

# Life

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**ETH** zürich



## Good news for doctoral students

Doctoral students, postdocs and scientific assistants I and II will, like all ETH staff, benefit from the cost-of-living adjustment from 2024 onwards. The Executive Board is lifting the present linking of their salaries to the rates of the Swiss National Science Foundation. In addition, the standard rate for doctoral students is being raised by 5 per cent in total.

→ [www.ethz.ch/salary-adjustments](https://www.ethz.ch/salary-adjustments)



## Looking ahead to 2024

The *life* editorial team would like to wish all ETH members a happy festive period and a wonderful start to the new year. You are very welcome to attend the Executive Board's virtual town hall meeting on Tuesday, 16 January from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. to find out what's coming up in 2024. The link to the online event will be sent out in January.

## A magical afternoon

Why are the Alps in Europe? And who lives in crystal caves and on mountain tops? Together with the Swiss Fairy Tale Society, *focusTerra* invites you to embark on a magical adventure and discover the secrets of our mountain peaks. Children aged 6 and over can experience fairy tales accompanied by music and carry out experiments to explore the world of mountains.

**Wednesday, 4 February 2024, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m., no registration required**

→ [www.focusterra.ethz.ch/fairy-tales](https://www.focusterra.ethz.ch/fairy-tales)



Photo: focusTerra

## Never stop learning

Lifelong Learning Hub (L3H) is a new learning environment dedicated to the professional and personal development of ETH staff. It serves as the starting point for an active and collaborative learning culture in which knowledge is shared and learning content is developed together.

→ [www.ethz.ch/l3h-en](https://www.ethz.ch/l3h-en)

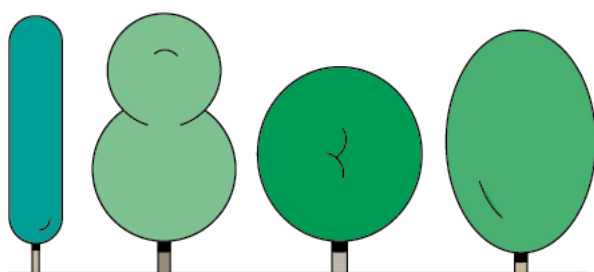




Photo: © MASI Lugano, photo: Gabriele Spalluto

# From Albrecht Dürer to Andy Warhol

Last chance for art fans: 300 masterpieces from the ETH Zurich Graphische Sammlung (Collection of Prints and Drawings) will remain on display in the Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana in Lugano (MASI) until Sunday, 7 January 2024. The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through European art history over the last six centuries and provides an insight into the different printing and drawing techniques.



ETH members print 18 million pages of A4 every year – that's around 1,800 trees. Data regarding demand for printers at ETH Zurich was collected again in 2023. On the basis of this survey, IT Services has set itself the target of reducing the number of printers by 30 % by the end of 2023. Anyone who cannot manage without printing completely can help by printing double-sided and in black and white.

→ [www.ethz.ch/printing](http://www.ethz.ch/printing)

**Publishing information**  
life – The ETH community magazine is published quarterly in English and German by Corporate Communications.

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**Circulation**  
13,300 copies

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**Further information and subscriptions:**



# Becoming a boss overnight

IN FOCUS





# Every year, dozens of ETH staff take on their first leadership role. In this article, three of them tell us how it feels.

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"Shark, owl, bear or tortoise? Which animal describes you best?" The course participants look at each other with an air of confusion. "Just go with your gut," adds the instructor. Slowly, the participants make their way towards one of the four animal pictures placed around the room. They have all recently taken on a leadership role at ETH and, for most of them, this is their first time as a manager. Whether they are responsible for a building, a department or a research group, they are all wondering the same things at the moment.

How will I manage to be someone's manager while also being their colleague? To what extent am I responsible for my employees' wellbeing? What is the right way to give feedback? And what do I do if someone in my team is having personal problems? These are just some of the questions that prompted these 20 ETH members to take part in the "Fit for my new leadership role" course.

"Leadership is all about people," says course leader Martin Ghisletti, who is responsible for development and leadership at ETH. He adds: "Good managers should at least know themselves well." They should be aware of how they respond to conflict – whether they focus on their own needs and have a tendency to snap occasionally, like a shark, or whether they prefer to withdraw into their shell like a tortoise.

