inland bakes the sun, as eagles soar.
The waterfalls bring welcome cool to woods,
while aviary concerts liven up our moods.
We love high mountains, rugged cliffs,
majestic trees,
exotic flowers swaying in the breeze,
mysterious billabongs, secluded creeks,
white ibis, kookaburras, black swans
with red beaks.
Grey and brown koalas grunt in eucalyptus.
Down in streams and lakes swim
skilful platypus.
Red kangaroos with joeys hop about,
black wallabies and wombats don't come out.
On balmy nights sea turtles
come ashore to nest,
they struggle up the tempered sand
and have no rest,
until in trance they lay a hundred eggs,
year after year.
The mystic task achieved, they turn
to sea and disappear.
Green turtles, loggerheads and flatbacks
hatch at dawn
in Queensland's golden beaches.
Instinct drives them on
to seek the light in the horizon, head to sea,
escaping crabs and seagulls in a run to be.
The natives called this weathered
land their home,
a habitat to hunt, to fish and roam.
Here lived and loved for sixty
thousand years a heart
that pulsates still in music, dance and art.
Rock paintings, etchings
feature lizards, crocodiles,
anatomies of rainbow snakes, whose wiles
created hills and billabongs.

Bark paintings dream
of barramundis, boomerangs
and birds that teem.
Aborigines know nature still and seasons,
live according to ancestral reasons.
We can learn from them the harmony
of cosmic forces and the will to be.
They managed fire, vast forests
and the desert sand,
until white settlers came in ships
to claim the land.
The settlers brought the cows,
the rabbits and the sheep.
They opened mines, built roads,
raised buildings steep.
As awesome as the fauna in the parks,
art galleries and orchestras deserve high marks.
The sails of Sydney's Opera take us in flight.
Killara's Seidler house breathes art and light.
There's music too in chequered cultivated fields,
There's drama in plantation
and in harvest yields,
There's pride in macadamia,
ginger beer, superior wine,
There's joy in living, mate. "No worries"
Life is fine!
Ephemeral as dappled butterflies,
invigorating as the radiant skies,
vacations mean discovery and learning,
shifting gears and reassessing,
dreaming, yearning.
Ethereal as a passing cloud,
ephemeral as silence in a crowd,
vacations hover timelessly,
and soon - too soon - recede in memory.



A Perfumed Art Talk with the Founder

AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. GOAR SEKHIAN SANFILIPPO, FOUNDER,
CURATOR, AND CEO OF PERFUME ART CREATION GALLERIES



TEXT
NORA PAPP, CONTEMPORARY VISUAL
ARTIST AND BLOGGER



"Purity" by JIRO, at Perfume Art Creation Venezia.
Perfumed painting, acrylic on fabrics, 100 x 70 x 3 cm.
© Perfume Art Creation, Zollikerberg, Paris, Venezia.

Thank you for the warm welcome! It's a privilege to share this space with you for this conversation.

The genesis of melding art with fragrance was birthed within the confines of my professional sphere. It's essential to note that both art and fragrances have been intertwined with my existence since childhood. Yet, my career trajectory for two decades was anchored in international trade, a field seemingly distant from these passions. The epiphany to fuse visual and olfactory pleasures arose from the strains of an unfulfilling work environment. This longing for aesthetic and aromatic stimulation became my muse. I envisioned an art piece on the barren wall beside me and a fragrance that could transport me from the drab confines of the trading floor. This wasn't just a fleeting daydream; my deep-rooted appreciation for art and scent fueled this aspiration.

How should we imagine the encounter with a perfume-combined work?

The creation of perfume-infused artworks is deeply personal and tailored, with my role being more of a conduit than a direct influencer. My background in art and olfactory senses serves as a foundation, yet it's the immersive study of an artist's portfolio that truly sparks my creativity. Every brushstroke, colour palette, and technique of the artist acts as a catalyst, igniting my visual and olfactory imagination. This process is collaborative at its core. As I delve into the nuances of an artist's work, the interplay of visuals and scents begins to take shape in my mind, forming the initial concept of a collection. It's a dialogue of inspiration, where my insights and the artist's vision converge to conceptualize a collection that is not just seen but experienced through scent.

And what kind of perfume is it?

Viewers are invited to not only connect with the visual aspect of the art but to also infuse it with a more intimate, personal layer by selecting a scent. This could be their own signature perfume or a fragrance that holds significance to someone dear to them. This integration allows for a unique synthesis where the chosen artwork is not just visually captivating but also intimately connected to the viewer's or their loved one's olfactory identity, enriching the overall experience and creating a deeply personal connection with the art.

How do you position yourself as a collaborator and gallery owner in the artistic work presented?

