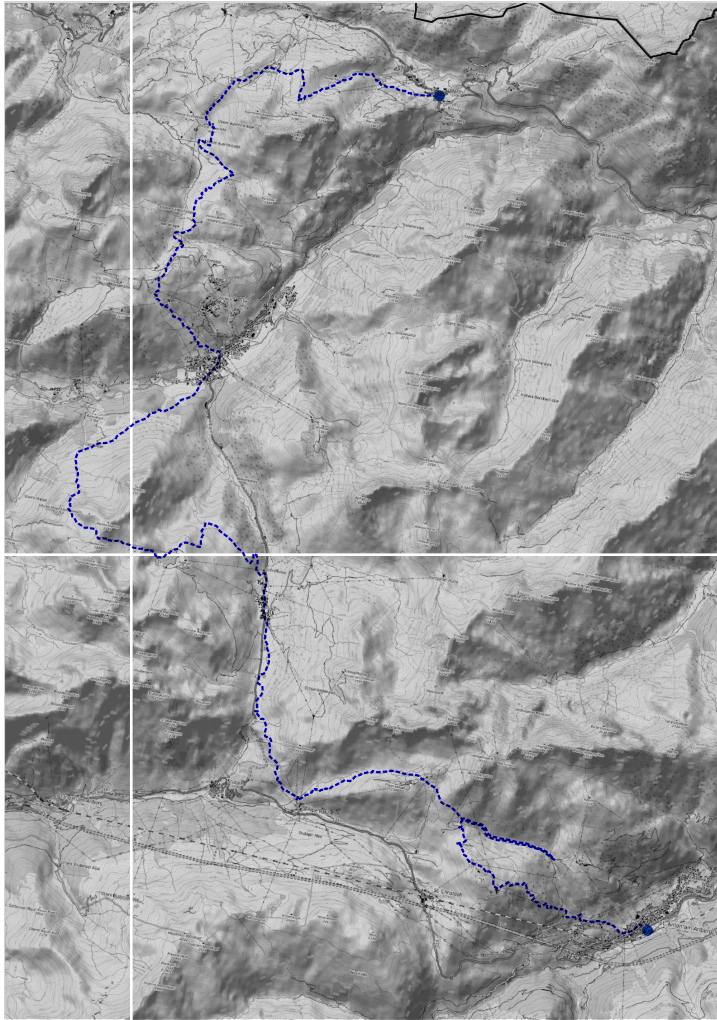


2100m

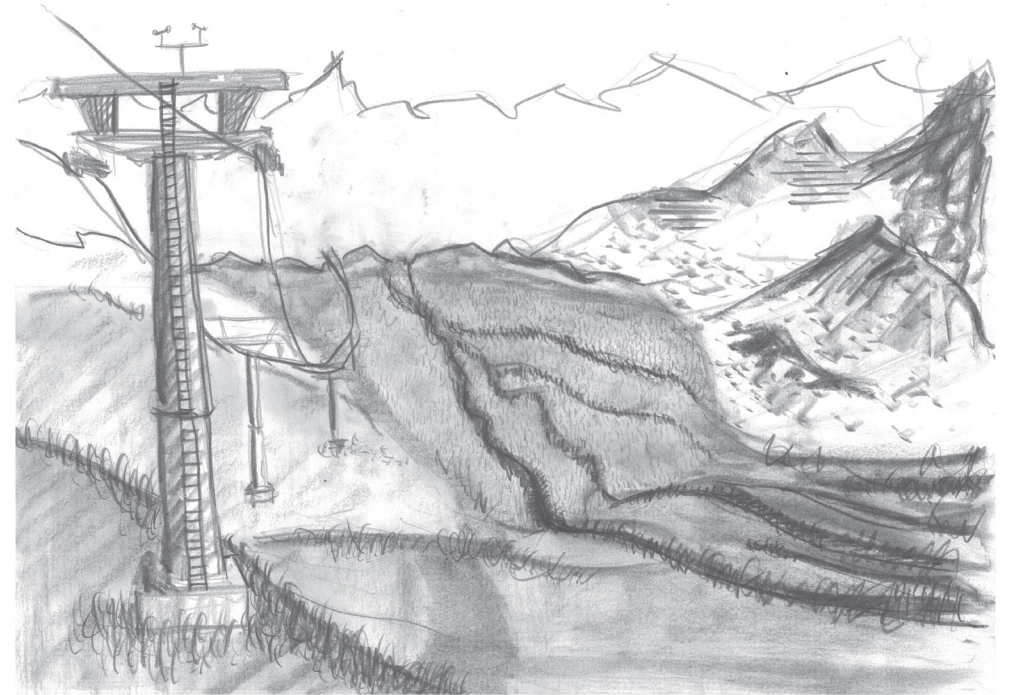
artwork | quiet ground
machinery | pistes
dialogue | flower

