

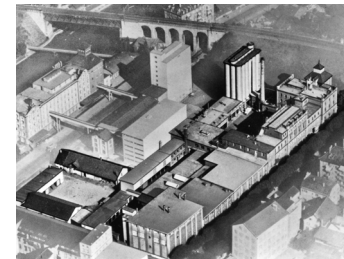
# **Timeline**

**1897-2023**

From 1870 onwards, Zurich evolved into a Grosstadt with a growing industry, developing mainly in Zürich West, along the Limmat. The Brauerei Löwenbräu, built in 1897, is one example of this development. With the growing industry, Zurich experienced a big increase in population, leading to a housing crisis and bad living conditions for the working class. This trend continued until the end of World War I in 1918.

Because social issues such as the precarious housing situation in Zurich, the SP, the social democratic party, gained a lot in popularity. In 1928, the SP acquired five seats in the nine-seat government of the city of Zurich, with the social democrat Emil Klöti being elected as its new mayor. Zurich under the governance of Klöti and the SP is referred to as Das Soziale Zürich or Das Rote Zürich ("The Red Zurich"). Different housing cooperations were formed and massive social housing projects were launched, enabling decent housing conditions for the working class.

The economic boom following World War II in 1949 marked the end of Das Rote Zürich and the SP losing their majority in the city government.



The Löwenbräu Areal in industrial times, around 1900, Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich

SCHWEIZER MEDIEN

# Rechtsumkehr

Ohne genauen Plan, aber voller Absicht: Wie die Schweizer Medien politisch immer weiter nach rechts drifteten.

VON KASPAR SURBER

Das Lob kommt von ganz oben. Von der Bühne des Schützenhauses Albisgütli in Zürich, ausgeschrieben von jenem Mann, der mit sehr viel Macht, noch mehr Geld und zumeist auch mit dreisten Lügen die Medien in der Schweiz in den letzten Jahrzehnten zu beeinflussen suchte: Christoph Blocher. Es ist der 20. Januar 2023, das Wahljahr hat gerade begonnen, und die SVP will mit einer nächsten Initiative die Migration beschränken. Die mediale Thematisierung scheint zu funktionieren: «Es gibt Lichtblicke, das ist schön», zeigt sich Blocher zufrieden.

«Der NZZ-Chefredaktor schaut es mir diesen Lichtblick an». Er zitiert einen Artikel, in dem Eric Gujer die gescheiterte Integration von Migrationisten in Berlin beklagt. «Es ist ein Anfang, dass es die Journalisten zugeben», bringt er hervor. Blocher einen doppelseitigen Artikel aus der «SonntagsZeitung» mit dem Titel «Wirkommen in der 9-Millionen-Schweiz» hervor. «Erregend sei der Text, ganz sachlich, eindeutig wachsend», ruft Blocher in den Saal.

Die Behauptung, dass fast alle Medien in der Schweiz eine Selbstverständlichkeit sind, ist auch den Äußerungen von Christian Mäder und der SVP begleitet, ähnlich wie die Anreden gegen die vermeintliche Klasse politischer Eliten. «Noch ausgerechnet das Lob von Blocher im Albisgütli zeigt, dass eine Veränderung im Gang ist. Die Medien – so zumindest der subjektive Leseindruck – sind im Wahn. Nicht in Richtung links, sondern in Richtung rechts, was etwa steigende Preise und sinkende Werten weniger Beachtung finden. Auch die Korrektur wirkt schon wieder wie eine reine Propaganda, trotz immerhin Risiken für die Volkswirtschaft durch die neue Megabank UBS.»

It tatsächlich ein Rechtstruck der Medien in Gang? Eine Entwicklung in dem Sinne, dass die Themen und Darstellungen rechter Parteien mehr Platz finden als links?

**Ein Jongleur wird Journalist**

Den Artikel über die «9-Millionen-Schweiz» hat Rico Bändle geschrieben. In der kleinmühtigen Schweiz kennt man sich bekanntlich meist von irgendwo. Rico kennt ich aus der Jongliergruppe der Kantonschule St. Gallen. Er war beim Schultheater der Star der Gruppe, ging später mit einem Zirkus auf Tournee. Für die richtige Wirkung beim Jonglieren braucht man nicht nur Geschicklichkeit, sondern muss auch eine Umschuldung aufsetzen können: Hoppeli, ein neuer Ring ist im Spiel! Wo kommt denn der plötzlich her?

Spricht man Bändle beim Treffen in einem Zürcher Café auf den Artikel zur «9-Millionen-Schweiz» an, zeigt er sein unschuldig-Ärztengesicht von früher. «Null Absprachen habe er mit der SVP gehabt, als er den Artikel vorbereitete, den er plötzlich auf neue Jahr veröffentlichte. Er habe SVP-Parteisekretär Peter Keller, der früher mit ihm auf der «Weltwoche»-Redaktion arbeitete, sogar um den initiativen Geldgeber für ein Primeur bringen zu können. Doch Keller habe abgewunken, man sei damit noch nicht so weit. Wie gesagt, keine Absprache. «Man muss sich als Journalist für die Neue im Wind haben. Die Migration und ihre Folgen sind ein Thema in der Bevölkerung. Und es war klar, dass die SVP mit ihrer Initiative kommt.»

Bändle definiert sich selbst politisch als «ultra-liberal» für Selbstverantwortung, Freiheit und möglichst wenig Einschränkungen der Regeln. Der Eindruck, dass die Journalisten nicht mehr die Medien beeinflussen, sondern umgekehrt, ist ein Zeichen dafür, dass die Medien im Wandel sind. Ein Zeichen für den Wandel der Medien, nicht nur in der Schweiz, sondern weltweit. Ein Zeichen für den Wandel der Medien, nicht nur in der Schweiz, sondern weltweit.

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**Somms Werbeanlage**

Wie dramatisch diese Krise ist, zeigt der Fall Zahlen: Der inflationäre Medienmarkt ist gemessen einerseits an den Umsatzzahlen, andererseits an den Inhalten. Die Umsatzzahlen sind in den letzten Jahren um etwa 50 Prozent gesunken. Die Umsatzzahlen sind in den letzten Jahren um etwa 50 Prozent gesunken. Die Umsatzzahlen sind in den letzten Jahren um etwa 50 Prozent gesunken.

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pretationen mehr Raum geben. Dass dies passiert, hat auch mit dem eigenen Nachwuchs zu tun.

**Wien trinken mit Faschisten**

Rico Bändle arbeitete acht Jahre lang als Kulturredaktor für die «Weltwoche». «Roger Köppel hat mich sehr geprägt. Er war wahnsinnig fordernd – aber auch unglaublich inspirierend mit dem Interesse an der Journalismus» sagt er. «Gelert habe er von Köppel besonders eine Sache: Dass das Kontrastivjournalistische das Interessante ist. Nicht das Bekannte bringen, sondern den Widerspruch dazu.» Und wie beurteilt er Köppels Mutation vom Journalisten zum SVP-Politiker und heutigen Putin-Propagandisten? «Ich bin nicht immer in deiner Meinung wie Köppel. Man kann mit ihm sehr gut streiten. Im Gegensatz zu anderen will ich nicht den Stab über ihn brechen.»

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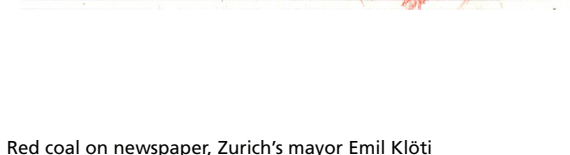
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Red coal on newspaper, Zurich's mayor Emil Klöti

From 1870 onwards, Zurich evolved into a Grossestadt with a growing industry, developing mainly in Zürich West, along the Limmat. The Brauerei Löwenbräu, built in 1897, is one example of this development. With the growing industry, Zurich experienced a big increase in population, leading to a housing crisis and bad living conditions for the working class. This trend continued until the end of World War I in 1918.

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From the year 1968 onwards, political revolts and demonstration of young people were happening around the world, with Zurich as no exception. In Zurich, the police did not hesitate to violently interfere, leading to a great conflict between the youth and the authorities. One such conflict revolved around the Globusprovisorium, a provisional building of the luxury warehouse Globus, near the Zurich train station. The city rejected to designate this building for the establishment of an Autonomes Jugendzentrum AJZ ("autonomous youth center"), which the young people of Zurich were longing for, as a space for interaction, leisure and togetherness. As a result, on June 25th 1968, a demonstration of around 2000 people formed around the Globusprovisorium. As the police tried to break up the crowd, the situation escalated, resulting in a violent riot. The media reacted controversially, with the right bourgeoisie referring to the activists as "Terrorists", and the left heavily criticizing the police brutality. The so called Globuskrawall was an expression of the desire for a space enabling social interaction and self-expression of young people in Zurich.

Eventually, on October 30th 1970, the city of Zurich decided to open an AJZ near the Lindenhofplatz. However, due to drug abuse and numerous conflicts revolving around the AJZ, the city decided to close the institution after just 68 days.

The demand for a AJZ for the city of Zurich would later recur in the 1980s.

Globuskrawall, 25 June 1968, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich



Sit-In Globusprovisorium, 22.06.1968, Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich



Posters promoting the AJZ, 1968, Picture: Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich



Autonomes Jugendzentrum Lindenhofbunker, 21/1970, Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich



The 80er Bewegung in Zürich lasted from 1980 until 1982. The period was dominated by protests and riots, fuelled by the activist spirit of Zurich's Youth. The demand of the activists was a AJZ, an autonomous youth center, as a place for social interaction and self-expression. In the eyes of the young generation, Zurich was a highly sterile and paternalistic environment, lacking places of leisure and creativity. An AJZ at the Sihlquai was eventually granted by the city of Zurich.

With happenings like the Nacktdemo ("Naked demonstration") from 1980 or bottom-up projects like the movie Züri Brännt ("Zurich is burning") by the label Videoladen Zurich from 1981, activists attempted to break the ice and free Zurich from its narrow minded existence.

This Narrow mindedness was also evident in the art scene, which was described as dead, with very few young artist being represented in galleries. With the occurring activism however, creativity and pioneering spirit was injected into the art scene. Out of this fertile ground, art institutions like the offspace Shedhalle in the Rote Fabrik in 1983, the magazine Parkett Art in 1984 or the Kunsthalle in 1985 were established.

In 1982, the AJZ at the Sihlquai was closed and demolished, resulting in further violent confrontations between activists and authorities.

The movement of the 80s was not exclusive to Zurich. In cities like Basel, Berne or Lausanne, a similar urge for profound change manifested itself.

Inside the AJZ  
at the Sihlquai,  
August 1980,  
Baugeschichtliches  
Archiv der  
Stadt Zürich



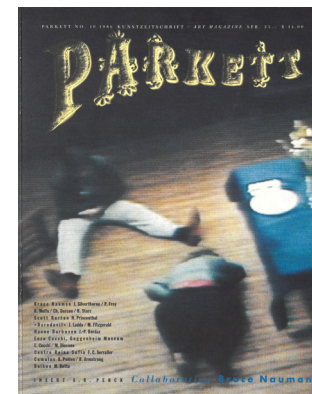
Autonomes  
Jugendzentrum,  
8/1980, Baugeschichtliches  
Archiv der  
Stadt Zürich



Movie poster  
«Züri Brännt»,  
Videoladen  
Zürich, 1981



Parkett Heft 10,  
1986



Brewery  
equipment still  
in place in 1989,  
Werner Stutz



The bottling Hall,  
a few years after  
the closure of  
the Löwenbräu  
brewery, 1989,  
Werner Stutz



Following a global trend, more and more industrial companies left Zurich West from the 1980s onwards, and a creeping conversion to a service zone began. This development also affected the Löwenbräu site: the brewery was shut down in 1986 after being taken over by the competing "Brauerei Hürlimann" in 1984, which itself was later merged into the "Feldschlösschen Getränke AG". After its closure, the Löwenbräu site stood mostly empty until 1995, with only occasional interim uses. Only then was the area revitalized by the arrival of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, the Kunsthalle and the Daros Latinamerica Collection, which was also originally only intended as an interim use.

