



Martin Oeggerli sees the world as a scientist and an artist: both perspectives are reflected in his pictures as he studies the shapes and sublime beauty of the earth's smallest living organisms:

„I just love to explore hidden places and mysterious creatures. By blending my imagination with real insights, I aim to expand the terrain through extravagant unexpected things viewed up close.”



Photograph by Pablo Wünsch Blanco

The Swiss photographer has collected and explored pollen grains, insect eggs, or mites from every corner of the earth. His images are based on scanning-electron-microscopy (SEM). Utilizing electrons instead of photons, SEM technology is capable to produce images with magnifications up to 500'000-times or even more, thereby expanding the limits of traditional photography. Oeggerli has put cancer cells on stage, and always painstakingly reconstructs colors that cannot be detected using SEM technology. Hence, Oeggerli is spending much of his time post-processing preliminary b/w-SEM scans. Being a scientist as much as an artist, he tries to transmit his knowledge by presenting unique insights into scientific phenomena and unknown territory of invisibly small creatures and their structures. But the purpose of his work goes beyond the exhibition of beauty:

“I want to broaden people's awareness that there are tons of tiny things around us that may play a pivotal role in our life, even if we can't see it: just think of COVID-19. As research topics are becoming more and more complex, it is critical to use convincing and visually powerful images to document and communicate the new scientific findings, in order to not only approach the intellectual elite but make the facts available for everyone”.

MARTIN OEGGERLI aka MICRONAUT was born in Switzerland in 1974. He has studied at the University of Basel and holds a doctorate degree in medical molecular biology. He started specializing on color scanning-electron-microscopy imaging late in 2005, and since then he works as a freelance science photographer.

His images are published by the greatest names in science and photography, such as: BBC, Nature, Cell, VOGUE and National Geographic. Over the years, he has received numerous awards, including 'International Photography Awards' (2010, 2011), 'Photography Master's Cup' (2011), 'Best Scientific Cover Image' (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014), 'Best Image of Research' (2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010), 'German Prize for Scientific Photography' (2009, 2011). In 2011, he was nominated 'International Photographer of the Year – Special Photography' and invited by the prominent Chinese Artist and Art Director Ai Weiwei to represent the field of Science & Art at the Gwangju Design Biennale, South Korea. In 2012 Nature has published an interview-article about his career. His collaboration with the University Basel lead to the world's first moving 3D-IMAX sequences with SEM/FIB, published by National Geographic Venture ('Unseen World'). In 2015 Oeggerli published two more feature articles in National Geographic ('Mighty Mites', Feb 2015, and 'Bug-Eyed', June 2015), followed by 'Leben in Uns / Microbes II' (April 2018 / Jan 2020), and 'How Herbs get their Flavor' (Sep 2019). For GEO he produced two articles ('Giftzwerge', Nr.11/2019 and 'Unser Darm', Nr.6/2020). In 2020 he was asked by the Swiss Post to produce a special stamp series (Microscopic Art Edition). Micronaut images are frequently used as cover by scientific journals. Nature published an article about Micronaut's career (2012) and CELL is featuring Micronaut images in one of their online picture shows, along with an interview and two-page comic to illuminate the daily life of the artist.



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Testimonials

Ai Weiwei

Artistic Director
2011 Gwangju Design Biennale

"I greatly admire your innovative work."

Prof. Dr. Michael Peres

School of Photographic
Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

„I have seen Martin’s work. Stunning.“

David Griffin

Director of Photography (2005-2010)
National Geographic

*„You are attaining a level of subtlety (...) of an accomplished painter.
Extraordinary images.“*

Dr. med. Wolfgang Bengel

Vice president DGZMB,
Lennart Nilsson-Award Committee Member

„Martin has put scientific photography on a new esthetic level.“

Dr. Gordon Hendler

Curator Natural History Museum,
Los Angeles County

*„Nature, down to its most minute details (...) and your artistry amplifies
the effect- exceptional.“*

Todd James

Senior Photo Editor
National Geographic Magazine

"It is a wonderful tribute to the miraculous process of evolution"

Shannon Hibberd

Photo Editor
National Geographic Explorer

*"The images are utterly sensational! The clarity and colors are
gorgeous... truly one of a kind images."*

Dr. Bill Hearl

CEO Immunomic Therapeutics, Inc.

*"The print looks beautiful! (...). It really is extraordinary work... you are a
modern master!"*