

Charles A. A. Dellschau



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Marquand Books, Seattle

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1830–1923

James Brett

Thomas McEvilley

Tracy Baker-White

Roger Cardinal

Tom D. Crouch

Barbara Safarova

Randall Morris

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Plate 4558 California Broad Cutt, February 1, 1920, 17 x 16 in.,
The Museum of Everything, London

Hello dear friend of the air, why do you gaze at the skies? Is it perhaps that you want to fly, to sail, to flap on an aspirational Archimedean abstraction, a profound nonsense of watercolour stripes and industrial press cuttings?

If so, then you have come to the right place. You are not alone, far from it, for on these very pages shall you experience the complex contraptions of Mr. Charles August Albert Dellschau, C.A.A.D. as he signed himself, a lowly Prussian by birth, an everyday butcher by profession, an immigrant into the Americas whose lifetime imaginary hobby found form in a dozen books of impossible flying machines.

What are these strange aesthetic drawings? Dreams, most certainly, transcontinental shifts from one country to another. Think of a fellow who arrived in the new world to escape from the old and you will surely understand this hobby of flight. Yet the escape is not simply geographical, it is metaphysical. In flight comes the dream of what is to come, a visionary future filled with possibility, where a carver of meats knows no limitation, where mankind can aspire to immortality.

Like the brave collaged pilots he admires, so Dellschau's inventions are celebrated by the Sonora Aero Club, dozens of tiny figures who man the mighty vessels, shoveling in coal as they sail, book after book, into the hereafter. So look beyond the red, white, and blue, lift up the grease-proof paper, discover Charles Dellschau as a hero of the heavens, whose butchery is emblazoned all over his vessels, be they FLANCKS or FINE CUTTS.

There are self-absorbed notations, imagined passenger announcements, there are numbers, overheads, sections and diagrams for movement, there are names, dates, cuttings, endless cuttings, plus puns-a-plenty. Best of all there is beauty, great beauty, a private expression of joy, so childlike in its creation, so limited in its colour palette, that it forms a body of work at once compelling, intimate, and grand.

These creations are truths, be they fiction or reality, made by C.A.A.D. for C.A.A.D. You, dear friend of the air, are privileged just to be here, taking a peek, gazing at the skies, and dreaming of up.

James Brett

The Museum of Everything, London, 2013

Introduction

Dedication and Acknowledgments

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

This book is dedicated to the life and art of Charles August Albert Dellschau (1830–1923).

Many people’s generosity of spirit went into the production of this book, and it is my pleasure to acknowledge them here.

Foremost, this project has the distinction of having seven genuinely passionate advocates for the artist behind it. They would be the distinguished James Brett, Thomas McEvilley, Tracy Baker-White, Roger Cardinal, Tom D. Crouch, Barbara Safarova, and Randall Morris. Thank you all for giving Charles Dellschau his due respect, at long last.

Thank you to Ed Marquand, Adrian Lucia, Jeff Wincapaw, Ryan Polich, Brynn Warriner, and Brielyn Fiones at Marquand Books. At D.A.P., thank you Todd Bradway. Thank you also to Tanya Heinrich for your editorial commitment and vision.

My deepest appreciation goes to J. Kevin O’Rourke of Maryland, who has made available all of the works from his extensive collection for this book. Furthermore, his continued support over the years has allowed me the opportunity to devote myself to the dissemination of Dellschau’s art.

My sincere gratitude also goes to James Brett of The Museum of Everything, in London, for his early support of this project and full commitment to the appreciation of the artist, and for giving continued worldwide visibility to Charles Dellschau through exhibitions and publications of his collection.

Similarly, to Bruno Decharme of the abcd collection, Paris, it is with great admiration that I also applaud your efforts to give this artist’s work and legacy respect throughout the world.

A recipient of my utmost gratitude is the owner of the earliest known Dellschau works—three volumes of illustrated memoirs written between 1898 and 1900—who wishes to remain anonymous. Without your insight and custodianship these magnificent works by Dellschau would not have survived, and indeed, it is one of the distinct great honors of my lifetime to be able to present them for the first time within the context of this book.

I must also acknowledge several Texas museum professionals who generously shared their time and resources. At the San Antonio Museum of Art: Katie Luber, The Kelso Director; Marion Oettinger Jr., curator of Latin American art; and Karen Baker, registrar. At the Witte Museum, San Antonio: Marise McDermott, president and chief executive officer; Amy Fulkerson, curator of collections; and Shellie Eagan, registrar. At the Menil Collection, Houston: Mary Kadish, collections registrar; and Amy Chien, rights and reproductions. A special thank-you to curator Michelle White for her ongoing enthusiasm and support for the artist.

Thank you as well to historian and genealogist W.M. Von-Maszewski, who helped with the biographical research on Dellschau’s life in Texas, and Clint Drake of the George Memorial Library, Richmond, Texas.

Heartfelt thanks go to all the photographic artists who generously lent their time and talent toward representing Dellschau's works with integrity. My deep gratitude to Renée Pierre Allain of Brooklyn, who gave his full commitment to this project. Additional thanks go to John Berens of Brooklyn for his beautiful cover photograph. Thank you also to William Bengston, Charles Bechtold, Dimitris Skliris, Patrick Goetelen, Peggy Tenison, Todd White, Sylvain Deleu, Rick Gardner, Hickey-Robertson, Paul Hester, David Plakke, Madelaine Johnson, and especially Frank Maresca and Roger Ricco for generously donating the Ricco / Maresca Gallery photographic archives for this effort.

And to the honorary members of the Sonora Aero Club, I salute all of the above, as well as Tom Isenberg for his inexhaustible enthusiasm for Dellschau, Lynne Adele, Edward Blanchard, Shari Cavin, Scott and Susan Glazer, Audrey Heckler, Stacy C. Hollander, Lee Kogan, Rebecca Hoffberger, Phillip March Jones, George Morton and Karol Howard, Siri Von Reis, Charles Russell, Jan Petry, Ann Percy, Susan Crawley, Adam and Flora Hanft, John Foster, Larry Dumont, Harriet Finkelstein, Terry Nowell, Francois Meyer, Chris Navarro, John Jerit, Dennis Crenshaw, Robert Kruckemeyer, Rita Reif, Cynthia Greenwood, Ruben Calderon, Lauren Redniss, John Turner, Deborah Klotchko, Phil Allocco, Stephanie Smither, Michael Burke, Jennifer Pinto Safian, Leslie Umberger, Steven Simons and Cheryl Rivers, Bruce and Julie Webb, and the late and forever great Elli Buk, Kenneth Simpson, William Steen, and Kim Maenak. And to the late Dennis Oppenheim, one of the greatest artists of the second half of the twentieth century, whose early encouragement and admiration for Dellschau was a seminal inspiration for this book.

Of course, thank you to my family, Amie, Jordan, Phemie, Amber, and Anika.

As for myself, my contribution to this effort is well known to those close to the project, a psychotomimetic journey, as is the unravelling of the many layers of mystery in Dellschau's work.

Finally, thanks to those who preserved Dellschau's legacy: Fred Washington, Dominique de Menil, Mary Jane Victor, Cecilia Steinfeldt, Frank Maresca and Roger Ricco, and again, James Brett, Bruno Decharme, and the late William Steen.

And to the greatest of all Aeronauts: P. G. Navarro. No words can possibly express how indebted I feel to you for sharing so unselfishly and enthusiastically all of your original resources and research into Dellschau. Your lifelong commitment to the artist can only be described as beautiful, and truly articulates the above quote by Albert Einstein. Bless you, Wonder Weaver.

Stephen Romano
New York, 2013

Ink drawing of Charles A.A. Dellschau by P. G. Navarro, 1999
Private collection





*Reollections second part, Otto Krause's Battery Revolving Generator and Reliever, 1900, 11 x 8 in.,
 Private collection*

1

Charles A.A. Dellschau's

Aporetic Archive

Thomas McEvilley

An Orphic Journey

In 1921 the psychiatrist Dr. Walter Morgenthaler, working in Waldau, Switzerland, published a book called *Ein Geisteskranker als Künstler* (A Psychiatric Patient as Artist); the psychiatric patient was Adolf Wölfli. In the next year another psychiatrist, Hans Prinzhorn, began to collect and publish the artworks made by his patients at the university clinic in Heidelberg. This led to the 1922 book *Bildnerie der Geisteskranken* (Artistry of the Mentally Ill).¹

These events were in the background of the artist Jean Dubuffet's decision in 1945 to visit mental hospitals in Switzerland and amass a collection of patients' art, which he called *art brut*—rough art or raw art: it hadn't been cooked yet. In 1948 Dubuffet published the Art Brut Manifesto, in which he defined *art brut* as “work produced by one who is unscathed by artistic culture”; all the inspiration, in other words, comes from the inside, nothing from the culture roundabout. “These artists derive everything . . . from their own depths,” he wrote, “and not from the conventions of classical or fashionable art.” In this and other writings he developed the idea that “madness . . . is merely a mechanism for revealing true creativity, a sign of ‘liberation’ from the stultifying effects of social convention.”² In 1949 the first *art brut* show, at the Galerie René Drouin, in Paris, was called “L'Art Brut préféré aux arts culturels” (Art Brut in Preference to the Cultural Arts). *Art brut*, then, seems to be uncultured art or art by an uncultured or uneducated person. Is that what uncooked means? Dubuffet in the essay for this show said that art has “nothing to do with ideas.” The “art of intellectuals,” he insisted, “is false art, counterfeit art, an abundantly ornate currency which nevertheless rings hollow.” Later Roger Cardinal would revisit the question of whether autistic people are more creative than others.³

Thus things got underway, and they soon sped up. In 1959 the Tate Gallery in London received some outsider works into its collection. In 1962 the Collection de l'Art Brut was located in Paris, with its first catalog appearing two years later. In 1967 the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, showed the collection. In 1972 Harald Szeemann introduced conceptual art and minimal art at documenta V, in Kassel, Germany, and also the works of Adolf Wölfli and American outsider artist Howard Finster. In the same year Roger Cardinal published *Outsider Art*, though in his own writing he continued to use the term “art brut.” In this book, outsider art was proposed as a larger category that contained the smaller category of *art brut*. The outsider category also contained, for example, prisoners' art and children's art. In 1976 the Collection de l'Art Brut gained a permanent home in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1979 the Hayward Gallery, in London, had a show of British outsider art cocurated by Roger Cardinal and Victor Musgrave, “Outsiders: An Art Without Precedent or Tradition.” Written on a placard at the show was a quote from Dubuffet that read:

Outsiders: Art does not lie down on the bed that is made for it; it runs away as soon as one says its name; it loves to be incognito. Its best moments are when it forgets what it is called.

In the catalog Musgrave posited a deep connection that would endure: “It offers an Orphic journey to the depths of the human psyche.” The unconscious part of the human mind has often been thought of as an underworld, and an “Orphic journey” seemingly refers to Orpheus's descent to hell and reascent from it. Musgrave, in conjunction with Monika Kinley, curated “Arte Incomum” (Unusual Art), an exhibition of outsider art for the 1981 São Paulo Bienal. Szeemann included outsiders again in “Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk” (The Tendency toward the Total Work of Art), at the Kunsthau Zürich, in 1983.

Adolf Wölfli

Adolf Wölfli (1864–1930) has been called the first outsider artist, a statement that doesn't add up chronologically, since Charles A. A. Dellschau (1830–1923) was born thirty-four years earlier than Wölfli. Still, Wölfli was the first outsider artist to be designated as such, so it was his work that catalyzed the concept of the outsider and affected its definition. When Dellschau's work first entered the discourse, some said he was an American Wölfli. This was not a light or meaningless observation. In fact, there are pronounced similarities between Dellschau's and Wölfli's work. Their obsessive detail and structural order is much the same. Perhaps that is a result of both artists being northern or Germanic Europeans, or perhaps there is more to be said about it. Wölfli, like Dellschau, took up writing and drawing at what would usually be retirement age, and spent the last two decades of his life making a series of large hand-bound books containing hand lettering and thousands of illustrations.

The Mandala

Perhaps the most thorough correspondence between the oeuvres of Wölfli and Dellschau is that both are very involved in the tradition of the mandala. All of Dellschau's drawings of airships (which he called Aeros) involve an underlying mandala form. *Mandala* is a Sanskrit word for a type of illustration that goes back to at least the Late Bronze Age and probably the Neolithic. It was perhaps originally regarded as the floorplan of a temple (or a monastery, as C. G. Jung has it), with four entrances at the four cardinal points and everything balanced around the center and the quaternity that rises from it as in a compass or a clock face.⁴ In the Jungian tradition it is believed that when someone “constellates” the mandala archetype it means his or her personality is seeking to center, harmonize, and balance itself. The occurrence of this motif in the work of mental patients is not unusual or surprising. Its basic meaning is “the premonition of a centre of personality.”⁵ This is experienced as a self-revelation: “The energy of the central point is manifested in the almost irresistible compulsion and urge to *become what one is*.”⁶ This “what one is” is experienced not as the ego but as a *self*.

Charles A. A. Dellschau

Charles August Albert Dellschau was born in 1830 in Brandenburg, Prussia, grew up there, and at age nineteen immigrated to the United States. He is believed to have arrived at the port of Galveston, Texas, in 1849 and settled in Richmond, just southwest of Houston, where he worked as a butcher—the trade that had been his father's. An Amnesty Oath he signed in 1865 (indicating that he had served in some capacity on the Confederate side in the Civil War) describes him as five feet three inches tall with brown hair and eyes. The one known photograph of him suggests he was balding and paunchy. In the 1850s he somehow became associated with a group of men in Sonora, California, that he would later call the Sonora Aero Club. The members of the club were occupied with the attempt to invent, design, and build a flying vehicle—or a number of them.

At that time an airship meant primarily a balloon. The Sonora Aero Club meetings took place when ballooning was a craze. In 1803 the Royal Navy lofted observation balloons from ships with people in the baskets. In the same year a Frenchman flew four hundred miles in a balloon. In 1809 a hydrogen-filled balloon used wings for changing direction. Various steam-engine dirigibles and aeroplanes were

tried in the 1840s and '50s. In 1852 Henri Giffard built the world's first passenger airship, driven by a steam engine.

In the midst of this activity, which was followed assiduously in the newspapers, Dellschau seems to have moved to California gold country and to have spent around four years there, from 1856 to 1859. Upon his return to Texas, he found work as a butcher and got married to a widow named Antonia Helt, who had a five-year-old daughter. The family grew to include two more daughters and a son.

In 1877, when Dellschau was forty-seven, his wife and young son both died. A decade later, he relocated to Houston with his stepdaughter, who had married a saddle maker named Anton Stelzig, and Dellschau occupied a room of their house. Dellschau seems to have lived, in the middle of an active and expanding household, a quiet and inconspicuous life, indeed almost reclusive. After working as a butcher for approximately thirty years, he clerked at the Stelzig saddlery for another decade or so. Thereupon, in his late sixties, he retired from the family business and continued to live in the Stelzig home.

Now, in his retirement years, Dellschau's creative energies came to the forefront of his consciousness. From the meager available knowledge of his life up to this moment nothing is known about his education and training except that his father had been a butcher and he followed his father's trade. Whether he had ever worked with drafting or with writing is unknown, but he dove headlong into both those activities and continued working obsessively at them for the following twenty-three years. It is worth mentioning that outsider artists often grow into the role of artist in their old age; outsider art is almost a retirement profession.

First Dellschau spent two years or so—from around 1898 to 1900—writing and illustrating his memoirs, two volumes in English and one in German. The earliest is called *In Evening Hours of Lisure Recollections of real and speculative Work of Friends in Time long gone by from a Friend yet here The are gone but their Work is not forgotten*. The *Recolections* contains, among other things, an account of some of the events he was involved in (or witnessed—or maybe just heard about) in Sonora in 1854–1859. At the same time or immediately after this writing, he went on to write another text, again in English, called *Recolections real and speculative Works on Ideas of Friends in for higher Aims long gone by second part*. This “second part” consists of his responses to a letter he read in the *Houston Post* in December 1898 that describes the basic concept of jet propulsion. At some point Dellschau translated the English texts into a German manuscript, with the two parts titled *Erinnerung vergangener Jahre Zeit und Sittenspiegel niedergeschrieben und illustriert in freien Stunden Zweiter Theil* (Recollection of Years Past of time and a Way of Life Written and Illustrated in Idle Hours) and *Erinnerungen über Wahre und Versuchs Arbeiten Gedanken Ideen von Freunden längst todt, aber nicht vergessen von einem jetzt hier Der bringt sie aufs Papier von den Kerl habt ihr es nicht erwartet* (Recollections of real and experimental work and thoughts and ideas by friends long dead but not forgotten, put presently to paper by one who knew them, you would not have expected this from that guy). The memoirs were handwritten in a cursive script with letters that tend to lean forward at about forty-five degrees. Each line is remarkably straight and parallel and the blocks of script occupy almost the entire page, with only small margins on the left and bottom. Occasionally letters have been written over to clarify them—in one case changing a small *e* to a capital *E*. The overall impression of the writer's personality is that he is careful, neat, given to small and fine work, and wants to get things right.

After writing his memoirs, Dellschau began to make drawings and collages, painting in very thick watercolor on hand-cut sheets of butcher paper roughly eighteen inches square. Often the watercolor is applied so thickly that it looks as opaque as gouache. It stands up visibly on the page. These paintings are usually pictures of Aeros, presumably those that had been designed (and flown?) by the Sonora Aero Club in the 1850s. In addition newspaper clippings are glued onto the pages and there are elaborately lettered bits of text, sometimes in the Latin alphabet and occasionally in a simple alphabetic code. Dellschau called the pages “Plates” and the news clippings “Press Blooms,” seemingly a reference to flowers pressed in books. The whole complicated work is not so much a text as a collage—the text being one of the elements of the collage, along with representational paintings and drawings (mostly of various Aeros), hand-lettered messages, press clippings, and elaborate borders or framing devices that conspicuously assert the art nature of the pages they appear on.

For thirteen years (1908–1921) Dellschau worked on these Plates, binding them with shoestring into large book-like objects. Twelve of these “books” survived, but it seems, judging from the careful dating and numeration of each page, and large gaps in the numeration, that there were perhaps ten others of the same size and type whose whereabouts are unknown.⁷ The twelve books contained in all about two thousand pages produced at the rate of about one every two days.⁸ Each page is an ambitious, complicated work unto itself, bearing intricate and delicate and sometimes secret messages in both visual and verbal symbols. In contriving these powerful and somewhat inscrutable messages Dellschau seems to have felt he was archiving certain historical facts connected with his years in Sonora—but their historicity has not been evidentially confirmed, and “archive” may be too simple a description of what he was up to.

Yet, archivist or not, Dellschau, as far as is known, had no audience or readership for these works. He labored on his creative output over a span of more than twenty years, dying, in 1923 at age ninety-three, without having made any provision for the publication—or even the preservation—of his accumulated works, which the Stelzig family simply stored in the attic after his death, along with some other things the family was keeping there.

The Fate of Dellschau’s Work After His Death

For forty years Dellschau’s thousands of Plates moldered in the darkness of a closed attic, gathering dust. The only intrusion known to have taken place was when a male child of the Stelzig family became curious about the Dellschau books and rummaged through them. Sometime in the 1960s there was a fire elsewhere in the house, and a fire inspector said to clear the debris out of the attic. So, after four decades in the secret dark, gently wafting the aura of twenty years of solitary late-night concentration into the depths of shadowy and slightly sinister corners, over the pieces of sad furniture with sheets flung over them and gathering dust, Dellschau’s life-work was carried unceremoniously out into the light of day and literally left in a heap in the gutter. (It was born into the gutter, you might say.) So the first venue for Dellschau’s oeuvre was his bedroom; the second, an attic; the third, a heap in the gutter. From this point there is uncertainty, and two versions have emerged. First, that a furniture refinisher named Fred Washington, making his rounds to see what people had thrown out, found Dellschau’s stuff and took it to his shop in Houston, called the OK Trading Post. Another version adds another pair of hands

and another transaction. The heap in the gutter, on this account, was taken to the dump by a garbage truck. In the junkyard a nameless picker found it and sold it to Fred Washington for \$100.

In any case, the story is that once Washington had Dellschau's things in his shop they spent some time under a stack of old carpets or, in another rendition, tarpaulins. Before long they were discovered by a browser who recognized them as artworks of some kind, and then the books began their wanderings through the artworld and its levels of society.

The find made under a pile of carpets in the OK Trading Post was talked about a bit and began to be split up and moved in various directions—mostly upward (through the classes). Four of the twelve books were acquired by the Menil Collection, in Houston, which had previously shown some interest in outsider art.⁹ Fred Washington sold the other eight books to a man named P.G. Navarro, who is an interesting figure in the story. Navarro was a practicing commercial artist in Houston who in his spare time had developed as a hobby an investigation of certain reported airship sightings.

These mysterious airship sightings occurred in the late 1890s first in Northern California (not far from Sonora), then throughout the United States but especially in the Southwest and Texas. The phenomenon was known in the press (not only in Texas) as the Great Texas Airship Mystery. Navarro was studying the airship mystery at the time Dellschau's books were discovered in the OK Trading Post, and it occurred to him that the Dellschau material might somehow be a part of it. Perhaps at first Navarro didn't know about the Sonora Aero Club and assumed that the Aero drawings referred to aeronautical events around the turn of the century.

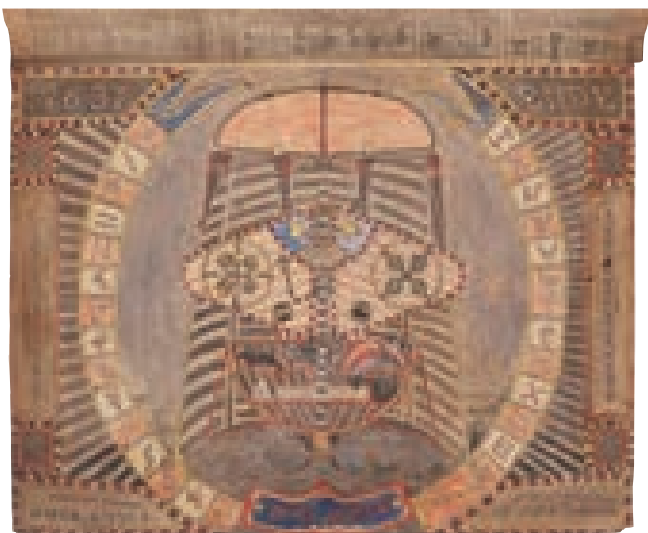
You've got to admire this sensible guess, and as he started to carry it out it became even more admirable. Navarro filled several notebooks with his findings, and these pages are exquisite in conception and execution; his obsessive concentration on order and neatness was not so unlike Dellschau's own. Dellschau's aesthetic is more expressive—meaning somewhat looser and more gestural—whereas Navarro's notebooks are “expressive” of rigid order—more or less a contradiction in terms.