Zürich West in  
1995, the Year of  
the opening of  
the new museums  
and galleries in the  
Löwenbräu-Areal,  
Desair Heinz  
Leuenberger



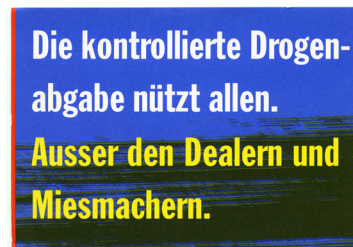
Starting in 1986, the Platzspitz or Needle Park became a meeting point for drug addicts, consuming mainly Heroin. Police and city decided to tolerate this open drug scene. The gathering of drug abuser in the public realm arose a lot of national and international attention. People from all around Switzerland and the neighbouring countries came to Platzspitz to consume their drugs, making the open drug scene grow.

On February 6th 1992, the authorities decided to no longer tolerate the misery on Platzspitz and clear the area. Because there were no preparations made concerning the thousands of drug addicts, the scene simply relocated to the nearby Letten at the riverfront.

On February 1995, the authorities then cleared the Lettenareal, leaving the drug victims no choice but to spread into the city, mostly to Kreis 5. Eventually, the city installed Fixerräume, places where the consumers could safely and hygienically take their substances or ideally substitute means such as Methadon. The installation of these drug consumption rooms finally showed an improvement of the situation, enhancing the living quality of both the drug addicts and the citizens of Zurich.

The case of Platzspitz displays that simple repression of a drug scene will not solve the problem permanently.

"The controlled delivery of drugs is helping everyone, except for dealers and the lousy.", a poster regarding the open drug scene at Platzspitz, 1991, SRF



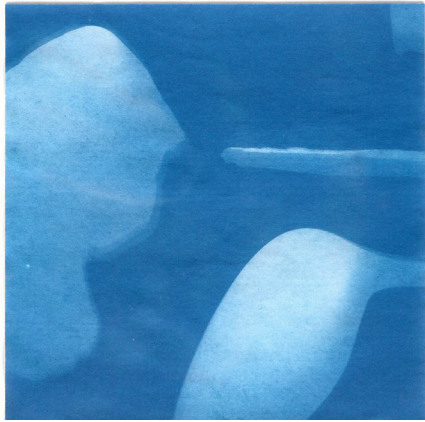
Drug misery at the Lettenareal, 1993, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich



Drug misery at the Lettenareal, 1993, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich



Drug misery at the Lettenareal, 1993, ETH-Bibliothek Zürich



Cyanotype triptych, open drug scene in Zurich from 1986 until 1995



In 1990, the left-green parties won a majority in the Zurich City Council for the first time since 1949. In contrast, the balance of power between the right-wing and left-wing parties in the city parliament was balanced during the 1990s. This led, among other things, to the urban development of "Zurich West" being blocked. The left-wing parties wanted to develop the former industrial area into a new city district with mixed residential and service uses, while the right-wing parties envisioned a new financial district. In 1992, a new "building and zoning ordinance" advocated by the left-wing parties was narrowly approved by the electorate. The BZO92, also called "BZO Koch" after the responsible social democratic city councillor Regula Koch, provided for mixed residential and commercial uses in the former industrial area of Zurich West.

However, the bill was delayed for years by numerous objections, so that the cantonal building director Hans Hofmann, a member of the right-wing SVP, introduced a new building and zoning code in 1995 over the heads of the



Voting poster for the BZO92, the new building code for Zurich, 1992



Election poster of Hans Hofmann for the cantonal government council, 1994

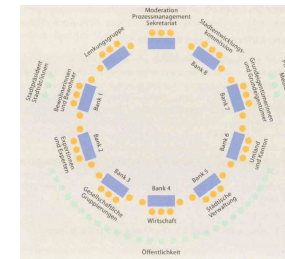


Election poster of Hans Hofmann for the cantonal government council, 1994

city government. The BZO95, also called “BZO Hofmann”, corresponded in large parts to the vision of the right-wing parties. Although the city council wanted to take legal action against these zoning regulations, the city parliament refused the mandate to do so. The BZO95 was thus put into effect.

Following the shock of the cantonal intervention, the city council wanted to break the deadlock in urban development. To this end, the “City Forum” was held, in which the various parties involved developed a common vision for Zurich West over several rounds of discussions. The blockade was actually solved, so that in 1999 a new building and zoning code adopted by the city parliament could be implemented. The bill, called BZO99 (without a Person’s name attached to it!), largely adopted the provisions of BZO95 and revised only a small part of it. Thus, after a decade, the legal basis for the development of Zurich West was finally clearly defined.

However, it is not the case that no development took place in Zurich West during this decade of uncertainty. In fact, it can even be argued that only this lack of clarity made the numerous cultural hotspots that emerged in Zurich West possible in the first place.



Schematic representation of the participants of the Stadtforum, 1997



The Stadtforum in action, 1997, Bildagentur Hofer



The Löwenbräu conglomerate formed in 1996 by the merger of the privately funded Migros Museum for Contemporary Art, the publicly subsidized Kunsthalle, and a group of then young and now globally operating galleries (Peter Kilchmann, Hauser & Wirth, and others).



Sketch of LOVE INVENTS US, Ugo Rondinone, 1999

The artwork «Love Invents Us» by Ugo Rondinone decorates the very top edge of the Löwenbräu Areal. It is in possession of the Galerie Eva Presenhuber and Hauser & Wirth and was produced in 1999. The rainbow colors are a metaphor for love, that according to Ugo Rondinone is a source of inspiration and creativity. The artwork gives the whole Löwenbräu Areal an atmosphere of acceptance and openness.



Collage alternative futures Zurich West / Löwenbräu

Structural change and deindustrialisation in Zurich West resulted in significant development potential. On the urban planning scale and site development, the process and initial discussions began as early as the end of the 1980s. The changes in building and zoning regulations in the 1990s were decisive. In 1996, a participatory planning process was initiated with the "Stadtforum". Also of importance, but later not implemented as a specific project, is the cooperative development planning of Zurich West with the landowners and the city of 1999. Projects from this synthesis report are shown in the collage.

The development of the Löwenbräu-Areal was also a long process. In 1991, Migros and Swiss-Mill commissioned Theo Hotz to draw up a design plan for the area. This was not implemented and in 1996 the Kunsthalle, Migros Museum and galleries settled in the Löwenbräu as a centre for contemporary art. This was followed by an unrealised project for a cantilevered coffee on the roof by the architects Gigon Guyer. For further development, another design plan was drawn up in 2005 for the current known use. In 2011, the site was converted to its current known use with work, housing and art.

Construction crews, scaffolding, cranes, excavators and people in hard hats and high visibility waistcoats are part of the familiar cityscape. We meet them every day, discover new ones and get a glimpse of the construction progress. Mostly, however, it remains an encounter at a distance. Barriers, grids, board walls and covers keep us at a distance and often block the direct view of the construction site.

It is forbidden for unauthorised persons to enter construction sites. Signs and inscriptions clearly point this out to us. The exhibition „Baustellen betreten erwünscht“ (Entering construction sites is welcome) allows us to take a look behind the usual barriers. The pictures by Juliet Haller, photographer at the Office of Urban Development, show construction sites and the people working there from close up or from unusual locations. We get an impression of the atmosphere on the building sites, in the construction pits and shells. The photographs date from the last 15 years. They show places and situations that we remember well, to which we perhaps have a personal connection, and others that we have already forgotten or never consciously perceived. Construction sites are as much a part of the city as completed buildings. Analogous to the photographic documentation of the built city, the recording of demolition and new construction is a prerequisite for us to be able to visualise today and in the future how the city of Zurich is constantly changing and developing.



Photograph Juliet Haller



Photograph Juliet Haller



Photograph Juliet Haller

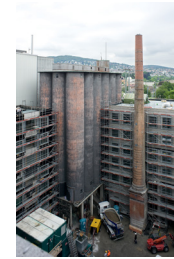
From 2011 to 2012, the Löwenbräu Areal was renovated by the architects Gigon + Guyer and Atelier WW. During the time of the reconstruction, the tenants of the Löwenbräu had to be temporarily relocated. The Migros Museum, the Daros Latinamerica Collection and the bookshop Kunstgriff were relocated to a space at Albisriederstrasse 199a, close to the Hubertus. The Albisriederstrasse 199a offered a 200 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space, alternately curated by the Migros Museum and Daros.

Galleries like Bob Orsouw moved to Hubertus, a former Bar and Restaurant in Albisrieden. Despite providing decent exhibition spaces, gallerists complained that the location was hard to find. Only people familiar with the art scene knew about the new location of the Löwenbräu galleries, leading to a uniform visitorship.

The renovation and permanent relocation of the Löwenbräu Areal led to numerous participants leaving the institution, including the bookshop Kunstgriff closing in 2019 and the galleries Eva Presenhuber and Peter Kilchmann permanently moving to the Maag Areal.



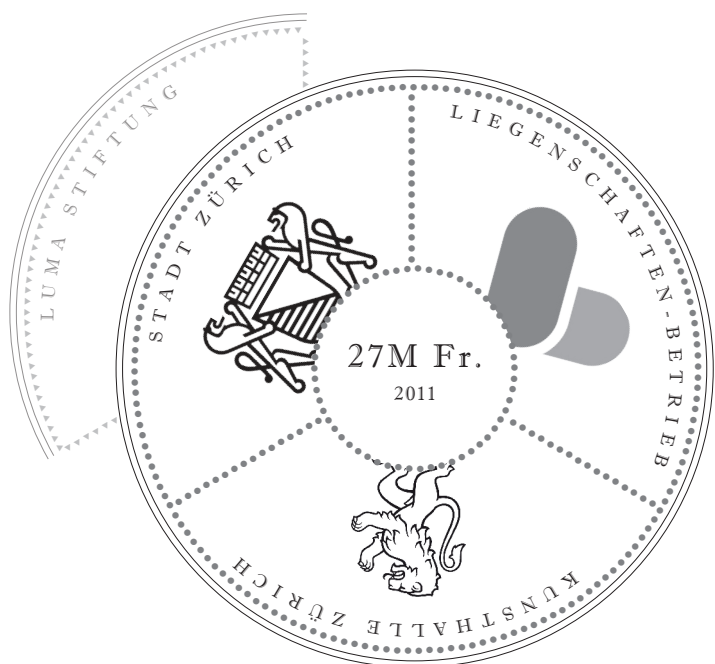
Photograph Juliet Haller



Photograph Juliet Haller



Walter Buchmann  
Café Hubertus



In 2011, Löwenbräu-Kunst AG(LKAG) was founded. Each of Liegenschaften-Betrieb AG (LiB-AG), Kunsthalle Zürich, and Luma Stiftung would equally invest one-third of the CHF 27 million-equity, meaning 33.33% each. Indeed, the Artuma Holding AG had been dismissed due to its commercial activities, so that the city disagreed with Artuma's involvement for unclear political reasons. Finally, the last CHF 9 million were going to be invested by the city of Zürich itself in an official private-public partnership.



On september 29th , the trans magazin launched its 43th edition. In the Kunstahlle UG, on the lower level of the Löwenbräu, the vernissage took place. People gathered in the exhibition space of Kunsthalle to examine the trans and to have a drink. Later, the vernissage spread to the Rampe on the groundfloor, a covered outdoor space, ususally used for installations and supply deliveries. This form of Raumzweckentfremdung or space alienation provides people, who would not usually visit the Löwenbräu, a reason to explore the spaces.

Rein Wolfs, who was director of the Migros Museum prior to the reconstruction in 2011, used this as a strategy to attract young people to get in contact with the Löwenbräu. He used to organize parties and happenings inside of the exhibitions to make them seem more accessible. This method proved to be very successful.

trans Magazine  
Vernisage,  
Kunsthalle UG,  
2023

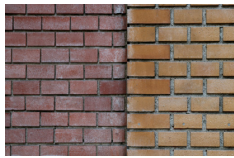


trans Magazine  
Vernisage,  
Kunsthalle UG,  
2023



trans Magazine  
cover, 2023





This study of the façades of the Löwenbräu Areal shows how the materialities of the original and the newer parts meet. Sometimes they touch, sometimes there is a small gap or even a door in between. Sometimes the colors match and sometimes they clash.

It is a bricolage, a mixture of different time periods. While the old parts are distinguishable from the ones added later, they nonetheless have a modern feel to them in terms of materiality. The architectural remains of industrial times are trimmed back and enclosed by modern volumes of ceramics, plaster and exposed concrete, up to the point where it becomes one entity. The old becomes new.

