

Artist residency from 02.10.2017 to 29.12.2017

Report by Michael Knizova

I have focused on analog photography during my stay in Bellwald. All in all I have shot more than 300 instant photos and filled about 20 analog films. I have also made lots of digital photos but these are more for documentation and possible later use.

Before my arrival in Bellwald, I had prepared for a project focused on landscape photography not exactly knowing what I could expect from life in a small Swiss mountain village. I found a very quiet and friendly surrounding with a strong link to nature. I think what surprised me most in the beginning was how many animals were living here and how strong life is linked to the environment.

I spent the first month mainly exploring the village and the closer surroundings by foot. Due to the warm late autumn weather I was able to make long hikes and also explore the regions on the mountains above Bellwald. I found beautiful landscapes with exceptional views that I tried to catch with my camera.

The beginning of November marked the end of the tourist season and the first snow was falling. I experienced even quieter landscapes void of human interactions. With the tourists gone and many restaurants and hotels closing for the month I was able to shoot even more intimate photos. The snow radically changed the surroundings so I shifted from shooting big views to smaller scale objects. Traveling on foot became also a bit more complicated so I used trains and lifts to reach destinations I didn't visit before.

So my main activity happened in the village and its surroundings. But I traveled also to places like Gornergrat, Oberwald, Bettmeralp or Fiescheralp. As snow came early, it became unavoidably the main topic of my work here, which is not a bad thing at all. The huge layer of snow created a very intimate and romantic atmosphere which I didn't expect in the beginning. I am positively surprised about the results of my stay and my expectations are more than fulfilled.

I would like to thank artbellwald.ch for giving me the opportunity of this residency. It was well organized as well the apartment as the studio were perfectly adapted to create a professional environment for working. Also being able to stay here for three months opened me insights that wouldn't have been possible during a short vacation visit.