

ABECEDARIUM BESTIARIUM



Antonia Baehr
& Friends

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Portraits of affinities
in animal metaphors

Antonia Baehr
Pauline Boudry
Dodo Heidenreich
Isabell Spengler
Christian Kesten
Stefan Pente
Ida Wilde (Keren Ida Nathan)
Lucile Desamory
Valérie Castan
Andrea Neumann
Sabine Ercklentz
Steffi Weismann
William Wheeler
Frédéric Bigot (electroniCat)

far° festival des arts vivants Nyon
make up productions Berlin

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Live Arts Week, xing, Bologna, Italy

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2013, January 10, *Beginning with The Abecedarium Bestiarium* (D, F, G, M, N, S, Y),
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Languedoc-Roussillon, France

2013, May 3-6, *Abecedarium Bestiarium* (D, Y, T, C, S, M, F, N + L),
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August Dance Festival 2013, Teater NO99, Tallinn, Estonia

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2014, January 24-25, *Abecedarium Bestiarium* (D, Y, T, C, S, M, F, N),
Tanzquartier, Vienna, Austria

Preface

Antonia Baehr

To begin with the beginning. My name is Antonia Baehr, which means bear in German, and I was born in Berlin, which is pronounced bear-lin. The symbol of the city of Berlin is the bear. Many people say I look a bit like a bear. And my paternal relatives are also like bears—big, stocky, a bit on the heavy side even, with small eyes, big bones, and generally robust. When I was born my mother designed a birth announcement which had no people on it, only Mama Bear, Papa Bear and Baby Bear, all dressed up in human clothes. When we were children we had teddy bears, no dolls, and we mostly read stories about bears. What might it be that brings together Baehr, bear and the Berlin bear? Well, of course, B as in bear, and Baehr as in bear. But what does this “as in” mean? What is the relation between A and B that it stands for? Did I become bear-like because my name is Baehr? Or has this bear-ness come upon me because I was, in fact, associated with this furry animal from birth onward, long before I had mastered language and the letter b? And is this only the case with Baehrs, or what is it like for my friend Dodo Heidenreich, I wondered, to be the namesake of a famous bird, the dodo? In her case, what’s more, it’s an extinct animal—one that we can no longer see live, there’s not even a photo nor a sound, only a few bones and some fanciful paintings from the 17th century. This is how I began. In the beginning were names and naming. What does the name Dodo do to you? This question to Dodo was the beginning.



J. J. Grandville 1853

Then I wrote an invitation letter to some of my friends (musicians, filmmakers, and visual artists) and asked them to write short, personal pieces for me in exchange for a small fee. “Find the affinity between yourself and an extinct animal. Create a score for a short and personal piece for me, about your affinity to this animal, keeping our friendship in mind. The animal represents you and the piece is about the relationship between you and me.”

Their choice was open to all birds and mammals that had died out since the 16th century, (no dinosaurs), and of which sources say that this species with its scientific, Latin name, really had existed at one time. This restriction in time stems

A

a



A is for Arnim

(Farfelus malacus)

by Antonia Baehr

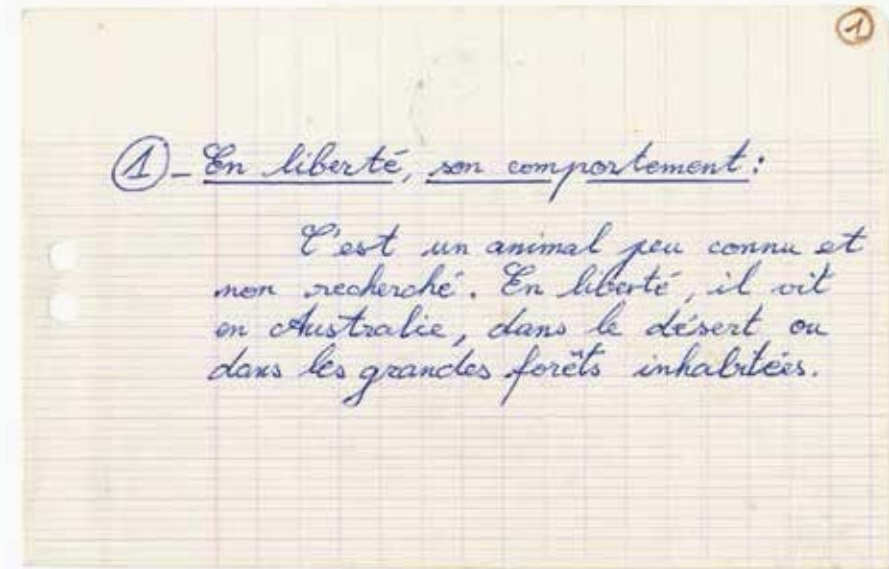
The Arnim (Farfelus malacus): Anatomy, Behavior, Diet and Reproduction