**1897-2023**

**Zurich West**

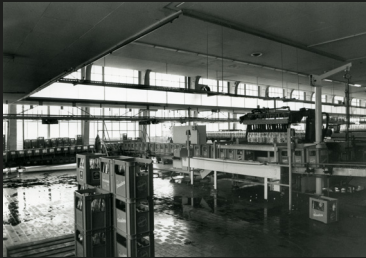
1986 Steinfels moved production to Wetzikon (Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich)



1987 Sulzer Escher Wyss closed the factory (Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich)



1988 Löwenbräu brewery ceased production (Stutz Werner)



1988 Closure of the Schöller textile factory (Baugeschichtliches Archiv der Stadt Zürich)



1990 Maag Zahnräder AG gradually withdrew until 2004 (Hussel Thomas)



1991 Cabra Commercial House (Dudli Hanspeter 2006)



1992 Multiplex Cinema former Steinfels-Areal (Hussel Thomas)



1993 Technopark Innovation Park (Hussel Thomas)



1999 Schiffbau Schauspielhaus Zürich and Jazz-club opened (Hut Ralph)



2002 Limmatwest I / II Apartments Schöller Area (Hussel Thomas)



2002 Toni dairy  
went bankrupt  
(Dudli Hanspeter)



2003 Redesign  
of Turbinenplatz  
(Hussel Thomas)



2004 Hall Puls 5  
(Baugeschichtliches  
Archiv der  
Stadt Zürich)



2006 Interim use  
Club Dachkantine  
Toni Areal (Dudli  
Hanspeter)



2006 Freitag  
Flagship Store  
Geroldareal (Dudli  
Hanspeter)



2010 Im Viadukt  
shopping arcade  
(Baugeschichtliches  
Archiv der  
Stadt Zürich)



2011 Demolition  
of parts of the  
Maag site (Baugeschichtliches  
Archiv der  
Stadt Zürich)



2011 Primetower  
(Haller Juliet)



2013 Gerold Garden  
Interim Use  
(Hussel Thomas)



2014 Toni Areal  
Zurich University  
of the Arts (Haller  
Juliet)



2015 Opening  
Pfingstweidpark  
(Hussel Thomas)



2019 Municipal  
interim use in the  
former central  
laundry (Haller  
Juliet)



2019 School  
Schütze (Rasmus  
Norlander)



2019 School  
Pfingstweid  
(Haller Juliet)



2020 New Police  
Criminal Inves-  
tigation Office  
(Haller Juliet)



2022 Atmos Build-  
ing (Haller Juliet)

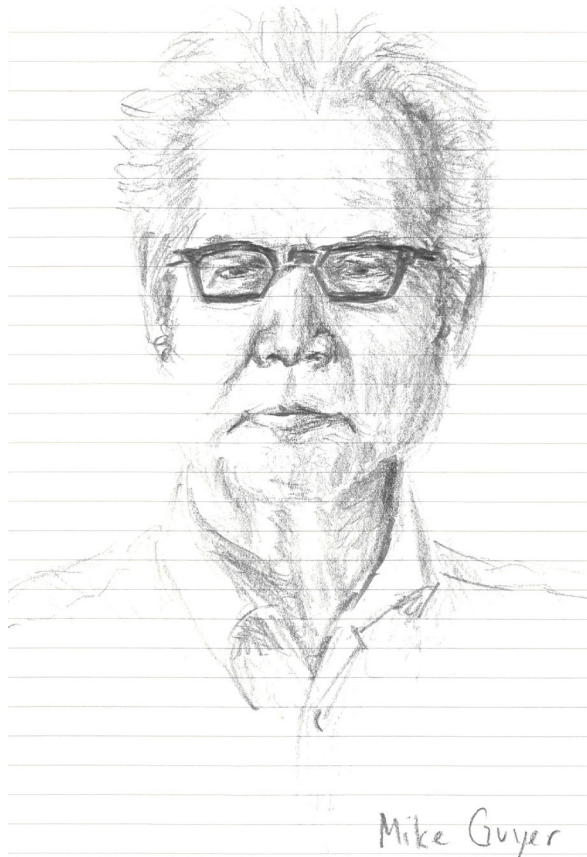


2023 Construction  
site of the tram  
depot for coop-  
erative housing  
(Wenger  
Timon)



# Transcripts

# Interview with Mike Guyer



Markus Schmutz is a bookseller and ran the well-known art bookshop “Kunstgriff” in the Löwenbräu area from 1996 to 2019. We met him in the Markthalle im Viadukt, just a few metres from the former shop. Markus Schmutz and his well-stocked bookshop were an existential part and important social meeting point in the Löwenbräu art building at Limmatstrasse 270. In our conversation, he anecdotally recounted his story and the transformation of the area from international radiance to insignificance.

**LN: Can you tell us how you can in contact with the Löwenbräu-area and in which context this happened?**

**Mike Guyer:** You know, in the 80s, Zurich was completely different compared to today. Among the youth, there was this uprising against the existing cultural politics, particularly around the Main Station. For the art scene, the nightlife and so on, it was quite a harsh time. For example, opening time for bars were restrictive or to even get a license to be allowed to open one was really hard. It was around the time in the beginning of the 80s when I studied here in Zurich, there was really a stillstand in the positive city development in general. There were some important buildings built, but it was in by and large difficult.

To the Löwenbräu Area: The production of the “Löwenbräu” beer stopped in 1986. The company had interesting plots of land around Zurich. It was taken over by “Hürlimann”, another brewery-company from Zurich. The new owner put all this land into a separate enterprise. In 1991, there was this project by Theo Hotz for this area, in which most existing buildings would be replaced by new ones. Just the main building, the chimney and the brick-silo in the corner would still be standing. I think, it was even permitted, but then the office-crises came and the concept of Theo Hotz was heavily questioned. The area stayed as it was, it was still a closed industrial area. The “Kunsthalle”, which back then was placed in Zürich West, had to move in the mid-90s, and they somehow were able to move into this buildingcomplex. Mendes Bürgi, he was the director of the “Kunsthalle”, was manly responsible for this. The “Kunsthalle-



le" did not move in alone, the newly formed Migros Museum also moved in. The "Kunsthalle" is a kind of public institution, organized as an association and heavily funded by the city and the canton. The Migros Museum on the other side is a private institution, funded by the company of the same name. They installed themselves in this building and did not really add anything.

At the same time, the political climate changed. We started our office Gigon & Guyer in 1989, and from around 1993 onwards there was this new spirit of optimism ("Aufbruchstimmung") in the building sector. There were the roundtables with the landowners, city, developer, "the Stadtforum", and so on. There was a new zoning law which was imposed by the canton, because the city was not able to implement a new one by themselves. The city then tried to somehow counterforce these new laws.

There were some important figures in the politics, Elmar Ledergerber, the socialist mayor of the city after 2002, also the heads of the department for urban development during this time were interesting figures. They succeeded in creating a positive atmosphere which was indeed very notable in Zürich West, were one area after the other was developed. Back then, this was seen as a good thing. Now, when you look back, it has obviously some disadvantages. Also, new typologies of buildings were possible, for example towers. For the previous twenty years, nobody even talked about high-rise buildings in Zurich.

The first years of the new Löwenbrau with the Kunsthalle and the Migros Museum were very successful. These were the golden years, big parties, still this feeling of an unofficial underground scene and really beautiful exhibitions. Zurich was put through this, within four or five years, on the map for international modern art. The people came on the weekend before the Art Basel to Zurich to visit the Löwenbräu. It was also visited by all generations, young and old and poor and wealthy people. The poor ones were attending the parties, the wealthy people bought art. (laughs)

And then, as always after such successful times, the aspiration of the protagonist became bigger. Mendes Bürgi became the director of the art museum Basel. Beatrix Ruf came after him, a very talented and charismatic figure, and she wanted extension. She wanted to double the square meters of the "Kuns-

thalle" as well as a better presence to the Limmatstrasse. At the same time, galleries came into the talk. "Hauser&Wirth" as a third big player installed themselves around 2000 in the building. There was really a pull towards the area ("Sogwirkung") as a result of the successful previous years.

### **LN: How did the project for the development of the Löwenbräu area come about and how were you involved?**

**MG:** Around the same time, the owner of the plot, REG Real Estate AG, wanted to develop the area. They were not really well organized at that time. The city immediately woke up when they heard about this, and organized a roundtable between the REG and the city. It was clear that it is not possible to again throw the art venues out of building because they were already extremely important for the image of the city and also economic wise a factor. As a result, the REG conducted a poorly organized competition for the redevelopment of the area with the art venues still in place. I think after three quarters of the time for the competition had already passed, they invited us also after the "Kunsthalle" had pressured them to do so. I was member of the board of directors of the "Kunsthalle". They wanted us to compete so they had at least a hand in the ongoing redevelopment. We then won this competition together with a different office, Atelier ww architects. So we really were forced to work together. Interesting is, that a condition for the further elaboration was, that as much of the existing structure as possible should remain intact. You must realize, this was in 2005, nobody was talking about sustainability yet. The heritage protection department played a really forceful and, in the aftermath, a very good role in the redevelopment. There was a need for a new masterplan ("Gestaltungssplan") for the area because it was zoned as an industrial area. But because we wanted to also create apartments, this was required. Around 2006, we gave the new masterplan to the city, which had to be approved by the city parliament. There were a lot of discussions, especially about the height of the towers. It really was a back and forth. In the end after around one year, it got approved, but then the neighbors interfered with legal recourses. This again prolonged the process for another year. Meanwhile the REG was taken over by the PSP Swiss Properties

AG. This is the second largest player in the Swiss real estate market. Within the negotiations between the city and the developer, Ledergerber (the mayor) asked for a model so that the art venues could stay there permanently. It was not put directly in a definitive contract, but the city wanted to take the art venues out of the market to stabilize the rents and give them a chance to stay there. And of course, the PSP did not like that at all. But they knew if they wanted to develop the area, they had to work with the city and give them something. They could not get out of it, the city was, in this case, precise how they got themselves into position. For example, the square meters for the upper structure for the "Kunsthalle" were given as a plus to the owner, so the art venues would not take up too much space of the whole area. With this kind of deals it was possible, that the western part of the area became a self-owned enterprise, the "Löwenbräu-Kunst AG". A third of it is owned by the "Kunsthalle", a third by the Migros-Museum and a third by the city itself. It was in my opinion also a wise decision to not let the private art sector become owners, Hauser&Wirth and the LUMA foundation are just renters in the building.

**LN: Can you describe the different actors involved in the implementation process and how it was carried out?**

**MG:** It is important to realize that this was a development which went over a decade from 2003 to 2014. There was a change in the ownership and difficult negotiations and the PSP decided to take probably the toughest realization model they could have chosen for such a project with all the existing buildings, the general contractor model "Totalunternehmer". They chose the wrong contractor, because this one went bankrupt during the construction phase.

Looking back, even though it was not easy, we managed to create a combined office with Atelier WW and we just followed the initial planning idea during the realization very close. It was quite an interesting task, challenge.

The only thing was that on the side of the art venues, there was never a real client with a central contact person. There were different players, Beatrix Ruf with the "Kunsthalle", the Migros Museum the other art galleries, and because of this it

was really difficult to get a program. The PSP had to somehow build the spaces and then give the finished building to the Löwenbräu-Kunst AG. But the Löwenbräu-Kunst AG as the overarching entity was not yet created, it was only installed a few months before the project was finished. The ideas and wishes were changing all the time. It was quite wild west, but it also offered, of course, the chances of getting through a lot of ideas we would not have brought through otherwise, I guess.

**LN: What happened after the project was finished?**

**MG:** The galleries, they came and left. In 2011 the west part was finished with a big opening party. There were a lot of faults in the realization which led to a renovation process around five years later.

We designed almost all the interiors. But every venue, every gallery had another culture, another understanding in a way of exhibiting art, which created different wishes and demands. Also, budget-wise it was all quite tight and difficult. For the galleries, everything was tight, very tight.

And, as always after a new opening, there was, one year later everything was "hurrah -hurrah" and then it fell together, you know. It has collapsed.

It is not so difficult to say why, it lost this kind of improvised, free space for people, to adapt, to be active themselves and whatever. It took until now, now it is getting again better and better. It took them until now to again reach a level where it becomes interesting, where it is a kind of full of content, interests of different curators, exhibitions, and curator programs from LUMA and so on.

And, you know, this kind of combination of museums with gallery spaces was also very new. They sold it as a kind of ideal model, and it is of course not an ideal model, because the market of the galleries completely changed. The big galleries went international, and are thanks to this very stable as, for example Hauser & Wirth. The medium-sized galleries, they disappeared almost completely. There is Eva Presenhuber, Francesca Pia survived, but Bob van Orsouw disappeared. And for the smaller galleries, for instance, they tried in the last four years to create

a kind of a pop floor. They made a kind of a change. With help of the Migros culture percent, they were able to subsidize a floor for pop-up galleries. But this also did not work. Half of the galleries disappeared.