Explore Lab Graduation | Valentin Zech | 4587979

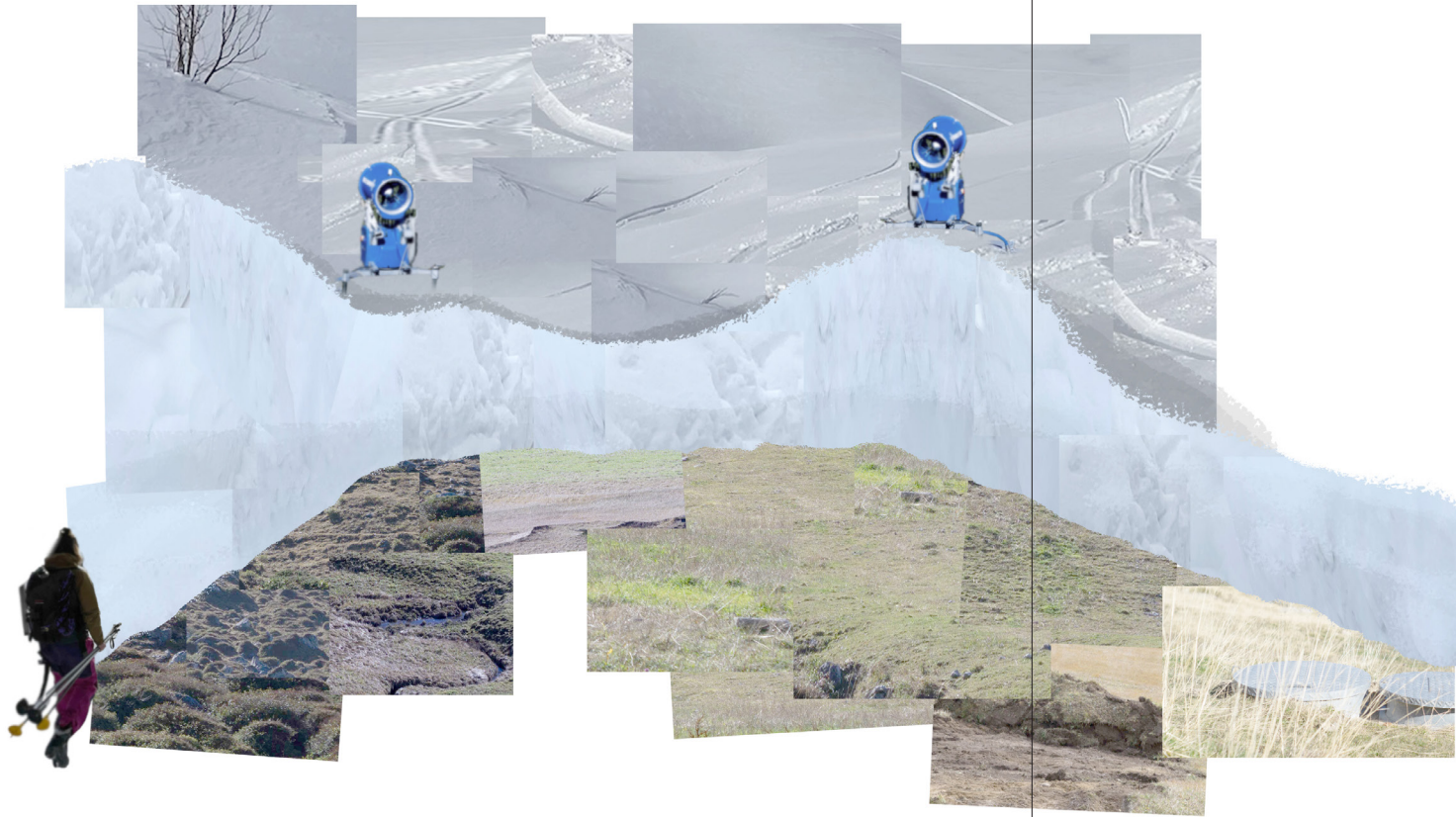
Booklet 6/8



name: quiet ground | location: madlochkessel
altitude: 2100m

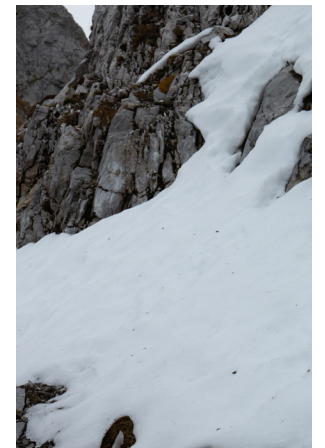
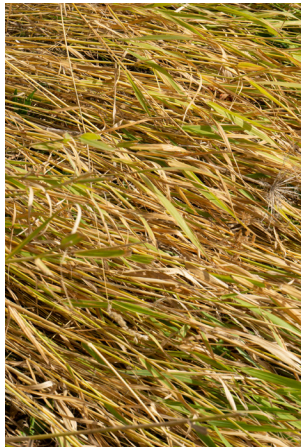


site, charcoal on paper



Quiet Ground

Quiet Ground inverts the idea of snow making: heat machines in each corner melt the snow to create a small meditation garden. Skiers can escape the loud and busy life of the ski area and apres-ski horror. At the same time, quiet ground uncovers what is underneath the snow-covered pistes - both on a stretch of piste and one off-piste. This shows not only how the stresses of and around skiing change the vegetation, but also shows the skier that there is a whole world underneath them; a world with colors, characteristics, needs. By removing the snow, quiet ground removes the blinders. A short meditative walk around the garden changes the perspective of the skier and they will feel the presence of all the non-humans underneath the thick pack of snow for the rest of their stay.





1520m



1730m

The “production” does not end after the lifts are turned off. In snow conditions, the snow cats flatten all the pistes of the area for the next day. In the off-season, renovation and maintenance works take place.



1730m

There is a pressure loss in the water system of the snow making infrastructure, but the location of the leak is unknown. The search involves a digger and opening large parts of the ground in an attempt to locate the problem.



1730m

Modern techniques massively improve the ability of soil and plants to regenerate after an interference. The different soil layers are removed and stored separately, specialized local seed mixtures ensure effective "re-naturation".¹

