



European  
Alpine  
Academy

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**REPORT**

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20  
23





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# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



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*If you have a garden and a library,  
you have all you need.*

Cicero

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## Our Mission: Doing More With Less

### SACRIFICE IS NOT A RENUNCIATION

By Hans-Peter Söder

Is ruthless expansive exploitation our destiny? In 1969, at a scientific gathering in Rome, the Italian Aurelio Peccei and the Scotsman Alexander King voiced their concerns about the side effects of unbridled economic and scientific growth. The basic environmental and social questions of the club of Rome that were evolving then, are still relevant today, and have become even more pressing: Is it necessary to set limits to the relentless growth of human endeavor? This question has been asked before. In the 5th century BCE, the Greek tragedian Sophocles focused on this colonizing urge of mankind in his tragedy *Antigone*:

Numberless wonders  
terrible wonders walk the world but none the match for man—  
that great wonder crossing the heaving gray sea,  
driven on by the blasts of winter

. . .

and the oldest of the gods he wears away —  
the Earth, the immortal, the inexhaustible —  
as his plows go back and forth, year in, yea rout  
with the breed of stallions is turning up the furrows.  
And the blithe, lightheaded race of birds he snares,  
the tribes of savage beasts, the life that swarms the depths —

. . .

He conquers all, taming with his techniques  
the prey that roams the cliffs and wild lairs,  
training the stallion, clamping the yoke across  
his shaggy neck, and the tireless mountain bull.

Translated from the Greek by Robert Fagles

Here, within the walls of Ettal Monastery, in the founding year of the European Alpine Academy, everything revolves around the question of whether less might be more after all? Wanting less, being able to abstain, is a power we humans must learn again. By not losing ourselves in the abundance, we may rediscover ourselves in what truly matters.

Summer schools, training companies, and educational institutions abound. What is lacking is an institution that brings people from all over the world together to rediscover themselves in others. Being human is not something given to us; it is a daily task. Therefore, there is a need to establish an academy for our time, whose goals go beyond the logic of growth. There is still some space for solidarity in the human heart. This is how Moses Mendelssohn felt when he said that the purpose of human life can be recognized in a different pursuit:

For this reason, under the leadership of the James Loeb Society, many have come together to make this project a success. Next year, Harvard University will be joining. This year, the University of Paderborn, the Swedish University of Gothenburg with its Center for Critical Heritage Studies, the renowned St. John's College from the USA, the Ettal Timaios Society, the Foreign Language Institute of the State Capital Munich, and the State Antiquities Collection of the State Capital Munich are represented as founding institutions.



The participants from Greece, Croatia, Kuwait, the United States, and Germany this year are already laying the groundwork for the academy in 2024. During this year's academy, the question will be discussed: What is an academy?

We would like to express our gratitude to Abbot Barnabas and the monastery community for their warm hospitality and steadfast support for this endeavor!

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*To seek truth,  
To love beauty,  
To desire goodness,  
To aspire to do the best.*

Moses Mendelssohn

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## Greetings and a Heartfelt Welcome From the Mayor of Murnau



As mayor of the market town of Murnau, I would like to welcome you to our town. The market town of Murnau has a long tradition in the field of cultural exchange. For many decades, the Goethe Institute, which greatly shaped the town in its cosmopolitanism, had a headquarter in Murnau. Three years ago, we entered into a development partnership with a region in Ghana. I supported the European Alpine Academy very early on because its objectives correlate excellently with the values of Murnau, as a place of international encounters. The idea of the EAA to provide students from all over the world with excellent German language skills and to inspire and guide them to think in new ways about sustainable models for the future is supported in its entirety by the market of Murnau. Murnau also focuses on sustainability and always tries to break new ground. For example, we have introduced an innovative local bus system.

I look forward to your visit and wish you an interesting and inspiring time in Murnau, with its impressive nature.

Rolf Beuting M.A.  
First Mayor



Photo: Rathaus Murnau © Rufus46 / Wikimedia commons

# IMPRESSIVE VISITS

## New James Loeb Exhibit at the Schloßmuseum Murnau

Text: Hans-Peter Söder



Photo: © Alfred Uhrig

The director of the Schloßmuseum Murnau, Frau Dr. Sandra Uhrig, was excited when she heard that the European Alpine Academy would visit the new James Loeb exhibit in order to see, if there were ways in which the academy could help with the museum's English presentation in 2024. The museum is especially interested in keeping the needs of young international visitors in mind. Help is appreciated not only for the translation of German texts into English, but also for ideas in regard to bringing the artefacts presented there to life through audioguides and interactive media. The James Loeb Classical Library Foundation will donate classical texts in 2024. Now it is up to the EAA students from John's College to present a text to the museum's visitors and then show its continued relevance for contemporary society.

