

PRESS KIT

Guided tour (preview) for the press
Thursday, 8 June 2017, 11 am

Registration :
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COLLECTION DE L'ART BRUT LAUSANNE

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MICHAEL GOLZ – TRAVELS IN ATHOSLAND

"Athosland" is an imaginary country that Michael Golz (born in 1957) has invented totally from scratch. The work is a lifetime project on which this German creator, together with his brother Wulf, has been applying himself without a break since his childhood years (1960s). The resulting imaginary world is full of mountains, hills and lush green valleys through which rivers flow; these real-life elements coexist with the strange and marvelous. Wide-spreading highway and railroad grids criss-cross a country whose towns and villages possess an infrastructure that amply fulfills the needs of everyday life: stores, cafés, movie houses abound, as do post offices and banks. At the same time, the land's inhabitants suffer no constraints: they are wholeheartedly at liberty! Those who not wish to work, for instance, can take as much time off as they want; they can enjoy the swimming pools transformed into discos, since robots are there to replace them. Moreover, this alternative world accepts payments in the form of jacket buttons, grass blades or tree leaves... Indeed, pushing a simple button even enables the short-term return of deceased relatives or friends. Still and all, as idyllic as *Athosland* comes across, danger and evil are likewise present. Thus one can come across beasts such as the "Teufels-Ö-Ifiche" (devil creatures), who are in league with the malevolent natives, or the "Glätschviecher" (glacier beasts) with their ice-caked maws. Moreover, pollution threatens this fantasy land's lush landscapes, due to the presence of the "Bübsfabriken" — imposing chimney-capped factories expelling clouds of black and foul-smelling smoke.

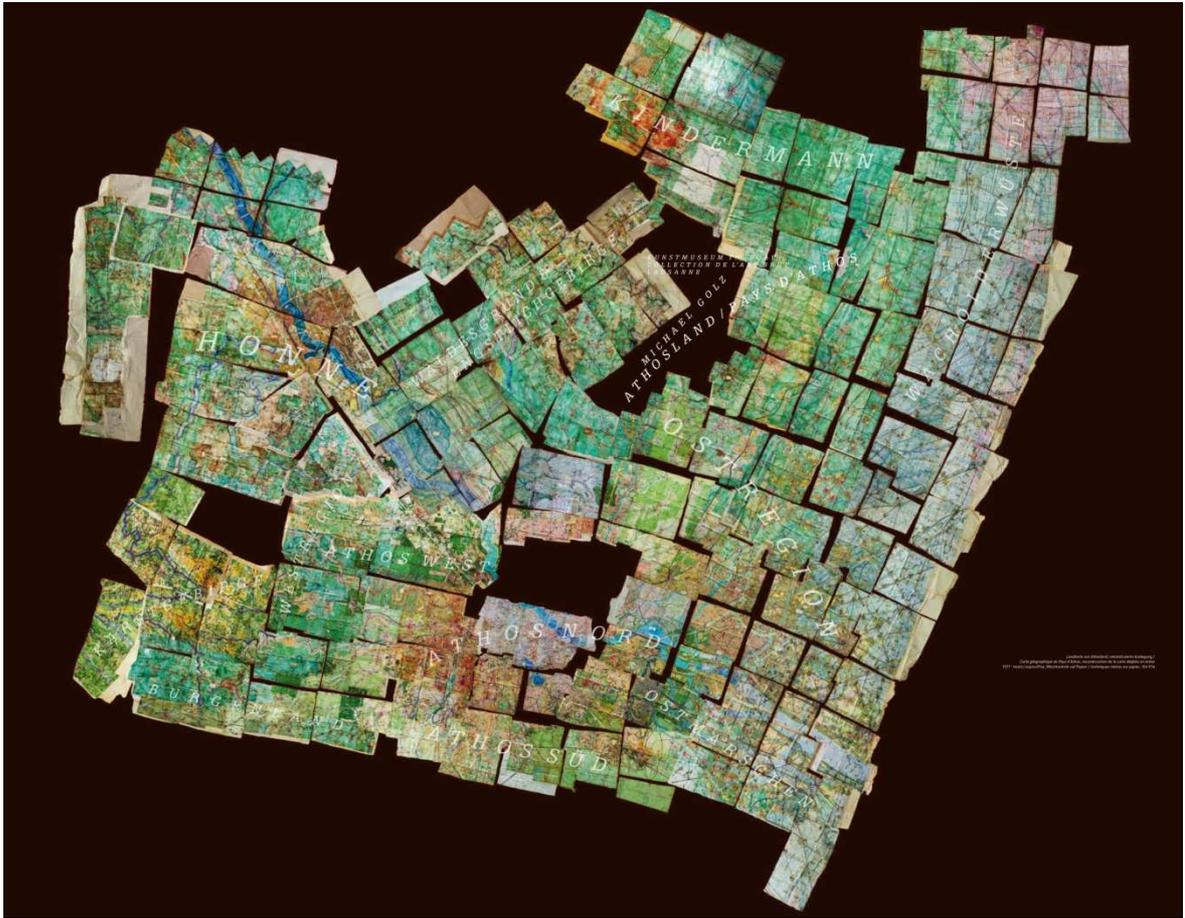
Michael Golz's universe, which continues to develop and expand day by day, consists of both pictorial creations and a language enriched by a wealth of neologisms. The whole is embodied by a most impressive topographic map. Once all the different parts are assembled—which comes to no less than 150 cardboard sheets—that map measures 14 by 17 meters. Accompanying the map are drawings in colored pencil and felt-tip pen; these offer a precise depiction of the land's picturesque cities and villages. All the inhabitants of this land have long hair. Completing this monumental work is a series of thick, numbered binders: these are meant as travel guides of a kind. Binding together hundreds of sheets of paper sheathed in transparent adhesive film, they offer illustrated stories about the "Ifichen mem" — that is, the inhabitants of his utopian world.