And the last stage now is that the museum constructive, which must leave its current location, because the city itself, which is the owner, needs it for the district heating network of the center of Zurich. It will come here. We will start a new building site in November. They will take the whole eastern part of the building and they also will take some rooms here on the first floor.

And even between the renovation seven years ago and now, we had another conversion where we installed an elevator. We did not touch the whole eastern part of the building until now because there were contracts which did not allow it.

In there was a beautiful museum in the 00s, and that was the third big player during this time, the Daros Latinamerica Collection by Stephan Schmidheiny. It was the "Kunsthalle", it was the Migros Museum in the it was Daros Collection, these were the three big venues of the golden years. The Daros collection then went to South America because the collection is about South American art. The spaces the collection occupied have problems now, with the energy supply, with the ventilation and everything. And only now the contracts are at the end of the contracted time. And that allows, it is really a kind of lucky coincidence, that now another big, more stable museum is coming into the site. And we will see how it will work. It is again a question mark. Because the experimental spaces will be mostly gone.

There is Hauser & Wirth, very strong, very international. There is the Kunsthalle, very unstable because they have all the time financial problems. A interesting venue with Bauman and then there is the Migros museum, which at the moment is in a very difficult phase because they do not have a curator now. It is not clear whether it stays a museum or if it becomes a kind of broader venue with a broader program, which I think could also be interesting. There is Haus Konstruktiv, which has a very strong circle of people supporting the museum. And LUMA has a program for young curators who can stay here. We have installed boarding camps where they can develop exhibitions, they can work together with private collectors of Zurich to

organize own exhibitions. They have a very close relation to Arles because Luma has one of the main venues there.

So, we will see. But the most interesting part is that it really is out of the market. The rents in 2011 were really high. We have now 2023 and it is already an affordable rent and in 10 years it will be a very affordable rent.

**LN: Is it the intention that the rent stays the same?**

**MG:** Yeah, it will mostly. The Löwenbräu is not anymore exposed to the forces of the market. They are managed now by interesting people, and they have the reserves of money for further inventions and iterations. They just must pay own-rent. The building is completely taken out of the market.

**LN: Can we assume that in the future there are just these big institutions and there won't be any more space for the small galleries? That this phase is over?**

**MG:** That is not completely true. Another issue is the space on the ground floor. There was this Bookstore and now it is vegan restaurants, which is horrible and does not work. This will also change. But it will probably take another five years until it must close. they have to The Löwenbräu Kunst AG will run it by themselves but at the moment the money is not there. First, Haus Konstruktiv will move in, which requires a lot of resource. But eventually there will be another possibility to take the remaining offices out. That might happen indeed and would free up around 800 square meters for young galleries. But everything must stabilize first. When we have the Kunsthalle, the LUMA fondation, the Migros museum, Hauser & Wirth and Haus Konstruktiv, then it becomes really interesting, because then the field for experiments opens again.

**LN: Are you adding any space?**

**MG:** No, no, it is done. It's done, yeah. We make it, of course, much more sustainable, all the roofs will be covered with photovoltaic elements, we will isolate as much as possible so

that the buildings themselves will be quite fit for the future on every level.

And the art spaces are as they are. The Kunsthalle for example, after Mendes left and Beatrix Ruf took over, she completely destroyed and rebuilt the interior. And Baumann after her again, he just changed everything again after took over. And this is okay, it is just the way it goes.

If you ask me now, I think you cannot add anything anymore, it is given. Although... You can never say no. If there is the political will, the city could grant them an extra 800 square meters for an extension and then they could do something.

On the other hand, that is important and that was clear all the time, that one part of the area is dedicated to the art and the other part is highly capitalized. This part included the black high-rise building with around 60 condos with very high prices tags. Stupidly high prices, especially in the beginning, I have to say. The PSP could not sell all the apartments, so they had to recalibrate all the time.

And even the two-level apartments at the top of the building took the PSP much longer than they anticipated. The interior was to be done by the new owner themselves, so it was lucrative for the PSP. I have an apartment in the building, my sister is living there, and it is a very interesting community. Also, Lars Müller is living there. There are people from a cultural background, there are foreigners, there are psychologists, business people, bank people and so on. It is, quite interestingly, a very active community.

There is a fixed core and an outside bearing wall and all the other things is flexible. The core has vertical shafts and every apartment is quite different from the other one. The levels are built in a series of four units' level, three units' level, two units' level, four units' level, three units' level, two units' level, again and again. It is a town with two houses on top. And the office is this. The apartments have these kinds of windows which can be opened like garage gates. We specially developed them for the tower. Because the tower has only 450 square meters per level, it was not feasible to make balconies. There was just not enough space. It is interesting how the people use it. We offered it with a kind of a second glazing and three-quarter of the owners took this away and they just live now within the

very few have chosen the option of having a kind of a patio.

The other parts of the eastern part of the complex stayed with the PSP and they rented it out. There is office space and a hotel. Also very interesting is that this part of the area was in the 90s, and still during the 00s, the party location of the town. They also renovated this space. A radio station was the first renter, they build in studio. They built in some studios and some offices. I do not know how it looks now; I was never again in there.

The last very interesting space is the silos. The silos are rented to Raum 05. That is this very innovative gastronomy venue who has different interesting locations around the city. They are specialized in coffee so they have rented the spaces on the ground floor and on the gallery, these are heated and usable and then they have this in-business space directly under the silos.

There is this kind of mechanism where they could move the grain to different directions for the trucks. And this space in between is a coal space. The coal silos are an industrial monument. You can rent it as an event venue, it is a beautiful space to, you know. There is a stair case going up directly from the ground floor.

**LN: When we go a step back, there was, around 2000, before the project for the redevelopment started, another project for a small coffee on the roof. Can you tell us a little bit about this? What was the intention there?**

**MG:** This happened still on the initiative of Mendes Birkin. I think it was in 2002 or so, no? The Kunsthalle all the time had a desire to be more present to the outside. Whether this was a clever desire, that is now, looking back, questionable, but they wanted to have something. And that was their first, a little bit naïve attempt to achieve this. We designed this kind of slab for them. And then they started to look for donors. It was a wood construction, which was completely prefabricated and then put into place. And it was a kind of multifunctional space for books, for coffee plays, but also for exhibitions together with terraces. And accessible through the staircase, where you enter to the terrace.

There are now two terraces. There is one on the northern side of the building and another one on the southern side.

**LN: We really like them, especially the one on the southern side. It is not used that much, there were never people there when we visited.**

**MG:** We will try to change this. We are planning a steel construction to create more shadow. That is the problem. It is often very hot, especially during summer. We also want to double the skylights for the new spaces of Haus Konstruktiv. We will take the existing shed lights away and double them and combine them with PV-elements.

**LN: So why didn't it come along? Why did it fail?**

**MG:** Because the donors were not there, they could not find the donors and then the new project came up. When it was clear that the RAG wanted to make a development over the whole area, the project was stalled.

**LN: What is your opinion on the whole idea that it wants to advertise itself more and how you would see the building from the outside and how it is perceived?**

**MG:** The art world is even more changing in the tendencies that the architecture world. Daniel Baumann has completely other issues and interests than Mendes or Beatrix Ruf, this is a kind of generational thing. If it would be the case now, I think they would not try to achieve that. I think if it would not be developed now, I think one thing would stay that you keep the building as quick as possible out of the market. It is not an architectural thing, which is the biggest achievement here, it is that this building is now forever belonging to the Löwenbräu AG. That is the issue. And I think the longer its history is going on, the better the site will become.

**LN: But isn't it just becoming like a "normal" museum?**

**MG:** Of course. It is an issue of gentrification. Art spaces are confronted with that, even more than most other spaces. You

cannot change that. You can just find strategies to again, on a higher level, become as innovative as possible and change your environment in the way as you want. It will change and it should change like that.

**LN: Were you aware of this when you developed the project back then? Or was it the intention to keep in a way like it was before?**

**MG:** What was for us a strong argument, and that is why I think we won the competition, is that we kept as much as possible. It was also because I was involved in modern art, and it was a lucky coincidence that the city was pushing the same direction. By giving the owner the possibility that they can realize the same number of square meters they have on this area anyway, so that they allowed them this two 70 meter and 40 meter high towers. That was the deal of the whole thing. To keep as much as possible, but go on certain parts of the area into a vertical typology. That is a little bit banal now, but it was, at this time, not at all possible to build 70 meters. And it is still not easy now, you know, there is another tower being projected just on the other side by architects from Basel, and they have quite some difficulties to build, to get the tower to be permitted.

**LN: Would you do it the same today? Like, what would you do, if you did this today, would you do anything differently?**

**MG:** Yes, I think we mostly would do things the same. But we would somehow try a concept where the patina of the existing would be more present, but it is again a kind of, you know, it is an architectural thing. Nobody in the art scene is interested in that. They want to paint it this way and in three months, they change it again you know. I mean, we already tried back then to keep as much as possible. The structure is really the same. And the lucky thing was and still is that the structure is very good. It can have heavy loads, it is solid, it has a lot of different levels because it is the history of a growing complex.

**LN: I think we discussed a lot is the whole entrance**

**situation.**

**MG:** That is an issue. That was a big fight with the heritage preservation commission. We wanted to open it up, but they denied it, it was not possible. To get the deal done, we had to resize the intervention. This is why there are just the small stairs. We wanted, even before the whole competition started, to open the entrance, the whole thing. And now it is contracted, you know, there is a monument protection contract, so you cannot change it. And maybe it is just part of this area now.

**LN: We heard from another source that that Beatrix Ruf promised Maya Graf from the LUMA Foundation, which is in the Westbau, that the main address would be from the west and from the back side. Is this true? I Sometimes it feels now like the main entrance is from the back, at least for a visitor. It is more open; it almost has this kind of like foyer. What was the intention? Was it because of this promise or was there another reason?**

**MG:** You see, this is important, all the levels are on a different elevation. So, it was really the key issue to find a vertical circulation, which is connecting all the different parts. And if you go up, you see that there are ramps in it, there are different stairs. And it comes down, and this space, it is of course a delivery space. When in August, before the opening of the season, it is like a working place.

But we also, all the time, sold it or explained it as a place for outside exhibitions and events.

And it did not happen in the beginning. But now, the last time I was here there was a kind of an art book market, a beautiful comic market. There were indeed now parties in August, in June. And what is interesting is that it is the only free space which is not defined by use. I think it is maybe an interesting space for the future. You can even build things there, temporary constructions.

**LN: Some of us went there to a party two weeks ago in the Löwenbräu which were organized by the Trans magazine.**

**MG:** Don't you think it is interesting what happened there? There is a magazine of the crazy architect students, they make this there because they do not have to pay any rent and suddenly after twice events it becomes a kind of attraction. That is exactly what happened in the 90s. And this, you know, gives me a kind of positive feeling because the building can be used in a way we never would have imagined.

**LN: When we were here the, a guard came at maybe at one o'clock and he asked: "How long are you going to do this?" and the people who organized it said "No, we're gonna close in like an hour or so" but they went until six. It is very quiet because people are out here smoking and then you go down the stairs and there is the...**

**MG:** And you see the art people who marked it immediately and they can tell you There will be more events not by the TRANS but art people doing this. That means space is a storage space becomes a very important space. And it is just depending on people discovering it.

**LN: But is this now not a bit of a missed chance when all the space up here is taken by these big institutions? I do not think they will do this parties in their exhibition spaces. Wouldn't it be a chance if they just created freely useable spaces like this?**

**MG:** It is relative: The Luma Foundation, the first thing they did and it was a very good intervention was creating Schwarzes Cafe. Haus Konstruktiv is taking a whole beautiful exhibition space and will place a coffee and a bookshop there. I mean they remove what they have now. So, it is all relative. What I already told you is in the future the offices in the building will maybe go because it is clear that they need some kind of platform for younger galleries. They need some kind of space for this bottom-up approach. Maybe they should try again, then they already have the steady rents from these venues, the big venues, and they can empty the second floor, get the office people out. Then they have this surface in the second floor, they have delivery ramp surface, and maybe there are other surfaces, terraces for example.