## Teddy or brown bear?

Philipp Kammerlander is standing with four other people by the picture of a bear. He is surprised to find out that bears have a tendency to give in and put their interests after the needs of others. "I was thinking more of a strong brown bear that can take a lot but can also go on the offensive, rather than a teddy bear," he says. For the last year and a half, Philipp has been Executive Director of the ETH Zurich Quantum Center, which brings together 36 research groups. In collaboration with three colleagues, he coordinates between the groups, represents the center externally and organises seminars and conferences.

"At the start I had very high expectations of myself, perhaps too high," recalls Philipp. He explains that he simply didn't want to make any mistakes and aimed to live up to the different expectations that his line manager and employees had of him. At the same time, he also realised that his performance as a manager was dependent on what his employees did and how well they worked as a team. "Suddenly I wasn't just responsible for myself and had to think about others too. I found that quite stressful."

Over time, Philipp has realised that not everything has to be perfect all the time, and he has learned to let go and delegate more tasks to his team. Bit by bit, he has started to grow into his new leadership role. However, low-level tensions kept cropping up in the team because the role distribution between him and a very experienced employee

wasn't completely clear. "For example, we couldn't agree on who was going to give feedback to a colleague," says Philipp.

"If the structures, competencies and responsibilities within the team aren't clear, it can be especially difficult to settle into a new leadership role," explains Martin. It took Philipp a while to recognise this problem: "I just put up with the tensions with my colleague instead of speaking to her directly about it. So maybe the bear analogy isn't so wide of the mark after all."

↓ Martin Ghisletti (52)





**“It’s important to me to have a good relationship with my team. At the same time, though, I have to make decisions that not everyone is happy with.”**

#### **The transition from colleague to manager**

“Stop nagging, the timing will work out!” When Nina Kollegger heard a member of her team saying this, it really annoyed her. A thousand different thoughts went through her head, but she didn’t say anything at first and acted as if everything was fine. Since the start of 2023, Nina has been responsible for coordinating work with schools as part of the Cybathlon. She develops teaching modules together with her four-person team and has been involved in setting up the programme from the beginning. As it got bigger and bigger, she also took on the role of head of the programme.

For Nina, it was clear that her employee had crossed a line with what he said. “It was a difficult situation for me because I’m good friends with him.”

Her initial reaction was like a tortoise – retreating into her shell and waiting. But she couldn’t stay like that forever: “I had to take a step back first and let my emotions cool down. Then I spoke to my colleague about the situation and told him that, as his manager, I expected him to speak to me in an appropriate tone,” she recalls. A bit like an owl that always thinks carefully before acting. And the owl is the picture that Nina chooses in the classroom.

When she took on her new leadership position, she suddenly switched from being a colleague to a manager. “It’s important to me to have a good, friendly relationship with the people in my team. At the same time, though, I have to make decisions that not everyone is happy with. Striking the right tone in these situations is not easy at all.” According to Martin Ghisletti, many people experience this conflict of roles when taking on a leadership position. The key is to be capable of nuanced communication: “As managers, we need to be able to express criticism at the factual level but should always remain respectful at the relationship level,” he says.



### Splitting yourself in two

Katharina Gapp is also familiar with this balancing act: since June 2022, she has been an assistant professor of epigenetics at ETH Zurich and heads up an eight-person research team. “I find it difficult to give critical feedback because I have a friendly relationship with my colleagues and don’t want to offend them,” she says. “At the same time, I have very high standards, which means that I often end up with conflicting goals competing within me.”

Now she is a professor, her work has moved from the lab to the desk, and she spends a lot of her time in meetings. “I had a bit of an identity crisis at first. Suddenly my self-image no longer matched up with what I was doing all day,” she recalls.

As a professor, Katharina is responsible not just for her own output, but for that of her whole team as well. While she needs to keep moving forward with her own career – because her funding at ETH Zurich is only secured for five years – at the same time she also wants to give her undergraduates and postgraduates the best possible support. “I often feel like I have to split myself in two,” she says. Which makes it all the

**“Suddenly my self-image no longer matched up with what I was doing all day.”**

↓ Katharina Gapp (39)



more important to turn down a request or invitation every once in a while.

