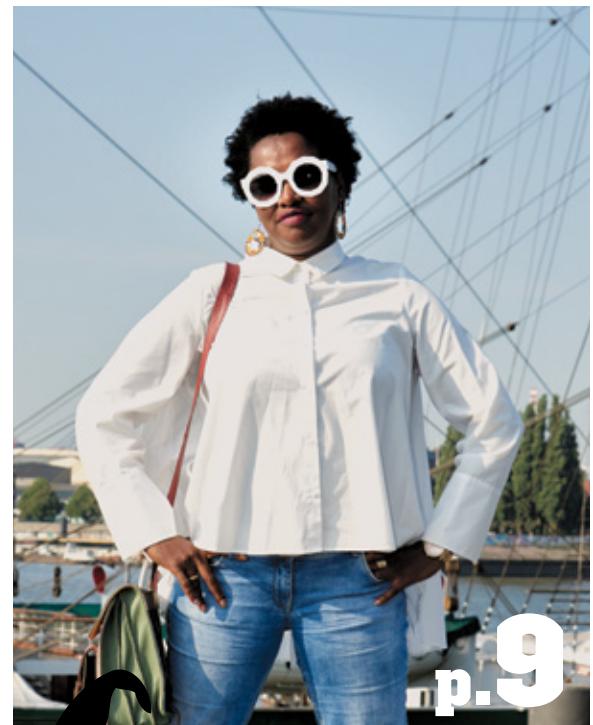


## Hamburg, My Harbour

Afro-German musician, artist, feminist and trained ethnologist, Onejiru, is as lively and diverse as her adopted Hanseatic home. She shows us its highlights on a district tour with a conscience.



p.9

## Zero Waste, Full Taste

Gastronomy produces far too much food trash. Thankfully, Berlin now has its first zero-waste restaurant, Frea. And the global movement is just beginning.



p.17

## Pirates of Activism

COMPANION gets to know the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, a marine NGO that focuses on fighting environmental damaging and the slaughter of wild animals in the world's seas.



p.14

## Cutting Edge Tradition

Curation meets collaboration: we explore Austria's Vorarlberg region, where a tight-knit community of craftspeople has led to innovative movements in contemporary architecture.



p.28

# COMPANION 17



A magazine by [friendsoffriends.com](http://friendsoffriends.com)  
for 25hours Hotels

Featuring  
from

Fashion & Style, Food & Drink, Art & Entertainment, Outdoor & Activity, Hospitality & Retreat, People & Business  
Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Paris, Vienna, Zurich & Beyond

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[companion-magazine.com](http://companion-magazine.com)

## THE FUTURE OF FASHION

Strictly dictated trends, environmental pollution, exploited workers—these realities take the fun out of fashion. However, another way is possible. COMPANION presents five alternatives to senseless consumerism.



p.22



### Bon Voyage

Doing something worthwhile on holiday hasn't become a trend for nothing. From cleaning up the beach to rescuing animals, why not leave something special behind instead of only bringing something back? Bonus: you get to know local culture and people that little bit better.

↳ [Activity Map, p. 24](#)



### Support the Local Community

Off to South Africa! Whether you'd like to learn more about traditional beading, cooking or rural life in the region of Durban and its surroundings in KwaZulu-Natal, WOWZULU gets you in touch with the local community—and makes sure your trip becomes a humbling experience. Within the idea of sustainable tourism, the NGO also ensures that the profits go where they should—to the people.

↳ [Travel Report, p. 20](#)

## The Pizza Rebels

On a mission to reclaim the origins of Italian cooking is Cucina Ribelli, the new gastronomic concept at 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna. We call it a pizza revolution.

↳ [Food & Drink, p. 16](#)

## Pogo and Politics

Electro punk band Egotronic has been engaging in musical hedonism for 19 years. Their latest album is about the erosion of the political centre and the necessity to forge new alliances.

↳ [Music Page, p. 8](#)

## A Sustainable Story

In the age of resource scarcity and endless consumption, what does sustainability mean? In a short essay, our columnist Thomas Girst suggests some answers.

↳ [Column, p. 30](#)

## Youth for Democracy

Journalist and founder of the political DEMO youth movement, Mareike Nieberding, has just published a new book. The message? Make use of your youth.

↳ [Cosmos, p. 4](#)

## Editor's Note

# SHOWER QUICK, KEEP YOUR MIND DIRTY.

**JOIN OUR MISSION.  
SAVE WATER. DONATE WATER.**

[stop-the-water.com](http://stop-the-water.com)



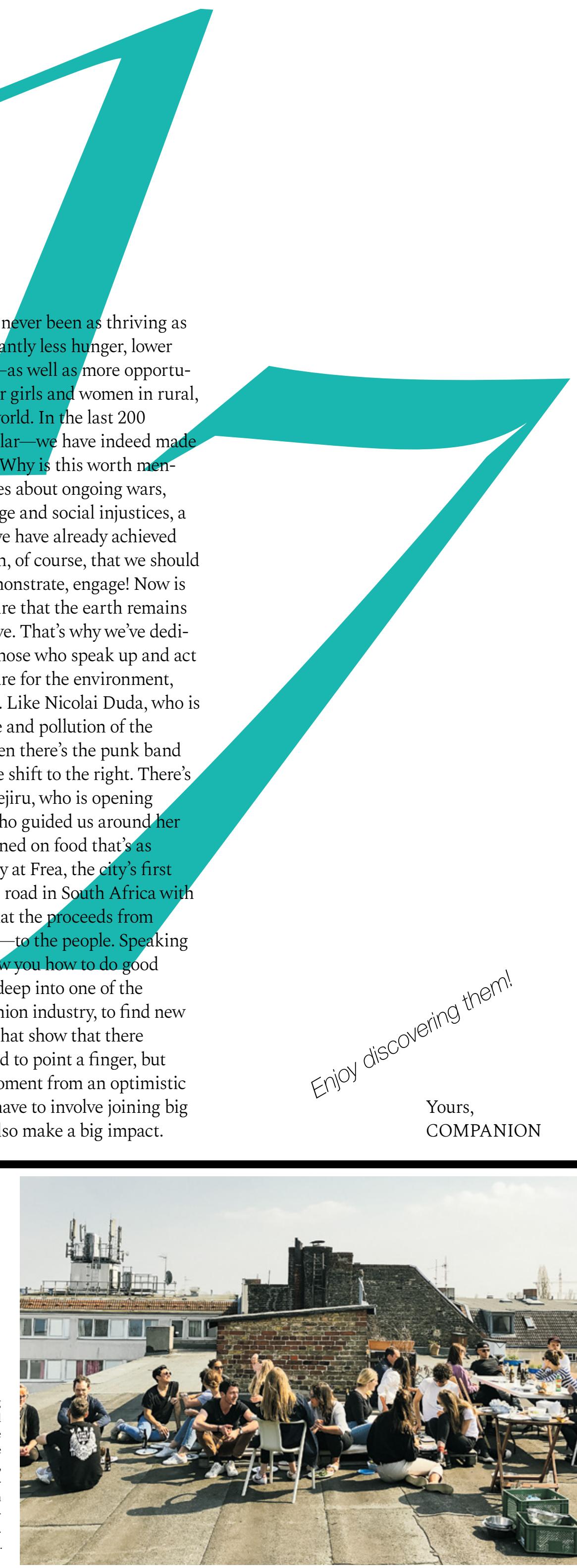
First, the good news: Humankind has never been as thriving as it is today. We're experiencing significantly less hunger, lower infant mortality, higher literacy rates—as well as more opportunities for education and a better life for girls and women in rural, traditionally patriarchal areas of the world. In the last 200 years—and over the past 30 in particular—we have indeed made huge leaps forward all over the world. Why is this worth mentioning? Amidst the daily horror stories about ongoing wars, environmental disasters, climate change and social injustices, a positive view of our planet and what we have already achieved seems lost in time. That does not mean, of course, that we should sit back. On the contrary: Protest, demonstrate, engage! Now is the time to work hand in hand to ensure that the earth remains worth living on—and to help it improve. That's why we've dedicated this issue of COMPANION to those who speak up and act according to their values. Those who are for the environment, for animal protection, or social justice. Like Nicolai Duda, who is fighting to stop illegal wildlife capture and pollution of the world's oceans with Sea Shepherd. Then there's the punk band Egotronic, who are rallying against the shift to the right. There's also the socially-minded musician Onejiru, who is opening up a feminist co-creation space and who guided us around her Hamburg. Meanwhile in Berlin, we dined on food that's as environmentally-conscious as it is tasty at Frea, the city's first zero-waste restaurant. We were on the road in South Africa with WOWZULU, an NGO that ensures that the proceeds from tourism actually go where they belong—to the people. Speaking of which, on our Activity Map, we show you **how to do good** on your travels. Oh, and yes—we dug deep into one of the dirtiest industries in the world, the fashion industry, to find new sustainable and inclusive approaches that show that there is another way. Issue #17 wasn't created to point a finger, but instead to take stock of our present moment from an optimistic perspective. Activism doesn't always have to involve joining big protests. Small everyday actions can also make a big impact.

*Enjoy discovering them!*  
Yours,  
COMPANION

## Friends of Friends

The online magazine Friends of Friends has been portraying inspiring personalities since 2009, forming a creative and international community along the way. Over the years, we have also built a lively network of talented people in the 25hours Hotels cities of Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Vienna, Zurich, and Paris—and everywhere else to come. Some have contributed to this 17th issue of COMPANION, which dives into the world of commitment and activism. The result? Read on to find out more.

[friendsoffriends.com](http://friendsoffriends.com)



## Contributors

Alex Jenkins



Alex has just returned from holidaying in Greece, where he spent every day at the beach and gained a little weight courtesy of the delicious local cuisine. Given the workout the London-native illustrator's fingers get back home, he's bound to quickly shed the pounds again. As his illustrations often communicate political or critical messages, Alex was a perfect match for our activist issue—to which he contributed to the Cosmos and Activity Map.

[alexgamsujenkins.com](http://alexgamsujenkins.com)

Anja-Kristin Lorké



Linda Silke

As Culture Manager of the 25hours Hotels, Anja is something like the extended arm of our editorial team: In addition to her countless cultural projects and collaborations, she also ensures—with a lot of dedication and cheerfulness—that the hotel's own favourite stories find their way into COMPANION. Be the change you want to see in the world—that is her motto, one which she pursues personally as well as professionally. In her adopted home of Hamburg, Anja is active in food sharing, where she rescues food that is still good to eat from garbage. Thumbs up!

[instagram.com/therreal\\_lorki](http://instagram.com/therreal_lorki)

Daniel Farò



'Distinct design, calm and a feeling for detail'—Daniel Farò has a clear vision for design and photography. This is evident in his role at Friends of Friends, where he has worked on COMPANION issues among a host of other projects. This time, though, he was at large for us as a photographer in the zero-waste restaurant Frea. How fitting: as a Sicilian, he was practically born with a love for good food. Happily, he was even allowed to eat the dishes after shooting them.

[danielucasfaro.com](http://danielucasfaro.com)

Silvia Silko



About three out of seven evenings of a week Silvia is out and about at concerts—of course, as a journalist for pop culture you also have to know what you are writing about! The fact that she was able to accompany musician Onejiru on her District Tour for this issue was just the ticket for her. In addition to writing, Silvia also takes care of the COMPANION's magazine production as a project manager. The focus here is on bringing together many individual strands and keeping an overview of the chaos. With the right music in your ears, this works even better. It's good that Silvia has such a wide repertoire.

[instagram.com/miss.zachanassian](http://instagram.com/miss.zachanassian)



TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA  
ILLUSTRATION ALEX JENKINS

Do you ever feel like you're just sitting back and watching the world turn upside down? At a certain point, that was no longer an option for Mareike Nieberding. The German journalist founded the DEMO youth movement in 2017 and discovered that many young people are prepared to be just as loud and active as she is. Her book *Verwende deine Jugend* (Make Use of Your Youth) is out now.

**COMPANION:** To Generation X, it seemed like nothing really mattered, and millennials are consuming like never before—but the teenagers taking part in 'Fridays for Future' and rising up against the political establishment seem different. What do you think of these young people?

Mareike Nieberding: Before my first DEMO workshop in 2017, when I was 29, I imagined young people as not caring about anything but their smartphones. But instead I found curious young people who were happy someone was taking some time out for them—that someone was taking them seriously, and respecting their youth. It wasn't that they were turned off by politics, but rather by parties, because they didn't know what to do with 'politics' in the form of party conferences and leadership debates. Of course, that's not great; after all, we live in a representative democracy and are dependent on young people getting involved with party politics in the future. Parties are dwindling and, in comparison with older generations, there are already very few young people who would consider this line of work. Young people are very much in the minority—in the last German federal election, they only represented

15 percent of voters. That's why they have to be louder than ever to have their concerns heard. Is it the current global situation that has brought about a radical shift in this generation or is their activism just a passing trend?

The global situation, Brexit, President Trump, the climate crisis... All these things have definitely contributed to the politicisation of Germany's youth, at least. But I also think they are the way they are—optimistic and reasonable—because they've grown up in one of the most liberal eras this country has ever known, and their parents also live by such values—environmental protection, open societies, social justice. After all, these values are shared by all democratic parties. I don't think the trend is just a passing one. On the contrary, I believe it's only just getting started!

**DEMO** started in 2017, when you founded the Youth Movement for Democracy. What sets you apart from organisations with similar intentions?

Perhaps the biggest difference is that we aren't aligned with a particular party. We also have a very loose structure and are primarily organised via the Internet. That makes a lot of things easier. But we

still need personal interaction of course, which we have in our regional groups. For us, it's mostly about dialogue—dialogue with young people, older people, politicians and each other.

**It's impressive that you managed to become active at all. Many people prefer to bury their heads in the sand. How often do you think to yourself: 'So what? I give up?'**

Rarely. Pretty much never, actually. Maybe that's also down to what kind of a person you are. I'm a relentless optimist. Do I have any other option? Life has continuously improved for millions of people across the world over the last few centuries, especially in terms of food, education and healthcare. Of course, there is still a lot we need to tackle, Germany included—climate change, equal rights, right-wing terrorism and racism, to name just a few examples. But I believe that you get much further with reason and fact-based optimism than with non-stop fear-mongering. Sea levels are rising and the oceans are full of plastic—so increase the price of CO<sub>2</sub> and ban plastics! It's better to do something than just complain about it. If you don't do anything, you don't have any power. That isn't just true for

regular citizens—it especially applies to politics and the ruling parties.

**Your latest book is a political appeal. What is your top tip for young people looking to get involved?**

The book is an appeal, not advice. But my tip would be to begin by doing anything at all. It could just be something small, like planting some grass for insects or something bigger like joining a party. Sometimes being political can also simply mean saying something when you notice your colleagues making jokes about women or minorities. Everybody is a political issue and of political importance. Understanding that taking yourself seriously as a political subject and taking responsibility for yourself and others would be my golden rule.

Mareike Nieberding's book *Verwende deine Jugend* (Make Use of Your Youth) has just been published in German by Tropen-Verlag.  
↳ [mareikenieberding.com](http://mareikenieberding.com)  
↳ [demo-bewegt.de](http://demo-bewegt.de)

## A Work Oasis amidst Sky-scrapers

In collaboration with Mindspace

### FRANKFURT PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Work gets done here—everyone who passes through Frankfurt notices this immediately. Skyscrapers stack up vertically, business people hurry across the street. Thanks to Mindspace, not all of them disappear into impersonal offices and dreary bank corridors, however. In 2018, the coworking space provider opened its first location in the metropolis on the Main river. It is worlds apart from the grey open-plan offices where a single sad pot plant brightens up one corner. Instead, the beautifully furnished rooms extend over 3300 square metres on five floors, which offer ample room for around 450 members—from the offshoots of a major international company to creative freelancers. It is not only modern interior concepts that make Mindspace so successful, however. The company has been proving this since it was founded in Tel Aviv in 2014. Across 28 locations in Europe, the USA and Israel, Mindspace offers its 14,000 worldwide members IT support and other local services. The networking offers are thoughtfully geared towards companies and freelancers: Weekly workshops, happy hours and other events bring members together. Mindspace CEO Dan Zakai knows that these events are particularly diverse in Frankfurt: 'The city is characterised by a dynamic mix of start-ups and companies from a wide variety of industries,' he says. 'As members in our new Frankfurt location, we help them to work more closely together, to network and to grow together.' Lucky for those who have managed to secure a place in the centrally-located Eurotheum skyscraper. Everyone is welcome to get a temporary taste of Mindspace: meeting rooms and event spaces can also be rented by the hour or by the day. All without office grey and pot plant green, of course.

