



Johann Garber, 2017 © Foto: Ludwig Schedl

## **Projekt / work in progress: JOHANN GARBER & KARL VONDAL**

**PRESS BREAKFAST:** July 19, 2017, 10 a.m.  
**DURATION :** July 20, 2017 – January 7, 2018  
**OPEN WORKSHOPS:** July 19, 2017, 6.30 p.m.  
**OPENING OF**  
**johann garber.! tinkerer and master painter**  
**& karl vondal.! erotic:** September 6, 2017

**contents:**

About the project	S. 2
About Johann Garber	S. 4
About Karl Vondal	S. 8
Catalogue	S. 10
Kulturvermittlungsprogramm	S. 10

**press contact:**

Mag.<sup>a</sup> Edith Wildmann

museum gugging

Am Campus 2

3400 Maria Gugging

T: +43 664 60499 374

e-mail: [edith.wildmann@gugging.at](mailto:edith.wildmann@gugging.at)

[www.gugging.at](http://www.gugging.at)



Johann Garber, Karl Vondal 2017, Foto © Ludwig Schedl

## PROJECT / work in progress:

## GARBER & VONDAL

**Press Breakfast: July 19, 2017, 10.00 Uhr with curator  
Johann Feilacher** (director *museum gugging*)

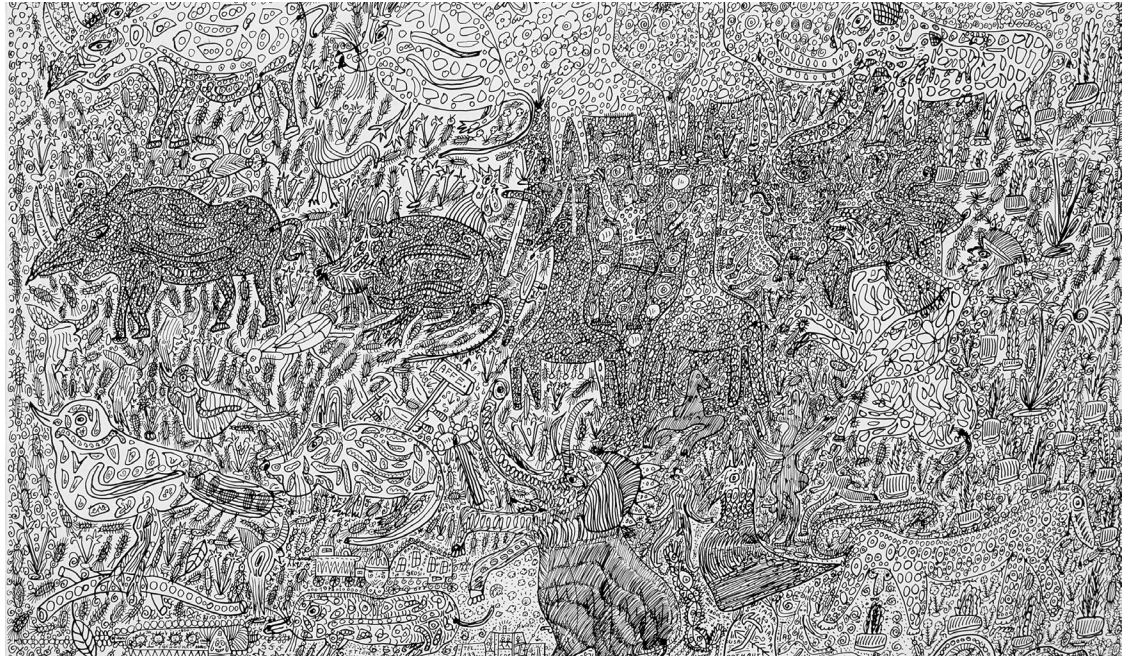
**Welcome to Paradise!**

**Work-in-progress by and with Johann Garber and Karl Vondal**

*On July 19, 2017 museum gugging starts a work-in-progress – and two Gugging Artists take centre stage: Johann Garber, who celebrates his 70th birthday this August, and Karl Vondal. Artistic director Johann Feilacher invited the two artists to move their work spaces into the territory of the museum. It is an invitation for the artists to engage in a lively artistic process and exchange with one another but also an opportunity for the public to visit the artists and witness the artistic transformations of space and objects.*

