

## *Westdeutsche Zeitung*

### Photography exhibition: Birches and pines as a natural spectacle

By Helga Meister

**Simone Nieweg triumphs with colossal photographs of trees in the garden art museum of Schloss Benrath.**



**Simone Nieweg, exhibiting at Benrath Castle, discovered these Birken 2012 at Kafjord in Finnmark.**

**Düsseldorf, Germany.** Simone Nieweg (53) is the most modest of Bernd Becher's master classes in Düsseldorf. She was 24 years old when she took up the first small garden with the big picture camera. She knows the beetroots, regentons and compost heaps next to the cabbage in the field. She has yet experienced how her grandmother had a piece of land behind the house, where she cultivated vegetables. And when the parents were temporarily financially bad, the whole family was fed by the harvest in Graeland.

Nieweg, however, now shows in the garden art museum of Schloss Benrath how it has developed to the great. The theme has been exclusively the forest for four years, a traditional motif. But as the motifs of the birches or pines almost make the museum rooms stand out from the hulls, this is spectacular and new.

If you look at the magnificent show in the museum wing, you forget that it is nothing more than tree trunks and some meadow or bushwork in the foreground. Or, more precisely, Simone Nieweg makes great art from an all-world theme. In this case, she is very much a typical Becher-Meisterschülerin and therefore representative of the Becher-Schule. As she chooses the neckline, recognizes the exact moment in daylight, and uses the colors in the background for her picture motif, this is outstanding.

The photos are anything but snapshots. Like a cat of prey, she sneaks around her motif, at first without the heavy camera. And she returns several times. She knows how the sun is at the moment of the recording and the light is prancing on the leaves. It has long since internalized the so-called autochthonous weather situation, ie, the weather at windstill, where the air remains on the ground. "I would never have photographed a tree that turned in the wind," she says.

She is keen on depth. The space behind the tree trunks is their pride. When the wind calm and the neutral sky allow it, it makes its image and is delighted when the bushes in light rosé lift the Californian pine from the backlight and is a balance to the many green.

Your photos are a school of seeing. Why an old pine in the Franconian Alb near Eichstatt is a colossal motif, she explains spontaneously: "The jaw was very magnificent and majestic. I discovered them by chance and went to see them a second time. When I stood in front of her I was lucky that the oat in the foreground was still partially green and the ground had a floor wave."  
"

She took the Garry forest near Düsseldorf at sunset. Now her photo has a reddish radiance. For this she had to be in the shade, while the light of the evening sky came only from behind. It was so strong that there were light reflections, which are only recognizable in the enlargement.

As far as the fjord landscape to Norway, it has been driven, where the birch trees are particularly resistant to the tree line, but they have to carry heavy snow loads in winter.

"I admire the power of nature that is documented in the tree," she says. In the middle of her image, however, she also has a slightly reddish heather, which gave the photograph a colorful cheerfulness.

Now she wants to leave the different latitude degrees. The Palatinate and Oberharz, the Ruhr, Mecklenburg, the Lausitz, Franconia and the Senne, as well as Hollywood, Southern France and Norway has already in the box. A bewildering, totally untypical picture from Vacluse is underneath.

She saw the mist rise in the pines on a hill. She had had to hurry, because in a few minutes the fog had passed.