↳ [Mindspace mindspace.me](http://mindspace.mindspace.me)



## SUGAR-FREE ZONE

### DUBAI FOOD & DRINK

Dubai is the perfect place to pick up a few treasures, dine in the large markets, and indulge in the city's wonderful smells and colours. Except for the scorching heat, which can make a getaway there a little less comfortable. It's a good thing that Comptoir 102 exists to offer a genuinely stylish oasis in the desert state—as well as air conditioning. It's actually a shop for contemporary design and jewelry from international labels, but the in-house organic bistro also serves up regional delicacies. Every ingredient they use come from local organic farms. The charming café is also suave and modern: no sugar, no dairy products and a large selection of vegan and gluten-free dishes, making it perfectly contemporary. Unsurprisingly, Comptoir 102 also reflects this approach with plenty of natural materials and refreshing colour concepts inside, complemented by a range of contemporary and artistic designer objects. This makes it the perfect place to recuperate in Dubai. After all, you'll need plenty of energy for your trip around the next market.

↳ [comptoir102.com](http://comptoir102.com)



## BOX THROUGH IT!

### BERLIN FASHION & STYLE

'Three friends, a dog and a lot of love for the sport'—that's how it all started for made in the squared circle. Basti and Alex have known each other for years and are sparring partners in Berlin. Hamburg natives Lorin and their four-legged friend Dux (not a boxer dog!) are the missing fist for the joint eureka moment. Together they form their own boxing brand, with casual T-shirts, hoodies and sports socks which feel just as good when worn outside the ring as in. And all this for a worthy cause: 'We want the eureka moment to be a positive one for children with disabilities,' say the founders. 'We want to raise awareness and collect donations for initiatives which harness the power of boxing to shape personal and collective development,' they say—all of this to promote

social cohesion and good physical and mental health.' That's because, in their opinion, as a sport that teaches self-confidence, discipline, composure and respect, boxing is, in fact, an ideal way of working with children from difficult backgrounds. Therefore, 12 percent of all profits from the made in the squared circle label go to organisations which work with socially disadvantaged children, offering them prospects and bringing them joy through the medium of sport.

↳ [madeinthesquaredcircle.com](http://madeinthesquaredcircle.com)

# Space there!

## COPENHAGEN PEOPLE & BUSINESS

From the outside, number 10 Flæskerovet looks much like any other blue and white building in Copenhagen's heritage-protected meatpacking district, but inside something quite different is going on. SPACE10 is a research and design lab dedicated to enabling a better everyday life for people and the planet. Fully supported by IKEA, SPACE10 collaborates with designers and other creatives around the world to find possible solutions for some of the biggest issues facing

our future. From designing an open-sourced farm pavilion to exploring the potential of autonomous vehicles, SPACE10 looks across a wide spectrum of topics to see what living better in the future may look like. As SPACE10's co-founder and Danish design icon, Carla Camilla Hjort, explains: 'For me, design is the opportunity to think outside the box.'

↳ [SPACE10 space10.io](http://SPACE10.space10.io)



## A Little Slice of Health

### PARIS FOOD & DRINK

One thing is clear: the owners of Wild & The Moon believe that 'eating should be good for you.' That's why they distance themselves as much as possible from regular supermarket offerings. All of the brand's products—from juices with complex flavours and filling nutritious bowls to delicious crackers and healthy popcorn—are based entirely on fresh gluten-free organic products. A visit to one of their branches in Paris should definitely be part of your next French itinerary. Besides branches in Paris, there are actually three shops in their homeland of Dubai and a store in New York is set to open this autumn. You can enjoy your healthy treats in the hotel or take something back as a souvenir—either way, the products look extremely pretty.

↳ [Wild & The Moon wildandthemoon.com](http://Wild & The Moon wildandthemoon.com)



## Create Your Revolution

### FRANKFURT ART & ENTERTAINMENT

As an important site for the German student movement in the 1960s and the home of the legendary Frankfurt School—a dedicated group of critically-thinking philosophers and academics—Frankfurt has always had the potential to bring about revolutions and sometimes even to start them. As the host of the world's largest book convention, the city is also the ideal place to get to the heart of uprisings and activism. Ideas that move the world—that's the theme of the Frankfurt Book Fair, which takes place from 16 to 20 October 2019. This year's campaign is *Create Your Revolution*, with a series of talks created in collaboration with the United Nations, amongst others. According to the organizers, the theory is that 'culture now plays a largely prestigious and entertainment-based role. The fact that culture can make a significant contribution to understanding—and therefore to shaping an optimistic future—is being overlooked.' The speakers in the first days' talks and discussions want to remind visitors of the power of the fine arts and daring words and are accordingly preparing for many other Book Fair events, which will be about nothing less than changing the world.

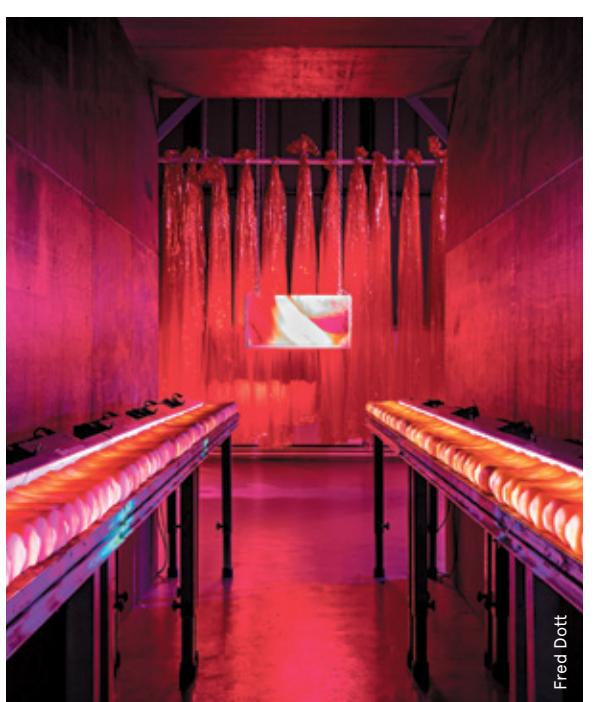
↳ [Frankfurt Book Fair buchmesse.de](http://Frankfurt Book Fair buchmesse.de)

## Social Feast

### VIENNA FOOD & DRINK

If you eat well, you're definitely doing something good. For yourself, that is. But in Vienna, you can also help out someone else every bite: Habibi & Hawara aren't just bringing a combination of Austrian and Middle-Eastern cuisine to your plate. Behind the restaurant is an independent training and integration programme. Refugees cook for guests at the Wipplingerstrasse restaurant, which not only provides them with the necessary tools to work for different restaurants in their new home, but perhaps also to one day found their own business. There is likely soon to be more than just the one restaurant as the founders have plans to develop their concept into a social franchise. Oh, and by the way: everything at Habibi & Hawara tastes amazing.

↳ [Habibi & Hawara habibi.at](http://Habibi & Hawara habibi.at)



### HAMBURG ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Feminism and LGBTQ+ rights are a very serious matter. Or are they? For 20 years, Peaches has been proving that, however important a topic is, a healthy portion of humour is always welcome. With her lyrics, outfits and shows, the Berlin music scene's *enfant terrible* isn't just provoking audiences. She also knows exactly how to entertain them. It was just a matter of time, then, before Peaches staged her own exhibition. With the fittingly humorous title *Whose Jizz Is This*, a living organism—which not only takes the art installation itself to the absurd, but also society's view of gender and sexuality—will be on display at the Kunstverein in Hamburg until 20 October 2019. As Peaches is best experienced live, she'll also be giving a few home concerts at the end of the year: three concerts in December at the Berliner Volksbühne—with a humorous title, naturally: *There's Only One Peach with the Hole in the Middle*.

↳ [Peaches teachesofpeaches.com](http://Peaches teachesofpeaches.com)



## A Wonderful Anarchy

### ZURICH AND THE WORLD ART & ENTERTAINMENT

To Bharti Kher, limits are an unknown concept. Her works deal with 'contemporary life, her devotion to extremely human drama and intrinsic love,' meaning the artist draws upon all forms of art, including paintings, sculptures and literature. Her new exhibition's rebellious name also works well: *A Wonderful Anarchy* by the Indian artist is on show at Hauser & Wirth in Somerset from 28 September 2019 to 5 January 2020. It's hardly surprising that the legendary Zurich gallery, with branches in London, New York, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Gstaad and even Somerset, decided to host a solo exhibition. Hauser & Wirth are known for testing limits, tackling political themes and focussing on topics such as diversity. In New York, for example, Hauser & Wirth are currently showing the work of Amy Sherald, who is inviting visitors to question their expectations of 'race and representation' with her powerful portraits until 26 October 2019. Of course, a visit to the gallery's Zurich mothership is always worth it.

↳ [Hauser & Wirth hauserwirth.com](http://Hauser & Wirth hauserwirth.com)



## Well-Dressed for Rebellion

### DÜSSELDORF FASHION & STYLE

Anarchy shirt and an army parka—for a long time this was considered the uniform of the revolution. For more and more young men, however, the true revolt has long since been in particularly fine threads. In a perfectly fitting suit made of the best Italian wool, they respond to a society that is far too often in baggy trousers and sneakers. Boggi Milano could be something like the linchpin of this generation of young gentlemen: after all, the outstanding suits are complemented by extremely fashionable details, such as jackets made of cool tech materials or suit trousers with drawstrings that make the Italian label accessible to a more casual audience. It goes without saying that the prices are also geared to a young clientele. And this clientele can look forward to growth: Boggi Milano recently opened a new store on Düsseldorf's Königsallee.

↳ [Boggi Milano boggi.com](http://Boggi Milano boggi.com)





TEXT SILVIA SILKO

The members of electro punk band Egotronic have been engaging in musical hedonism for 19 years—a kind of hedonism which can increasingly be viewed as a political outcry. Their latest album *Ihr seid doch auch nicht besser* (*You're No Better Either*) represents the zenith of this development. It's about the erosion of the political centre and the necessity of forging new alliances.

Pounding punk, an in-your-face staccato bass, the beat of the drums, electronic sounds simmering in the background and singer Torsun Burchard aggressively bellowing his lyrics into the microphone—Egotronic sounds a bit like the Sex Pistols might after some advanced DJ training. With nine pop culture albums under their belts, the band from Berlin has become a permanent fixture on the German music scene. Their impact? Always sceptical, always critical of the system and always prepared to ask the awkward questions.

Since they were founded, Egotronic has remained as true to their sound as they have their political fighting spirit. If anything, this fighting spirit has intensified even more as the world's political situation has changed. In their last album *Keine Argumente* (No Arguments) (2017) Egotronic gave a forthright warning of a paradigm shift: When right-wing tendencies are the order of the day, and stay strong and persistent for long enough, at some point a certain level of indifference towards them will be displayed. It's precisely this which Torsun believes is the most dangerous development we are seeing today—not only in Germany, but across the whole of Europe.

The unpretentious, jagged chords and lashing electronics are not just the perfect background, but also next-level-punk. Thanks to catchy choruses, listeners hear the polarising messages in an almost playful way. 'You find us really cool, yet still feel nationalistic, you can kiss my arse, I don't want to be with you,' go the lyrics in *Tolerante Nazis* (*Tolerant Nazis*).

Torsun is sitting on the steps of a hipster Berlin café in an inner courtyard: It's a little dingy, with brightly coloured graffiti on the walls into which large white windows are recessed. They allow a view into airy agency offices, outside which there are parking spaces for oversized SUVs. The city's contrasts could not be expressed any more clearly: Berlin is a melting pot for many different things—capitalism, creativity, loss of control, gentrification proceeding apace; destruction in equal measure. A few years ago, Egotronic came across as like jokers who made us forget the future: as lefties who rejected conservative lifestyles. Today that's all been put on the backburner. Torsun and his bandmates have more important things to turn their attention to.

Torsun can't understand why people haven't long since taken to the streets, more often and stronger than ever before, to demonstrate their grievances. For him, keeping quiet is no longer an option. He thinks that, as far as possible, every single person should take a stance and get involved. 'If not now, then when?', asks Torsun. 'Above all, German history

shows us that if you wait long enough and keep quiet, then at some point you can no longer say anything. Then all of us in the whole of Europe will soon be unable to speak freely.' At least Egotronic makes music which speaks a clear language: no tolerance for Nazis and right-wing ideologies. They are supporting their new album with an extended tour in the second half of this year. 'We always get people coming who share our views,' says Torsun with a smile.

Torsun is looking forward to the small clubs they will play at, packed with 'good people', as he calls them. The revolt will be celebrated together—a rebellion against inhumanity, intolerance and xenophobia through music. According to Torsun, together they can give each other energy for the daily battles faced outdoors. And who knows who they will be able to reach with a concert like this. Perhaps someone who will go back out into our difficult world and make it that little bit better. Torsun, for one, believes that it can get better again. 'It has to,' he says.

However, the problem is not just a German one: the whole of Europe has changed. 'Since the so-called "refugee crisis", you notice right-wing radicalism more than ever,' says Torsun. The right-wing populist Alternative Für Deutschland (AFD) has been trying to make its racist ideas socially acceptable since the party was founded in 2013. After winning seats in the German Bundestag in 2017, they have been propagating their ideas at the highest level of national politics. For years the party has had an influx from a wide range of social classes. There are similar developments in France, too. In the 2017 presidential election, Marine Le Pen with her Front National, which has since been rebranded Rassemblement National (National Rally), was a serious rival to president Emmanuel Macron. Right-wing parties are already governing in Poland, Italy and Hungary.

For Egotronic, it is not just these examples which clearly demonstrate an institutionalised right-wing political trajectory: 'The new right is having an effect,' says Torsun. 'Thanks to constant pressure from the right, we are all now discussing things at a level which didn't exist years ago.' All of a sudden, there are public debates about whether refugees at sea should be rescued or not. 'As if there could be different responses to that!', says Torsun. He is unable to keep the disbelief out of his voice. 'People in need should be given help. Any other response is inhumane.'

Torsun can't understand why people haven't long since taken to the streets, more often and stronger than ever before, to demonstrate their grievances. For him, keeping quiet is no longer an option. He thinks that, as far as possible, every single person should take a stance and get involved. 'If not now, then when?', asks Torsun. 'Above all, German history

### The Pogo and Politics Playlist

#### Playlist

- 1 **Yassin**  
Abendland
- 2 **Dackelblut**  
Edwin van der Sar
- 3 **Frittenbude**  
Die Dunkelheit darf niemals siegen
- 4 **Zugezogen Maskulin**  
Was für eine Zeit
- 5 **Kummer**  
9010
- 6 **Egotronic**  
Linksradikal
- 7 **OHL**  
Deutschland (Demo)

Listen to the *The Pogo and Politics* playlist on the 25hours Hotels website.  
[25hours-hotels.com/en/companion/journal/the-pogo-and-the-politics](http://25hours-hotels.com/en/companion/journal/the-pogo-and-the-politics)

[egotronic.net](http://egotronic.net)



TEXT SILVIA SILKO — PHOTOS SAMUEL ZUDER

A stiff breeze, soaring seagulls and cranes in the background on the harbour. No matter which district of Hamburg you are in, Hanseatic flair is guaranteed. At the same time, the city's sights vary considerably depending on the district you're in. Amidst Altona's narrow streets, you can spend the day in little cafés; visit the heritage-listed Speicherstadt (the warehouse district) and stroll between brick buildings steeped in history; in the St. Pauli district, famed for its entertainment offerings, you can either get carried away by it all—or perhaps be a little put off—depending on how much Astra beer you have consumed. On the other hand, on a shopping trip down Neuer Wall you will quickly notice that Hamburg can also be highly polished. Although the city, with its 1.8 million residents, is not a particularly large metropolis, it nevertheless radiates an international atmosphere. The Port of Hamburg is one of the world's largest transportation ports and its airport is often the stopover for journeys all over the world. Simply put, Hamburg offers something for everyone.

