

# Heaven And Earth

- I. The Order Of Things
- II. The Course Of Things

A film by Michael Pilz  
Austria 1982, 297'

Take what is before you as it is and do not wish it to be different, simply exist.

*Lao-tzu*

He who is afraid of tiring when walking should place one foot in front of danger.

*Dschuang-Tzu*

(...) Austria's own filmmakers will find themselves in the same situation as those pop musicians now being ranked as *Old Wave*. They too believed that without a lot of money and the right status, you simply could not make it. That is until the *Nouvelle Vague* came and swept them away with a fresh wind, new modesty, tight budgets and a great deal more imagination. Michael Pilz seems to have accurately interpreted the signs of the time. Instead of doing a multi-million production, instead of paying homage to the tradition of the feature film, he simply devoted himself to a radically subjective form of documentary film that is comparatively cheap and is not boring even.

Franz Manola,  
WIENER,  
Vienna, February 1982

Shooting this film was somewhat like a *slow homecoming* (Peter Handke), with a director who refuses to make a *fast* film in a landscape that has been shaping each gesture and movement of its inhabitants for centuries. (...)

Pilz works with only a recordist and carries the camera himself. He starts out by waiting, living with the crofters, talking to them and gradually becoming a part of their lives, whom they accept as one of their own in their remarkable tolerance when they are given enough time. Up there in the mountains time is not measured by our clocks, one has to be able to wait with great patience. Their waiting is not laziness, not inertia, but a sure feeling for the inevitability of things. (...)

When the pictures are mounted in the sequence in which they were filmed, the result are images of an incredible beauty and a film of an intensity that can only be made by someone absolutely sincere rather than someone who just hangs around and snoops around. Pilz is never indiscreet, he does not betray his friends – and the people here have indeed all become his friends. (...)

Pilz films everything, their work, their festivities, with hectic associations at first but infinitely carefully and gently and sparse in his images towards the end of the film. The sensitivity with which Pilz has created his film is not one advertised loudly as *new*. (...)

Pilz compares the creation of the film with a train trip through a foreign country. You sit by the window, dozing, while pictures are moving past outside, sometimes you go through tunnels and it becomes dark. The country we are travelling through in this case is the recollection of images, moments from our youth, when we were growing up.

And indeed: We are shown children's games which we had long forgotten and gestures from puberty that we had repressed, and an unexpected experience of *deja-vu* hits us like a sudden blow. There is an ideal symbiosis of the external and internal worlds and what makes this film not only understandable but also appealing is precisely this combination of our own experience with the experience of a social stratum that has become unfamiliar to us.



With **Heaven and Earth** Michael Pilz has succeeded in creating a cinematographic work of art of a classical standard.

*Samo Kobenter,  
UNI-AKTUELL, No. 2,  
Vienna, April 1982*

Far from the bustling cities, far from the hectic modern life, the inhabitants of Sankt Anna, located 1400 meters above sea level, lead a hard-working life, a life of permanent struggle with inhospitable nature: The climate and the location in the mountains are their enemies, their work is the intensive use of the land and their duty. Here nature reigns supreme and man fights for his survival.

Just as the mountains were formed by glaciers over thousands of years, the people of this area appear rugged, their eyes reflecting the light of this region in the mountains. Each of them constitutes a part of this landscape, is himself the landscape: the frozen ground, with the sun in their hearts.

Socially, these people are an isolated group like all minorities. Each existing for himself, involved in an all-out struggle. Society in its original meaning of *associating*, not in the sense of community.

They speak to the animals and listen to the wind. In the company of other people they are silent. When they speak of themselves they speak only of their work. Whatever they love, they love in silence. And it is as if the women among them weren't there at all – even though they work like the men and have to take care of the household and the farm.

But they are good people, with faith in their hearts and love and happiness. Of course, it is an archaic faith in God that takes root on the steep slopes. When they cut down a tree, they are making room for heaven in their souls.

