



THE MOUNTAIN ART OF ADAM ATTEW

How many artists do you know who would dig a snow hole to sleep in overnight ready for the best light?

Michael Cranmer meets Adam Attew 2,670m up an Austrian mountain...

Artists sometimes suffer for their art. J M W Turner famously tied himself to a ship's mast in a storm to capture the full force of nature...



Adam Attew finishing his oil painting 'Last Light on the Kirchenkogel' 2760m up at Obergurgl in the Austrian Tirol. Following in his brushstrokes, another English artist, [Adam Attew](http://www.adamattew.com) (<http://www.adamattew.com>), spent February 2,670m up an Austrian alp painting the mountains. An honorary local right down to his *lederhosen*, he turned up each day as Artist-in-Residence at the Hohe Mut Alm where skiers could drop in and see him put the finishing touches to a collection on show in the futuristic new Carat Centre in [Obergurgl](https://www.maddogski.com/resort/obergurgl/). (<https://www.maddogski.com/resort/obergurgl/>).



The Carat Centre in Obergurgl

Mountains are his obsession and the exhibition featured work from Sweden to Canada, but Austria is his spiritual home. *“I carry a camera wherever I ski”* Adam told me. *“The light changes constantly and I can capture the scene then work on a painting back in my studio”*. As a highly-qualified instructor he knows a thing or two about skiing and thinks nothing of heading off into the backcountry, and digging a snow hole to sleep in overnight ready for the best light. *“Early mornings and dusk are magical times for photos”* he said, *“I want people to share my experiences through my work”*.



Adam Attew skiing

The paintings are finely detailed, and Adam has developed an exceptional ability to portray that particular transparency of backlight and shadow that comes from sunlight mirrored off snow at high altitudes. This skill is reflected in sales of his work. *“I’ve already sold one painting and had a buyer very interested in another before the exhibition was even open to the public”* Adam said. Prices indicate the painstaking hours of work he puts in—‘Last light on the Kirchenkogel’ is priced at €8,500.

The artworks hung in the Carat Centre, which takes its inspiration and design from the branding of the Ötztal Valley area as ‘The Diamond of the Alps’. The majority of his work is oil on canvas but he’s even decorated a pair of bespoke PFD (Pure Freeride Design) skis constructed from bamboo. They too were on show at the Carat Centre. After all, L S Lowry painted on scraps of cardboard. Let’s pause a moment and consider. The skis/artwork are priced at €2,500. The skis from the factory would cost you €1,499. So [Adam’s artwork \(http://www.adamattew.com\)](http://www.adamattew.com) comes out at €1,044. Pretty good value for a unique piece I reckon. *“Prices are hard to gauge”* he said *“the market makes its own mind up”*. The record price for a Turner is €4,225m (‘Rome from Mount Aventine’) so he has a way to go to match that. I ask Adam if he thinks they should be used or mounted on the wall? *“Not for me to say!”* he laughed, *“Whoever buys them can decide”*.



PFD skis painted by Adam Attew

Although most of his work is in oil a beautiful little watercolour caught my eye. Entitled ‘Beyond the Cabins’, it depicts a tent lit from the inside, with a sparkling moon behind. *“I learnt Arctic bushcraft from Ray Mears. We were in Swedish Lapland. This is a Sami Lavvu camp of the type used for thousands of years to house the Sami reindeer herders”*. Adam’s eye for detail, deep empathy with his subject, and his delicate technical finesse have all gone into this. Maybe I should start saving up.



Beyond the Cabins

The Obergurgl exhibition is by no means his first. Last year the ‘Cathedral Gallery’, the highest art exhibition space in the Alps at the Arlberg Hospiz Hotel, St Christoph, hosted his successful solo show. He’s in demand. Looking further ahead, and strictly hush hush, I understand that the Spectre 007 Elements centre in Sölden have made enquiries. The call probably went something like this...

“Choose your next exhibition carefully, Mr Attew — it may be your last”

“Do you expect me to ski?”

“No, Mr Attew, I expect you to paint!”

TELL ME MORE ABOUT ADAM ATTEW

A gallery of Adam’s work can be viewed at www.adamattew.com (<http://www.adamattew.com/>).

TELL ME MORE ABOUT MICHAEL CRANMER

A former press photographer, picture editor, and ski instructor, Michael now turns his attention to what really matters...the perfect turn, the perfect slope, the perfect chums to share it with, and the perfect Dirty Dry Vodka Martini. Read more of his award-winning work [here](https://www.maddogski.com/author/michael-cranmer/). (<https://www.maddogski.com/author/michael-cranmer/>).

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