For the artist Onejiru, the Hanseatic city has always been the place to be for music. 'At first, I spent a year commuting here to make music and then seven years ago I moved here permanently. All of the musical projects I've been involved in throughout my life have always taken place in Hamburg. This is simply where the best beats and the coolest people are,' she says with a big laugh. 'It's hard to be in a bad mood in Onejiru's company. Her cheerful disposition is contagious; her laugh comes from the

bottom of her heart and she recounts anecdotes with fantastic ease. Her new album, *Higher Than High*, reaffirms these qualities. The Nairobi-born musician deals with hard-hitting themes—loss, racism, the empowerment of her own voice. She wraps all of this up in soulful pop, which, adorned with Afrobeats and catchy harmonies, immediately inspires you to dance—and incites contemplation by the second time you hear it, too. For Onejiru, who graduated in ethnography, music is also about engagement. This is clear from the projects in which she is involved. With her Afro-German female artist collective Sisters, she deals musically with issues such as gender inequality and environmental policy. She is also the spokesperson for the musical mentoring programme, music4H2Women. As if that didn't keep her busy enough, Onejiru is also on the advisory board of the Viva con Agua foundation and, along with two other women, has recently established eden—a feminist co-creation space and social business. It's therefore hardly surprising that on her District Tour Onejiru takes us to places where engagement, sustainability, culture and art are as deeply embedded in their DNA as they are in hers.

[onejiru.com](http://onejiru.com)



## Werte Freunde

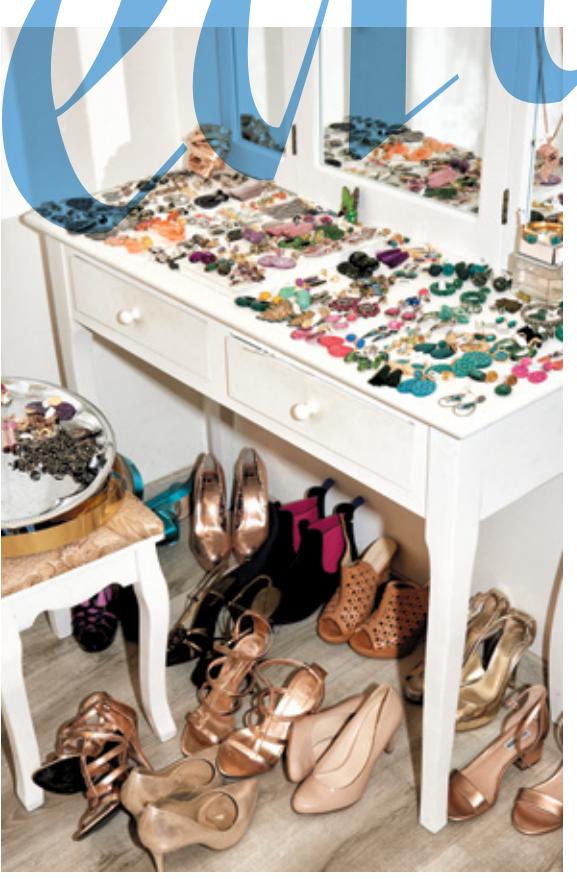
Our next destination is the concept store Werte Freunde (Dear Friends). It combines beauty and fashion with fair trade and sustainability—plus it's incredibly chic. The shop occupies the sleek facade of the new development area in the Nikolaiviertel district; here, expertly-curated products await visitors in a modern, laid-back interior. Upon entering, you are greeted with the fragrance of herbs and essence of flowers. Onejiru has chosen this shop because of the expansive selection of fair trade cosmetics on offer. Soaps, creams, perfumes and make-up can be found in more or less every price range. 'I'm also looking for a present for a friend I'm meeting later,' admits Onejiru with a wink, and sighs blissfully as she smells a body mousse. Founder and natural cosmetic expert Janine Werth was seeking to create an oasis with Werte Freunde—and has more than succeeded in this aim. If the hectic pace of the city gets too much, you can also pamper yourself with spa treatments here—which exclusively use the fair trade products on offer in the store. Naturally.

[werte-freunde.de](http://werte-freunde.de)

①

### Landungsbrücken

'I get a bit of that port feeling every day,' says Onejiru. She regularly makes the crossing from Neuenfelde to St. Pauli. On the piers, the salty sea air blows briskly—given that Hamburg gets an average of 195 days of rainfall per year, visitors to the city typically receive a raw welcome in this spot. Yet there is a constant hustle and bustle on the piers. Groups of tourists jostle each other as they board boats, dockers gather at the small harbour kiosks over a beer or one of Hamburg's famous fish rolls. On the horizon, Hamburg's cranes stretch up high; at the harbour itself the ships' masts rock in sync with the water. Since the completion of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall, which has been an imposing backdrop to the pier since 2017, this place has finally become Hamburg's showpiece. The St. Pauli Piers should be on every visitor's must-see list—but locals enjoy a stroll here too. For Onejiru, the piers signify the beginning and end of her working day.



## Two Keys Couture

After lathering ourselves up with creams, we emerge smelling wonderful, and make our way to the north of the city. In Winterhude, we visit Lena Kasten and Yasemin Kalayci in their small boutique. The shop exudes extravagance—think pearl-embellished clothing, handbags in the shape of red puckered lips, sparkling earrings in every conceivable colour. The two designers behind Two Keys Couture specialise in made-to-measure fashion. Those who come here receive a head-to-toe consultation can draw inspiration from the designs displayed on golden hangers and end up with their dream tailor-made outfit. Naturally, Prosecco is also served during the consultation. Two Keys Couture has a special significance for Onejiru. 'This is where I had my wedding outfit designed,' she smiles.

[twokeys.de](http://twokeys.de)

# flair is certain'

# 'Hanseatic



⑥

### eeden

Slightly woozy from the abundance of aromas, we make our way towards Altona. Here, Onejiru introduces us to four exceptional women: Kübra Güümüşay, Jessica Louis, Nürsen Kaya and Carmen Glöger. They come from a diverse range of sectors—art, politics, design, marketing or event planning—and are pooling their strengths for a project that is particularly close to their hearts: eeden, a feminist co-creation space. The idea is to create a space where women can work together, have conversations, engage their creativity and put things in motion. The premises are currently still under construction. The entire interior will bring to life the combined vision of the five women. Bold colours, grand ceiling lights and modern spiral staircases are in the works; the designs for the custom-made bathroom show pink tiles and futuristic showerheads. eeden is expected to finally open its doors at the beginning of next year. It will then also be possible to rent a room here, for events or for working groups. All profits will be donated to charity.

[eeden-hamburg.de](http://eeden-hamburg.de)

④

### Oberhafenkantine

Shopping gives you an appetite—and where better to seek fortification than in one of Hamburg's heartiest restaurants? The Oberhafenkantine appears to be a relic of a long-gone era. The small, dark, red-brick building has a heavy 'list'—nautical speak for being lopsided—and the walls could presumably fill entire books with tales of sailors. Onejiru enthuses: 'You can feel history here!' Since 1925, this 'cafeteria' has been known for its down-to-earth cooking style and cosy atmosphere. Today, not much has changed. On the menu there is traditional Labskaus (a dish made from beef or fish, potatoes and onions), Buletten (meatballs) and the typical Hamburg dessert Rote Grütze mit Vanillesauce (red fruit jelly with vanilla sauce). The dishes vary according to the season and the ingredients are regionally sourced. As such, the restaurant continues to be run in the style implemented by Anita Haendel. She ran the 'canteen' for over 70 years and today oversees the room from a framed portrait on the crooked wall. If you ask for an espresso after your meal, the answer is just what you'd expect: 'No, we only have filter coffee!'

[oberhafenkantine-hamburg.de](http://oberhafenkantine-hamburg.de)



⑤

### Spicy's

After a visit to the Oberhafenkantine, Onejiru recommends a post-dinner wander to walk off your meal. It's accordingly ideal that our next destination is a leisurely 20-minute stroll away through Hafencity. Onejiru wants to visit the spice museum Spicy's. 'I have never been there, but I imagine it's fascinating,' she says, explaining her decision. Apparently even after living in Hamburg for almost 10 years, you can still discover new places! At Spicy's, you get the feeling that you could sniff out hidden secrets in the 350m<sup>2</sup> museum. The air is heavy with pepper, curry, saffron and marjoram, the old wooden floor creaks with every step and there are heavy antique machines once used to process the spices that are scattered around in apparent disarray. Flavours from all over the world often arrived first in the major port city of Hamburg—and were sold on from here. As an ethnologist, it's little wonder that Onejiru is keen to go on a journey of discovery here.

[spicy's.de](http://spicy's.de)



⑦

### M. Bassy

The District Tour of Hamburg ends with another great woman. Designer Bisrat Negassi is known for her collections which feature classic cuts in lavish designs. Alongside fashion, she has also founded the public salon M. Bassy, together with a few fellow campaigners. Similarly to eeden, the project aims to provide a kind of open space for opportunity creation. At the premises in Harvestehude, artwork is exhibited, music is produced and events are organised. The focus is on contemporary African culture and everything it inspires. Onejiru will exhibit her artwork here on 26 September 2019 as part of M. Bassy's 'Decolonisation' series—which blends the formats of concert, performance and discourse—alongside the director and producer Teddy Goitom, whose documentary series Afrifpedia offers new perspectives on the African diaspora. It surely won't be the last creative project we see from this multi-talented Hamburg denizen in 2019.

[m-bassy.org](http://m-bassy.org)



Kristine Thiemann (for M. Bassy)

# TALKING BUSINESS

## It's Always Been True Love

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

As a 15-year-old, Lorenza Sebasti fell in love with Castello di Ama. Today, she runs the place. Her family bought the little village in the middle of Italy's Chianti region and turned it into a hideaway with comfortable suites, a restaurant, contemporary art installations and, of course, wine production. In doing so, Lorenza and her family found a solution for traveling clientele, constantly searching for unique and special experiences every season. Lorenza talked to COMPANION about what makes this little wine producing village so special, and how they came to present contemporary art there.

**COMPANION:** As Managing Director, you oversee 200 hectares of land, wine production, perfume production, suites, and a restaurant—welcoming over 8000 guests each year. That sounds like a lot of work!

Lorenza Sebasti: It is, but each morning I feel blessed to be able to enjoy the beauty of the landscape—and to keep on doing what I love. Does this huge responsibility sometimes feel intimidating? After all, wine was being produced in the Castello for hundreds of years before your family bought the place—such a rich history and long traditions to keep up with.

Our wines are appreciated and more and more connoisseurs regard the Sangiovese with the same respect as they do other varieties like Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc. This terroir is being discovered for its uniqueness. Yes, Chianti Classico is a very beautiful region which indeed has the longest tradition in wine culture. But in the last century many things happened and somehow we lost track. Since the seventies there has been a kind of Renaissance spirit, guided by the aim of doing better and better.

Is it important to you to do things in a modern way while keeping up with this heritage?

Modernity is a word that I don't really use to describe our attitude. It is more about respect and authenticity.

Who's in charge of safeguarding this authenticity when it comes to your wines?

Marco Pallanti is the winemaker and has been our director since 1982. He makes sure our wines interpret this terroir with a degree of purity that makes the wines as perfect as nature made them.

Though your wine is outstanding in and of itself, you also decided to focus on presenting contemporary art at the Castello at some point.

First, I have to say that I love Ama very much. The first time I arrived here I was 15 years old. I fell in love with and was captured by this little hamlet—the few houses, surrounded by vineyards. I didn't know anything about wine, but I felt the soul of this place. Guided by these

feelings, I started to open the villas to make temporary art exhibitions in 1994 and then—step by step—our project took shape. Since 1999, we have been inviting artists who can be inspired by this place and its history and leave a trace of their art here.

Do you give these artists—Anish Kapoor, Daniel Buren and Hiroshi Sugimoto, to name a few—a carte blanche when it comes to creating an artwork for the Castello?

We do have a curator and we certainly look for artists who fit our aim to make site-specific installations. They need to commit to the place and to find their own space.

What would happen if you'd really disliked one of those pieces though? After all, you have to look at it each and every day.

Fortunately enough, that's never happened. We share a deep dialogue and respect between us, the artist and the curator. So far, it's always been true love.

At Castello, it seems like as though you also understand and treat your wines as works of art, ranging from the classic to more modern interpretations. Which is your favorite one—or would this be like choosing one child over the other?

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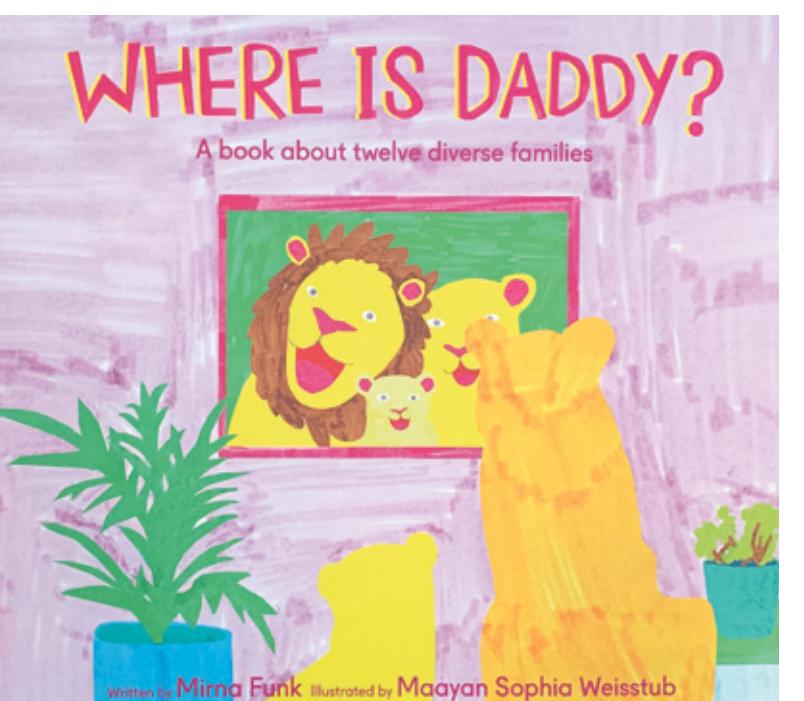
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**'We consider it a privilege to work and live here.'**



castellodiamma.com



### Reading Diversity

Families come in all shades and sizes. That's why Berlin- and Tel Aviv-based author Mirna Funk is rewriting the nuclear family narrative of mum, dad and two kids. Her first children's book is about 12 diverse families and stars a lioness and her cub. It's available in German, English and Hebrew.

Where is Daddy by Mirna Funk, 19.95€

↳ [whereisdaddy.bigcartel.com](http://whereisdaddy.bigcartel.com)



### Warm and Cozy

'Honestly, we are warm AF', is one of Canadian outdoor brand Moose Knuckles' current claims, right in time for autumn and winter. Never being cold should be an international human right, right?

Lumsden Jacket by Moose Knuckles, 650.00€

↳ [mooseknucklescanada.com](http://mooseknucklescanada.com)



### Fantastic, Less Plastic!

Plastic is one of the major dangers to our ocean. To reduce its use in the long term, shoe brand Camper is now collaborating with recycling brand Ecoalf. The result? The sneakers have recycled uppers and purchasing support the Ecoalf Foundation by donating 2€ for each pair sold.

Camper x Ecoalf Sneaker, 135.00€

↳ [camper.com](http://camper.com)



## THE GOOD LIFE

Period underwear, portable solar lamps and recycled sneakers: we present our favourite seasonal goodies that make our lives—and ultimately the planet—that little bit better.



### Kissing is Healthy

It's said that people who regularly use lipstick eat up to 3.5kg of it over a lifetime—better make sure it's organic! Luckily, that label applies to all products by beauty brand Und Gretel.

Matte & Shiny Lipgloss 'Knutzen' by Und Gretel, 35.50€

↳ [undgretel.com](http://undgretel.com)



### Light for All

A small, portable solar lamp for those without electricity: What started as a humble idea by artist Olafur Eliasson in 2012 has since turned into a global project that has changed over two million lives. The Little Sun lamp is now also available in a diamond shape. A worthy treasure.

Little Sun Diamond, 30.00€

↳ [littlesun.com](http://littlesun.com)



### Underwear Revolution

Fresh, dry, safe, planet-friendly and even fairly produced: now that's a revolution! Thanks to period underwear, you won't need tampons or pads anymore. Simply rinse the tech briefs after wearing and use them again the next month.

Period Underwear by Ooshi, 37.95€

↳ [ooshi-berlin.de](http://ooshi-berlin.de)



### Save the Rainforest

The Amazon is burning—on so many levels. Supporting initiatives like this one by Düsseldorf-based jewellery designer Gisa Golpira are more than welcome: the entire profits of her Save the Rainforest collection are donated to the cause of its namesake.

Rainforest Earring by Golpira, 650.00€

↳ [golpira.de](http://golpira.de)



### Engage for Yourself

Exhausted by your everyday activism? Simply throw this bubbling sunshine ball into a hot bath after a long day and let its fragrant blend of myrtle oil, fresh lime and neroli instantly boost your mood.

