

## LE POIGNARD SUBTIL

20/12/2017

The Fabuloserie in Paris is in full swing: with the exhibitions of Marie-Rose Lortet and Michael Golz, two events to end the year in style. But the “Fabulosiens” from Rue Jacob have not been satisfied with a single exhibition. Truly fascinated by the recent discovery of Michael Golz, German creator of an imaginary land, the Athosland, declined in dozens of map fragments merging with each other in a wild puzzle, they decided to exhibit in a proliferating scenography they obtained from the neighboring gallery, on the other side of the street, which used to be the seat of the Jacob d’Alain Bourdonnais workshop (birthplace of the “fabulosienne” establishment), the Gallery Eric Mouche, that they let them invade with the amazingly proliferating plan of Athosland created by Michael Golz (exhibition set to last until 11 January 2018).

His work, besides the prodigious memory it represents (Golz seems to make a complete mental plan of which he assembles its parts without mistakes, continuing them without connection problems other than tool failure: i.e. pastels, pens, pencils, ...), vast plains crossed by highways and railways, and covered with a farmland mosaic and sprawling city, the entire land crossed by a gigantic river, worth before all the picture that he makes of it and of which one received only a few fragments, here again, in written testimonials (see the catalog of the exhibition in the Kunstmuseum in Thurgau – Karthause-Ittingen in Warth, Switzerland – then transferred to the Collection L’Art Brut in Lausanne ), in reference to the interview which Philippe Lespinasse gave in his documentary “Athosland” (33min) and presented in the DVD “Paul Amar, Michael Golz, Joseph Hofer, Anna Zemankova” (Lokomotiv Films/Collection de l’Art Brut Lausanne), film which provides a passageway to Golz’s fantastic world.

The small catalog edited by the museum of Thurgau, under the direction of Markus Landert and Christiane Jeckelmann gives valuable indications on the work that Michael Golz pursues since his childhood, sometimes in the company of his brother Wulf (the authors of the catalog propose the date of 1977 for the definitively intense start of the creation). His land of fantasy borrows from the real world while being perfectly invested with the imaginative desires of its author. It is a land of total freedom where the marvelous is normal. Everyone wears long hair. Taking days off work is legit, robots are doing the work of the humans (this recalls certain situationist’s dreams). You can pay temporarily with grass blades, buttons or tree leaves (alternative marks). You can even momentarily revive recently deceased relatives, as you wish, by pressing buttons in the cemeteries. (Golz adds: “When you have enough, return the dead to the cemetery. The Broutsch will come to get them to

put them back in the ground and plunge them into a deep sleep, until the next awakening.”)... This land is not only marvelous, but evil is also rife, in the form of demons, the “Teufels-O-Ifiche” (Devils-O-Ifichen, the author often forging neologisms), that support “malicious natives” and “Glatschviecher” (“Glassy-Beasts”) with a frozen mouth. Golz seems occasionally fascinated by cruelty, describing bubbling blood baths, children pulled from their mothers at birth directly from the uterus to be forced into rubbish rubber outfits they will never get out of again... The pollution, caused by black and stinking smoke spewed from factories, regularly threatens the Athosland atmosphere. Some places bear the imprint of people who have had an impact in the author’s life, prompting the viewer to think that he is in front of this constantly evolving topography (Golz is sometimes gluing new versions of the fragments on top of each other), but in reality before a gigantic image of the creator’s memory, melted with the map of a territory and a utopian world.

This imaginary land, materialized through images and words equally shared, progresses constantly. It is not without reminding me of the monumental and multiple creation of Henry Darger in the USA, who also immersed himself entirely in the painting of an imaginary alternative universe, theater of a war between adults and children, which he represented in the form of a huge book “In the realms of the unreal”. We can also think of Wölfli and his infinite universe where he reigned as supreme emperor.

It already seems difficult to measure the full extent of this topographical invention, the author imagining it as vast and proliferating, perpetually metamorphosed, as is the real world. Besides his card, he also produces isolated drawings, in black and white and in colour, folders filled with drawings and inscriptions which appear as the narrative hanging of the card, giving many details, especially on the characters, the “glassy-beasts” and the “devils” for example. The set is very close to the form of a comic strip, and has many onomatopoeia. It seems that three heroes are permanently there, perhaps Golz’s own avatars with his brother Wulf and his sister Dorothee. Some of these binders have already been scattered after sales, but Golz, who wants to rework constantly, keeps pictures of his pages on his computer. If Golz had created eight of them at the time of the exhibition in the Museum of Thurgau, he planned to realize twenty in total... In addition, as we learn in the catalog of the Museum of Thurgau (exhausted, but of which I obtained, thanks to the kindness of Sophie Bourbonnais and of Marek Mlodecki, the French version which was very valuable to establish this note), Michael Golz has written a typescript in 2012, still unpublished to date, which makes it possible to get a more precise idea of Athosland by a story in the form of a glossary.

The Fabuloserie Paris has accomplished an achievement by managing to bring this incredible creation in the middle of Paris, and therefore giving us a wonderful Christmas present.

Translated by:JoBo Brademann