## Murnau

Text: Marcello Maramigi, Fremdspracheninstitut München

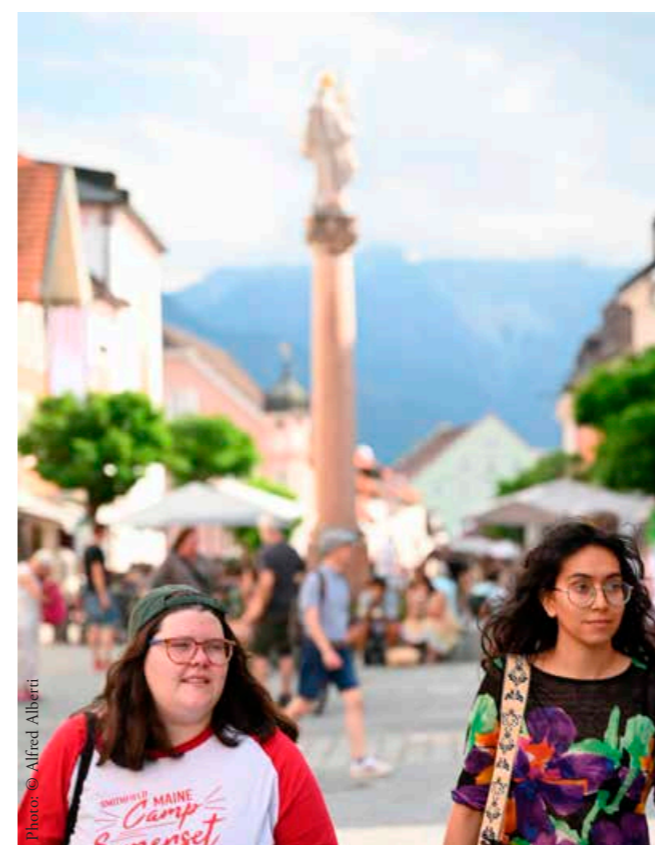


Photo: © Alfred Alberti

Murnau is a small town in Upper Bavaria with a population of about 12,000 people. The town can very easily be reached by train, as it is connected to Munich Central Station directly. We had the incredible honor to speak to the mayor, Rolf Beuting, and discuss the future of the town, which relies mostly on tourists that come to explore the nearby moor or the lake Staffelsee. At the moment, plans for the town are to expand on bike tourism, given that the region is relatively flat and beautiful nature-wise. They also want there to be fewer tourists that arrive by car, in order to minimize the effect of tourism on the climate. We had an interesting and very productive few hours with the mayor, who gave us great insights on the way a town like Murnau functions.

Murnau itself is a beautiful town, which is in part thanks to the nature nearby, but also thanks to the fact that the town is highly historic. It was founded in the 13th century, and its pedestrianized old town boasts many an old building.

The experience in Murnau was very nice, and it is especially good that the town is being considered as a hub for future EAA projects.



## Glyptothek

Text: Alfred Alberti, Universität Paderborn

After spending two weeks in Bavaria, we finally had the chance to return to the starting point of our trip: the bustling Munich Metropolis. Despite growing fond of the more secluded life in the monastery, all of us were eager to further explore the city. Against the stream of day trippers, we eventually made our way to the Glyptothek, where we met up with director Dr. Florian Knauß, who had kindly agreed to give us a tour of the collection. Prominently situated on the side of the picturesque Königsplatz, the neoclassical building serves as a temple of art and culture, true to Munich's Athenian spirit. The collection is built upon the property of the House of Wittelsbach and was significantly expanded by the museum's patron, Ludwig I, who was an avid collector since the early 19th century. While providing a home to countless ancient treasures, the thick brick walls also offered us welcome shelter from the scorching summer sun. The half-shaded courtyard was overlooked by the protectress of the arts, Pallas Athene, gleaming in gold. Inside, the natural light filtering through the extensive windows created a saturated atmosphere rich in contrast. The light perfectly complemented the marble in a way that brought the stone to life. A modern and open curation allowed every piece enough space to shine and created refreshing viewing angles. The Circular Room featuring both the enthrall-



ing Barberini Faun and the beautiful Medusa Rondanini, especially fascinated us with its shadow play. I am sure we could have spent many more blissful hours wandering among the gods, heroes, and figures of old. Sadly, our time was cut short by other engagements, so we have no choice but to return for another visit.