Cheer Up Buttercup by Lush, 4.75€

↳ [lush.com](http://lush.com)



TEXT CELINA PLAG

Illegal fishing, oil tanker spillages, floating fields of plastic bottles spanning kilometres: We have caused a lot of damage to our oceans in recent decades—damage with far-reaching consequences for marine life, for the balance of Earth's ecosystems, and for humanity itself. The ocean is essential to the lives of billions of people, whether directly or indirectly. That's why the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has been dedicated to fighting the destruction of habitats and the slaughter of wild animals in the world's seas for over 40 years now. Founded in the USA in 1977 by Paul Watson, who also brought Greenpeace to life, the international charitable organisation has attracted attention, often

with very daring actions on the world's oceans: blocking the path of illegal whale poachers on the high seas, for instance. As this had previously led to the ramming or sinking of ships, Sea Shepherd earned itself a reputation for piracy among NGOs, although their diverse initiatives are now implemented completely within the remit of the law. COMPANION spoke to Nicolai Duda, Treasurer and Fundraising Director at Sea Shepherd Germany. He talked about the growing interest in environmental protection, fashionable activism, modern slavery in the fishing industry and the indeterminable origins of frozen fish.

**COMPANION:** In the ballad *Haifischbaby*, France Gall sings as a baby shark: 'I like you so much I could eat you up.' How do you feel about fish?

Nicolai Duda: I'm actually a fan of sharks. [Laughs] I generally like orcas, killer whales—the classics. I wouldn't eat them, though. Many volunteers and employees at Sea Shepherd are vegetarian or vegan, but this isn't mandatory. However, in this job, you should probably avoid eating fish.

**And in general? Is there actually such a thing as fair trade fish?**

At Sea Shepherd, we believe that fair trade fish does not currently exist. Industrial fishing causes a lot of damage. At the same time, consumption has grown so much that we have completely tapped out our own fish stocks in the Mediterranean, North and Baltic Seas. Therefore, Europeans are also fishing off the coast of Africa, so there can be no talk of sustainability.

**Is fishing inherently wrong?**

From a moral point of view? From an animal conservation perspective, each person must form their own opinions about whether fishing is ethically justifiable or not.

**Let's take a fishing village, for example, where the residents have sustained themselves by fishing for hundreds of years. Do you believe that they are in the wrong?**

No, I don't. We are actually currently supporting local fishermen on the west coast of Africa because we want to tackle unauthorised and industrial fishing. 40 percent of all fishing there is illegal. This causes great damage to the local economy. We are trying to help the local community to be able to make an adequate living again. First, people need to be helped

out of poverty. Then we can consider other prospects, possibly even without fishing at all.

**What kind of help do you provide exactly?**

We have entered into partnerships with West African states, such as Liberia, Gabon and Namibia, which in concrete terms means that we can have local police officers or even the military on our ships there. Everybody fishing off the coast is inspected—if anybody is found to be fishing illegally or without a licence, they are arrested.

**Does that not also affect the 'small fry'?**

Almost everything that is done there falls under the umbrella of organised crime. Moreover, many of those forced to work on the fishing boats are recruited surreptitiously, then have their passports confiscated and receive little to no pay. There are even actual 'slave islands' where people are dropped off and picked up again by the next fishing boat that passes. By the way, the fish caught by these boats are consumed here too. On the factory vessels at sea, everything ends up in the same freezer. We therefore no longer have any traceability regarding the origins of the products from this point onwards. No one notices it from here.

**We are facing ecological catastrophes all over the world. Why is marine conservation in particular so important right now?**

There are a lot of social factors involved. Illegal fishing destroys the livelihoods of an extremely high number of people, especially in Africa and the Pacific, and plastic in the oceans also plays a part. Even now, the ocean is the primary source of income for over 1 billion people on Earth. Over 700 million people around 10 percent of the global population, have jobs that involve the sea, either directly or indirectly. The sea is also the source of half of our atmospheric oxygen. If this balance is destroyed, it will affect everybody.

**What does that mean?**

For 13 years in a row, Sea Shepherd has sailed to

Antarctica with the entire fleet and practically positioned themselves between the whales and the harpoon boats. In the past, there had also been some mutual ramming attacks. That's how we earned our reputation as pirates. However, I want to stress that over the last 40 years of our existence, nobody has been injured or killed. Paul Watson, our founder, always says: 'I call what we do aggressive non-violence.' The game of cat and mouse continued until 2013, at which time The Hague Tribunal declared that Japan was acting illegally. Following that, we suspended our patrols for a year and Japanese fishing boats now only operate in local waters. We consider that to be a major success. It means that they are only permitted to fish within the 200-mile zone off the coast of Japan.

**So is everything outside of that like the Wild West?**

There are laws in place there too, although illegal fishing can still happen, and often goes undetected in the open seas. This is one of the biggest problems we are trying to tackle.

**How do the local arms of the organisation, such as Sea Shepherd Germany, work together with the 'mother ship'?**

We put all of the donations we receive into a pot and use them to support our ongoing initiatives across the world. The cost of commissioning an entire fleet of vessels can quickly tally up into the millions, even though many of our boats are staffed by volunteers.

**What kinds of volunteers do you attract?**

It's often people in their mid-twenties who have just finished their studies and want to try out something new, while also doing something good for the environment, before they enter the professional world. There are also many people at the end of their careers hoping to find a new path to follow in life, for instance



**Illegal fishing often goes undetected in the open seas. This is one of the biggest problems we are trying to tackle.'**

# Pirates

on t-shirts, hoodies, baby clothes, thermos flasks and even bamboo cutlery.

Everything is certified Fairtrade and organic. The income from merchandise sales is used to fund our offices and pay our employees. There are actually only four people working for us in Germany. By way of comparison, around 1000 people work for the World Wildlife Fund nationwide. 100 percent of the money donated to Sea Shepherd is invested in our initiatives. That's why we are so grateful for the income we generate with our shop. And the hoodies look pretty cool, too.

**It's also clear that environmental protection is a key topic in the fashion industry at the moment. Many lifestyle brands are flirting with the idea of marine conservation. How seriously should we take that?**

I think it has to do with the fact that kids are experiencing world events in a very different way, due to the internet and social media. Today, we can reach a wider audience with Facebook and Instagram. We have a decent following for a small NGO, by the way. Social commitment resonates with them—when I was 15 or 16, I wouldn't have been particularly interested in something like this.

**Is the increased interest among young people another reason for your growth over recent years?**

I would say there are several reasons. On the one hand, the topic of marine conservation has become more mainstream, whereas it used to just be something for eco-warriors. You can see it in the major companies that are all making an effort, for example by reducing their plastic consumption. Nowadays, for the sake of their public image alone, businesses can no longer afford not to make a statement about the environment. On the other hand, our initiatives also draw a lot of attention. Then we have supporters with a lot of clout in the media, such as Aerosmith, the Beastie Boys, Pamela Anderson and Pierce Brosnan. When somebody like that is seen in one of our t-shirts, that helps us a lot.

**In reality, it's more complicated. Let's take plastic, for example, which is a particular problem in oceans. As a consumer, you may struggle to find alternatives on the supermarket shelves.**

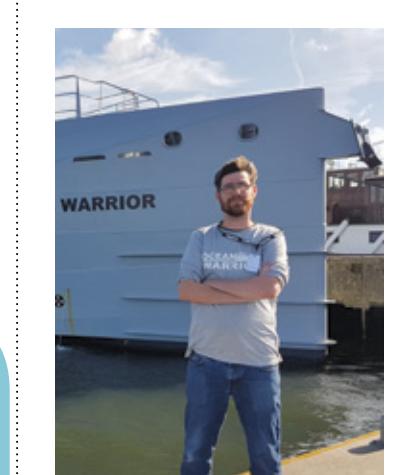
Unfortunately, I haven't been able to go completely

plastic-free either, but we can at least reduce our usage. I also think that's what lawmakers are for. Why is it only now that plastic bags are being phased out?

No supply, no demand! Germany is lagging far behind there—and we even ship our waste abroad. In reality, less than 10 percent of our waste is recycled. By the way, Sea Shepherd also organises regular beach cleaning campaigns. Even in cities that aren't coastal, such as Berlin, we are trying to clean up the lakes.

**For those who can't volunteer for you right away, what other ways are there to get involved in marine conservation?**

At the very least, you should develop a deeper sense of responsibility for marine conservation matters. This starts with your beach holiday, and even your choice of sunscreen. What many people don't know is that oxybenzone-based sunscreen is extremely harmful to coral reefs. Even just a few drops can contaminate large volumes of water. You should look for alternatives when shopping. Of course, the first lesson in marine conservation is to not leave any waste on the beach. Another is to avoid dolphinariums. When booking marine activities, such as whale watching, check whether they will use food to attract the animals and whether the anchor will destroy coral reefs. Oh yes, and if you've been snorkelling with the fish underwater, could you please give the huge seafood platter a miss afterwards when you're back on land?



**Nicolai Duda**  
Nicolai actually only wanted to fill the gap between studies and doctorate in a meaningful way when he started as a volunteer at Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in 2013—meanwhile he has become one of the four permanent employees at the NGO's German branch, where he has worked as Treasurer and Fundraising Director since 2018.

**W**hile the world is still trying to figure out what to do with plastic waste, Sea Shepherd is already ahead of the game. The NGO has been fighting for marine conservation since 1977, and its work has expanded to include environmental protection, activism, and even fashion. In this issue, we explore the organization's history, its impact on the oceans, and its role in fighting illegal fishing. We also look at the challenges of marine conservation and the steps we can take to help protect our oceans. Finally, we introduce the new Sea Shepherd logo, which features a pirate ship and a skull and crossbones, symbolizing the organization's commitment to fighting for the health of the oceans.

seashepherd.org

# The New Rebels of Italian Cuisine

TEXT ANNA DOROTHEA KER

As beloved as Italian cuisine is around the world, its authenticity can sometimes get lost in new or hasty interpretations. On a mission to reclaim the honest origins of Italian cooking is Cucina Ribelli, the new gastronomic concept of the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna. Welcome to the 'peaceful revolution' you can taste.

From antipasti to zabaglione, the mere names of Italian culinary staples are enough to make mouths water. In every corner of the world, Italian food culture—from the tradition of aperitivo to long, lazy family lunches—evokes indulgence, simplicity and a sense of the good life. When a culinary tradition is so rich and enduring, what is left to reinvent? According to the team behind Cucina Ribelli (Rebel Kitchen), the new gastronomic concept of 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna and soon to be opened at Zürich West too, the answer is: plenty. 'The idea of Italian food is very popular, but authenticity is really hard to find,' explains Vincenzo Carnemolla, Ribelli's Sicilian *pizzaiolo*—the pizza maker. 'Everywhere you get pasta dishes with cream or butter added to improve the texture. This has nothing to do with what our grandmothers did—in the south of Italy, all they had was some olive oil from their own land. And they created the best dishes with it.'

It's this spirit that Ribelli was established to reclaim—by reinterpreting simple, popular cuisine and rediscovering the heart of Italy through its food. What keeps that heart beating is heritage, diversity, produce, and craft. 'A drop of balsamic vinegar and a basil leaf don't score points for au-

thenticity,' according to the team. Instead, 'Italian cuisine is all about choosing the right ingredients. We aim to just do the bare minimum that is necessary to bring out the quality of products,' explains Taku Tabuchi, formerly the Head Chef at Italian restaurant S'accapau in Tokyo, who left Japan for Italy at age 18 to learn the secrets of Italian cuisine directly from the source.

Now, he, Vincenzo and the team behind Ribelli draw upon their close connections with small, passionate producers all around Italy, who they visit personally. 'Our real chefs are the farmers, butchers, cheesemakers that supply our ingredients,' Taku says modestly. 'In the kitchen we just have to be careful to bring their work to completion.' Guests at Ribelli can expect to begin with antipasti platters—cured meats and aged cheeses sliced fresh from the restaurant's in-house *salumeria*, to be enjoyed over aperitivo. Forgotten or lesser-known Italian staples await on the *Platti dal Forno* menu (dishes from the oven)—sizzling stews, casseroles and hearty pasta dishes. Naturally, the wine, alongside carefully-selected Italian craft beer, flows freely.

Then there's the pizza—Neapolitan of course, with crisp bases smothered in San Marzano tomatoes and topped with



Alessandro Castagna

oozing rounds of mozzarella. The best part is, you don't have to stick to just one kind. 'Conviviality is the essence of Italian life, and we want to bring this experience to Italians grew up with to our restaurants. That's why we had the *Giro Pizza* concept in mind for Ribelli,' explains Vincenzo. 'When a group of friends in Italy decide to go to the pizzeria together, no-one each orders their own pizza just for themselves! Pizzas will always come to the table one after the other to be shared among everyone.'

And for those who are so enamoured they want to recreate the experience back home? Given that the pizza made at Ribelli is difficult to reproduce in standard kitchens—'unless that oven heats up to over 500°C, as our pizza oven does' as Vincenzo exclaims—the chef asked his mother to share her recipe for the pizza she used to make for him and his sister. The key to Neapolitan pizza perfection, he says, is knowing your ingredients, learning to 'read' the dough, and understanding what it needs to develop the right lightness, fragrance and taste. But most of all, it takes love and passion—*amore e passione!*

[ribelli-restaurant.com](http://ribelli-restaurant.com)



Alessandro Castagna

## Mamma's Pizza

Makes 4 pizzas

### For the dough

850g soft wheat flour  
550g water  
20g salt  
5g fresh yeast

### For the topping

1 can organic Italian pelato tomatoes  
100g for di latte mozzarella  
2-3 basil leaves  
Parmigiano Reggiano DOP, aged for 24 months  
extra virgin olive oil

### Method

Dissolve the yeast in the water. Then add 800g flour and mix together with a big spoon. Add the salt and start kneading energetically, adding the remaining flour little by little. When the dough is perfectly smooth and free of clumps, let it rest for 10-15 minutes. Form a ball and let it rest for another 30 minutes. Then divide the dough into smaller pieces, each weighing around 350g.

Put each piece of dough in an oiled baking pan, cover with foil and let them rest for 8-12 hours in a warm place. Place each piece of dough on an oiled baking tray. To create the classic pizza shape, press down with your hands from the center towards the rim. Cover the pizzas with the tomatoes, followed by finely-sliced rounds of mozzarella. Sprinkle with grated Parmigiano Reggiano. Cook in a preheated oven set to the highest temperature for at least 6 minutes. Check the underside of the pizza to see when it is ready. Finally top with a drizzle of olive oil and a couple of basil leaves—buon appetito!

ZERO WASTE



TEXT EVA BIRINGER – PHOTOS DANIEL FARÒ

A restaurant produces an average of 70,000 tons of waste per year. This doesn't have to be the case: a group of forward-thinking chefs around the world is trying to save resources in order to do good for the environment. Zero-waste is the name of the new movement that has recently reached the German capital too. The restaurant Freia is breaking new ground in Berlin.

With homemade mint kefir, potato peels in mushroom broth and a composting machine called Gersi. COMPANION paid a visit to the plant-based restaurant.



In some kitchens the centrepiece is a sous vide cooker, in others it's a high performance salamander grill. Here they are proud of Gersi. The composting machine stands in the back section of the restaurant, separate from the dining area, but still positioned in such a way that anyone who's interested can take a look. The principle is simple: food waste goes in at the top and humus soil fertilizer comes out the bottom. Ultimately this ends up back on the fields of the farmers who supplied the ingredients in the first place. It's what's referred to as the circular economy. David Suchy likes to take the time to explain these things. In March this year he opened Frea, Germany's first zero-waste restaurant. The restaurant operates based not only on the principles of sustainability and waste prevention, but also restricts itself to using exclusively animal-free ingredients.

It's Monday midday, just before lunch. People are happily enjoying the heatwave in Berlin until climate change is mentioned. Despite it being 35 degrees in the shade, some customers have seated themselves at the tables overlooking Torstrasse, the rest retreat inside. The interior is spacious and light, featuring a lot of natural materials. The first thing

that stands out is the baby blue bar counter and, to its right, an open-plan kitchen. The walls are un plastered, as you'd expect in Berlin Mitte, and small tables are set with linen napkins. Embroidered cushions in earthy colours line the wooden benches and gold desk lamps give the place a touch of retro glamour.

Plants are everywhere—in pots and hanging from the ceiling. Bossa Nova plays in the background. Only the fact that the ceiling lamps are on the middle of the day taints the image of an ecologically impeccable life.

David looks as if he's just got back from holiday. He has chin-length dark blonde hair and a lean build. As he extends a wary forearm in greeting, he asks us to wait a few minutes. He's in the middle of a workshop for restaurateurs who have travelled from all over Germany. Occasional words can be heard above the hum of the fans set out around the room: 'delicious', for example, 'full taste' and again and again the catchphrase that it's all about—'zero-waste'.

