



Press Release - For immediate release.

3. Art Safiental (18th July to 1st November 2020)
Alps Art Academy (24. September to 3rd October 2020)
ILEA Talks (26./27. September 2020)

Land Art in Safiental: Analog-Digital

From July 18, the 3rd international Biennial Art Safiental 2020 will present contemporary land art responding to the theme of 'Analog-Digital'. This open-air exhibition takes place throughout the entire municipality of Safiental in the Beverin Nature Park, from the Rhine Gorge to the Turrahus and beyond. Visitors will be able to experience a complex interaction between the ancient and beautiful mountain landscape and the new possibilities of digital art. This year's theme, 'Analog-Digital', locates many contributions to the exhibition in the cloud or on the mobile phone whilst maintaining its roots in the spectacular landscape of Safiental. In addition to a 15 weeks exhibition (July 18 to November 1) and the 10 days academy (September 24 to October 3), the research and scientific component of the project has an ongoing year-round presence in the Safiental in the form of the ILEA (the Institute for Land and Environmental Art).

'Analog-Digital' was chosen two years ago as the theme for the 3rd Art Safiental 2020. At the time no one suspected that the current pandemic would redefine this topic in such a way that, in addition to a lot of suffering, it has also caused major innovations in the area of digitization. Art Safiental is organised by the Beverin Nature Park, together with the Institute for Land and Environmental Art (ILEA), which was founded in 2019. Artistic director Johannes M. Hedinger, who founded the Biennale and Academy in 2016 and has been leading it since, also curates the third edition of Art Safiental. He has secured contributions from over 17 national and international artists who will respond to the 'Analog-Digital' theme, creating exciting dialogues with the landscape, nature and Alpine context.

In keeping with the theme, and in addition to the physical presentation of some large-scale works, many of the works in the exhibition will be located at the intersection of the analog and digital, some will even be purely digital in nature. This presents an exciting opportunity to experience new media and technologies more often associated with the urban environment in the context of the mountain valleys of Grisons. The range of media includes VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) apps, game culture, social media and film (with and without drones) as well as an audio walk, performances and physical installations, sculpture, photography and painting. In keeping with the character of the Safiental and its scattered Walser settlements, work can be found all over the municipal area, from the Rhine Gorge to Z'hinderst.

Art Safiental curator Johannes M. Hedinger states: "The 2020 edition will be different from the two previous exhibitions. In addition to the familiar site specific and functional works, there will be novel digital and immersive formats and technologies which will appeal to the senses in new ways and communicate differently. However, the full impact of this Land Art exhibition can still only be experienced on site in the Safiental. Today, while physical distancing determines our lives, it is still crucial that we physically engage with the objects and environments that are important to us. Art Safiental stages an encounter between nature and art. The spaces it creates combine the everyday and the extraordinary and evoke lively perceptions, reflection and engagement."

For Safiental's Mayor Thomas Buchli, this year's Art Safiental is particularly valuable: "We are pleased that our beautiful mountain valley will probably gain a lot more attraction with the exhibition this summer and autumn. After the many corona-related problems and losses this is of great importance for our farmers and companies. In addition, the topic of 'analog-digital' is extremely exciting for us locals. Because even if the Safiental is perceived as the epitome of the analog, the fact is that digitization is becoming increasingly important here too."

The mountain valley as a source of inspiration and a studio

Some of the artists have been researching and developing their work for over a year and have also been active in the valley. For example, the French artist *Melodie Mousset* used maintenance work at the Zervreila power plants last summer to walk over 7 km through the empty water gallery under the mountain between Safien Platz and Thalkirch. This resulted in a film and photo works that are now being presented outside the usually hidden duct in Thalkirch. *Patrick Rohner*, from Glarus, scanned the Rabiusa Delta with a drone at the entrance of the Rhine Gorge. His multi-part work 'Nature knows no catastrophes' deals with climate change in Safiental and links it to a similar situation in Bergell, where Rohner presents the second part of the work at the Biennale Bregaglia 2020, which takes place at the same time, thus connecting the two biennials. The photo artist *Ester Vonplon*, located not far from the Safiental in Castrisch, will expose her photos in nature and then process some of them digitally, the decommissioned Acla tunnel serving as her camera. The Basel artist *Denis Handschin* has been spending a second summer in the Safien Alps. He completed an apprenticeship as a shepherd, including an internship with Simon Buchli in Zalön. He will spend this year's Alpine season with a flock of sheep in the Safiental and report his 'daily sheep news' about the animals entrusted to him both on a billboard located on Safien Platz and digitally via blog and Instagram.