My name is Antonia Baehr. My surname is pronounced 'bear' like the name of the animal in both English and German languages. My mother's name is Bettina von Arnim.

As a child I said to myself that if my paternal surname was an animal's name, then my mother's surname had to be that of an animal, too. However, this animal could only be a poorly known and entirely unresearched kind, since it couldn't be seen alive anywhere and nobody at school ever talked about it. In addition, it would certainly have disappeared completely before the beginning of the 21st century.

Around 1980, when I was about 10 years old, I set out to write a zoological book about the animal 'arnim.' Based on a soft toy I had made out of a simple knitted cylinder stuffed with bits of foam, it described and elaborated on the small woolen creature. The book, written in my childhood home of southern France, remained unfinished.

The arnim book



1. In the wild, its behaviour:

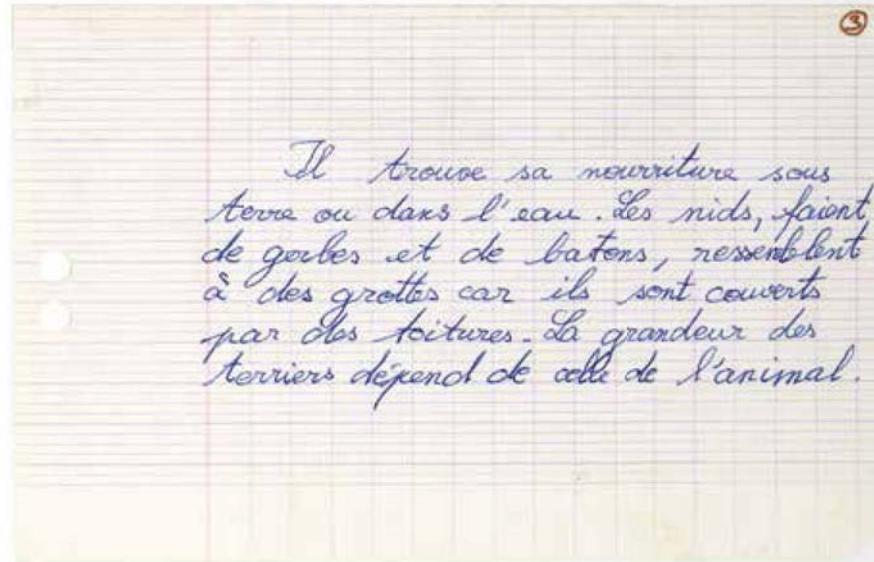
The animal is little-known and not much researched. In the wild, it lives in Australia, in the desert or in big forests uninhabited by human beings.