Here there are no automatic watches although there is television, however obscure the pictures coming from the outside may remain. They drive their cars like tractors and walk a lot. They observe the weather and the stars and rise with the sun. They feed the animals and go to bed early. When they slaughter their pig, they thank God.

**Heaven and Earth** is a filmed document of this reality and – as all works of art are in contrast to scientific descriptions – it is as subjective as all artistic works are and an account of the reality experienced. (...)

The director of the film was concerned with showing something different from our lives as he had experienced it, in time and space and with real people: epochal, atavistic and – despite the fact that modern man may look down on it condescendingly – archetypical. He tried not to exploit the earth, not to rob the people of Sankt Anna. He did not try to change them, he tried to show what he saw with affectionate eyes what he saw, the way he saw it. He started with the question: What do my eyes see? What do my ears hear? A journey on which every detail was to happen the way it did and nothing is left unnoticed.

Karl Marx said that man experiences himself primarily through his work. He realizes himself through his production forms and the things he produces.

The people of Sankt Anna live mainly by agriculture and raising animals. The money they earn is hardly enough for the family to survive. There is no such thing as a vacation in Sankt Anna. Whenever a pig is slaughtered, everyone has enough to eat for several months. Life, to them, is the way it is – something they cannot change, a force of nature. Something to be endured rather than enjoyed. God has given it, God will take it back. The faces, furrowed by wind and weather like a field, skin like leather.

The soul of a man is in the things he does. The heavens are contained in the blue colour of his eyes. He who takes a trip can tell a lot, but only he who knows himself can report on it.

*Beate Kögel-Pilz,  
"Filmreality – reality of film",  
Grenoble, France, August 1982*

Michael Pilz is a poetic documentarist, he does not want to denounce or strip away anything. He consciously avoids the clichés of reportage, of worn-out journalism.

He makes a real effort to use the camera and edit the film as a poet. No gathering of facts but a resumé of personal experience.

*Friedrich Geyerhofer,  
FILMSCHRIFT,  
Vienna, September 1982*

**Heaven and Earth** shows the people of the mountains hard at work, and on rare occasions celebrating. It shows us that each person there relates to his work, to nature which he must cultivate. Only then does he relate to other people, for this *working towards each other* provides the basis for existing together.

*Rikki Winter,  
NEUE ZEIT,  
Graz, 25 September 1982*

The inhabitants of Sankt Anna, a mountain village in Austria, live a hard life. They constantly fight with nature to earn their daily keep and to protect themselves from the rigors of the weather. They take after the mountains and glaciers where they live; they are rough and bashful, they prefer to talk to animals, watch the sky and listen to storms rather than engage in long conversations. When they do talk, it is about their work. The things they care for, they care for in silence. Their chores are well integrated into the slow and commanding mountain scenery. In this grand environment endeavors like cutting a tree or killing a hog take on the stature of a pagan or archaic rite. They are not just simple motions one has to go through in order to have wood for the fire or meat for food, but rather a way of identifying with the life cycle.

The film reflects realities. Michael Pilz has a way of getting close to these people using his sensitivity. The end product required three years of filming. Pilz did not want

to produce an ethnographic, sociological or political film about the people of Sankt Anna. Instead he wanted to communicate his experience of living with these people.

The film is an ode of love to these mountain people who live between heaven and earth.

*14e FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE CINÉMA,  
Nyon, Switzerland, October 1982*

**Heaven and Earth** is the fascinating portrait of a mountain village fighting to survive against the powers of nature as well as against economic pressures from outside. A profound reflection on the meaning of life and work, the necessity for relationships and the definite character of our world. Slow and lengthy, this film stands out for its beauty and poetry.

*Prix du Jury Oecumenique,  
14e FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE CINÉMA,  
Nyon, Switzerland, October 1982*

With remarkable patience, Pilz collected impressions. He captured everyday events and created portraits of whole families. In short, he actually integrated himself into the life of this village community and put together a film which represents a sort of homage to nature and the labor of a hard life. He has, in fact, created *his* own story about Sankt Anna, *his* own view of things.