*Phase two commences on September 6, 2017: Curator Feilacher dedicates two exhibitions to the artists. Johann Garber's multifaceted creations are fascinating in their exuberant wealth of concise black and white and intensively coloured objects. In Karl Vondal's work erotic fantasies come to the fore, which he portrays within various motifs. Conjuring the paradisiacal is the connecting thread between these two artistic positions. Older works will be complemented with fresh experiments from the museum workshops. The two showcases will open under the titles "johann garber.! tinkerer and master painter" and "karl vondal.! erotic".*





Johann Garber, Schöne Tierwelt, 1989, © Privatstiftung - Künstler aus Gugging

## Welcome to Paradise! Johann Garber & Karl Vondal

Two strong Gugging personalities take the stage at museum gugging starting July 19, 2017: Johann Garber and Karl Vondal. A central theme connects the artistic work of the two Gugging Artists: Conjuring the paradisiacal. However, each has their own unmistakable signature in the artistic realisation:

Johann Garber's creations fascinate with their exuberance. His clear black and white drawings with pen and ink enchant us to meticulous worlds of humans and animals. The main design elements are ornaments and patterns, which he also overlays upon his objects.

Karl Vondal's artworks portray erotic fantasies, which he stages like a theatre director within various motifs. Collage-like images consisting of pasted together paper and cut-out, self-drawn elements, which he enhances with a narrative layer, form the core of his artistic work.



Johann Garber, 2017 © foto: Ludwig Schedl

## johann garber.! tinkerer and masterpainter

“THE WORLD IS PLEASANT, AND PALPABLE, THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD, IS =  
WITHIN REACH, =”

(excerpt from a manuscript by Johann Garber from January 14, 1991)

Johann Garber has belonged to the Gugging Artists for four decades now. He has made a name for himself as an illustrator but also for “colouring” readymades. His oversized ear sculpture in front of the RadioKulturhaus in Vienna is but one of his works that has become a tourist attraction. He also painted large parts of the House of Artists in Gugging with his garish colours – one of the most famous façades in the world of Art Brut. In contrast to these large-scale multicoloured works Garber also produces meticulously detailed, fine ink drawings. Besides the urban and rural landscapes as main motives, they are always crowded with many – often naked – people and animals. Garber also loves to craft countless objects, to tinker, as he calls it, and to install them outdoors or in his salon at museum gugging. His works are exhibited in museums and galleries across Europe, USA, and Japan; all of Austria’s public and renowned private collections possess works by the artist.





picture left: Johann Garber, Hunting Trophy 2001, picture right: Revolver, 2005, both: © Privatstiftung - Künstler aus Gugging

## Artistic development and life of Johann Garber

(excerpts Maria Höger)

Johann Garber was born in Wiener Neustadt in 1947. He initially grew up with his grandmother and then later in orphanages. After attending school, he began an apprenticeship as a painter and house painter, but he quit before completing it, deciding to work for a construction company. Garber's first stay at the "Lower Austrian State Mental Health and Care Facility at Gugging" (Niederösterreichische Landes-Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Gugging) was in 1966, following the completion of his nine-month compulsory military service in the pioneer corps. From 1968 onward, the 21-year-old lived there permanently, except for one year. In 1981 Garber was part of the group of artistically talented patients who moved into what is now the House of Artists (Haus der Künstler) on the basis of Navratil's initiative. The first drawings made by Garber are documented from 1977 onward. In a 1982 interview, Garber explained that it was particularly the drawing activities of Johann Hauser which inspired him to work as an artist himself. His first sheets were created using crayons, gouache, and colored pencils, and they are colorful depictions of people, animals, and machines. There is almost no hint of the complex networks of text and image that would follow later. He created his first pen-and-ink drawings in 1979. This traditional and technically demanding graphic medium requires highly skilled craftsmanship and, aside from Garber, only a few others have used it at the House of Artists, including Oswald Tschirtner, whose minimalistic figurative pen-and-ink drawings made him famous, and Franz Artenjak, a draughtsman who is currently still largely unknown.[...]

