2579m

artwork | corrected
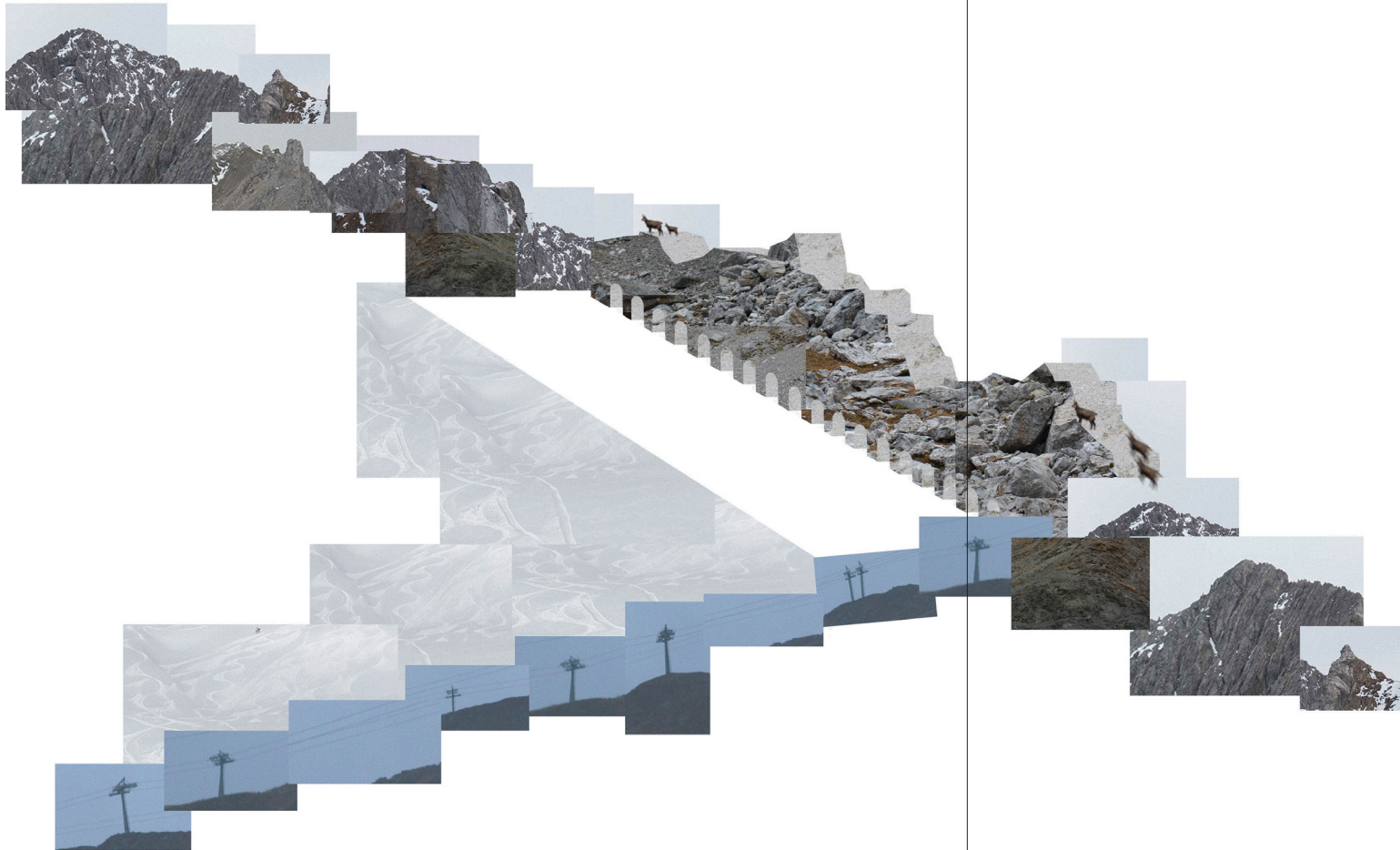machinery | avalanche control
dialogue | hotel owner
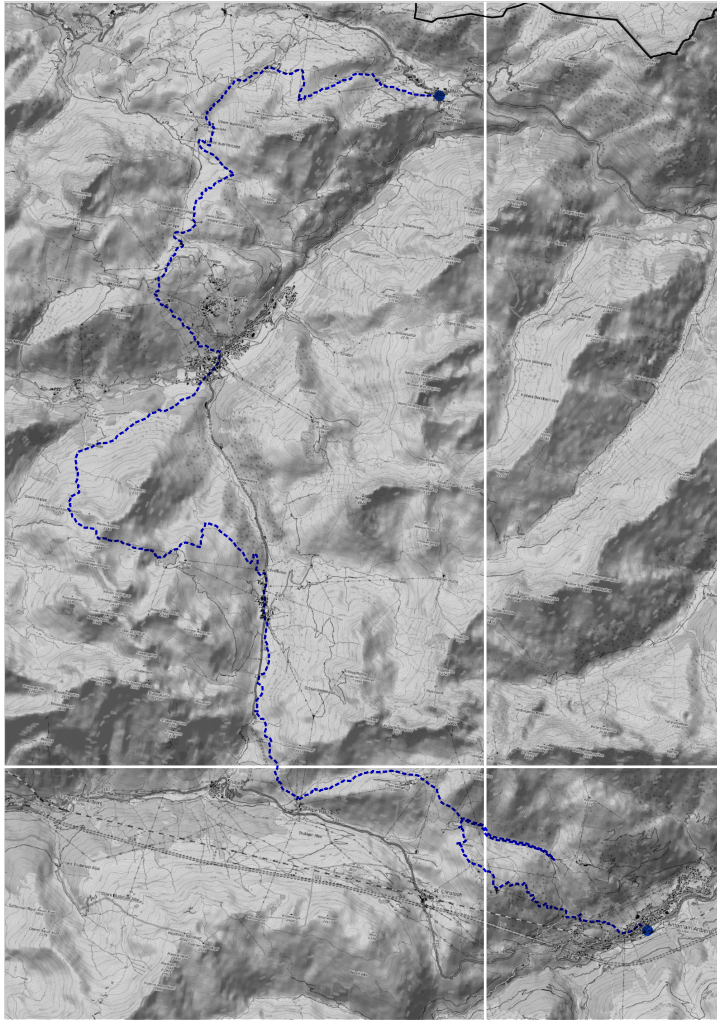
name: corrected | location: schindlergrat
altitude: 2579m