*Claude Vallon,  
24 HEURES,  
Lausanne, 16 October 1982*

**Heaven and Earth** shows a respect that does not permit the persons shown on the screen and their personalities to become sensational objects of attraction. In the realization of this film, which took three years, Pilz succeeded in penetrating to those spheres of understanding in which words are no longer needed. His film conveys a poetic, silent portrayal of mountain people. He does not just stay on the surface, with the image, but instead reaches the innermost rhythms, the hearts of the people. The author admits: "My film is also where my heart is".

*Elisabeth Gyt-Noth,  
LUZERNER NACHRICHTEN,  
Luzern, 20 October 1982*

**Heaven and Earth** represents a radical departure from the concept of documentary film based solely on the reporting of facts. (...) The final result is a statement of many years of work.

Already because of its length, the film cannot be understood right away and judged beforehand. The images – separately and united through numerous inner references – woven together to hundreds of sequences, show a life of almost unimaginable severity. When the people are not speaking in their almost unintelligible dialect, one hears a sober commentary interrupted by minutes of silence and accompanied by sounds of nature. With the slow motion

and mute scenes, a philosophical discourse evolves from sentences cited from the bible and Chinese sages, formulating man's existence without reference to ethnographical and sociological aspects.

*Christoph Egger,  
NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG,  
Zurich, 21 October 1982*

The discovery this year at Nyon is Michael Pilz. The way he approaches people and things recalls Bresson, his understanding of reality resembles Godard's. Here a slow symbiosis comes into being between the subject and the film, between the viewer and the people filmed. This film is monumental. Rarely has the life of a poor and marginalized – yet proud – group of people been presented as well on screen: A community shown in perfect harmony with its environment. The beauty of the images is underscored by an exact depiction of the economic constraints that a marginalized group is subject to.

*Yvan Stern,  
LA LIBERTE,  
Fribourg, Switzerland, 23 October 1982*

Never before has a documentary of such beauty and fascination been made!

*Yvan Stern,  
CINE-FEUILLES,  
Lausanne, 23 October 1982*

This film makes up what is already a matter of course in Austrian literature: approximating the outer world to the inner world without any superficial social criticism. **Heaven and Earth** depicts something that has gone out of style since the time of Flaherty: Man and nature, away from society, struggling with each other but nevertheless at one. (...) **Heaven and Earth** celebrates what remains of a past *Order of things* (Part 1) which is then swept away by the *Course of things* (Part 2). (...) Sometimes Pilz succeeds in images of a mystic quality – similar to Herzog, except that in Pilz' case they are not posed – a farmer sowing the field, while a tractor circles him, a neon light in a village inn resembling a saint's halo, the invasion of the world of television as though it were from another planet.

*Horst Dieter Siehler,  
epd – KIRCHE UND FILM, No. 11,  
Frankfurt a.M., 11 November 1982*

(...) A documentary film lasting a provocative 4 and 3/4 hours – produced by the author as a movie, a documentary film that fits in with the best tradition of the opponent. Nowadays, this kind of film has become rare all over the world. In Austria there has not been and is not anything comparable to it. (...) It's monumental length is not at all boring. The inhabitants of the mountain village of Sankt Anna live at an extremely slow pace. With their slow and sometimes even solemn tempo images and sounds evoke a feeling for unfamiliar and perhaps even inconceivable

pace of living. As is the case in many, generally reserved scientifically oriented ethnographic films during the course of the film we become aware of a beguiling poetic element. Exactly this was, and is, the main characteristic of the classical documentary film – as opposed to the feature film in which already on the first page of the script art is supposed to be conjured up, albeit seldom successfully.

As regards the social-critical aspects of the film, the viewer is subjected to a strange juggling of emotions. While he sees with painful clarity the scarcity and poverty in Sankt Anna, he also becomes aware of the many spiritual riches which seem to have forgotten lost where the largest TV stations are – and are painfully missed.

