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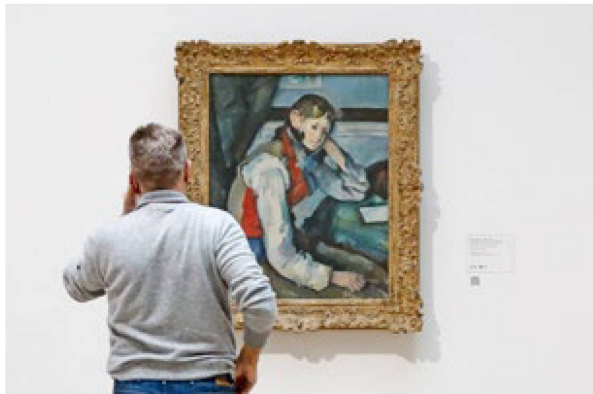
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Paul Cézanne's "Boy in the Red Waistcoat" is one of the most prestigious works in the Bührle collection. It was stolen in 2008 before being recovered in Belgrade. It now hangs in the Zurich Kunsthaus. Photo: Keystone

Zurich Kunsthaus. He suggests the powers that be have been more interested in promoting Zurich as a centre of art than taking a serious look at the Bührle collection. According to Keller, they want to dissociate the collection from its founder – so that the art no longer stands for a man and his arms deals, but for Zurich, a city of culture.

This is why the existing provenance research into Bührle's art collection is inadequate, he says. Can Zurich really say for sure that there is no plundered art among the paintings, given that such research has remained in the hands of the Bührle Foundation? Former members of the Bergier Commission are now among those calling for an independent review.

The situation in Zurich contrasts sharply with what happened when the Berne Museum of Fine Arts was named heir to the trove of art dealer Cornelius Gurlitt, who died in 2014 – Gurlitt had inherited the collection from his father Hildebrand, who was a Nazi art dealer. After conducting an independent provenance assessment, Berne relinquished part of the collection – probably easier to do as Gurlitt was a relative outsider. Bührle, on the other hand, had intimate connections with the Zurich elite.

However, things now appear to be moving in Zurich. Mayor Corine Mauch announced that the city has called on the Bührle Foundation to ensure that the presentation of its works in the Kunsthaus extension is accompanied by the necessary context. "The controversy surrounding Bührle is good for us, even if it hurts," she told the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung".

The Bührle collection (in German): revue.link/buehrle
 The Bührle collection (in English): revue.link/artcollector
 Erich Keller, «Das kontaminierte Museum»: revue.link/keller

Switzerland in figures

Couples marrying, mountains swaying

19.2

Switzerland began 2022 with record temperatures, as Poschiavo in the Alps recorded a high of 19.2°C. It is hard to know whether to laugh or cry about such distinctly unseasonal weather. In January as a whole, 13 out of 14 Swiss weather stations recorded above-average temperatures.

22.2.22

Swiss couples prefer to marry in summer than in winter. This February was an exception – but not because of the mild weather. It had more to do with a unique date. On 22/2/22, almost all wedding venues in Switzerland were booked out. The couples who tied the knot on this quirky date presumably also did so for the right reasons.

6.2

Books are dead, they say. But the statistics say otherwise. In 2021, book sales in German-speaking Switzerland rose for the third year in succession – this time by five per cent. Fiction was up 6.2 per cent. And six of the top ten bestselling novels in German-speaking Switzerland were written by the following Swiss authors: Donna Leon, Benedict Wells, Christine Brand, Joël Dicker, Arno Camenisch and Silvia Götschi.

9,000,000,000

Nine billion cigarettes are consumed in Switzerland every year. The nicotine haze is quite thick at the moment, with sales of cigarettes and other tobacco products having risen since the beginning of the pandemic – the first time they have done so in ten years, climbing four per cent. People working from home is one of the reasons, say experts.

2

The numbers on this page often indicate change. But surely not in the case of the mighty, immutable Matterhorn. Wrong! Scientists say that the summit of Switzerland's iconic mountain is in constant motion, swaying a few micrometres back and forth once every two seconds – stimulated by seismic energy in the earth. The swaying is over ten times stronger at the summit than at the base of the mountain, rather akin to how the top of a tree sways more in the wind.

FIGURES COMPILED BY MARC LETTAU