Katharina’s research results are now also dependent on the work of her employees, which means it is important to find the right people in the first place. As she finds it difficult to assess people purely on the basis of an interview, she likes to recruit students whom she has worked with before. Another point to consider is how much freedom to give her employees. “My doctoral students are free to gain their own experience – I don’t want to keep interfering with their work.” Ultimately, what counts is that research projects result in good publications.

### Leadership is a journey

According to Martin, challenges like these are typical for new managers. “As managers, we need to learn how to handle conflicting goals and how to communicate them transparently.” When taking on their first leadership role, many people feel they need to please everybody. “As team leaders, we are responsible for creating a work environment in which people are able to perform well and make progress. We are not responsible for ensuring that everyone is completely satisfied all the time.”

Martin believes that many people have the potential to be a manager. The way in which someone carries out this role depends heavily on their personality. This means that if you attend a leadership course at ETH Zurich, you will not be given a set formula for a particular management style. “The important thing is to reflect on your own behaviour and decide which management style is appropriate to a specific situation,” says Martin. After all, some situations call for a bear, some for an owl.

# Silvio interviews Cornelius

DOMINOES

**Cornelius Senn**

64

Electrical engineer in D-BAUG  
Has been at ETH for 38 years

**Silvio Bonaccio**

58

Head of ETH transfer  
Has been at ETH for 22 years  
(Currently on sabbatical in the USA)



# Cornelius Senn tells Silvio Bonaccio why he doesn't want to go to Mars and why his guests have to cook for themselves.

**Silvio Bonaccio:** Let's start off with the big question: Cornelius, who are you?

Cornelius Senn: I've asked myself that question lots of times. At the end of the day we're all interconnected and I'm just a small cog in a big wheel.

**Silvio:** In an institution as large as ETH Zurich, it's the small cogs that are so important and make up the organisation as a whole. How did you end up at ETH Zurich?

Cornelius: I trained as a construction fitter. In 1985 I joined VAW – the Laboratory of Hydraulics, Hydrology and Glaciology at ETH Zurich. Four years later I had a serious motorbike accident that called everything into question. I survived, but my right arm was paralysed and I was thrown into crisis. I had to ask myself: "Who am I and what do I want?" My job wasn't challenging me enough, and I came to the conclusion that I wanted to do something that had more to do with people.

**Silvio:** What was the next step?

Cornelius: I studied electrical engineering. In 1996 I moved from VAW to D-BAUG with the aim of bringing technology and people closer together. It shouldn't be a case of people adapting to technology – technology should adapt to them.

**Silvio:** You're still working in D-BAUG workshops today, producing custom-made equipment for researchers. What do you love about your job?

Cornelius: I always get a thrill getting to understand where researchers are in terms of their work and helping them find a solution. When I was at VAW I developed a system that was used to measure glacier ice thickness. I was able to carry on with these projects at D-BAUG and I accompanied the glaciologists on three expeditions to Greenland,

where our measuring systems were embedded up to 1,000 metres deep in the ice.

**Silvio:** We shared a stage in 2018 when one of your developments was nominated for the Spark Award. This award is presented each year to the most promising invention developed at ETH over the last 12 months. I was delighted that you were nominated despite not working in research.

Cornelius: I was surprised but very happy to be nominated. And it gave me the opportunity to keep developing the reflectors.

**Silvio:** What exactly was it that you developed?

Cornelius: It's a simple mechanism that makes it possible to connect panels together quickly without the need for screws or other parts – which is useful in the case of reflectors, for example. The Federal Office for the Environment is considering using my reflectors for the early detection of natural hazards. I would be very pleased about that – otherwise our work can be so fleeting and short-lived.

**Silvio:** Do you have any tips for other ETH members who are developing something?

Cornelius: It's like anything else in life: if you have a vision, never give up hope. Developing something is always a journey with lots of little steps. And often it's the failures that really help you move forward.

**Silvio:** Speaking of wild ideas: more and more countries are talking about sending people to Mars. Would you be tempted?

Cornelius: No. Back when I was a child, people were talking about colonising the Moon. My feeling is that we should be taking better care of our Earth so we can keep living here rather than looking for new habitats.

