

**1st international *Alps Art Academy* (26.6. - 2.7.2016)  
and *Art Safiental* open-air exhibit (2.7. – 31.9. 2016)**

## **Land Art - the Safien valley surprises itself**

**From June 26<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016, the first international *Alps Art Academy* on the topic of *Land Art* will take place in Safiental (canton Graubünden, Switzerland). Students and lecturers from all parts of the world will create contemporary ephemeral art works during eight on-site workshops throughout the valley. The resulting pieces will be exposed during the first *Art Safiental* open-air exhibit, running from July 2<sup>nd</sup> until fall 2016.**

The first *Alps Art Academy* explores Land Art as an art form. Throughout eight different workshops, students and lecturers will create art in dialogue with nature and landscape. Different topics and media linked with the contemporary practice of Land Art will be put into question, challenged, and developed. What are current and new tendencies of Land Art in open architectural and social spaces, in interaction with other media and in a dialogue with society? A seminar will approach the historical and theoretical aspects of this art form, and another one will be dedicated to mediating art.

### **Why Safiental?**

The Safiental region is perfectly suited for Land Art in many different ways. The powerful, authentic landscape with its steep mountain flanks and imposing Rhein Gorge features extensive surfaces of raw nature. For Land artists, this makes for a wonderful setting. On top of that, the Safien valley is not overloaded with cultural activities. Next to a lively community life and a couple of projects mostly linked with the conservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the area like that of the Walser culture, there is room for something new. Communal president Thomas Buchli's statement confirms the Safiental region's reputation for being open-minded: "Artists will be working with our resources, our surroundings and our nature. This brings forth a potential for innovation that we can use." The works of Land Art will be located on carefully selected spots spread out through the entire area of the Safiental municipality. Hotel Alpenblick in Tenna will be the meeting point and hub for participants during the academy as well as for guests during the exhibit.

The association "Pro Safiental", which is dedicated to promoting sustainability in culture, business, agriculture and tourism, is a key partner to the Alps Art Academy and open-air exhibit Art Safiental. Jolanda Rechsteiner, CEO at Safiental Tourismus and Pro Safiental, is also the operative manager of both projects. She is looking forward to hosting the event: "it's a great opportunity for the Safien valley to stage itself in a completely different way. Thanks to the exhibition Art Safiental, we may attract a different type of culture and art-loving tourism. As for the academy, we expect participants to enjoy an enriching experience and perhaps to become enthusiastic ambassadors for our valley, spreading the news to their sometimes-faraway countries. It's the best possible touristic promotion, and it comes almost for free."

### **A sustainable experiment**

Artist and art researcher Johannes M. Hedinger is the father and artistic director of the project. He sees a lot of potential in the double pilot project: "Sustainability is a key issue for the Alp Arts Academy and the Art Safiental exhibit. But they are also experimental labs, because we will be dealing with partly unknown scales. This is exactly the point where we expect interesting and productive discussions to take place – between art and nature, between international artists and

locals. I'm really excited about the cultural diversity and transcultural collaboration that will take place with the 30 participants from about 20 different countries. Next to Switzerland, Germany and Austria, artists and lecturers from a broad range of countries such as India, Columbia, Spain, Thailand, Australia, Hong Kong, Finland, Palestine, UK, Iceland, Venezuela, South Africa and the USA will be attending. We offer a few grants covering travel expenses and participation fees to those in need. What will happen, when all these people come together to make art? How will the Safien valley influence them, and what will be their influence on it? And how will the whole project be perceived by the local population and the visitors?" This last aspect will be decisive as to how often the *Alps Art Academy* and the open-air exhibit *Art Safiental* will take place in the future.

### **Art hopping with hiking shoes**

The art works created during the workshops will be presented to the public at the opening on Saturday, 2.7.2016, a date which serves both as the closing point of the Alps Art Academy, and the opening of the Art Safiental exhibition. A publication in the form of a "hiking map" will lead visitors through the exhibit and feature small explanatory texts. Visitors must nevertheless literally and metaphorically find their way to the pieces, as this is an important aspect of the Land Art concept—the idea that one needs to go on a journey in order to experience the pieces. Hotel Alpenblick in Tenna will serve as information center for the exhibit during the entire summer and feature a small collection of books on the theme of Land Art in its library.

### **Information**

For regular updates and impressions: [www.alpsartacademy.com](http://www.alpsartacademy.com) and (from June 15<sup>th</sup> 2016) [www.artsafiental.ch](http://www.artsafiental.ch)

### **Media professionals – for your calendar:**

Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 9.00 AM - 5.00 PM Hotel Alpenblick, Tenna  
Opening symposium of the Alps Art Academy – rsvp preferred ([info@alpsartacademy.ch](mailto:info@alpsartacademy.ch))

Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, starting 10.00 AM, press event at the Hotel Alpenblick, Tenna followed by a guided tour of the exhibit and the official opening in presence of all the artists and lecturers from 11.00 AM– 4.00PM, closing party at the Hotel Alpenblick with music and barbecue starting 18.00. A detailed invitation will follow.

Academy participants, lecturers or workshops may be contacted and attended for journalistic purposes. Beforehand permission is requested.

**Press pictures:** a selection of pictures is available on [www.alpsartacademy.ch/presse](http://www.alpsartacademy.ch/presse). For pictures of specific works, lecturers or Safiental landscapes, please contact the media representative.

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