Building on what I shared earlier, the culmination of our collaborative efforts—the artist's work—emerges as a manifestation of our shared vision and inspiration. This creative synergy often results in a collection that is akin to a “newborn,” crafted with care, passion, and a deep-seated connection between all involved. As the relationship between the gallery owner and the artist evolves through this process, it transcends traditional professional boundaries. It blossoms into a creative friendship, where mutual respect, understanding, and shared aspirations form the cornerstone. This unique bond not only enriches the art but also adds a layer of depth and intimacy to the collection, making each piece a testament to the collaborative spirit and the profound connections formed along the journey.

What messages are you trying to communicate with your curatorial work? What differentiates your approach?

My curatorial vision is rooted in a belief passed on by my father: “*Art is noble. You can learn many things, but art must be in your blood.*” This conviction has guided my work since I began organizing exhibitions in 2017.

In 2018, I founded Perfume Art Creation, a project dedicated to perfumed art that places olfaction at the heart of the visual experience. Based in Zollikerberg, near Zurich, the gallery adopts an intimate, human-scale approach deeply connected to local nature and history. By integrating scent into exhibitions, artworks are experienced multisensorial, allowing artists' practices to unfold beyond sight alone. What distinguishes my approach is a sustained commitment to expanding perception in contexts where olfactory art remains rare. A recent collaboration with the Ortsmuseum Zollikon, combining historical maps with scents from local flora, marked an important step in anchoring perfumed art within a cultural and historical narrative.

How do you select the artists and what is really important to you in terms of an artist's approach?

As I've touched upon previously, the creative process we engage in significantly transforms the dynamics between the gallerist and the artist, often leading to a deep-seated friendship. Such a bond is predicated on unwavering trust, forming the foundation for a lasting relationship. In the

realm where galleries and artists intersect, while talent undeniably plays a critical role, the core human values of respect, loyalty, honesty, and creativity hold paramount importance. I approach all my professional relationships with sincerity, transparency, and a forthright attitude. It is essential for these fundamental values to be reciprocated and upheld. Should there be any deviation from these principles, our paths diverge swiftly and decisively.

Since you founded the concept in Zurich in 2020, you have already opened new galleries in Venice and Paris.

Every locale brings its own unique flavour to the art scene, and for us, Venice holds a special place. My husband and I were merely 21 when we first visited Venice and found ourselves captivated by the majestic Scuola Grande di San Rocco. The profound spirit and philosophy of this place inspired a heartfelt vow between us: to one day emulate the Venetian middle-class families' tradition of nurturing young talent in the arts. Fulfilling this aspiration, we inaugurated our first international gallery in Venice in April 2022.

A year later, a serendipitous opportunity emerged: the possibility of acquiring a gallery space in Paris—a city where art is not merely practiced, but lived as tradition, conviction, and spirit. Located in the Village Suisse at 78 Avenue de Suffren, just steps from emblematic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, the site carries a powerful cultural resonance. Establishing a presence in such a prestigious setting once felt far beyond our reach.

What is your focus with curating an exhibition?

Our galleries in Zürich, Venice, and Paris are abuzz with activity, hosting new exhibitions bi-monthly. Each collection is personally curated by me, a responsibility I cherish deeply. It's a privilege to intersect paths with such incredibly talented and creative artists, which in turn, enriches my own creative journey immeasurably.

Running a burgeoning gallery demands an immense commitment, often translating into 16-hour workdays that intertwine with family life. Such a rigorous schedule is sustainable only because of the joy and fulfilment derived from working alongside individuals who inspire and invigorate me daily.

Are there any forthcoming exhibitions or related creative works you would like to highlight for our readers?

The current solo exhibition of impressive JIRO are simultaneously in Venice, Paris and Zurich. The Art of JIRO and the Philosophy of Levinas: The Epiphany of the Face. JIRO's perfumed artworks "Holy Visions" —particularly his series devoted to female faces and figures of saints—resonates deeply with the thought of Emmanuel Levinas. His concept of the "epiphany of the face," which places the face of the Other at the very heart of ethics, finds here a singular and subtle artistic expression.

In Holy Visions, JIRO unites his two countries, his philosophy, and his spirituality in a single creative breath.

For JIRO, perfumed art becomes a total art: visual, olfactory, and spiritual emotions meet, blend, and reveal the inner colour of the world. This collection is a journey through sacred faces and inner souls. It draws its roots from the Church of Saint Hripsimé in Armenia, a testament to ancestral faith, while also being deeply anchored in the presence of contemporary saints—everyday women whose eyes and faces seem to carry light and inner clarity.

Perfume Art Creation extends its curatorial vision into fragrance creation. Two years ago, the gallery conceived "Zürcher Heimatduft", a limited-edition unisex eau de parfum, presented for six months in the Swiss International airplanes catalogue. Designed as a true sensory experience, the fragrance opens with smoky notes inspired by Zurich's iconic bars - gin, whisky, and vermouth - before unfolding into green and woody accords that evoke the surrounding landscape. Fresh citrus notes add a vibrant, contemporary finish.