## Our Day at Ocean Package

Text: Danica Kahle, Fremdspracheninstitut München

One of the highlights of our curriculum was the opportunity to learn about a very friendly, modern Munich-based start-up The Ocean Package ([www.theoceanpackage.com](http://www.theoceanpackage.com)). Their mission is to produce sustainable boxes and packaging from the plastic polluting our oceans. Joshua, one of the founders of the startup, talked about the various challenges of a small company trying to establish itself on a market where big companies do not appreciate new ideas disrupting their supply chains. In their cozy office right next to the Isar river in Munich, Joshua not only explained how the boxes were made, but also how difficult it is to create a mind shift among consumers so that they recycle.

There was a lot of questioning, reporting and discussion about what else global and local companies can do to become more environmentally friendly. It was also very interesting to learn how a startup is structured and why Joshua took on such an enormous and risky undertaking. We ended the day at the Isar with inspiring conversations in a relaxed atmosphere. It was a very enriching day that offered a nice change from the daily monastic routine at the Ettal monastery.



## The Journey to Schachen House

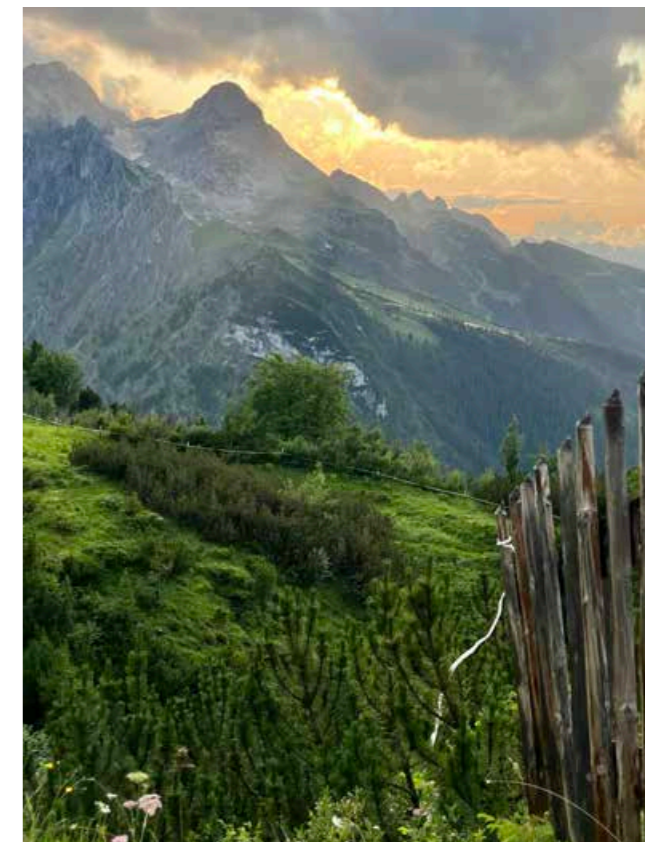
Text: Emma Richter, Universität Paderborn

Backpacks strapped to our backs, rain jackets already donned, water bottles filled, we wait as usual for the bus in Ettal. All thoughts and conversations revolve around the upcoming hike. This is the most challenging and exciting hike of our time together in Bavaria. There is great anticipation, but also a scent of rain in the air. Nevertheless, the journey begins. As we get off in Kleis, the most intense rainfall many of us have ever experienced begins. Within a few minutes, the most expensive rain jackets are soaked, and even the best hiking boots give way. After seeking shelter under the trees, it quickly becomes clear that it won't get any better. So, we start our hike in pouring rain. The clothing seems to weigh twice as much within a short time, and most of the spare sweaters in our backpacks quickly become useless. Surprisingly, the mood of our hiking group remains impeccable. Better yet, the catastrophic weather brings a surprising euphoria. We keep walking. The group stays together as long as the rain persists. After two hours of rain, the sky clears up, and suddenly, the sun shines on our faces. Our hiking group slowly splits into smaller groups, and everyone climbs the Schachen at their own pace. The path to the Schachenhaus is strenuous. Once again, the weather changes, and the last 90 minutes to the destination are climbed in absolute fog. Completely out of breath, soaked, hungry, and exhausted, we arrive at the Schachenhaus and catch sight of the Zugspitze massif that was hidden in the fog during our hike.

