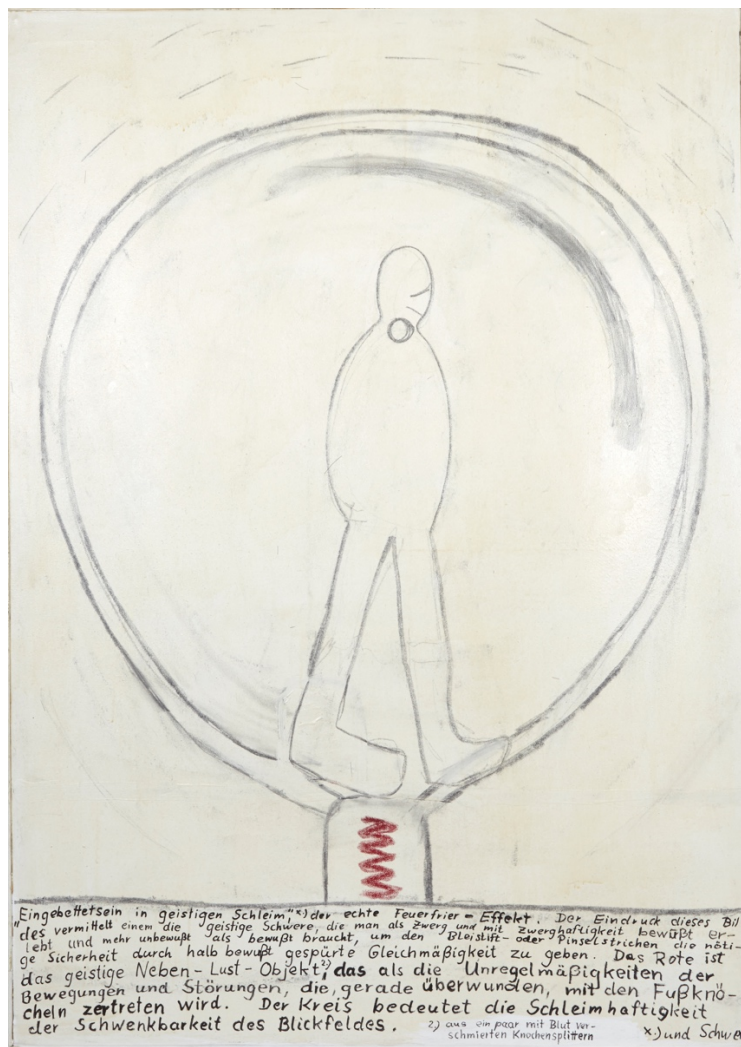


Dietrich Orth

by Roberta Smith



There is no shortage of self-taught artists whose work renders the line between insider and outsider art fairly useless, but **Dietrich Orth's** eccentric paintings confuse the distinction in a style all their own. **Mr Orth**, a 28-year-old German whose mental illness has been diagnosed as clinical psychosis and who has been in and out of psychiatric clinics for the last dozen years, is a kind of outsider conceptual artist.

His paintings, which have the awkward simplicity of children's-book illustrations, often depict strange sculpture-like objects, along with written instructions for using them.

Certain images, like one showing a man standing on a triangular piece of carpet demonstrating an object to help one *feel dignity while walking slowly*, have a captivating bizarreness reminiscent of Bruce Nauman's early work. Another image, which shows a hand painting a floating abstract configuration, offers a written description of the accumulating pleasure and fatigue of the actual act of painting. The words do not always make perfect sense, but they communicate the artistic process with a rare and touching accuracy.

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