Perhaps Navarro appreciated Dellschau's books as artworks. In any case it is clear that for one reason or another—maybe aesthetic, maybe spiritual, maybe as a search for something he couldn't exactly name—Navarro felt a strong attraction toward the Dellschau material. It almost seems he got into a folie à deux with the long-dead Dellschau; in his notebooks, Navarro redrew many of Dellschau's pages, carefully and in detail. He worked many long evenings to decipher coded messages he found there in what looked vaguely like alphabetical symbols, as seen in Plate 1631 (at left), but from some other tradition. Navarro says Dellschau used a simple one-to-one substitution code and claims to have worked it out.¹⁰ He worked on this hobby for thirty years and became something of a philological scholar in the process. He is still alive now at age ninety-three, the age at which his ego-ideal Dellschau died. At some point Navarro sold four of the eight Dellschau books of drawings in his possession to the San Antonio Museum Association; two went to the San Antonio Museum of Art and the other two went to the Witte Museum, also in San Antonio, a museum devoted to South Texas culture. His remaining four books ultimately entered the art market and ended up in various hands.¹¹

P. G. Navarro's “Books of Dellschau”

Navarro worked long and hard on his documentation of Dellschau's work. The main report, entitled “Books of Dellschau,” is compiled in a five-hundred-page record book. It is an index of each Plate, each

Plate 1631 Peter Mennis Ende, March 9, 1908 (see page 167)



Aero, each club member, Dellschau's terminology, and a chronicle of Navarro's history with the material and the process by which he conducted his research. The initial index of the Plates, which includes brief summary information, key words, and a few sketches of motifs, is joined by another index of each book, with more detailed sketches and observations of the Plates. Additional record books contain even more details and replicas of the drawings. Navarro attempted to make his record chronological, but in this respect there seem to be divisions in the artist's oeuvre. Dellschau was more out-of-time—more ahistorical—in the early work. But for the most part Dellschau was not as ahistorical as might be expected of someone who would fall into Cardinal's category of autistic artists. He definitely had a view of history that dominated his thought. But this view of history seems partly made up and partly devised to conceal this fact; the question of how far Dellschau himself believed it is open. So Dellschau may have been an obscure archivist, or a Trickster with a Lie to work on, or deluded, as some other outsiders seem to have been, such as Adolf Wölfli, Henry Darger, and Martín Ramírez. But, deluded or not, the enormous list in "Books of Dellschau" involves some recognizable themes, among them smatterings of his view of history.

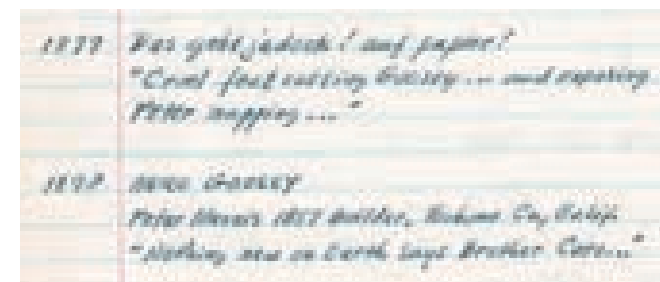
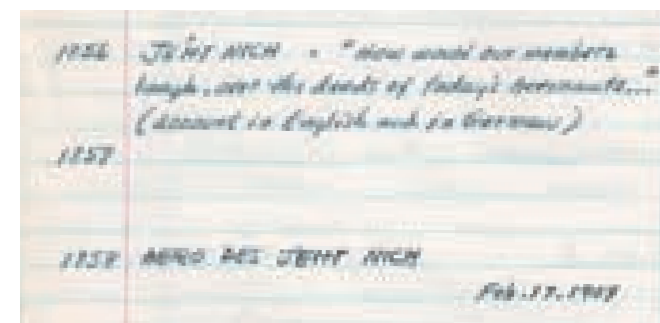
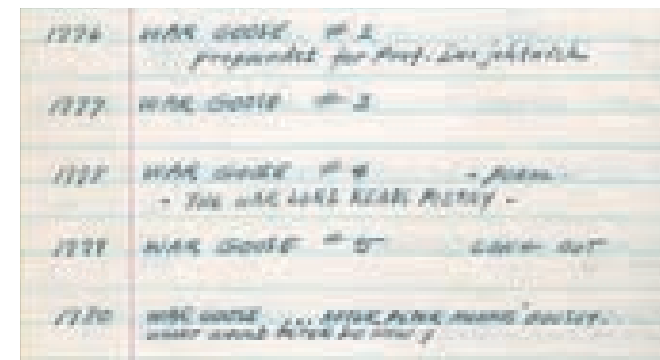
Plate 1727 is described by Navarro as a "Newsclipping re: Airship War." This is in connection with the Aero Hector, which is represented in seven of the surrounding Plates. Hector was the great Trojan warrior in the *Iliad*, and the name suggests that the Aeros were intended for use in war. This theme continues with a number of pictures of the Aero called War Goose on Plates 1776–1780, along with the somewhat cryptic reports "poem" and "The war lord reads poetry," which may suggest or hint that the collage element contained a poem, perhaps about Hector. The War Goose was a version of the original airship made by a man named Peter Mennis and called Goose (sometimes Goosey, sometimes Gander). On the same page Dellschau adds the query, "What would Peter do now?" Is one supposed to glimpse a hidden history behind such references? The Goose, it seems, refers to the 1850s era—the Sonora Club version of history—and the War Goose recaps it in the era of the turn of the century, the age of the Wright Brothers, whose first manned flight was in 1903, and the age of the approaching war.

Plate 1856 (see page 171), Navarro notes, includes the following inscriptions: "Jeht nich" and "How would our members laugh, over the deeds of today's Aeronauts." Dellschau is implying that he and his comrades in the Sonora Aero Club were more advanced in 1856–1859 than early twentieth-century aeronauts (such as the Wright Brothers).

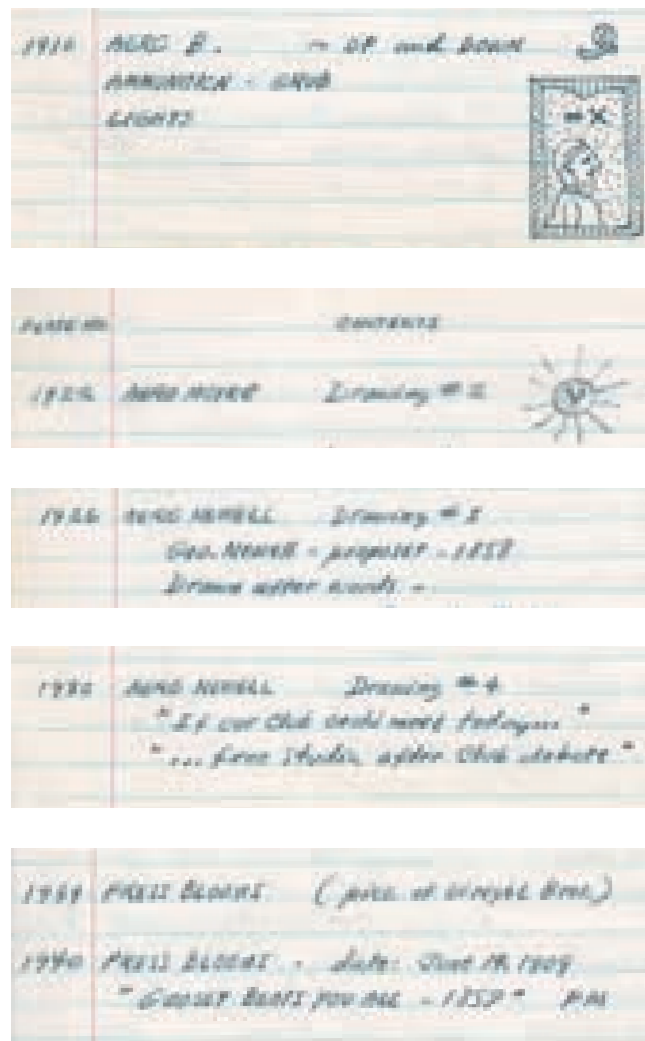
Two Plates later we find, "Aero des Jeht Nich." The phrase *jeht nich* looks like the more common German phrase *geht nicht*—(it) does not go. In fact, *jeht nich* seems to be the Berlinerisch form of *geht nicht*, that is, the form in the dialect peculiar to Berliners, which may include Dellschau. So the phrase "airship that does not go" might be a self-ridiculing joke by Dellschau.

Plate 1877 is described by Navarro as having the words "Das geht jaddock! auf papier! 'Cruel feat cutting Goosey . . . and exposing Peter napping.'" It seems that Dellschau has made a drawing in which he "cuts" open the Goose and shows Peter Mennis inside sleeping—lying down on the job. Dellschau calls his own act of drawing "a cruel feat" and seems to have sympathy for Mennis in regard to a trick he himself has played on his friend. That little moment—"a cruel feat"—could indeed come from someone deeply involved in a delusion or daydream, feeling sympathy for one of his own characters. The following Plate, of the Aero Goosey, includes the information "Peter Mennis 1857 Builder, Touhume Co., Calif. 'Nothing new on Earth says Brother Caro.'" "Nothing new on Earth says Brother Caro."

Details from P. G. Navarro's "Books of Dellschau"



Details from P. G. Navarro's "Books of Dellschau"



Of the many named characters who appear in these pages as members of the Sonora Aero Club, Peter Mennis seems to be the main one. He not only designed and flew the first airship, the Aero Goose, but also provided the mysterious anti-gravity fuel that supposedly permitted some of the airship designs of the club members to fly and which, when it ran out and could not be obtained, marked the end of the Sonora Aero Club. Drops of this Lifting Fluid fell onto an Electrande (a set of three rotating black-coated metal plates), causing a rising gaseous stream that would fill the pockets in which balloons of that time were filled with hydrogen gas, and have the same lifting effect.

Plate 1910 is titled "Aero B" and is inscribed with the words "up and down," "ammunition," "grub," and "lights." Navarro copied a looping symbol and added a little framed drawing to his notes of a bearded man in profile against a dotted ground headed by the scrap of formula "= X." This symbol could be part of the code $\text{DM} = X\emptyset$, which appears on Plate 1688 with the apposition "A Hoax. Long Distance Aero Berlin." The next Plate is labeled Groser Aero Berlin, "Prof. Max des Jeh'tnich teasing Heinrich Schroeder." And Plate 1690 is inscribed "Aero Berlin From Below #3/pro des Jeh'tnich—proposer." The phrase *jeh't nich*, then, in addition to being a Berlinerisch form of *geht nicht*, is also found, in the Sonora Aero Club history, to be the name of the proposer of the Aero Berlin.

In his notes for Plate 1922, entitled "Aero Moyke," Navarro has sketched one of Dellschau's symbolic drawings that look rather like Egyptian cartouches. This one seems to represent the sun, with eleven rays radiating out from it, and within the circle of the sun a mottling that suggests sand, and the drawing of a V. In New Kingdom Egyptian tomb paintings the mottling means desert sand surrounding the burning sun. But in Dellschau's version the mottling that seems to suggest sand is inside the sun-disc rather than surrounding it. Does the V suggest the double mountain from within which the sun rises in the ancient iconography?

Plate 1926 is the first in a series of drawings pertaining to another major figure in the Sonora Aero Club, George Newell. "Geo. Newell—proposer—1858 / Drawn after words." Does "Drawn after words" mean that Dellschau never saw the Aero Newell but had heard a verbal description of it and based his drawing on that? Or does it mean "afterwards," later. Among several more appearances of Newell in Navarro's notebook is the quote "Don't believe every word I say." Plate 1930, another drawing of the Aero Newell, includes the musing "If our Club could meet today." Then: "free studia after Club debate." *Studia* is the word Dellschau used for his drawings of airships, seemingly the word "study" put into an Italianate form. He claims to remember accurately and in detail the discussions the Sonora Aero Club had fifty years before.

Navarro notes that Plate 1939 contains Press Blooms and "pics. of Wright Bros." At that time Dellschau clearly was not using only his fictional imagination to picture reality but also real contemporary aeronautic adventures reported in the newspapers. The point that drove his interest seems to have been the idea that those events around 1900 paralleled those that the members of the Sonora Aero Club supposedly experienced fifty years earlier. Perhaps in their day the unscheduled flights of Aeros made by club members might have led to "mystery airship" rumors. Perhaps there is another such club behind the new reports.

Plate 1940, dated June 14, 1909, contains Press Blooms and the haughty declaration "Goosey Beats You All—1857." This is evidently another claim that the Sonora Aero Club members were further advanced in the 1850s than the Wright Brothers and other twentieth-century would-be aeronauts.

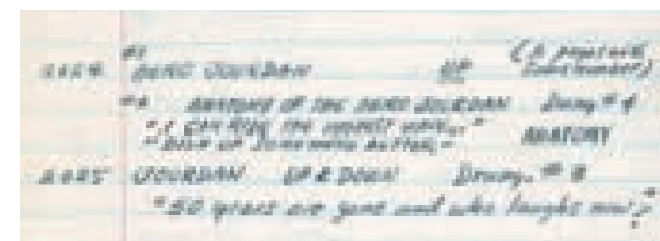
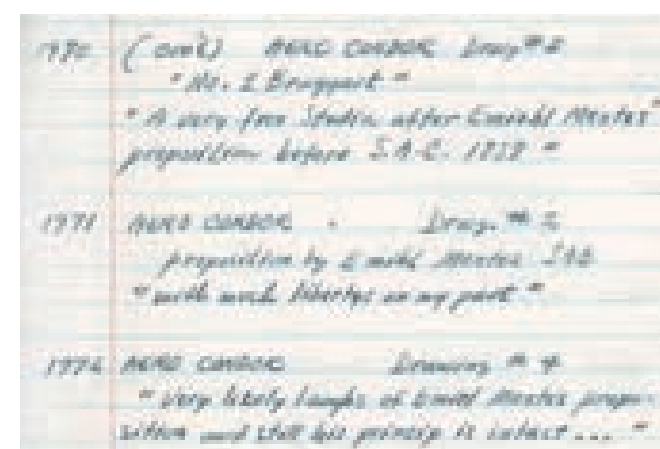
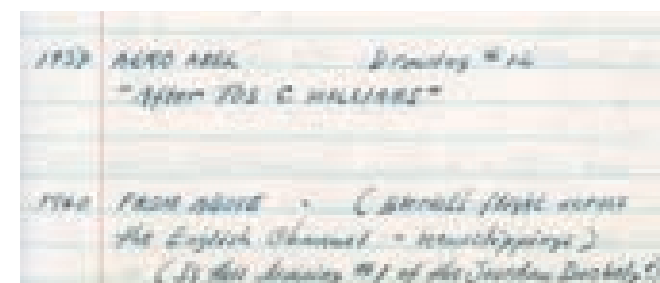
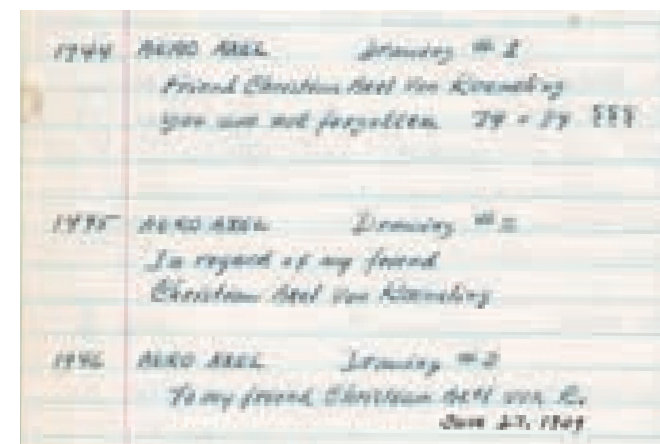
Plate 1944, of the Aero Axel, introduces “Friend Christian Axel von Roemeling” with the sentiment “you are not forgotten.” The following two Plates are of the same Aero and bear sentiments to Dellschau’s old friend. A few Plates later we find this narration, as transcribed by Navarro: “Looking at the plates of Aero Axel, my friend Williams say it weatherproof all-right in rain, yes—but . . . how in a big snow storm.” Two points should be made. First, in this case the little glimpse inside the Sonora Aero Club—the question about the waterproofing—seems to suggest that it was historical (or at least that the idea of its historicity was plausible), unlike other signs to the contrary. Even more important is the fact that here for once Dellschau refers to a readership; he seems to say that he has a friend named Williams who would look at his work and comment on it. Was this a friendship from the 1850s? Or did this friend enter the private sanctum of Dellschau’s room in the Stelzig house, and, if so, how many times and how often, and were there others? Or, did Dellschau take some of the work out of the Stelzig house to somewhere else to meet and show it to this friend? The Aero Axel in Plate 1957 is captioned “After Williams’ idea.” Perhaps this means that Williams expressed his “idea” in the 1850s period. The attribution to Williams may conflict with the fact that the Aero Axel has already been established as the proposal of Christian Axel von Roemeling (who, like Williams, is referred to as a “friend”). Perhaps he remembered them both from the 1850s or made them both up. But there does seem something legitimate underlying the anecdote about Williams revising von Roemeling’s design. In addition there is confusion about credits, which seems believable. On page 418 of Navarro’s “Books of Dellschau,” for example, one reads that August Schoettler accused Juan Maria and Jose, two Spanish members of the club, of claiming as their own some discoveries that were actually made by other club members. Page 413 recounts that Dellschau made revisions to the Aero Jourdan that Jourdan himself, the original designer, objected to. Page 408 states that the Aero Goeit, with the Balancier, or landing device, hanging below it, snagged on a tree and crashed. Such failures sound realistic (cunningly realistic if indeed written by a Trickster). Even more so the story on page 400 of the “tragic flight that caused the death (by a broken neck) of a probable member of the Sonora Aero Club.” (Why a “probable” member?)

Plate 1960 is described by Navarro as containing “Bleriot’s flight across the English Channel—newsclippings,” which illustrates the atmosphere of Dellschau’s early twentieth-century work, where almost daily news clippings about aeronautical developments mix with the listing of important Aeos and their proposers from the possibly fictitious history of the Sonora Aero Club in the 1850s.

Navarro’s notes for Plate 1970, of the Aero Condor, indicate that it contains the phrases “No. 1 Braggart” and “A very free Studia after Emiehl Mentés’ proposition before S. A. C. 1857.” Emiehl Mentés was another of the club members whom Dellschau says he remembers from the 1850s. Plate 1972, another drawing of the Aero Condor, contains the remarks: “Very likely laughs of Emiel Mentés proposition and still his princip is intact.” Someone evidently laughed at Mentés’s proposition yet in Dellschau’s mind “his principle is intact.”

Plate 2024 contains, among other things, the strange boast “I can ride the highest wave.” Plate 2025 includes the comment “50 years are gone and who laughs now?” The implication is that the claims of the Sonora Aero Club in the 1850s have subsequently been proved true and those who laughed the first time the claim was made, in the 1850s, can no longer laugh. Yet that doesn’t actually seem to be the case. Is this an example of Dellschau speaking from a delusion?

Details from P. G. Navarro's “Books of Dellschau”



The Contents of Dellschau's Books of Drawings

Dellschau leaves a picture of a reality that has to be pieced together from isolated words, images, scraps, and reversals. Currently the meager discourse on the artist includes one exhibition catalog from a 1997 show at a New York gallery and a book published a dozen years later by Dennis Crenshaw, *The Secrets of Dellschau*.¹² P. G. Navarro is credited as a collaborator on this book, which includes a list of about fifty Aeros and what detailed information they had on each.

A key element of Crenshaw's book is the fact that Dellschau's career was bookended by two aerial phenomena—in the 1850s the balloon craze and increasing experimentation with flight, and in the late 1890s the series of unexplained airship sightings called the Great Texas Airship Mystery. Dellschau read the Texas papers and followed aviation stories in general—but especially the mystery airships, which are referred to in some of the Press Blooms.

The story of what was going on in Sonora in the 1850s can be filled in somewhat sketchily from the artist's memoirs combined with the hand-lettered texts in the twelve books. In all, about sixty people are mentioned by name as being involved in the flight-experiments of the 1850s, and about a hundred airships, presented in the texts and depicted in the paintings, with some mention of technical developments from one model to the next. There is dim talk of an entity referred to, after Navarro's decoding, as NYMZA, possibly a group of people in Germany that in some unexplained way is supposed to lie behind the activities of the Sonora Aero Club. Those activities are presented by Dellschau as a record of events that took place at the meetings of the club, where one member might present to the others a design or an idea for a design, which would be discussed and criticized.

The drawings in Dellschau's books, when Navarro got to them, were in disarray; many pages had been removed from their bindings and stacked or heaped in no particular order. It is not entirely clear who reconstructed the pages as books, nor if it was done correctly. Navarro may have been involved at that stage, as part of his attempt to identify everything and organize it all, along with comments, in his voluminous notebooks, and his work does not seem to be that of a maniac or crank. If he wasn't a scholar when he started, he made himself one.

Various authors have proposed different appraisals of the truth value of Dellschau's account. At one extreme is the opinion of Fred Washington, who, like Navarro, spent a lot of time studying the drawings when he had them at the OK Trading Post. Washington believes Dellschau was a seer whose transcendent visions were, perhaps, above categorization. Dellschau's "brain," he surmised, "was far too advanced to function in the world as we know it . . . His whole mind had been taken over; it wasn't of this reality."¹³ But he doesn't say what exactly he thinks "took over" Dellschau's mind. Was it a delusion? A message from outer space? A mystical flash that just didn't stop?

Navarro expresses different positions at different moments. His skepticism is apparent when he says: "The lack of records would seem to indicate that the entire story of the Sonora Aero Club is a figment of his imagination." But at the same time Navarro found the books compellingly convincing. Crenshaw notes that "Pete felt almost without a doubt that Dellschau was diagramming a working machine. The detail was too precise, the same pieces of machinery placed time after time on his Aeros."¹⁴ The later Aeros maintained the same mechanical and aerodynamic principles as the Goose. "If Dellschau was making these drawings up in his mind as he went along it's hard to believe that he would continue to use the same components used in his early Aeros to make up the working machinery in his later

machines.”¹⁵ Dellschau’s imagination, according to this view, was too limited; he kept repeating the same Aero design a hundred times over twenty years. Why didn’t his imagination produce further developments in the design of the Aeros? Studies of doodles indicate that they do change and develop over time. Dellschau’s paintings do change a bit over the years, but not in the mechanics envisioned for the Aeros. The difference is more a matter of style.

Dellschau’s early work may strike one as pragmatic and technical, while in the later work it seems he is either losing his mind or becoming an artist. The touch of the brush becomes increasingly gestural, and added emphasis seems placed on the ornamental borders.

What artworks might Dellschau have been familiar with? Another question that stands alone.

The Aesthetic of Dellschau’s Art

It is not hard to see Dellschau’s work as art—especially the later work. The books themselves have a sculptural presence with a rustic frontier aura. They could be props in a movie. But most artlike are the airship paintings, of which there are many hundreds. Dellschau’s approach to painting features drawing, which is to say it emphasizes line over color. Much of it could be called drawing with paint. The airship paintings have the fascination of something light (a bubble) hanging in the air. They really do speak right out to the beholder in a way that seems like art—a parading of their sensory nuances along with the overlay of a verbal message that may permanently remain not totally understood. One of the flagrant qualities of the Plates is the fact that much of the color is heavily tinted—meaning that there is a lot of white mixed into it; broad areas of the compositions are left translucent, allowing the light of the page to shine through. Along with the elegant simplicity of Dellschau’s drawings comes the sense of an object with a lightness not exactly ghostly and not quite supernatural. It floats like a snowflake or a Christmas ornament or a ghost—yet with remarkable detail. There is a quality of thinking there that either a child or an adult could follow.