Exhibition Curator :

Sarah Lombardi, Director of the Collection de l'Art Brut

The exhibition is organized jointly with the Thurgau Art Museum (Kartause Ittingen, Warth)

PUBLICATION



A bilingual (French and German) exhibition catalogue has been published for the occasion: Markus Landert, Christiane Jeckelmann (Director), *Michael Gölz, Athosland/le pays d'Athos*, Thurgau Art Museum, 2017, 63pp

FILM

Athosland, a documentary film by Philippe Lespinasse and Andress Alvarez (duration 33', in German in the original, French subtitles), co-produced by the Collection de l'Art Brut and the Thurgau Art Museum, is screened as a loop during the exhibition.

PUBLICATION EXCERPT**"Ah, when we set out on a trip..." — An excursion to Athosland**

By Markus Landert, Director of the Thurgau Art Museum

[...]

Athosland narrates the world, as seen by applying a gigantic distorting mirror to it and thus reflecting its inconceivable scale. It is worth endeavoring to see *Athosland* in its entirety, in order to get the full measure of the scope and ambition that Michael Golz's project embodies. Not that such a trip is without danger: all exploration attempts seem doomed to fail in the face of the sheer quantity of material entailed here. The images come in simply mind-boggling numbers, while the travel stories in all the binders are altogether overly numerous and overly detailed. Moreover, few viewers have occasion to see the whole map spread out. In addition, by now, several binders and drawings have since been sold and are thus no longer on site. Hence, it would require several weeks or months before one could find one's bearings even to a modest degree within this unknown world. Conceivably, attempting to visit Athosland could well turn into a sort of dead-end quest.

