

## 1550 SAN REMO DRIVE

A group presentation curated by Francesco Tenaglia

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Two men walk into an alpine landscape. The first ventures into a snowstorm and escapes freezing by taking shelter within the walls of a hut: losing his senses, he dreams of a golden era populated by an Olympian, content society. The idyll is soon replaced by grotesque and violent allegories of a decadent present. Hamburg-born Hans Castorp—the main character of Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* (1924)—goes back to the Swiss Sanatorium that he intended to visit for a few days, but where he spends many long years, as if under the effect of a spell. The writer Robert Walser—the second figure—had retreated to the Alps after spending a very productive and a successful period in Berlin: his brother, the artist Karl, had introduced him to the city’s artistic milieu but Robert never felt comfortable with the social duties of cultural cliques. He committed himself to an increasingly isolated life: he lived in a mental institution in Switzerland even after he recovered from nervous exhaustion. Walser shrank into a frugal, almost invisible lifestyle, started writing “micrograms” (short composition written in barely legible, small characters), and cultivated his life-long passion for promenades: an enthusiastic wanderer, a natural flâneur. On December 25, 1956 his body was found in a field of snow near the asylum. 1550 San Remo Drive is a fictional touchpoint of these two trajectories.