



Rob Krier, Figures. A Pictorial Journal. 2000–2002

With contributions by Ann Holyoke Lehmann and Vesna Andonovic. 768 pp. with 665 illus., 120 x 170,9 mm, hard-cover, German/English
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The architect is at all times also an artist. How otherwise would he be able to tame the three-dimensionality of space and subdue the urges of physics and structural mechanics with the creations of his fantasy? This creativity is however mostly restricted purely to its own field.

In this respect, Rob Krier is indeed the proverbial exception that proves the rule. Besides his actual profession, which demands his daily attention, Krier has for years also made a vocation of his love of art, one which he nurtures parallel to his work. Fine art could stand in dialogue with architecture and it is Krier's ambition to have iconographic themes brought into the latter, so that they might speak equally to both the occupants of a building and to bystanders and move them to thoughtful reflection.

In the works of Mies van der Rohe it is not rare that one finds naturalistic figures from, for example, Aristide Maillol or Wilhelm Lehmbruck – as an anthropomorphic contrast to the strict geometry of the architecture, notes Rob Krier in the comments on his journal.

Krier's artistic skills are in no way inferior to his architectural work such as Potsdam-Kirchsteigfeld, De Resident in The Hague, Noorderhof in Amsterdam, Veste Brandevoort near Helmond, Citadel Broekpolder near Beverwijk, or the Cité Judiciaire in Luxembourg. As a sculptor and illustrator, too, Krier brings together extraordinarily musical qualities and incorporates them into his work, as exemplified by his bronze *The Jumper* in Montpellier, the *Cowering Woman* on Berlin's Friedrichstraße, or the four metre-high duo *Bosch i Al-sina* and *Papasseit* on the Moll de la Fusta in Barcelona.

Rob Krier is not only an architect, but also an influential theorist for architecture and urban planning. Born and raised in Luxembourg, he moved to Vienna after having studied in Munich and worked for Oswald Mathias Ungers and Frei Otto. Today he resides in Berlin and Liguria. After teaching posts in Stuttgart and Lausanne he was a professor of architecture at Vienna Technical University from 1976 to 1998 and, in 1986, held a guest professorship at Yale University in New Haven, Mass.

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Edition Axel Menges

Frontispiece
Rob seen by Roswitha

I wish to express my gratitude

to Ann Holyoke Lehmann
for translating the verses here into English
as well as for her short texts “Energy” and “Synergy”,
based on the insight
of many years’ acquaintance with my work and myself

and to Paul Kallnbach
for his patient editing of my archive of figurative drawings
and the exact and expert layouting of all the illustrations
and texts upon these pages.

Rob Krier

For Ann Holyoke Lehmann and Eberhard Blum

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Figures
A journal in drawings and models
2000–2002

To preface and make remarks about a journal is like tearing into a private sphere best left hidden, reserved only for one-self. An air of self-importance is attached to it; I will not deny it. But also something like last-minute panic, which overcame me on my seventieth birthday.

Ein Tagebuch einzuleiten und zu kommentieren, ist wie ein Griff in die Privatsphäre, die man besser verstecken und für sich behalten sollte. Viel Wichtig-tue-rei haftet daran; ich kann es nicht leugnen. Aber auch etwas Torschlußpanik befällt mich mit dem siebzigsten Geburtstag.

The utilitarian activities of an architect constantly drive back artistic dreams. The latter can emerge only in moments of total isolation. Most of the time this happens during business trips, pressed into a narrow airplane seat.

Der künstlerische Traum wird durch die nutzenorientierte Tätigkeit des Architekten ständig in den Hintergrund gedrängt. Er kann sich nur in Momenten vollkommener Isolation entfalten. Dies geschieht auf beruflichen Reisen, meist im Flugzeug, gepreßt in enge Sitze.

One nonchalantly trusts his life to the pilot and his flying machine, and as if in a dream, allows oneself to be carried away over the landscapes and cultures, weightlessly, and enjoy the art of travel in a way that cannot be imagined more artificially. The thin membrane of the cabin, which separates one from the inhospitable, undoubtedly fatal outside world, raises the state of suspension to the surreal. Only in this atmosphere of false security can I successfully manage to plunge into the kind of contemplation that eludes me on ordinary ground. Once back down, the sketches I made in the air are no problem to translate into clay.

This book has the same soft-cover size as the journals of little drawings. Even the cloth binding corresponds to the

Lässig vertraut man sein Leben dem Piloten und seiner Flugmaschine an. Läßt sich hinwegtragen über Landschaften und Kulturen, schwerelos, wie im Traum, und genießt eine Art des Reisens, wie sie artifizieller nicht vorstellbar ist. Die dünne Haut der Kabine, die einen von der unwirtlichen, ja tödlichen Außenwelt trennt, steigert den Zustand des Schwebens bis in eine surreale Welt hinein. In dieser Atmosphäre frivoler Sicherheit gelingt mir der Sprung in eine Besinnlichkeit, die mir in trivialer Bodenhaftung im Halse steckenbliebe. Wieder gelandet, kann ich die in der Luft gezeichneten Entwürfe dann problemlos in Ton umsetzen.