The experience was further enriched by an exclusive chocolate creation developed in collaboration with a Swiss chocolatier, allowing Zurich to be both smelled and tasted. //

A new eau de parfum, "Genfer - Le Genevois", is currently in development.

This fusion of art, scent, and taste defines the creative identity of Perfume Art Creation.

We will be delighted to ensure a memorable private visit to any of our gallery locations contact us by phone or email www.perfumeart.ch. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to share this interview with you.

Perfume Art Creation Galleries in Zollikerberg (ZH), Paris, and Venice, www.perfumeart.ch

Égypte

DELTA DU NIL 1/3

SAVOIR +

Altaï Travel



Né de la fusion du Nil Blanc qui prend sa source au lac Victoria et du Nil Bleu issu du lac Tana, le Nil, qui est avec l'Amazone le plus long fleuve du monde, rejoint la Méditerranée à quelque 150km au nord du Caire par un delta à l'entrée duquel il se divise en plusieurs branches dont deux principales, celle de Rosette à l'ouest et celle de Damiette à l'est.

Après un parcours de 6600 km à travers le désert, le Nil se jette dans la mer Méditerranée sous forme d'un delta d'une superficie de l'ordre de 24000 km². C'est une région marécageuse, riche en faune et flore, et qui depuis l'Antiquité représente une zone stratégique pour une agriculture intensive. L'histoire de l'Égypte tout entière, et particulièrement celle du delta du Nil, est fondée sur la maîtrise de trois atouts: l'eau, la fertilité des sols et sa position de carrefour commercial entre l'Orient, l'Afrique et l'Occident. Pour valoriser la richesse alluviale et hydraulique du delta et permettre l'établissement de populations nombreuses, de lourds travaux ont été entrepris. De tout temps les gouvernements égyptiens ont dû affronter les caprices du fleuve et gérer ses crues. Si cette richesse potentielle a constitué la grandeur de l'Égypte, elle a aussi causé sa perte car elle fut convoitée depuis toujours par de nombreux peuples, entraînant de longues périodes d'instabilité politique et des guerres destructrices.

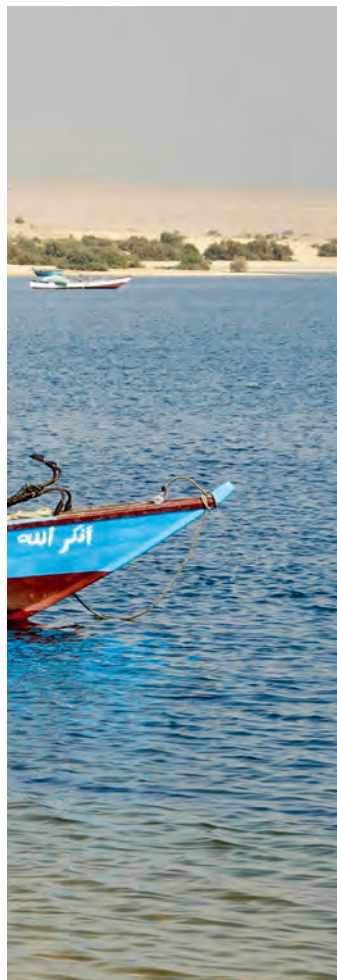
Le delta a connu des visages différents au cours de son histoire ; tout dépendait du pouvoir qui le dominait et de sa capacité à maîtriser l'eau du Nil. Et chaque défaillance dans son aménagement occasionna des catastrophes humaines et agricoles: inondations, épidémies, divagation des canaux, salinisation des sols et limitation de la navigation. Jusqu'au XIX^e siècle, le delta du Nil a subi des inondations répétées et des périodes de sécheresse sévère. De plus, depuis la construction du haut barrage d'Assouan en 1973 - considéré comme l'un des plus importants au monde -, le fleuve charrie dix fois moins de sédiments. Ainsi, la mer a tendance à reprendre le dessus, affectant une partie de la superficie du delta sur laquelle vivent quelque 40 millions d'habitants. Bien qu'en zone dite « rurale », le delta du Nil héberge près du tiers de la population égyptienne et fait partie des régions les plus densément peuplées de la planète.

AU CŒUR DU DÉSERT

Le jour n'est pas encore levé sur Louxor et sa région. Les Colosses de Memnon - deux gigantesques statues érigées sur la rive ouest du Nil il y a 3400 ans représentant le pharaon Amenhotep III - se distinguent à peine dans l'obscurité. La Vallée des Rois, les temples d'Hatshepsout et de Ramsès III sont tout proches, mais il est bien trop tôt pour les découvrir, sauf en prenant de l'altitude depuis une montgolfière d'où le spectacle est féérique au lever du jour. Louxor est habituellement le point de départ pour remonter le Nil en bateau jusqu'à la frontière avec le Soudan. Au programme, la visite de nombreux temples construits le long du fleuve dont ceux d'Abou Simbel, le site antique le plus visité d'Égypte après les pyramides de Gizeh (voir le *newSpecial* de juin à septembre 2023, « Au fil du Nil »).