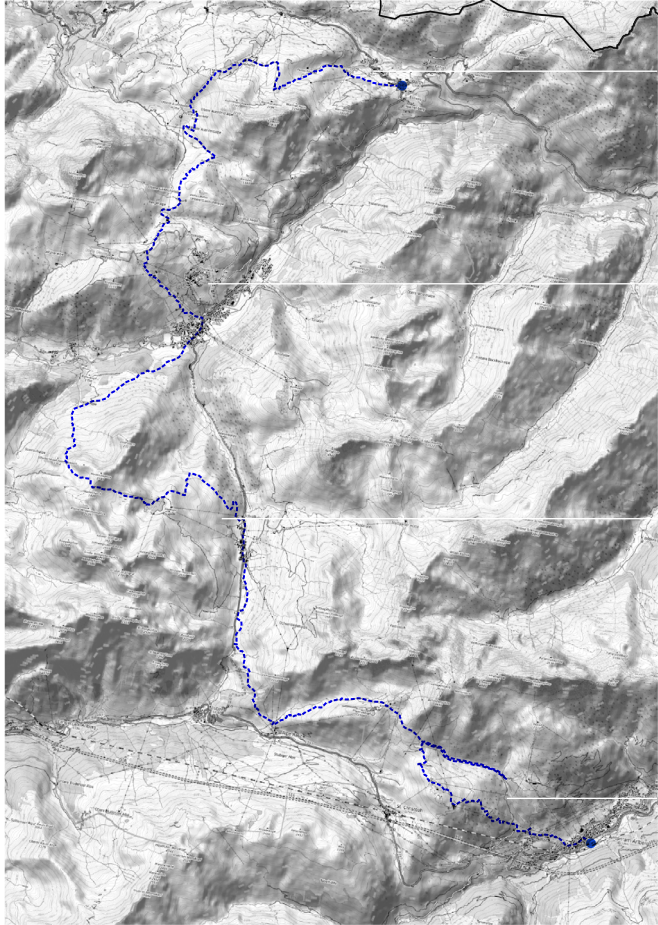


1740m

The water storage capabilities of a ski piste is much lower than that of more extensively used areas. Water runoff systems help against excessive soil erosion.²



2012m



¹ steffisalp, 1520m

^{2,3,4} schlegelkopf, 1730m

⁶ above zuers, 2012m

⁵ steissbachtal, 1740m

Dialogue: Patricia, Purple Gentian



photo creative common by Audrius Meskauskas

(Instructions to recognize a someone)¹

Step 1: Choose a someone
(a human, a thing, a river, a tree, a non-human animal)

Step 2: Recognize that someone has a value.

Step 3: Try to imagine that someone has a *within*.

Step 4: Recognize that someone has a voice even if that voice is not always audible or comprehensible in our language.

Step 5: Assume that several voices and interests can come together in a search for conflicts and compromises (e.g. in the form of a human translator or guardian).

Patricia realized very early that the most important thing in life was actually dying. Not that she wanted to die, she liked being pretty, purple, and full of life. But once, she overheard a simple grass say: “being alive means making yourself edible”. She realized that she was part of a much bigger world than her little patch of soil she shared with some other flowers, herbs, and grasses. Even bigger than what she could see when she rose above all the weeds around her, showing her beautiful bloom to the mountain scenery.

She realized that for life to continue showing its beautiful bloom, its astonishing landscapes, its deliciously fresh air, she had to die. She would die and new life would eat her, compost her, turn her into the very nutrients she herself was pulling out of the ground underneath her every day.

She was so fascinated by this thought of hers, that she tried to tell her neighbors and even took the long way through her root system to tell her friends further away. But they wanted to hear none of it. They were busy trying to be the tallest, the prettiest, the fastest growing. Patricia couldn’t care less about those things. She knew that she lived in an especially crucial part of the whole: just a few life cycles ago, a huge disaster happened right where she grew. The web of roots and small animals, of fungi and carefully taken care of humus was torn off the mountain and collected in big piles. None of them knew anymore where they were, they were cut off from their light and water-supply.

After a while, everyone was assigned a new spot – everyone slowly started to re-establish some of the old connections, make some new ones. But that is hard work and takes a long time. In addition, without this strong network in place, it is much harder to retain the valuable water and nutrients – making it even harder to survive and propagate.

Patricia knew that this would take time. She knew how important her dying was for new and more life to be able to make the dream of a good new network possible. Sometimes, when it got dark and Patricia relaxed her head a little, she looked across the hill where the soil hadn't been affected and daydreamt about the lively conditions there – the diversity, the amount of highly specialized grasses and flowers, the fungi and insects.

Every time she caught herself thinking those thoughts she remembered another sentence she heard from a weed some time ago: “The grass is always greener on the other side”.