The world is changing. Images of oceans contaminated by plastic and the news that we consume the equivalent of a credit card-sized amount of microplastics every week have had an effect. After years of reckless hedonism, environmental awareness is suddenly trendy. For many people, it has become second nature to buy organic products and air travellers are rapidly being called to account. But that's no longer enough. Zero-waste means attempting to produce as little waste as possible. It's about sustainability, conserving resources and avoiding any kind of waste. If you think more

## Our aspiration is to use everything.'

In 2016, David decided to give up meat, which was followed one year later by all animal products. At about the same time, he came into contact with the zero-waste movement, which at the time was little known, through New York blogger Lauren Singer. The Berlin native

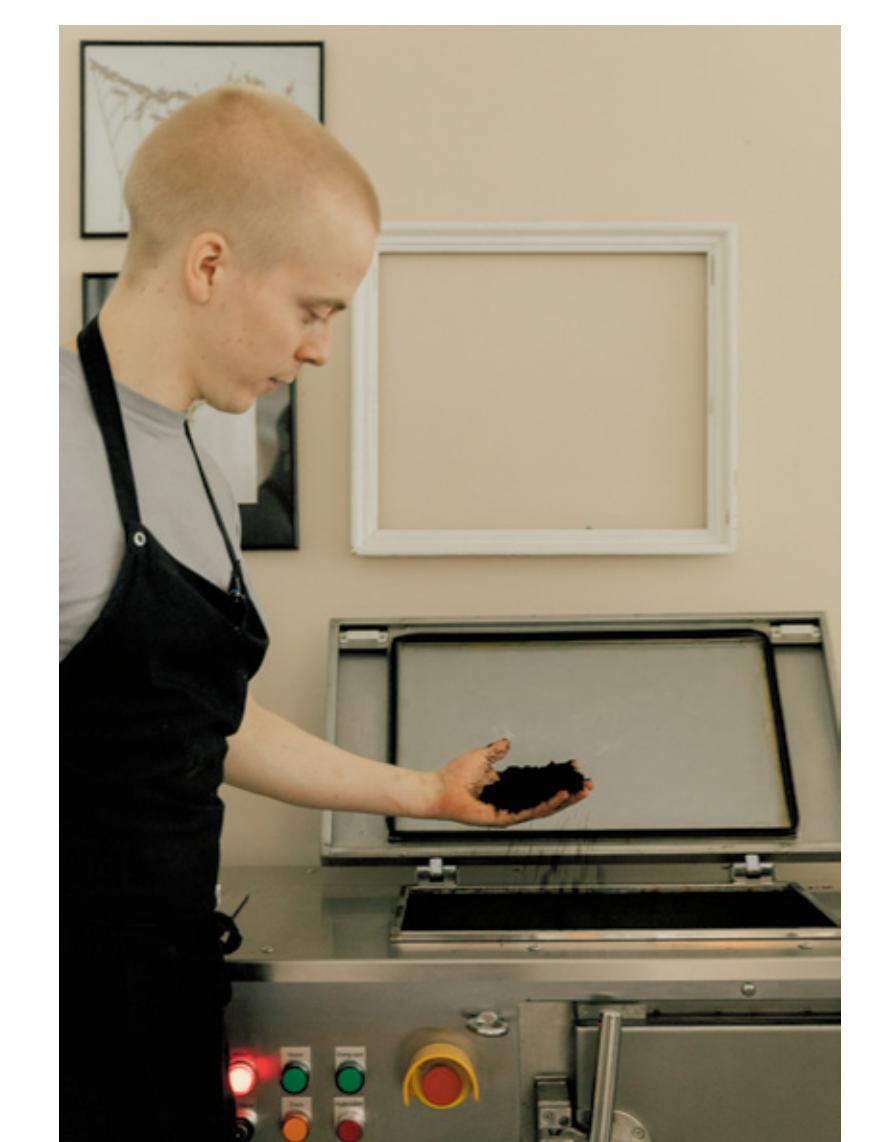
quickly relished the idea of an invisible ecological footprint. 'In everyday life, it's no problem at all. Instead of toothpaste I use toothpaste tablets and a bar of soap for washing. If I want to moisturise, I opt for coconut oil.' To share his experiences with others, he founded his own YouTube channel, Johnny and the Food, and supported a vegan catering company. Then he met a kindred spirit in Jasmin Martin, now 29, who was working at a management consultancy. The couple began dreaming of opening a restaurant together. They looked at forty locations and finally settled on one in central Berlin. The name was inspired by Freya, goddess of agriculture and fertility in Norse Mythology, and Frigg, goddess of the hearth. The conceptual model came from Silo in Brighton, England, whose proprietor, Douglas McMaster, was one of the first people to transfer the idea of a waste-free life to gastronomy in 2015. David spent ten days there as a trainee—and subsequently brought sous-chef

Halfdan Klutften back with him to Berlin. Halfdan, with his peroxide-blond hair and prominent cheekbones, prepares the lunch. The menu changes every week. As well as salad and flatbread with a trio of dips, there is also a pasta dish and a vegetable dish for the main



course. If you are still hungry, you can order dessert—today, for example, there's an apricot sorbet. Frea also recently started opening in the evenings as well. On the dinner menu there's kohlrabi linguine with roasted shiitake mushrooms, broccoli and cream of tomato, a plate of pickles and a potato terrine with portobello mushrooms. These can be accompanied by some homemade kombucha or natural wines by the likes of Enderle Moll or Claus Preisinger. Well, for David's customers, at least—the 32-year-old proprietor decided to give up drinking two years ago to see how his body reacted. The verdict? 'I can highly recommend it.' Listening to him talk, you get the impression of a thoroughly efficient life—he speaks of 'drive.' Getting up early, being present in the restaurant, managing the Instagram account, holding workshops, always being contactable. If customers want to reserve a table, he answers the telephone personally. And he's constantly driven by the desire to not consume anything which is harmful to the environment. What does he find hard to give up? 'Nothing,' he answers with a penetrating look from his hazel eyes. What does he do if he gets hungry when he's out? 'I always have supplies with me in Tupperware boxes.' He's even well-prepared on holiday. Last summer he went to the Baltic Sea with a boat full of supplies. Wait—he took his car instead of the train? 'Nobody's perfect.'

In any case, nobody could find fault with the furnishings of the restaurant. The lamps above the bar are made from fungal cells. Almost all the furniture comes from Ebay classified ads. One of the pictures on the wall was welded together from the plastic waste generated during the renovation work. There's certainly no sign of any paper napkins or takeaway coffee cups.



## Even More Zero Waste

**Instock, Amsterdam**  
An advanced course in dumpster diving—ingredients come from what a lorry collects on its rounds.

↗ [instock.nl](http://instock.nl)

**Nolla, Helsinki**  
Scandinavia's first zero-waste restaurant doesn't even have a single bin.

↗ [restaurantnolla.com](http://restaurantnolla.com)

**Isla Coffee, Berlin**  
Peter Duran makes cheese and yoghurt out of left-over frothed milk and a legendary bread pudding from leftover cinnamon buns.

↗ [instagram.com/islavcoffeerberlin](http://instagram.com/islavcoffeerberlin)

**Haven's, New York**  
A restaurant, cookery school and event location in one. Meat is also served here, although only the cuts which usually end up in the bin.

↗ [havenskitchen.com](http://havenskitchen.com)

**Rovi, London**  
This restaurant, which belongs to the acclaimed chef Yotam Ottolenghi, sources its food from an organic farm in Sussex, makes vinegar from vegetable scraps and heats the dining room with energy from the kitchen.

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# SOUTH AFRICA'S HIDDEN GEMS

TEXT CELINA PLAG

Sustainable tourism is developing in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal. With organisers such as WOWZULU, an NGO which has made it its goal to strengthen rural, marginalised communities, the region can be experienced off the beaten track—for example on a trip to Inanda, where COMPANION learned about traditional Zulu beadworking from Mma Mtshali.

The midday sun shines brightly on the small village nestled between the bustling township of Inanda and the rural Mzinyati, about half an hour outside Durban, South Africa's third largest city. It is August, in the depths of winter, but today it is warm enough for an airy skirt and T-shirt. This is how Mma Mtshali stands in front of her turquoise house, radiant as she waits for her guests to climb up the steep hilly path towards her. 'Sawubona,' she shouts from afar: 'I see you'—the poetic 'hello' of the Zulu, who make up South Africa's largest ethnic group with a population of around 10–12 million people, most of whom live here in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

'KwaZulu' means 'the place of the Zulus.' This is where Mma Mtshali was born, and where she has spent her entire life. Mma Mtshali's first name is Eunice, but out of respect for the 51-year-old, everyone here only calls her Ma. For more than two years she has been opening the doors to her own four walls for interested visitors, mostly tourists. Actually, it is only one wall: She lives in a traditional round *rondavel* house that is often seen in Zulu villages and that invites people to sit together chatting in a circle formation. Here, the craftswoman gives courses in beadwork, through which she also shares her culture. On a large mat on the floor, where she now takes a seat and briefly types a message into her smartphone, countless multicolored beads are already waiting for the group to be processed into jewelry.

Visits to Mma Mtshali's place are organised by WOWZULU, a sustainable tourism company that's active in KwaZulu-Natal. They organise off the beaten track tours to rural communities in the area with the aim of supporting marginalised and often poverty-stricken communities. WOWZULU was founded in 2014 as an offshoot of Africa!Ignite, a non-profit rural development agency that has been helping young people and women in the region for over a decade now, focusing on empowering them to own businesses and improve their lives.

Globally, tourism is booming. It is one of the most important and fastest growing economic sectors in the world—at a rate of 3.8 percent annually, the World Tourism

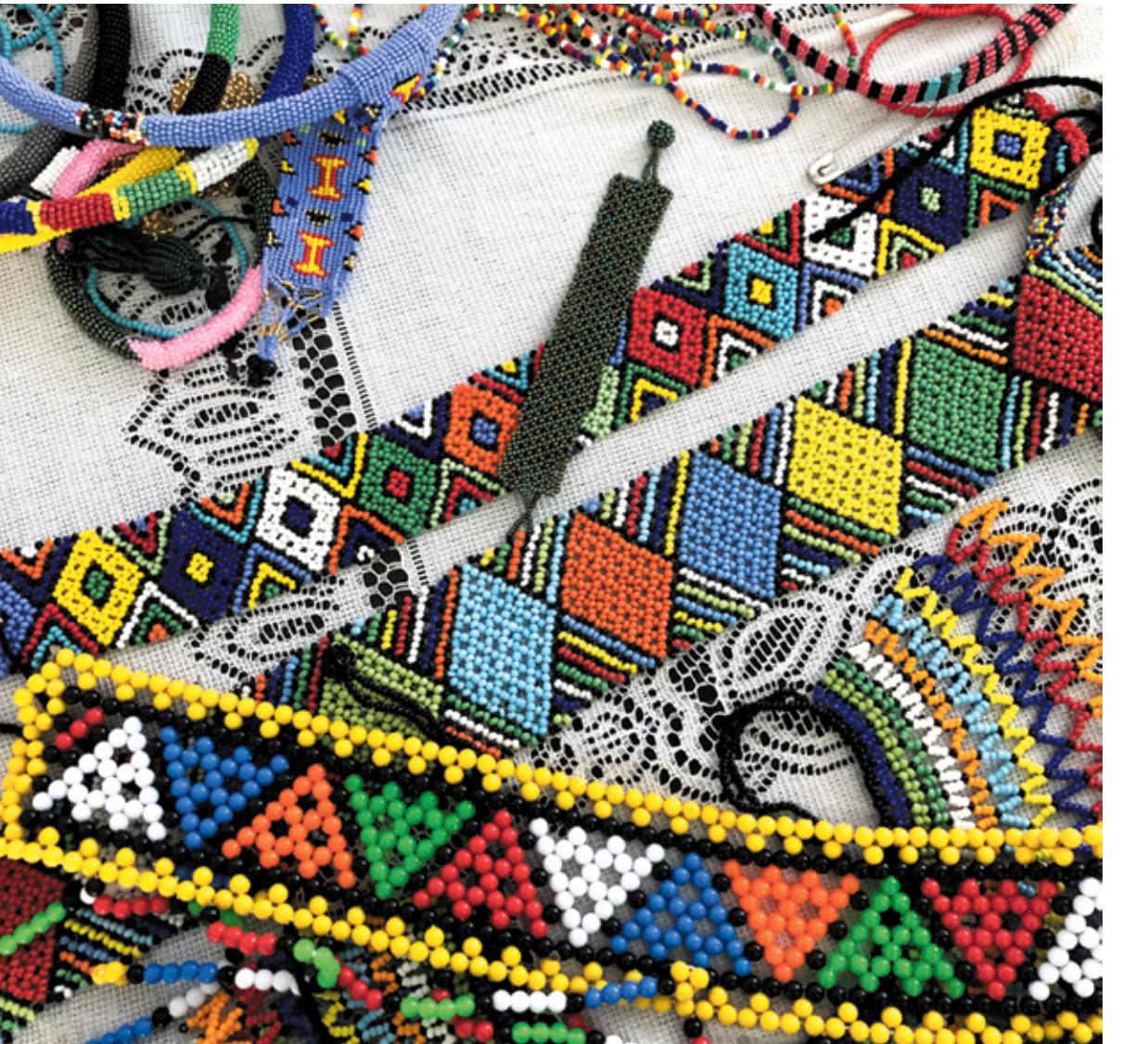
Organization estimates. According to the UNWTO, there were 1.3 billion worldwide cross-border arrivals in 2017. Then there is the tourism industry's dark side: Precarious working conditions, enormous CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to the increasing number of flights and the destruction of nature through conventional mass tourism.

Companies such as WOWZULU show that travel does not necessarily have to be bad. Quite the contrary. Sustainable tourism can promote the flourishing of species and nature conservation and create new income opportunities, which boosts the local economy. This can create new job and training opportunities. This is how Bongiwe Mlangeni, WOWZULU's Operations Manager, understands her mission: 'We support communities that are on the doorstep to tourist hotspots, but have not yet benefited from them,' she says.

KwaZulu-Natal has a lot to offer when it comes to dream tourist destinations. There's Durban itself, with its warm climate, the relaxed surfer vibe and some of the country's most beautiful beaches. There are the nearby Drakensberg Mountains, a breathtaking mountain landscape in which the small kingdom of Lesotho is embedded. And the township of Inanda itself, whose brook-filled landscape invites hiking, mountain biking and canoeing. It's also the cradle of South African democracy: Gandhi lived here for over 20 years. And Nelson Mandela first voted here, in 1994, at the Ohlange Institute, exactly 25 years ago. The end of apartheid.

This historical place, which still today serves as a secondary school, is also the site of one of WOWZULU's marketplaces, where the products of cooperating local artisans such as Mma Mtshali are sold. This is also the starting point for the tour to her home—for today's visitors, she has already spread out some particularly pretty testaments to her skills: In addition to fine bracelets, her table also displays impressively large necklaces consisting of several semicircles and belts on which long pearl fringes dangle. All unique pieces and works of art. 'You don't usually create something like this in an hour,' she says, laughing.

For now, she starts with simple bracelets. Mma Mtshali pulls a thread through the small eye of the needle with fast, routine movements, turns a knot into the end and cleverly



**'The arts and crafts have made me proud of my homeland.'**



threads several of the tiny, colorful pearls. What takes her guests a while only takes her a few minutes. Mma Mtshali can create about 100 of these bracelets a day, while for larger, more elaborate pieces she sometimes needs a week. She has practiced this all her life, having learned the art of processing pearls from her mother, who in turn learned the art from her own mother, just like generations before them. Like pottery or basket weaving, the making or decorating of jewellery, clothing and utensils with precious stones and pearls has a centuries-old tradition in the Zulu culture.

Traditionally, Zulu women and men alike are elaborately adorned. Their artistic pearl ornaments are considered some of the most beautiful in the world. In the past, necklaces, belts, loincloth or hats of the traditional tribal costume were made from ivory, shells, eggsHELLS, wood, bones and others. Later, when the trade with amber and other precious stones—in particular, glass beads—began, the pieces of jewellery also became finer and more complex. This is how Zulu jewellery gained its artistic reputation.