5km

site, charcoal on paper

Corrected

When landscapes are "corrected" by blasting off parts of the mountain for construction projects, it inevitable destroys the habitat of highly specialized plants and insects. Corrected uses left-over material from blasting to complete the gap in a "corrected" mountain ridge. The structure consists of losely stacked rock with many cavities for plants and insects to thrive in.

Simuntaneously, the artwork creates a barrier for skiers they can only pass through one of the built-in holes. This makes the original gap visible, since a thick snow cover often hides those abrupt transitions in the landscape.

1755m

Avalanche blasting through gaspipes and by helicopter are used to purposely trigger avalanches before the ski area opens its doors in the morning.

2141m

What does this mountain goat think the blasting sound is all about?

2446m

2180m

Blasting is also used for "landscape corrections": changing the shape of the mountain to allow the construction of lifts/pistes and ensure safety for skiers.

2501m

Plants and animals at these altitudes are highly specialized to survive in these rough circumstances.
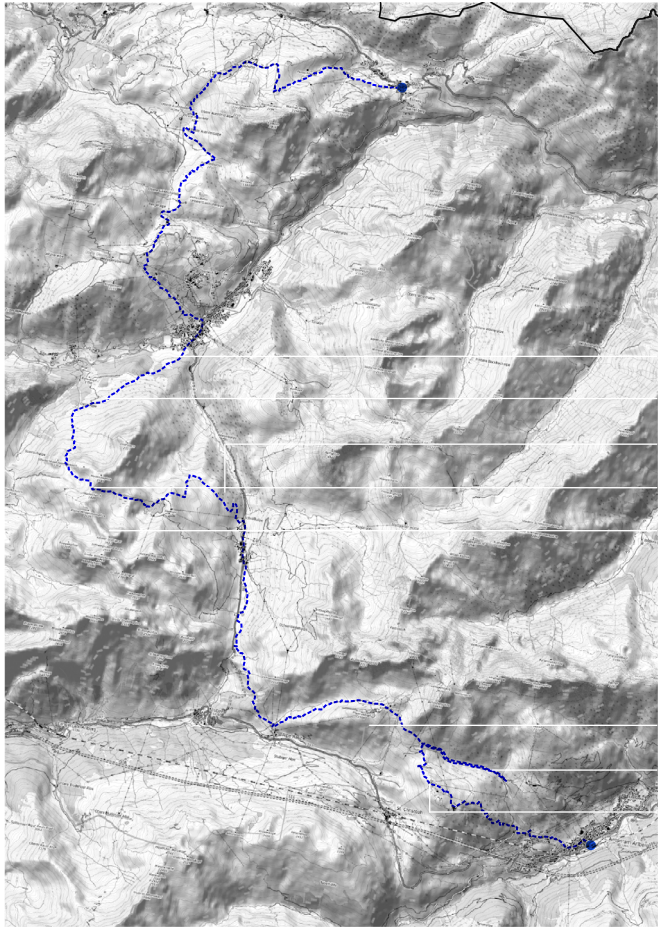
2007m

1750m

2497m

Avalanche barriers prevent snow from sliding down steep slopes above roads, buildings, and pistes. Still, accidents involving skiers happen frequently.

[6] above zug, 2007m
[2] above zug, 2141m
[7] above zuers, 1750m
[3] madloch berg, 2446m
[5] kleine wildgrubenspitze, 2501m

[8] below schindlergrat, 2497m
[1] steissbachtal, 1755m
[4] tanzboedenbahn, 2180m

Dialogue:
Hubert, Hotel Owner and Farmer

(old) photo creative common by Hans Bezard

(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).

