

ARTISBUSINESS

#SUSTAINABLE CULTURE

BY RITA SZENTGYÖRGYI JULY 1, 2026

“Making art a part of everyday life”
– Interview with Andrea Strommer



Featured image: **Andrea Strommer** (photo: Johannes Eisenhut)

From chocolate paintings to digitized installations, **ArtAnd Strommer Consulting** focuses on bold, innovative works and artists. They combine imaginative styles with the latest technologies. **Andrea Strommer** is the heart and driving force behind this Zurich-based consulting firm, which represents artists primarily in the Swiss, Austrian, and German markets. Her husband, **Arthur**, who is of Hungarian descent, is her strategic partner in this young venture. **Andrea** also volunteers at the Zurich office of **Room to Read**, an organization founded in Nepal by **John Wood**, the former director of business development for **Microsoft's** Greater China region.

Born in 1970, **Andrea Strommer** has traveled an adventurous path from Hungary to Switzerland. With a degree in international trade, she began her career at a multinational company in Hungary, then continued at a family-owned private business. In 1997, she moved to London to be with her future husband, whom she had met earlier, while working as a marketing manager at an international company there. Due to Arthur's job at a Swiss bank, he was assigned to the Bahamas, where they lived from 2002 to 2010. They moved to Switzerland with their five children in 2010. In 2024, they founded their art consulting firm, **ArtAnd Strommer Consulting**.

*Looking more closely, what is the **Room to Read** international education development program about, and who is its primary target audience? Do foundations or the **Swiss federal government** play a role in it?*

From 1998 to the present, I have volunteered with numerous nonprofit organizations. In addition to my very important role as a mother, I wanted to contribute something to society as well. I work as a volunteer at the Zurich office of **Room to Read**, which now operates in twenty-eight countries. We engage the local community in charitable activities. I also play a major role in organizing the annual charity gala. The Swiss region is responsible for raising funds for the international program, which originated in Nepal. In Switzerland, support relies heavily on private donors, while contributions from foundations are negligible. On the one hand, the program focuses on teaching reading and writing skills to first- and second-grade children; on the other hand, it targets girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, aiming to use education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and early marriage. The goal of **Room to Read** is to sustainably support education—from teacher training to mentoring—through its programs operating in numerous countries around the world.

You have a wide range of experience, from project management to client relations to event planning. What inspired you to start an arts consulting firm?

Art and human connections. A major turning point in my life came when I was in the Bahamas and became more involved with the arts—from crafts to fashion to music. Until then, I had been more of a consumer and appreciator of the arts, but then I suddenly realized that there's so much more to it than just going to a gallery and looking at a beautiful piece of art. I came to understand that works of art convey social messages. This different perspective on art inspired me to make art more accessible to people—so that it doesn't just reach those who are consciously curious about it, but becomes part of everyday life. I found inspiration and strength for all of this through the **Room to Read** community, where I met Swiss artist **Sabeth Holland**, who has been a dedicated supporter of the organization for many years. She is a painter and sculptor, and her works can be found on buildings and in public spaces.

During the years I spent in the Bahamas, I also developed deep connections with local artists, and my relationship with one of them has lasted to this day. Her work was the first piece of art to find its way into our home—not as part of a conscious collecting strategy, but as a memento of an important chapter in our lives.



Andrea Strommer and Sabeth Holland (photo: Johannes Eisenhut)

Apart from them, what other artists—from what fields and under what conditions—does your advisory work cover?

We occasionally enter into project-based agreements with artists; there are no fixed contracts or exclusivity clauses. One of our strengths is that we place artistic projects within different contexts and narratives. This often sparks interest among both active and inactive art collectors. For now, we're working with three artists: two from Switzerland—**Sabeth Holland** and the Swiss chocolate manufacturer **Billy & Bugga** (for whom chocolate is an artistic medium)—as well as Austrian photographer **Mathias Kniepeiss**.

We offer two lines of chocolate: hand-painted, preservative-free pralines, and contemporary artworks featured on the surface of 10-by-10-centimeter chocolates, which are also handmade in small batches. The concept for the latter was developed at the initiative of **Billy & Bugga** in collaboration with artist **Mathias Kniepeiss** and is marketed under the brand name **Artsy Chocolate**. This format goes beyond mere physical appearance: it offers the opportunity to create unique works in which the convergence of visual art and taste gives rise to a new kind of multidisciplinary artistic experience.