It is still the Zulu women who practise the craft of pearls. The stones are often no longer made of glass but rather from plastic—and the jewellery, like the traditional costume of the tribe, is no longer worn daily, but only at special festivals. Like the yellow pleated skirt embroidered with pearls, the *Isidwaka*, which Mma Mtshali now wears for fun. Previously made from cowhide, it is now made from bright fabric. The bride wears it during a traditional Zulu wedding. Or the *Isicholo*, the Zulu wedding hat. It looks a bit like an inverted funnel and used to take on dimensions the size of a cartwheel. 'In the past, the hat was interwoven with the bride's hair, and remained firmly on her head for months,' says Mma Mtshali, laughing. 'But today that's no longer the norm.'

Mma Mtshali explains that the pearl works not only have a decorative function for the Zulu, but also serve as communication, a non-verbal language full of symbols and hidden codes that provide information about the relationship between the sexes—even if modern means of communication today, as everywhere else in the world, have naturally dampened the importance of these symbols in everyday life. Yet if you take a closer look at Mma Mtshali's works, you will notice that the triangle in particular appears again and again as a central form. With an upwards point it stands for the woman, the other way around for the man. The merging of two triangles into a diamond, on the other hand, reveals, like a wedding ring, a married woman—and two triangles assembled like an hourglass stand for the married man.

The colours also have their significance. Blue stands for peace, white for purity, green for nature and red—"naturally for love," says Mma Mtshali, chuckling. This is the simplified version. Depending on how colours and shapes are put together, complex statements emerge—the interpretation of which can fill entire books: 'But you can't do anything wrong with such simple bracelets,' says Mma Mtshali. She should know—she certainly has enough experience.

Since 2007, Mma Mtshali has been working with Africa!Ignite and partly with MIET, a sister NGO from which the former stemmed. Meanwhile, she has gathered a whole host of beadworkers around her, whose bracelets, necklaces, decorated dolls and pillows are sold at the WOWZULU marketplaces located in seven destinations across KwaZulu-Natal, as well as internationally: WOWZULU has a growing customer base in the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom among other countries. The courses that Mma Mtshali gives with increasing frequency are especially fun for her. She says: 'The curiosity of my guests and their enthusiasm for Zulu culture is thrilling. The arts and crafts have made me proud of my homeland.'

It is fitting, then, that intercultural encounter and mutual exchange is one of WOWZULU's main goals. Bongiwe says: 'With all our tours, we want the tourists to actually talk with the community instead of viewing locals from the perspective of an observer. We don't want one-way communication, but rather a dialogue that leaves its mark on everyone's lives—because the locals are also curious to find out more about visitors' cultures. The exchange is enriching for everyone.'

The tours offered by WOWZULU and other sustainable tour operators therefore stand in stark contrast to folkloric theme parks, where dancers or amateur actors in costumes perform Zulu culture for tourists in staged shows. They usually have little to do with the realities of contemporary Zulu life—and often not even with the past. Instead of authenticity, the 'African tribal cliché' is performed there, which may sadly even strengthen the existing prejudices of tourists.

'I think the way in which one encounters other cultures also has to do with education,' says Bongiwe. 'Many of the people who book tours with us are very enlightened and cosmopolitan and have already travelled a lot.' Of course, travelling opens up horizons. But for many travellers, security is certainly also a decisive factor,' says Bongiwe. This is a problem in South Africa—caution is required everywhere and at all times. Bongiwe therefore advises against exploring the townships on one's own. This has to do not only with safety, but also with respect. After all, the tours go into the most intimate spaces, including people's own homes—

and no-one wants unannounced tourists standing outside their doors. With the sustainable tours, not only beadworkers like Mma Mtshali or other craftspeople profit, but the whole community—on average, 28 people per tour, according to WOWZULU. For example, if you go on a day trip to Inanda, you will eat out, stop off at a café, maybe visit a museum and perhaps undertake an outdoor activity such as a canoe trip. Locals are supported with everything, not least drivers and guides, who also come from the respective regions and, as with the encounter with Mma Mtshali, who speaks little English, often also act as translators. And as bridge-builder between visitors and locals.

With its current offering of seven destinations, WOWZULU directly supports around 200 people, in addition to around 250 craftspeople who produce for them regularly within a network of around 1,000 creatives, the rest of whom sporadically work for the non-profit company. All in all, WOWZULU pursues the values of fair trade. They ensure that people are paid appropriately for their work, and that the money from the tours ends up where it belongs—with the locals in KwaZulu-Natal. According to its own statements, Africa!Ignite was able to generate revenues of around 6 million rand between 2015 and 2018—the equivalent of 370,000 euros.

It is difficult to say what this figure really means—and how great the impact of WOWZULU is on the region—because the number of those who could or should theoretically be supported there cannot be determined. Take the example of the beadworkers: It is impossible to say how many of the crafters live in the province, according to WOWZULU and the South African Beadwork Association. The reason for this is the largely informal way in which the work is carried out: many women do the craft only as a hobby and only occasionally sell something, often simply by the roadside. Others may sell on a part-time basis, but are not registered anywhere. Despite the complexity, nationwide arts and crafts sector market is valued at

an estimated 3.6 billion rand—about 220 million euro.

In fact, however, the informal nature of the sector is one of the reasons for its great potential, because it provides direct access to the labour market for women like Mma Mtshali, who learned the craft like everyone else from her mothers and grandmothers. They don't have to invest money in training because they already have the necessary skills and can do the work flexibly from home in addition to their other activities—in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal women still traditionally take care of raising children and the household.

Supporting them makes sense for so many reasons. One extra plus is that according to WOWZULU, one rand in a woman's hand contributes more to the family's budget than one in a man's. Their beadwork is either a supplement to the family income, or often the women are the sole earners.

Take Mma Mtshali: She attended school up to the fourth grade and never had a formal job. In the beginning, her beadwork only added a little to the household budget. When her husband, who had a full-time job, died in 2015, she became the sole breadwinner for her two children, and her husband's two children, overnight—and meanwhile there are already two grandchildren of whom she takes care. The hardest part was to get the older kids through school, she says. She benefits from the fact that, together with WOWZULU and the expansion of the distribution system, the regularity of her orders is growing and, on top of that, the number of beadwork lessons is increasing.

Mma Mtshali retains around 60–70 percent of the profits per product sold. She can determine their price herself. Of the narrow, colourful bracelets with an iconic triangular pattern costs around 50 rand—three euro. Unlike the much more elaborate, but also more traditional belts or gigantic chains, which might attract collectors more, they're popular souvenirs. And they're fashionable. Mma Mtshali has just finished another one and turns it back and forth on her wrist. 'Looks really chic,' she says, grinning mischievously. She's right.

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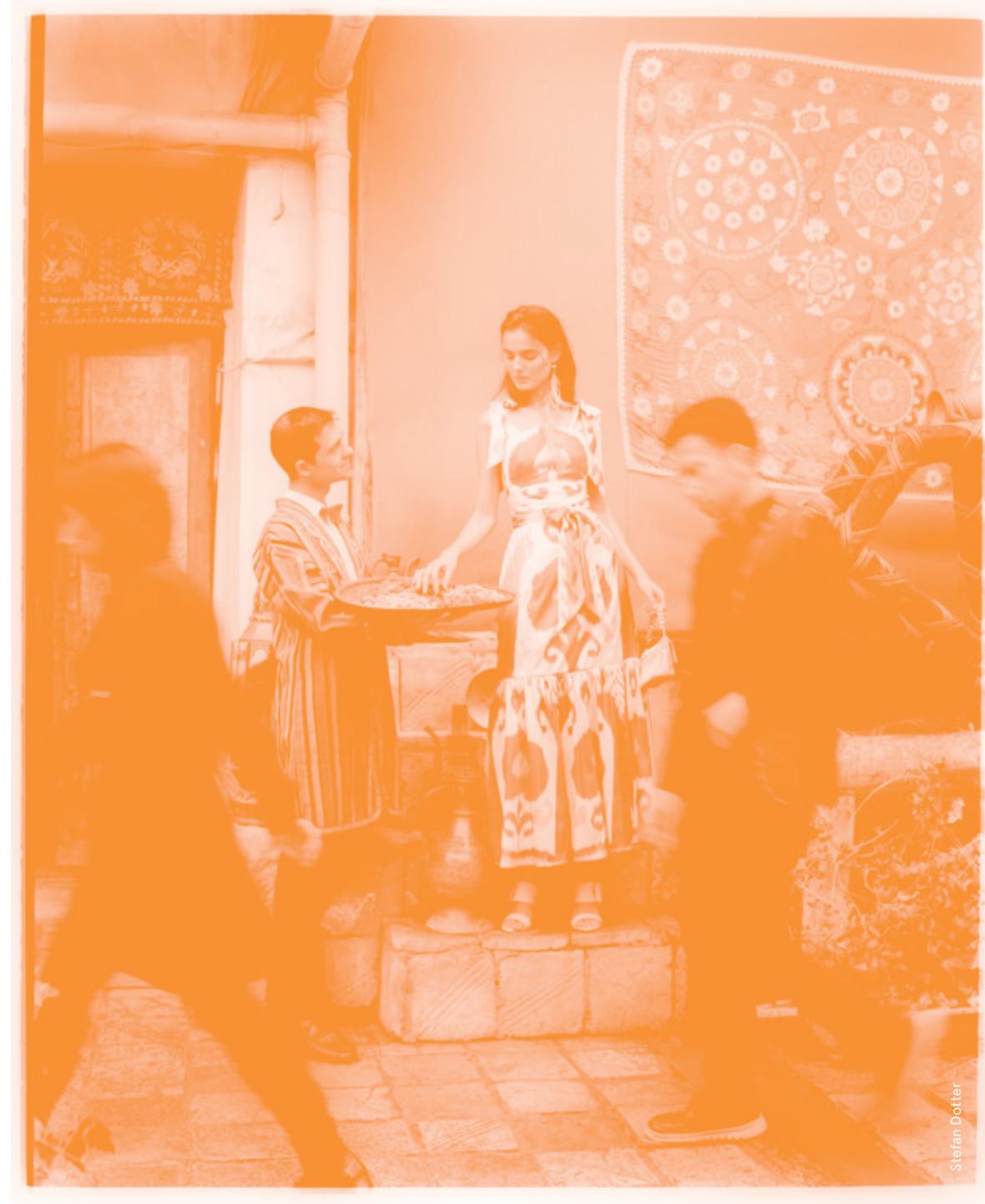
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© Valdanson

# The Future of Fashion

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

Strictly dictated trends, environmental pollution, exploited workers—these realities take the fun out of fashion. However, there is another way. COMPANION presents five alternatives to senseless consumerism.



## Enabling Fair Wages Zazi Vintage

'If Jimi Hendrix were still alive, he would be in the body of a modern activist who weaves and grows organic tomatoes in India and Afghanistan. She was connected with the right people by an Afghan trading family she met on her travels. 'We know the names of all of the women who place each stitch and we know the stories of their daughters and sons,' explains Jeanne. The statement is more than a mere platitude. For her, supporting women who may otherwise be marginalised is the reason she even carries on making new things today. 'We actually don't need anything any more, with all the beautiful things the world already has,' she says. In any case, women make up 80 percent of the fashion industry worldwide, but the lion's share of the profits end up in entirely different pockets. With Zazi Vintage, Jeanne wants to give skilled workers the opportunity to make profitable use of their talents in handicrafts and to encourage more responsible fashion consumption. To do so, Jeanne is also happy to venture off the Silk Road: 'At the beginning of the year, I travelled deep into the Amazon to visit the Huni Kuin tribe,' she explains, adding that the women there began to weave the natural cotton found locally following the 'vision of a spider goddess'. That also sounds rather complex. Which is why it fits in so well with Zazi. 'Now, all I have to do is find out how to set up a supply chain from the Amazon to us here in Berlin,' says Jeanne.

[zazi-vintage.com](http://zazi-vintage.com)



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## Making New from Old Rafael Kouto

Not only does Rafael Kouto absorb cultural trends and artistic dispositions, he also takes a closer look at the industry and its mechanisms. After having studied fashion in Amsterdam and Basel, Rafael worked for labels such as Alexander McQueen, Martin Margiela and Carven. At London and Paris ateliers, he witnessed how great fashion is created—and how it can often go wrong. 'I saw how many designers were using vintage fabrics for inspiration, but also how these old materials would somehow disappear during the creative process,' says Rafael, and asks: 'Could we not also use those materials to make the finished product?' The answer is yes. Rafael himself has been proving this since 2017. When founding his own label, he set himself a task: creating new from old. His label Rafael Kouto only sells products made from reclaimed materials. He collected his first fabrics in close cooperation with Texaid, a recycling initiative involving six aid organisations. After that, his unique creative process began, whereby old fabrics and items of clothing become part of his collections. 'Discarded pieces are my starting point, but ultimately also my finishing point,' he says. 'The challenge when you are working with textile waste is that you have to see the value in everything, and that there can be neither prototypes nor mistakes.'

Rafael's concept also has a political component. His intention is to scrutinise the functionality and aesthetic of fashion, he says, and to 'de-Westernise' the sector. From fast fashion to slow fashion, from global production to local production, from mass production back to artisanal crafts—these are the premises of the Eurocentric fashion industry that Rafael aims to challenge. He also takes inspiration from Romuald Hazoumé, an artist from Benin. 'He uses upcycling techniques and creates artworks from objects that had been exported to Africa from the West,' explains Rafael, who has African roots. 'What emerges is a critical statement against exporting waste, which Hazoumé ultimately brings back to the West as part of his exhibits in Europe and America. Thinking clearly, thinking for yourself, thinking out of the box—this kind of sensitivity would do a few major Western labels some good as well. In fact, Rafael could imagine himself working for one of them occasionally—as long as he could be the one providing inspiration and input. 'It would be very interesting for big fashion houses to take new, ethical and sustainable approaches in production.'

[rafaelkouto.com](http://rafaelkouto.com)

## Fashion for All Karl Michael

The man has a lot to say: Karl Michael Schwoiser prefers to express himself through fashion. 'Fashion is like a language, and I feel that I can speak it on a native level,' says the designer from Vienna on his website. The way that Karl puts his vocabulary of clothing together might not be to everybody's tastes. Online, you can read bigoted criticisms that condemn his exalted designs, written by followers of populist parties on the warpath. This is because the pieces presented under the Karl Michael label don't fit with traditional right-wing values. In Karl's lookbooks, men are seen in fluffy blue faux fur pieces, and women are shown wearing oversized hoodies. At his shows, men wear blood-red robes and women wear grotesque face masks. In doing so, Karl strikes some rather harsh tones. Yet the task he has set himself could hardly seem any more inviting. 'My fashion is for everybody,' he explains. 'I don't want to be exclusive. In general, fashion should always be inclusive.' For Karl, this means no clear distinctions between menswear and womenswear, a high-end line for the more affluent clientele and a range of affordable pieces for those on a tighter budget. This means the sections of his online shop look almost identical. 'Women', 'Men', 'Unisex'—there is a very similar set of products behind each of the categories; T-shirts with offensive prints or political statements are available for all genders. Karl's mantra is: 'If you can fit in it, then it fits.' There will always be people who Karl's clothes don't fit—old-school critics who attack his queer aesthetic and his approach to gender-bending fashion. Nevertheless, Karl has a message for these critics, too. Last year, he personally got involved and held up a protest sign above the catwalk at Vienna Fashion Week. 'Minorities Unite', it said. In addition to this clear statement, he conveyed another, entirely different message to those who were still reluctant to understand: his bare behind. That, too, truly spoke volumes.