Of course, Michael Golz is by far not the only one to dream up a truly personal world. Through the ages, artists have built up their works with an eye to providing unique and imaginary worlds of their own. Thus, for instance, Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516) created altar triptychs intended as far more than moral injunctions. His "Garden of Delights" depicts an exuberant vision of a world inviting the strange and the unexplainable to burst through our experience of reality and normalcy. With his thousands of works, Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930) paved the way for a world of boundless dimensions, for which he himself—aka St. Adolf— served as the undisputed linchpin. Or again, we have the endeavor by Armand Schulthess (1901-1972) to sum up our universal knowledge through key words recorded on little signboards (metal plaques) strung around his property. What all these total bodies of work share is an attempt at the impossible task of conceiving and describing the world in terms of a delimitable Whole. In their irrepressible zeal, these self-taught creators amass knowledge and experience in such quantities that any attempt to classify or organize their findings becomes as hard to read as the world itself. For Michael Golz, what started out as an innocent teenage game continues to multiply as freely and limitlessly as ever. *Athosland* is like a compass gone berserk: one that its author has developed for his very own use. The goal of his undertaking is not to produce a work of art: it is to collect, class and transmit pieces of information. Hence, the process is endless. And the reference instrument, so trivial at the start, has rapidly been transformed into an autonomous, self-sustaining world that totally eludes being captured as a whole. One feels ill at ease when succumbing to that world, when adopting its language without the slightest idea where it all could lead us. To accept Michael Golz as our guide is to risk igniting our own imagination and blurring the boundaries between aesthetic creations—pictures, depictions, dreams, accounts—and reality. Yet, in the world that is ours today, it seems ever more relevant to confront such passages which have, suddenly, become blurred... Blurred by the great impact of the digital media which contribute to erasing the boundary between images and reality, the real world and its reflection, its on-screen construction. Tourists travelling across *Athosland* cannot help but learn something from it in the process.

Curriculum vitae

It is Renate Golz-Fleischmann, the creator's mother, who drew up this biographical sketch in honor of the art world's first encounter with Michael Golz and his oeuvre, at a show put on by the ART CRU Gallery in Berlin in 2012. Her approach to her son's work is biographical and personal.

Michael Golz—on the fringes?

Michael has been mentally disabled ever since major damage was inflicted on his brain by a virus infection triggered by a vaccination against smallpox. My once alert and lively young boy, so enthused by his surroundings, was transformed following five consecutive days of high fever. He became as if locked in, cut off from a SELF that had escaped him. His gestures no longer had any goal, nor did his doings make any sense. Some time later, when handed a pencil, he could not understand what to do with it.

Resolving that problem was like opening wide the floodgates: after a first few successful scribbles, his drawings shaped up into something very personal. He showed an undeniable artistic talent. Having established that drawing and painting had a positive influence on his general development, I began searching for the right school: this led me to discover Eckwälden, in the Swabian Jura Mountains. It is a boarding school for children who are disabled or saddled with learning difficulties: here the educational and therapeutic methods in an anthroposophic vein stimulate the children's creative and intellectual resources, while encouraging their development.

Michael spent ten years at Eckwälden, returning home for the three and half months of vacation periods. Having completed his schooling, he expressed the wish to become a gardener. He did an apprenticeship in several anthroposophic institutions along the lines of his school, and then left for Dalle in Lüneburg (a town in the German state of Lower Saxony). "Dalle" is a village community that welcomes young people having studied at Eckwälden. It offers them a large garden, together with creative gardening methods (organic farming). All the while, Michael continued his creative activity, and the community's drawing classes enabled him to hone his technique. Yet all this came to an abrupt end when a car accident deprived him of a gardener who had served as a reference point to him.

His attempt to lead a normal professional life came to naught, prompting him to join the gardening department at the "Flüedner Mühlheim" Foundation's sheltered workplace, where mandates were carried out on demand. Michael soon came to miss the creative gardening he had enjoyed at Dalle. Fortunately, there was a good side to his discouragement: he took to focusing more on his creative oeuvre, and began drawing a map of Athos. What started out as an A4-size sheet of paper has now become a map made out of about one hundred sheets fitted together and measuring some 14 by 17 meters. Having moved into an apartment (sheltered housing) of his own, in 2012 Michael resigned from his work at the Foundation. Once a week he attends the "MALzeitler" (Diakoniewerk Duisburg GmbH) painting workshop, where he can implement his creative skills. Furthermore, since being discovered by Alexandra von Gersdorff-Bultmann, he is determinedly seeking to prove his status as an artist.

