

# as long as it lasts (L.W.)

**Peter Baracchi<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Artist, \*1982, Zurich, Switzerland

mail@peterbaracchi.com

**Part of this programme:** "art meets science" Artist Residency HFSJG

**Keywords:** art; performance; culture; snow; snow creatures; melting; tourism; global warming; climate change

---

## 1. Project description

The Jungfraujoch is rarely stingy with superlatives in its advertising: highest railway station in Europe, fastest lift in Switzerland, highest post office in Europe - hence the self-chosen title "Top of Europe".

As one of Switzerland's most sought-after destinations with up to a million visitors a year, it has always been a place of contrasts. Crowds of selfie-taking day-trippers meet nature-loving alpinists who set off on their solitary high-altitude tours. Wealthy travellers also like to be flown up by helicopter.

At the same time, one of Europe's most important, modern and - of course - highest research institutions is located just a few metres away from the souvenir shops and fast-food snack bars. The "High Altitude Research Station HFSJG", delivers huge amounts of data on atmosphere, climate, weather, radiation, glaciology, permafrost, etc. every day....

In times of global warming, climate change and environmental toxins, these data play an enormously important role, as there is practically no comparable measuring station anywhere in Europe.

On this small rocky spur between Switzerland's most famous mountains, you can meet social groups that would otherwise hardly meet each other voluntarily. At Switzerland's most touristy hotspot, state-of-the-art technology is being used to research solutions to the climate crisis, for which tourism is not insignificantly responsible.

It is precisely this contrast that fascinates the artist Peter Baracchi. In his projects he repeatedly deals with social phenomena of our time and translates them through spatial and material decontextualization into sculptural and installative works.

It is therefore not surprising that he, of all people, has applied for the first ever artist residency on the Jungfraujoch. From August to September 2021, Baracchi will live and work for one month in the research station on the Jungfraujoch at more than 3,500 metres above sea level.

For this stay in the highest art studio in Europe, Baracchi has set himself a strictly conceptual work programme. He is, as it were, conducting artistic research.

Every morning, before the masses of tourists arrive on the mountain, he builds a snowman/snowwoman outside in the "eternal" snow and ice. These snow creatures are then photographed and documented using analog instant photography technology and remain exposed to the sun, the weather and the tourists for the entire day before the artist transports them indoors to the warmth in the evening and lets them melt overnight.

The melt water is collected and filtered. The filters with the collected particles and dirt residues are dried, pressed and fixed - the melt water is filled into glass containers and hermetically sealed.

All of the snow creatures' artifacts are thus collected, dated, and archived. This creates an analytical documentation of the artist's activities on site, while his pseudo-scientific, daily repetitive Sisyphus work becomes a performance. In the end, thirty individual and unique artworks are created, each consisting of the preserved fragments of a snow creature and the corresponding Polaroid photo.

Fittingly, the Polaroid photo will also disappear over time. Because like snow, the Polaroid will decompose the more you expose it to sunlight.

Thus, as a "guest researcher", Baracchi deals with similar topics as the environmental researchers who usually work here. Nevertheless, his work is more than just "climate art"; the social aspects are in the foreground. It is an artistic exploration at the interface between society, culture, art and science. It is about transience and how we deal with it.

The recipients are led to critically question themselves, their own actions and also the social construct. In the end, everyone makes up their own mind.

**2. Conclusion and current project status**

I was able to execute the project as planned, thanks to perfect weather and snow conditions during most of the month and thanks to the great support of everyone on location from HFSJG and from Jungfraubahnen.

Luckily, thanks to the presence of a scientist team from the DLR in Germany, the project area could be expanded to the glacier all the way down to Konkordiaplatz, where we could collect some glacial algae to include into the snow collection.

The collected snow probes show a great variety of pollution. From natural products like plants, dirt, dust, etc. to artificial remains like plastic, food and other residues from the tourism industry. The filter system worked perfectly to show all the particles on the final filter sheets.

All the collected fragments and the preserved materials were safely transported to my studio in Zurich, where I'm currently working on an adequate form of presentation to be able to show them in future exhibitions. Hopefully, I will be able to start showing these results within this year.

On the following pages you will find some photographs of the project in the making as well as some press articles.

---

**Internet data bases /**

<https://art.peterbaracchi.com/index.php/project/as-long-as-it-lasts-lw/>

**Scientific publications and public outreach 2021****Magazine and Newspaper articles**

"Er lässt Schneemänner auf dem Top of Europe schmelzen", Jungfrau Zeitung, September 6, 2021.  
<https://www.jungfrauzeitung.ch/artikel/193173>

"Baracchi schmilzt Schneemänner", Berner Oberländer / Thuner Tagblatt, September 20, 2021. <https://www.berneroerlaender.ch/baracchi-schmilzt-schneemaenner-833183684399>

"On Top of Europe", Transhelvetica, Facebook, September 8, 2021.

<https://www.facebook.com/Transhelvetica/posts/4469136856441582/>

**Address**

Peter Baracchi  
Idastrasse 1  
8003 Zürich  
Switzerland

**Contacts**

Peter Baracchi  
Tel.: +41 76 580 4635  
e-mail: mail@peterbaracchi.com  
website: <http://art.peterbaracchi.com>

**3. Project making-of photographs**