We enter the hut of the Schachen House and dry our clothes. The term "drying room" quickly becomes one of the favorite words of our English-speaking participants. The day ends in a cozy evening. The mood is cheerful, the food is hearty, and the drinks are cold. It was a day when our group came together, and together, but at the same time individually, each one mastered the challenge.

The next morning, we have breakfast together in the best weather and participate in a tour of the Schachen House. The down-to-earth excursion hut of King Ludwig appears surprisingly small, rustic, and an absolute contrast to Linderhof, which we visited the previous week. The ascent to an unexpected world above the ground floor gives us a glimpse into Ludwig's hidden character worlds.

The descent from the Schachen was no less adventurous than the ascent. Injuries and broken shoes did not stop us from completing the journey. The hiking group has repeatedly waited for each other on this path, and we arrived together in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. There, we crossed the gorge, which is an impressive phenomenon. A raging river with waterfalls in the midst of a canyon. Despite enormous exhaustion, we got a last boost of energy here and completed the hike in the beer garden with Bratwurst and Helles.





# EXPERIENCES WRITTEN BY THE STUDENTS



## First impressions

Text: Lina Maier

It's 10:30 AM, meeting point: Munich Central Station. All around us, there's hustle and bustle as people rush between the platforms in search of the right way. We embark on our adventurous journey towards Ettal, and despite the rail replacement service, everything goes smoothly. Three hours later, we arrive at the monastery. As we pass through the gates, our gaze rests on the beautiful monastery complex and church, and we know we've made it. We've left the hustle and bustle of the city behind. Standing in the courtyard, we marvel at the impressive building and its mystical surroundings. We're allowed to enjoy this special place for a full three weeks, soak in the tranquility. Now all revolves around the questions: What is an academy? Is less sometimes more? Can we be just as fulfilled with a sustainable lifestyle? After a brief tour of the grounds, room assignments, and more amazement from our common room, we embark on a small exploration of Ettal. We view the monastery from all angles and discover quaint cafes and, of course, the beer garden at the monastery hotel.

The fatigue from the journey slowly fades away, and we begin to feel the tranquility of the place seeping into us. In the days to come, much will happen: we will climb mountains and ignite discussions, delve into various cultures, from the ancient Greeks to the modern yet reclusive lives of the monks. And on the very first evening, the mountain air clears our minds, sparking discussions about fairness and power. Shortly after, the moment arrives, and we are allowed to enter the church. Reverently, we sit on the benches and listen as Florian Bauer tells us how Ludwig the Bavarian founded the monastery in 1330 and what the paintings depict.

## Living in a Monastery

Text: Bridget Gallagher, American University

We have been taught that Monks live a simpler life than most to better connect them with god. As students, we have lived a life of convenience-- any shop or restaurant open anytime we want. Coming to Ettal, we have been eating both breakfast and dinner here most days as part of the program. With a diet consisting mostly of cheese and bread at the monastery, we were quick to understand that we too were getting a glimpse into the Monklifestyle.

Every night we joke, "Bread and Cheese, my favorite!" The meals are now more about discussions, debates, points of view and

conversations, and less about what is on our plates. One week into our stay, we had a meal of chicken, some pork, and a bowl of tomatoes. Words cannot describe the utter exuberance we had at the, now thought as, wide arrangement of foods we had at this particular dinner.

While eating a particular diet has proven difficult for some, it truly has shown us all on the program that Less can in-fact be more. Appreciation comes from perspective, and through this program we have actively learned that.



## Back to Nature

Text: Emma Richter, Universität Paderborn

The philosophy of ‚Less is More‘ inevitably leads back to nature. The stay in Ettal offers a variety of opportunities for walks and hikes. Evenings in the valley with a view of the landscape lead to shared discussions about destiny, gratitude, and life paths. The contents of our academy blend with the surrounding landscape. Through physical movement in nature, our thoughts and discussions progress.

As the meeting center of the academy, we repeatedly return to the old music room. With a view of the mist-covered mountains in the west and the monastery courtyard in the east, we exchange newly gained impressions and experiences there.