When and how did you start to rent out rooms to guests?

My parents started hosting the first tourists towards the end of the war. At first, these efforts to earn a bit of extra money on top of what the farm yielded were modest: there was no separation between private and guest spaces, while the family retracted their lives into the bedrooms (gada), guests would sleep in the stuba (traditional main living room). My father also started working as a ski teacher in the ski school that had been founded in the 1920s in Warth – then a tiny ski area.
In 1990, I took over the family business and thoroughly renovated the house. Most people told us to demolish the old building and just put up a modern new structure – but instead, we decided to reuse most of the existing building, including the traditional stuba, and add new spaces around it. Respecting what is there, especially the very old structure was important to us.
During the season, my alarm rings at 5:15 every day. The first thing I do is check on my cows and milk them. Then, while Birgit tends to the guests and their needs, I work as a ski guide until the slopes close in the late afternoon. Before bedtime, I milk the cows again. It makes for busy days, but I enjoy it this way!

You are one of the few farmers left in Warth. Is farming still an essential part of your income?

"A farm protects you from poverty and a farm protects you from wealth", that's how an old saying goes. I make a living combining farming, ski guiding, and renting out rooms. Today, you only have cows if you have a true passion for it and they make you happy. Purely economically speaking, there are much more interesting options.
For me, however, it is really important. We live off the landscape and cultivating it means caring for it; even alongside the skiing. In our traditional way of farming, the Dreistufenlandwirtschaft*, a circular approach is self-evident. You give back what you take: when a cow eats on the field, its poop becomes fertilizer for the same patch of land. Additional fertilizers from elsewhere, that would be added to the loop, are out of question. We also don't farm for maximizing milk

production. Our six cows are a robust species that produces about half of the volume of milk compared to the average cow in our state, just 5 to 6 thousand liters per year instead of 10 thousand. But they get by with the grass that is available here, without industrially produced feed.

[*Dreistufenlandwirtschaft (three-level-agriculture) means that, other than the farm itself, there is a Maisäß (on a higher altitude than the town) and an Alpe (on an even higher altitude). In the warm months, the farmers bring their cattle up into the mountains so the meadows in the valley can be cut and dried as feed for the winter months. The Alps and Maisäß are often shared by several farmers who also hire a cowherd to take care of the cows.]

What is the relationship between farming and winter tourism?

A large part of the ski area is also farming ground – either meadows or fields that are part of an Alpe. Back in the 70s, the relationship with the interests of the ski area were not so good: the planarizing of pistes meant that nothing noteworthy would grow anymore, because the already thin layer of humus would be destroyed. Nowadays, the different layers of soil are kept separate and hyperlocal seed mixtures make sure that planarized patches stay ecologically valuable. Therefore, the relationship is mostly symbiotic as long as there are good contracts between the farmers and the ski area management concerning compensation.

How to you view the future of (winter tourism in) Warth?

Since my parents started the guesthouse, many things changed. Everyone in the town lives off tourism now. While Warth is quite unique in how many of the businesses are still family owned, there are few jobs and opportunities for our young people. A town needs a school, social activities, and sports clubs. If the younger generations move elsewhere, there are less people to sustain such initiatives: this creates a further downward spiral. For example, we have a school building, beautifully designed by a renowned architect, but it is closed because there are not enough kids and no teacher.

There is also a lot of pressure from international investors – especially large scale apartment projects for the superrich, that will only stay in Warth a few days a year. This, of course, does not promote the livability of the town. What we need is innovative projects and ideas that create interesting perspectives, strong communities, and a sustainable approach for the future. We cannot ignore that the climate is changing.

There is no denying that we are practicing intensive winter tourism here – this has nothing to do with soft or slow tourism. In my opinion, it is really important that we stay authentic, that we sell our identity, not ourselves. I often take a moment to realize that we live in one of the most beautiful places I know. Our capital is a healthy landscape: it used to be when everyone here was a farmer, it is today with winter tourism, and it will be in the future. An old farmer's saying goes "a cow that is 3m long is 1m too long". Or in other words, using potentials efficiently and smartly is okay, but you must strike the right balance and there are certainly things where we [humans] have gone too far.

Hubert Strolz lives in the town of Warth, in the oldest building that is still (partly) intact: the floor beams were put into place around 1450. He is a ski guide, hotel owner, farmer, and passionate climber. Hubert grew up mostly standing on his skis – in 1988 he won a gold and silver medal in the Calgary Olympics. Today, he runs a small guesthouse and farm together with his wife Birgit. It was there that I met him on a January afternoon to talk about his multi-sided relationship with the nonhuman world around him and his wishes for the future of the ski town of Warth.

The interview was held in Vorarlbergerisch (a dialect of German). It was translated and edited to give an account of the most important thoughts and messages. If you are interested in detailed answers, questions, or specific words please contact the author.