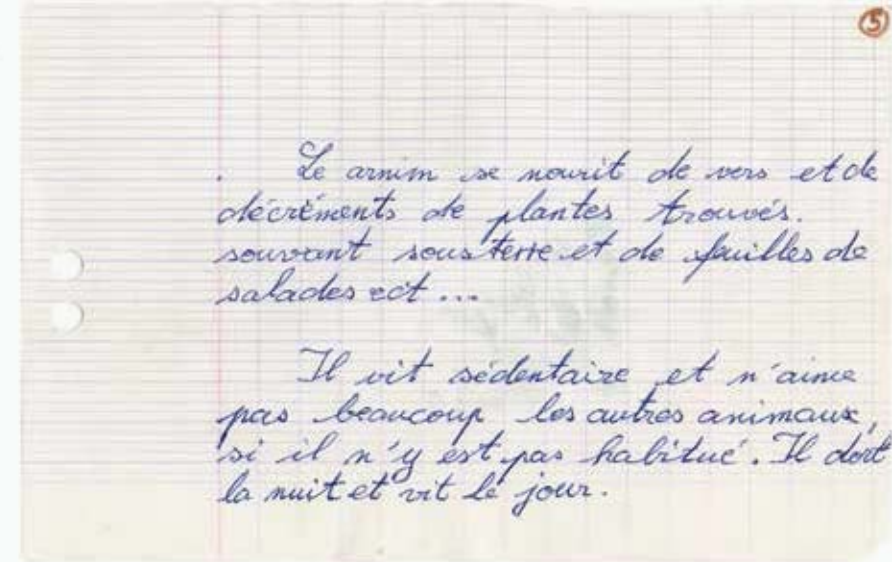
Arnims of Australia

Zones:

- Forest
- Deserts
- Mountains
- Habitat of arnims

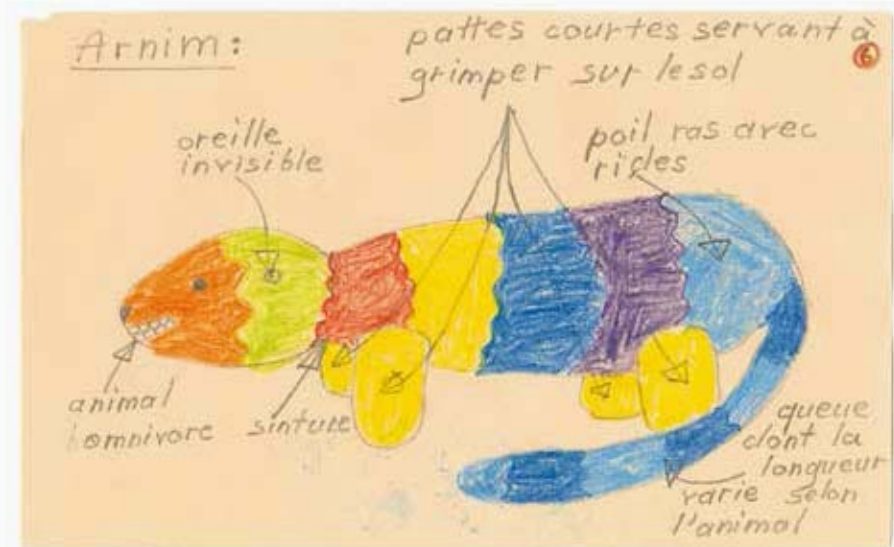
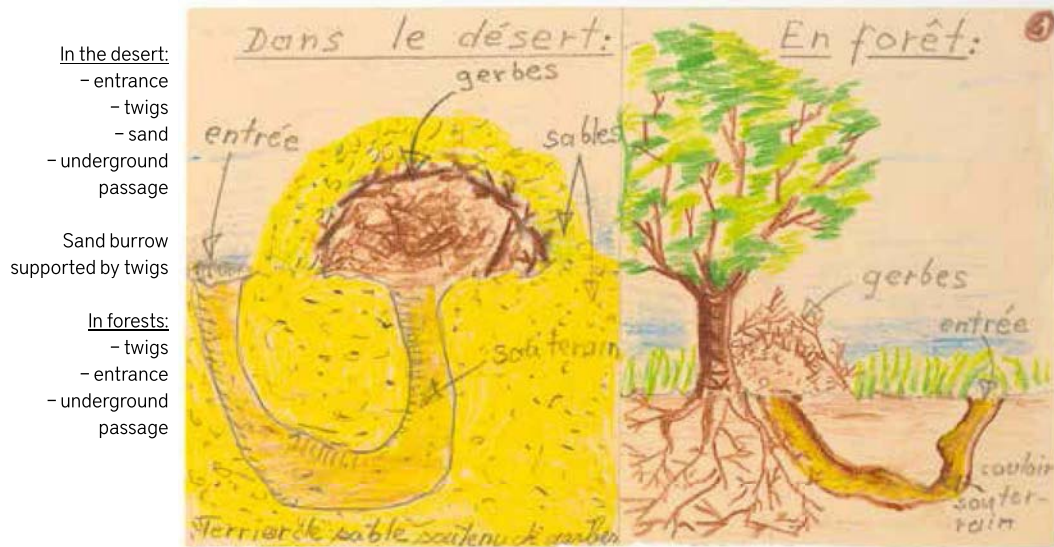