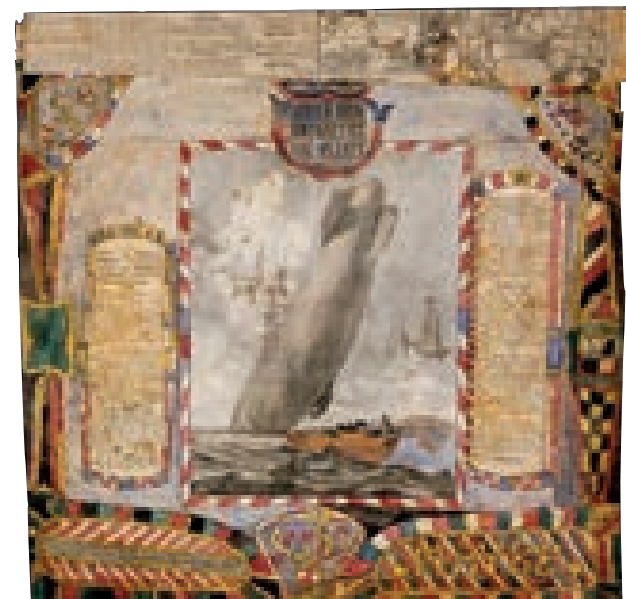
Each of Dellschau’s Plates is carefully composed and attractively, even expertly, merges its verbal and visual elements. For a similar feeling about space and the beings who might inhabit it in the imagination one may think of the gods’ departure in Jean-Antoine Watteau’s *Embarkation for Cythera* (1717), or the ceilings of Tiepolo—both Rococo depictions of the edge between historical space and pure or Ideal space. Dellschau’s Aeros occupy that edge, too.

Some Aeros have one balloon or lifting chamber, some two. These mechanical alternatives lead to two different types of compositions. Many of the Plates are based on unity and structured around the central point, which gives birth to a mandala-like eight-petaled lotus form. Others are based on portraying the moment when duality emerges from unity. Those are based around a central axis rather than a central point, and a heraldic flanking device is structured around that axis. Some of Dellschau’s renderings embody what you might call an aristocratic use of space, somewhat as in Renaissance painting; others give the impression of a working-class view of space, with hints of comics and advertisements.

Numerous Plates are devoted primarily to Press Blooms but place them in pictorial settings; the different orders of the sensual and the cognitive are cunningly brought closer and closer to one another as they contribute to the same pictorial effect. In Plate 4441 (right, top) a huge Press Bloom hangs suspended in a pale blue sky, like an Aero; the picture of an airplane dropping a bomb in the *Scientific American* clipping in turn parodies or ironizes the fact that the Press Bloom itself is in the position of

Top: Plate 4441 Press Blooms (Attacking Forest Fires with Gas Bombs), August 6, 1919 (see page 255)

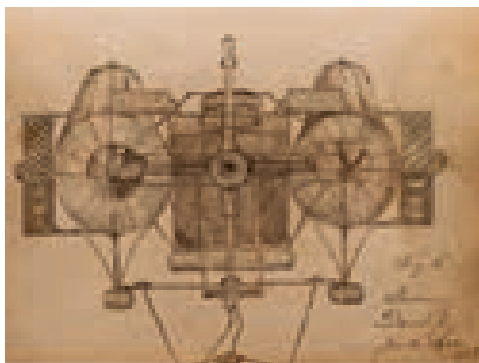
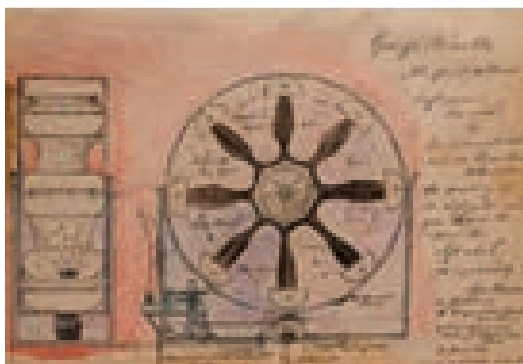
Bottom: Plate 4520 Maybe, December 3, 1919 (see page 275)



Top: *Recolections second part*, Otto Krauses
Batory Revolving Generator and Releaver,
1900 (see page 10)

Middle: *Recolections second part*, George
Newells “We goe it allone,” 1899–1900 (see
page 124)

Bottom: *Recolections second part*, Brownny
Doobely, 1900 (see page 113, bottom)



an Aero. The massive Bloom hangs on ornamental—even somewhat palatial—brackets on both sides, which in turn are fastened securely to an emphatic border in primary colors, white, and black whose tiny framed rectilinear abstractions might be found on a Neolithic bowl. In the similar Plate 4520 (page 21, bottom), the Press Blooms in or around the center are embedded in massive ornamental borders, which become picture panels or series themselves.

Plate 4520 is a special masterpiece. The large central panel shows a Press Bloom in which a dirigible is crashing into the ocean. In the water below is a wooden boat with a crew of six, and a vague aura of another era. Above it the elaborately framed newspaper headline “Border Drug Smugglers Use Planes” seems unconnected to the scene of which it is the heading. In the border at the bottom right, in large yellow print cunningly superimposed on circus-like primary stripes, is the word *Maybe*, also seemingly in a world by itself, only vaguely integrated into the whole pictorial / linguistic puzzle or reality. These and other elements are lovingly and intricately unified on a page, along with many elements that work and interpenetrate with some difficulty. The decorative framing of disaster (which Roger Cardinal identifies as *schadenfreude*) is like Horace’s famous poem beginning *Suave mari magno*, in which he says that it is pleasant to stand safe on the shore and watch a ship caught in a storm out at sea.

Prominent among the center-based compositions are several that present massive eight-cogged gears (turning at the center of the Platonic clockwork universe) like monstrous mandalas. A great example—another of Dellschau’s iconic masterpieces on which he seems to have expended especially loving or reverential care—is a page from *Recolections second part* that bears the heading “Otto Krauses Batory Revolving Generator and Releaver” (left, top). It seems that the whole energy of the revolving universe is held within a transparent glass vial in an ambience of blue air or water—like a perfume. It is a mighty icon that one can almost hear groaning in the turns. The central mandala figure (representing the inner harmonic motion of the universe) has eight rays, or petals. The mandalas scattered throughout Dellschau’s work are almost always eight-petaled, like the primary and secondary compass points or the quarterly positions of a clock face. The four- and eight-petaled mandala was the ancient Sumerian form, where the iconograph, which is still everywhere in human culture, came from. In this instance the mandala is dated on one side 1858 and on the other 1900, the dates invoking both of the spheres of aeronautical activity that lay behind Dellschau’s work—the Sonora Aero Club in the late 1850s and the Great Texas Airship Mystery of the late 1890s. The droplets of Mennis’s antigravity fluid are dripping into the revolving mandala from above; power derived from them presumably keeps the mandala turning (clockwise, it seems).

Another, also from the same volume of the memoirs, is headed, “George Newells “We goe it allone”” and dated 1858 (left, middle). On the left one sees the drops of Lifting Fluid creating an upward current. The eight-limbed mandala is centered around a smaller center-plus-quadrature motif. As in many Neolithic and Early Bronze Age icons the cosmic quadrature rises out of a system of concentric circles and revolves clockwise. The Liftpower, which is generated on the left, is used to turn the Liftwheel. This tiny engine, it seems, turns the universe.

The mandala center-plus-quadrature icon occurs throughout Dellschau’s Aero designs, often portrayed not as the center of everything but as one ancillary part among others. It’s a form that appears often in *Recolections second part*. In one drawing, of the Brownny Doobely (left, bottom), the little mandalas appear on both sides in the heraldic flanking arrangement, with eight blades for the eight petals of the

lotus. In other drawings the form occurs with variations but always with the eight primary and secondary compass points. In Plate 3352 (right, top) the eight-petaled rosette at the center is made up of Press Bloom photos of “Eight Members of the New British War Cabinet.” As the mandala sheds its meaning all around it, war is presented here as an ongoing universal life form permeating everywhere. The cabinet members are like devils.

Dellschau’s depiction of the Aeros involves some artistic license; he found in the concept of a device for ascent some decorative room to explore alongside symbolic meanings. Dellschau has chosen to make use of this freedom to give meaning to the work by the incorporation of symbolic forms into it. To begin with he has imagined his spaceships along Platonic lines—meaning with circular mandala-like forms, usually divided into eight interior segments, placed in dominating positions in the compositions. The message is an exhortation to live in peace and harmony—the ethical message inherent in unity, centrality, and circularity. Aristotelian cosmology has a similar ethical tinge. The motion of eternal entities is always circular, as their shape is apt to be spherical. Aristotle seems to have adopted this from the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition, and indeed Dellschau’s imagined conceptions of the Aeros are made up of circles within circles, like the gearbox of the universe.

Several of the Aeros are featured in numerous drawings—George Newell’s Airostant Stickfast, Eduard Hermsdorf’s Airostant Doobely, W. H. Brown’s Airo with the Suckerkicker, the Brownly Doobely, and finally and above all Otto Krause’s Idea, two drawings of which are made up almost completely of an array of circles within and around one another creating a constant flurry of rotation and energy (right, middle and bottom).

The Theme of Flight

The theme of flight has often been said to dominate the twentieth century. It is a theme with several branches and levels. There’s the Wright Brothers making an airplane, and then there’s St. Teresa flying above the treetops. On one level it is the old center-based mandala spirituality, with flight as an ascent from the center; on another it has an ecological aspect that has to do with the ambition to leave the earth (perhaps having used it up) and fly to unforeseen rematerializations. Renaissance paintings show saints and angels floating or flying around amid clouds in the same skies where Dellschau’s angelic Aeros are suspended light as a feather.

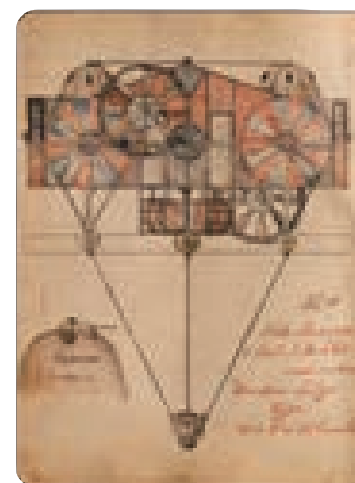
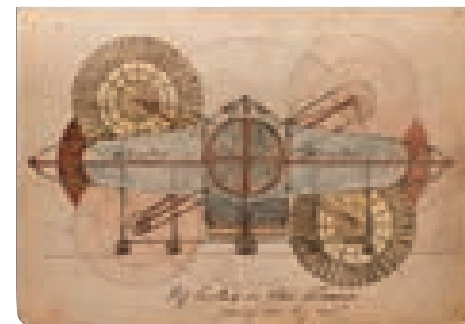
But there is an inner tension to the Aero drawings. The mandala form that much of Dellschau’s work involves is a vision of cosmic space as an enclosure, but the theme of flight or upward ascension implies escape from or flying up out of the cosmic enclosure. On the one hand, it may seem that the mandala theme with its positing of the wholeness of space is the primary theme rather than the theme of ascent or escape from it. On the other hand, the function of the mandala, though it is static in space the way a center is, is as a launching pad either out of the mandala or to a higher level of it conceived three-dimensionally. It provides stability but not a dead stability so much as a space crawling with life—perhaps it could be called a space for transformation, though it is not glimpsed at the moment of the blazing miracle—but the gentle ascent of a balloon floating silently up, up, and away.

The ascent or escape from the mandala, in fact, needs some magical or religious help, because it’s not just a matter of ascent but of descent also. “Of all the metaphors,” Gaston Bachelard says, “only those pertaining to height, ascent, depth, descent and fall are axiomatic. Nothing can explain them

Top: Plate 3352 War Press Blooms (Eight Members of the New British War Cabinet), May 27, 1915 (see page 224, top)

Middle: *Recolections second part*, Prof Carolus on Otto Krause, 1899–1900 (see page 116)

Bottom: *Recolections second part*, Otto Krause & Carl Nitschke combination Weather Lodge Type, 1899–1900 (see page 117)



but they can explain everything.”¹⁶ Eliphas Levi, in *The Mysteries of Magic*, presented his own form of the axiom: “The spirit clothes itself to come down, and strips itself to go up.”¹⁷ In Levi’s parable of the comet and the fixed star, the comet brags: “I am permitted to wander at will and vex the harmony of the spheres! . . . I am the proscribed, the eternal wanderer, who has infinity as domain.”¹⁸

Shamanic traditions around the world involve the claim of bodily flight. “Ancient India,” Mircea Eliade notes, “knows the ecstasy that makes ascension and magical flight possible.”¹⁹ Patanjali, in the *Yoga Sutras* (III.45), declares that yogis can obtain the power “to fly like a bird.” In the *Mahabharata* the sage Narada “soars into the sky and reaches the summit of Mount Meru.”²⁰ There is also “the myth of ascent to the sky by a ladder,” which goes back to Old Kingdom Egypt and “is also known in Africa, Oceania, and North America.”²¹ And, Eliade notes, “the sky can [also] be reached by fire or smoke, by climbing a tree or a mountain, or ascending by way of a rope or a vine, the rainbow or even a sunbeam.”²² Shamans are called to their profession by what Eliade calls a psychotic episode, and among them as among mental patients the dream or imagining of flight is common. Artists too have sometimes exhibited the special personality that needs the dream of flight. One modern artist who was especially literal about it was the French artist Yves Klein, who wrote:

Today anyone who paints space must actually go into space to paint, but he must go there without any faking, and neither in an airplane, a parachute, nor a rocket; he must go there by his own means, by an autonomous individual force: in a word, he must be capable of levitating.²³

Of course, some or all of these flights or ascents must have been made in the imagination, and that is clearly how Dellschau’s relationship to flight developed. It seems that he imagined it visually and thought it, somehow, nearly in his grasp.

Scrap Book

A tantalizing remnant of Dellschau’s oeuvre is *Recolections second part*, composed in a commercially bound blank journal with “Scrap Book” imprinted on its leather cover. Dellschau filled both sides of each of its twenty-four pages with elaborate drawings, among his most intricate and finely finished. In addition, he affixed two sets of double-sided sheets of handwritten text with brads to some of the drawings—these he called Yarns and are the two stories for which the pictorial drawings illustrate. Made with lead pencil and watercolor and/or colored pencil, the gray of the pencil lead is joined by red and blue with minor touches of lavender-pink and pink. The airship designs vary somewhat in their aesthetic effect, but the concept remains basically four-part: the balloon on top of the rig, which will be filled with anti-gravity gas; a cablike arrangement in the middle that provides room for an aeronaut or two; the device that powers the airship by dripping a few drops of Peter Mennis’s antigravity fluid onto a plate that converts it into a gas that is funneled into the balloon part or lifting chamber; and beneath it all, the landing device, involving what Dellschau called the Falleasy. The overall effect of most of his drawings and watercolors of Aeros is that they are composed principally of circles in some arrangement and look like flying mandalas.

On the one hand, Dellschau’s drawings look like technical drawings (as Cardinal and others have stressed), though as far as is known he never had training in draftsmanship; on the other hand they look like decorative artwork, though again Dellschau never, as far as is known, had training as an artist.

In any case it seems that he took leeway with the technical aspect of the drawings, though he never cut loose from it completely. This aspect led to Pete Navarro’s argument that if the Aeros were all imagined they wouldn’t display such regularity.

Another dichotomy that has arisen in the discourse is that some interpret the changes in his late work as a sign of deterioration, maybe with a bit of old-age dementia, while in reality it may be that his increasing awareness of himself as an artist is taking over and remaking his personality.

In addition to the apparition-like silence of the colorful Aeros floating and rising iconically, Dellschau introduced narration here and there in his writings, presenting a childlike story or a dream with possible symbolic suggestions. He wanted to draw connections between his more important characters, seemingly in hopes of making the whole thing a single great mandala-yarn (more like Wölfli’s magnum opus). George Newell, Peter Mennis, Christian Axel von Roemeling, and others are connected in a nexus of story that is only visible in partial glimpses. One of the supplemental texts in *Recolections second part* is entitled “George Newells Yarn of Peter Mennis Dream ‘The Rescue’ of Christian Axel von Roemeling, The Moonskooter, rendered Sumer 1857 after closing Club Transactions of the Sonora Aerial Club” (right, top). Dellschau claims the yarn to have been “rendered” (just meaning “drawn”?) in 1857, though his artistic efforts are usually regarded as beginning in 1898 (perhaps in the retirement-artist mode of the outsider—here again the same three names haunt him: Wölfli, Darger, Ramírez).

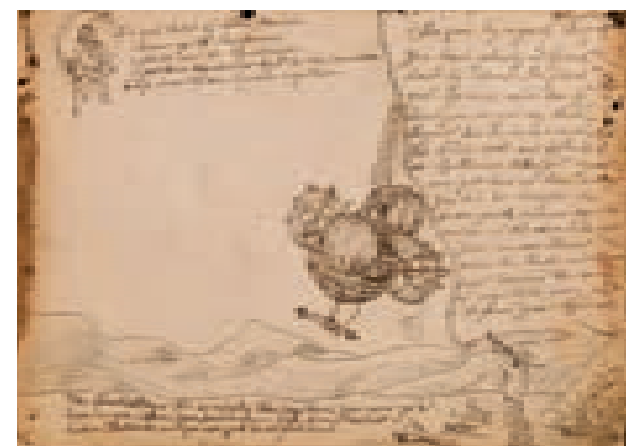
One of the Moonskooter rescue drawings shows the Goose tilting at a strange angle above some landscape (right, bottom). The Aero is made up of four spherical elements disposed around another larger one. An empty basket swings down below it. A man (Dellschau, perhaps) stands on the ground with a telescope looking, it seems, at the moon, where von Roemeling, with a sword, is seated astraddle. He says: “If i get hold of that Mashine I never go to California i strike out for Copenhagen I get that Rope-ladder tyed to the moons horn and go down to him if ever on I fid him.” Down below: “Ha Shuckelmyer Air is mighty thin up here you never go to Copenhagen i save you, but my own Way I need Ballast . . . and you are just built for that.” On the right is a long text that seems spoken by Mennis. “Im gone by myself August. You have plenty of Grub on hand by dinner. We fetch a good Apetite whit us. You hear Dont you forget my Order August as he went a going. Yes Fatty will act splendid as Ballance Wheight if i ever get him of that roost. You bet his weight pull us home quick i recon the action of the air trow the Hair on our Heads out whit the Boots and i be baldheaded the ballans of my Life im gone August good bye old Soul.” There is the Man in the Moon, the man on the earth with the telescope, and in between there is a third man barely visible in the passenger basket of the Aero. That middle figure would seem to be speaking the long speech just quoted: Mennis. At some point he wakes up and realizes it was a dream.

DM = XØ

Present in many of the Plates are character-like symbols that look as if they are based to a degree on letters of the Greek alphabet. It is not clear to what end these only semi-recognizable characters are used. A formula that is on many of the Plates looks almost like $DM = XØ$ but not quite. The two letters on the right of the equation look more like *chi* and *phi* from the Greek alphabet than like *X* and *O* from the Latin alphabet. The formula $DM = XØ$ has a horizontal dash entering the *D* around its middle, from the left, and a diagonal line from upper right to lower left through the *O*. And of course *D* and *M* are both in the Greek alphabet, too. *Delta mu = chi phi*? It may be Dellschau didn’t leave enough clues to figure

Top: *Recolections second part*, Geo Newells Satyre “The Rescue of the Moonskooter as given before The Sonora Airostat Club vait a leettle i come and get you Fatty,” 1899–1900 (see page 120)

Bottom: *Recolections second part*, The Moonskooter Rescue, 1899–1900 (see page 120)



it out. Maybe it has something to do with Peter Mennis, as on Plate 2003 (as described by P. G. Navarro in his “Books of Dellschau”) are the words: “Have you never heard of P. M.’s goose and heir offspring $\text{DM} = X\emptyset$ —Peter I haven foregot you!”

Navarro thought he had worked it out in Dellschau’s code so that $\text{DM} = X\emptyset$ translates into NYMZA. In his interpretation the five elements refer by code to a mysterious organization, perhaps operating from Germany, that was the sponsor or secret director behind the activities of the Sonora Aero Club. There is in addition one drawing (Plate 2550) that is signed, “a $\text{DM} = X\emptyset$ Club Debate Studia . . . Drawn by CAA Dellschau.” *Studia* is the term Dellschau used for a model or study or artist’s proof. So: this is the Study-Model that came out of a Sonora Aero Club debate. But of course Dellschau treated the right side of the equation as if it was the Latin letters *X* and *O*, and didn’t consider the problems about those letters mentioned above.

The Question About Question

One of several major questions surrounding the secrets of Dellschau has to do with the historical value of the account given in his various formats—the three volumes of memoirs and the twelve known books of Plates. Attempts have been made to find other records or evidences of the Sonora Aero Club, or Peter Mennis or George Newell or any other character of the many named, but the results have not been satisfying.

P. G. Navarro sums it up: “Many of the newsworthy events that Dellschau claimed to have happened while he was there have been verified. But those events dealing with the activities of the Aero Club have not.” And again: “A personal search of records and cemeteries . . . have turned up nothing that would prove the members of the Aero Club ever existed.” And “The lack of records would seem to indicate that the entire story of the Sonora Aero Club is a figment of his imagination.”²⁴ The idea that Dellschau’s yarn is fiction somehow does not resolve the issue, since fiction has many modes. Is it fiction in the way a work of art is fiction? Or the way an outright lie is fiction? Or the way confusion may produce a kind of fiction? Different opinions have been registered on all this.

And after considering them all, one must acknowledge that the evidence simply doesn’t provide a clear answer to this question. It is one of many questions that just have to be lived with as questions—or ignored. Dellschau refers to events in the news of the 1850s that check out, but he could have just looked them up in a library. The problem is that little if any confirmation of Dellschau’s personal history, the Club and so on, has been found.

If a question is rivetingly important to a questioner, then the failure to find an answer can cast a question mark over everything in his or her life. Some will try to escape the dilemma by asserting that a question that does not have an answer is not a real question. Question and answer are a mutually dependent pair, like yes and no or true and false or up and down. In such a pair neither proposition can be meaningful in a universe where the other is not also meaningful. The idea that, lacking an answer, one should live with the question as a question, like an acquaintance whose name one does not know, may seem frustrating, but at least one major artist, James Lee Byars, has apotheosized the idea of Question; his oeuvre is posited on a universe in which Question rules, which he feels will be more open and creative than one in which Answer rules. Question, after all, is wide open; it could be pointing to anything in the universe. But Answer is closed, it appears as one thing and continues to do so.

Can it be that accepting a question as a question is inwardly, hiddenly, a kind of answer? Or is it just a kind of shrug? Dellschau's twelve massive books of words and pictures may be no more than an old man's lonely daydreams. They are pretty daydreams, which imply a pretty question mark, pretty and somehow deep, as one question behind the Aeros is the choice between ascent and descent. The breathlike striped spheres floating by may remind one of a line from a poem of e. e. cummings: "In Just-/spring when the world is mud-/luscious the little/lame balloonman/whistles far and wee." The little striped spheres float silently onward. What is their destination?