**Silvio:** What do you do in your free time?

Cornelius: I enjoy reading and photography, spending time with my family and making sculptures out of steel. It allows me to visualise and process things. The first sculpture I made was a wedding gift for my daughter. And I cook too.

**Silvio:** For guests or for yourself?

Cornelius: I'm not so keen on cooking for myself. I would often invite people over, buy all the food and then ask "What are you good at making? Salad? OK, you do the salad." Then it's a joint effort. At the end of the day, it's about spending time together.

**Silvio:** You will be retiring in just under a year. Have you started making plans for your retirement?

Cornelius: No. I'll take it as it comes. I'm not in retirement mode yet; there's still so much I want to get done. And I have a new project coming up too... maybe I could show it to you at some point?

**Silvio:** That would be great! And hopefully we'll see you up on that stage again.

# On the lookout for danger

BACKGROUND





**When ETH is expecting an important visitor, the team from the SSHE Security section is always on hand – unnoticed – in the background. On ETH Day, life followed their every move – and found out how a jar of honey ended up being the biggest hazard.**

#### **Saturday, 18 November, 9.05 a.m.**

Andreas's phone rings: "This is Kaiser. We'll be arriving in Rämistrasse in around ten minutes." "We" in this case means Kaiser (the chauffeur) and the people he is chauffeuring: Chairman of the Swiss National Bank Thomas J. Jordan and his communications officer. Thomas Jordan will be the keynote speaker at this year's ETH Day and is on his way to the Main Building.

Andreas Romer is Deputy Head of the Security section and is responsible – on behalf of ETH – for the safety of the guests at ETH Day. At this special event, the team is supported by members of ETH's own person and event protection group (PSG). When important politicians visit ETH, the Security section works closely with the Zurich municipal police, who are responsible for the safety of the VIPs. All security personnel are connected via radio.

#### **9.15 a.m.**

The limousine carrying the guest of honour arrives. He is greeted by ETH President Joël Mesot and Rector Günther Dissertori. Adrian Meier, Head of Security within SSHE, is standing ready in the background. He takes the visitors into the ETH Main Building and onwards to the President's office. Andreas is already in the building, checking with the Security team that the previously agreed route to the office is clear. "If we found something unexpected – an object in the way, for example – I would contact Adrian immediately via radio," explains Andreas in a calm but focused tone. Then they would be able to find a different route.

Andreas is constantly working in the background during ETH Day. "I don't like being in the spotlight, but I keep

track of everything security-related happening on this day," he says. This requires intensive preparation. When the project team tells him at the end of September who the keynote speaker will be, the first thing he does is research their level of public exposure. He notifies the municipal police of the planned visit and discusses the general risk situation with them.

#### **9.45 a.m.**

Everything is going smoothly; the guests take their places in the foyer and in the Audi Max. The 15 rectors who have been invited gather on a mezzanine for the traditional procession. Andreas helps Wolfgang Ressel, Rector of the University of Stuttgart, to put his rector's chain on. "I helped him with his chain once years ago, and over time it has become a fixed ritual that we both look forward to," laughs Andreas.

#### **9.58 a.m.**

The rectors form a line and start moving towards the main foyer. Romer goes ahead of them to check that the route is clear.

#### **10 a.m.**

The orchestra starts to play a fanfare and the rectors move slowly down the central aisle of the main foyer. The ceremony has begun, and Andreas withdraws to F floor.

During the ceremony, Andreas is still pulling the strings behind the scenes – he sends a patrol around the outside of the building at frequent intervals, and there are security personnel inside the building too. Prior to the event, Andreas walked them through the premises and assigned them specific tasks and places. "We can prepare for a lot of things in advance, but when something happens, you have to act boldly," he explains.

#### **12.10 p.m.**

The ceremony ends and the guests move to the side areas for the drinks reception. Tables decorated for lunch stand ready on the galleries of the F and G floors.

#### **1.20 p.m.**

The guests sit down and the meal is served with the ambience of an elegant restaurant. At this point, the first security personnel are also able to take a break for lunch in a separate room. But Andreas is still working. "As the person responsible for security at the event, I feel an obligation towards my colleagues, so I always go to the break room last," he says.