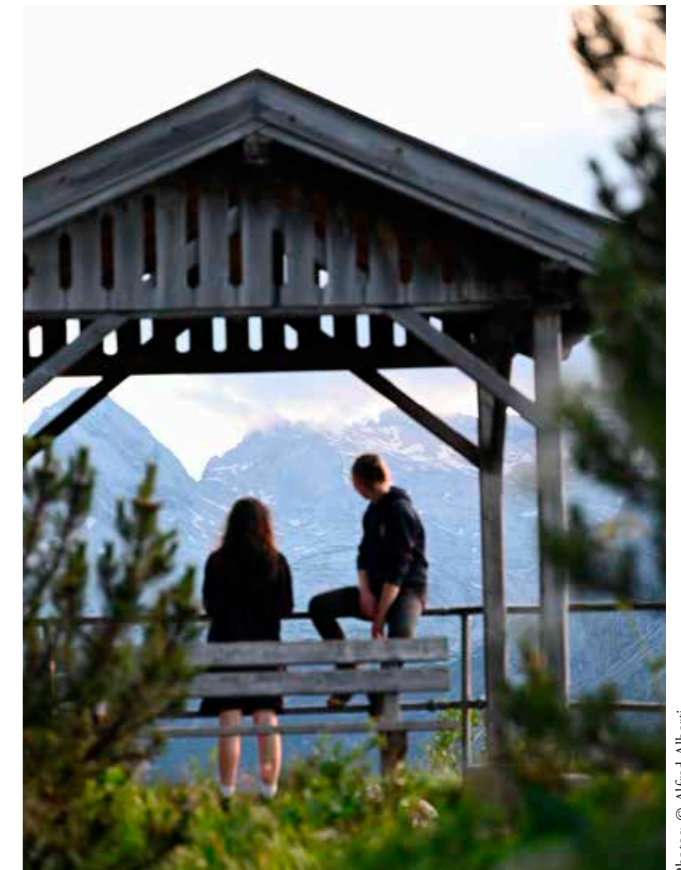
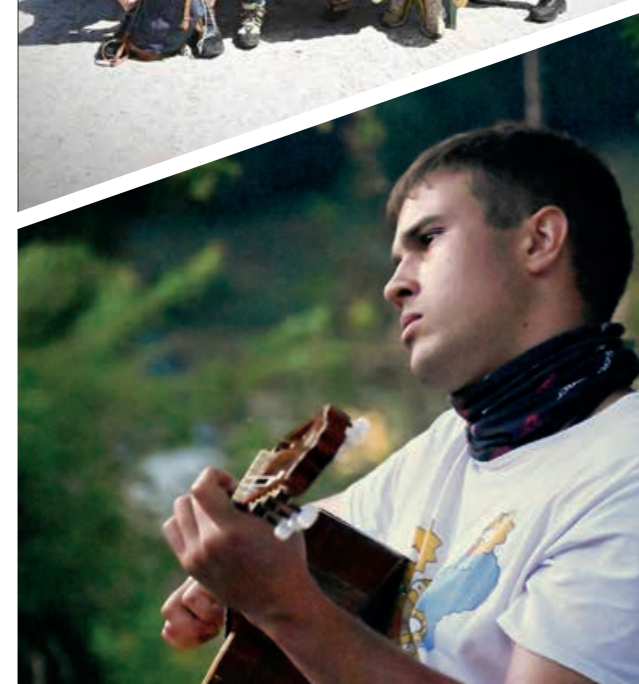
## Community

Text: Semyon Sandruschenko, St. Johns's College

After a long day filled with physical and mental wanderings, everyone is tired but not yet ready to retire to their rooms. Suddenly, someone remembers that the living room we are in is not called the ‚music room‘ for nothing. One of us hurries to fetch their guitar, and Professor Söder carefully retrieves the candles he had bought for this purpose. The chandelier dims, and the room is bathed in a mystical atmosphere, with only the faint

candlelight fighting against the darkness. The guitarist begins to play. He sings a song in a foreign language about a distant land he dreams of returning to one day. While the exact meaning of the song will remain a mystery to most of those present, the rhythm and intonation transport each of us to places and times that are forever gone, existing only as memories.

But then the song fades away. After a few moments of reflection, the next song is played. This melody is familiar to all; some know the lyrics by heart, while others hurry to look them up. Now, the chorus rings out, and the sound of one voice blends with many. Those present look at each other, seeing the glow of the candles reflected in each other's eyes. We all sense that through our time here, we have become a community on which the academy can build. Strengthened by this experience, everyone goes to bed to rest and start the new day refreshed.