Franz Manola,  
DIE PRESSE,  
Vienna, 13/14 November 1982

(...) **Heaven and Earth**, a documentary film that is actually a mosaic of contemplative art and a recording of Pilz' deeply personal impressions of what he saw and heard. Throughout he stresses his devotion to the Lao-Tzu principle of just being there, watching, listening, not interfering with the flow of things and events.

Keith Keller,  
"Viennale Festival Reviews",  
VARIETY,  
New York, 17 November 1982

**Heaven and Earth** is an incredibly long film but to cut any of it would destroy it and I would not want to miss a single moment of it!

Henry Colpi,  
film editor and director, member of the jury,  
3eme FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DES FILMS  
DU MONDE RURAL,  
Aurillac, France, 20 November 1982

(...) **Heaven and Earth** also reminds us that the history of film, from Hitchcock to Wim Wenders, has a strong resemblance to the tales of countless travels. In the latter it does not matter so much how long they last but that they have actually taken place. **Heaven and Earth** is also the story of such a journey: here it leads to the place of a daily struggle with many defeats, over many paths, the outer ones being the landscape, the inner ones despair, resignation, but also hidden hopes shining through.

Dr. Anton Leiller,  
KÄRNTNER KIRCHENZEITUNG,  
Klagenfurt, 21 November 1982

One can say that this film teaches us to look and listen anew.

Ulrich Gregor,  
BERLIN FORUM FOR YOUNG CINEMA,  
Berlin, February 1983

(...) Images, heavy, powerful, beautiful, coming at us, appearing before us, one might say. They describe how the farmers toil, how for instance man and horse form a strong

unit, drudging in the unflagging endeavour to cultivate the rock slopes. When trees are cut, the field work is done, a pig is slaughtered, the camera looks into weatherbeaten faces, shows hard-working people, intense body postures; all of this, however, is not meant to monumentalize work. Hard work is not glorified. In the same way no idyllic scene is created of the hard but beautiful country life or of unspoiled nature as it is praised in hiking songs. Nature is severe, it determines the rhythm of life; the farmers, it seems, live in harmony with it and its laws.

Birgit Weidinger,  
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG,  
Munich, 11/12 June 1983

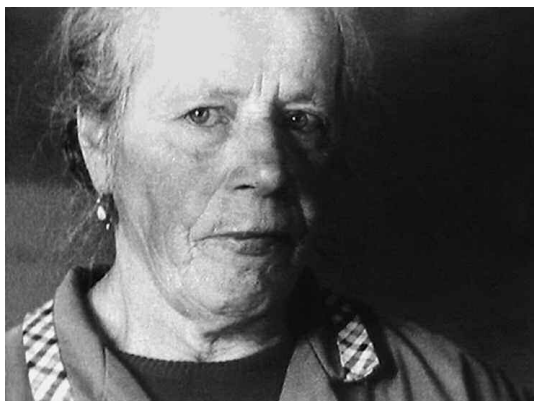
(...) What we see are expressions, almost always of some working process, of a life of nearly unimaginable hardship. But even though the camera carefully follows each working step, each moment, of the hand, what is behind it is not a folkloric or sociological interest. These people, whose names we are hardly able to remember, become familiar to us while yet remaining irretrievably distant. Images of an extreme effort showing man and animal struggling together as in the extraordinary sequence with the plows alternate with seemingly unintentional, calm images of barren earth, of rain, wind and snow. Accompanying the sounds of nature and of work and the moments of silence there is a sparse commentary: texts from the Bible, the Talmud, from Chinese sages whose *it is said* is followed by *but I ask*, all of this guided by the single effort to find oneself. An exercise in *being*.

Christoph Egger,  
NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG,  
Zurich, 14 September 1983

Guided entirely by his intuition and curiosity and unhindered by any sort of methodology, Pilz presents a wealth of detail, which in the final analysis is all equally important. These details shown by Pilz will soon have disappeared for ever. The film is genuine ethnology in the best sense of the word. According to a fitting definition, ethnology is the only branch of knowledge that consumes its own subject-matter. It is concerned with things that are slowly disappearing, impoverishing the world.