#### **2.45 p.m.**

The first guests start to leave the Main Building, and Chairman of the Swiss National Bank Thomas Jordan takes his leave too.

#### **3.15 p.m.**

Suddenly a radio message comes through to say that there is a guest lying bleeding in the underground car park. Andreas immediately calls an ambulance and heads to the car park along with other members of the security team. It turns out that the guest tripped and fell over, breaking the ETH Day gift – a jar of honey – in the process. Their hand is bleeding heavily. After receiving first aid, the guest is taken to the university hospital by ambulance. Andreas informs the project manager and the Rector as the host of ETH Day. Apart from them, no one else hears about this accident.

While the guests celebrated the 168th birthday of ETH Zurich in a relaxed atmosphere, the security personnel kept watch in the background – leaping into action as soon as they were needed. And that's exactly what it's all about for Andreas: "If no one notices we are there, then we've done our job well," he says modestly.

→ [www.ethz.ch/eth-day-2023](http://www.ethz.ch/eth-day-2023)

# Christmas at ETH

The time leading up to Christmas is full of rituals and traditions. Three ETH members spoke to *life* about how they mark this special time of the year with their colleagues.

## A spotless start to the year



"A Christmas ritual of a different kind takes place every December in most of the metal processing workshops at ETH Zurich – including ours in D-ITET: shortly before Christmas, all of the machine tools undergo thorough cleaning, lubrication and maintenance, and the premises are cleaned too. Everyone gets involved,

from apprentices right up to the boss. We carry out this "spring clean" on the last three days before the Christmas break each year so that when we come back in January, we can start working with spotless machines. And we know if any of them need repairing.

This cleaning ritual is not just an ETH tradition. It has been an integral part of the job description for polymechanics since the onset of industrialisation and is performed every year across Switzerland – and in other countries too.

We don't do anything particularly Christmassy while we're cleaning – we don't decorate the workshop or listen to Christmas songs as we work. 😊 But once it's done, we all go out to eat together. It's a nice way to round off the three days of cleaning, and the whole year too!"

Urs Rohner, precision engineer in D-ITET



Recorded by  
Mona Blum





## On your marks, get set, bake!

"For about 15 years now, we have been running an annual Grittibänz bread man bake in the test kitchen of the food technology group at the FNH (Food, Nutrition and Health) institute. Whenever possible, this takes place on the morning of 6 December – i.e. on Saint Nicholas Day. Around 50 amateur bakers take part each year, and there's a really happy atmosphere. From 10 a.m., once all the kneading, rolling out and shaping is done, it's time to eat the Grittibänz men together. It's a lovely tradition that is an integral part of our Advent!"

**Horst Adelmann, lecturer in the FNH institute**

## Christmas time in IT Services



"We have two Christmas traditions for IT Services as a whole.

Firstly, the IT Services Christmas market outing where we spend an evening together at the Wienachtsdorf Christmas market on Bellevueplatz in Zurich. All IT Services employees can come

along – we drink mulled wine, have a good time and enjoy the market together.

The other thing we do is invite all our staff to a special IT Services Christmas coffee morning around Saint Nicholas Day. We put decorations up in the IT Services kitchens and organise a special Znüni. It's a really popular event: people can drop by whenever they want within a two-hour window and we get about 80 attendees in total. People love having an opportunity to chat. This is one of the reasons we've been running this Christmas coffee morning for 12 years. We previously held it at three locations in Zurich. Now everyone gets together in the Octavo building in Oerlikon."

**Sabine Hoffmann, Head of PR Communications at IT Services**





PORTRAIT



**Rislane El Harat is probably the first ETH employee to win a music award in Hollywood. But this isn't what she hopes to achieve with her love of music.**

"I actually wanted to be a whale researcher," laughs Rislane. "Whale song and marine biology have always fascinated me." Today it is not whale songs but her own songs that are in the spotlight – something that she attributes to her former choir director. "She would always pick someone out unexpectedly to sing solo – and at some point it was my turn. That was the initial spark," says the 35-year-old. "I closed my eyes, sang and forgot about everything around me. I merged with the music and became one with it, as though I didn't exist any more. That's when I knew that this was what I wanted to do!"