# Academic Impulses

Text: Ranna Kiswani, St. John's College

We have been so lucky to experience the space here at Ettal for our studies of tradition and of the world. Even the 'music room' we use is a great example of how the space helps our thinking. The views of the Alps on one side which connects us to nature and the view of the Kloster on the other side connects us to tradition and thinking.

This connection to thinking was continued when we visited Dr. Roland Jurgeleit Ancient Greek class in the gymnasium. The students spoke German and we spoke English but what connected us was Ancient Greek and in the space of that classroom we all got to give our perspective on translations. We got into a very interesting conversation with the German students about the Greek term "deinon" and how Germans see it much more negatively than we do in English.

We learnt a lot about the different ways the three languages think about humans and their impact in the world. This is of course a big part of what the academy does but is an extension of our duties to understanding each other as well. The other way the space at Ettal has helped us is through the classes we have had about "Iceland: Language, Culture, Myths" given to us by the wonderful Jonas. He has taken the time to teach us about a language and tradition that is so closely linked to Germany and its surrounding countries. From Jonas we learned that not only animals, insects and trees disappear, but that minor languages are also being lost at an alarming rate every year. Learning Icelandic taught us that less is also – on a linguistic level – worth preserving.

Learning Icelandic has also helped us see connections with the German language while also giving us this wonderful opportunity to learn something we may not have dedicated time to otherwise.

The reading of the sagas, the discussions about poetry and life in Iceland, and reciting the Icelandic alphabet are just some examples of the wide array of tasks we have done together. Guided by a scholar of Iceland, we have learnt so much, very quickly. The space here at Ettal allows us to think and connect on an academic and physical level which I think is delightfully beautiful.



Photos: © Alfred Alberti

Photos: © Bridget Gallagher



# Space and Time

Text: Dolan Polglaze, St. John's College

At our academy, many of our experiences and conversations have circled around the theme of Space and Time. Space and time are not merely the basis of our human experience: Professor Doctor Söder has encouraged us to explore how this specific, local space at Kloster Ettal has informed our perceptions of what we encounter in our daily lives.

There are, as Herr Söder suggested, many kinds of space and time: there is the time of the cloister bells, the time of the train schedule, digital time, the time between sunset and sunrise, and agricultural time.

And while all these may seem like different measurements of the same thing, in our experience, each kind of time affects us incompletely different ways. There are also many kinds of space: the space between myself and this massive mountain, the space of the altar, and the space within a human heart.

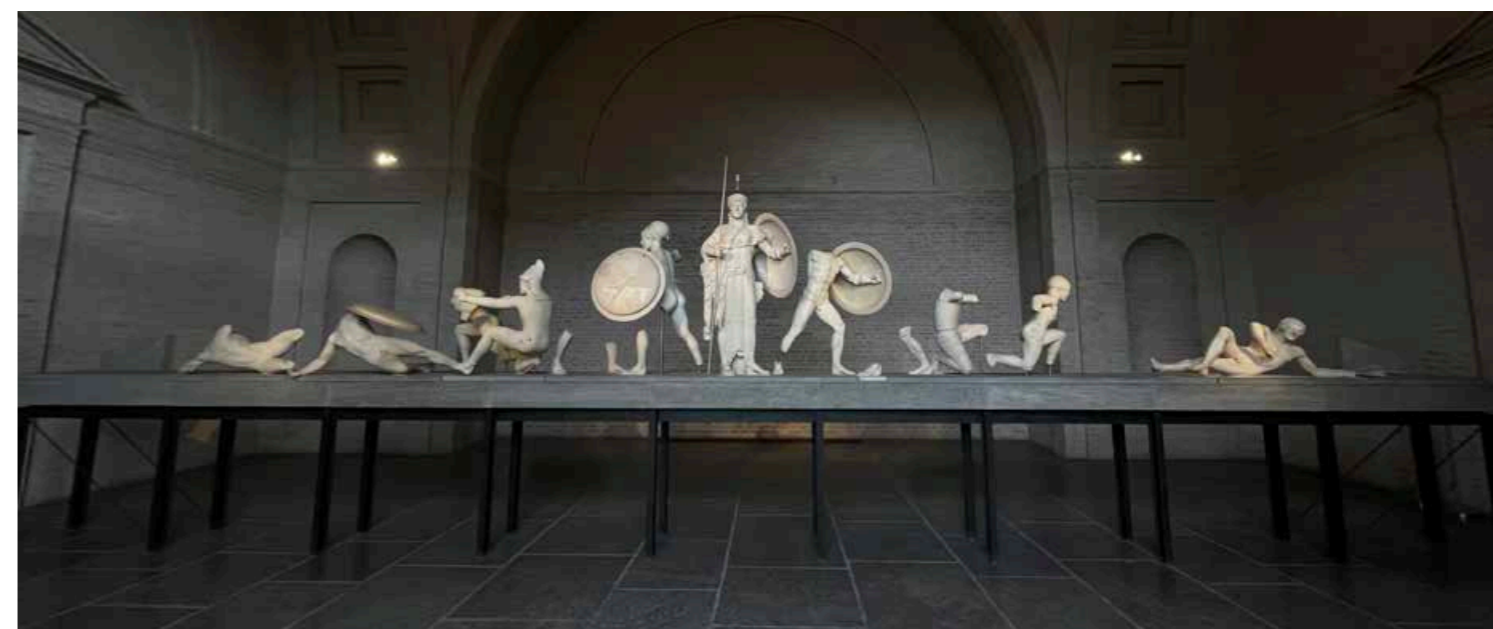
It is important to consider how space and time affect us because we are constantly being unconsciously formed by the specific kind of space and time we inhabit. For example, in the monastery, time does not move as it does in Munich.