Chat,  
TAGESANZEIGER,  
Zurich, 16 September 1983

**Heaven and Earth** seems caught in one of the most common situations of documentary film: The filmmakers stay in a rural area to collect material for a film. But in this case the result is far from an *ethnographic* portrait based on an *urban morality*. Pilz's work is characterized by the fact that the initial relationship of unfamiliarity between the people being filmed and the people filming is never completely erased. From this simple yet absolutely fascinating situation results a film in which mainly the period of time



(real and imaginary) during which the film was made is documented. Divided in two parts – *The Order of Things* and *The Course of Things* –, **Heaven and Earth** is actually situated in a sort of intermediate region between a transcendental sphere and down to earth reality. A region involving many different aspects which are presented by the film and given the dimension of a saga in which there is no hero who is not familiar with the vision or persistent passion.

*Joao Lepes,  
EXPRESSO,  
Lisboa, 17 September 1983*

What Pilz has created is a poem of everyday life, a meditation on the so-called simple life. Here nothing is being denounced, nothing dissected. Everything is accepted the way it is. The filmmaker approaches the philosophy of life of these people in a remarkably natural way. A constantly recurring image in the film shows a little boy clinging to a car tire, running and swinging with it. The farther he wants to swing, the greater the impact will be when the tire is forced down by gravity, back from heaven to earth, as it were. There is no flying away, no fleeing to another world.

**Heaven and Earth** is a philosophical film in which we are provoked to deal with our own roots and the meaning of our existence. But it is also a film which would be inconceivable as fiction. This is the only way in which documentary film has any future.

In this ingenious and intelligent composition such mere looking and listening – the negative aspect of which is of course superficiality – becomes a journey into one's own soul. One should expose oneself to this almost five-hour long experience and take one's time to see if possible both parts of the film in succession. And one should lay oneself open to all the contradictions and resistances rising up in oneself. Only then will this film become a meaningful exploration perhaps not so much of the people in Sankt Anna as of ourselves.

*Roger Graf,  
ZOOM No 19,  
Bern, Switzerland, 5 October 1983*

(...) There is no question about what is extraordinary in this film. It is not only a pioneer achievement with regard to its subject matter and thus a must for the many uninformed, but with its numerous quotations it also offers many impulses to ponder the meaning of life in general.

*Rikki Winter,  
NEUE ZEIT,  
Graz, 15 October 1983*

(...) I was moved and then seduced by **Heaven and Earth** (Michael Pilz, 1982) who describes the day-to-day life of the inhabitants of a small Austrian mountain village with intelligence and emotion. This film has precisely what is so often missing: A feeling for visual aspects, for the

humorous detail and for what touches us as well as for the human factor. We are not just exploring an unknown group of people, but we are experiencing the day-to-day rhythm of work, of life, and of the seasons. After seeing this film one says to oneself, really, I'd also like to live there. And I don't think I could have thought of a more beautiful homage to this film than the wish to partake of the life presented here, at least for a moment.

*Léo Bonneville,  
SÉQUENCES No 115,  
Montréal, January 1984*

Of the numerous and very different reasons one could give to support the statement that this film offers one of the most enriching, unforgettable cinematographic experiences in a long time, one might first name the following: experiencing documentary film images on a movie screen is something so rare, so exotic, almost extinct, that its recapturing in **Heaven and Earth** alone provokes a wonderful feeling of excitement. The spectator dives up from a fog of tacky-sweet, artistically staged, calculated, carefully framed and lit professional movie images; and suddenly there is an almost painfully clear vision, allowing an unobstructed view of reality!

To avoid any misunderstanding, we must recall that nothing is less apt to grasp reality, nothing brings forth drabber and more contourless reproductions of reality than those TV-documentaries that have allowed the once so noble genre of non-fiction film to degenerate to a quantitatively immensely large, but in the final analysis insignificant branch of (unscientific) sociology.