Notes

1. Walter Morgenthaler, *Ein Geisteskranker als Künstler* (Bern: E. Bircher, 1921); and Hans Prinzhorn, *Bildnerie der Geisteskranken* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1922).
2. Colin Rhodes, *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 45.
3. Roger Cardinal, "Outsider Art and the Autistic Creator," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of Biological Sciences* (May 2009): 1,459–66.
4. C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 356.
5. *Ibid.*, 357.
6. *Ibid.*
7. This calculation was done by P. G. Navarro.
8. This count was made by Stephen Romano.
9. The first public exhibition of Dellschau's work was "Flight," at the University of St. Thomas, in Houston, in 1969. I personally saw them on display in that exhibition.
10. He translates the ciphers as (left side, top to bottom) P, O, N, M, L, K, I, H, A, B, C, D, E, F, G and (right side, top to bottom) Q, R, S, T, U, W, X, Y, Z, CH, SCH, with the O used for double letters and no representation for J or V. By using this code, he claims the passages on the left and right edges of the drawing read "Now talk about your dirigibels" and "O yes we didden know nothing say." P. G. Navarro, e-mail to Stephen Romano, July 30, 2012.
11. Two were acquired by a New York gallery that specializes in outsider art, one entered the abcd collection, Paris, and one is in a private collection.
12. Lauren Redniss, *The Aeronautical Notebooks of Charles Dellschau*, exh. cat. (New York: Ricco/Maresca Gallery, 1997); and Dennis Crenshaw and P. G. Navarro, *The Secrets of Dellschau: The Sonora Aero Club and the Airships of the 1800s, a True Story* (San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books, 2009).
13. Redniss, *Aeronautical Notebooks*, 7.
14. Crenshaw and Navarro, *Secrets*, 114.
15. *Ibid.*, 138.
16. Quoted by J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), 104.
17. Arthur Edward Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi* (London: George Redway, 1886), 192.
18. Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual* (Chicago: Occult Publishing House, 1910), 184.
19. Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 407.
20. *Ibid.*, 409.
21. *Ibid.*, 490.
22. *Ibid.*
23. See Thomas McEvelley, *Yves the Provocateur* (Kings-ton, NY: Documentext, 2010), 86.
24. Crenshaw and Navarro, *Secrets*, 114 and 181.



Plate 4575 Broad Cutt Up, March 17, 1920, 17 x 17½ in.,
American Folk Art Museum, New York, Blanchard-Hill Collection, gift of M. Anne Hill and Edward V. Blanchard Jr., 1998.10.16a

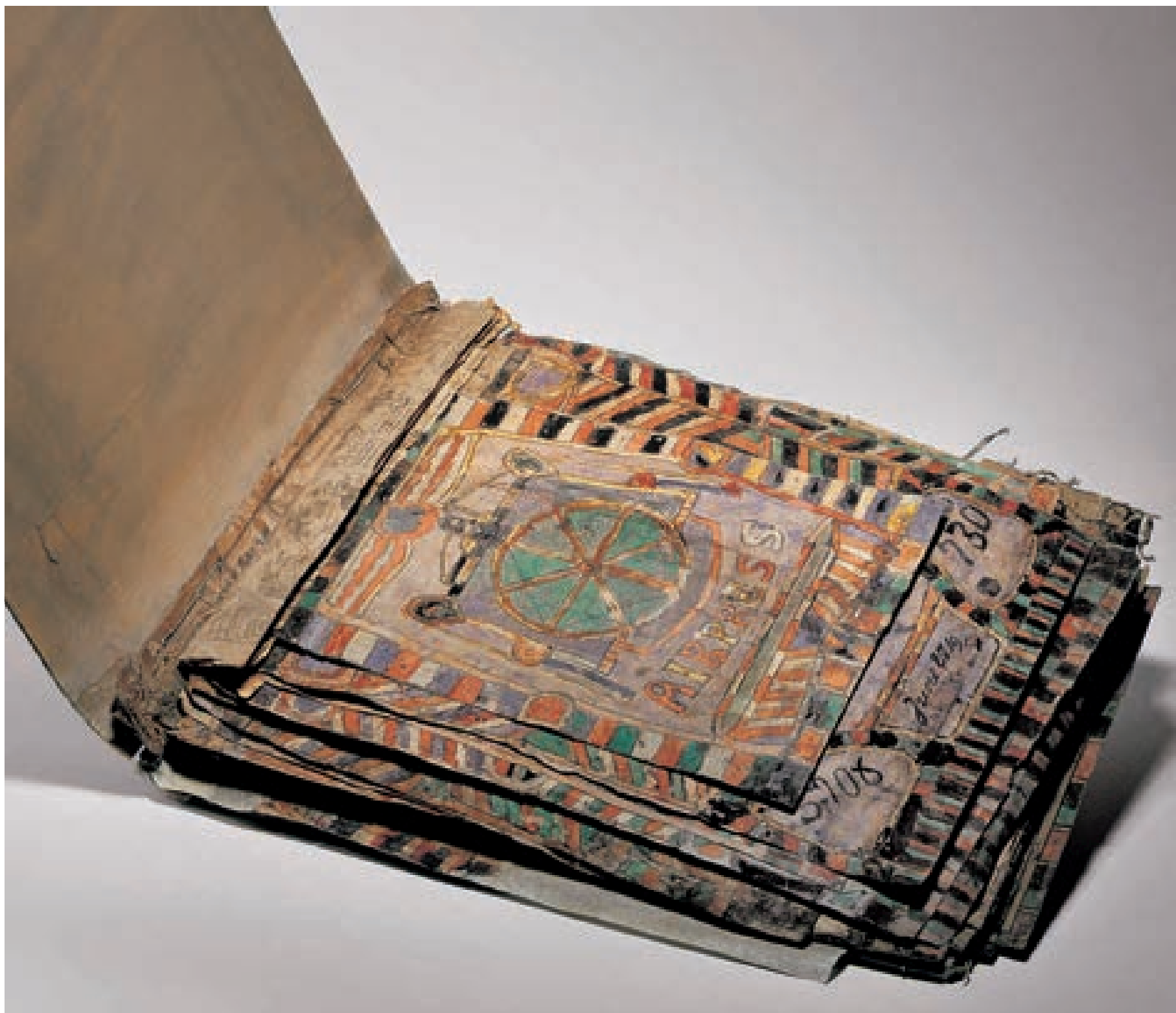
Charles A.A. Dellschau
Selected Works



Book 8 (Plates 4301–4490), 1919
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



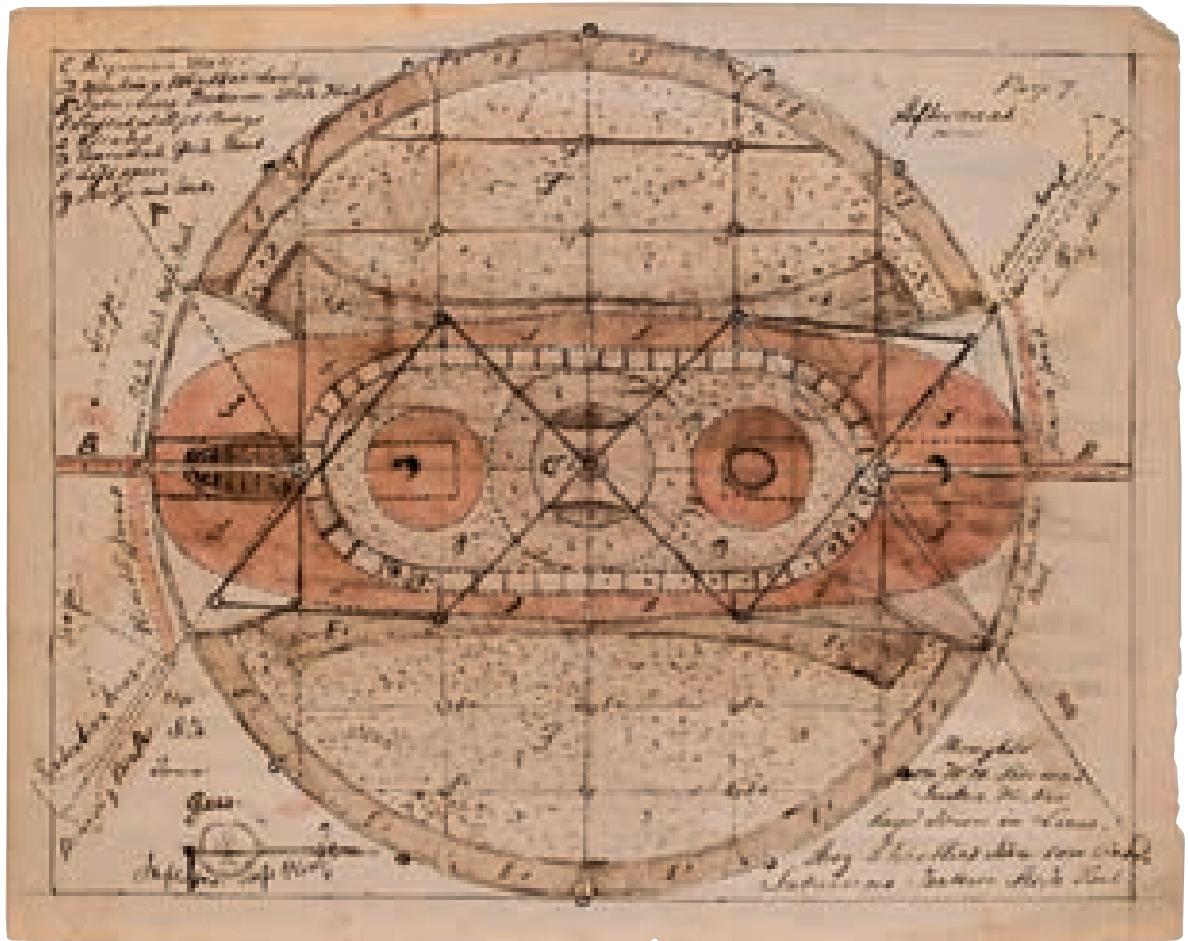
Book 9 (Plates 4491–4737), 1919–1920



Book 12 (Plates 4527–5235), 1921
abcd collection, Paris

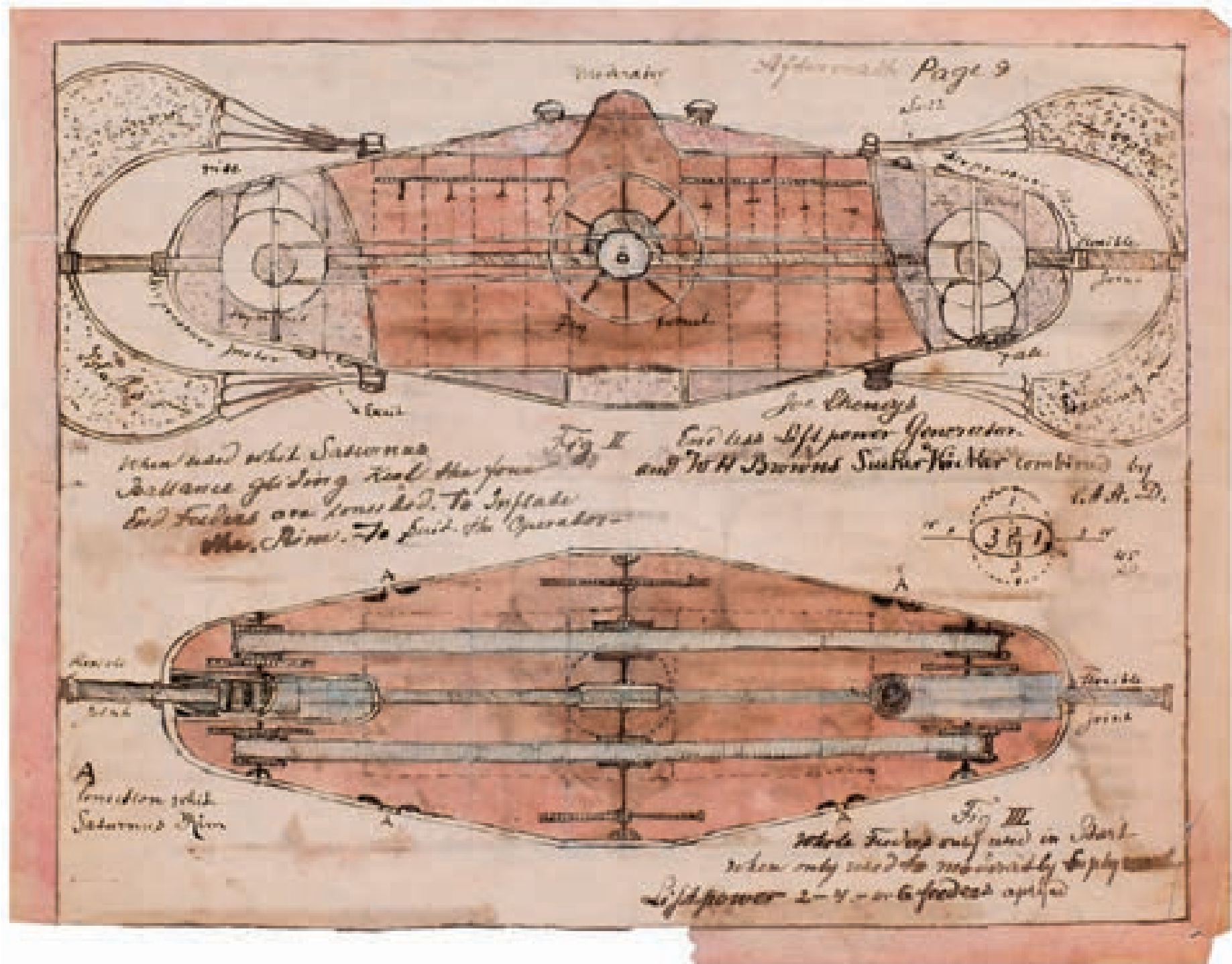
Lather Proposptions W. H. Browns Sucker Kicker ^{at P. 1}
Texas. ^{at} ^{has} ^{been} ^{described} ^{by} ^{himself} ^{Principles}

A perfect Air Ship
Brewton Texas November 28. 1898. As a description of my Invention of
an Balloon might interest the public. The Balloon if ever built
should be composed of Aluminum Ligas shaped, such Balloons have been
constructed, filled with Gas, and made to ascend, but the motive force
employed, to propel it was attached to the rear, and on the outside the
Propeller could only cleave or whirl the Air in a rotary or Whirlwind
motion, the Air escaping to each side and Rear offered no resistance
to the Stroke of the Propeller. From a natural Law, Action and Reaction
been equal the Balloon remained Stationary. My Idea and Invention
is to make a pipe two feet high and eight inch diameter wide, said Pipe running
central through the entire Length of the Balloon open on both Ends
to allow passage of air, placing a rotary or revolving Fan in center
of this square Pipe and snugly fitting it, the lower half of fan is
in the pipe, upper half revolves in an air tight box, by doing so the
lower part of fan only strikes the Air, the upper creating no reaction
then through mechanical force applied, cause the fan to rapidly revolve
at a high rate of Speed say ??? 7500 ??? times a Minute (Ten and thirty)
We will have a current of Air passing through Pipe at a rate of 1000 Miles
per hour, and this swift solid current (continuous but) passing out at rear End
will cause the outside Air to bank and offer resistance, Gravity being
overcome, and the Balloon whirling like as Air surrounding it, it must
move forward there can be no other Result, and as you increase the speed
the greater the Air resist. See other side.

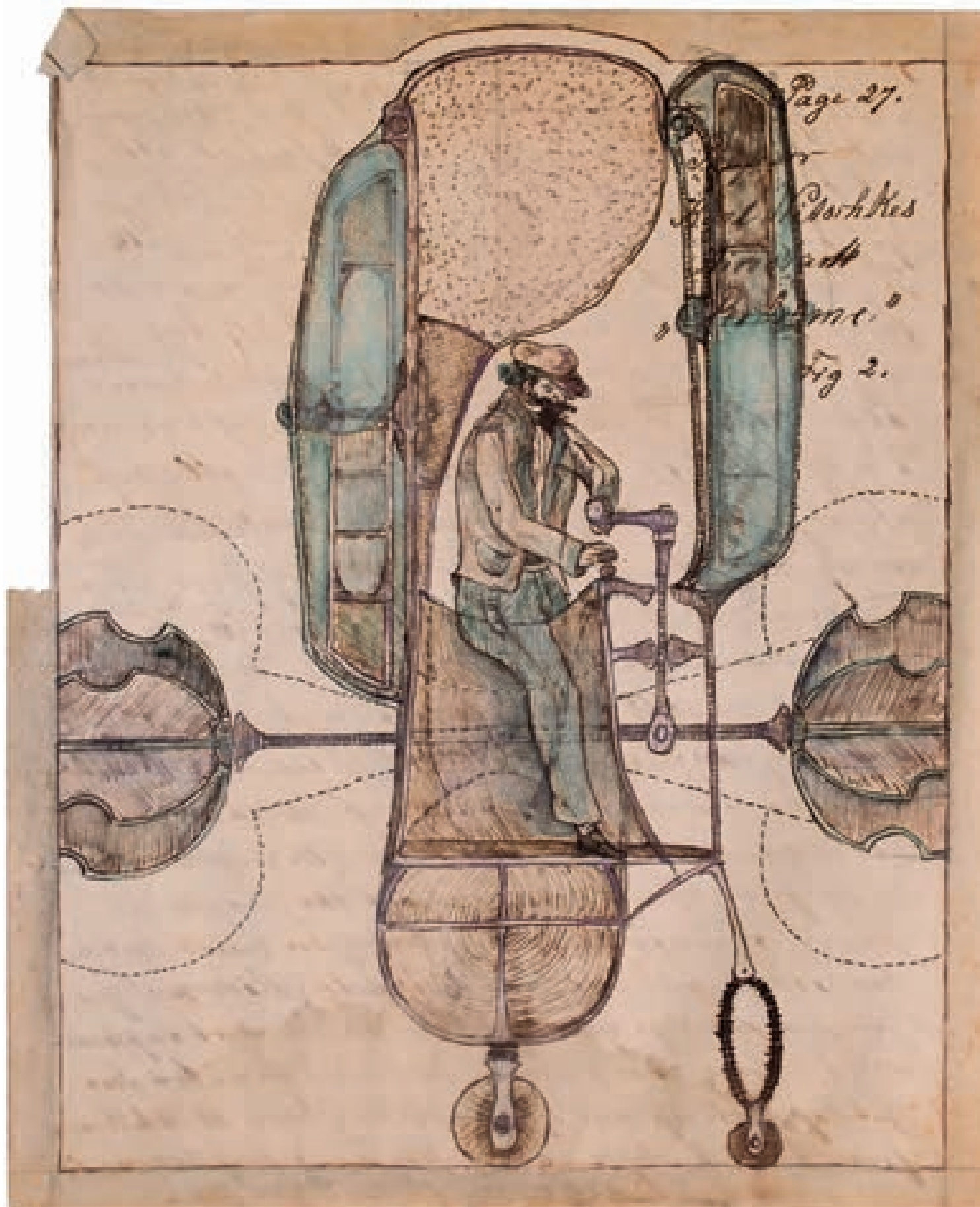


Recollections, Now Mike you call heir Eagle, 1898-1900,
 7½ x 9¼ in.
 Private collection

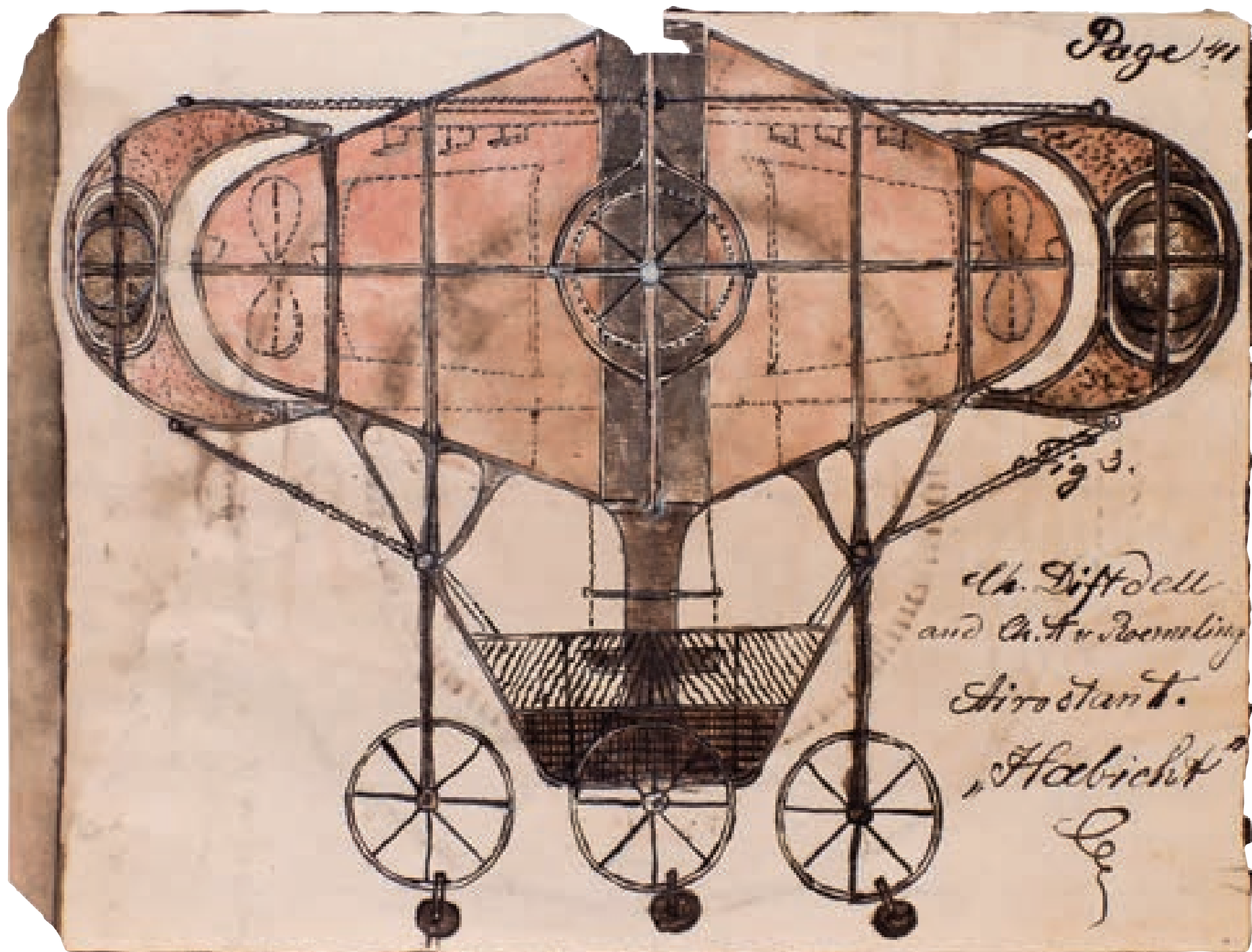
Recollections, Aftermath, Thoughts on WH Browns Sucker
 Kicker layd down in Lines, 1898-1900, 7½ x 9¼ in.
 Private collection



Recollections, Aftermath, Joe Cheneys Endless Liftpower Generator and WH Browns Sucker Kicker combined, 1898-1900, 7½ x 9¼ in. Private collection



Recolections, Professor Karl Nitschkes Airostant "Rideme,"
1898–1900, 9¼ × 7½ in.
Private collection



Reollections, Ch. Diftzell and Ch. A v Roemeling Airostant
"Habicht," 1898-1900, 7½ x 9¼ in.
Private collection



Reollections, Madame Glantz and Christian Axel von Roemeling
courtship scene, 1898–1900, 7½ × 9¼ in.
Private collection

Houston Texas 1899.

