

The giants of the desert (Jack Dykinga)

During our excursion to Oberhausen to the exhibition "The fragile paradise", I took a photo of Jack Dykinga. The photo is called "The Giants of the Desert" and it shows saguaro cacti (*Carnegiea gigantea*) in the Sonora Desert (Red Stone State Park in Arizona). Lightning flashes around her in a late summer thunderstorm towards the earth and a light rainbow can be seen in the background. In the picture, the bright colors of the rainbow play around the violent forces of nature of the thunderstorm. The photographer wants to show the viewer the beauty of nature from a different angle. He succeeds in this when he manages to combine the soft colors of the rainbow with the gigantic plants and the threatening lightning. From the info text next to the photo, you learn a lot about the thunderstorms in the Sonoran Desert and the saguaro cacti.

Late summer thunderstorms are common in the desert especially in the monsoon season (July-September) are not rare. The Sonoran Desert is one of the largest deserts in the world with 320,000 km² and impresses with one of the most diverse biodiversity.

The saguaro cactus can effectively store water due to its sponge-like interior. This leads to enormous growth. Such a cactus can grow to an average height of 14 meters and weigh up to well over a ton. Individual specimens of the plant live to be around 200 years old.

I was impressed by the picture because I find the contrast between the calmness of the rainbow and the restlessness of the thunderstorm fascinating. I think Jack Dykinga got his intention across very well. I also find it interesting how the cactus has adapted perfectly to its environment and can resist such forces despite its height.

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