

BRIXEN BRESSANONE
**WATER LIGHT
FESTIVAL**

Nadja Rungger
**THE STARDUST
MEMORY PROJECT**

2026

Martin

*using the hands
to experience movement and
forming, capturing
a moment
in every sculpture
and telling its story*

When someone came to call at Brunostraße 13, Martin would perhaps be up on the scaffold working on a sculpture, hands white with plaster. He would wear a leather apron and a loden hat on his head. Or perhaps he would be in town to buy milk and run some errands. There he would often meet people he knew and exchange a few words before heading back to his workshop. Martin loved to observe, formed sculptures based on moments.

Martin and his wife Klementine moved to Brixen in the sixties, when he was commissioned to work on the people's altars, for example at the Cathedral of Brixen, after the Second Vatican Council. He was born in 1923 in the Schnalstal valley and grew up there on one of the farms which would later be submerged in the Vernagt-Stausee reservoir. After the war, Martin attended art school in Val Gardena and planned to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich together with a friend after that. They had pooled their resources to buy a leather bag together specially for that. As they were ultimately accepted at different acade-

mies, one of them had to keep the bag and pay his share to the other. Money was scarce, but the time at the academy was a good time. There was mischief, it was a creative time, there was work.

When Martin's children were little, they would often sit in their father's workshop and occupy themselves with wood and tools, playing. Martin would watch them, make sculptures about them. Being around art was something completely normal in this family; it was there, like a table or a chair, and sometimes Martin would hang his hat on a sculpture.

For some years now, a prize has been awarded in honour of Martin Rainer. You can encounter his art in the fountain on the Cathedral Square or the all-year nativity scenes at the Hofburg Palace. These nativity scenes used to live in the family room at home, and when someone stopped by, the children would be quiet and listen to Martin and his wife telling them about the figures.