From that point on, the then 12-year-old's life revolved around music. However, apart from a couple of private lessons with a singing teacher, her music career has been largely self-taught: "Learning by doing has always been my motto," says Geneva-born Rislane. Most of her ideas for songs come to her in the shower. She starts by recording a voice note or sitting down at her piano: "I feel my way into the song: Which instruments would work? What do I want to say with this song? You cut, replace, swap chords or passages of text. The first spark comes from inside. Then I have to shape the sparks into a song."

**The honesty of busking**

For many years, busking was her favourite way of singing her songs: "There is a lot of honesty with busking," says Rislane. "If people don't like it, they just walk away."

Her confidence grew as she realised she was able to cast a spell over people with her music. But the idea that it would ever become so popular that

she would receive an award in Hollywood never occurred to her. Which is why it came as such a surprise when her debut album *Newland* won the Hollywood Independent Music Award this August – the highlight of her career to date. Receiving this honour made Rislane incredibly happy and confirmed that she was on the right track.

**Carried by the audience**

An equally important milestone on this journey happened four years ago when she was on tour in Spain: after a cold turned into a severe inflammation of the throat, Rislane became more and more hoarse and almost lost her voice entirely. But cancelling was out of the question for her and she continued to perform in a different place every evening. At the end of the tour, she suddenly found that she was well again. "I am sure that was only possible because I was carried by my audience. And that's when I realised it is universal love that carries people. I know it sounds cheesy, but I wouldn't exist without the people out there." And that's where her artist name came from too: "Rislane and The Lovers". "The Lovers" refers to her audience.

This experience shaped her approach to life as well: "Love is the answer," says Rislane with a smile. "I'm convinced that love is the answer to many of our problems. If everyone acted in the interests of love, so many problems would be solved. And that's what I want to do with my music: spread as much love as possible."

Putting something positive back into the world is important to Rislane away from the stage too, and it is one of the reasons she has worked in accounting at the ETH Institute of Robotics and Intelligent Systems for seven years. "I like the fact that research is useful and application-oriented," says Rislane. What she particularly enjoys about her job is its logical nature: "I take care of invoices; everything is very clear and

structured – it's very different to the world of music."

**An incorrigible optimist**

The fact that she is able to combine these two sides of her life is down to the exceptional flexibility she has at ETH.

Although she only works part-time (20 percent), she is hugely valued by the entire team, according to Brigitte Spors, who also works in accounting and is friends with Rislane outside of work. "We just love her! She brings such a zest for life to the office and is such a warm person. An incorrigible optimist."

As a friend, there is one quality of Rislane's that she particularly values: "If you were having a rough time, you could call her at two in the morning and she would still answer the phone." She also admires her colleague's commitment to improving equality between men and women in the music industry.

Rislane's work colleagues have been able to enjoy her musical talents on a number of occasions, including at the 20th anniversary of the institute and this year's Christmas drinks reception.

Incidentally, she has never regretted the fact that she didn't go into research herself. "In a way, life as a whole is a kind of research," she says. "Who knows if there is a right way to do it?"

**Authors**  
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and Anna Maltsev

**Photo**  
Dan Cermak

# A visit to the new GLC building

A VISIT TO



9.00

If you walk through the ground floor of the GLC building in the morning, there are two things you're likely to hear: "We're just here for coffee actually," closely followed by "We're here because there's so much space." And yet most of the visitors on this November morning seem to be very taken with the new ETH building on Gloriastrasse in other ways as well.

"The GLC is cool. It has lots of good workspaces, there's a student canteen, the Archimedes Mensa, right here in the building and it's close to the tram stop. I think it's my new favourite building," says mechanical engineering student Janis, who is currently working on an innovation project with three fellow students. The project involves a test track and a mobile unit with an integrated robot arm which – in the future – will hopefully be capable of collecting, sorting and unloading cups.

## The lure of the coffee machine

While some are still working on their projects, the large entrance hall gradually fills up with more and more people, most of whom appear to be heading for the same destination: the coffee machine in the Bakery Bistro. That includes electrical engineering students Caroline and Ivan. Caroline has an exam soon, while Ivan is coming straight from a laboratory in the ETL building. The two of them have been coming to the GLC for their coffee breaks regularly for the last two months. "Otherwise I spend all my time in the lab underground – whereas here you get some sunlight," says Ivan. Up to now, however, this is the only floor he's visited. Caroline nods: "I've never seen the other floors either."