Revenus sur terre, ce sera direction plein nord pour nous, pour partir à la découverte du delta du Nil. Au préalable, une incursion dans le désert s'impose. Au-delà de ses richesses historiques, l'oasis d'El Fayoum dévoile des paysages naturels époustouflants. Véritable havre de paix, cette région contraste avec l'agitation urbaine du Caire et ses 20 millions d'habitants situé à seulement quelques encablures. Oasis la plus proche du Nil, El Fayoum nous invite à un voyage captivant à travers le temps. Proche du lac Qaroun - plus grand lac d'eau douce d'Égypte -, la réserve naturelle Djebel Qatrani abrite un site archéologique ainsi qu'une forêt pétrifiée tout à fait exceptionnels. Véritable trésor de fossiles, elle relate l'évolution des mammifères et des primates à partir de l'Éocène, deuxième période du Paléogène qui s'étend entre 56 et 33,9 millions d'années. Avec ses formations rocheuses arrondies, la vallée des Pastèques, située non loin de là au cœur d'un panorama superbe, fait le bonheur des photographes en quête d'images surréalistes.

Situé dans la région du Fayoum, le lac Qaroun est le plus grand lac d'eau douce d'Égypte.



Grands espaces désertiques et panoramas pharaoniques du parc national de Wadi El Rayan.

Entre les dunes de sable du Wadi El Rayan se dévoilent deux magnifiques lacs alimentés par les eaux venant de l'oasis d'El Fayoum ainsi qu'une cascade, créant un paysage époustouflant. La région est connue également pour sa biodiversité et sa faune exceptionnelle. Habitat d'hibernation pour les oiseaux migrateurs traversant l'Égypte du nord au sud, elle accueille plusieurs espèces menacées, dont le rarissime fennec. Depuis Djebel Medawara, la vue est superbe sur le lac inférieur de l'oasis d'El Fayoum ainsi que sur le Lac Magique - qui change de couleur plusieurs fois par jour, suivant l'heure et la quantité de lumière solaire qu'il reçoit - situés dans le Wadi El Hitan. La route est encore longue pour rejoindre le delta du Nil, et le village de Tunis sera l'endroit idéal pour passer la nuit. Il n'y a pas si longtemps, ce magnifique endroit était un village de pêcheurs sur la rive du lac Qaroun. Dans les années 1980, tombée sous son charme très différent des autres villages égyptiens et de ses vibrations uniques, la Suissesse Evelyn Porret décide de s'y installer. Potière de formation, elle y fonde tout naturellement un atelier de poterie qui deviendra très vite une école et maintenant, le pauvre village de pêcheurs est devenu un centre réputé de poterie moderne.

DE PYRAMIDE EN PYRAMIDE

Retour à la piste ; au travers de villages bouillants de vie, aux échoppes colorées, nos 4X4 se faufilent tant bien que mal. Au loin se détachent de l'uniformité du désert les pyramides de Dahchour, joyaux de l'architecture égyptienne datant de 2613 à 2589 avant J.-C. Situées à environ 40 km au sud du Caire, ces structures monumentales ont été construites par le pharaon Snéfrou, fondateur de la IV^e dynastie. Bâtitisseur infatigable, il en a érigé plusieurs aux formes différentes et insolites, dont la pyramide rhomboïdale. Commencée avec un angle d'inclinaison très ambitieux de 54 degrés, cette construction a rapidement révélé des faiblesses structurelles préoccupantes. Face à ses problèmes, à environ 49 m de hauteur, la pente fut réduite à 43 degrés, créant cette silhouette caractéristique qui lui vaut son nom. Le site de Dahchour est d'une importance fondamentale pour comprendre l'évolution de la construction des pyramides. Après une première tentative imparfaite, Snéfrou entreprit la construction de la pyramide rouge - ainsi nommée en raison de la teinte rosée de ses pierres calcaires - en optant dès le départ pour un angle d'inclinaison de 43 degrés. Haute de 104 m, elle devint ainsi la première véritable pyramide parfaitement réussie de l'histoire égyptienne et servira de modèle pour la construction de celle de son fils Khéops.

A une dizaine de kilomètres, la nécropole de Saqqarah - le plus vaste ensemble de tombes égyptiennes de l'antiquité - abrite la célèbre pyramide de Djéser. Construit il a près de 4700 ans, cet édifice fut le premier à être bâti en pierre taillée plutôt qu'en briques de terre crue. Souvent considérée comme la première pyramide de l'Égypte antique, elle se démarque par sa structure à degrés. Avant, les tombeaux royaux étaient de simples mastabas, des constructions basses rectangulaires. En empilant plusieurs mastabas de taille décroissante, l'architecte de génie Imhotep créa pour son pharaon Djéser un édifice de 62 m de haut à la silhouette élancée pointant vers le ciel.

