

# GALERIE ANDREA CARATSCH

## WINTER EXHIBITION DECEMBER 2015 – APRIL 2016

From December 12, 2015 to April 16, 2016, Galerie Andrea Caratsch is showing at its St. Moritz premises a new body of work by Luca Pancrazzi titled "Occidente Esotico". The subject of his new paintings done in the last year and a half are the Engadin mountains and landscapes.

Luca Pancrazzi is foremost an observer. He distills his impressions in restrained yet complex paintings, built up through innumerable tones of white. Through this process, he uncovers the most subtle gradations of light and shadow, and, in so doing, invites viewers to reconnect with the seductive act of looking. In Pancrazzi's most recent series of paintings, the artist turns his inward gaze to the vast Engadin Mountains, a new subject matter which nevertheless seems to be a complete synthesis of his singular painting technique and contemplative manner.

Images of mountains are highly speculative ones, evoking a primal sense of fantasy and the unknown. Across depictions in literature and art, mountains inspire sensations of fascination and extreme beauty, yet they also fill us with terror as we consider their harsh conditions and dangerous terrain. They are home to the gods and wild creatures, the spiritual retreat of hermits and the mysterious peaks scaled only by the most adventurous mountaineers. From any point of view, mountains instill a sense of deep isolation; from the valley looking up, the mountain represents an expanse that can never be fully comprehended, while from the summit looking down, we experience a unique distancing of the self, allowing us to view the world we inhabit as a large system of which we are only tiny parts.

Speaking of the Engadin valley, Nietzsche, who was inspired to write *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* while living in this allegorical landscape, said he saw within the complexity of the light there "the cradle of all silver tones" – a remark that also reflects the experience of Pancrazzi's canvases. The compositions focus the eye on various fragments of the Engadin valley –

rock formations, clusters of lakes, remote villages – in a layered language that emphasizes the morphology of masses and shadows. The large scale of the paintings enables a coexistence of realism and abstraction; the images remain coherent from a distance but reveal, upon closer examination, a distinctive semi-pointillist texture of brushstrokes. The white paintings are suffused with brightness, they seem to flicker in and out of focus and the landscape appears almost as a mirage. In one of the compositions, a band of mist sweeps through the middle of the canvas. This reminds us of the looming threat always present in these areas, where obfuscating elements – such as fog, steam, bright light and haze – envelop the peaks and ridges and disorient the sense of place completely.

This sense of mystery, of perceiving the unseen, is paramount to Pancrazzi's work. Much of the raw allure present in mountainous landscapes has inevitably dissipated with the easy access of satellite imagery. The notions of exploration and surrender so intertwined with the experience of remote landscapes are casually displaced by the proliferation of images, and the ease of merely dropping a pin to find oneself in the midst of these far-away settings. In opposition to this, Pancrazzi proposes we slow down and look for the subtle shifts in color, light and texture. In a context where few things remain foreign or truly mysterious, Pancrazzi proposes that the only way to return to a sense of wonder is to destabilize our position as viewers by the practice of close, transformative looking.

Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Via Serlas 12, 7500 St. Moritz

The gallery is open from Monday to Saturday, from 2 – 7 PM.