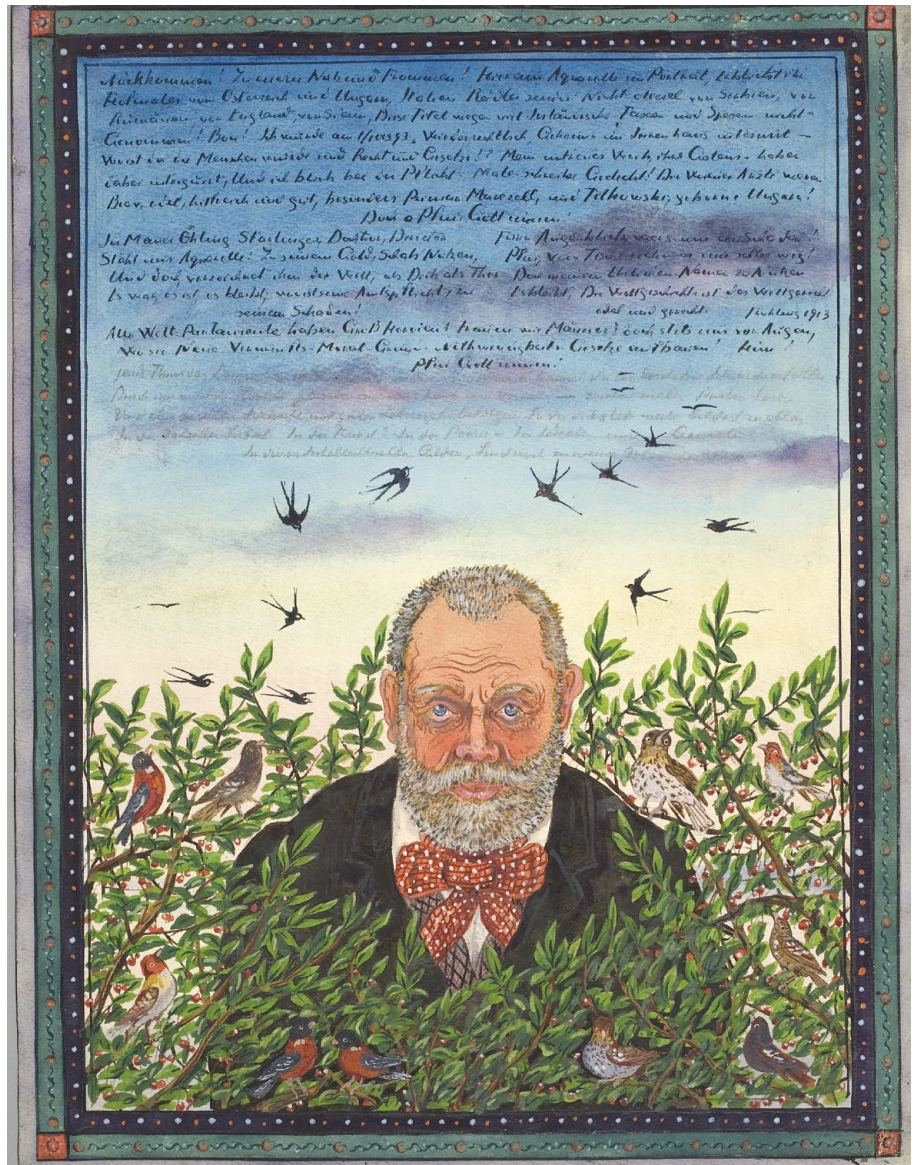


ART, ART EVERYWHERE

BY JULIE PORTIER

A new type of art centre is born: it is 'mobile' and 'elastic', autonomous and versatile. It could have been called Providence, but its founder and director Marc-Olivier Wahler had a better idea. Chalet Society is both the result of his taking stock of existing art institutions and the dream of an artistic community committed to vitalizing a certain form of poetic consciousness. Marc-Olivier Wahler, the former director of the Palais de Tokyo, has found a temporary residence for his baby in the premises of a former catholic seminary, which hasn't changed one iota since the previous tenants moved out. Situated on a chic Parisian avenue, boulevard Raspail to be precise, Chalet Society's first bivouac, before envisaging developing the model and why not, exporting it worldwide, was provided by a property group, Emerige and its art collector president, Laurent Dumas. It cannot be denied that this autonomous institution could not survive with the support of its devotees, who from the very first euro they contributed, have ardently believed in this community and its philosophy. Marc-Olivier Wahler is convinced that: "Places like this are the means by which a town can breathe new life into its art dynamic." And we would like nothing more than to believe him.

The first exhibition had no choice but to mark its difference and from this point of view the 'Museum of Everything' is a frank success. This travelling museum is unique in its kind: it contains an absolutely amazing collection of works of outsider art, from the 19th century up to today. The exhibition has literally taken over the three floors of this abandoned property, filling its corridors, staircases and even the showers with an overwhelming creative energy, the works of a lifetime, works of madness, solitude and exclusion, productions of breathtaking quality, which prove once and for all that this art form has its place and deserves consideration by art criticism and the philosophy of aesthetics. And so some major names in contemporary art, those who believed, didn't get it wrong after all: Christian Boltanski, Carsten Höller and Nick Cave have all written about these artists, whereas Cindy Sherman and Maurizio

Joseph Karl Radler, *Untitled (Bohemia)*. © The Museum of Everything.

Cattelan were directly inspired by these works of art, namely Morton Bartlett's blood-curdling dolls. What inspired these ceramic cameras modelled by the blind artist Alan Constable, or the sweet and sadistic universe portrayed in Henry Darger's monumental drawings, found in his bedroom after his death? This exhibition shakes the very foundations of our convictions and we no longer know which way to turn. These images and these forms, produced several decades ago, with no formal art education, no references and outside society, seem so blindingly topical that they are without a doubt at the source of contemporary creation. ■

THE MUSEUM OF EVERYTHING, until 15th December, La Chalet Society, 14 Boulevard Raspail, 75007 Paris, musevery.fr