**Heaven and Earth** continues a tradition of documentary filmmaking that requires a type of filmmaker who for reasons easily understood is a rarity in our age of specialization: a many-sided person whose scientific interest and journalistic integrity are equally balanced, whose talent for poetic as well as precise observation and composition is guided by reflections of a sociological and anthropological nature. **Heaven and Earth** is a film by Michael Pilz.

Almost five hours long, it shows the daily life of the inhabitants of a Styrian mountain village, which has a special quality in its monotony, from ever new angles. The perspective which the filmmaker attempts to persuade us to accept – as we finally do so after some initial protest – is not that of a tourist. Together with Pilz we overcome a feeling of strangeness, but also of a sort of exaggerated sympathy that are often assumed in order to avoid the ordeal of direct experience.

**Heaven and Earth** is not a film in which humility vis-à-vis a certain reality and people is confused with that pose of condescending intrusion that is so noticeable in the documentaries about marginal groups of society characteristic of our drab everyday TV programmes. Michael Pilz remains an urban intellectual and this is something not even a stay of many months in the mountains can change.



He deals with his experiences in a very personal manner which cannot suddenly be that of a small farmer in the mountains. Both the poetically profound depiction of reality and his reflections upon this contribute to the quality of this film.

*Franz Manola,  
DIE PRESSE,  
Vienna, 16 March 1984*

**Heaven and Earth** is a painstaking and beautiful record of Michael Pilz's three years' observations in an Austrian village. Pilz's film, through its length, takes enormous risks encouraging a confrontation with the reality of the village that cannot be regarded simply as a touristic or lyrical view. (...) The film's tempo comes from the pace of the mountain peasants themselves. A silent people, their emotions are kept private, so Pilz concentrates on their deeds, not their words. (...) A mosaic of people at work, the film explores the relationship between survival and understanding life.

*38th EDINBURGH  
INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL,  
Edinburgh, 11–26 August 1984*

(...) Another outstanding documentary, Michael Pilz's **Heaven and Earth**, is a five-hour record of three years of observation in a remote Austrian village: Pilz's dogged, discreet study of his subjects demands a good deal of patience in the viewer, but rewards it with genuine insights into a very private people.

*David Robinson,  
"Some splendid rarities at the  
Edinburgh Film Festival",  
THE TIMES,  
London, September 1984*

(...) As a result, **Heaven and Earth** is Austria's best post-war documentary.

*Franz Manola,  
DIE PRESSE,  
Vienna, 2 October 1985*

(...) The author's subjectivity is even more assertive in the five-hour film **Heaven and Earth** (1979–1982) that was shot over a period of three years in the village of Sankt Anna in the Austrian mountains. Taking time to win the trust of the inhabitants is the primary concern of every attentive filmmaker in order to render a faithful in-depth subject. The poetic, nearly mystical consciousness of Michael Pilz delights in the grandiose, overwhelming landscape, amidst these people shaped by the mountains and the ruggedness of their existence. Manning the camera him-self and accompanied only by a recordist, he observed and strove to capture and comprehend the nature of these mountain people living close to the earth, the trees and the animals.

It is up to the audience to make the effort and enter into this film in order to profit from the unique experience which the author shares with us. The five hours of **Heaven and Earth** show us a different world of startling archaism

and persistent faith. Penetrating the mystery of this archetype and witnessing another epoch, bringing forth the goodness and plentitude that lie within the ruggedness of these mountain people, this film constitutes an entrancing cinematographic experience.

(...) The film **Heaven and Earth** presents the restrictions of the inhabitants of Sankt Anna as an essential aspect and explores their way of keeping the traditions of their ancestors – whether to their advantage or not.

*Dominique Jules,  
"Au coeur de quinze films ruraux",  
CINÉMACTION,  
Courbevoie, France, 1986*

**Heaven and Earth** shows very clearly that the confrontation with reality (which in this context means mostly work) is always characterized by intellectual categories. Where this is not the case, it is a matter of the insolence of a phony naiveté or the actual blindness for the fact that in our age of *soft news* and explosive reporting a redefinition of formats has determined our way of looking.