[karlmichael.net](http://karlmichael.net)



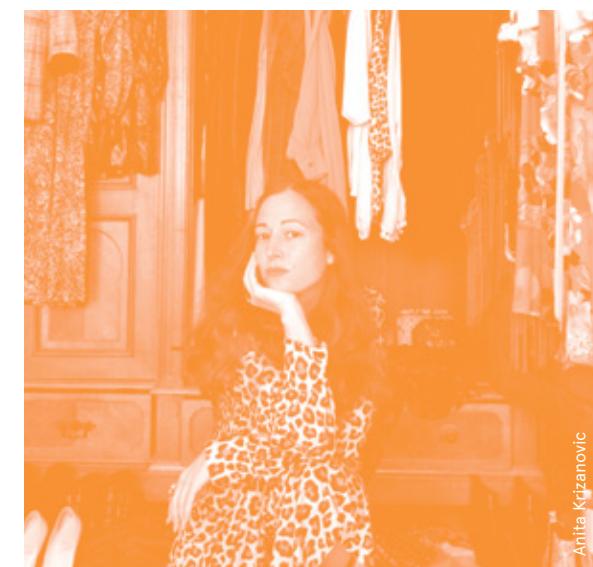
Karl Michael

## Stylish Inclusion Ffora

'We talk so much about inclusion and diversity and yet people with disabilities are often left on their own when it comes to practical solutions in everyday life,' says Lucy Jones, 'because with many products, not everybody is considered.' In response, Lucy didn't just begin talking. First, she listened. In the beginning, to a family member with a disability, and eventually, to many people. 'My relative has a cerebral movement disorder, and really challenged me to rethink my creations,' Lucy says. At that time she was already studying fashion design at the renowned Parsons School of Design in New York and had spent many years reflecting on beautiful shapes and colours, on taste and design. Lucy hadn't yet had an eye on the many people who were ultimately denied access to fashion. Only after talking to her relatives and conducting a detailed study of the market did she realise that she wanted to do something different. She invested two years in intensive research, talking to many different people with diverse disabilities about their needs. 'One of the community's wishes has always been to find products that are not only functional and easy to use, but also really desirable and stylish,' says Lucy. So in 2017 she founded her brand Ffora to do just that: offer practical products that don't just meet the special needs of a particular clientele, but also explore her aesthetic interests. The first small range has been on the market since July. It includes, for example, holders for travel cups that can be attached to more than 170 different wheelchair models. Pocket models, which can be carried sitting and standing in very different ways, are equipped with zippers that can be pushed to both sides. This makes the pockets, which can be opened extra wide, easy to use even if your motor skills are impaired. Lucy is not the only one responsible for the fact that all products in the range—from PVC-coated metal parts in modern design to high-quality leather accessories in bright colours—are extremely beautiful. The brand founder has gathered a team of award-winning designers around her. The most important protagonists in the creation of new products, however, remain people with disabilities, from whom Lucy receives feedback for new designs. She simply listens to them. 'I firmly believe that everyone should find themselves in the products they use every day,' she says.

[liveffora.com](http://liveffora.com)

## To the End Illusion Fashion



It may sound paradoxical. A stylist who worked in magazines, music videos, advertising and TV for ten years and is extremely well acquainted with beautiful cuts and fine fabrics, now also offers her services privately—and doesn't want to encourage her clients to go on shopping sprees. 'I prefer to first go shopping in the client's own wardrobe,' says Anita Krizanovic. It is not only the Berlin-based stylist who is convinced that new, unexpected combinations and hidden treasures can be found there. According to Greenpeace, around 40 percent of the items of clothing hanging in European wardrobes are 'never or rarely worn'. Many of them are among the millions of tonnes of textiles that end up in collection containers or landfill sites each year. Little wonder, then, that Anita first takes a look around her clients' homes. Her styling service, Illusion Fashion, embodies sustainability. With a precise analysis of her clients' tastes and wardrobes, not only does Anita wish to restore order, she also wants to instil a sense of consciousness. 'I have noticed that, though many of my clients are interested in sustainability, they sometimes have no idea what it is actually about,' she says. 'Simply buying organic jeans is no longer adequate. Ultimately, the production of trousers using organic cotton



Flora

[illusion-fashion.de](http://illusion-fashion.de)

[illusion-fashion.de](http://illusion-fashion.de)

[illusion-fashion.de](http://illusion-fashion.de)



TEXT SILVIA SILKO  
ILLUSTRATION ALEX JENKINS

# Bon Voyage

Wouldn't it be great to not only bring back something special from your travels, but also to leave something special behind? From cleaning up the beach to rescuing animals to helping out on archaeological digs, doing something worthwhile on holiday hasn't become a travel trend for nothing—after all, it allows you to get to know the local culture and people that little bit better.

PORUGAL  
**In Indiana Jones' Footsteps**

1

INDIA  
**Female Empowerment**

2

GHANA  
**Teaching for Life**

3

AUSTRALIA  
**Supporting Indigenous Roots**

4

You don't need to bring a lasso and fedora with you—just a bit of curiosity about our ancestors will do. They always have a lot to teach. You can help researchers in Portugal look for traces of bygone generations who lived in the region some 8,000 years ago. Weekly expeditions to excavation sites run from August to September, and those with previous experience can join trips for expert assistants to ruins in Tuscany, for instance.

.....  
[earthwatch.org](http://earthwatch.org)

Glowing colours, raw nature, delicious cuisine—sadly not the only things that spring to mind when you think of India. The uncertainty inherent in women's lives might be another. Jodhpur offers the chance to experience the country as a travel destination whilst consolidating female empowerment. The city is a favourite amongst travellers and a local NGO welcomes any support with open arms. It focuses on teaching girls and women how to read and write, offering them important information on their rights or educating them on topics such as hygiene and menstruation.

.....  
[freiwilligenarbeit.de](http://freiwilligenarbeit.de)

There is an acute shortage of teachers in Ghana. The classrooms are overcrowded and many children don't have the benefit of going to school at all. Travellers can support the few teachers there and make a better future possible for the children through education. The local way of life—far removed from tourism—can be discovered at the same time whilst staying with a host family.

.....  
[travelworks.de](http://travelworks.de)

The consequences of colonisation are still apparent in Australia. Today, Indigenous peoples, who have suffered a long history of oppression, lack professional opportunities and their economic situation is even more precarious. Young people are particularly disillusioned, such as those in the Djarindjin community living on the Tattana Peninsula. The Tattana Oyate association represents their interests. It organises tours for travellers, and the income this generates doesn't only make school education possible, but also helps people in search of their Indigenous roots.

.....  
[travelbeyond.de](http://travelbeyond.de)

GERMANY  
**For Clean Waters**

5

GERMANY  
**Dancing With Wolves**

6

DOING GOOD AT HOME  
**Your Garden, Your Holiday**

7

MALTA  
**Walkies Done Differently**

8

ITALY  
**Help on A Farm in Bella Italia**

9

Millions of tonnes of rubbish land in the sea every year. We would all do well to change the way we think in the long term and holiday-makers can begin today. Germany's Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), for example, campaigns for the protection of birds and their nesting places with the Seas Without Plastic initiative or through various informative events. So on your next holiday at the North or Baltic Sea, just drop by, see what they have to say and get involved. After a fruitful day's work, an evening spent lounging on a beach chair will feel a lot more rewarding.

.....  
[nabu.de](http://nabu.de)

For the most part, people are somewhat conflicted about the fact that wolves have made Germany their home once again. On the one hand, city-dwellers might indulge in the romantic notion of the roaming packs, while rural inhabitants live in fear of wolves and farmers complain of sheep herds being savaged. Biosphere Expeditions offer you the chance to make up your own mind. On these mini expeditions in Lower Saxony, starting every summer, you can investigate tracks left by wolves and take photo evidence. It's also a chance, of course, to learn a great deal about these animals.

.....  
[biosphere-expeditions.org](http://biosphere-expeditions.org)

Staying at home is in itself a good deed, as whoever avoids taking a car or plane can worry less about their carbon footprint. And it doesn't need to be boring either. Help is always needed in your local area, whether it's helping to find accommodation for refugees, with activities or handicraft sessions in the retirement home around the corner or with feeding times at the local animal shelter. Along the way, you'll see where you live in a new light, and all for the better.

.....  
[islandsanctuary.com.mt](http://islandsanctuary.com.mt)

Beautiful landscapes, friendly people, splendid wine, good food: Italy is always worth a visit. Right now especially, since sustainable farming is becoming ever more important. There are ecological farms spread right across the country, with some offering homemade food and welcoming accommodation. The homepage of WWOOF lists farms where visitors are welcome to get stuck in themselves. Accommodation is free in return, and new acquaintances and experiences are sure to follow. There'll certainly be one, or a few, great evenings to remember, too. The locations range from Lombardy in the north to Calabria in the south.

.....  
[wwoof.it](http://wwoof.it)

the sooner now



# A City Needs Movement

TEXT MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA

IN COOPERATION WITH MINI

Since 2016, the initiative The Sooner Now, presented by MINI Germany and the online magazine Friends of Friends, has been bringing together industry leaders who are facing the challenges of increasingly urban societies. The joint initiative has now launched with its own website and podcast, in search of answers to the questions, 'How do we want to live tomorrow, and what can we do about it today?'

'So, what do you actually do?'—it's not just that classic question asked on the first date, at apartment interviews, at cocktail parties. The question also marks the launch of The Sooner Now's new podcast. Every month, presenters Lena Heiss and Fabian Ebeling invite interesting people on a city tour in a MINI. During the ride, they and their guests raise questions about the future of cities, provide food for thought on participative social development, and speculate on urban utopias. All while learning more about the people in the passenger seat—intriguing guests from the worlds of art and culture, urban development and architecture; lateral thinkers from a wide range of disciplines. So, Ludwig Engel, long-time Berliner, utopian, passenger of the first episode: 'What do you actually do?'

Ludwig doesn't have to think long and hard, but he does have to go a little further: after all, he's a 'futurologist and urban researcher,' which is not a profession that can be summed up in a classic nine to five schedule. 'Futurology never had the ambition to say that we know what things will become,' says Ludwig, 'but rather, to say that we have to look at the present from many different perspectives to get a better idea of what will be possible tomorrow.'

As it also is the many perspectives of urban life that drive MINI. After all, the first MINI was designed as a small city car under the motto 'creative use of space'. This is exactly what MINI has been pursuing ever since: Between the first compact model from 1959 and the first all-electric ver-

sion, MINI ELECTRIC, launched in 2019, there was a lot of change and a lot of movement. 'MINI is an urban brand, and it must continue to be in the future,' says chief designer Oliver Heilmeyer. 'For me, the future of MINI is electric.'

It's fitting that the podcast by The Sooner Now with Ludwig Engel was titled 'A city needs movement.' It's a credo to which the initiative is already committed: The Sooner Now was founded in 2016 by MINI Germany and Friends of Friends. The Berlin online magazine also continuously profiles people who are thinking about the future, helping to shape cities and streets with exciting ideas. There's no question that more and more of us need to start engaging with our new urban reality: More than half of the world's population lives in cities today, according to United Nations forecasts, in 30 years' time, that will rise to nearly three quarters.

The Sooner Now not only endeavours to document the challenges that this rapid development has in store, but also to make tangible the opportunities offered by urbanised societies. The dialogue platform has been bringing together visionaries since it was founded. Like the architect Oke Hauser, who has already stood in focus as a speaker. In his role as Creative Lead of MINI LIVING, he is concerned with urban coexistence and what it might look like in the future. This year, The Sooner Now is expanding the search for tomorrow's innovative solutions and design possibilities with two creative conferences. And with its own online magazine and podcast,

The Sooner Now now makes the multifaceted topics accessible to a broader audience.

The articles in the magazine describe, for example, how movement in urban space, traffic on the streets, and people in houses, influence the sound of a city. Canadian architect Brady Peters calls for a more sensitive approach to acoustics in urban and building planning in an interview. Design itself can also portray movement, such as the 'utopias built on the outskirts of Paris,'—of which another The Sooner Now article tells—building complexes with multi-layered forms, with curves, corners and edges. For Ludwig, the man in the MINI passenger seat, architecture plays a central role as an 'instrument of liberation' when it comes to the idea of future cities. Architecture has always been able to show new spatial possibilities and with them new possibilities for living together, 'to intervene speculatively in what we think should be,' he says. But equally relevant is what happens between the facades.

As veins of the city, streets ultimately form central fulcrums and hubs of urban life; they are not merely a network of routes connecting private and public spaces. Streets themselves are part of the public space that needs to be rethought. 'We are facing major issues: autonomous driving, e-mobility, digitization and shared services are just a few of them,' says Oliver. They need to be designed. For Ludwig, streets are also a kind of negotiating space for interpersonal relationships. He likes 'the character of the street in its

Listen to The Sooner Now podcast on all major audio platforms or visit [thesoonernow.com](http://thesoonernow.com)

**The Sooner Now is a joint initiative between MINI Germany and Friends of Friends. The two companies have worked together since 2016, producing a series of events exploring questions surrounding the concept of urban futures. The new online platform, [thesoonernow.com](http://thesoonernow.com), deepens these questions by publishing articles and interviews with innovative change makers about the future of city life.**

Simply scan the QR Code with your smartphone camera to find out all about The Sooner Now and the new podcast online.



Podcast moderators Lena Heiss and Fabian Ebeling during the production of the new podcast from The Sooner Now.

Aimee Shirley

TEXT FABIAN EBELING — PHOTOS AIMEE SHIRLEY

The tight-knit community of craftspeople and architects in Austria's westernmost region, Vorarlberg, has led to innovative movements in contemporary architecture. As director of the Vorarlberg Architecture Institute (vai), Verena Konrad shares the region's deeply rooted traditions—and, through curation and collaboration, helps to shape them for the future.

A peaceful alpine region nestled into the shores of Lake Constance perhaps isn't where you'd expect to find a hotbed of contemporary architecture. But then Vorarlberg isn't your average Austrian locality. Its rich history of artisanship, architecture and design has resulted in a steady stream of innovation throughout the decades— influenced by international movements, yet remaining steadfast in its distinct local character. The evolution of Vorarlberg's built environment is documented and displayed at Vorarlberg Architecture Institute (vai), based in the city of Dornbirn, which is home to around 50,000 people. Vai's mandate is to educate the general public and tourists about architecture and act as a communication platform for professionals—a purpose which vai's director, Verena Konrad, describes as a 'continuous thought process.'

Home to around a population of 375,000, Vorarlberg is one of the strongest economic regions in Europe and Dornbirn is a fairly wealthy community. Big companies like Rudolf Olz Meisterbäcker, a baked goods manufacturer and SPAR, a large trade company have their Austrian headquarters here. The lighting manufacturer Zumtobel is the town's biggest employer. Yet, the glory came in the mid-19th century when the textile industry was booming here. Later, Rüscher Werke produced manhole covers for the whole region, as well as turbines. An old Rüscher Werke production shed has been transformed into Kunstraum Dornbirn, a gallery space which exhibits contemporary art all year round. It's raw—lots of stones—steel and high windows that allow natural light to diffuse in the space. At the center of it is a reconstruction of *Black Maria*, the first studio built to produce special effects for film. Verena knows the artist well: 'I curated one of Bernd Oppl's first presentations in a group exhibition,' she says with a smile on her face. Before she took on the role of director here six years ago, Verena worked as a curator for contemporary art in Vienna and Innsbruck.

Across the court is Inatura, a children's museum dedicated to nature, humans and technology. Dietrich Untertrifaller Architekten, Hermann Kaufmann Architekten and Christian Lenz revitalised the old buildings that now host the museum. Upon purchasing a ticket, visitors also gain access to the Kunstraum Dornbirn. The grey colors of both buildings are contrasted by the rusty colors of some of the museum's elements,' Verena explains. 'They're made of weathering steel which reflects the different weather conditions it has endured over the years.' The buildings are surrounded by a comfy municipal park and a beautiful courtyard, designed by Swiss architecture practice Rotzler Krebs Partner (now Krebs & Herde). 'It's great when public space confidently exudes that it belongs to everyone, like this municipal park. That's really important in a society in which private property matters so much,' Verena analyses, adding that: 'Planning needs a certain vocabulary so that people can engage in dialogue and become more aware of the importance of public space.'

It has proved advantageous for Dornbirn to purchase a chunk of land in the middle of town, like the former Rüscher Werke, and set about transforming it. Even though industry developed extensively here, the region hasn't experienced the same levels of urbanisation as other European centres have. Rural structures have persisted, craft has remained a vital part of the region's fabric and it's an important concern to cities like Dornbirn that villages and communities stay connected.

Communities like Ebnit, which is part of Dornbirn but situated in the more hilly areas surrounding the city. Infrastructure projects like the Scharnerlochbrücke—designed by Marte.Marte Architekten—are crucial for such areas. In addition to its functional purpose, the bridge beautifully blends in with the rocks and the stream beneath it, appearing as if it has grown out of the mountain. Its architects are currently renovating the Deutschlands Haus, a Berlin-based centre of the Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung, a trust that documents the displacement of the 60–80 million people in the first half of the 20th century.

Intersectional and collaboration are words Verena often uses in her work at vai. Both apply to her work and position within the framework of contemporary building culture in the region and beyond. Born in 1979, in Oberösterreich, near Linz, she grew up in a family that lovingly supported her interests. Her mother, a secretary and her father, a project manager for industrial plants, would always ask, 'What can we do to help you learn more about this?' as Verena says, when something sparked her interest. She studied art history, history and theology. Her focus was design and architecture theory. 'Initially, I wanted to work at the university, but now I am really happy to be very closely working with people in the practical field,' she explains.

Verena's drive to understand her environment and to be



Kunstraum Dornbirn

responsive to people around her emerges not only from her professional background, but also from her from biographical experience and comprehension—the understanding that knowledge and experience are things to share. This attitude has been a guiding mantra across the wide range of roles she has held—from curator with the team at Kunsthalle Wien and the gallery at Taxispalais in Tirol to different positions and teaching assignments.