Recollections real

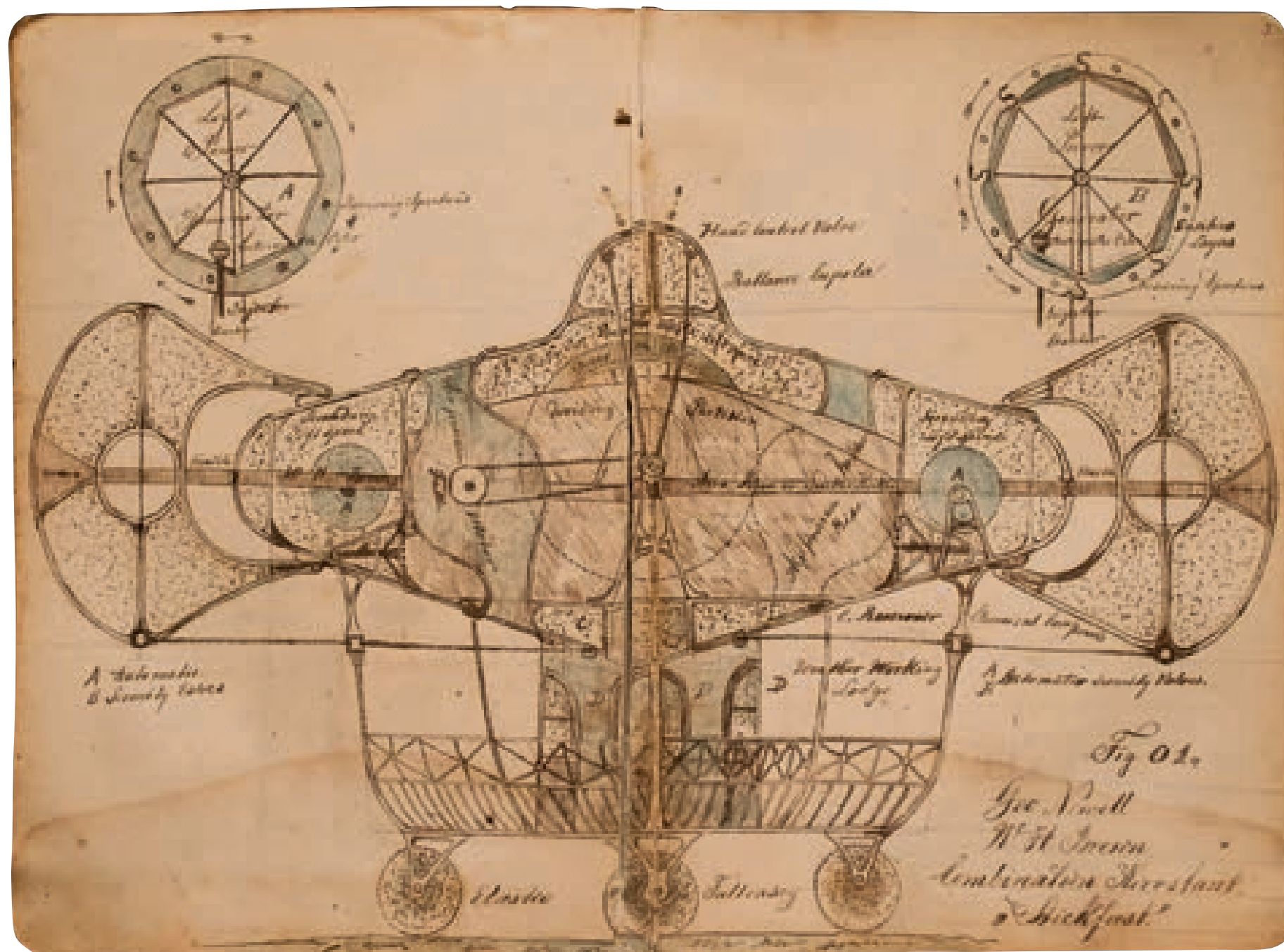
and speculative Work

on

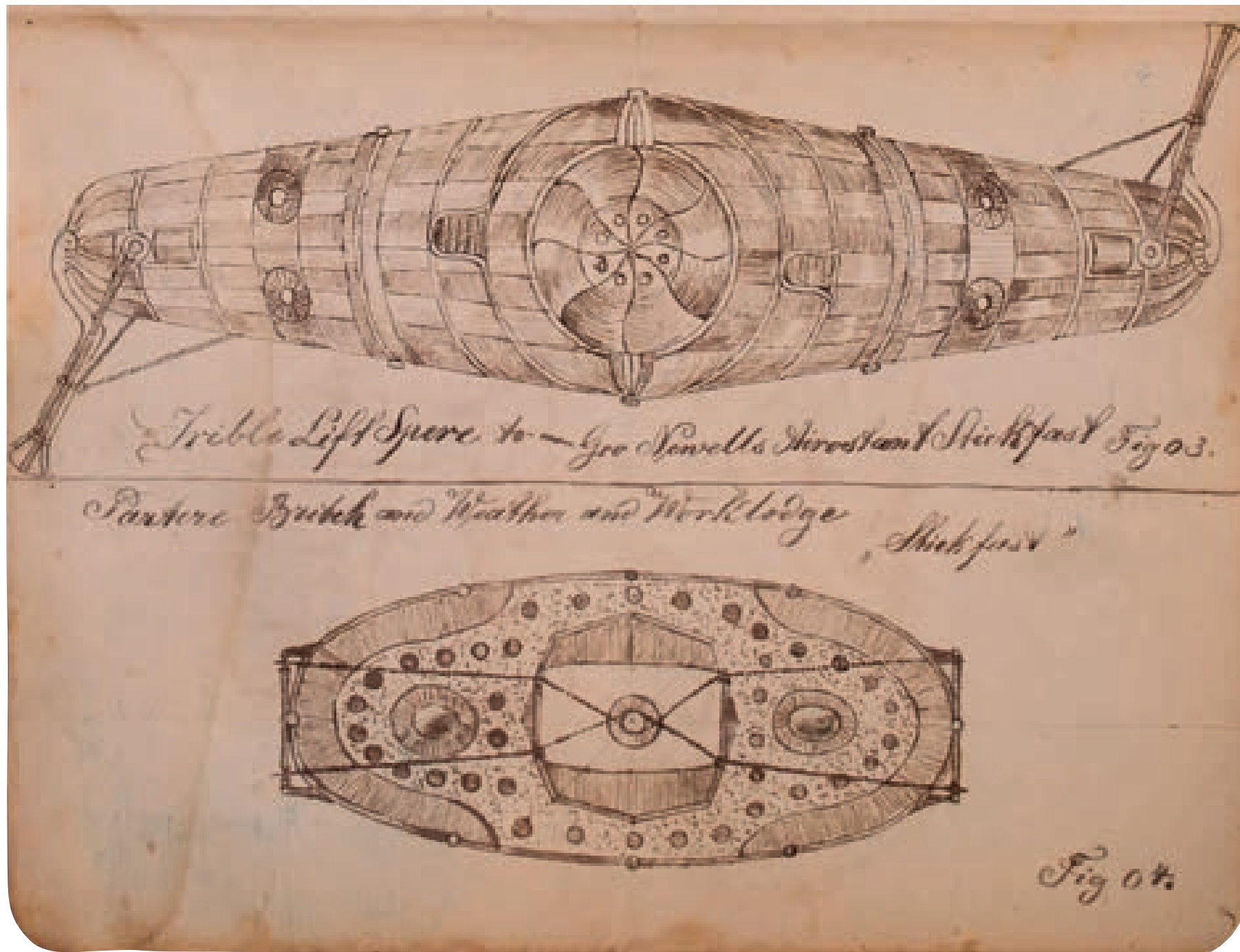
Ideas of Friends in

for higher aims, long gone by.

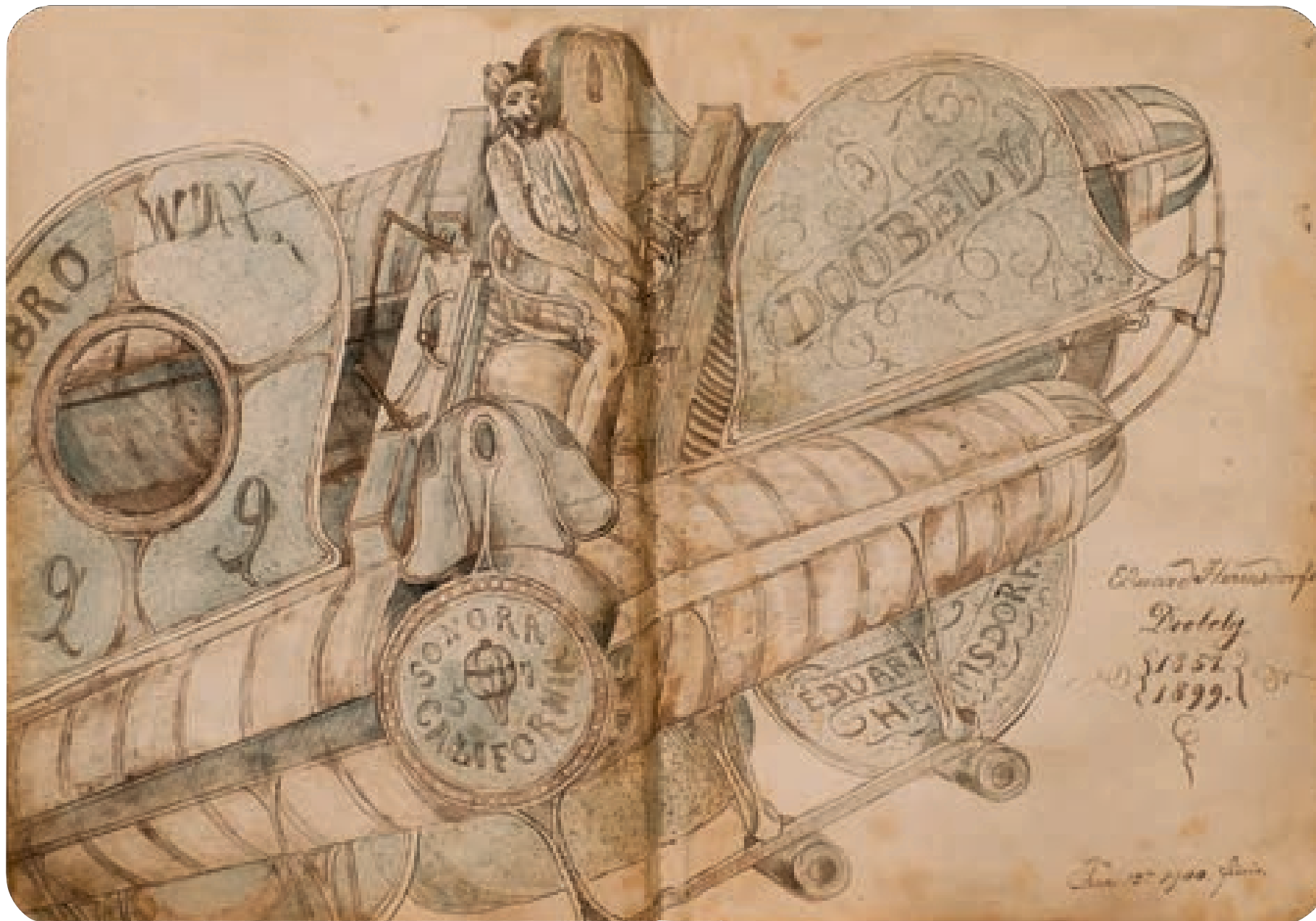
Second part. by C. A. B. D.

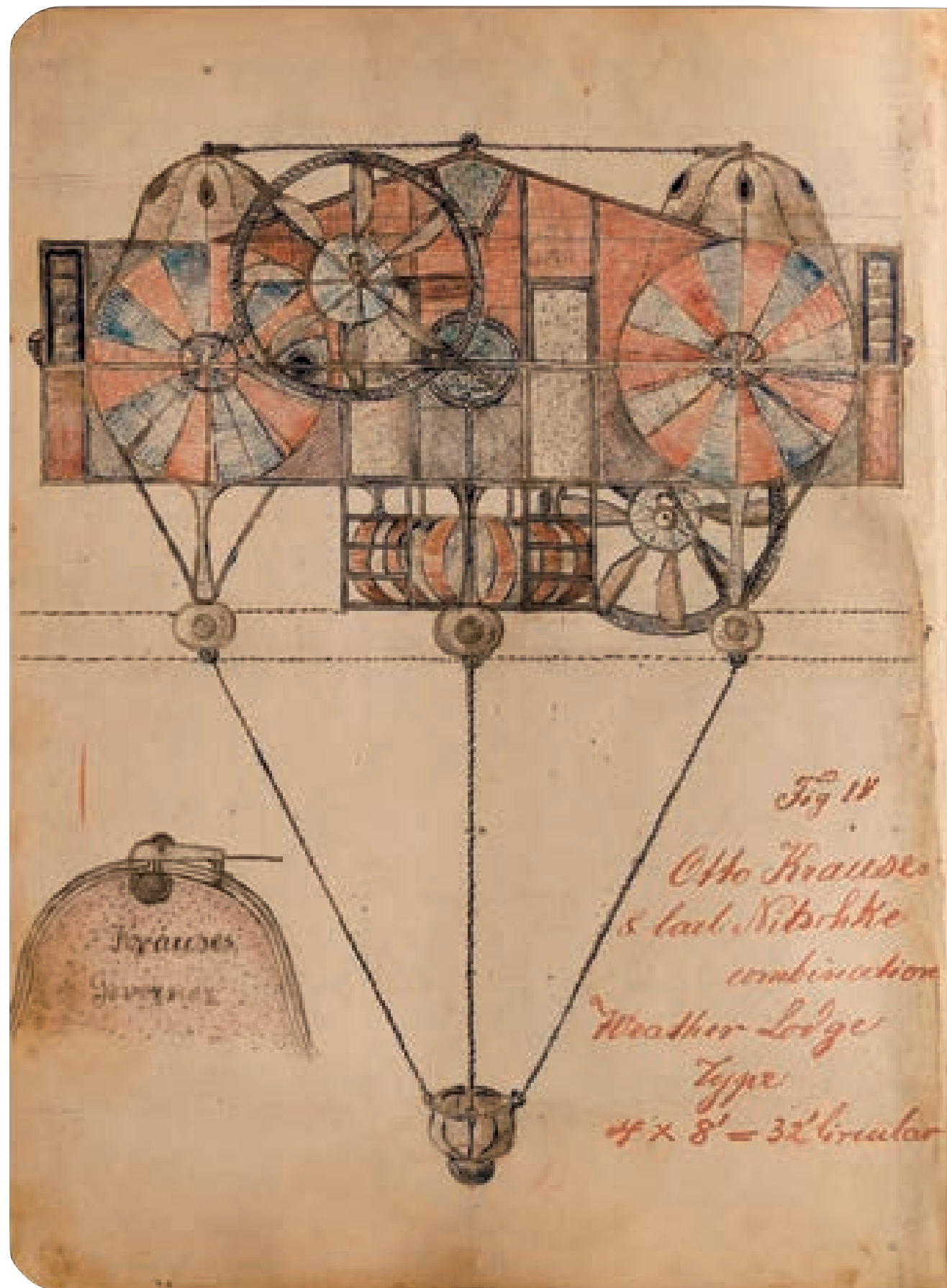


Recollections second part, Geo Newell WH Brown Combination
 Airostant "Stickfast," 1899-1900, 11 x 16 in.
 Private collection

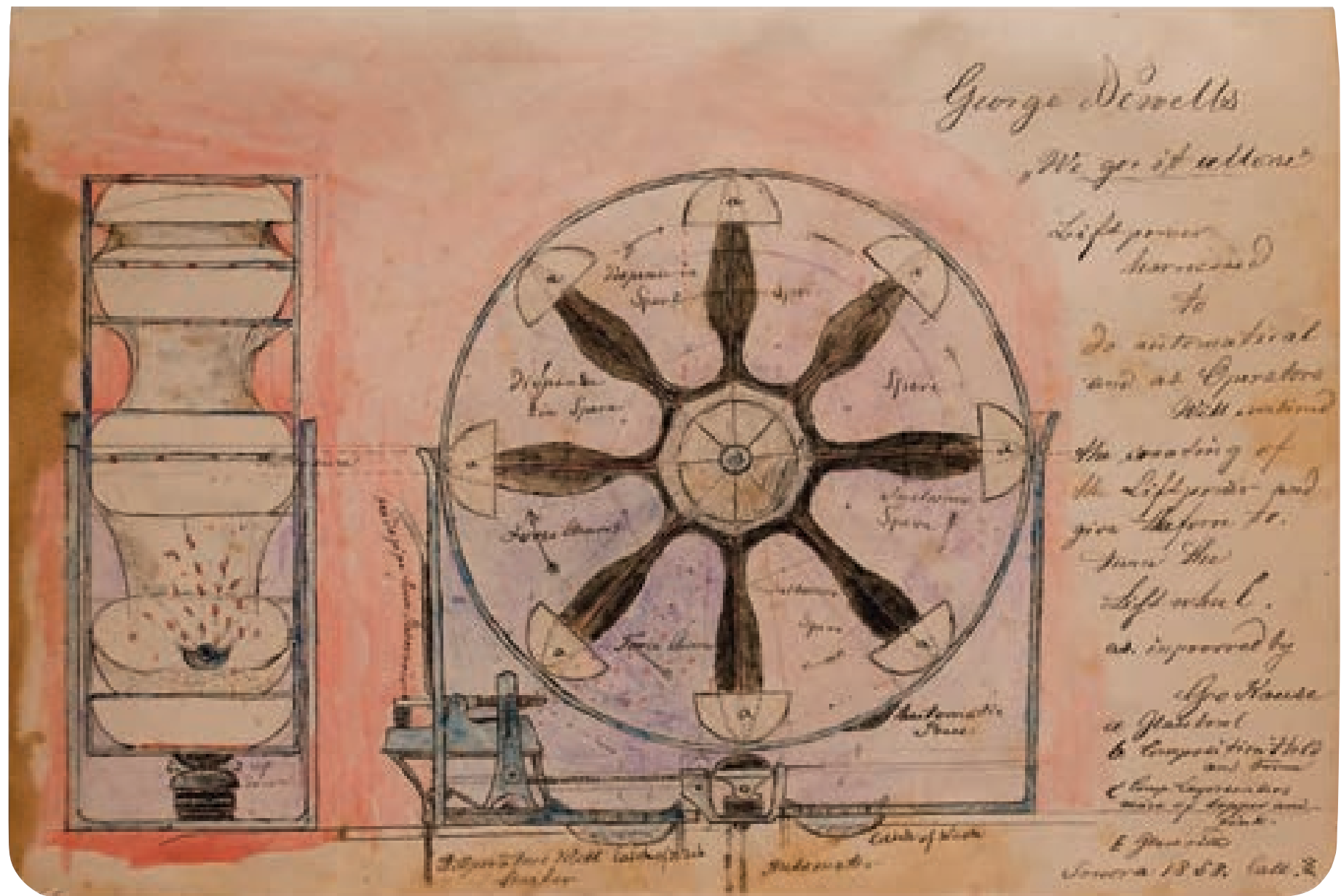


*Recollections second part, Tribble Lift Spere to Geo Newells
Airosstant Stickfast/Partere Britch and Weather and Worklodge
"Stickfast," 1899-1900, 8 x 11 in.
Private collection*





Reollections second part, Otto Krause & Carl Nitschke
 combination Weather Lodge Type, 1899-1900, 11 x 8 in.
 Private collection



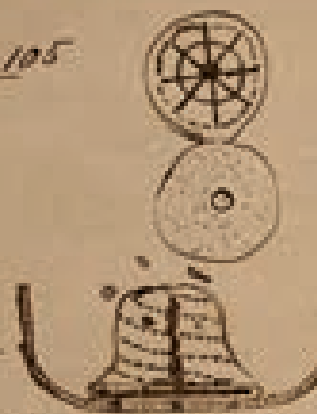
Peter Mennis Secret lifted by Prof Diftall and Partner but I got
 my doubts about it.

Foundation. a piece dried Raw hide to fit cavity
 of Electrode, drilled up a to throw
 hairy sides outside up and down, paper piece
 pierced by a round hole to let the metal wire
 combination between go from twisted up to
 form the central electrode, to hold the gener-
 ating mass to its place. Recipe as near
 as found out by Prof Diftall and his partner
 Christian Zell on Spemeling
 Fat less Spicing Material as resinous as oily
Yuccish but simple Flour paste
fine powdered Quick Lime
House coal
condensed Oxid blood and Gall putrid as possible
all kneaded to gather slow and brought
stuffed with Copper and Zinc filings
formed in suitable form and shade dried on Skin
Foundation - a black stone like mass ever ready for
using up, every drop Flour falling on it.