It finds its food underground or in the water. The nests, made from grass and sticks, look like caves because they have roofs over the top. The size of the burrow depends on that of the animal.



The arnim eats worms, the remnants of plants, often found underground, and lettuce leaves, etc.

It is a sedentary creature and does not much like other animals if not accustomed to them. It sleeps at night and lives by day.



Arnim:
- invisible ear
- omnivorous animal
- belt
- short legs, good for crawling along the earth
- short hair, wrinkles
- tail, the length of which varies with each animal

La taille varie toujours. Il mesure entre 3 cm à dix mètres de long. Il est assez léger. L'arnim est le seul animal du monde qui puisse être si riche en races différentes. Parfois, il est même trop difficiles de voir, ou de le reconnaître à d'autres bêtes. On, de trouver l'arnace de l'autre parent avec lequel il est né.

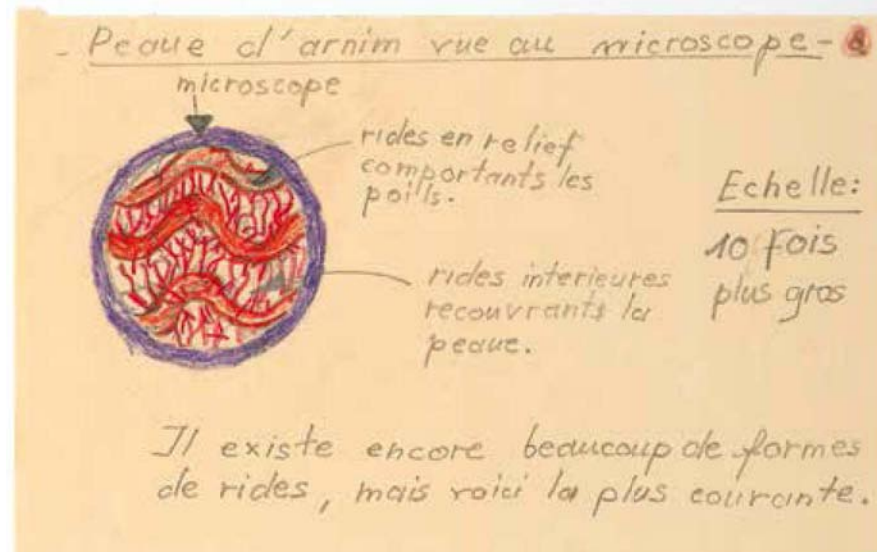
Its size is highly variable. It is between 3 cm and 10 metres long. It is fairly light. The arnim is the only animal in the world that is so rich in different breeds. It is sometimes even too difficult to see if it really is one, or to tell it apart from other animals, or to find the breed of the other parent that begot it.

- Arnim skin seen under a microscope -
- microscope
- wrinkles in relief including the hair
- inner wrinkles covering the skin

Scale:

10 times bigger

There are many types of wrinkles, but these are the most common.



Le poil est souvent ras ou ébouriffé, il comporte de petites ondulations de peau plus ou moins régulières. Il est rayé de couleurs vives.

The coat is often short or tousled. It comprises little waves of skin which are more or less regular. It is striped in bright colours.

- Interior - Waste and reproduction are separate. It never gets fleas.
- There is a sack of fat with vitamins. It is very clean.



- soft ribs
- it walks on its lungs
- soft spine, buried in the flesh.
- vocal bag
- ocular globe
- nostril
- mouth always closed
- hearing
- omnivorous teeth
- fat
- sack of vitamins
- reproduc. of mammals
- the tail
- waste
- layer of fat
- flesh
- legs without nails or hands