**LN: It is like the New Yorker model which requires the landlords, if they want to build a skyscraper in the city, to do at least 25 % social housing. So, you have rent control, the rest of the building would pay for that 25 % who cannot afford that.**

**MG:** But you see the building out of the market. You have a situation which is in this case interesting, that it is not anymore capitalized. It is a commonplace. You must respond on a more refined level. Indeed what you indirectly ask is why should the upcoming young artist or gallerist actually be interested in going to Löwenbräu and what do they have to do that they will come again like in the 90s. Should things like music play a bigger role? Schwarzes Cafe, I think, is very interesting because it is so open to all kind of art related activities.

**LN: With the conversion, there was a standardization in the circulation areas. Some people speak of disorientation. Would you design it that way again today?**

**MG:** You mean the entrances and so on?

**LN: Yes, exactly.**

**MG:** The entry space which we just passed I think is a good intervention because it has, suddenly it has four entrances. There is the Hauser & Wirth, there's the Migros Museum, there's the restaurant which will be hopefully open again in five years. And then we have this kind of breakthrough, but the stair, the existing stair above stayed. The existing stair came down like this. We added this new hall, which has this kind of clean feeling.

**LN: Was it intentional?**

**MG:** Yes, it was intentional, it was just, we took it over from the 90s. They just had these big doors, and when they opened the doors, you could see what they wrote on the inside of the doors. They would write their activities on it and what kind of exhibition were going on. Some existing pieces we kept, it

was not an intervention by us. But this again can change, you know. I think what is most important is that they can activate the space.

The whole circulation of the stairs, it changed every year. Did you saw it on the website? They had invited an artist who painted the whole circulation space very quick, within three days with three people. And then they had other interventions where they made floor by floor interventions with different artist. So now Baumann took over with his with his exhibition posters.

Because the Kunsthalle has two major exhibitions, it is on two levels. And again, the Kunsthalle is embedded in an interesting setting: On one hand, they have the space in the second floor in the room of the old bottling plant, a very common industrialized space. On the other hand, they have this kind of ideal space above, which you can enclose with two windows, 600 square meters one. I think this is an interesting setup.

Also, the Schwarze Café, and the three upper floors of the LUMA foundation are also interesting. They have different heights, and they use it also in relation to the heights. The room on the top floor with the biggest height is mostly one big exhibition space. The one in between with the lowest height is mostly used as a space for films or as a dark space. And the one in between is more used for conventional art, for paintings.

**LN: This was really the architectural idea, to give the artists space and the room, which they then can adapt?**

**MG:** The LUMA Foundation is more focused on the curator than the art scene. Maya Hoffman [the founder and patron of the foundation], she is just appointed director of the Locarno Film Festival, she is really an interesting person. She never wanted to make a museum, she wanted to make a kind of experimental venue for young curators, artists or art historians or people coming from a complete other direction to develop their own visions of exhibiting art. It really has the best exhibitions now.

There is another thing, it is of course a setting which is quite competitive between the venues but also between the people.

Sometimes there was a kind of a blockage as a result which was often negative. But sometimes it was also positive in a certain way, because there was a time where for instance all the artists which were exhibited in the Kunsthalle by Beatrix Ruf, were directly taken over by Hauser & Wirth and pushed to an international level. It was like a money machine. This was of course very critically observed by the art scene.

**LN: It is really an interesting space, with all these different institutions in one place.**

**MG:** And if you level it up now to the situation in Zurich, it is the complete opposite to the Kunsthaus.

**LN: Yes, that is true.**

**MG:** And that was also an intention by all the participants. And it is also completely different from the strategy in the Rote Fabrik. Because the Rote Fabrik is now also in renovation.

And I mean, the Löwenbräu-Kunst AG is maybe not anymore, but in the 00s, it was unique. And it was heavily criticized by elderly people, that the highly capitalized galleries were seen side by side by the subsidized museums. And it turned out that the most stable parts were the common, subsidized museums, and the galleries, they came and went.

What can be questioned is if a city of half a million really needs the Kunsthaus as the big art museum, two art centres like the Löwenbräu and the Rote Fabrik, and on top of this multiple specialized museums, like the Landesmuseum or the Museum Rietberg.

**LN: Yes, it is really an expression of the wealth, which is concentrated here in Zurich, that there are so many different art venues.**

**MG:** We are hourly bombed by images from the war between Israel and Palestine, the war in Ukraine, the one in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Serbian-Kosovo conflict. And we are, you know, we are busy with moving statues. It is a very privileged situation. I think you should tell this Adam [Caruso].

**LN: Perhaps this is a bit exaggerated, but think Adams first opinion was to blow up all the museums.**

**MG:** Yes, but what does that solve? They are here. For example, the Toni Areal. The Toni Areal is the biggest art academy of Europe now, you know, and a lot of young people in the same age as you are studying there. They are becoming artists, sculptors, filmmakers, curators, art historians, and, you know, they must have a life after. I mean, the Löwenbräu is for them. The Kunsthaus is something else, that is for them, for the conservative society. But this and the Rote Fabrik, are for them, for you.

**LN: This was very new when it happened, this constellation of galleries, museums, and like the city, that they would all be like players in the same space. Are there examples like this today, are the comparable sites?**

**MG:** I would research on this. That is what I said before. I think the best achievement was to take this site with these rooms, with these buildings, out of the market. It was a kind of common will of the society to do that. And of course, it is also again privileged in the end. And you know, this can now change quite a lot. During the time from 2011 to 2023, the 12 years in use since the renovation, the changes were quite dramatic. Much more dramatic than in the Kunsthaus in the Rote Fabrik, and I think it will go on like that. And although the most avant-gardist galleries turned their backs to the Löwenbräu, I still have hope.

The newest galleries are now on the Rämistrasse or the Weststrasse. The focus is not anymore on the Löwenbräu, and I think it is a big chance that something new can somehow rise, without being discussed all the time. Also, as already said, because they are now not exposed to the forces of the market

Maybe it was also this kind of quick rhythm that was fuelled by an unstable, provisional state until it was replaced by new buildings. And if you accept the challenge of transforming and reconstruct an existing building, then you have really had other problems. It is really an interesting... that is what we experienced.



**LN: Perhaps this is a bit difficult for this area, that oftentimes this interim use exactly can fuel the creative scene. It is almost like an event when everybody knows it is only for a limited time. Could this be a bit of a problem now for the Löwenbräu that it is too safe?**

**MG:** Yes, it is an issue, clear, but in a city like Zurich where there is just not anymore free space anywhere it is almost a necessity to create spaces like this which are out of the market. Which again is in a way very privileged. We only have this space here and the Rote Fabrik for alternative young art. I mean if you want to have as a young artist an atelier you most likely will not have it in the city, you probably must go to Altstetten or Kloten or Dübendorf.

**LN: It may sound cynical, but it is a chance for the Löwenbräu, because there is no space left anywhere for these young artists?**

**MG:** You know, if the will is here, they are quite sensible about that. Because the owners of the Löwenbräu AG are the city, the Kunsthalle and the Migros Museum. And if they think there should be again a platform for young art, they can do it. They can say, we go away with our offices, they have eight hundred square meters. But they just tried this five years ago. And it did not turn out very successful. I mean, they should try again. They will try again and again. The major thing is that the whole building is out of the market. They do not have to care about these forces. And they will not be sold, they can develop as long as possible.

The only thing is, it should stay a center where people are willing to go, because it is interesting to go there. You know, the architecture students, as for instance Lois, my son, you know, is going to the Löwenbräu to a storage room in the underground floor to make a kind of presentation. It is great, isn't it? That is the thing.

**LN: We talked about it multiple times, but there was a time with all these small galleries, why do you think this failed? Is it because it was organized too much from**

**top down or was it just the economy who did not work out?**

**MG:** I do not know, but the small galleries were organized from the bottom up. Just that you see that right. In the beginning, around 2009, 2010, 2011, there were galleries like Bob van Orsouw, Francesca Pia, Eva Presenhuber and other galleries. They invested quite some money in their interiors, each very different from each other. And from these galleries, half disappeared.

And then after the exodus of the smaller galleries, the Löwenbräu-Kunst AG made a kind of reset. We made this connection with the second entrance and with the elevators on the gallery. And then they created this kind of bottom-up space on the first floor, and stabilized the second floor with the offices from Migros. That was a try-out for the bottom-up galleries. They also created a bigger visibility with the new signatures outside by Teo Schifferli. And screens, as you see. But again, after five years, two years ago now, the economic situation just took them out of the market. And this just happens, you know, it is okay.

**LN: Just before the whole scene started here, it was in 1995, there was the in-between phase. 1987, the brewery closed, so there were these eight years, and in this time, do you know something of an interim use?**

**MG:** It was closed, really closed. It was not completely empty; I think they slowly sold all the equipment of the beer production and the Migros used it for some singular events but at first it was in fact mostly empty. After they stopped producing, I think they took three years to just clean up the whole thing. And after that they rented all the spaces which had enough light as interim usage.

**LN: What did you think about the Hubertus, because there was one year when the Löwenbräu area was a big construction site, did you go to the, because the artist moved to another building, I think it was called Hubertus? And the Migros Museum was in the Siemens factory during this time.**

**MG:** Yes, it was there too, in the Siemens factory. I even helped them installations, electricity and power.

**LN: We heard it was for them an exciting phase. Probably also because it was almost like an event. They knew, okay, we are just there for a year. But during this phase, this was really...**

**MG:** Indeed. You know, if you talked with young artists or young curators, you should do that. Because there is among your generation, there is a tendency to indeed react like Adam, we don't need any space anymore. For sure not fixed space. We can do an exhibition completely digitally. We can have pop-up activities for three months. You can find that in the city. It is all the time a kind of interim situation between destroying the old and rebuilding the new. You can go in and so I accept the DNA of this kind of revisionist state and I move from one part to the next to the next. And there were some galleries and art venues who did that. But if you get tired, you do that for five years.

But it has this sequence of an all the time renewing: "Come to this new place, come to that new place." You see in the scene of the bars and the restaurants as well, there are some quite famous or well-known actors who do not have a fixed place anymore but they move from one place to another. So, it happens, yeah.

**LN: Can I ask you something a bit more open? What do you think is, when we put the question of sustainability to the side, the point for doing conversions or renovations? Compared to designing from the plain space with no context. This was a brewery before so what is the advantage or good points for converting instead of rebuilding this place from scratch?**

**MG:** The good thing about when you keep the space and you choose to continue when you choose to build with the existing is you accept history of the site. You accept the patina of the buildings, of the interiors. When you do extensions, you have this kind of rooted space in place. For example, here at the

Löwenbräu area, we now have better courts for the people. That is clearly the case. We would never have gotten these high rises just from taking it all down. Never. The first urbanistic plan of Holtz shows this clearly. And now, you must deal with resources even more carefully than we did.

It is of course not a question anymore. It is clear what you have to do. I think the major questions you can have maybe in your semester is does a museum still need a fixed room? I mean, I could understand somebody who is coming up with this idea. For example, with a kind of flexible museum which changes place every second or third month.

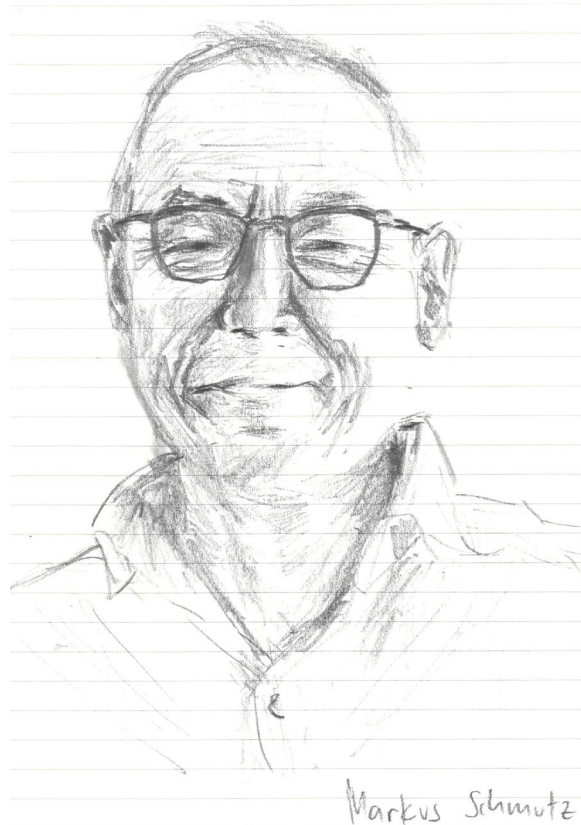
I mean they already do that when they change the exhibition and they repaint everything. It is the same institution but the space changes when they close for rehanging or renovation and they do it two times per year or four times per year. Some even six times.