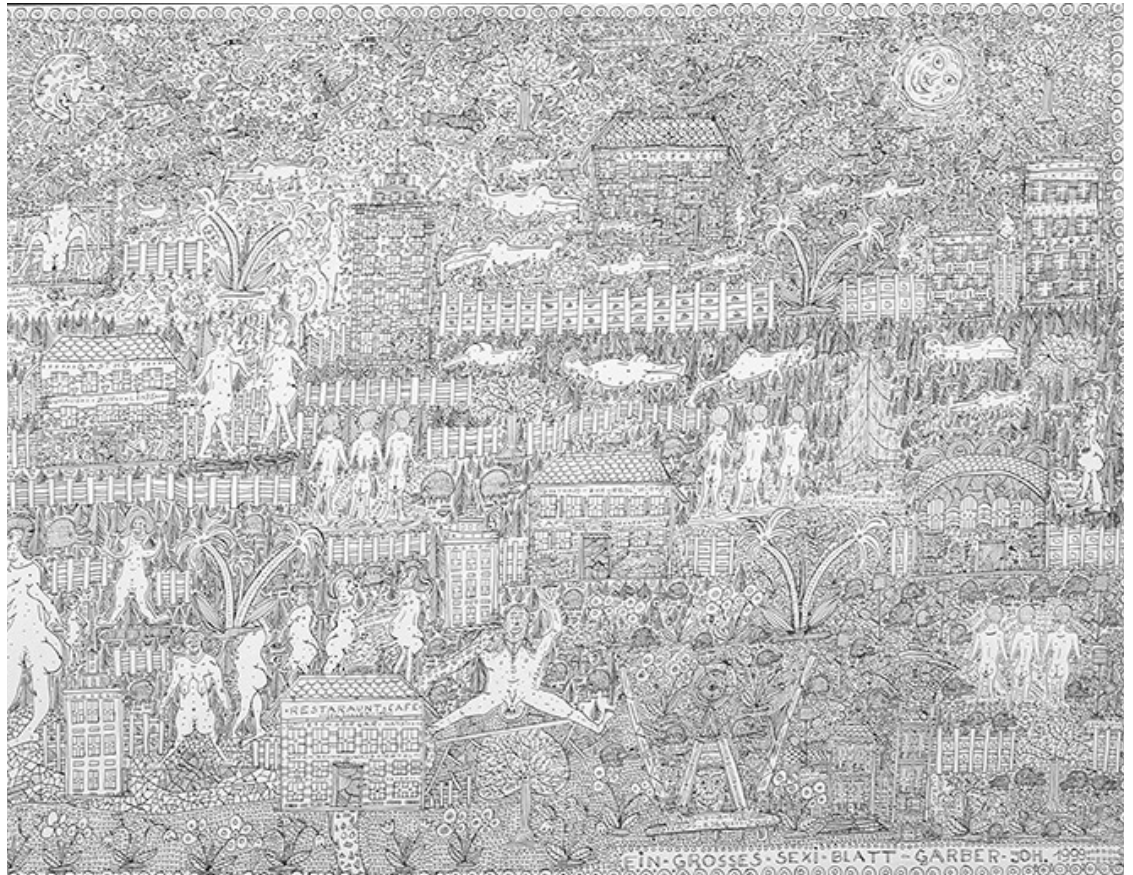
In 1981 Garber created drawings based, among other things, on "color reproductions of Baroque church interiors." His occupation with these photographs and those of Gothic church portals as well as reproductions of artworks, in general, and the complex



