

Grüsse an Daheim

Bad Waldsee, Skulpturenweg, 1998

A postcard project; throughout the period of the exhibition twelve different motifs were available from existing postcard stands at kiosks and shops. A contribution to the exhibition "700 Jahre Stadt Waldsee Skulpturenweg," curated by Axel Otterbach

Bad Waldsee, is a placid spa town near Lake Constance. During my stay there, I soon noticed two different ways of life, one led by the locals, and the other led by the people who live there temporarily, the so-called spa guests.

As a guest, I did everything that guests do: went for walks, drank coffee, thought about that, which people mean when they use the phrase "at home." During this time I had intense conversations with spa guests about their ideas of home, and life there in town. It was through these conversations that I became aware of how serious their illnesses were.

I selected twelve quotes and had one printed on the reverse of each of the postcards. The front sides featured motifs I photographed during my walks through town. Influenced by the conversations, they did not reflect the beauty of the place, but rather, the tristesse of train station waiting rooms and mole hills.

Excerpt from a text by Florian Matzner on the work of Karolin Bräg,
from “Leben ohne Geländer” in the book “Nimm Abschied” 2004

By making them public, Karolin Bräg erased the anonymity of personal statements from individual conversations. However, these quotations were published without specifications by the author. Grüsse an Daheim (Greetings to those at home) is not, however, about carefree tourists on vacation sending greetings to jealous friends and relatives at home; rather, these are quotations from people who are ill and hoping to convalesce in a spa town. In their “temporary homes,” they have to literally rehabilitate themselves for their everyday lives at home: loneliness, marginalization, alienation, uselessness, almost the feeling of being superfluous characterize the statements of people Karolin Bräg interviewed: “Anyone who’s been gone three times already has left his home behind. You walk through a life without railings, under an unfamiliar sky, through unfamiliar streets.”

A “life without railings” symbolizes the unforeseen, unmanageable situations in life, such as illness, accident, or death, which, sooner or later, inevitably confront each and every human being. The path of life, the meaning of life at the threshold between the private and the public, between individuality and anonymity, in the tense relationship between personality and society—these aspects characterize Bräg’s projects, as she searches for the extraordinary in everyday life.