*Bert Rebhandl,  
DER STANDARD,  
Vienna, 14 December 1996*

Work, looking, a hill: this is what the world consists of. What can the movie recognize? How much of the world can it see? And: *Who* sees it? Any film poses the same question – the question of the way of looking, whose omnipotence (in the movies) has to be doubted. The cinematographic view and doubts about it are the concern of the works of the Austrian filmmaker Michael Pilz, they are also the theme of his **Heaven and Earth**. (...)

Often the camera looks at children, and what happens is usually non-verbal: waiting, embarrassed laughter, cautiously approaching the camera and retreating again – out of a fear of the recording instrument, but fascinated by the unfamiliar technology which is not usually a part of their world. They are looking at each other – the camera looks at the people and the people look at the eye of the technical equipment: the film and the world are the theme of **Heaven and Earth**. (...)

Learning about life, becoming familiar with what is strange and distant, that is what is important to Pilz: an ethnographer, even if his interest exceeds mere recording and preserving. Whether in quickly made videos of his travels or in FELDBERG, the three-dimensional 35mm stereo film featuring the nature of "Feldberg", Pilz records the world in complex image and sound montages, intentionally subjectively. At the end of **Heaven and Earth** a last glance is cast – into the sun, into the white and yellow daylight. The movie image is blinded: since its power, as Pilz is telling us in this way, is limited.

*Stefan Grissemann,  
DIE PRESSE,  
Vienna, 14/15 December 1996*

(...) Blood becomes authentic. In the 1980s the Austrian (documentary) film opened up a new chapter. The minds were appeased, the spaces created by art had been left behind. Animals were being slaughtered in the country. Their blood flows through the living space of the villages, on remote farms, in butcher shops.

**Heaven and Earth** (1979–1982) by Michael Pilz allows much time for observation and reflection upon the viewer's own position and self-image. The filmmaker and the Styrian crofters he has filmed enter into a symbiosis that does not claim that either side is more knowledgeable than the other. By the time we are shown the scene in which a pig is being slaughtered we are familiar with the landscape – the area around Obdach – and the people living there, their faces, their relationship to the camera and above all the rhythm and ardousness of their work. Just prior to the slaughtering scene we see a boy riding his bicycle. He stops in front of his family's farm. As though they had hurriedly assembled for a photograph for the family album, the entire family are standing in front of the farmhouse that has nothing in common with the pretty flower-decked houses of earlier Austrian narrative films. On the soundtrack we hear "thoughts about the farmer's job", which the man sees as being endangered. The slopes are steep and difficult to farm, the climate is unpredictable and harsh, the prices they get for their produce are low, their social security is insufficient. Almost by necessity the farmers need another income to survive. The man speaks matter-of-factly, without feeling sorry for himself. Pilz separates this scene from the subsequent slaughtering scene by a black board with the words "Life or death: we cannot escape, can we?" written in red. Next, a pig held on a leash is running from the pigsty. The camera records from the level of the pig's eyes, trying to take in as much as possible. It responds quickly to whatever is happening. The peasant and his helpers have obviously been doing this kind of work many times before, they are well-practiced, demonstrating a considerable routine although they do not seem to be doing it mechanically. They are working with dignity and concentration. As they go along they are instructing each other about the next step to be done.

"I have met the people living in the mountains, because their feet really touch the earth. If that is not the case, they will plunge to their deaths. In the mountains you are closer to heaven, but also closer to death." (Michael Pilz: Vienna, 9 February 1983. In: freunde der deutschen kine-mathek, (Ed.): 13. INTERNATIONALES FORUM DES JUNGEN FILMS, folder 16, Berlin 1983).

The pig has been slaughtered, and when its carotid artery is opened and the head is severed a lot of blood gushes out. In this context, though, the animal's blood does not refer to anything beyond itself. It has lost its function of a sign

of an inner state or an ideological superstructure. Instead it concretely expresses every-day work, an economic basis of life, a traditional rural farming reality. (...)