SUR LA ROUTE D'ALEXANDRIE

A mi-chemin entre Le Caire et Alexandrie - dans le delta du Nil -, l'oasis de Wadi El Natroun, dépression aride, s'étale sur une centaine de km. Durant l'époque pharaonique, cette vaste région était considérée comme sacrée en raison du natron, minéral qui s'y trouvait en abondance et dont les propriétés nettoyantes, absorbantes ou antiseptiques étaient essentielles aux cérémonies de purification et à la confection des momies. Durant l'ère chrétienne, le Wadi El Natroun abrita Saint Marcaire le Grand - moine égyptien et « *Père du désert* » - dont la présence attira de nombreux croyants. Peu à peu, des églises et des hospices pour les pèlerins furent construits, ainsi que des monastères coptes orthodoxes pour les religieux, dont les remarquables Deir al-Surian et Deir Anba Bishoi, un des plus anciens au monde (IV^e siècle).

Alexandrie est en vue. Construite sur les rives de la mer Méditerranée, la cité légendaire, née de la vision d'Alexandre le Grand, nous dévoile une autre facette de l'Égypte. //

(Suite de l'aventure à découvrir dans le prochain numéro du newSpecial)

Suisse - Italie

VOL EN HAUTE ALTITUDE

SAVOIR +

Ballons
du Léman



Les frères Montgolfier sont à l'origine en 1783 du premier vol d'un ballon à air chaud avec à son bord des passagers humains. Depuis, les montgolfières ont évolué, se sont modernisées et transportent chaque année des milliers de passagers à travers la planète. Depuis la Suisse, une véritable aventure aérienne d'exception vous propulse jusqu'en Italie avec la « Traversée des Alpes », du long courrier à l'air libre à près de 6000 m d'altitude: sensations garanties!

Issus d'une famille de papetiers d'Annonay, en Ardèche, Joseph et Étienne de Montgolfier sont indissociables dans l'invention du ballon à air chaud. Passionné pour la physique, Joseph rêve de fabriquer une machine volante. En 1782, en observant les mouvements qu'imprime la chaleur à une chemise séchant près du feu d'une cheminée, il prend conscience de la force ascensionnelle de l'air chaud et découvre qu'il est plus léger que l'air froid. Il imagine alors un globe de 1 m³ en soie qu'il dispose au-dessus d'un feu et qui décolle d'une trentaine de mètres. Désormais convaincu qu'une enveloppe remplie d'air chaud doit être capable de s'élever dans l'atmosphère, il va s'employer à concrétiser ce projet avec son frère Étienne en faisant tout d'abord décoller un ballon beaucoup plus gros qui grimpera cette fois à 400 m de haut. Le 4 juin 1783, les frères Montgolfier connaissent un nouveau succès avec un aérostat de 900 m³ qu'ils font s'envoler depuis la place d'Annonay. Ils utilisent comme source de chaleur un mélange de paille et de laine qu'ils font brûler dans la nacelle suspendue sous le ballon, qui franchit alors l'altitude de 1000 m. L'Académie royale des Sciences entend parler de cette prouesse technique et invite Joseph et Étienne à faire une démonstration à Paris en présence du roi Louis XVI.

PREMIER VOL DEVANT LE ROI

A cette occasion, ils font la connaissance du scientifique Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier qui leur offre ses services, notamment pour peaufiner et maîtriser l'alimentation du foyer afin de produire l'air chaud. Malgré des soucis liés à l'enveloppe du ballon qui se déchire lors d'essais quelques jours avant la démonstration devant le roi, le succès sera total ce 19 septembre 1783 à Versailles en présence de la famille royale ainsi que toute la Cour.

Le ballon nommé « Le Réveillon » - 18,47 m de haut sur 13,28 m de large pour un poids de 400 kg et décoré aux couleurs du roi - ne part pas vide; un mouton, un canard et un coq embarquent dans le panier en osier suspendu en dessous. Après être grimpé à 600 m d'altitude et avoir parcouru 3,5 km, il se posera 8 minutes plus tard avec ses passagers sains et saufs. L'innocuité du vol en atmosphère vient d'être prouvée et les frères Montgolfier pensent à un vol « humain ». Responsable de ses sujets, le roi l'interdit tout d'abord, mais à force de persuasion, consent alors à accorder son autorisation. Et c'est ainsi que le 21 novembre 1783, Pilâtre de Rozier, accompagné du marquis d'Arlandes - que Joseph de Montgolfier avait rencontré au collège des jésuites de Tournon, monte dans la nacelle accrochée sous un ballon de 2400 m³ pour effectuer ce premier vol habité qui parcourra une dizaine de kilomètres en 25 minutes.