The latest technologies in a primordial landscape

In this year's exhibition, two artists position their work in virtual reality (VR), offering representation and perception of a computer-generated reality in real time and, in the case of Art Safiental, interactively (using video glasses). The German artist *Manuel Rossner* nests his high-performance computer in a Safier stable. Visitors can immerse themselves in a 3D model of the Safien Valley and virtually hike to digital sculptures created by the artist. By way of contrast the VR installation by the three-person artist collective *Fragmentin* from Lausanne is quite physical: After the approximately two-hour ascent from Tenna to the 2283m high Schlüechkli, visitors will encounter a solar-powered weather station in the form of a triangulation point. With a VR headset, the visitor will experience the actual landscape in digital form augmented by visual representations of weather data including the wind, temperature and electromagnetic waves. Three works are based on Augmented Reality (AR), in which reality is expanded by the superimposition of computer-generated information. In her work the American artist *Nancy Baker Cahill* uses her self-developed app "Fourth Wall", with which visitors can experience 3D works by the artist in the natural landscape. A new work will be created exclusively for Art Safiental, which can only be seen and experienced at certain coordinates in the valley.

The Grisons artist *Curdin Tones* and the Dutch artist *Jan Robert Leegte* work with the "Fatschadas" app, developed for the Engadin cultural initiative SOMALGORS74. They have created new digital decor and inscriptions for two house facades in Valendas and Camanaboda, which you can experience on site with your smartphone or tablet.

The young Zurich-based artist *Sara Rutz* will be the first artist in residence at the ILEA institute at the Berghotel Alpenblick in Tenna during the Biennale. She plans to develop a nonlinear game during her stay. To do this, she will scan the Safiental landscape with a 3D model scanner and use it to build an interactive digital scavenger hunt.

The installation "ctrl + s (precarious places)" by the artist duo *frölicher / bietenhader*, who recently won the Grisons Art Prize, leads back to the analog. Reminiscent of a digitally corrupted image but intentionally created, a glitch envelops the old Walser stable situated above Bäch.

Drones are omnipresent today - whether as children's toys or providing footage on the daily news. Despite their impressive wingspans of 10 to 40m, Military drones are rarely seen as they fly at an altitude of up to 20km. This is exactly what the British artist *James Bridle* wants to make visible in the tranquil mountain village of Valendas, creating "drone shadows" which trace their menacing outlines on the narrow streets.

Signification and sensation

At three locations in the valley, the artist *Bruno Jakob*, who often paints with water, light and energy, will create empty white canvases and engage receptive viewers on a spiritual level. The audio walk by Zurich performer *Lucie Tuma* will also stimulate new perceptions. She invites the visitor to accompany her alter ego *Amber Tardis* on a walk while she relates a story. The one-hour circuit will lead to the end of the valley behind the Turrahus, there will also be further routes in the front valley. "Polycloud" can also be streamed or downloaded in advance. The Geneva-based artist *Marie Velardi* will create hiking signposts in two locations in the valley that do not lead to a conventional destination or relate to the cardinal points of the compass. An arrow points vertically into the ground indicating the centre of the earth (about 6,500 km) while a second arrow points vertically upwards and marking the end of the Earth's atmosphere, at a distance of about 800 km. These simple ratios and references make us aware of our own scale and relationship with the environment.

Recurring and participatory projects

Appenzell networker and conceptual artist *H.R. Fricker* loves stone and, on the basis of his contributions to the preceding two Safiental Biennials, the local population shares his affection. This year he will borrow their personal favourite stones and the stories associated with them and exhibit them in Versam. In 2020 the popular mountain pulpit and guest book will make a return. After the wooden structure created by the artist duo *Com & Com* (Marcus Gossolt & Johannes M. Hedinger) appeared at the back of the valley near the waterfall in 2016 and at the front of the valley above Versamertobel in 2018, it will provide a new perspective in 2020 with a location in the middle of the valley on the trail to the Glaspas, a steep hour's walk above Safien Platz.

Walking to the work is part of the experience

Virtually all of the work presented in Art Safiental 2020 is accessible by hiking trails, in some cases it is also accessible by public transport or private car. For some works a walking time up to 60 - 90 minutes should be expected. If you want to visit all of the works in the Biennale, plan for at least two days. A map with information about the works and hiking tips will be available from mid-July (both online and as a folding map in all hotels, restaurants and information points in the valley). Information about the work will be available on site and at the website www.artsafiental.ch. Some hotels in the valley will offer special Art Safiental packages. Collaboration with local companies, such as the Rössli brewery in Versam, with whom a special Art Safiental beer is being developed, is ongoing.

Events

Individual visitors or small groups will be able to explore Art Safiental 2020 without restrictions. Events will take place in accordance with the instructions of the BAG. The program of the vernissage (18/19th July) and finissage (Oct 31, November 1st) will be published at a later time. Guided tours by artists from Art Safiental are planned on four Sundays: August 2nd, August 23rd, September 20th and October 18th, 2020. In cooperation with the ETH Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Systems (ETH IRIS), a science and robot day is planned. On Saturday and Sunday, the 5th and 6th September 2020 (alternate dates 10th and 11th October), there will be a demonstration of robots and exoskeletons climbing Tenner Chrüz. The latest details of these and other events can be found at www.artsafiental.ch.

