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How Switzerland's spectacular lakes have inspired artists

They play a prominent role in the work of Ferdinand Hodler,
Caroline Bachmann, and many others

By Rebecka Domig | Jul 30, 2024 | 7 min read



From Lake Geneva and Lake Maggiore to Lake Lucerne, Switzerland's picturesque lakes are as much a part of the country's DNA as its world-famous mountains. A number of artists have found intriguing motifs in them, most prominent among them Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), who sketched and painted them relentlessly. To Hodler, landscapes were almost sentient, full-fleshed individual characters. Similarly, various contemporary artists have set out to capture the essence of Swiss lakes, all in their own unique way.

Lakes appear repeatedly in the dreamlike landscape paintings of Andriu Deplazes (b. 1993), which often seem to toggle notions of confinement and openness. In *Kletternde* (2020), a shoreline divides the painting horizontally. In the foreground, rocks protrude into the water, serving as the base for a single tree sprouting pink blooms and a sole figure that appears to be climbing. The human figure is depicted amid nature, yet curiously detached from it – a key concept in Deplazes's work. Through his meticulously composed arrangement and captivating use of color, a mountain lake takes on a symbolic quality, evoking a sense of longing for a place that remains just out of reach.



Andriu Deplazes, *Tannen vor Bergsee* (Pines in front of alpine lake), 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann. Photo: Sebastian Schaub.



Andriu Deplazes, *Körper auf Pfosten* (Body on stake), 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann. Photo: Roberto Marossi.



Andriu Deplazes, Kletternde, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann. Photo: Sebastian Schaub.