Les vols vont ensuite se multiplier et en janvier 1784, une immense montgolfière, surnommée « Le Flesselles », de 42 m de haut pour 24 m de diamètre et d'une capacité de 27 000 m³, s'élève au-dessus de Lyon. Pilotée par Pilâtre de Rozier, elle emmène six passagers, dont Joseph de Montgolfier anobli entre-temps par le roi.

« BALLONS DU LÉMAN »

Créateur d'émotions, fort de 30 ans d'expérience, « Ballons du Léman » est né d'une passion commune et d'une grande amitié entre Fabien et Gaël. Pilote professionnel depuis 1994, ce dernier totalise plus de 1700 heures de vol en montgolfière et affiche également 16000 heures de vol en avion de ligne. Quant à Fabien qui accumule plusieurs centaines d'heures d'expérience de vol en montagne, il participe à de nombreuses compétitions, et en 2006, obtient la 3^e place aux championnats suisses de montgolfière. Après avoir volé pour plusieurs sociétés de montgolfières et parcouru le monde à bord de leurs nacelles, ils ont souhaité partager leurs expériences et leur amour des airs au bord du Léman avec comme objectif que chacun puisse vivre un moment exceptionnel qui restera gravé dans sa mémoire. Une formidable équipe les entoure, aussi bien dans les airs qu'au sol, mettant tous leurs atouts et leur savoir-faire pour totalement satisfaire leur clientèle.

Du baptême en montgolfière au vol fondue, gastronomique ou apéro et afterwork – réservés aux gourmands à la recherche d'expériences uniques – en passant par les vols de nuit, à haute altitude, sur mesure, privés ainsi que pour les personnes en situation de handicap, il y en a pour tous les goûts. Mais pour les amateurs de sensations fortes, le vol d'aventure aérienne le plus extravagant proposé par « Ballons du Léman » est sans aucun doute la « Traversée des Alpes ». Au départ de Suisse, le ballon vous emmènera jusqu'en Italie, au-dessus des sommets alpins, à la découverte des plus belles montagnes et glaciers d'exception depuis un balcon à 360°. Libres comme des oiseaux à pouvoir presque frôler les versants enneigés, vous admirerez des paysages à couper le souffle.

TRAVERSÉE DES ALPES

Au cœur de l'Oberland bernois, dans la vallée de Simmental, se niche le magnifique village de Zweisimmen. Rendez-vous est pris sur son petit aérodrome, un incontournable pour tous ceux qui recherchent un accès rapide aux stations hivernales des Alpes suisses, comme Gstaad mondialement connue. Peu de trafic aujourd'hui et l'équipe au grand complet des « Ballons du Léman » en profite pour investir la piste.

Dispersées sur le terrain et fixées à leurs nacelles – elles même solidement arrimées au sol –, les enveloppes des ballons de 35 m de haut se remplissent progressivement d'air froid propulsé par des ventilateurs. Grâce aux brûleurs à gaz, la température de l'air se réchauffe, les ballons se gonflent et se soulèvent lentement pour atteindre leur position verticale d'envol. Une petite quantité de chaleur supplémentaire va permettre aux montgolfières d'atteindre leur équilibre et elles seront prêtes à décoller. Cette phase du pré-vol est des plus excitantes et tous les passagers ont hâte d'embarquer.

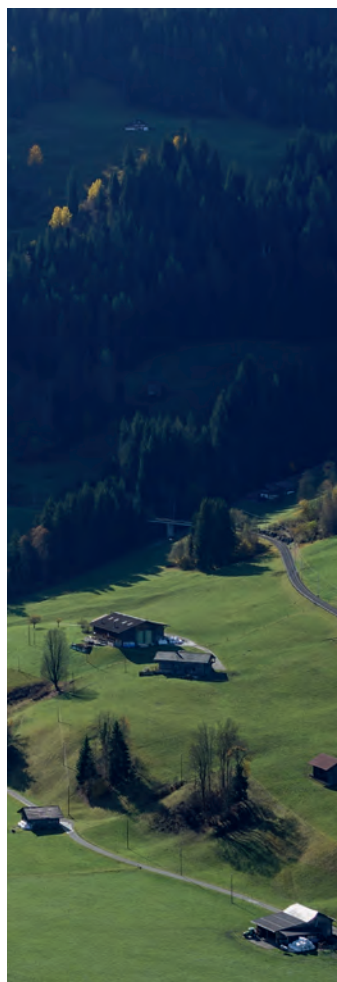
C'est le moment où les 2,4 tonnes de chacune des montgolfières s'arrachent lentement du sol. Après avoir remonté la vallée de Simmental à faible altitude, histoire de s'acclimater au vide, très rapidement les 4000 m sont atteints; un autre monde, celui où l'oxygène est deux fois plus rare. Avant de survoler le toit des Alpes il est temps de nous équiper de masques reliés à des bouteilles d'oxygène qui ont trouvé place aux côtés de celles contenant le gaz servant à alimenter les brûleurs: au total, 650 kg de carburant ont été embarqués pour maintenir les 12 000 m³ d'air des plus gros ballons de Suisse à une température avoisinant les 100°. On rentre dans le royaume du blanc, celui du Cervin, celui du Mont-Blanc.