Die kleinen Skizzen haben dasselbe Taschenbuchformat wie das hier vorgestellte Buch. Auch der Leineneinband entspricht

Sennelier sketchbooks I use. The miniature format has been my companion for half a century. Figural and architectural concepts first take shape in these small sketchbooks, which fit into a breast pocket and can be deployed at a moment's notice. I have also required my students to purchase these little books, and they had to present them during critiques.

The scribblings on these scraps of paper are hardly suitable for the art market, no more than the small figures of them that I make in clay. There were no bites in response to my meek efforts to make contact with gallery owners. Art magazines also blew me off. In the meantime, I became too old to go around begging, so I resolved to publish this critical part of my

den Sennelier-Skizzenbüchern, die ich benutze. Das Miniaturformat begleitet mich seit einem halben Jahrhundert. Figurenwie Architekturkonzepte finden ihre erste Aufzeichnung in den kleinen Skizzenbüchern, die in der Brusttasche Platz haben und jederzeit einsatzbereit sind. Ich habe den Besitz eines solchen Büchleins auch von meinen Studenten verlangt. Bei den Korrekturen mußten sie es mir vorzeigen.

Die Notizen auf solch kleinen Papierfetzen eignen sich kaum für den Kunstbetrieb, ebenso wenig wie die kleinen Figuren, die ich nach diesen Vorlagen in Ton modelliere. Auf meine zaghaften Kontaktversuche mit Galeristen hat noch niemand angebissen. Auch bei Kunstzeitschriften bin ich abgeblitzt. Inzwischen bin ich zu alt für diese Bettelpossen und habe mich entschlossen, diesen wich-

work in sketch journals instead. This way, I can freely express myself, independent of current art trends, without having to worry about time-consuming exhibitions. Furthermore, the tasks of negotiating and appraising art belong to a world that often disgusts me, as it stands in total contradiction to its intellectual content.

I am well aware that an artist cannot survive without a market. The familiar niche in which I have positioned myself in this sketchy-world is barely tolerable within my double life between architecture and sculpture. To run a lavish studio, à la Andy Warhol or Jeff Koons, is physically and artistically draining. It reduces works of art to merchandise, similar to what

tigen Teil meiner Tätigkeit rückblättern in Tagebüchern zu veröffentlichen. So kann ich mich unabhängig von den aktuellen Kunsttendenzen frei ausdrücken und brauche mich nicht um das zeitraubende Ausstellungswesen zu kümmern. Auch ist das Handeln mit und das Bewerten von Kunst eine in ihrem geistigen Gehalt total konträre Welt, die mich oft anwidert.

Daß der Künstler ohne den Markt nicht überleben kann, ist mir schon bewußt; die intime Nische, die ich mir in dieser Skizzenwelt eingerichtet habe, ist in meinem Doppelleben zwischen Architektur und Bildhauerei gerade noch zu verkraften. Einen aufwendigen Atelierbetrieb à la Andy Warhol oder Jeff Koons zu führen, zehrt an den physischen und künstlerischen Kräften. Es degradiert das Kunstwerk zum

goes on in our architectural firms.

I wish to protect my personal hand, and not subject my work to any fashion trend or market mechanism. The world of poetry is much like this attitude. The brief sentences that I add to my figures are not to be understood as poems. My Luxembourg dialect doesn't permit me to take an excursion into the realm of poetic speech. German is still a foreign language to me. Therefore, my writings should be interpreted as conversations between my figures and me. I could chat with any drawing in a similar fashion. So that my comments do not descend into nonsense, or even become a burden, I will turn this over to the reader.

Produkt, so ähnlich wie das in unseren Architekturbüros passiert.

Ich möchte mir die persönliche Handschrift bewahren und meine Arbeiten keiner Modetendenz und keinen Marktmechanismen unterwerfen. Die Welt der Lyrik steht dieser Haltung nahe. Die kleinen Sätze, die ich meinen Figuren hinzufüge, sind nicht als Gedichte zu verstehen. Meine Luxemburger Mundart erlaubt mir keinen Exkurs in dichterische Sprachsphären. Deutsch bleibt für mich eine Fremdsprache. Meine Texte sind als Dialoge zwischen mir und meinen Figuren zu verstehen. Ich könnte mich mit jeder Zeichnung ähnlich unterhalten. Dies überlasse ich dem Betrachter, damit meine Erläuterungen nicht zum Geschwätz ausarten oder gar belasten.

One thing must not be overlooked, namely, that the smallest imitative movement of the face, the most imperceptible motion of the body and all its parts, open up entire imaginary worlds. I may draw the language of the body, but I cannot record it in words. A drawing can allow all sorts of interpretation; so will a later model of it. Although they capture and freeze a gesture, its meaning remains alive forever; it does not need any more profound interpretation. Because these figures convey emotion, I cannot just lock them away in my chest at home. They seek dialogue. And so the best means of providing this, as it has been since time immemorial, is the book – a wondrously enduring medium.

