

## **Andriu Deplazes**

Location: Pfisterhuesli, first floor, left

As we climb the stairs and enter the room on the left, we are immersed in a universe of images, painted windows, objects, and sculptures.

We invited Andriu Deplazes to create a new group of works for the Backstage Engelberg exhibition. The Swiss artist, who lives in Marseille, intensively explored the tourist attractions of the Alpine village, such as the local sports activities, nature, mysticism, and the Engelberg Monastery. The result is an exhibition within an exhibition, which Deplazes calls Body Recreation.

Andriu Deplazes is interested in the complexities and contradictions of everyday life. His work repeatedly shows that he is inspired by 19th-century paintings by artists such as Ferdinand Hodler or Giovanni Segantini. Yet, he works in a very contemporary way.

For one of his new works in the Pfisterhuesli, Deplazes has worked with an image of an altar boy by the French artist Chaïm Soutine. *Enfant de chœur*, as the title suggests, is the French term for altar boy. On the plexiglass window to the left, we see a subtle reference to the religious tradition of the monastic village of Engelberg. Next to it, we discover a second stained glass window depicting a body sitting cross-legged in meditation. With these two images, Deplazes asks whether today's new religion could be called yoga. He also makes a connection with the history of the Engelberg mystics.

In the Backstage Engelberg exhibition, Andriu Deplazes has taken a completely new approach: Never before has he combined painting and sculpture so intensively. The archaic hands are an allegory of the town's past, as the Pfisterhuesli once served as a bakery for the monastery. Combined with the white doves, the colored fluorescent eggs in wire mesh, and the intense painting, Andriu Deplazes creates a delicate balance between metaphorical ambiguity and a lively thirst for knowledge.