If you would be a curator and you would be know invited to by Luma Foundation to live and work here, you would not think about the space, you would think about the art that you are interested in. And the space is just there, lovely that you have such a space, but you probably would not bear it, you know.

I think, in the end, for modern art, especially for younger art, it is not so important where it happens, just the content counts.

One of the best exhibitions was when we had to renovate the space of the Kunsthalle a few years ago. It had heavy thermally problems, because of the bad realization by Steiner, the general contractor. And then, I believe it was already Daniel Baumann, made an event out of the destruction of the inner walls. He invited artists, he invited this British sculpturer, this old lady. I do not actually remember her name. And it was the best exhibition for me, she drilled holes into the walls and she made dust walls where you could view into this kind of destroyed atmosphere. This was extraordinary, but in the end, it could have been everywhere.

# Interview with Markus Schmutz



Markus Schmutz is a bookseller and ran the well-known art bookshop “Kunstgriff” in the Löwenbräu area from 1996 to 2019. We met him in the Markthalle im Viadukt, just a few metres from the former shop. Markus Schmutz and his well-stocked bookshop were an existential part and important social meeting point in the Löwenbräu art building at Limmatstrasse 270. In our conversation, he anecdotally recounted his story and the transformation of the area from international radiance to insignificance.

**Jonas Zimmermann: What is your first memory of the Löwenbräu area?**

**Markus Schmutz:** I am not from Zurich. At that time I hadn't been in Zurich long and I knew a woman who worked for the Kunsthalle Zurich. It was still in the Schöller area, where the building on the waterfront with the shed roof stands today. There was a factory building that housed the Kunsthalle and other galleries. At that time it was No Man's Land and the people of Zurich had the attitude that nothing would come after the Escherwyss site. I knew from her that there were ideas to move the Kunsthalle to the Löwenbräu site.

At that time I was a bookseller at the Bern Art Museum and I was interested in opening a bookshop there [in the Löwenbräu area]. The whole thing only came about because Migros had the right of first refusal from Hürlimann and originally wanted to build a distribution centre.

The area had been empty for 10 years. I visited the person responsible for art at Migros, which didn't have a museum at the time, who took care of the collection. Back then, a young Dutchman, Rein Wolfs, later became very important for the Löwenbräu area. He made a career for himself and is now director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Anyway, he told

me about the idea of opening a museum there and I was able to visit it with him in 1995.

It was a ramshackle place. The huge hall of the bottling plant looked as if they had stopped working yesterday, but it had been abandoned for ten years. Where Hauser & Wirth is today, there were still man-sized steel barrels set in concrete that could be walked on.

**JZ: Were there any interim uses in the Löwenbräu area during the vacancy?**

**MS:** In the houses at the back, near the scoops, there were isolated users. For example, a metalworker, rather an artist for special cases. Later he moved to the viaduct arches. There was no interim use in the front building itself.

The “Blaue Saal” with club already existed before. I’m no longer sure whether my first encounter with the Löwenbräu was in the club. It was above the last furniture shop.

**JZ: What happened after their first visit?**

**MS:** The Migros Museum and the Kunsthalle Zürich tried to move into the Löwenbräu together. Then came the dialogue with gallery owners to see if they were also interested. I had to negotiate with Hürlimann Immobilien myself. I didn’t want a space that was too big because of the rent. It was already clear that an entrance to Limmatstrasse would have to be built for the building at Limmatstrasse 270 and that the bookshop would have to be set up there.

One came through the door, Hauser & Wirth was not yet there, into a long hallway. The hall had opened up generously and then it became very narrow again towards the stairs. There I had a six-metre wide sliding door, which I opened completely. The shop was separated from the huge hall by a wall. It was only 45 m<sup>2</sup> but had a high ceiling. The costs were relatively high.

After that, there was some change of ownership and speculation. We had long contracts because we had to pay for the

expansion ourselves. Later, a fitness centre followed. Nobody wanted that, but Hürlimann Immobilien had no strategy, they just rented it out. It was all so “Häbchläb”. Everyone had their contract and everyone was something for themselves, but there were synergies and we worked together. For an art bookshop, it was the best place.

The director of the Kunsthalle at the time, Bernhard Mendes Bürgi, later director of the Kunstmuseum Basel, had the sense for such a motley crew. He introduced new artists to me and we drank coffee together. I was the social place. People found: In the museums and galleries we trade, look at art and at my place we chat about it.

**JZ: Did it become a combination bookshop and coffee shop?**

**MS:** I wasn’t a coffee back then. People sat at my table and I had a coffee machine. You were still allowed to smoke then and they smoked all over my place. It was a lively place. If you visit a gallery, someone sits at the desk, you look at the art. For me it was something between a shop and a coffee and it was about art.

**JZ: What were the relationships with the galleries like?**

**MS:** For me it was clear that I had the books and catalogues for the current exhibitions. But I didn’t sell anything exclusively, because I didn’t want to be their bookshop.

**JZ: Was it her first bookshop?**

**MS:** Yes, and it went very well. It had a bit of an impact in Zurich, you can read about that. It was a great place. Rein Wolfs was also important. I was sceptical at the beginning because he organised parties in the Migros Museum. I turned up my nose at the purists at first, but not for long because I realised it was sustainable. It wasn’t just party, party. People came back and visited the exhibition. It broke the inhibition barrier and many young people came. In a very concrete way, he held parties in the exhibitions, you had broken the aura of that. Here is the artwork and here I am. I thought that was great even then,

that it wouldn't become just another reverential place. There were openings, parties and the summer festivals were gigantic.

**JZ: Were the parties at the end of the 90s legal in the conservative and stiff Zurich?**

MS: In retrospect, I also asked myself that [laughs]. I don't remember us getting into trouble back then. It was relatively criminal because it was so crowded by all the people. That was certainly one reason for the renovation. It had to be safer with all the narrow stairs. Nobody cared about the fire police.

It developed a great charisma that the city found interest in marketing the place as a meeting place for contemporary art. [...]

**JZ: Did it need the renovation and expansion of the Löwenbräukunst building?**

MS: Yes, it was inevitable from a security point of view. Due to the success, there were too many people in the building at certain events. Today it has turned into the opposite. At some concerts it is even child-friendly. There is no drinking or smoking. Back then it was completely different.

We saw it coming and we were aware that something had to happen if it was going to continue. But it was in the air that it was going to be something completely different. The charm was lost. The conversion by Gidon Guyer, whom I like very much as a human being, I doubt whether it was the best architectural solution. It was a levelling out and the people in the building had trouble finding their way around. It's also logical, because it brought a clean-up. Before, everyone had a different door, different floor and you always knew where you were. It became a bit sterile.

**JZ: Did the standardisation and common signalling bring about a visual democratisation?**

MS: I don't know if you know this story or how other actors would tell it to you.  
At the Kunsthalle, Beatrix Ruf became director. She had close

ties with Maya Hoffman, founder of the Luma Foundation, patron and billionaire. Hoffmann built the Luma West Building. Beatrix Ruf was very ambitious and wanted to expand. One suggestion was to rename the tram stop "Kunsthalle". She had convinced Maya Hoffmann to join in and promised to realise the main entrance from the back of the building at the Luma Westbau. When we were already outside because of the reconstruction, we were told afterwards that the address would no longer be on Limmatstrasse but on Gerstenstrasse 6. I was outraged. From my point of view, therefore, the back looks like a main entrance with the staircase visible. But the address remained at Limmatstrasse.

**JZ: The undefined entrance situation with multiple entrances is interesting. Is this a consequence of the aforementioned process?**

MS: Why they didn't solve the entrance differently is a mystery to me. In the first bookshop I wanted to enlarge the window, but this was not allowed. With the conversion, it was no longer a problem.

**JZ: Did you also go to Hubertus with the Kunsthalle and the Migros Museum during the renovation?**

MS: The Migros Museum offered me to be the cashier for the Migros Museum. I was paid by them from 12 noon to 6 p.m. and at the same time it was my bookshop. So I was able to survive that time.

**JZ: What was that time like? Did it have many visitors?**

MS: It was amazing. It already had a certain attraction. The Migrosmuseum, Hauser & Wirth and a gallery were there. There were actors like Kilchmann who didn't come back after the interim use.

**JZ: Was it the old Hubertus building?**

MS: No, it was on the Siemens premises in a hall. There was a coffee shop by the tram stop. It was an interim use and a great place with concerts but had nothing to do with us.

**JZ: What impact did this have for you and for the city?**

**MS:** It was even worse than the Schöller area. Nobody had a reason to go there. Only the visitors who wanted to see the exhibitions came. It became more serious.

It had taken the air out of the whole thrust. The decision for the Renovation was a total break. I have to tell you that there were all kinds of different interests and possibilities. I was the smallest [player] with zero possibilities to Hauser & Wirth with any possibilities. There were discussions after a coffee even before the conversion. It didn't materialise at the time. There was a project by Gigon Guyer that would have been great. They designed a box cantilevered over the façade.

This theme of coffee illustrates for me very well the different interests. Right here [Markthalle im Viadukt], where we are now, there was an interim use called "Banana and Fruit". Today they run the well-known pizzeria behind the Helsinki. It wasn't a pizzeria then, but it was already very popular. I brought up the suggestion of bringing people from Viadukt to us in a container or something. But no, it had to be chic for the noble clientele from r& Wirth.

One disease of the Löwenbräu was that there were not different [rental] price classes. They were all intelligent people, but they behaved elitist. They wanted to have a say because they were already there, and they turned people down at a time when it was fashionable. After that, no one was found. Why they didn't keep Löwenbräu alive with different [rental] price classes later on is incomprehensible to me. Everyone thinks young up-and-coming galleries are great and wants young artists. I have discussed again and again: Why not 5 years of cheap rent and only then a higher rent? For me it was foreseeable that it would become more elitist. We knew that after the conversion the rents would go up massively, but they would remain stable.

We all more or less survived this break. Afterwards, people hoped that things would be different but would continue well. It was all new and people wanted to see it.

**JZ: Such density, from free Migros-Genossenschaftsmuseum to the international Hauser & Wirth gallery, is incomparable in Zurich. Why did they still find it elitist?**

**MS:** Elitist towards the public is one thing, this was not the case even after the conversion. I mean the attitude of the tenants and the new owners, especially after the conversion. Of course, they had invested a lot of money and had to buy a part of the building from the PSP and rebuild the infrastructure. That's why it became much more expensive afterwards and I understand that. But there was also a slight megalomania and they wanted to have the internationally relevant galleries and rejected the smaller ones. At some point it tipped over and it was no longer a centre of attraction. Today, Gstaad or St. Moritz are relevant for such large galleries. The reason for the Löwenbräu was because it was cool and a centre. People didn't have to search for galleries all over town.

They were all characters of their own and I criticised before the conversion that they all looked up to their own door and no further. The development space was the open space in there and after the conversion it was different. It was unified and there was a structure like the tenants' meetings. It had a different character.

**JZ: Was it already difficult for young artists before the conversion: to get space inside the Löwenbräu?**

**MS:** Yes, they were all very ambitious and wanted it to be a place with attraction. At that time, it was already all galleries that were at Art Basel. You have to be in the top 400 to participate. There was financial pressure and they were ambitious. It wasn't just a community of convenience, they wanted to outrank Basel for contemporary art. It was also such a place for a long time.

My strongest sales time of the year was during Art Basel. If Documenta, Art Basel, Münster or Venice Biennale were all in one year, all hell broke loose at my place. In the art world, collectors and gallerists travel around Europe for three weeks. These were my clients and they were buying big stacks of

books. These were the good times when I could pay back my debts. In the first five years with the 45 m2 bookshop, I was able to pay everything back and pay myself. I never earned much during that time, but it was going well. It was clear when you are a specialised bookshop and in the place where everyone was.

Afterwards we came back. The question then arose as to where I would go. They suggested a room and told me the rent and wanted to know if I was in. Before, they had looked at each other and that the social meeting place was important so that the passageway was not extinct.

I used to have great support from Bernhard Mendes Bürgi, but Beatrix Ruf didn't care about me. Her focus was on the supposedly important people in the gallery. In her entire career, she was in my bookshop maybe three times. That's fine, but it shows how things changed. Without her ambition, there wouldn't be a box [Kunsthalle] on the building and the Luma Building wouldn't exist. I suspect the area would have been developed differently, whether that's good or bad.

