

Monica Ursina Jäger

Location: Ochsenmatt Gadä, ground floor

In the 1670s, Thomas Burnet crossed the Simplon Pass several times. The man was English and on a Grand Tour with several sons of nobility. In view of the “wild, vast undigested heaps of stones and earth”, he came to the realization that the Alps must be older than the ruins of Rome. It is to him and his work *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* that we owe some interesting observations about how mountains were formed and that they are still in motion. Debris flows and landslides are evidence of this. But the danger can also be contained: by forests that support mountain slopes.

For those who have traveled here, the mountain scenery and forests of Engelberg are one thing above all: beautiful. In her installation *Guardian Forest*, Monica Ursina Jäger demonstrates the importance of the forest for the town. The concept of the protective forest sounds like a pure cost-benefit calculation. The forest protects life and infrastructure from avalanches, rockfall and erosion. This is more cost effective than other measures. 54.2 percent of the forest of Engelberg is protected forest, which is above the Swiss average. But if you look at the trees that have held up the boulders, there is also something tender in this sight—as if a couple had found each other. In Monica Ursina Jäger’s installation, boulders from the Engelberg forest weigh down and stabilize strips of paper painted with chlorophyll. The Zurich-based composer and musician Michael Bucher, with whom Jäger has already collaborated on a previous project, wrote a soundscape for it in which the interplay of forces becomes audible. (ah)

Monica Ursina Jäger, born in 1974 in Thalwil, Switzerland, lives and works in London and Zurich. Her work has been shown in Switzerland in 2023 at Kunsthalle Wil and Kunsthaus Zürich, among others, and in India at the Serendipity Arts Festival Goa. In 2019, Jäger was represented at the Singapore Biennale. Jäger is a permanent member of the Institute of Natural Resource Sciences at the ZHAW.

Further information: muj.ch