Visiting Safiental and the Beverin nature park

Together with the municipality of Safiental, the Beverin Nature Park is the sponsor of Art Safiental. It is the task of the nature park, together with the twelve park communities, including Safiental, to strive for sustainable economic and social development. Benedikt Joos, the Project Leader for Product Management and Culture at the Beverin Nature Park, is looking forward to the upcoming open-air biennial: "Art Safiental focuses on the intact natural and cultural landscape in the Safiental valley and combines sustainable development with innovation and tourism and nature in an exemplary manner with international appeal." Switzerland is a popular summer holiday destination for visitors seeking fresh air and healthy stimulation for the body, mind and soul. From day trips to holidays in combination with hiking, local cuisine and Alpine wellness, Art Safiental 2020 compliments these activities with its appealing program.

Tenna becomes a centre for international land and environmental art

Founded in 2019, the INSTITUTE FOR LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL ART (ILEA) moved into permanent rooms in the Berghotel Alpenblick in Tenna in 2020 providing research and artistic production in the area of Land Art and Environmental Art in the Safiental a permanent home.

The ILEA also organises the ALPS ART ACADEMY (international summer academy, September 24th to October 3rd, 2020) and the ILEA TALKS (symposium, September 26/27, 2020), which this year, due to the current situation, will only take place in autumn.

In addition to the Art Safiental Biennale and the Academy, the aim of the ILEA Institute is to become an information, research and competence centre for Land Art and Environmental Art. The first long-term studies have already been started and an initial publication was produced last winter. In addition to the office and library, it also hosts a residency for selected artists and scientists. This year, a year-round exhibition will be staged at the Berghotel Alpenblick. In addition to the permanent exhibition, there are several temporary exhibitions every year. This summer the ILEA will present a small cabinet exhibition devoted to *Furk'Art* (art on the Furka in the 80s and 90s) which will provide a historical reference to art in the Alpine region. Additionally, there will be a selection of work by *H.R. Fricker* celebrating 30 years of the artist's passion for stones.

Complimentary publication

LANDSCAPE is a series of publications in German and English, edited by Johannes M. Hedinger and Hanna Hölling, for the Institute for Land and Environmental Art (ILEA). It deals with the theory, history and latest trends in art in the peripheral, rural and Alpine landscape. In addition to scientific essays and a glossary of the concept of landscape, the publication documents the works of the two previous Safiental Biennials. It is available for 33 francs from Vexer Verlag St. Gallen (ISBN 978-3-909090-94-5).

Technology and equipment

Most of the works presented at this year's Biennale can be experienced without technology. However, a mobile phone is required for five of them. For the augmented reality works by *Nancy Baker Cahill*, *Curdin Tones* and *Jan Robert Leegte*, a free app can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play. The audio work by *Lucie Tuma* can be heard as a live stream but it is better to download the file to your mobile phone beforehand. It is also helpful to have headphones with you. A mobile device with a QR code reader is also required for the film component of *Patrick Rohner's* project. Using QR code signage in the landscape, visitors will be directed to a film, which is streamed live. A QR code is also displayed by all of the work boards which will lead directly to the artist's website.

The two virtual reality works can be experienced using the computers provided with a VR headset. While *Manuel Rossner* permanently installed a computer, in the case of *Fragmentin* visitors will have to carry part of the equipment to the mountain outside of the fixed presentation times.

Partners and support

The Art Safiental exhibition would never have been possible without the generous support of the sponsors, the Beverin Nature Park and the municipality of Safiental as well as numerous foundations, sponsors, patrons and partners. This year a thematic partnership has been established with the Migros Kulturprozent which has enabled the production of three works of art within the framework of a sponsorship competition. Last but not least: the exhibition is again free this year but anyone who appreciates and wants to support the work can now help with a small donation via QR code or TWINT which will enable the exhibition to take place again in two years.

Participating artists Art Safiental 2020 (as of May 2020)

Nancy Baker Cahill (US)

James Bridle (UK)

Com&Com (CH)

Fragmentin (CH)

H.R. Fricker (CH)

Frölicher / Bietenhader (CH)

Denis Handschin (CH)

Bruno Jakob (US/CH)
Jan Robert Leegte (NL)
Melodie Mousset (FR/CH)
Patrick Rohner (CH)
Manuel Rossner (DE)
Sara Rutz (CH)
Curdin Tones (CH/NL)
Lucie Tuma (CH)
Marie Velardi (CH)
Ester Vonplon (CH)

Information and contacts

www.artsafiental.ch: Exhibition, works, list of artists, map, hiking tips, events, photos, videos
www.alpsartacademy.ch: Summer academy, symposium, works by participants, photos, videos
www.ilea.art: Office, research, archive, publications, projects, indoor exhibitions
www.safiental.ch/tourismus: Accommodation and tourist information, Tel +41 81 630 60 16
Facebook: @alpsartacademy
Instagram: @land_and_environmental_art
Hashtags: #artsafiental, #alpsartacademy, #ilea

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