**JZ: How did your bookshop change after the renovation and was it enlarged?**

**MS:** My new shop was 110 m2 and that was a bit too big for me. Good friends of mine had the JRP art publishing house. This art publishing house moved from the Letzi-Areal to the Löwenbräu. This JRP-Ringier publishing house belonged to Michael Ringier personally. This publishing house was not part of his holding company. He was a great art collector and he afforded this publishing house. They had done about 800 titles in 15 years. He was internationally known as the art publisher and not the "Blick publisher" [Swiss tabloid daily]. Afterwards we convinced them to sell their publications in the shop. There was a shop window for you and I could cover myself a bit. Even then, it was foreseeable that it would be damn difficult in the book trade because of the competition of the internet and the availability. I have to imagine, when I started in the 90s, I had been an oracle for people. My speciality was research and I found everything.

I thought we should consider and I knew her well. I could carry on as before and not be a flagship store for the publisher. Afterwards, I made this deal and sold my library to Ringier and became an employee.

**JZ: Did you find the new shop better than the old one or was it a compromise?**

**MS:** It's complicated. I was quickly very happy with the deal, because they didn't finish at the Migros Museum. The floor on the ground floor was not good and had defects. We couldn't open because of that. We improvised for the big Löwenbräu opening. I was glad, because I couldn't have carried those 3 months myself.

To be honest, I still don't understand the entrance to the Migros Museum. Mike Guyer had the idea that we would become a coffee as a bookshop. The lease said we would use it as a bookshop and coffee corner. They pushed us in the direction of opening a coffee shop. Luckily we had the legal advice of Ringier. The conversion did not include a coffee shop. The reason given was that it was not spatially possible, even though there is a new big box on the roof, which is difficult to play with.

We set up a few tables and I sold coffee. Nothing special, just coffee.

**JZ: Was the entrance to the Migros Museum again through your shop like back then at Hubertus?**

**MS:** No, it was separate like now. I never quite understood that. I find the entrance to the Migros Museum relatively unattractive. I wonder why it doesn't have some of the brightness from the front. My room was great with the four big windows. For me, the entrance hall is oversized and a fiasco. Then there was always different furniture. We also had art students design furniture for the entrance. [...]

**JZ: Did you also have your own exhibitions?**

**MS:** Yes, but unfortunately poorly documented. First I exhibited my friends.

**JZ: Has the entrance been in the same place since the first reconstruction in 1996?**

**MS:** Yes, the size of the entrance is the same today as it was then. This has not been changed. The old one was always a bit cumbersome with the porch. The staircase is also the same. The back entrance looks to me like the entrance to the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart: spacious, glazed and with a staged staircase. Mike Guyer, we get on well today, but back then he was a little angry with me because we didn't realise the coffee and weren't interested in the furniture.

Basically, architects would like to design everything through. That stinks to high heaven for me. It was a bunch of creative minds with charm and afterwards they wanted to put the same stamp on everything. But I'm not so good at judging the architecture.

But I know why Kilchmann didn't come back. He used to be at the top of the building. In order to put the "big box" on the roof, the building had to be reinforced and the room height was lowered. He didn't want to return to a lower room after the renovation. Now the Migros Culture Percentage is in the room.

**JZ: Has a new "hotspot" developed in the city due to former users who have left?**

**MS:** Today they are all returning to Rämistrasse. I mean, if there is any proof of the failure of the Löwenbräu, it is the return of the galleries to Rämistrasse. This is like a certificate of poverty.

The Löwenbräu used to attract people who would never have come otherwise. Zurichberg collectors, they had no reason to come before. Suddenly they liked the industrial and shabby chic. It was a labyrinth, badly signposted and a voyage of discovery.

**JZ: Was the Löwenbräu an insider tip?**

**MS:** At the beginning it was an insider tip, but it went quickly. From my point of view, looking at the big picture, it's really typical of Zurich. You have "Stutz" [a lot of money] and you

suffocate something by trying to consolidate it with money. I'm putting it that way now, because I'm not one of the investors and it's clear that it has to be worth it for them. So many intelligent people were involved in Löwenbräu and from today's perspective it's a fiasco.

[Limmatstrasse 268] Now there will be big changes again with the moving in of "Haus Konstruktiv". Patrick Frei is moving out and as far as I know Francesca Pia and Gregor Steiger will also leave.

This is a complicated story and is related to the building Limmatstrasse 268. Originally it was just the building Limmatstrasse 270. The entrance to building 268 was still closed and was opened when "Schmidheiny" moved in. They had rented the space on a long-term basis and opened the museum "Daros". They invested a large amount in building 268. They ran it for a few years and it fitted in well with the elitist Löwenbräu. The part with the copper kettles, where the red tower is today, was still the big gallery "de Pury & Luxembourg". All of a sudden it was building 268 and 270. The whole brick part had users related to art.

**JZ: How do you see the combination of museums, galleries and collectors trading?**

**MS:** At that time, this did not yet exist in Zurich. I remember it as if it were yesterday: There is a German art magazine called "Kunstforum International". The editorial work is certainly not politically right-wing, but rather critically left-wing. In 1995, they dared to write an article about the shopping centre of art being built in Zurich even before it opened. ["We demand the immediate closure of the city of Zurich - shopping centre of art, gentrification and the definition of public space" Kunstforum International vol. 132 1995].

I thought: "You ass, it's not even open yet and you're already complaining". Of course, five years later I was already thinking: "He had foreseen it and it came just like that. The gentrification of this corner was as described". Since I was involved, I didn't want to believe it at the time but of course he was absolutely right [laughs]. The author had already experienced



this in other cities, like New York Soho. First come the galleries, then the temporary use businesses. Everything is funny and a bit quirky and then it takes off.

**JZ: The viaduct arches are also part of the gentrification...**

**MS:** Exactly. I also considered renting a bow when I was rebuilding here. But I didn't know how well it would work. I thought it was brave, because there was still far too little out here. I think many of these small shops work almost only on Saturdays and there were many changes. At the time, it was too big a risk for me.

**JZ: How did the "Kunstgriff" bookshop come to an end?**

**MS:** Sometime after the renovation we could open and for me it was a good time. Things went on differently but the social function in the building remained. The pressure on everyone was greater because of the high rents and this had an effect. Everywhere you noticed that it was much more commercial and the charm of before was also gone in everyday life. On Saturday, the rich people came by my bookshop with the pictures under their arms and looked for complementary literature. It was doing well and was still hip. But you could feel the pressure and the climate changed.

The end of the bookshop was like this: Löwenbräu was going downhill and Löwenbräu-Kunst AG had to do something. They applied the cheapest means to increase the frequency. They wanted to kick me out and finally realise a coffee. Somehow they found the Zurich coffee chain "Tschingg". This had tended to attract the public from the commercial school next door instead of people interested in art. It was a compromise and Löwenbräukunst AG presented us with a fait accompli. The lease had expired. At the beginning I was still smiling, because Michael Rinigier was on the board of the Kunsthalle. I thought he wouldn't let himself be kicked out because the house was always very important to him. Unfortunately, at the same time as his 70th birthday, he started to clean up his life and decided to close the Kunstverlag. He wanted to downsize and I can understand this well, because not everything has to be for

eternity. He was very nice to me and wanted to give me the bookshop for free.

I asked myself what to do without space in the Löwenbräu. On the upper floor, now the "Verein für Originalgraphik", were the offices of the publishing house and a small gallery, which moved out. Then I moved into these rooms with the bookshop for another year. That was mid 2018 until spring 2019. It was great space again and the shop was even bigger. I still had a lot of hope, but the publisher already told me that it was too expensive and she had other ideas for these spaces. In spring 2019, with Ringier's closure of the art publishing house, my bookshop also closed. It was all very socially acceptable. I would have liked to continue with a bookshop but the Löwenbräu stood me up to here. I was no longer appreciated and my social function suffered under the pressure. It was no longer in and attractive at that time. Many spaces could no longer be rented out. I had thought long and hard about what to do with the bookshop. The economic situation in the book trade was bad and in Zurich the rents were much too high. I looked for an antiquarian bookshop as a partner for an art book antiquarian or a gallery, but nothing came of it. I have a family at home and had to move on. Consequently, I turned Michael Ringier down. I had to pack up my own baby and sell it off. I'm not a child of sadness, especially because the clouds kept getting blacker in the book trade. There are a thousand reasons for that. In the 90s, I saw my friends with record shops that were going under and encouraged them to do something. My idea was a highly specialised antiquarian bookshop, this is still going today. It would need a highly visible place in Zurich, but they are expensive. That's why I decided to do something else in my life.

**JZ: Were you mourning in the Löwenbräu?**

**MS:** That was the other reason for me. It's a total shame and a missed opportunity. I don't go to the Löwenbräu any more either. Not because I'm resentful, but the Löwenbräu has become insignificant. Since the 2019, I had been there maybe three or four times. There are also fewer and fewer reasons. Patrick Frei are friends of mine and are also moving away. It's "killing" [dying out], everyone there says. Those who are still

there have completely different reasons to stay. Migros Museum always had the problem that it costs too much for Migros. There were critical voices as to why it had to be in Zurich when Migros is all over Switzerland. I think it's stabilised a bit at the moment.

**JZ: Does a new place gain in importance through the moves and existing networks?**

**MS:** No, rather not. The commercial part with the galleries moved back to Rämistrasse. It's not a particularly attractive street, but art has always worked in clusters. So people don't have to go through the whole city. When Art Basel is, they go to eat at the "Kronenhalle" and want to look at the most important galleries in Zurich within two hours. At the Löwenbräu they would have had this in hand and could still have opened it at different price levels. From my point of view, they blew it.

**JZ: Have you been to the Schwarzescafé?**

**MS:** Yes, this already existed after the renovation. At the beginning, it was said that budding curators could experiment with Maya Hoffmann's collection. But it didn't work out so well because the rooms lack charm.

**JZ: Why do you think the charm was lost? Because of commercialisation?**

**MS:** There are many reasons, you can't reduce this to one. One is certainly the architecture.

The Kunsthalle Zürich association pays one million francs in rent per year. How can you pay so much rent for two rooms that are so badly connected? You still have to tell people that it goes on upstairs and they are difficult for the artists to play in because they are monstrously large. It's not necessarily the fault of the architects, but also of those who order. From my point of view, the architects have designed better art spaces. For example, at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, my current employer. The extension is super.

The people of Zurich with their money, you can also want too

much instead of letting it grow or letting it be a tinkering. If you want big galleries to open a branch in Zurich, you have to meet their demands as well. Perhaps this is all a logical development.

I am already a bit older than you. When I came to Zurich, it was a quiet bourgeois city, but after 30 years of red-green government, I have to say that they also make mistakes. In 2017, for example, there was Manifesta. Manifesta is a big European exhibition. It's actually meant for peripheral areas or cities that don't get much attention. In the art world, this is an important event. What did the people of Zurich do? They simply bought it for city marketing.

At the beginning, I was naïve when the city took a stake in Löwenbräukunst AG. It was pure city marketing for the luxury segment. At the beginning, I thought it would be great to stabilise the rents and buy the building. But the city couldn't act as operator because of the highly commercialised galleries, so it only bought the floor.

I don't think the initial euphoria can be reproduced. It was different times and different people. I was in the right place at the right time at the beginning. Rein Wolfs at Migros understood how to get the young people here. It must be a hip place.

I don't begrudge everyone if the Löwenbräu gets a better reputation again. The Haus Konstruktiv is of course not bad, they have found the rank to mix the somewhat dusty Constructive Art with curators tough as nails with contemporary art, designed an interesting programme and a coffee. It's a place where people go, not a sleepy museum. It certainly has potential but smaller galleries are disappearing again. This is due to the fact that the Darus Museum left the Löwenbräu and still had a long lease. They sublet the space to smaller galleries on a patronage basis. Therefore, they can afford the space as long as the lease is still in place. This will be replaced by Haus Konstruktiv.

**JZ: Was there an alternative location for the interim use in Albisrieden?**

**MS:** It was every man for himself. Some wanted to stay together for survival. Not all of them took part by a long shot. The AMAG hall on the motorway towards the airport was still under discussion.

I needed an alliance for this year, otherwise the business would not have survived. I found this with Migros.

**JZ: Where would you go today if you wanted to look at contemporary art?**

**MS:** Then you have to move around a lot. We don't have a cosmopolitan city where we have many of these galleries. The whole of the Engadine probably has a better mix of galleries than here. You move the galleries to where the rich people are in their free time.