Eines sollte nicht übersehen werden: daß die geringste mimische Bewegung im Gesicht, die unscheinbarste Bewegung des Körpers und all seiner Teile romanhafte Welten öffnen. Ich kann die Körpersprache zeichnen, sie aber nicht schriftlich erfassen. Die Zeichnung läßt vielfältige Interpretationen zu, ebenso wie später das Modell. Obwohl sie eine erstarrte Gestik festhält, bleibt die Mitteilung zeitlos lebendig und bedarf keiner tiefsinnigen Deutung. Da diese Figuren eine innere Bewegung übermitteln, darf ich sie auch nicht zu Hause in meiner Truhe einsperren. Sie suchen den Dialog. Um diesen zu überbringen, ist das Buch – ein wundersam zählebiges Medium – schon seit eh und je geeignet.

**The Journal
2000–2002**

RK – May 2008



The millennium begins without hope for great humanitarian nor cultural transformations.

Das Jahrtausend beginnt ohne Hoffnung auf große humanitäre und kulturelle Umwälzungen.

05 Feb 2000

Visit to the Dresdner Antikensammlung
(collection of antiques), Satyr and Hermaphrodite, marble



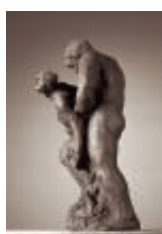
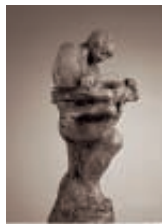
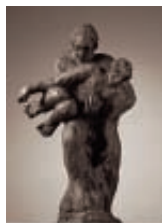
Kamuff mit
einer Hermaphrodite
Antikensammlung Dresden
6.2.00 HZ

15 Feb 2000 / 17 Feb 2000
Berlin — Bergen op Zoom, Holland



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Life

March 2000

Snatched and snared was I
as from the welkin torn

revelation forced
out of intoxicated bliss

delivered, now let him
wend his way again.



*Leben — Eingefangen ward ich
der dem Wolkenreich entrissen*



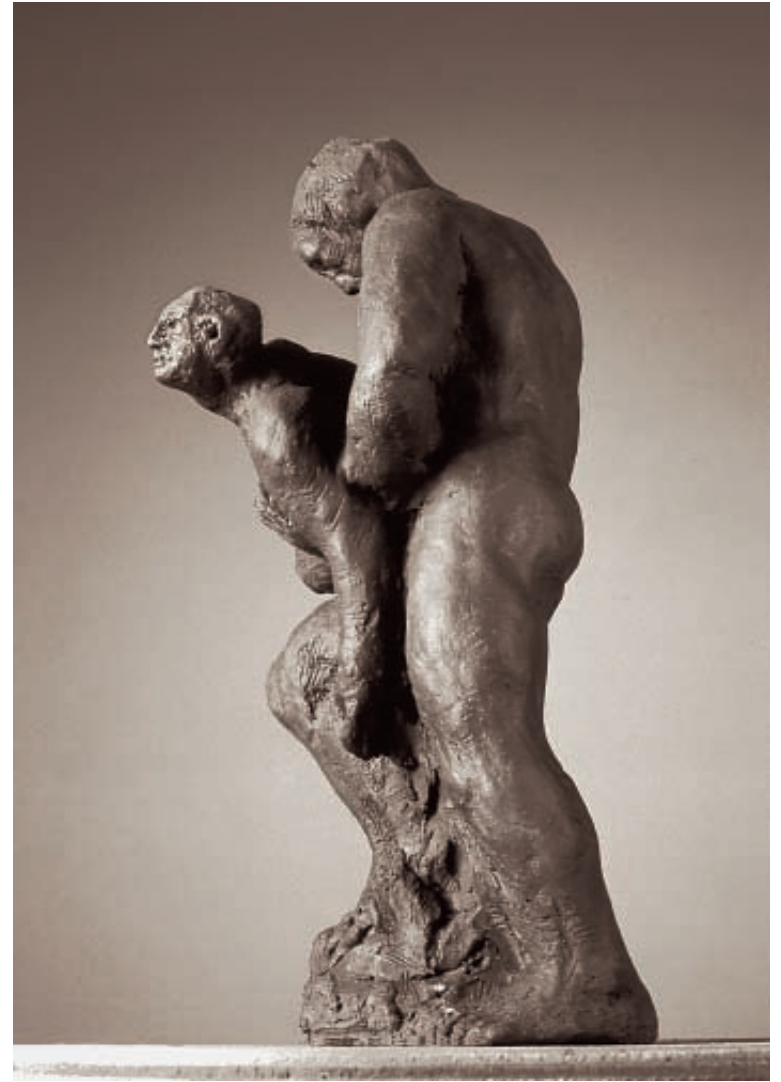
Erzwungenes Wiederfinden



aus seliger Trunkenheit.



Gib' dem Erretteten



den Weg wieder frei.

In tow

February 2000

You catch to spite and mock me
me, verminous absurdity

would the hold were lighter
here upon your stormy loins

as a sapling in the winter's storm
am I yet a living thing.



*Schlepptau — Du fängst mich zum Spott
mich unvernünftiges Gewürm*