Here, time is given the proper space to unfold naturally, and the cloister bells show that time cannot be made to move according to our desires. Time approaches us, we do not approach time. Space too is expressed more wholesomely here: in Ettal we do not just move from room to room as one would in the city, but from mountain to meadow and back to the mountains again.

Thus, space here is dimensional, and makes us feel the massive scale of the material world. Life at the Kloster has forced us to ask ourselves the question: How does the specific kind of space and time we inhabit help or hinder our striving towards the good life?



Photos: © Bridget Gallagher





# REVIEW FOR NEXT YEAR

# 20 24

## Arrival

- Welcome Dinner
- Tour through Munich
- Getting to know each other and introducing partners and interns
- First glimps on Bavarian culture: Visiting the Beer garden and having Weißwurst-Frühstück (Brunch)

## Munich

- Tour through the most important Museums: Glyptothek, James Loeb Collection
- Meeting the James Loeb Society
- Visit of the traditional Kocherlball

## First days in Ettal

- Traveling to the Monastery together
- Getting to know the grounds and the accommodations
- Define this years academies goal
- Hike to the Ettaler Mannl
- Developing a group feeling

## WEEK 1:

### The Monastery, Ettal and the Simple life

- Tour through the monastery
- Workshop on 'How to make cheese' and Gardening Project
- Get to know the simple monk life
- Discussion: What is necessity?

## WEEK 2:

### Murnau, Ludwig the Bavarian and tools

- Wood and Carving Workshop
- Introduction of Murnaus Maker Lab
- Learning about Ludwig the Bavarian
- Visit of Lindnerhof and hike to the Schachenhaus
- Discussion: What is the worth of material?

## WEEK 3:

### Project [14.07. - 24.07. at Villa Riedwies]

- Art Projects with Steffi
- Putting thought into work
- Vernissage 19.07.2024
- Farewell Event 21.07.2024

