



A PILGRIMAGE TO VAL GARDENA

5

Internationally Renowned
Wood Artists

5

Bruno Walpoth
Gehard Demetz
Aron Demetz
Willy Verginer
Gregor Prugger

ABOUT VAL GARDENA



Val Gardena has been a centre of wood carving since the seventeenth century. What began as a pastime for farmers during the harsh winter months gradually developed into an internationally renowned tradition of craftsmanship and art.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, religious sculptures, nativity scenes and wooden toys were exported throughout Europe and even to South America. To this day, wood artists in this valley continue to create religious imagery.

At the same time, new forms have emerged. Contemporary artists reinterpret the tradition and produce modern, worldly work that is appreciated both locally and internationally. Many artists continue to work figuratively, selling their life-sized sculptures at international art fairs and in museums.

This presentation by wowwood.nl focuses on five of these artists.

ABOUT BRUNO WALPOTH



Bruno Walpoth honours the vulnerable human being: curled inward, withdrawn into oneself, closed off from the outside world. Adult figures lie on the ground in a foetal position. By coating his sculptures with white primer, his life-size, meticulously carved figures appear almost like shadows of themselves. These characteristics make Walpoth one of the most prominent representatives of contemporary woodcarving in Val Gardena.

ABOUT GEHARD DEMETZ



Gehard Demetz doubles faces, particularly those of children, who are burdened at a young age with imposed role models that shape their identities. A young girl is presented with the attributes of the Virgin Mary, functioning almost like a mask that partially obscures her face.

ABOUT ARON DEMETZ



The memento mori of Aron Demetz are not classical artworks featuring skulls, withered flowers or hourglasses. His wooden sculptures make death itself visible. The heads and bodies of his figures bear traces of transience and decay. Demetz confronts the viewer with the inevitability of the end, without passing moral judgement.

ABOUT WILLY VERGINER



Willy Verginer shows a figure praying on an oil drum, while an aluminium colour plane indicates the rising sea level. Oil barrels recur in many of his sculptures.

A child can no longer play carefree in the water because of the floating drums and debris surrounding it. A young deer stands forlorn atop an oil drum. A woodpecker pecks a hole into such a barrel. A man drowns in one.

ABOUT GREGOR PRUGER



Gregor Prugger has created a heart made of wood. From this heart-shaped sculpture emerges a bundle of branches that closely resembles the branching circulatory system of the human lungs. With this work, the Val Gardena artist tells a story that is already embedded in the wood itself, adding only a trace of his own presence.

CREDITS & LINKS



Image material courtesy of galleries and official websites.

Extended travel guide and artist biographies

Wowwood presentation Val Gardena