Roger and Thomas, on the other hand, know the building inside out. They are responsible for the GLC as part of the building services team and are

enjoying coffees from the bistro just a few metres away. "We've actually met to discuss the hot water situation in the ETZ building. We were supposed to meet there – but the coffee machine here was just too tempting," laughs Roger. "And now we've digressed a bit and we're thinking about how we could save more energy here. We're still in the phase of optimising every area of the GLC – and it will be a while before we're completely satisfied."

## Labs filled with light and music

Philip, on the other hand, already seems very satisfied – he is on the floor above and is preparing experiments for his Bachelor's thesis. Sunlight fills the laboratory, which Philip has almost to himself, and "Highway to Hell" by AC/DC can be heard in the background. This is because, according to the music schedule on the fridge, it is "Worldwide Wednesday". "You can tell the building is new – it's really nice and clean," says Philip. He also likes the fact that it is an interdisciplinary lab with researchers from lots of different departments.

One floor further up, doctoral student Lena is preparing for tomorrow's Future Day, where children will have the chance to control a "neurofeedback car" with their thoughts.

Back in June, a large proportion of the Rehabilitation Engineering Lab where she works moved from the Balgrist Campus to the GLC. "I think our office is much nicer than an open-plan space," says Lena. She works here alongside another doctoral student and two post-docs from her research group.

The Institute for Biomechanics has





**9.00** The workspaces on the ground floor are popular among students – including Janis and Tim.

**9.30** All of a sudden, the entire Institute for Biomechanics assembles in the courtyard to take a new group photo for the ETH website.

**10.15** Roger and Thomas from building services still think there is room for improvement in the GLC – although not when it comes to the coffee machine.

**10.30** Philip is preparing nano-pipettes. For his Bachelor's thesis, he is aiming to optimise a biosensor.





recently moved to the GLC too from the Hönggerberg campus and can now be found on the top floor (H). There was one thing that they absolutely had to bring with them: “We’ve had the table football table for more than ten years; it’s like a shrine for the entire lab,” says Florian, who discovered the delights of table football as a student before embarking on his doctorate. “It’s where we take our breaks and how we all get to know each other – plus it breaks down the hierarchical structures a bit,” he says, adding with a beaming smile: “We’re currently thinking about organising a table football tournament with the entire GLC.”

Whether the table football table might even outshine the coffee machine on the ground floor remains to be seen.

→ [www.ethz.ch/glc-en](http://www.ethz.ch/glc-en)

**10.40** Doctoral students Lena and Laura are happy with the quiet atmosphere in their new office.

**11.00** Not many people know about the table football table on H floor. But will that change if there is a tournament for the entire GLC?

**11.45** The Archimedes Mensa on the ground floor gradually fills up.



# Where did Orlando Wächter from Facility Services take this photo?

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Take a guess and send your answer to [life@hk.ethz.ch](mailto:life@hk.ethz.ch) by 31 January 2024.  
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Prize



SNAPSHOT

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## ANSWER

**August 2023 edition:** Carolin Arndt took this photo in the Science Lounge in the BSA building at D-BSSE in Basel. It shows doctoral students discussing their work in front of one of the four internal courtyards on the seventh floor. Congratulations to the winners: Anna Mei, Jan Michler and Leon Nissen!





# Looking at the stars

He and his successors – including Alfred Wolfer, pictured – used the telescope to count and observe sunspots. Research activities ceased in 1980 and the refractor was stored in the depot of the Stadtmuseum Aarau.

In August 2023, the historically significant refractor was restored to its original location. Other astronomical instruments from Rudolf Wolf's collection can be viewed in a permanent exhibition at the observatory, which is now home to the Collegium Helveticum.

→ [www.ethz.ch/telescope](http://www.ethz.ch/telescope)

A huge refracting telescope was installed in the dome of the Semper Observatory of the Federal Polytechnic Institute in 1864. The refractor was commissioned by astronomy professor and observatory founder Rudolf Wolf.