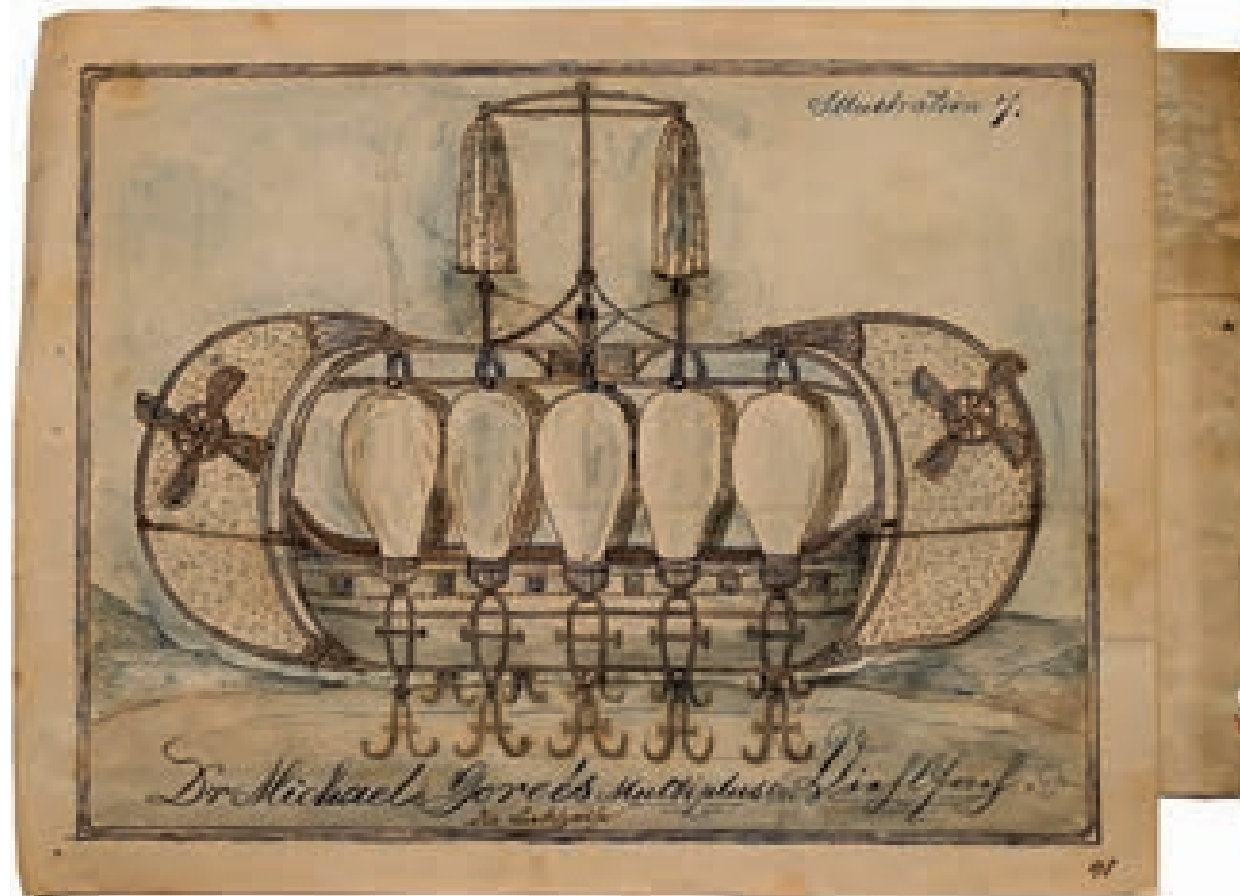
Generator Cone
 More Dash and Coal first
 air Blast and Gall slow
 keep a mass inside -
 the dry and tough enough
 add the powdered lime
 a little and a little, when worked
 in, mix the metal filings or
 stuffing from gold than form
 and dry in shade, let the mass
 dry as hard as rock before
 use

Contents of Generating Fluid
 1- Carbonic Acid Carbonic Acid ??
 2- and Propyl base the of uncertain straight (type ditto)
 3- Diastase in water, to be dealt out in
 very small Droppings on Generator Cone
 as I have ever did R.M. get, or who ever saw him by the staff's inside it beautiful

Page 105

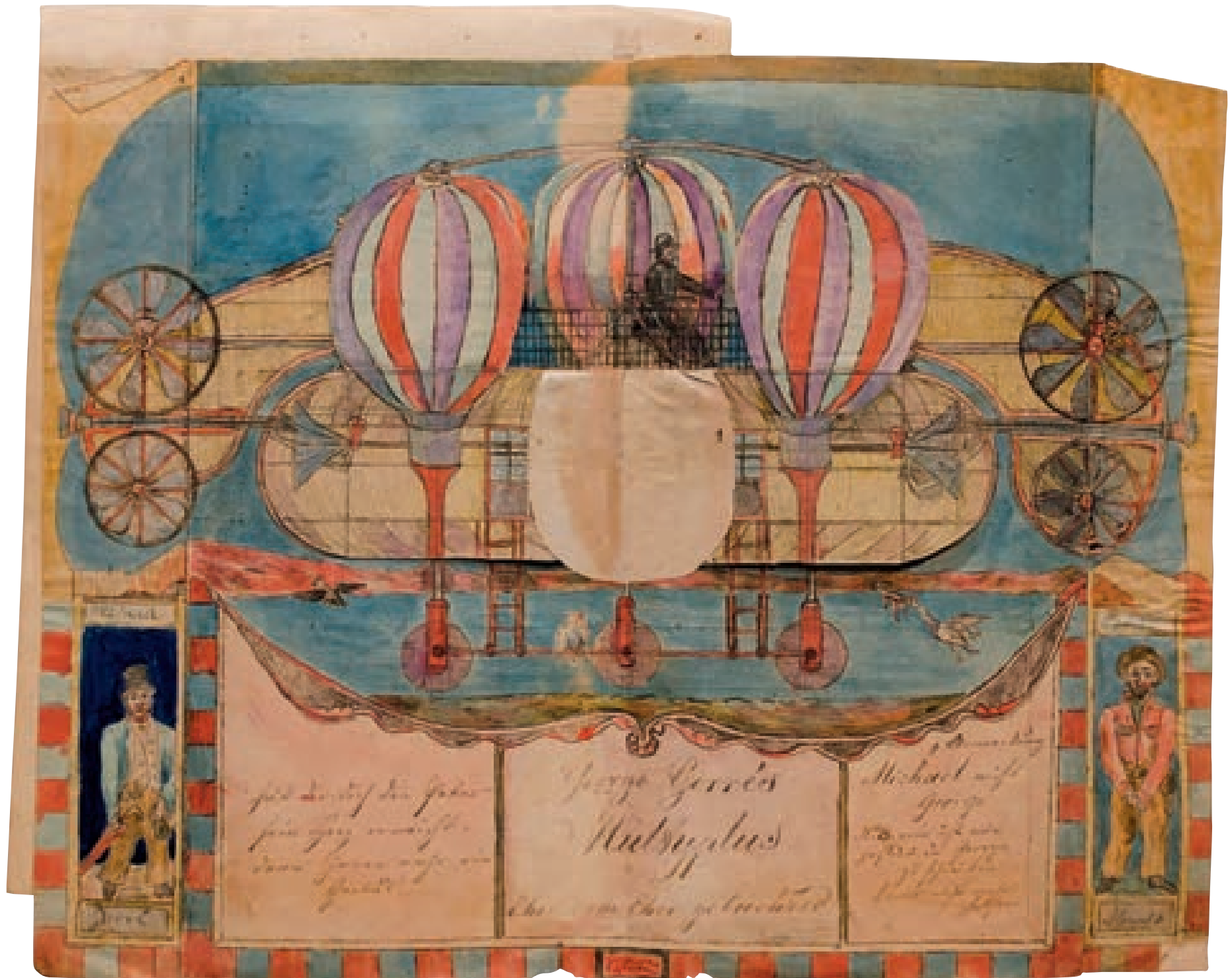


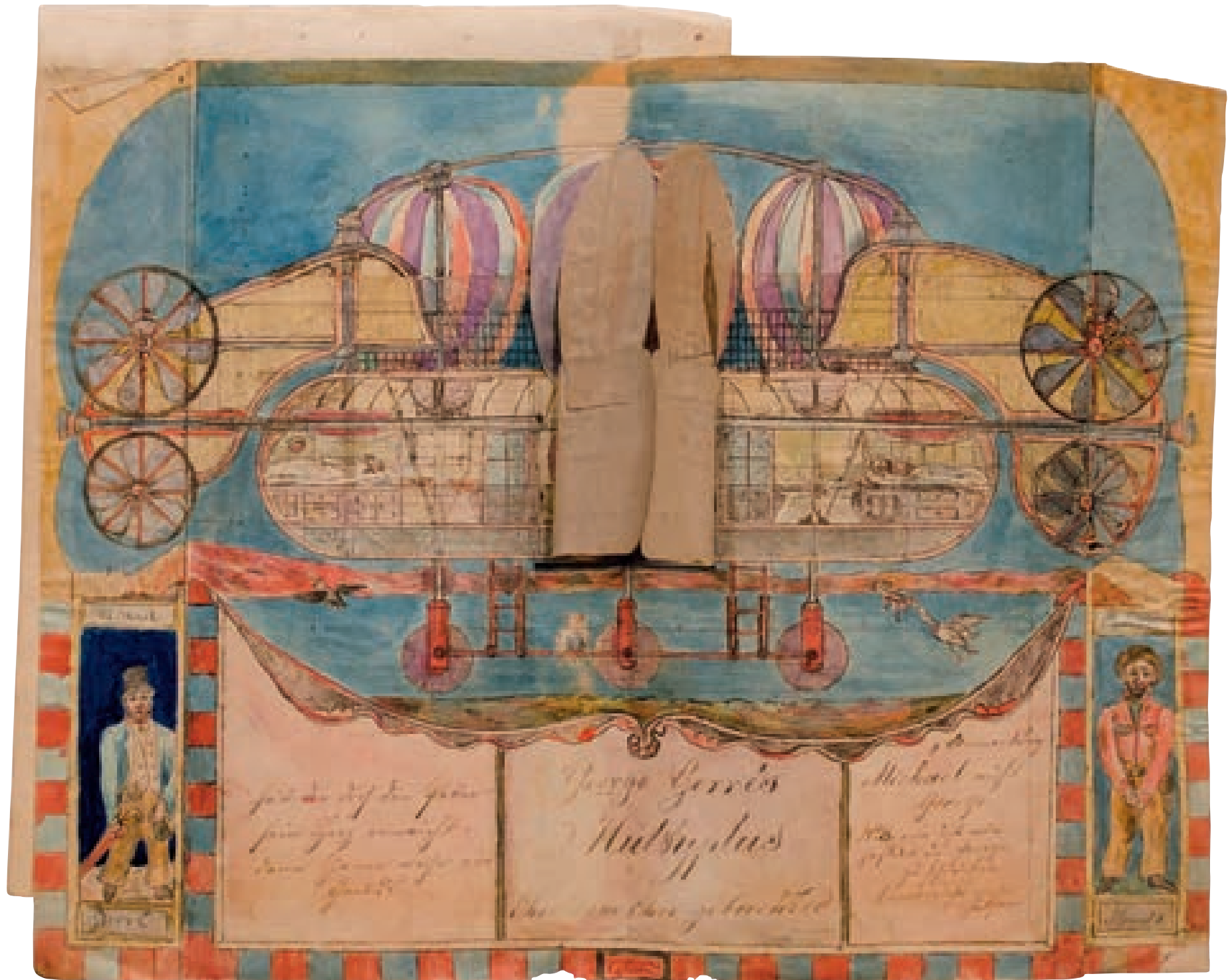




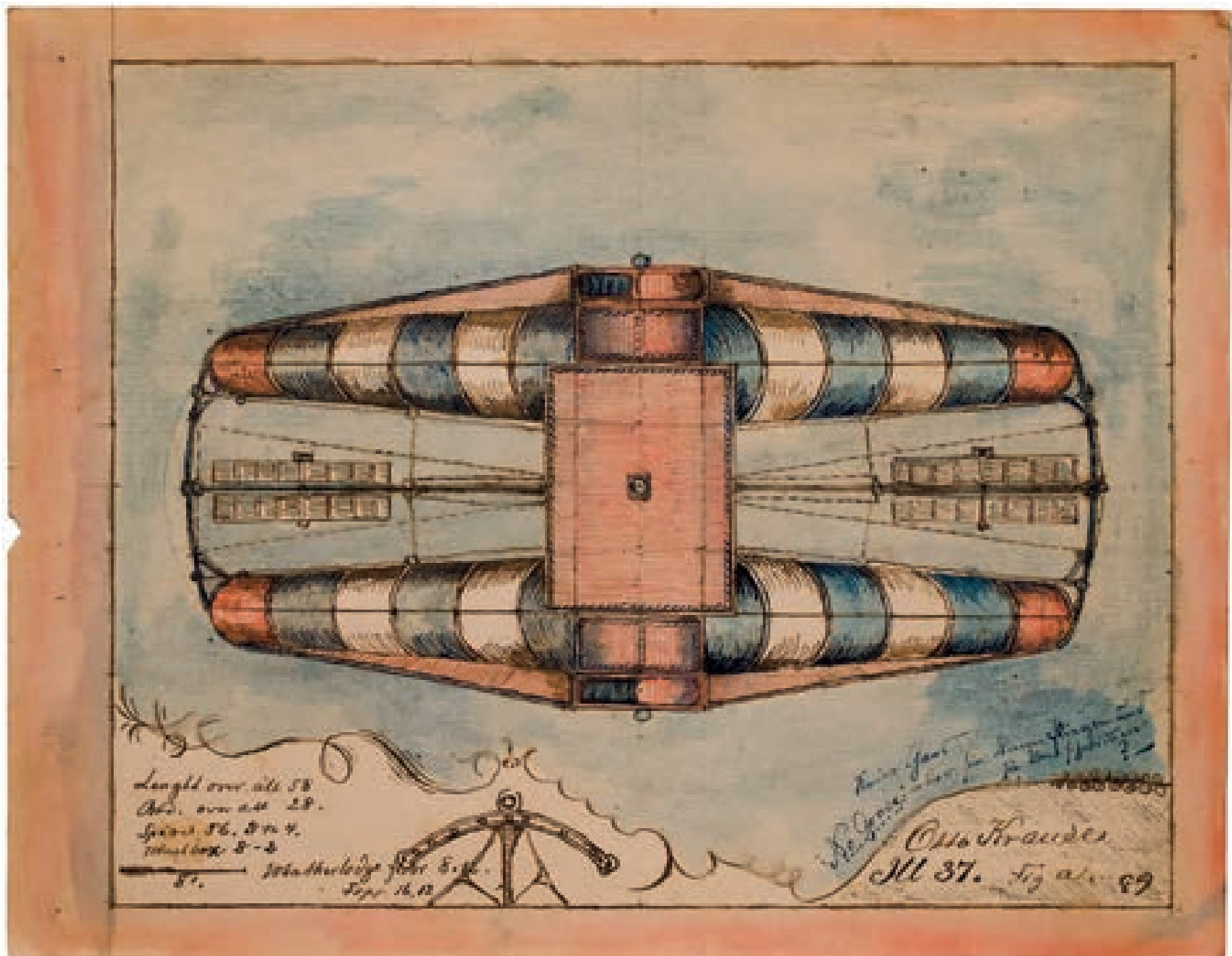
Erinnerungen (Recollections), Dr. Michael Gorres
Multiplus, 1900, 7½ × 9½ in.
Private collection

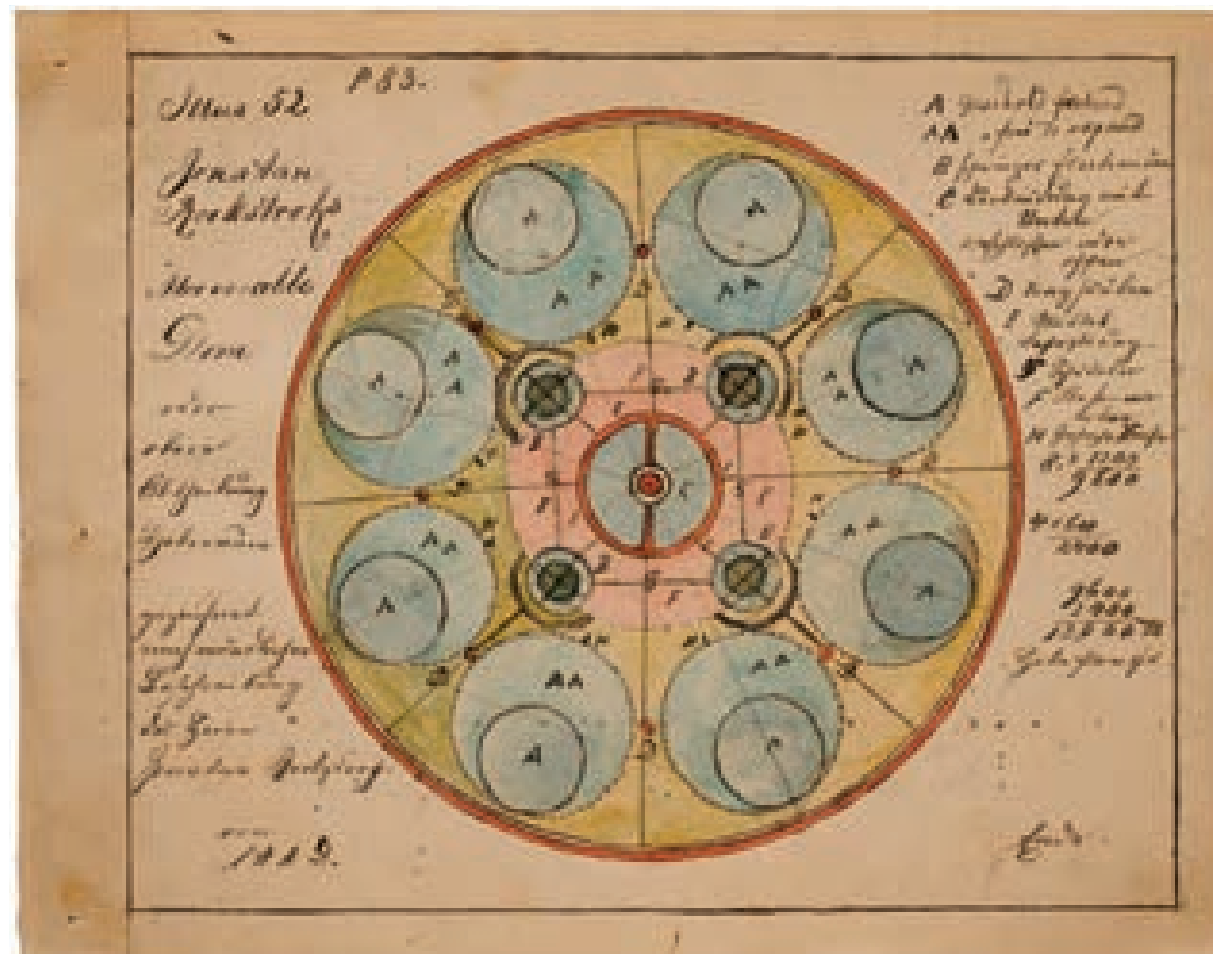
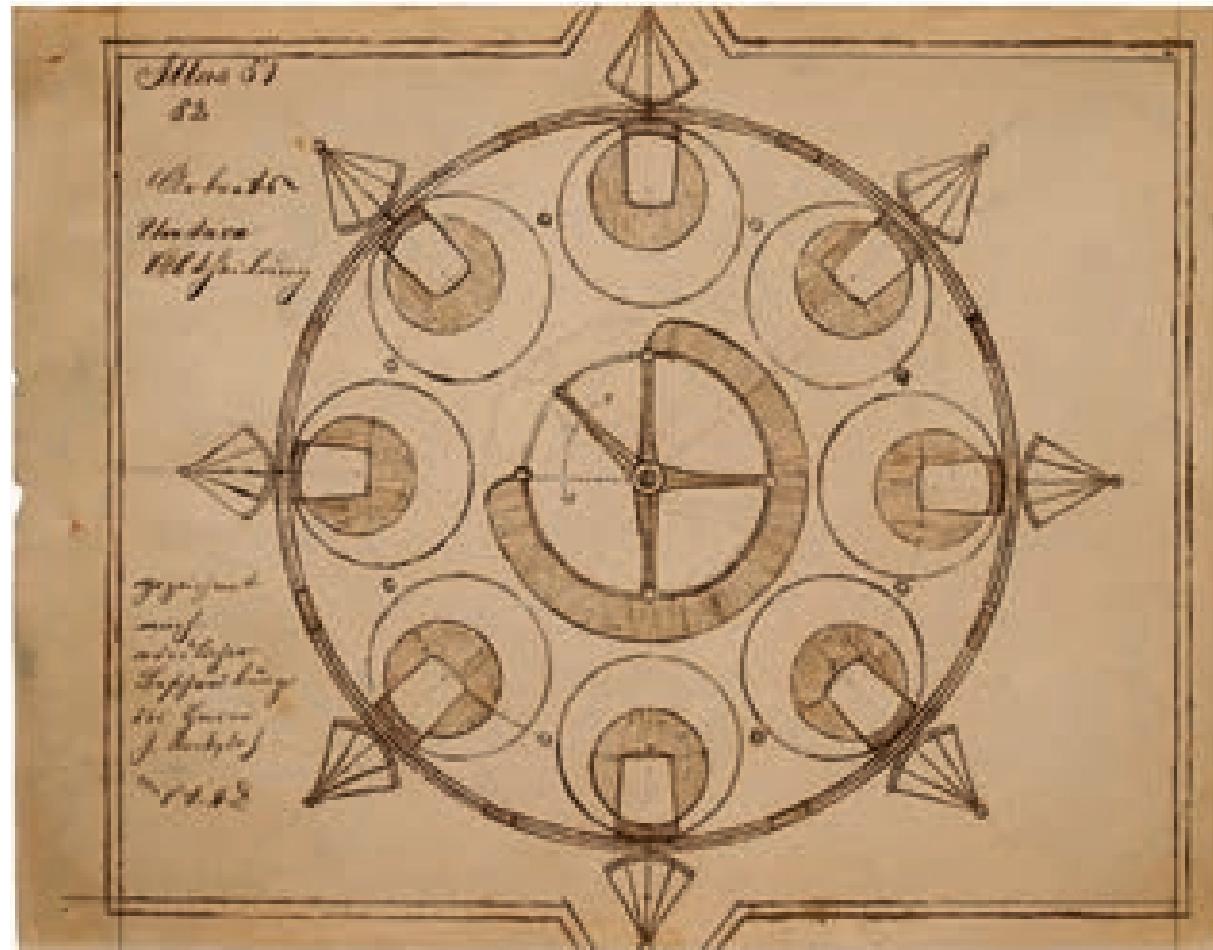
Erinnerungen (Recollections), folded insert, George Gorres
Multiplus, 1900, 10½ × 12½ in., flaps closed showing exterior
Private collection





