

Martina Altschäfer

true places II

**Exhibition from 19th March to 24th April 2021,
extended until 29th May 2021**

A catalogue with a text by Christoph Peters will be published.

On the occasion of the exhibition, Jochen L. Stöckmann will lead a conversation with the artist, which will be available afterwards on the gallery's website.

During the lockdown, exhibition viewing is by appointment only or online.

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Tues to Sat, 12 to 6 p.m.

and by appointment

With *true places II*, Galerie Poll continues an earlier exhibition of high alpine drawings by Martina Altschäfer. Whereas the mountain landscapes shown in 2016 were mostly deserted, the artist now sets figures from the world of myths and legends within her *true places* derived from reality and imagination.

In his essay for the catalogue, Christoph Peters describes the mood that captivates Martina Altschäfer, and which she captures in drawings on paper, with virtuoso technique, using coloured pencil, pastel chalk, and gouache: "Since time immemorial, mountain peaks have been places of longing and forbidden zones, transitional spaces between heaven and earth ... They are considered to be the seat of the gods or of demonic powers, who must be placated with sacrifices, processions, and prayers to ensure a happy fate or to avert wrath or punishment. It is through mountain peaks that earthly space projects most deeply into the infinity of the cosmos. In towering up as mountains, the heavy mass of inert matter almost seems to be following an inherent transcendence, growing beyond itself to approach the sun – the source of light and warmth necessary for all life. Nowhere on earth does this light shine more intensely than on snow-covered mountains."

Martina Altschäfer's drawings develop slowly over months, layer by layer. They are based on photographs, yet above all on impressions and moods that have inscribed themselves in the artist's memory during her forays through the Gotthard massif.

All of her drawings evince the beauty and harmony that Altschäfer achieves through her use of light and colour. Her dramaturgy of light makes the vast mountain landscapes appear at times enigmatically surreal, at times threatening. With her sledge in *Milk I* (2017), the woman farmer appears to come from another world, as do the two hikers decorated bombastically with flowers in *Spring* (2020). In this drawing, Altschäfer exaggerates figures of Alemannic customs that bid farewell to winter and welcome springtime. *Rauhnacht* (2020) – a reference to the twelve nights of celebration near the end of the year to mark the turning of winter – depicts a procession of six hikers

through the mountains shortly before nightfall. They too wear elaborate headdresses as they walk through a lonely, deserted, snowy landscape. Custom holds that on the nights named in its title the gate to the “other world” opens up and evil spirits are to be banished through rituals or magical acts.

In the rendering of the sky with its cloud formations, and through the illumination in the scenes she depicts, the artist allows hidden forces of nature to become manifest in her drawings. The works reflect Martina Altschäfer’s mastery of both the large format (up to 130 x 160 cm) and of the miniature. In these drawings, the line as a formative element increasingly withdraws in her blurring and rubbing of colours, giving way to a painterly depth.

Martina Altschäfer, born 1960 in Rüsselsheim, studied fine arts and German language and literature at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz and painting at the Düsseldorf Art Academy (Kunstakademie Düsseldorf). In 1991 she completed her studies as a master student of Prof. Konrad Klapheck. From 1990 to 1997 she taught drawing and painting at the Johannes Gutenberg University and at the University of Applied Sciences Wiesbaden (Fachhochschule Wiesbaden). Martina Altschäfer has received numerous scholarships and has been awarded several prizes. Works by the artist are held in private and public collections, including the collection of the Deutsche Bank, the Kunstmuseum Albstadt, the Gutenberg Museum Mainz, and the Landesmuseum Mainz. In recent years, Martina Altschäfer has published short stories in a collection titled *Brandmeldungen* (2018) and a novel, *Andrin* (2020), both of which appeared with Mirabilis Verlag. She lives and works in Rüsselsheim.

Exhibition Catalogue

True Places. Martina Altschäfer

Drawings 2014–2021

with an essay by Jochen L. Stöckmann and numerous coloured illustrations

29 x 23cm, 48 pages, hardcover, with French flaps

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Price: 200 euros, during the exhibition: 180 euros

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