# DIDACTIC FEEDBACK

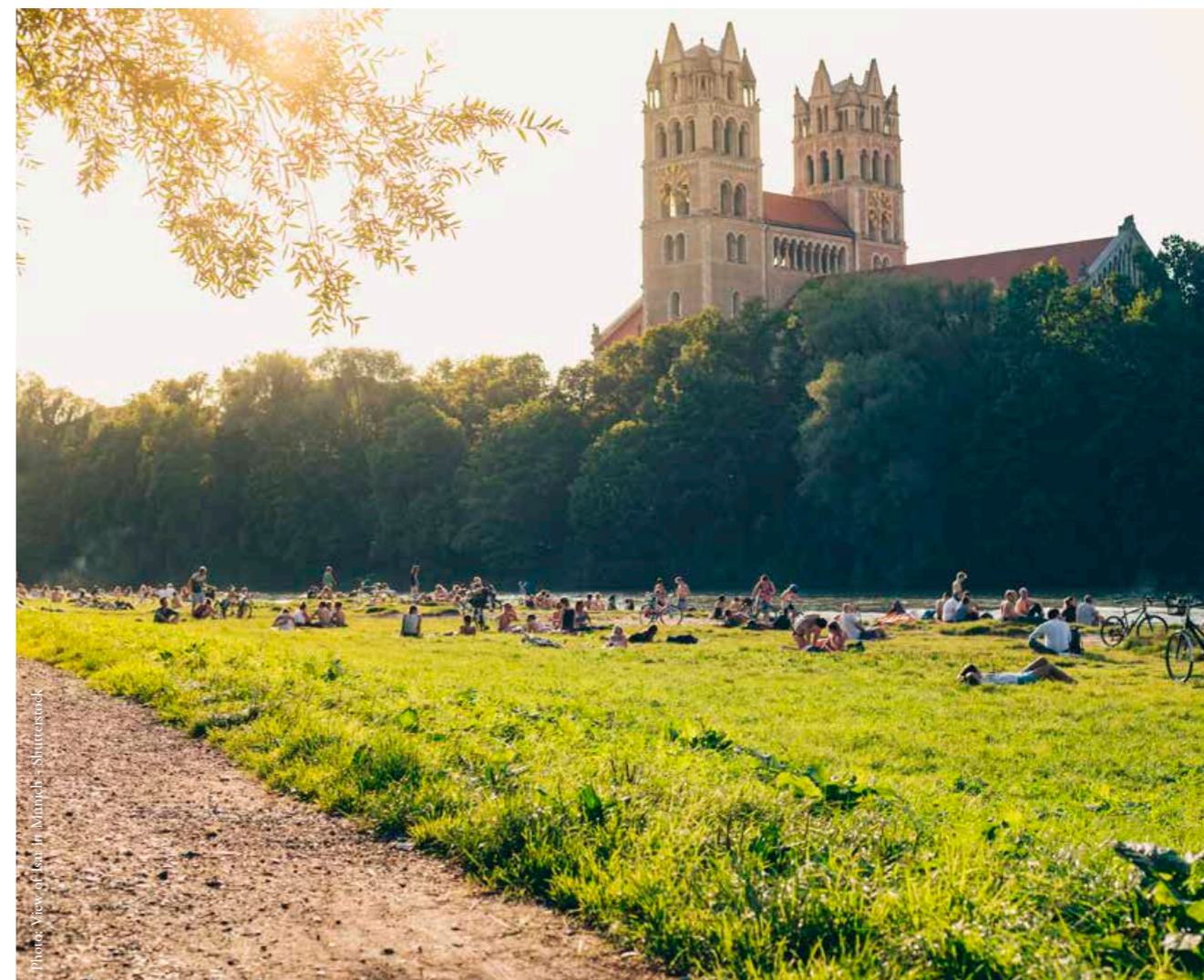
## Paedagogic Reflections

Every week will have a group goal: building, cooking or activities.

After 10 days (positive peek of a new group): program review and set the goal for this years academy.

After 20 days (critical evaluation): team building and easy group tasks.

A structure with shared tasks will be established.





# END NOTES

## Introducing our Team

Hans-Peter Söder, Director, [hp.soeder@eaa-ettal.com](mailto:hp.soeder@eaa-ettal.com)

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Johann-Friedrich Söder, Communications and Media

Jonas Bockelmann, Academic Program

Carl-Gustav Söder, IT- Services and Business - Consulting

Armin-Heinrich Söder, Mountain Guide

Dr. Frank Werner, Mountain Guide

Renée Remy, Academic Coordinator, FIM - Partner

Dr. Sandra Uhrig, Schloßmuseum Murnau - Partner

Bridget Gallagher, Activities and Media Creation

Alfred Albert, Photography

Emma Richter, Teambuilding

Roland Jurgeleit, Timaios Gesellschaft - Partner

*James Loeb*  
James Loeb Gesellschaft e. V.

### *Special Thanks to*

Sigrid Panhans  
Anita Falkenhahn

### *Supporters and Patrons*

Gloria Mötzingler  
Ellen Sullivan  
Cornelia Müller-Nymphius

### *Partners*

Kloster Ettal  
Staatliche Antikensammlung  
Marktgemeinde Murnau  
Fremdspracheninstitut München  
Schloßmuseum Murnau  
Timaios Gesellschaft

### *Interns*

Antonia Beljung  
Marcello Maramigi  
Leo Doppelberger  
Zoe Klinglmair  
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*Outward Bound for the Soul.*

Ellen Sullivan

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