# Interview with Jacqueline Uhlmann

Jacqueline Uhlmann has been Head of Communications at Löwenbräukunst AG since 2019. The LKAG is the umbrella brand under which all single tenants are united as independent parties.

From 1998 - 2000, during her time as a student, Jacqueline Uhlmann worked at Galerie Eva Presenhuber, which was also located in the Löwenbräu Areal.



**Julian Merlo: Is there any archive material from before 1996?**

**Jacqueline Uhlmann:** That is difficult. Much of it is in the DU magazine. I also thought about going to the archiv, but back then nothing was documented. You have to understand, it was also before the whole cell phone era. At the time of the 25th anniversary of the Löwenbräu I started writing around to collect old material but found practically nothing. Unfortunately, you can't find anything from the Blauer Saal (a party room from the time of its interim use) either. But it is also in my wish zone to find out more about it.

**JM:** Were you once in the Löwenbräu Areal before 1996?

**JU:** Yes, during my time as a student. From 1998 to 2000 I worked at the Löwenbräu Areal for the Galerie Eva Presenhuber. I also visited parties in the Blauer Saal a few times.

**JM:** Do you know why the Eva Presenhuber Gallery left the area?

**JU:** She had great rooms in the Löwenbräu, but the Maag Areal offered her alternative spaces. People were generally not very happy with how the renovation of the Löwenbräu

turned out. It no longer had its charme and the reputation was harmed. There was a lot of critique towards the Löwenbräu. In 2006, the phase of planning to preserve the Löwenbräu began. The idea was to sell the premises to individual institutions (today all rooms are rented). 2008 was the time of the financial crisis and nobody wanted to buy premises at the Löwenbräu because nobody had "cash" anymore. Out of panic, an AG was founded (the LKAG), purely out of financial reasons, in order to obtain money.

With the foundation of the LKAG the rebuilding followed. After the reconstruction Eva Presenhuber left the area. The reason was finally the combination of an attractive alternative (the Maag Areal) and the reputation of the Löwenbräu, which changed with the conversion.

**JM: You also worked in New York. Did you find institutions that are comparable to Löwenbräu? Especially with regard to the combination of galleries and exhibition spaces.**

**JU:** In New York, for example, there is MoMA PS1, but it has no galleries. In San Francisco there is the Minnesota Art Center, then the Kunstareal München or the MQ Wien, but these tend to consist of individual buildings on one site. Then of course there is the South Bank in London, an area south of the Thames, where dance, theater and galleries are combined in one complex.

Considering the Löwenbräu, such a repurposed industrial site with a combination of galleries and museums, all under one roof is, in my opinion, incomparable. Also the fact, that the site was created in different stages makes it unique.

**JM:** How has the accessibility improved since the rebuilding in 2012?

**JU: The accessibility is a sore spot of the building. We have three different entrances, even four if you include the barrier-free entrance. This already creates the first problem: which one is the main entrance?**

We have created a foyer, but at events I have no idea from where people come in... The 270 (Limmatstrasse 270) and the 268 (Limmatstrasse 268) are on slightly different levels. There are the levels A to C and on the other hand the levels -1 to 3, because the levels do not come together. That makes it difficult, also purely in terms of signaling. I have to listen to complaints every three weeks. I've also tried to make everything digitally, for example with maps or descriptions, but it's hard. The Löwenbräu offers a certain degree of complexity, which does not bother me. One should just float through the building and be surprised.

Every tenant wants to be labeled seven times at every corner, but I want to get away from the analog. When new tenants come in, they should pay for analog signage themselves. I think a change to digital is simply necessary.

**JM: The main entrance seems to us rather discreet, reserved and not at all staged. The signage by Jenny Holzer (a former member of the artist collective Group Material) also looks more like a work of art than a signboard. Are you of the same opinion and was that intentional?**

**JU:** The facade is under heritage protection. We were almost not able to do something to it at all. And I have to say, that I took it over as it was. Even the signaling with the signage by Jenny Holzer was already in place. Now we are in a phase where we are again looking for a change. Graphically I think the lettering is great but it doesn't really work.

There is a general problem with the entrance: Everyone knows the Löwenbräu. They all say "I passed by it once with the tram", and I mean that's how it is. You sit in the Tram and think to yourself "that looks interesting", and in the next moment, its gone.

One must also not forget the light emissions. The artwork by Jenny Holzer also has to be turned off at night. I also find this one graphically beautiful, but I am less convinced of the responsiveness to people.

**Ladina Nägeli: Soon, the Haus Kosntruktiv will move in. What are you hoping for with this new tenant?**

**JU:** It's a bit of a blessing in disguise. The 268 is old and needs to be renovated anyway. It was also difficult climatically. At the same time, the contracts from Daros Galerie (, who are now still tenants of the 268,) are expiring. And we knew that when we renovate, we have to think ahead. That's why we are going to cover the whole roof with PV, we are so to speak tackling the issue of renewable energy. Back in the days this would not have been possible due to heritage protection but today the priorities are different.

The Haus Konstuktiv must go out (from the ewz, the former area of Zurich's electricity plant) and we have space to spare. They want to stay in the city, mainly for cultural reasons. A move to Schlieren or Altstetten would have been unthinkable for them. The Haus Konstruktiv has large space requirements. Four current tenants are leaving and Haus Konstruktiv will move in in two stages. Between the two stages there will be interim uses. It is of course more attractive to have a tenant who signs a contract for ten years, than for just two. Larger institutions are more likely to be able to offer us that. But in general it is difficult to find tenants. Migros only moved in because we didn't find anyone else in the first place.

**JM: Will the entrance to the Haus Konstruktiv be free?**

**JU:** That is of course a difficult question. We want to be the first art institution with free admission, just like Migros is already doing it. But Migros is also a public museum. Subsidized institutions like the Haus Konstruktiv and the Kunsthalle are not allowed free admission, as far as I know. To my knowledge, it is not possible to receive money and grant free admission at the same time. So free admission would be nice but I don't see it yet.

It has an effect on visitor numbers. If it is free, more will come. A free entry would be nice because we have so many galleries, and they are all free to enter.

**LN: Are all the tenants independent of each other or are**

**there certain hierarchies? Also with regard to the fact that some tenants are part of the LKAG and some are not.**

**JU:** We are the holding company, the umbrella brand, so to speak. All the tenants are autonomous, independent and treated equally. They are all posted the same way and have the same vote. For the future, we decided to give them even more individuality.

We also had the wish to introduce gender-neutral toilets. I asked everyone and they agreed. Now two years have passed and only fifty percent of the toilets are gender-neutral. At the beginning, of course, you always want to be progressive, and then you realize what that actually means. For the time being, we'll leave it that way; after all, these are processes that you have to try out.

**LN: How does Löwenbräukunst see itself situated in the art scene of Zurich? Is there a dialogue with the city and the Zürich West neighborhood?**

**JU:** In my days as a student (in the 1990s), the Löwenbräu marked the end of Zurich West. But now, we are actually just at the beginning. We are almost back in the city center. We always seek dialogue in the neighborhood. In the past, there were also more galleries, but today they are all on Rämistrasse (a street in central Zurich). But we still want to maintain the dialogue. Also for the opening vernissage, which we have today (6.10.23), there will be an after-party in the clubhouse near the Kunsthaus Zürich, where there is currently an interim use. The Maag Areal, with the galleries Eva Presenhuber and Peter Kilchmann, we also try to include.

Nowadays the Löwenbräu is more and more institutionalized, which is a pity. The mixture of offspaces and galleries (before the renovation) was very productive. However I came to the realization that these things are always changing again. Zurich is changing immensely, but we have a good location, which I also want to use and preserve. Maybe also with a connection to the Schütze-Areal to attract people on Sundays as well. Having a restaurant is difficult. It has no other stores on the street along

which you can walk and then discover the gastronomy.

**LN: Have you seen a change in the number of visitors in recent years?**

**JU:** I'm a little bit unlucky, I started in 2019 and then we had two or three years of pandemic. I think the numbers are picking up again. We've also had free admission two or three times, coupled with exhibitions that are real visitor magnets. As a result, the figures are not really reliable because they do not include these fluctuations. Basically, however, I can say that we have many visitors, especially many school classes.

On an international scale, the house is working very well. The Zurich Art Weekend for example attracts many art enthusiasts from all around the world. This clientele very much appreciates, that, at the Löwenbräu, everything is under one roof. We are doing fewer exhibitions for sustainability reasons. We used to have four big exhibitions a year, but now we have three. It's just more sustainable to show things longer.

**LN: Are there internal collaborations between the individual tenants?**

**JU:** Not for quite some time, unfortunately. Migros, for example, goes in a completely different direction than the others. LUMA is strongly coordinated via Alres in France. The programs from there come to us later. The Kunsthalle is more or less the only institution that is independent. Hauser & Wirth is a global enterprise, but we work well with them, even though their headquarters are in London. Migros, for one, has a lot of money. One percent of sales, not profit, goes into their cultural program every year.

Architecturally, it's interesting. I think the LUMA Westbau is quite great. I also like the idea of the boarding house. There are three rooms, similar to hotel rooms, and a community kitchen, a community lounge, and a laundry room. LUMA has the priority for the boarding house. It would be nice to have studios there but we don't have enough rooms for them.

**A glimpse into the future:**

**JU:** Our interior spaces are, for fire code reasons, very difficult to play in, very little is allowed. What I would like to see is a community space where you can relax, without having to consume art. A quiet place, like there is at the ZHdK.

Ideas are floating around to use the parking lot. During the summer festival there is always no parking space. The free space is then used for benches and food carts. It is very cool, people come mainly from Gerstenstrasse and Wipkingen. Architecturally, the parking lot would also have potential for an urban gardening project.

The next step is definitely green spaces and outdoor spaces, since there are not many rooms left inside to play with.

Maurice Maggi, an urbanist, has suggested installing a structure on the wooden terrace where hop plants could grow. These would provide shade and have a connection to the history of brewery. However, it has always been said that this is not structurally feasible, but I know that is not true....

The Rampe (a covered outdoor space) in the courtyard is a very attractive space but also has a cold aura. It only lives because of the parking spaces, through which it becomes a sort of passage. We have already tried a lot to animate this Rampe. However, it must be something mobile, because the ramp is always transformed into a construction site to prepare installations. We are struggling a lot with heritage protection. On the ground floor there are these old columns which were displaced and now they are just standing in an adjacent room, just because they had to be preserved. In the Toni Areal, I was surprised how little they had to preserve. It's also brilliant, of course, with our old facades. I am curious how the area will look with the coming PV surfaces. This is our step into the green future.

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WALKTHROUGH WITH PROFESSOR KRIPPING  
ONLY REMEMBER THE FLAT WE LOOKED  
AT IN THE BLACK TOWER.

I remember the bad idea  
I remember the big number of  
Hans with blocking the entrance  
to the gallery.

Empty with one specific event  
with all Zurich people

Expensive Artgalleries sitting in  
an old industrial site, pretending to  
be open for everyone

COLLAGE  
FACSADE  
BOOKSTORE

→ Zurich view / Quantification / Art Schools / Tomi Amal / ZHUK  
from an open society

Convent



- a surprisingly messy place - for Zurich -
- very diverse place for art from Hanger to
- the Kunsthalle.
- Great book store
- interesting part of the city

- park to make longer ←
- public space provision
- Hanger

- humble
- bad access
- empty
- huge
- unremarkable

It was big and empty  
everyone was going all around on the terrace for  
a view  
the rest was "dead" except underground rave

We went there with the  
~~teacher~~ teacher from  
Arch. & Kunst in the first  
year.  
I was very impressed and  
surprised, that there's  
such a big complex of  
museums and galleries  
in this building. I live  
nearby and wouldn't have  
expected it.

The first time I went into the Migros Museum I needed to take off  
my shoes (didn't even get what the gallery next door was, but  
got the idea that it's not in my timetable).

empty space

Stimulating Exhibition about wars in the  
Migros Museum. (Vases/Remnants in lake, Michael, Mr  
Sando etc.)

- Sterile  
- Empty  
- Dead

1) FIRST CONTACT WITH THE POINT  
ART WORLD OF ZÜRICH; FEELING  
OUT OF PLACE

beautiful old building  
very different exhibitions  
light rooms / dark rooms  
contemporary art

- Overwhelmed by the scales of the bit.

- space was too strong that art defeats

- closed to public?

Young place → designed for youth to express themselves

Flexibility & Potential → a lot of open space to utilise and manipulate

