

HOW NATURE CHANGES IN THE ALPS WALTER NIEDERMAYR EXPLORES LECH IN CONTRASTING SEASONS

The artist and photographer Walter Niedermayr questions common landscape clichés in his work. Niedermayr's publication *Raumaneignungen – Lech 2015/16 (Appropriating space – Lech 2015/16)* focuses on the popular winter sports region, opening up new perspectives of nature as it changes with every season.

Berlin, December 15, 2016 – Lech is a small, yet famous tourist destination in the Austrian Alps. For centuries, mining left its mark on the mountains, but in the early twentieth century, the region turned to tourism out of economic necessity. Every winter snow blankets the landscape around the Arlberg; vegetation and topography vanish beneath the whiteness. Only the structures required for winter sports remain visible. In summer a completely different, far more multi-faceted landscape appears.

Walter Niedermayr (*1952) spent forty-eight months traveling repeatedly to the same places throughout the year with his camera, capturing the atmosphere there, as well as the changes in the landscape. At first glance, the works from his series *Raumaneignungen – Lech 2015/16* may seem to be simply aesthetically pleasing, but upon closer inspection they also reveal disruptions and shifts that challenge readers to think about the various perspectives of nature and the treatment of landscape in general.

Raumaneignungen – Lech 2015/16 makes it possible to see what conventional landscape, advertising, and sports photography don't like to show: the color reduced pictures dissect the spaces where Alpine tourism occurs, questioning the reality behind the photographs from a reflexive distance. This distanced gaze doesn't allow us to take anything for granted. "The series isn't meant to show us views of the mountains around Lech," says the curator and art historian Catherine Grout in her essay accompanying the series in this book. Rather, Niedermayr's seismographic sensitivity could be seen as an early warning system that makes readers critically aware of conditions and latent developments, adds the publisher and Lech hotelier Gerold Schneider.

Since the 1980s Niedermayr has consistently worked on projects in which he examines space as a place of artificial reality occupied by people. Perceptions of space and of atmosphere in both open and closed areas comprise recurring themes in his photographic and video works. Alpine regions, urban structures, architecture, and industry are sites for his investigations.

Raumaneignungen – Lech 2015/16 contains fifty series of photos, each of them consisting of at least two or more works of art; an introductory essay by Catherine Grout and excerpts from conversations between the artist and the publisher round out the book. The book launch on December 17 also includes the opening of an accompanying exhibition, which will be on display until April 2017 in *allmeinde commongrounds* in Lech.



WALTER NIEDERMAYR
RAUMANEIGNUNGEN - LECH 2015/2016

Foreword by Gerold Schneider
Essays by Catherine Grout, graphic design by
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ABOUT HATJE CANTZ

Hatje Cantz is a groundbreaking international publishing company specializing in art, architecture, and photography. Since 1945 Hatje Cantz has been using its profound expertise and enthusiasm for craftsmanship to produce and publish books of the highest quality. We currently release around two hundred new titles annually.

Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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