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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

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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. Zahnradstrasse 21 Rämistrasse 33 11-13, rue des Arquebusiers 8005 Zurich 8001 Zurich 75003 Paris +41 44 278 10 10 +41 44 278 10 11 +33 1 86 76 05 50

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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.

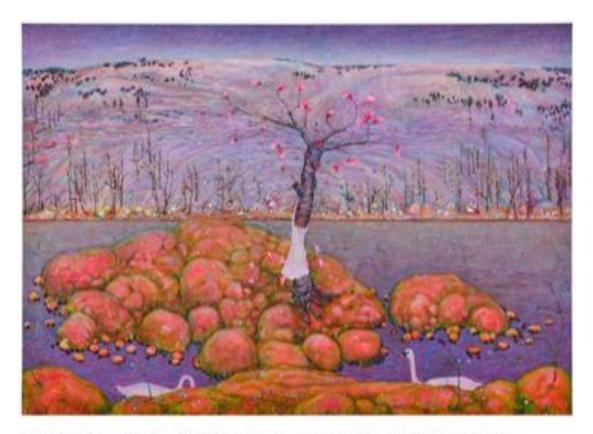




Andriu Deplazes, Körper auf Pfosten (Body on stake), 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann. Photo: Roberto Marossi.

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

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