

GENTLEMAN

Engadine For Art

by Enrico Dal Buono February 1, 2019



St. Moritz is not just a center of attraction for skiing. Throughout the years it has transformed into a global point of reference for collectors and galleries, with a program as exclusive as the locality that hosts it.

If it is true that the peaks of the Engadine have inspired artists since Segantini's time, then the valley has been transforming into a global reference point for collectors and galleries in the last years. And this is not just due to the purchasing power of its visitors. "In the cities people don't have much time, it's stressful, whereas in the mountains the proclivity for fully enjoying beauty is perfect," says the curator Giorgio Pace. He founded his consulting company here, connecting the worlds of art and luxury. "Of course, the people I consult have already seen everything, so I need to offer them something different, like exhibiting

on frozen lakes, or restarting vintage trains for traveling: experiences that go beyond the mere indulgence of the works." Hence the objective of Nomad, an itinerant contemporary art and design event that takes place in the sixteenth-century aristocratic residence Chesa Planta in Samedan from the 7th to 11th of February. Pace, who will also inaugurate Sommet, a boutique art fair with 25 galleries at the Maloja Palace Hotel in 2020, organizes Nomad with the architect and gallerist Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte, who tells us: Nomad is an intimate meeting point, without the artificial lights and the crowds of the usual fairs, which involves design galleries such as David Gill and art galleries such as Massimo De Carlo. We set up in a house with wood paneling and ceramic heaters, also to demonstrate to the collectors how the works integrate themselves into a domestic ambiance."

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Left: In front of the Kulm Hotel, which today is the property of the Niarchos family, Vito Schnabel Gallery was inaugured in 2015. Installation view of *Tom Sachs: The Pack*. Right: Swiss Flag (2018), one of the works on view at Vito Schnabel Gallery.

The Engadine remains an ideal place for beauty hunters in general. St. Moritz alone counts six galleries. The latest one to open, this past September, was Hauser & Wirth from Zurich. "Only 40% of our guests ski, it is fundamental that alternative activities flourish. Or, maybe only 40% ski because there are so many other interesting things to do," Heinz Hunkeler, general director of the Kulm Hotel St. Moritz and Grand Hotel Kronenhof Pontresina, tells us. The Kulm, where in 1864 its founder Johannes Badrutt invented winter mountain tourism by betting with English tourists that if they came in December they would stay until Easter (and that is how it went), is also a cultural salon. "It is not by chance that the owners, the Niarchos family, own one of the richest collections of art on the planet and are longtime friends of the Schnabels." Julian's son, Vito, opened a gallery across from the hotel in 2015, which at the moment is exhibiting works by the American artist Tom Sachs. "The halls of the hotel are frequented

by collectors and creatives like Norman Foster and are dotted with pictures and installations whose value is not emphasized, in tune with our style," Hunkeler clarifies. "In addition, we support artist in residence projects in collaboration with events and galleries." Such is the case with Stalla Madulain, a gallery inaugurated in 2014, in a three-story barn in Madulain from 1488. "In agreement with the Kulm, we invite an artist to spend a period of time at the hotel in the summer, where they can be inspired by the Engadine to create a work that then is exhibited for sale," explains Gian Tumasch Appenzeller, co-founder of the space with his architect cousin, Chasper Schmidlin. Outside of the gallery is the bronze head of a camel on a pole, covered in snow. "It is an installation by Not Vital," explains Appenzeller. "Artists of his caliber like to exhibit here because of the way the Engadine mountains permeate their works."