Sous nos pieds, les Alpes suisses, françaises et italiennes. La température extérieure chute à -15° mais la chaleur des brûleurs se fait sentir. Il faut se frayer un chemin dans le ciel parmi les avions de ligne et les aéronefs militaires. Notre pilote Paul-Henry est l'un des rares à entreprendre ces vols périlleux. Il est assisté par Olivier qui gère notre plan de vol; pour assurer notre sécurité, il est en contact radio permanent avec les tours de contrôle des aéroports de Genève puis de Milan. Fils de pilote qui lui a transmis le virus, Paul-Henry – dit Polo – a 20 ans d'expérience à son actif. Également instructeur, il a aussi participé à la Coupe Gordon Bennett, la plus ancienne et renommée course de ballons à gaz au monde, compétition qui réunit le plus grand nombre de nations dont la France qu'il représentait.

Après avoir tutoyé les 6000 m d'altitude, notre survol des Alpes prend fin; les sommets enneigés ont laissé place à des paysages plus arides. Au loin se dessinent les lacs italiens: lac Majeur et ceux d'Orta, Varese, Monate et Comabbio. Nous amorçons la descente au-dessus du Piémont où les rizières s'étendent à perte de vue. Notre pilote redouble de vigilance: il est temps de déterminer l'endroit où nous devons nous poser, impérativement près d'une route car l'équipe d'assistance des « Ballons du Léman » doit pouvoir nous récupérer pour regagner la Suisse. Poussées par des courants différents, nos deux montgolfières toucheront terre à environ 1 km l'une de l'autre. Après trois heures de vol et une traversée de 152 km, notre fabuleuse aventure prend fin près de Formigliana, petit village de 550 habitants situé à mi-chemin entre Turin et Milan. Nous ferons l'attraction du jour; très vite une foule de curieux s'étonnant de la pose de montgolfières sur leurs terrains agricoles viendront se joindre à nous.

C'est l'heure du déjeuner: « Polo » se met aux fourneaux. La fondue est au menu, elle sera vivement appréciée pour clôturer en beauté cette journée qui restera à jamais gravée dans notre mémoire. //

Survol de la vallée de Simmental avant de prendre de l'altitude pour pouvoir effectuer la traversée des Alpes jusqu'en Italie.



Depuis la nacelle, la vue à 360° est à couper le souffle sur les sommets comme le Mont-blanc et le Cervin.

Poems from WHO Poetry Garden



FOR THE SAME DIGNITY

The poem “*For the Same Dignity*” is a call for equity, justice, and respect for diversity, showing that human dignity is built collectively and requires solidarity, responsibility, and daily commitment.

We walk upon the same earth, in humanity!
Under a shared sky, a bearer of fraternity!
Our paths may still differ in reality,
But our steps move forward together,
in solidarity!

Some walk without barriers, with ease!
Others climb walls, unseen and in invisibility!
Opportunities are not always equal, in truth.
Hence the call for justice and impartiality!

Equity is neither favor nor charity!
It is the just response to every reality.
It is giving each person the possibility
To move forward standing, with dignity!

Our faces differ, rich in diversity!
Our stories cross paths, full of plurality.
From our exchange is born a strength:
complementarity!
A force that builds the future
with sustainability!

Diversity does not deny unity!
It nourishes it, through reciprocity!
Every difference becomes an opportunity
When welcomed with equity!

Dignity in motion calls for responsibility!
A moment for action, for clarity!
To recognize together, with sincerity,
That equality is built through continuity!

Talents, genders, cultures, in parity!
Multiple voices united in complicity!
Diversity enlightens our activities
And strengthens our teams in their efficiency!

Equity is lived every day, in reality!
In every choice we make, guided by integrity!
To build a humanity grounded in equality,
Where no one is left on the margins
of fraternity!

POUR UNE MÊME DIGNITÉ

Le poème «*Pour une même dignité*» est un appel à l'équité, à la justice et au respect de la diversité, montrant que la dignité humaine se construit collectivement et nécessite solidarité, responsabilité et engagement quotidien.

Nous marchons sur la même terre,
en humanité!
Sous un ciel partagé, porteur de fraternité!
Nos chemins diffèrent encore dans la réalité,
Mais nos pas avancent ensemble, en solidarité!

Certains marchent sans barrières, avec facilité!
D'autres franchissent des murs,
dans l'invisibilité!
Les chances ne sont pas toujours égales,
en vérité.
D'où l'appel à la justice et à l'impartialité!

L'équité n'est ni faveur ni charité!
Elle est la réponse juste à chaque réalité.
C'est offrir à chacun la possibilité
D'avancer debout, avec dignité!