Johann Garber, 2017 © Foto: Ludwig Schedl

and richly contrasted prints of Dürer, in particular, led Garber to entirely new pictorial compositions [...] In 1982, that is, just five years after the artist created his first works, he had his first solo exhibition at the Galerie Heike Curtze in Vienna. Ink drawings were shown, most of which were created on the basis of visual materials that served Garber as a model. [...] By turning his attention to the visual worlds of others, Garber succeeded in developing his own visual worlds. In 1984 he began to create sheets with a self-confident stroke and unmistakable characteristics. At that time, he was also translating personal content into his visual idiom. Garber individualized his way of writing along with his visual idiom: He began to use only capital letters and invest his writing with rhythm through an idiosyncratic punctuation consisting of periods, dashes, equal signs, and arrows, which is reminiscent of Morse code. In this way, the written word became not just the basis of the artist's manuscripts, but also an element of his drawings. [...]

The human figures who densely populate Garber's visual world make their way between nature and culture. In those cases that do not deal with portraits of specific people, we find figures who lack any identity, who are naked in several respects, and whose depiction is usually erotically charged. They are either embedded within a larger pictorial context or they are the central motifs of sheets that the artist has grouped together under the name SEXI SHEETS. Here Garber often uses drastic words for the titles of the motifs of his drawings. Intertwined tangles of human figures (seen from the front, in profile, and from behind), children's and adult's bodies, bellies, male and female genitals emerge. Their framing through Garber's ornamental elements places even greater emphasis on the nudity of the bodies. In the process, the SEXI SHEETS are intensified into images that seem almost pornographic at first glance. They also appear pornographic on account of the explicit depictions of genitals and the bodily functions involving them. However, a closer look reveals that most of the figures stand alone in isolation. There is hardly any interaction. Bellies



Johann Garber, A LARGE SEXI-SHEET, 1999 © Privatstiftung - Künstler aus Gugging

and genitals appear in stereotypical sequences. Along with the erotic component, the bodies' nudity visualizes a yearning for unadulterated naturalness and "paradisiacal" uninhibitedness.

(Excerpts from the catalogue text by Maria Höger: "Attention: Here Johann Garber is making paintings ...")





Karl Vondal, 2017 © Foto: Ludwig Schedl

## **karl vondal.! erotic**

In contrast to the subtle lines in Vondal's drawings, his approach to the subject of eros is very direct. His favourite motive is a couple making love, which the artist shows in all its clarity. This direct representation is coupled with the impressive, often sensitive texts that the artist writes on the drawing. Complete short stories fill the glued together sheets of paper, which can take on a size of several metres. Folded into rolls, bent and torn, Vondal often transports his works from the House of Artists to the studio building and back in all weathers. This history of production can be seen on the works and belongs to the creative act.

Karl Vondal has lived in the House of Artists in Gugging for more than a decade; his works are presented internationally and enrich many collections.

The splendid colors and the vibrancy that they bring to the pictures of Karl Vondal accompany viewers from the moment they take their first look at this artist's work. The pastel-like impression of his green, yellow, blue, and particularly pink catches our eye. These tones are often mixed using acrylic paints, and they develop a texture that renders every single brushstroke visible. (Nina Ansperger, excerpt from the catalogue)





Karl Vondal, Couple under Palm Trees, 2013 © Privatstiftung - Künstler aus Gugging

## Erotic

Karl Vondal was born in Lower Austria in 1953. In his artistic oeuvre, eroticism forms a dominant theme that can be found in one form or another in almost every one of his works. [...]

If we look behind the scenes—where it is particularly the works' textual level that sheds some light—another side of his work as an artist reveals itself. It conveys dreams and wishes, deals with the theme of closeness to other people and of relationships with them, and it points to his desire to get away in the form of a yearning for unfamiliar places.

