

Text – Thomas Schweizer - Sinnlichkeit und beschwingte Eleganz : Lustwandeln in Claire Ochsners Skulpturengarten

Sensuality and Graceful Elegance: Strolling through Claire Ochsner's Sculpture Garden

*Come into the garden and listen
To the waters flowing from the stone.
"Everything flows," says the Greek,
And by that he means:
Movement and change.*

*Kogoro twirls joyfully
In the shelter of the golden cypress.
Driven by the power of the wind,
The sculpture moves — drunk with color, light and soft.*

*Take in the energy
That flows from the sphere
And, flowing, surrounds you.*

("Jardin magique")

The sculpture "**Kogoro**" no longer stands in Claire Ochsner's magical sculpture garden, which belongs to the extensive estate of her home in Frenkendorf, near Basel. For several years now, it has stood — to the daily delight and joy of my wife and me — in our own garden.

But the sculpture, like all the others, is a characteristic work of the artist, who is now considered one of the most renowned figures in Swiss visual art.

Let us immerse ourselves in the dreamlike worlds of Claire Ochsner's garden — a place that already resembles a small park, and in whose center we discover a charming pavilion. It serves as the venue for smaller exhibitions, concerts, and other cultural events. Together with the family home and the studios, the garden forms something like a total work of art. As we stroll along the paths that lead us to the many sculptures, we marvel at the variety and originality of the works: large water features, smaller spirals, slender figures, moving wind sculptures, powerful spheres, and mysterious mythical creatures. They all appear weightless, light, and seem to float.

Air and water, light and colors.

The smile of a summer night or the clarity of a cold winter's day: the garden enchants visitors with its beauty and playfulness in every season. It exudes a Mediterranean ambiance, thanks to the cheerful, graceful, and elegant shapes of the individual sculptures. They blend harmoniously into their surroundings and never disturb the natural charm of the many trees, shrubs, ponds, green spaces, and enchanted paths. The garden reflects the harmony between artworks shaped by human hands — those of the artist — and the world of a naturally grown, freely unfolding nature.

This was especially evident in the extensive and impressive exhibitions held in places such as the "Park im Grünen" near Basel, the Old Botanical Garden in Zurich, or along the lake

promenade of Ascona. Especially at Lake Maggiore, with its endless blue in the joy of summer, Claire Ochsner's high artistic mastery was particularly striking. Yet the cheerfulness, lightness, and southern elegance can also be felt in her garden in the northwestern corner of Switzerland.

In spring, the colors of the sculptures resonate like Uhland's "Spring Faith". In the sun-drenched summer, they shine in full intensity. In autumn, they form a unique harmony with the vibrant colors of nature. In winter, they contrast beautifully with the snow's white, which gently surrounds and softly blankets the entire park.

At the end of our walk, let us retreat into a rose-covered arbor and listen — a glass of sparkling wine in hand — to a few words from Shakespeare. They might come from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or one of his profound comedies. But this time, they are an invitation from his narrative poem "Venus and Adonis":

*"A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know.
Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses.
And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses."*

A thousand "honey-sweet secrets" are also hidden in Claire Ochsner's sculpture garden, and just like in Shakespeare's verse — no snake hisses here!

Instead, you hear the bright laughter of jokes and caresses, the chirping of birds from the bushes and rooftops, along with the gentle breath of the wind brushing through the leaves with longing.

Come into the garden, follow the serene paths, admire the sculptures, and sit beneath a cherry tree that, each spring, shines in its radiant flower dress. Or take refuge in the shade of a wild wisteria and watch the silent play of mobiles, gently stirred by the breeze.

It makes perfect sense that this unique sculpture garden is open year-round.

It has something to offer in every season.

It enchants us with its poetry — and makes us happy.

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