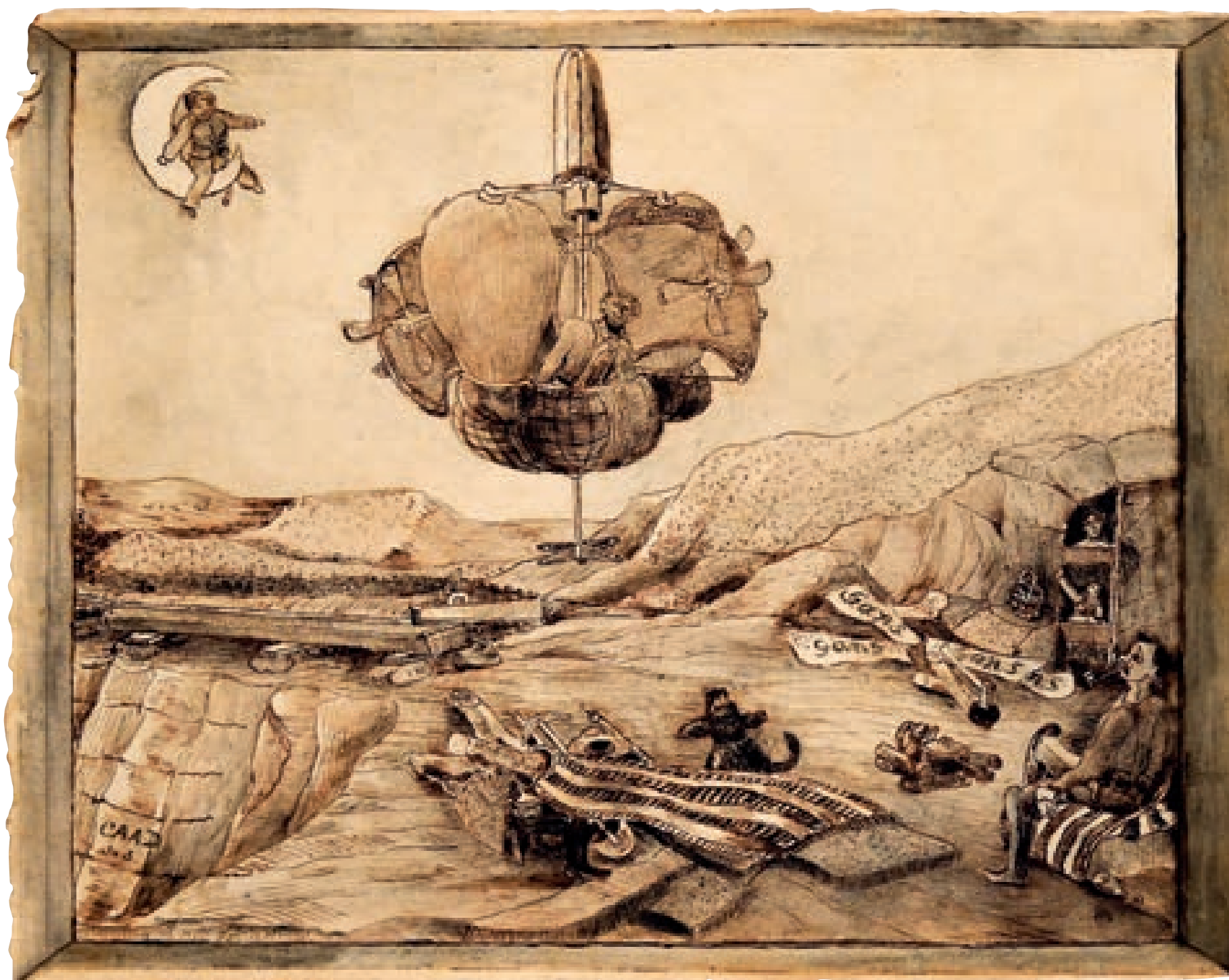
Erinnerungen (Recollections), folded insert, George Gorres Multyplus, 1900,
 10½ × 12½ in., flaps folded revealing interior
 Private collection





Erinnerungen (Recollections), Illus 51, 1900,
 7½ x 9½ in.
 Private collection

Erinnerungen (Recollections), Jonatan Rockstrohs
 Moveable, 1900, 7½ x 9½ in.
 Private collection



Erinnerungen (Recollections), Rescue of the Moonskooter scene,
1900, 7³/₄ × 9³/₄ in.
Private collection



Erinnerungen (Recollections), George Newell's Yarn scene, 1900,
7³/₄ × 9³/₄ in.
Private collection





Plate 1902 Aero Honeymoon Flanck, April 11, 1909,
14½ × 18¼ in.
The Witte Museum, San Antonio

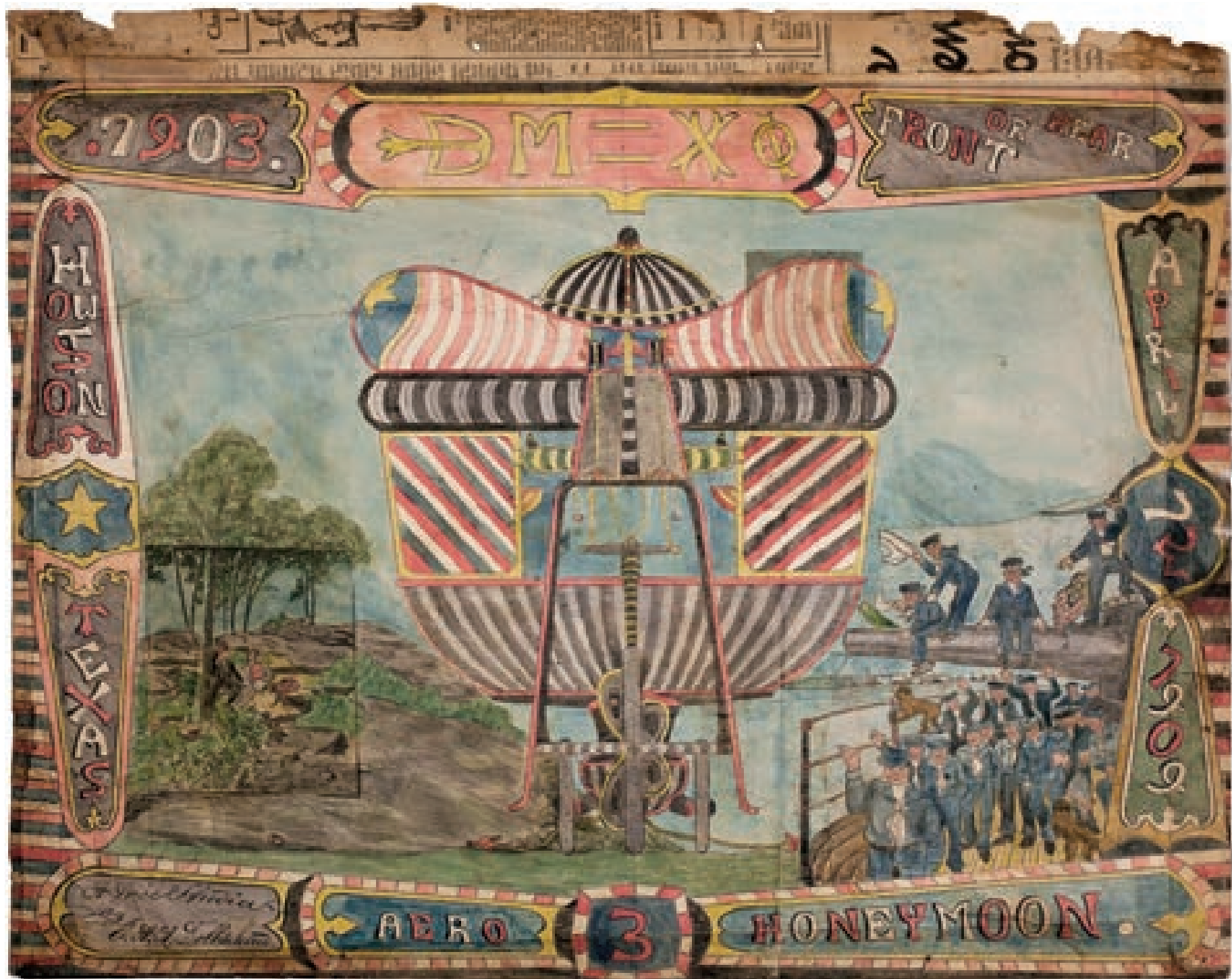


Plate 1903 Aero Honeymoon Front or Rear, April 12, 1909,
 14½ x 18¾ in.
 The Witte Museum, San Antonio

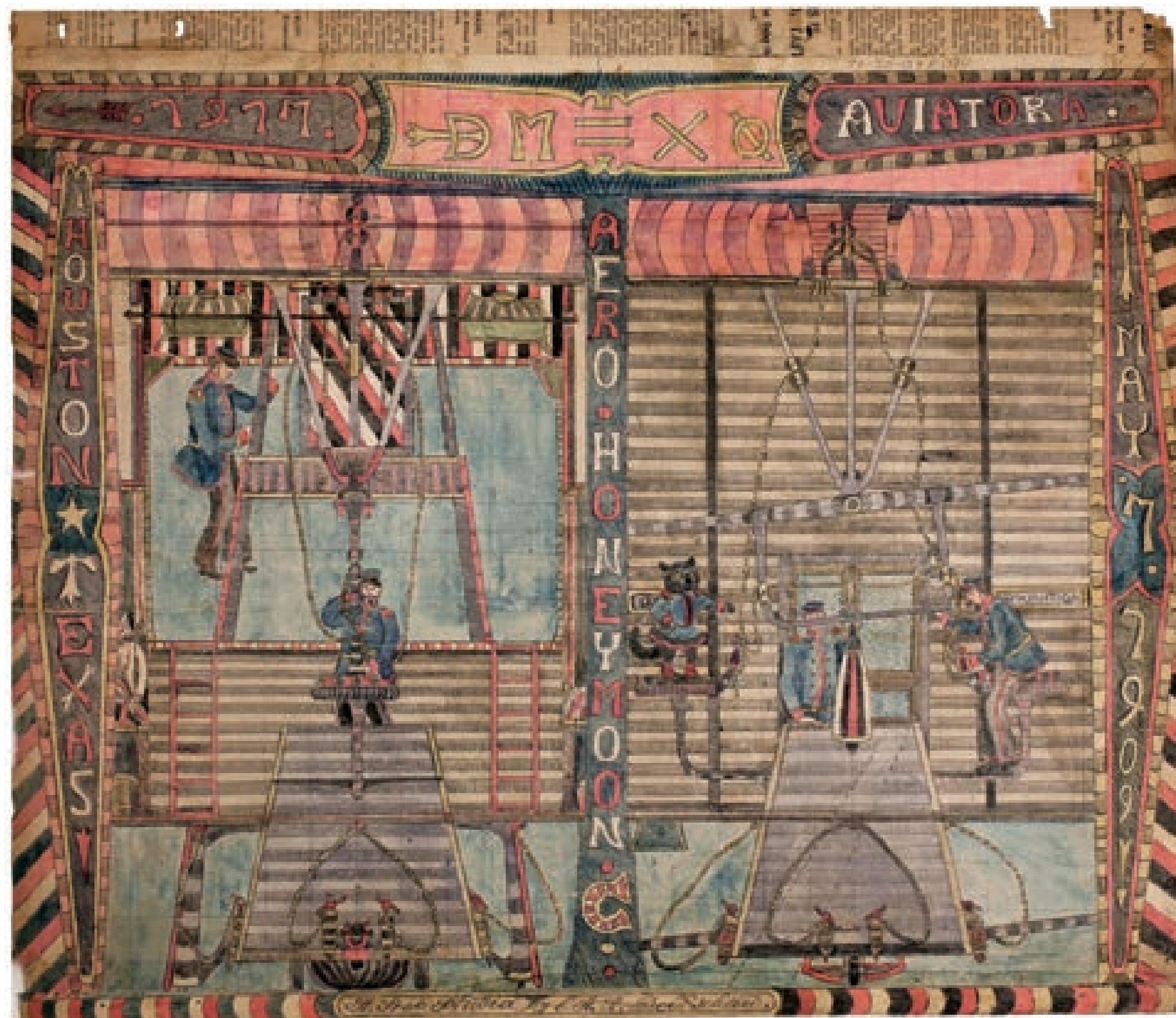




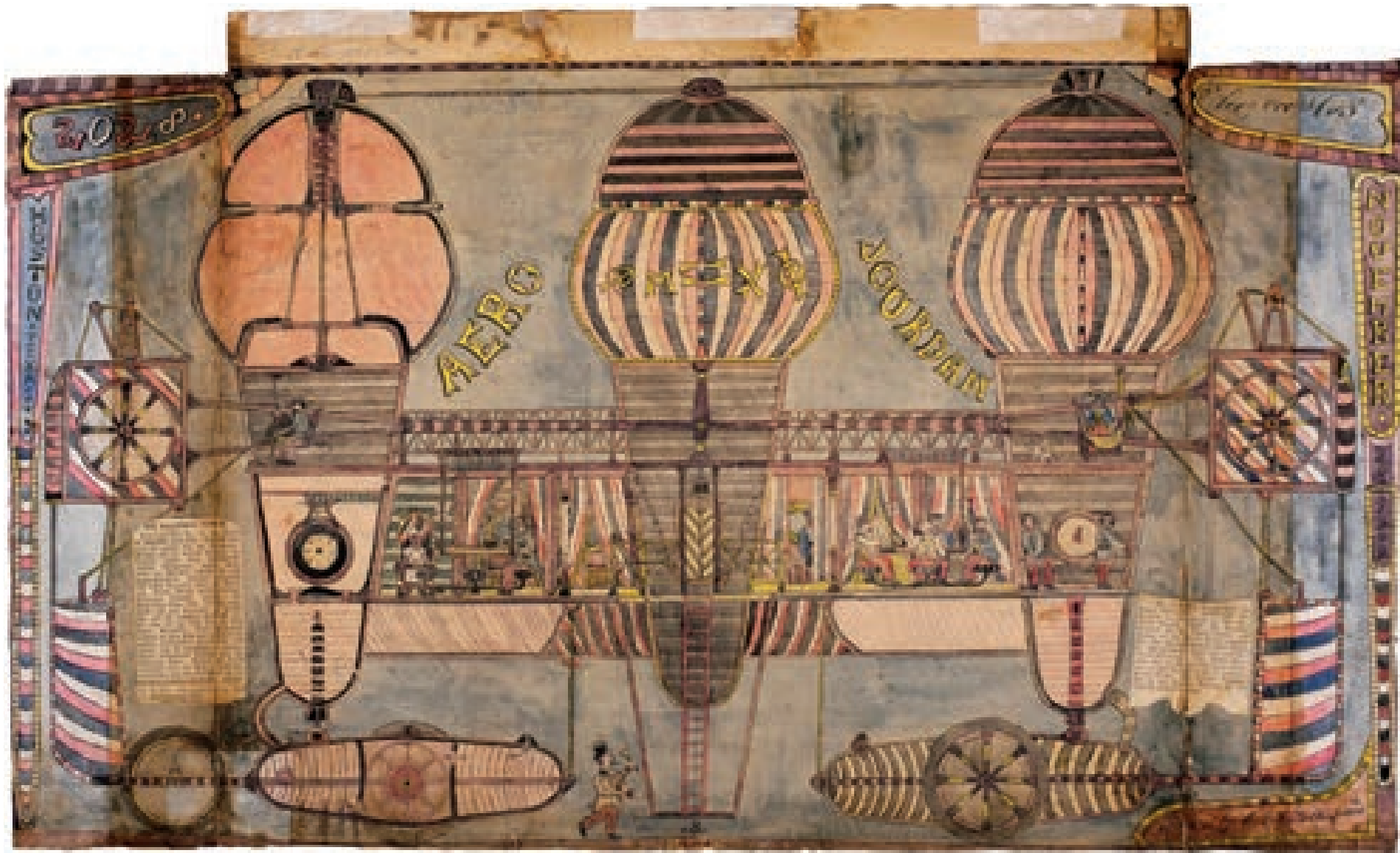
Plate 1972 Aero Condor Long Cross Cut, August 17, 1909,
16¾ × 19⅞ in.
The Witte Museum, San Antonio

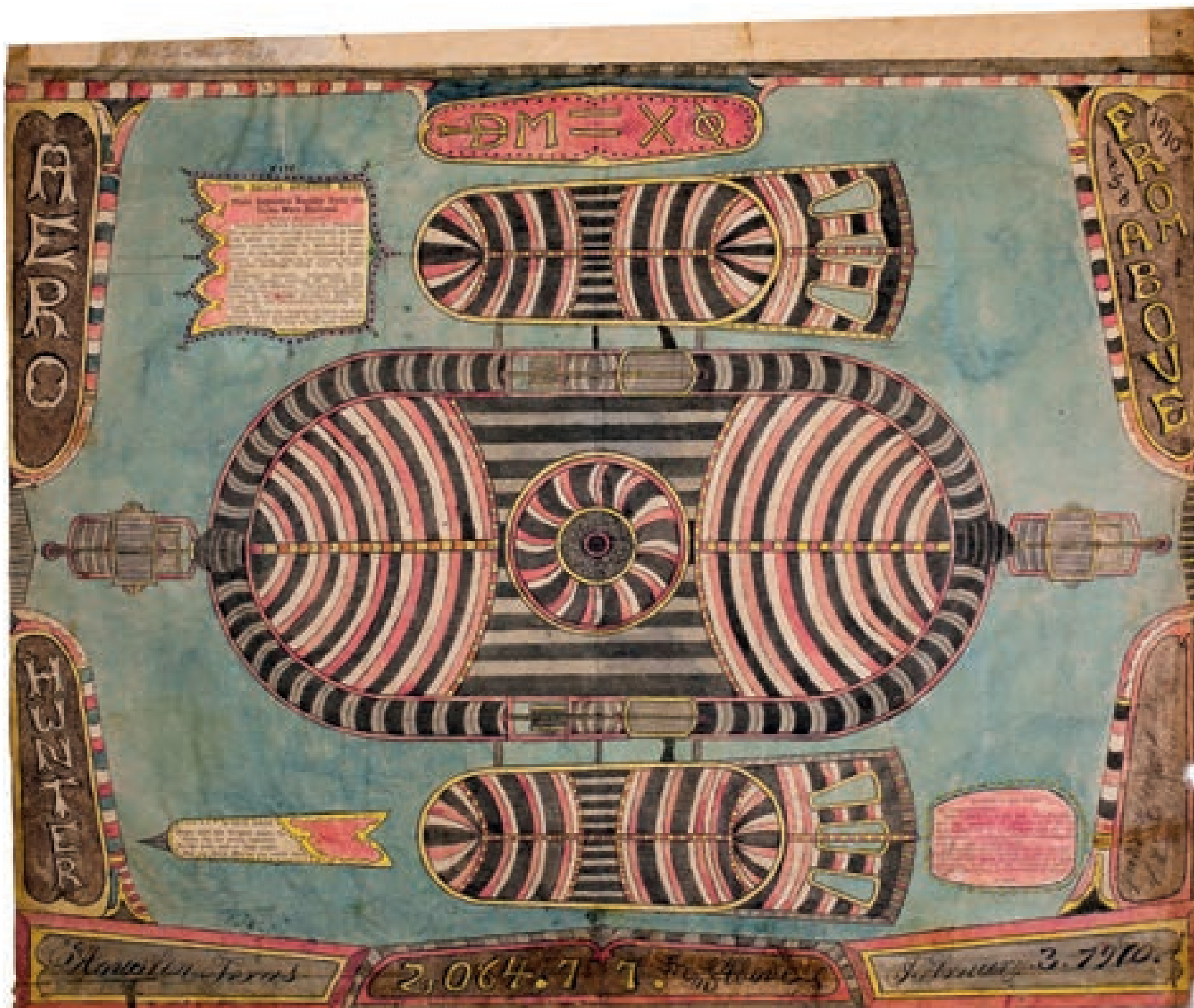


Plate 1985 Aero Condor Deck, September 8, 1909, 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 19 in.
The Witte Museum, San Antonio



Plate 2004 Somers Rondo Front or Rear, October 10, 1909, 17 x 20 in.
Collection of George Morton and Karol Howard, Texas





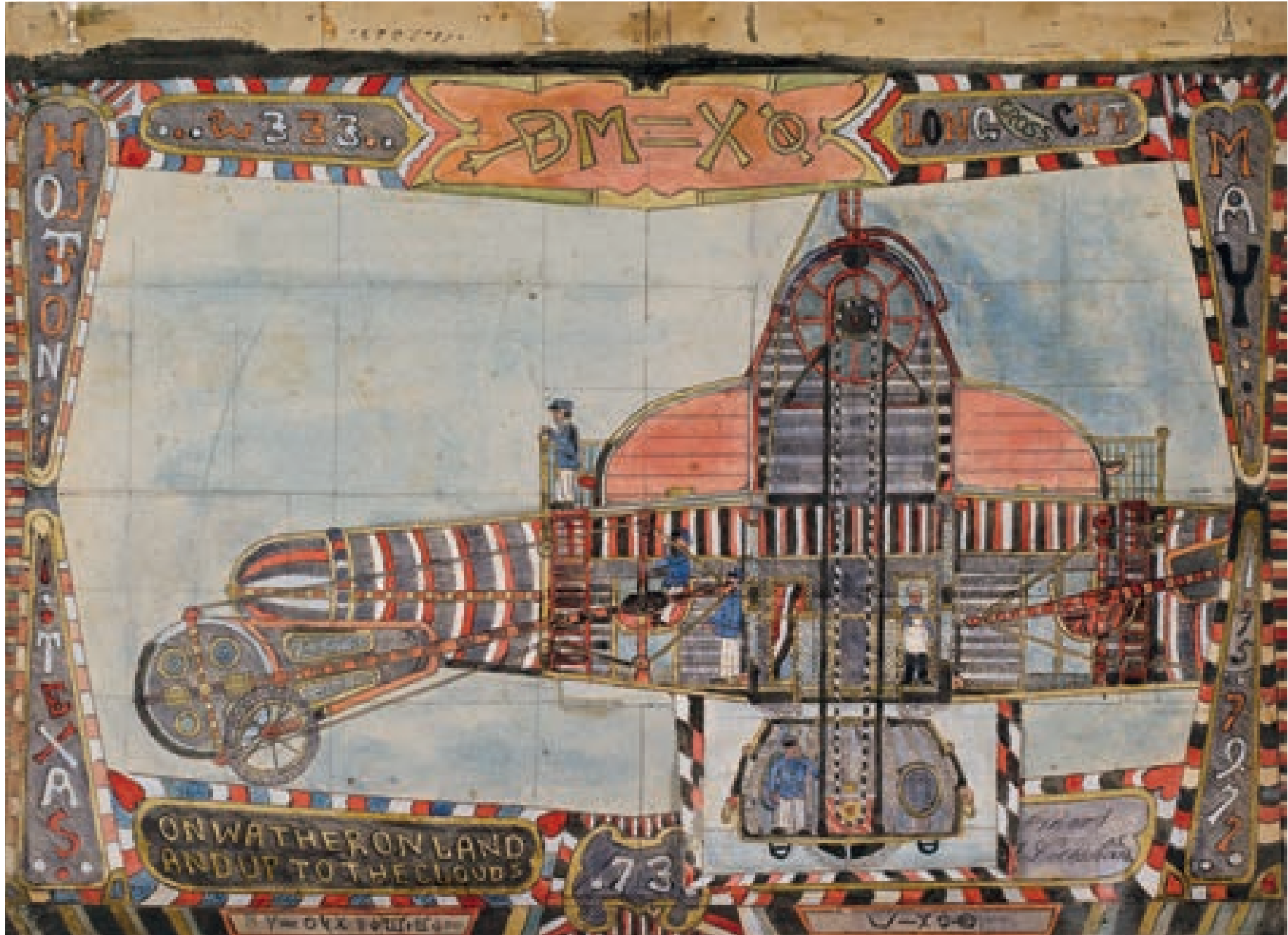


Plate 2333 Long Cross Cut on Wather on Land and up to the Clouds, May 15, 1911, 13³/₄ x 19 in.
Collection of J. Kevin O'Rourke, Maryland