Next to her work at vai, Verena is part of the council at the University of Liechtenstein, the board of trustees at IBA Heidelberg (International Building Exhibition Heidelberg) as well as the Austrian Building Council at the chancellery. When she's off work, she spends time with her two children and enjoys the occasional one-hour run up to a ropeway station close to Dornbirn, as well as bike rides. Quite a demanding schedule. Does she feel like a role model for women in society? Not necessarily. 'There are also other women who work and take care of their children. I don't need to provide that example,' she says.

Between Dornbirn and Bregenz lies the small village of Altach. Just outside, there is a Muslim cemetery, set gracefully in front of the mountains, facing Mecca. Red concrete, manufactured in a wood sheathing, adds to the calm and inviting atmosphere. Verena explains that it took 'ten years to negotiate between the different Muslim faith groups before this cemetery was built.' Dr. Eva Grabherr of okay. Integration and Diversity in Vorarlberg headed this process and almost all Muslim groups agreed to use the cemetery together—a reality which is not necessarily self-evident.

The site carries the design of architect Bernardo Bader, and the carpets in the prayer room were designed by Azra Akšamija and knotted by a group of Bosnian Muslim women who used the technique from their home region. Many of those who make up the ten percent of Vorarlberg's Muslim population originate from Turkey. 'Given the political shift to the right, such a project might not be possible today,' says

# Cutting Edge

Verena. Yet, initiatives often come from the ground up in this region—as evidenced by the many projects in the realm of building culture here.

Innovation is often sparked by craftspeople in Vorarlberg, especially in the valley and mountains of Bregenzerwald. Craft has consequently come to play an influential role in the movement of new alpine architecture. There is a high density of quality architects in the region and initially, those who spearheaded the movement of Vorarlberger Baukünstler since the 1960s were not architects but craftsmen, like Rudolf Wäger (1941–2019). Traditionally, architects, craftspeople and designers have worked together closely here.

The Werkraum Bregenzerwald, based in Andelsbuch, is a good example of this. Verena takes us on the 40-minute drive there and we cross Bödele, a pass that connects Dornbirn and Bregenzerwald. At Werkraum, a group of around 90 craft enterprises have joined forces to establish this space for exhibitions, meetings and talks. Here, regional craft is exhibited and people can get together and talk over lunch that's provided by the canteen. Swiss architect Peter Zumthor designed the building because the group of initiators valued his appreciation for craftsmanship. One reason for the high standards of craft here, according to Verena, is proximity: 'People know each other here and craftspeople don't want to hear complaints about something not going well, as they're closely interwoven personally and professionally.'

Yet even ground-up initiatives benefit from top-down support. In the 1990s, Austria profited from generous subsidies for culture and education. Verena remembers, that 'in the late nineties you could really feel this funding come into effect.' Rudolf Scholten of the social democrats in Austria (SPÖ) was a formative figure in cultural and educational policy of the time and pushed for this investment. 1997 marked a pivotal year in the history of Vorarlberg's building culture: it saw the founding of Vorarlberger Architekturinstitut, Werkraum Bregenzerwald and Kunsthaus Bregenz.

The latter building takes the form of a cube, encased in a facade of opal glass. It was also designed by Peter Zumthor. During the building process, local craftsmen pushed the idea of working with the architect in the future, which resulted in Zumthor designing the Werkraum Bregenzerwald. Inside, the floor, staircases and walls are made of grey concrete which is contrasted by the glass ceiling. Both the facade and the ceiling allow the daylight to illuminate the space. Natural light is diffused and supported by lusters just above the glass ceiling. In contrast to the cool look and feel, the light conveys a warm, welcoming atmosphere. When the sun sets, the rooms take on a gold-like glow. Dornbirn-based light manufacturer Zumtobel contributed these lusters and is, according to Verena, 'highly appreciated by architects for their custom-made products.'

As with her creative counterparts in the region, openness, collaboration and mutual learning is an integral element of Verena's work. A quality, one might think, that's necessary to have when holding a position that is at the intersection of education, institutions and the general public. Verena is always on the move, absorbing inside and outside perspectives from different fields because that's what it takes to keep an institution such as vai up to date. Reflecting on the six years she has worked in Dornbirn, she muses: 'I think it's not good to hold such a position for too long. The insider's perspective grows too strong by then.' For Verena, directing vai is not about her own status and profit, but rather the connection of each project at hand to those gone before—and the ones yet to come.

This story was produced as a collaboration between Friends of Friends and Zumtobel. Just as the traditional Austrian company, vai is based in Dornbirn.

↳ [v-a-i.at](http://v-a-i.at)  
↳ [zumtobel.com](http://zumtobel.com)

# Tradition



# Sustainability

TEXT THOMAS GIRST  
ILLUSTRATION CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

In our post-industrial age of resource scarcity and endless consumption, what meaning does the concept of sustainability convey? In the following short essay from Thomas Girst's book *Alle Zeit der Welt (All the Time in the World)*, the author retraces the term's origins in consideration of its future implications.

The oldest chair manufactory in Switzerland was founded in Horgen near Zurich in 1880. Many of the trees processed there today were planted at that time. Beech and oak, precious woods such as black walnut, ash and cherry trees from the Swiss Jura have also been sourced from the same family business for almost a century. Successful forestry is based on sustainability. The term, which has been used excessively for years, especially in business management, originated in this context. The perpetual use of forest areas presupposes that as many trees are planted as are felled. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson once told the well-known hippie and activist Stewart Brand the story behind the massive oak beams on the dining room ceiling at Oxford University's St Mary's College—the huge dining room in the school, founded in 1379, is not unlike that of Harry Potter's Hogwarts. At the end of the 19th century, however, the old wood became infested with countless beetles and required urgent replacement. The university administration eventually turned to the head forester. He showed the authorities a narrow path through the woods which led to a small oak forest in the midst of the Oxford University estates. "These oaks will never be felled. They are intended for the dining room," was the message forest wardens had probably passed down for the past half millennium. In that same spirit, architects for the English aristocracy at the beginning of the 18th century, who built country estates would often press seeds into the damp soil in the immediate vicinity. All in the knowledge that the tree trunks which had grown from the seedlings over hundreds of years would eventually replace the dilapidated wooden roof truss of the main house.

"After 2000 years of care, my lawn will be quite acceptable," says an Englishman in René Goscinny's *Asterix in Britain*—a character who trims a single blade of grass with a miniature sickle in front of his thatched house. Yet gardens, forests and estates have always had an economic function as well as an aesthetic one. Trade in wood, plants, fruit, vegetables and flowers is lucrative. Today, forests are regarded as local recreation areas and a source of capital in international tourism, which is why Scotland, for example, deliberately strives to make its landscape more attractive for international visitors through targeted reforestation. In 2002, the artist Olaf Nicolai was commissioned by the former Forestry Commission Scotland to produce a work in which wood from felled trees in The Trossachs National Park was used to make weather-proof storm matches, similar to those used for outdoor barbecuing in the north of England. Every purchase of a box of matches helped to ensure that two new birches or Scots pines would be planted for each tree that had been felled. Sustainable forestry and agriculture is always grown with the next generations in mind. Unfortunately, the demand for natural equilibrium is by no means taken into account everywhere. From the deforestation of Italy in Roman times to the slash-and-burn of rainforests today, humans exploit nature instead of assuming responsibility for its regeneration. If you bury a seed in the soil, you inevitably think of the future, whether a dystopia or a utopia. "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."

Whether Luther's most famous quote actually comes from him is as debatable as the source of the saying: "The one who plants trees, knowing that he will never sit in their shade, has at least started to understand the meaning of life." A Greek proverb, an American Quaker saying, or perhaps a quip of the Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore? What has been documented, however, is the work of René Descartes, who wrote about the necessity of supra-generational action and thought as early as 1637 in his *Discours de la méthode*. "For as true as it is that every human being is obliged to promote the good of others as far as he can, and that being useful to no one is almost the same as being completely worthless, it is also true that our concern must extend beyond the present time. Therefore, it is good to refrain from doing things that might benefit the living if it is done with the intention of doing other things that are more helpful to our grandchildren." Here Descartes referred primarily to his own spiritual heritage, but his long-term mindset makes it clear that sustainability should not be limited to naturally renewable materials. On a rainy day at the end of the last millennium, Baron Feversham of Duncombe Park used his index finger to draw the attention of a group of students strolling on his estate to a freshly lead-covered roof of his estate from 1713: "There are three levels of lead sheet quality on the



Christoph Niemann, Siesta, 2018

'10,000 years of deep knowledge in the relationship between man and object have been successively revoked over the past 100 years.'

market. The cheap sheet lasts 50 years, the medium-priced one 100 years and the very expensive 200 years. I am a poor man—of course I buy the best quality, as it is the cheapest per year!"

Sure, there are the maker movement, do-it-yourself campaigns and subcultures that for many are already heralding the age of another industrial revolution, in which sustainable, communal and non-profit considerations define urban planning, manufacturing processes and the world of commodities. Despite increasing urbanization, responsible architects are building sustainable cities and smart homes, which will be powered 100 percent by renewable energy and will allow us to live in better harmony with nature and fellow human beings in the big city. For in the interpersonal sphere, sustainability means nothing more than the depth of our relationships, which is fed by the exchange of ideas and growing familiarity. It was precisely this claim that the architecture critic and sociologist Lewis Mumford formulated in his essay *What is a City?* in 1937. If the whole world becomes a city, then it must not replace human interaction, but rather foster and ideally strengthen it. Like the forests, caves and steppes at the very beginning of it all, in our post-industrial age the architecture of the big city can at best provide a sustainable stage for our social spectacle.

Thomas Girst is a writer and Global Head of Cultural Engagement at the BMW Group living in Munich. His book *Alle Zeit der Welt (All the Time in the World)* is published by Hanser and is currently available in German.

Thomas Girst, *Alle Zeit der Welt*  
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↳ [hanser-literaturverlage.de](http://hanser-literaturverlage.de)



## DORNBIRN, AUSTRIA

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Marktstrasse 33  
Tuesday-Wednesday 14:00-17:00  
Thursday 14:00-20:00  
Friday 14:00-17:00  
Saturday 11:00-15:00  
↳ [v-a-i.at](http://v-a-i.at)

## VIENNA, AUSTRIA

25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier  
Lerchenfelder Strasse 1-3

Cucina Ribelli  
at 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier  
Lerchenfelder Strasse 1-3  
Monday-Sunday 12:00-23:00  
↳ [ribelli-restaurant.com](http://ribelli-restaurant.com)

Habibi & Hawara  
Wipplingerstrasse 29  
Monday-Friday 11:00-24:00  
Saturday 18:00-24:00  
↳ [habibi.at](http://habibi.at)

KarlMichael  
Getreidemarkt 13  
Monday-Saturday 11:00-20:30  
↳ [karlmichael.net](http://karlmichael.net)

Zazi Vintage  
Max-Bier-Strasse 31  
Showroom viewing by appointment  
↳ [zazi-vintage.com](http://zazi-vintage.com)

Frankl Michael  
Getreidemarkt 13  
Monday-Saturday 11:00-20:30  
↳ [karlmichael.net](http://karlmichael.net)

MindSpace Eurotheum  
Neue Mainzer Strasse 66-68  
Monday-Friday 9:00-18:00  
↳ [mindspace.me](http://mindspace.me)

25hours Hotel The Circle  
Im Klapperhof 22-24

## Masthead

COMPANION is a magazine about the people who shape and enrich our cities.

↳ [25hours-hotels.com](http://25hours-hotels.com)  
↳ [companion-magazine.com](http://companion-magazine.com)  
↳ [fvonf.com/tag/25hours](http://fvonf.com/tag/25hours)

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# MY 25hours



freedom  
All for

Sven Hoffmann loves working without strict limits—he photographs, designs and has now also dedicated his life to film. In a collaboration with 25hours Hotels, he put his versatile creativity to good use, bringing to life 25hours' visual identity relaunch.

Sven Hoffmann and 25hours Hotels? It's a match made in heaven. The creative multi-talent and the innovative hotel group like to veer off the beaten track—and have been breaking new ground together since 2012. When 25hours Hotels were looking for someone to redesign their logo they chose Sven, who previously worked as Creative Director at the Red Bull Inhouse Agency, for Martin Imdahl at Chiemsee and also taught at the Miami Ad School in Hamburg—to name just a few of his many projects.

The logos that Sven and his eponymous design studio created portray the idea of crossing borders: overlapping points in different colours, creating new colours and shades. Every single 25hours Hotel received its own colour palette, with the logos representing one thing above all else: diversity.

In general, Sven places a great deal of importance on having as few limits as possible in his work. 'Jobs are good if they're free,' he says. 'Free of customers who are too strict, free of expectations that are too specific.' That's why one of

his most important maxims is to be alone as often as possible on set when he's taking photos or filming, for instance.

But for Sven, freedom also means travelling. Creative types are always out and about, aren't they? And his favourite place? Tokyo! He loves the incredible food and the city's progressiveness and is fascinated by the omnipresent harmony in the city of millions of people. Atmosphere is something that Sven generally pays attention to when he goes to a new city—or a new hotel.

In case you're wondering, his favourite 25hours Hotel is the Bikini Berlin. In particular, he finds the corridors 'really, really cool'. Whether that's because everything is harmonious or because the corridors connect the different rooms that allow Sven to freely move throughout the hotel, we don't know. It's probably a mix of everything.

↙ [svenhoffmann.com](http://svenhoffmann.com)

## All for Water

Johannes Tomczak has a goal: to provide every person on the planet with access to clean drinking water. That's why he has been working for Viva con Agua for four years. Its latest coup? The Hamburg water initiative is once again working with 25hours Hotels to host the *All for Water Week*.

Toxic chemicals or bacteria making their way into the groundwater, periods of drought drying up wells to global corporations tapping H2O in order to sell it bottled at high prices—and all while the population often suffers from water shortages. News like this goes around the world on a daily basis. While some environmental activists would love to throw stink bombs at the headquarters of Nestlé and the like, the Hamburg water initiative Viva con Agua (VcA) takes a different approach: 'We are advocates of positive communication because we believe that we can achieve a lot in people's minds,' says Johannes Tomczak, who is responsible for the organisation's marketing and fundraising division.

Johannes, like the aid project itself, comes from Hamburg's St. Pauli neighbourhood—VcA founder and former striker for the local football club, Benjamin Adrion, came up with the idea during a training camp in Cuba. He had seen that in kindergartens there, the water had to be boiled before use. Back home, he started a big fundraising campaign, engaging prominent supporters like the local band Fettes Brot. He had soon raised even more money than expected. That was in 2006, and Viva con Agua was born. Meanwhile, the initiative has its own water source, from which part of the proceeds flow back into water projects. In addition, VcA projects have provided access to clean drinking water for over three million people in nine countries—mainly in East Africa, as well as India and Nepal. Johannes visited the latter in 2016, together with a delegation that included 25hours Hotels representatives. 'It was one year after the great earthquake and destruction was visible everywhere. Add to that the partially precarious situation of the population—that's affecting,' he says.

Johannes is all the happier to have been making a posi-

tive contribution to the VcA team over the past four years. He originally studied literature and media studies in Kiel and Bristol and initially worked in the cultural and events sectors. The move to VcA was initially 'bad for the bank account, but good for karma,' he says with a grin. For him, one thing is clear: 'Water is the basic requirement for everything that follows.' He explains that with girls in Ethiopia who don't go to school when they have their period, due to the lack of sanitary facilities. For them, access to water means access to education.

Johannes' job never gets boring. Fundraising drives in schools, table tennis tournaments in Lusatia: there's always something going on at VcA. This summer, the organisation spent a lot of time at festivals. Volunteers there collected deposit cups, the proceeds benefited their projects—and they were able to enjoy music for free at the same time. 'We are not a non-profit, but an all-profit organisation,' says Johannes, laughing. Next up for VcA is a new phase in their collaboration with 25hours Hotels, who have been supporting them for many years now. Every time a room is booked via their own website, a portion of the profits are donated to the water initiative. With the *All for Water Week* in November, the commitment is now being taken to the next level. Tombolas, custom VcA drinks, concerts, upgrades for donations: Each 25hours Hotel has come up with its own creative, intensified way to support VcA in for one week—accompanied by a great cultural programme. Turns out that commitment doesn't always have to be so serious. And positive communication? It clearly doesn't hurt either.

↙ [vivaconagua.org](http://vivaconagua.org)



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