

Die Macht der Insta-Berge – Zur Schöpfung und Bedeutung eines kollektiven Alpenbildes in den sozialen Medien

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Out of an almost infinite number of ways that the Swiss Alps can be experienced and interpreted, the present study investigates the collective view of a group of Swiss *Instagrammers* who particularly shape the discourse surrounding the visualisation of the Alps in digital times. They are a collective of young users of this popular photo and video sharing social networking service, who predominantly present mountain photographs on their channels. These mountain photographs present the object of investigation of this study and are dubbed '*Insta-Berge*', German for 'Insta-mountains'. The description, explanation and interpretation of *Insta-Berge* is the focus of this study.

Starting from an image-centred research approach, this study investigates the perceptions and appropriations of space articulated in the photographs. It further examines how Instagram as a social media platform shapes the production and reception of *Insta-Berge*. The discourse-determining representations of *Insta-Berge* are finally interpreted in relation to traditional perceptions of the Alpine mountains.

This research is done by investigating the *Insta-Berge* photographs using a phenomenological-semiotic image analysis procedure and analysing interviews with the photographers.

This study provides insights into the nature preferences of these Instagrammers, making their predilection for wilderness-like landscapes evident. It is revealed that the depictions of the *Insta-Berge* follow a romantic 'longing for nature' but simultaneously set new accents. The Swiss Instagrammers discover 'globalised Alps': *Insta-Berge* do not necessarily represent a traditional Swiss cultural landscape, but can depict landscapes that can be found in far away places – e.g. in New Zealand – too. This globalisation of the 'alpine image' is a result of the presenter-viewer-interactions happening on Instagram, where the mediation of the image is co-produced by both sides.

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