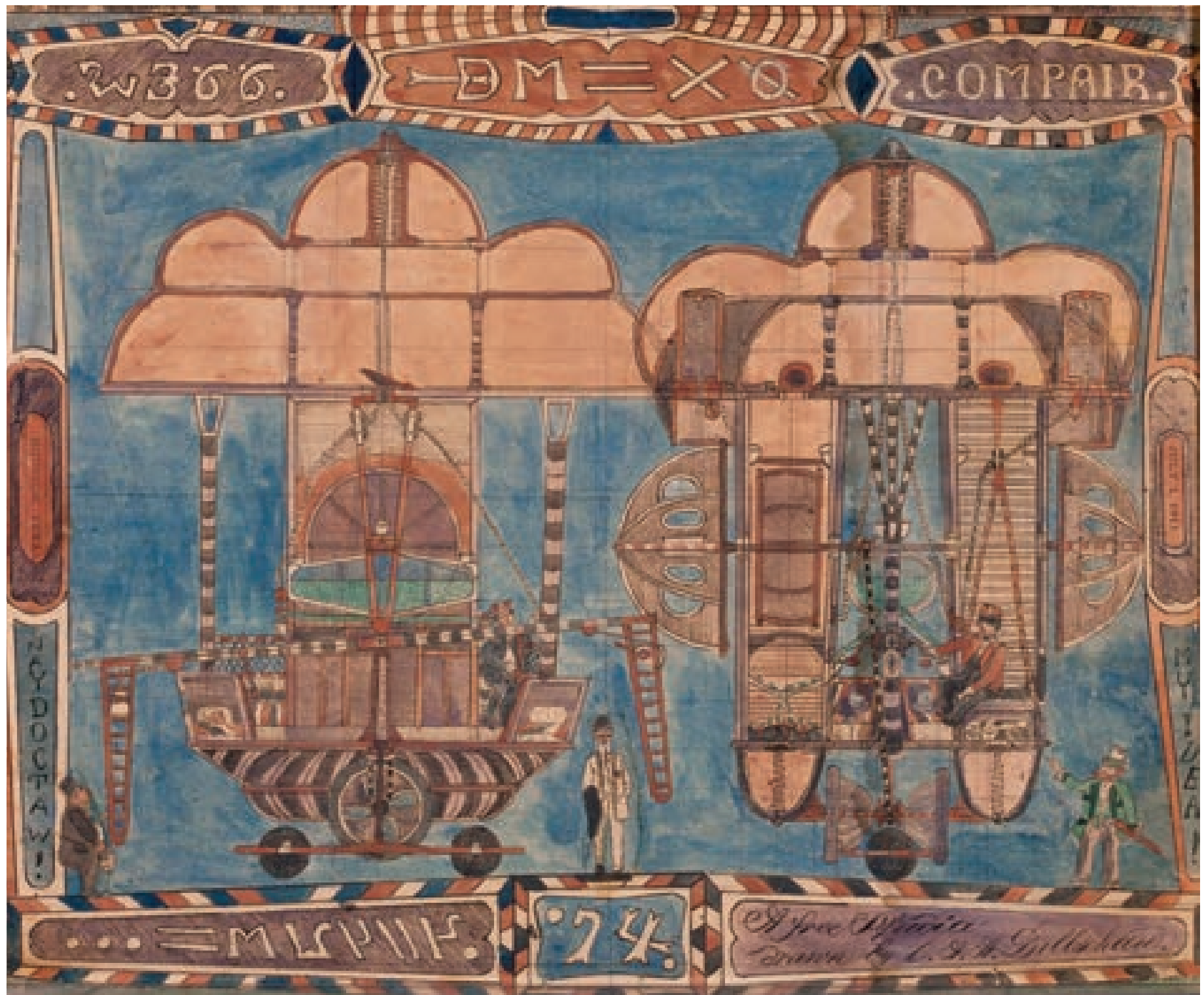


Plate 2366 Compair, July 1, 1911, 16½ × 18¾ in.
Collection of George Morton and Karol Howard, Texas



Plate **2365** From Below, June 28, 1911, 16½ x 18¾ in.
Collection of George Morton and Karol Howard, Texas



Plate 2647 Dora Compair Front Rear, September 19, 1912, 16¾ x 19 in.
San Antonio Museum of Art



Plate **3352** War Press Blooms (Eight Members of the New British War Cabinet), May 27, 1915, 16¾ × 19¾ in. San Antonio Museum of Art

Plate **3612** Men at Deck, September 6, 1916, 16¾ × 18¾ in. The Menil Collection, Houston



Plate 4301 Cutting 2 Aero EEE, February 6, 1919, 17 x 16½ in.
 Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate **4329** Long Tour Aero Cod, March 12, 1919,
17 × 16¼ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate **4327** Codrige Cod, March 10, 1919,
17 × 16¼ in.
Collection of Tom Duncan, New York

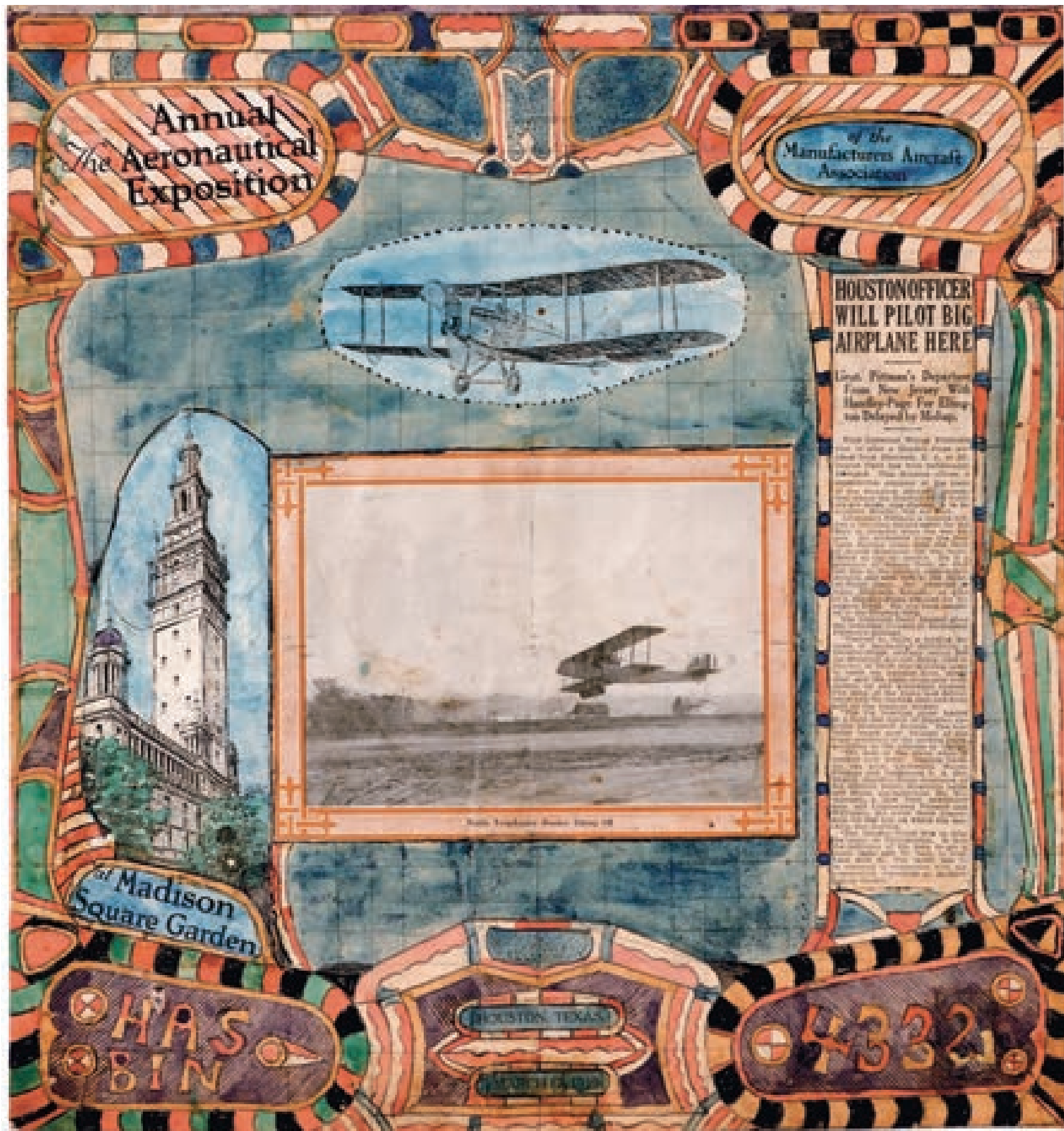


Plate 4332 Has Bin, March 17, 1919, 17 × 16½ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate **4340** Goeit Maybe Monee, March 27, 1919,
17 × 16½ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York

Plate **4341** Jenai Pa, March 28, 1919,
16½ × 16½ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4347 Nix Down, April 7, 1919, 16 x 16 in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4441 Press Blooms (Attacking Forest Fires with Gas Bombs), August 6, 1919, 16½ × 16½ in.
Collection of J. Kevin O'Rourke, Maryland



Plate 4463 Press Blooms (Delivering Mail to Steamer After It Has Sailed), August 30, 1919, 14 x 16 in.
 Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York





Plate 4490 Aero Mio, October 14, 1919, 16½ x 16½ in.
Collection of J. Kevin O'Rourke, Maryland



Plate **4499** Aero Gander on Land Clouds and Sea,
 October 29, 1919, 17 × 16½ in.
 Collection of Selig and Angela Sacks, New York

Plate **4501** Aero Gander from Below,
 November 1, 1919, 17 × 16½ in.
 Private collection



Plate 4510 Aero Gander Above, November 13, 1919, 17½ x 17 in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4513 What May Happn Wont Pay, November 17, 1919, 17 × 17 in.
Collection of J. Kevin O'Rourke, Maryland

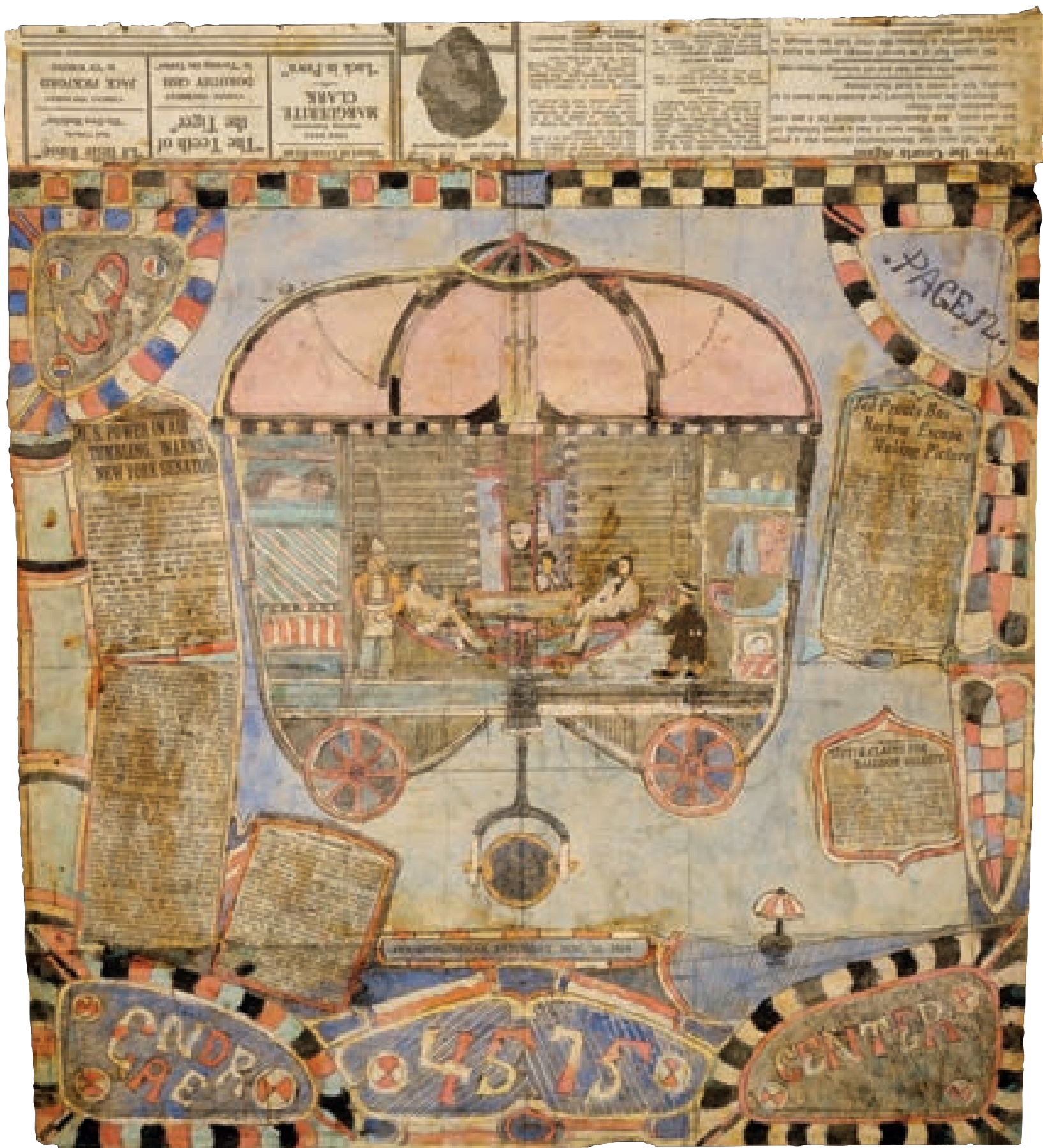


Plate 4515 Gander Center Up, November 22, 1919, 19 × 17 in.
 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, Norfolk Southern Collection of
 Self-Taught Art



Plate 4562 Grand Nonsense Press Cutts, February 7, 1920, 18¾
 × 15 in.
 Collection of Francois Meyer, Switzerland



Plate 4563 Aro Centra Left Flanck, February 9, 1920, 18¾ × 15 in.
Collection of Francois Meyer, Switzerland



Plate 4570 Burnt Mike Mik Goré, March 10, 1920, 17 × 16½ in.
Collection of Scott and Susan Glazer, Chicago



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Plate **4566** Motor Stearen, March 1, 1920,
17 × 17 in.
Collection of Jay and Victoria Wehnert, Houston



Plate **4589** Aero Trump Below, April 9, 1920,
18½ × 16½ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4616 Flyers on Paper, May 18, 1920, 17½ x 16 in.
 Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4651 Airo Swallo Fall Easey Top Short, July 15, 1920, 17½ x 17 in.
Collection of Francois Meyer, Switzerland



Plate 4670 Below Fall, August 10, 1920, 19 x 15¼ in.
Courtesy Stephen Romano, New York



Plate 4695 Press Blooms (Flies Across Channel), September 17, 1920,
 17 × 17 in.
 Collection of Carole Kraus, New York

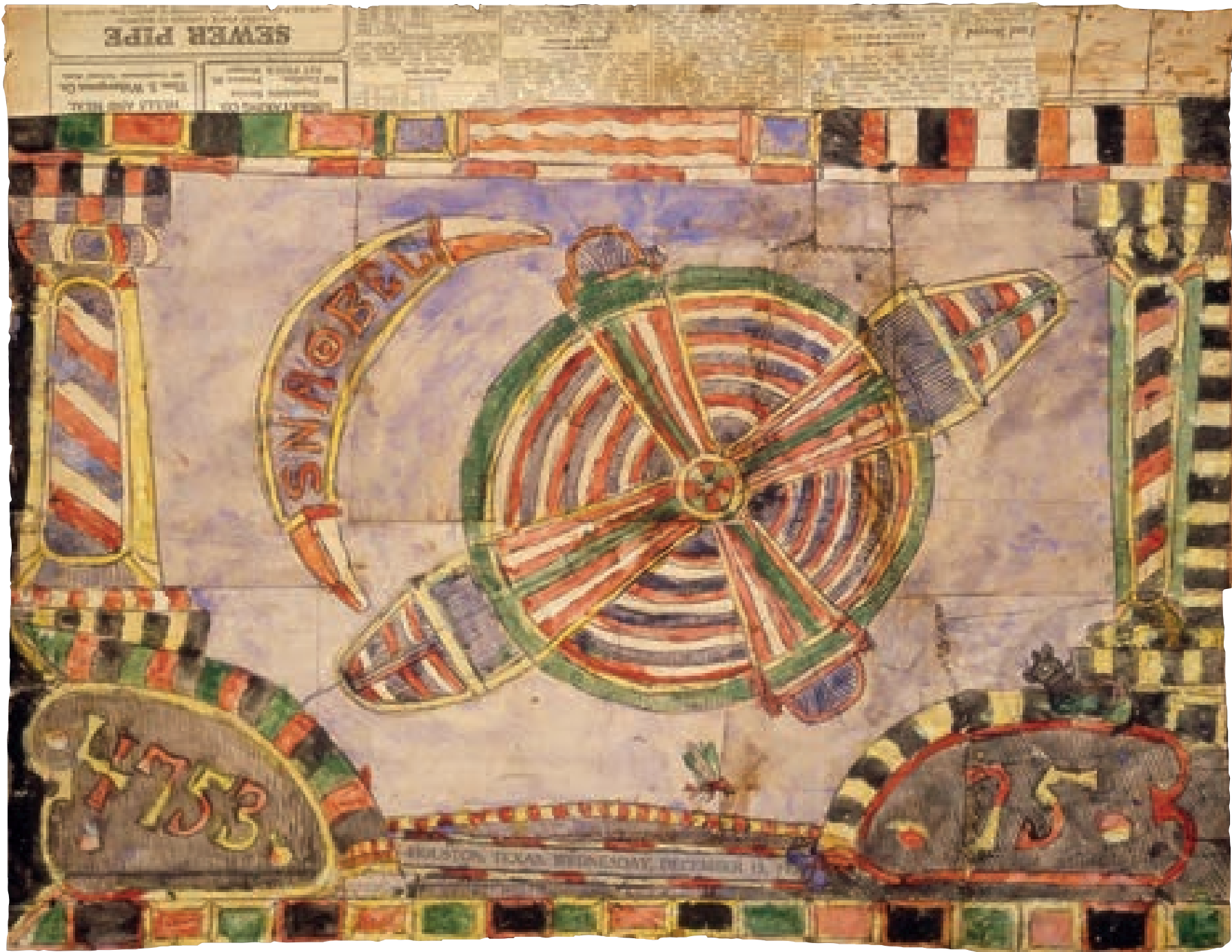




Plate 5118(a) July 4, 1921, 17 × 12 in.
abcd collection, Paris



Plate 5123 Ease Fall, July 7, 1921, 17 × 12 in.
abcd collection, Paris

Contributors

James Brett, whose background includes film, media, art, design, and architecture, is the founder of The Museum of Everything, in London—Britain’s first and only institution dedicated to the untrained, unintentional, and undiscovered artists of the modern era.

Stephen Romano is a private art dealer in New York specializing in the field of self-taught and visionary art.

Thomas McEvilley is an art critic, novelist, curator, editor, and professor. He lives in New York City and in the Catskill Mountains region of upstate New York. He has held appointments at Rice University, Yale University, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the School of Visual Arts, and elsewhere. He holds a Ph.D. in classical philology and has taught numerous courses in philosophy, art history, the Greek and Latin languages, Greek and Indian culture and philosophy, history of religions, and film studies. Dozens of his monographs have appeared in a variety of journals, and a major work of interdisciplinary scholarship, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies*, was published in 2001. For his writings as an art critic he has received a Fulbright grant, a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and the Frank Jewett Mather Award for Distinction in Art Criticism, given by the College Art Association. Major works in art criticism include *The Triumph of Anti-Art: Conceptual and Performance Art in the Formation of Post-Modernism* (2012), *Art, Love, Friendship: Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Together & Apart* (2010), *Yves the Provocateur: Yves Klein and Twentieth-Century Art* (2010), *Sculpture in the Age of Doubt* (2001), *The Exile’s Return: Toward a Redefinition of Painting for the Post-Modern Era* (1994), *Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale* (1993), as well as essays on Anselm Kiefer, Paul McCarthy, and Dennis Oppenheim.

Tracy Baker-White worked for twenty years as a curator of education and an arts administrator at the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Southwest School of Art and Craft, in San Antonio, and the Corcoran College of Art and Design, in Washington, DC. In 1999, while at the San Antonio Museum of Art, she served as project director for a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to study the works of Charles A. A. Dellschau. Her research resulted in the exhibition “Flight or Fancy: The Secret Life of Charles A. A. Dellschau,” which traveled to the Mennello Museum of American Art, in Orlando, Florida. She published an article of the same name in *Folk Art* 25, no. 3 (Fall 2000).

Roger Cardinal wrote the pioneering *Outsider Art* in 1972, and has published widely on individual outsider artists, including Ilija Bosilj, Madge Gill, Ted Gordon, Karl Junker, Michel Nedjar, Guillaume Pujolle, and Clarence Schmidt. He has also produced essays on such topics as outsider architecture, prison art, autistic artists, and memory painting. A contributing editor of *Raw Vision* magazine, he has organized exhibitions in Britain, France, Greece, Slovakia, Switzerland, and the United States.

Tom D. Crouch serves as senior curator of aeronautics at the National Air and Space Museum, in Washington, DC. A Smithsonian employee for thirty-eight years, he holds a Ph.D. in history from the Ohio State University and is the award-winning author or editor of some twenty books—including *Wings:*

A History of Aviation from Kites to the Space Age (2003), *Military Ballooning During the Early Civil War* (2000, with F. Stansbury Haydon), and *The Eagle Aloft: Two Centuries of the Balloon in America* (1983)—and many articles for magazines and journals.

Barbara Safarova is the president of abcd—art brut connaissance & diffusion—a Paris-based non-profit organization working with the collection of *art brut* formed by the French filmmaker Bruno Decharme. Her Ph.D. thesis has been devoted to the artistic productions of Achilles G. Rizzoli and Unica Zürn. A professor of aesthetics, she has taught the subject of *art brut* since 2010 at the Collège International de Philosophie, in Paris, exploring this concept from an interdisciplinary point of view by focusing on its meaning in different geographical and historical contexts, collections, and its signification within the field of modern and contemporary art. She has written a number of essays on artists whose work has been linked to *art brut*—A.C.M. (Alfred Corinne Marié), Zdenek Kosek, Lubos Plny, and Unica Zürn.

Randall Morris is a writer and curator and the co-owner of Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, which mounts more than a dozen exhibitions each year. He taught the first in-depth classes in the United States on *art brut* and self-taught artists for the education department of the American Folk Art Museum, New York, and has organized exhibitions of the work of Jamaican intuitive artists and Justin McCarthy. He is the author of numerous articles and catalog essays on ethnographic art, contemporary ceramics, basketry sculpture, and non-mainstream artists from the United States, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and New Guinea, including African American artists, Emery Blagdon, Martín Ramírez, and Joseph Yoakum. He is also a contributor to the forthcoming catalog for a 2013 exhibition of the work of Jon Serl at the Natalie & James Thompson Art Gallery at San Jose State University School of Art & Design, San Jose, California.

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René Pierre Allain: Book 8; Plates 1952, 1953, 2332, 2360, 2364, 2378, 2392, 2393, 2586, 4301, 4302, 4304, 4306, 4315, 4317, 4318, 4319, 4322, 4329, 4332, 4335, 4339, 4340, 4341, 4342, 4344, 4347, 4358, 4373, 4374, 4376, 4393, 4410, 4426, 4427, 4437, 4438, 4441, 4459, 4463, 4474, 4487, 4488, 4489, 4490, 4504, 4509, 4510, 4511, 4513, 4514, 4523, 4524, 4527, 4538, 4567, 4568, 4589, 4599, 4670, 4671, 4677, 4714, 4805

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Image, page 2: Plate 4306 Auto Fallease, February 13, 1919, 17 × 16¹/₂ in., courtesy Stephen Romano, New York

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