

# MALOJA

## ARTE BREGAGLIA

5.7.08 - 21.9.08

# CHIAVENNA

**An art course from Maloja to Chiavenna**  
**July 5 – September 21 2008**

**Arte Bregaglia: Contemporary art comes to the Bergell, to a valley of Italian language and alpine culture on the southern border of Switzerland. It is situated on the driving route from Milan to St. Moritz and is usually just perceived as a transit valley. The Bergell is an inside tip; only a few persons know it better. It connects the Swiss stone pine forests of Maloja (1800 metres) with the southern gardens of the little Italian town Chiavenna (300 metres), where it is called Valchiavenna. 13 artists, women and men, have been visiting the Bergell, have been examining, exploring and experiencing it. During a summer's time, they are going to show their works, thus reacting to the special historical, cultural and political conditions of this region. What they all have in common is the context-related procedure, which takes up traces of the past, makes them visible and lets them appear in a new light.**

The works of the artists who participate in the exhibition project Arte Bregaglia make a chain of interventions, installations and interactions, a chain which goes through the whole valley, stretching from Maloja to Chiavenna.

**Ursula Palla**, an artist from the canton of Grisons living in Zürich, opens up the "station path" with her audio-visual installation "passages". Near the tower Belvedere in Maloja, laughter is being heard, spreading over the whole valley, sounding from an optically unobtrusive source, sometimes in a cheerful and carefree, at other times in a malicious or mocking manner, before fading away. Up here near the tower, the German artist **Pfelder** furnishes his "room with a view". In the ruins of the ancient hotel, which was erected by the Belgian Count de Renesse, he designs three bivouac-like accommodations, which together form a sculpture.

The German artist **Olaf Nicolai** recalls the Italian editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. To commemorate his untimely death in a misdirected bomb blast intended for a power pole, Nicolai declares a tree to be a sculpture, bedecking it with red isolators. Thus this nature sculpture turns into an ambiguous metaphor.

The artist **Chiara Dynys** from Milan chose the Gothic church ruin Gaudenzio. In the apse of the open room, she places a model church true to scale, composed of two letterings of Gothic letters – Bellezza (beauty) and Sobrietà (sobriety, modesty). In these two terms, the polar identity of the valley is collected and increased.

In Vicosoprano, **Patricia Jegher**, an artist from the canton of Grisons living in Zürich, invites the visitors to the "Hotel Helvetia". With her temporary sculptural monument, a box to walk on, she reminds us of the ancient Hotel Helvetia, which served as an internment home for refugees. Not far from the Hotel Helvetia, hidden in an idyllic clearing of the forest, two cylindrical stone towers rise. They served as gallows up to the 18th century. On this spot, the Bergellian artist **Piero del Bondio** appears in different performances, choosing as a central theme the feelings of pain and fear yesterday and today.

On the bridge over the Maira, which leads to the Castelmur, **Roman Signer**, a Swiss artist living in St. Gallen, would like to project an image on the water, which, as dusk is falling, shows how he

is navigating the river in a kayak on this very spot. During the day, this activity on the water will be continually replayed on a monitor.

**Ariane Epars**, an artist from Lausanne, stops by the church Nossa Donna near Promontogno. As a subtle reader of traces she uncovers layers of the historically important site, and recharges them with new energy through subtle interventions.

**Rémy Markowitsch**, an artist from Zürich living in Berlin, follows the traces of emigrated inhabitants of the valley to Africa. Below Soglio, very close to hay stables and little houses for drying chestnuts, which have partly been converted into summer residences, he builds an African round hut, which carries a chestnut as well as a fetish on its roof. Social, historical and architectural clichés and stereotypes meet, charged with tension, and mutually question each other.

The artist **Bethan Huws** from Wales living in Paris brings light into the dark of a small tunnel below Soglio. With a sidelong look to Marcel Duchamp, she borrows from his famous work "Étant donnés" the woman's arm holding a lamp.

Near the customs office, on the closely guarded boundary between the Swiss and the Italian part of the valley, the artist **Luigi Serafini** from Milan plans a swing. Who sits down on it, carelessly swings over the political frontiers, questioning them by his light and gliding presence.

The artist **Michael Günzburger** from Zürich has looked around the many restaurants of the valley. At least for the duration of the exhibition, a series of his subtle and poetic drawings decorates their walls.

The Berlin based artist **Simone Zaugg** from Berne deals with our experience of time. Her sugar sculpture 'A WAY' refers to the Bergell as a valley of transit as well as to the confectioners who saw themselves forced to emigrate.

Paradiso – the botanical garden on a rocky hill rising directly above the little town Chiavenna - is wrapped up in a cloud of sounds. Here Zaugg lets a Bergellian female choir start singing melodies. In different languages, growing, being and passing by in the valley and in the world are celebrated in song. The voices mingle with the waves of laughter, which also oscillates between pain and pleasure.

To mark ArteBregaglia, a two-part publication will be published by Verlag Periferia Poschiavo/Luzern. The first part, which will be available before the opening of the exhibition, documents the entire ArteBregaglia project. Texts (by Angelika Affentranger-Kirchrath, Lucia Buzzetti, Anna Giacometti, Patrizia Guggenheim) and sketch-like contributions by the artists present the gestation of each individual art work and highlight the tension between idea and realisation. In a second part, which will appear later, renowned photographer Raymond Meier presents the completed art works in a leporello fold. Last but not least, an attractive fringe programme, featuring such highlights as the culinary event "Grenzfall" by the Thurgau artist Max Bottini, will accentuate the art trail.

**Private view of exhibition: Saturday, July 5 2008, Promontogno, Hotel Bregaglia**

**Press conference: Friday, July 4 2008, 13.30: ewz administrative building, Vicosoprano (ewz)**

**Further information on:**

**[www.artebregaglia.ch](http://www.artebregaglia.ch)**

**[www.periferia.ch](http://www.periferia.ch)**