Nos visages diffèrent, riches en diversité!
Nos histoires se croisent, pleines de pluralité.
De nos échanges naît une force :
la complémentarité!
Une force qui bâtit l'avenir dans la durabilité!

La diversité ne nie pas l'unité!
Elle la nourrit, dans la réciprocité!
Chaque différence devient une opportunité
Quand elle est accueillie avec équité!

La dignité en marche appelle
à la responsabilité!
Un moment d'action, de lucidité!
Reconnaître ensemble, avec sincérité,
Que l'égalité se construit dans la continuité!

Talents, genres, cultures, en parité!
Voix multiples unies dans la complicité!
La diversité éclaire nos activités
Et renforce nos équipes dans leur efficacité!

L'équité se vit chaque jour, en réalité!
Dans chaque choix posé, guidé par l'intégrité!
Pour bâtir une humanité fondée sur l'égalité,
Où nul n'est laissé en marge de la fraternité!

RIGHTS AND JUSTICE A CALL FOR ACTION

She is the foundation of progress,
The quiet force behind every global milestone.
From homes to hospitals,
From classrooms to corridors of policy,
Women have shaped the world -
often without credit.
She is Marie Curie's science lighting the future,
Rosa Parks' courage moving nations,
Indira Gandhi and Angela Merkel
Redefining leadership with resolve.
She is the health worker at dawn,
The researcher seeking answers,
The peacemaker rebuilding after conflict.
Her rights are not negotiable.
They are universal, indivisible, inalienable.
Justice is not delayed hope,
It is accountability in action.
And action is the measure of our commitment.
In laws enacted.
In systems corrected.
In girls educated, protected, empowered.
From songs that once praised her sacrifice
To global pledges that now demand equality,
Her journey is one of resilience and rise.
On International Women's Day 2026,
We affirm more than celebration.
We affirm responsibility.
Rights and Justice in a call for Action,
Not in words alone,
But in outcomes.
For ALL women and girls,
Everywhere.

EQUITY IN EVERY SHADE

We are not born equal in fortune or place,
Not gifted the same starting line in the race;
Yet dignity lives in each heartbeat and name,
And justice demands we be valued the same.
Diversity paints the world vivid and wide,
In language and culture, in faith and in pride;
Each story a thread in humanity's seam,
Each voice adding depth to a shared
human dream.
Equity asks not that all paths align,
But each soul receives what it needs to shine;
Not ladders pulled up by privilege or fear,
But bridges built strong so all may draw near.
Where difference is welcomed,
not merely allowed,
Innovation speaks clear and progress
speaks loud;
For minds that think differently,
question, and see,
Are engines that drive possibility.

From classrooms to boardrooms,
from fields to the law,
From science and service to art and to awe,
When fairness leads choices and bias departs,
We measure success by the reach of our hearts.
Let policies listen, let systems repair,
Let leadership look like the world
it must serve and care;
For justice delayed or selectively applied,
Is justice diminished, its promise denied.
So let this be more than a slogan or claim,
More than kind words with no structural aim;
Let action give meaning to values we voice,
Let equity guide every deliberate choice.
For a world truly strong is not one
made the same,
But one where all differ - and none are denied;
Where diversity thrives and equity stays,
Lighting tomorrow in countless bright ways.

This poem was written for International Women's Day 2026, under the global theme "*Rights, Justice and Action for ALL Women and Girls*". It draws inspiration from the lived realities of women across cultures, sectors, and generations, acknowledging both their visible leadership and their often-unseen contributions. The poem deliberately traces women's impact across multiple spheres of society - from homes and classrooms to laboratories, hospitals, and policymaking spaces - highlighting that progress in health, science, governance, peace, and social development has always carried women's fingerprints, even when history failed to name them.

By invoking figures such as Marie Curie, Rosa Parks, Indira Gandhi, and Angela Merkel, the poem connects global women's leadership across science, civil rights, and governance, while also honoring millions of unnamed women - health workers, researchers, caregivers, and peacebuilders - whose daily actions sustain communities and nations. The structure reflects the evolution of the women's movement: from a time when women were celebrated primarily for sacrifice and endurance, to a present that demands rights without negotiation, justice without delay, and action with accountability. The repeated emphasis on outcomes underscores a shift from symbolic recognition to measurable change.

Ultimately, the poem is both a tribute and a call to responsibility - affirming that International Women's Day is not only a moment of celebration, but a reminder of collective duty. It reinforces the principle that gender equality is not a special agenda, but a universal imperative, essential to sustainable development, health equity, peace, and human dignity - for all women and girls, everywhere.

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LUDOVIC ET FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL, DOMAINE DES FAUNES

Bienvenue !

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TOUT AU LONG DE L'ANNÉE DANS UN CADRE EXCEPTIONNEL
POUR UN MOMENT UNIQUE D'ÉCHANGES ET DE PARTAGE.



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