Vondal's adolescence fell in the period characterized by the Sexual Revolution and the movements of the late sixties as well as the rejection of sexual taboos that went with them and were accompanied by increasing tolerance and acceptance regarding sexual needs. The idea of sexual liberation and free love unleashed a veritable boom of erotic films in the 1970s. The 1968 German-Swiss-Italian movie *Die Nichten der Frau Oberst* (The nieces of the colonel's wife) is a typical example of this genre; with around five million viewers, it was one of the most-watched movies in West German theaters. The movie made a formative impression on Vondal, who has repeatedly referred back to it and incorporated it into his artwork. [...]



Karl Vondal, Three Woman Band, acrylic, pencil, colored pencils, 2013, Privatstiftung – Künstler aus Gugging

We almost seem to have landed in an earthly paradise, though not one that corresponds to any religious notions—other rules apply in the paradise of Karl Vondal!

### Artistic development and life of Karl Vondal

Karl Vondal was born on April 6, 1953, in Obersiebenbrunn in the Lower Austrian district of Gänserndorf. He was the youngest child of a large family consisting of six sisters and two brothers. For seven years, he went to the elementary school in Siebenbrunn and then spent two years at the secondary school in Leopoldsdorf. When he was old enough to stop attending school, he began a three-year apprenticeship as a bricklayer. Vondal did not complete his training as a craftsman and worked as an unskilled laborer in construction and the coal trade between the ages of 19 and 20. He became mentally ill during this period and, at 19, came to the Mental Health and Care Facility at Gugging (Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Gugging). His subsequent chronic illness made it necessary for him to permanently reside in psychiatric institutions. Vondal spent most of this time in Gugging, where his artistic talent was recognized in the 1980s by Johann Feilacher, who is now head of the museum gugging. Like many others, Vondal formed miniature-like objects out of matchsticks, however, his differed from those of his fellow patients. They already demonstrated a distinctively individual formal idiom, which was continued in his drawings from this period. Evidence of this is provided by



# museum gugging

the first documented works from 1988, in which classic stylistic elements like palm trees, naked women, and houses can already be recognized (88-001). Between the 1980s and 2002, when he moved into the House of Artists (Haus der Künstler), Vondal established the basis for his artistic career, as was emphasized through his inclusion in the galerie gugging in 2003. Since 2002 the artist has worked ceaselessly in both the House of Artists and the open studio gugging (offenes atelier gugging). His work is represented in important collections, such as London's Museum of Everything, the Essl Collection, and—of course—the museum gugging.

(Excerpts from the catalogue text by Nina Ansperger: Liebe und Sex – Ein Einblick in Karl Vondals Kunst.)

**CATALOGUE:**

Hg. Nina Ansperger, Johann Feilacher, Maria Höger: Johann Garber - Karl Vondal, Verlag Brandstätter, Wien-Salzburg 2017, 174 S. Hardcover, mit zahlreichen Farabbildungen, € 19,90.

**FRAMEWORK PROGRAM:**

- 06.08.2017    Public guided tour: johann garber.! tinkerer and masterpainter.  
                    With Maria Höger
- 03.09.2017    Public guided tour: Artists' Spaces: Johann Garber's Parlour, workshop  
                    and August Walla's Room.  
                    With Katja Brandes
- 07.09.2017    The Gugginger Gugelhupf: Johann Garber's pointed pen."  
                    With Katja Brandes



## Route:

GPS  
48°18'48.82"N  
16°15'30.90"E



## download:

A digital version of this document can be found here:  
[www.gugging.at/de/presse](http://www.gugging.at/de/presse) in der Rubrik

## IMAGES

Garber, download:

<https://celum.noeku.at/pindownload/login.do?pin=5VUSU>

Vondal, download:

<https://celum.noeku.at/pindownload/login.do?pin=LUN7D>

## Press contact:

Mag.<sup>a</sup> Edith Wildmann  
museum gugging  
Am Campus 2  
3400 Maria Gugging  
T: +43 664 60499 374  
[edith.wildmann@gugging.at](mailto:edith.wildmann@gugging.at)  
[www.gugging.at](http://www.gugging.at)

Wir danken



DER STANDARD



KULTUR  
NIEDERÖSTERREICH