IMAGES AVAILABLE TO THE MEDIA

All images: Kunstmuseum Thurgau, Ittingen



Map of *Athosland* (detail), 1977 - 2016
Mixed media on paper, 14 X 17 m
Photography: Mirjam Wanner



Map of *Athosland*, 1977 - 2016
Mixed media on paper, 14 X 17 m
Photography: Mirjam Wanner

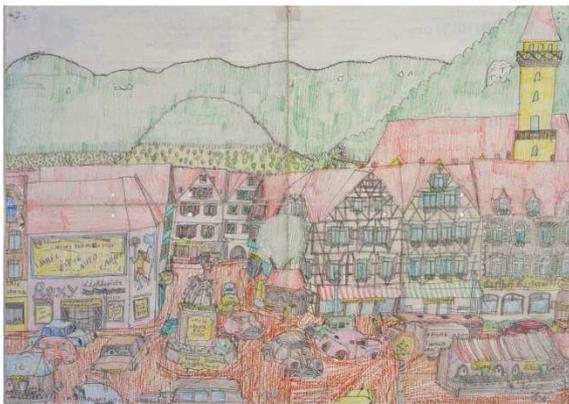
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Breitenbach im Athosland
Breitenbach, village in Athosland, 2008
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin



Hergou im Gounaland
Hergou in Gounaland, 2007
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin



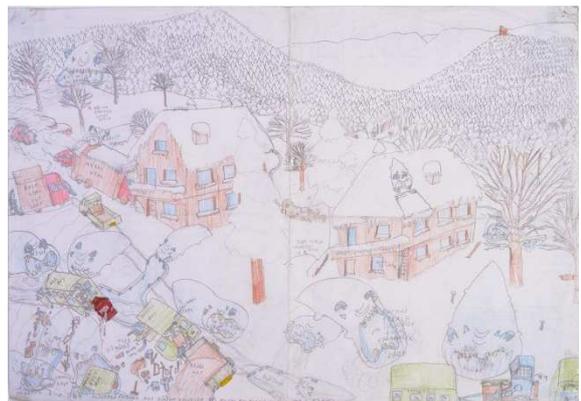
Metzgerdorf im Athosland
Metzgerdorf, village from the « butcher », Athosland, 2005
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin



Räkershausen Hauptbahnhof
Central station in Räkershausen, 2008
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin



Rock Band mit Karin Kinder Mann
Rock Band with Karin Kinder Mann, 2006
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin



Fliednergärtner auf Glätschviechern bei Kunde bei Kindermannsdorf
Fliednergärtner auf Glätschviechern bei Kunde bei Kindermannsdorf, 2010
wax crayon, coloured pencil and lead pencil on paper
Author's collection, courtesy de la Galerie Art Cru, Berlin

EVENTS

Guided tour (preview) for the press **Thursday 8 June 2017, 11am**
by Sarah Lombardi, director of the Collection de l'Art Brut
with Michael Golz
Bookings: sophie.guyot@lausanne.ch

Official opening **Thursday 8 June 2017, 6:30pm**
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne

Free guided tour **Saturday 17 June 2017, 2:15pm**

Free guided tour for teachers **Thursday 14 September 2017, 5pm**

Young People's Workshops **Saturday 17 June 2017, 2pm** Duration: 1h45
(ages 6-10) **Saturday 9 September 2017, 2pm** Fee: 10.-/ child

Guided tours For classes (from age 4) and groups, in French, German, English and Italian.
Upon request

Class visits Advance booking required
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 11am to 6pm
Thursdays from 9am to 6pm

Contact and booking for all tours and workshops at www.artbrut.ch > agenda or 021/ 315 25 70
on a first come first served basis

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Press kit Illustrations and a Press Kit can be downloaded at www.artbrut.ch under the heading: press

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Opening hours Tuesday thru Sunday from 11am to 6pm including holidays and Fasting Monday (follows third Sunday in September)
Open every day in July and August
Free admittance the first Saturday of the month.

Entrance fee Fr. 10.-
Reduced price: Fr. 5.-
Groups of 6: Fr. 5.-
Unemployed persons and youngsters up to 16: free admittance

Access By bus

From St-François : bus no. 2, Beaulieu-Jomini stop.
From the railroad station (gare CFF) : bus nos. 3 and 21, Beaulieu-Jomini stop.

By foot: 25 min. from the station; 10 min. from Place de la Riponne.

By car: highway exit Lausanne-Blécherette, follow Palais de Beaulieu. Car park: Parking de Beaulieu.

Reduced mobility:

The *Michael Golz – Travels in Athosland* exhibition is not accessible to persons with reduced mobility.

THE COLLECTION DE L'ART BRUT THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