I'd like to emphasize that while the professional role of galleries is extremely important, newer generations are seeking different contexts. In Zurich, too, smaller galleries are closing one after another. **ArtAnd Strommer** focuses on private events and studio visits, seeking personal connections: individual, in-depth conversations that go beyond formalities. Our approach is to rent a venue, invite five to eight collectors or prospective collectors, and host themed evenings. Studio visits are also a proven method; people are interested in artists' thought processes, and the stories behind the creative process often come to light during these visits.



Billy & Bugga Artsy Chocolate (photo: Sarah Reuland)

Their website states that they bring high-quality artworks to audiences in Switzerland and Western Europe and open up new markets. What does this look like in practice?

The artworks include contemporary paintings, photographs, digital fusion art, and spatial installations. We focus on exciting projects and collaborations; for example, at the end of last year, at the request of a global pharmaceutical company, we unveiled a sculpture that explores the theme of art and health. As part of our **Art Live On Tour** program, we bring art to corporate, institutional, or private settings with the aim of providing a personalized experience. The greatest interest in this comes from the financial, healthcare, and biopharma sectors. A major challenge for 2026 is our plan to pair contemporary artworks with the launch of collections by boutiques and new fashion brands. For 2026–27, we are planning a VIP collectors' program that will trace the journey of a work of art from the creative process through the gallery and into institutional settings.

It is well known that the art market is thriving in Switzerland. In Hungary, art consulting is still in its infancy...

The Swiss are open to new ideas, but when I'm introduced as a consultant during a meeting, they look at me with a "why do we need this?" expression. Sometimes even in Switzerland I have to explain that the conventional approach—where buyers approach artists directly—is misguided. In the business world, artists can be pushed into the background, as they don't like to "sell" themselves. It's not their job, after all. But painters, sculptors, dancers, and other creators shouldn't have to remain poor. We represent a fresh approach; we're looking for new connections.



A detail from a handcrafted chocolate wall by master chocolatier **Juliana Hassler**. The piece is an artistic interpretation of the power of connections: the golden threads and delicately crafted chocolate elements symbolize the invisible web that binds people, cultures, and opportunities together. The artist created the piece for the launch of a print issue of ***Art is Business*** focusing on Switzerland's cultural and business life (photo: Dániel Török)

*Their role as bridge-builders is indispensable in ensuring that the works reach their audiences and collectors. Does **Strommer's** art consulting also include legal representation for artists and artworks?*

We represent artists with established reputations and work closely with them. We do not handle legal matters, although last fall I had to organize the shipment of a sculpture and a chocolate painting and set up the administrative and legal framework to ensure they arrived at their destination without a hitch. The **Sabeth Holland** sculpture titled ***Happy Lovable***, which we shipped to the **Autistic Art** charity gala in Budapest, generated significant support, as did the artwork she donated to the **Room to Read** gala in Zurich. Such artistic contributions are capable of supporting noble causes that have a genuine social impact—this, too, is part of the philosophy that places a value- and experience-based approach at the center of our work.

Many people seek out works of art as investments. Of course, there is also a tradition of giving through charity auctions in Switzerland...

I don't know anyone in my circle who doesn't donate to some organization or another. All of this is done discreetly, quietly. It's not a topic of conversation who supports what or how much. It's a sophisticated system: the famous Swiss discretion, neutrality... Companies and private individuals lead the way in giving.

Social responsibility characterizes the artists and partners we work with just as much as it does my husband and me. Together, we support a variety of initiatives, ranging from children's hospitals to cocoa-farming communities.



Master chocolatier **Juliana Hassler's** chocolate painting performance at the Luxury Summit in Lausanne. During the performance, **Juliana** created a chocolate composition inspired by the lush flora of the Amazon rainforest, into which she subtly integrated the logo of Purest, one of the event's sponsors. The hand-painted motifs became a natural part of the artwork, demonstrating how brand identity and contemporary art can be elegantly combined (photo: Sarah Reuland & Chris Reist)

How receptive and open-minded are the people of Zurich and the eastern Swiss region to contemporary art?

Fortunately, art isn't centralized anywhere in Switzerland. We have a small Alpine vacation home in Graubünden, one of the largest cantons. We see that in that region, every other village has a museum, gallery, or art association. In Switzerland, it's a proven model to establish art associations on a nonprofit basis, with membership fees, specifically for showcasing contemporary works. From **Pipilotti Rist** onward, most artists' careers began through such associations. In Hungary, the visual arts are still tied to galleries. I think they should be made part of everyday life. In any case, in the future, we would very much like to reach out to the local community by showcasing new contemporary works.

This article first appeared in our print issue published in April 2026, which focused on cultural and business life in Switzerland.

Link to the article:

<https://www.artisbusiness.hu/hu/hireink/a-mindennapok-reszeve-tenni-a-muveszetet-interju-strommer-andrea-3753/>

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