*Elisabeth Büttner, Christian Dewald,  
"Körper: Blut",  
page 251–253,*

*ANSCHLUSS AN MORGEN, EINE  
GESCHICHTE DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN FILMS  
VON 1945 BIS ZUR GEGENWART,  
Residenz Verlag Salzburg, 1997*

(...) Since the beginning of the 80s the "Heimatfilm" panoramas of the 50s, which in their cyclorama-like horizons of prevailing visual patterns sealed themselves off from any curiosity, have been countered by a respect for actual reality. A different way of looking at things has taken hold, sometimes it is individualistically coloured, a patient finding and framing of images, a form of montage that seeks to maintain its integrity vis-a-vis reality. Films invite us to see and hear the landscape, its inhabitants, their stories, their everyday lives. Films such as *Heidenlöcher* by Wolfram Paulus or **Heaven and Earth** by Michael Pilz have established this new attitude. The two directors have chosen different approaches. However, cinematographic realism is not determined by a decision for the fictional or the documentary but by the question of the awareness of the aesthetic cinematographic means. (...)

*Elisabeth Büttner, Christian Dewald,  
"Bewegung, Zeit: Ausschnitt und Anordnung",  
page 376,*

*ANSCHLUSS AN MORGEN, EINE  
GESCHICHTE DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN FILMS  
VON 1945 BIS ZUR GEGENWART,  
Residenz Verlag Salzburg, 1997*

(...) Films catch the light of things and refract it through the projection onto the screen. **Heaven and Earth** by Michael Pilz demonstrates this fundamental cinematographic principle. The "visible voice" of things, their order and their progression, are transformed by the film into relationships between the filmmaker who observes and the objects which become real through his observation.

**Heaven and Earth** is a long-term cinematographic journey into the life of crofters in the vicinity of the village of St. Anna in Northern Styria, where Pilz spent several months. The film assembles images and sounds that are related to the processual of their origin and their formal procedure. Such an attitude towards the cinema is preceded by a long phase of working, waiting, discovery and allowing oneself to be surprised: "In winter 1979/80 I did not know where my journey would take me, and the further I got the less I could see a goal and the more I needed to pay attention to the path. The paths in the mountains are dangerous in winter, and I made the greatest effort not to miss any momentary perception and to face everything the way it occurred. It was the dictate of the moment to



renounce my own fears, desires and preferences in order to be able to encounter a reality that was greater than the "preconceived" one. Geographic and climatic conditions enforced a concentration of the senses." (Michael Pilz, in: STADTKINO-PROGRAMM No. 49, Vienna 1984).

Making films may also be seen as the practice of a communication that constantly moves between impression and expression. The borderline between inside and outside becomes blurred. Seeing something and being seen by the others. (Michael Pilz: "The moment I enter the farmer's kitchen, reality changes, because I, too, am in the kitchen. We were a foreign body. The film incorporates the subjective relationship between the farmers who were observed by our camera and us, who observed them with the camera." In: ABENDZEITUNG, Munich, 4/5 June 1983). Having ideas, revising them, reformulating them.

The division into fiction and documentary, by which the images of the cinema are often classified, reveals itself here in all its questionability. The filmmaker's look at the world that demonstrates his approach and shortcircuits the found images with circles of questions or ideas, creates fiction. Godard describes document and fiction as the two aspects of one and the same movement: "The glance is the fiction, and the text is the expression of this glance, the legend explaining this glance. For the fiction is the expression of the document, the document is the impression. Impression and expression are two aspects of one and the same thing. I would say the impression emerges from the document. But when you have to look at the document, this is the moment that you express yourself. And that is fiction. But the fiction is as real as the document. It is another aspect of reality." (Jean-Luc Godard: "Einführung in eine wahre Geschichte des Kinos", Frankfurt/M. 1984, p. 128) – In 1976 Michael Pilz and John Cook filmed A SLOW SUMMER, in which fiction and document likewise merge into one another, becoming indistinguishable and thus emphasizing the cinematographic space, the discovery as opposed to action, the progression of the story). The fictitious does not separate itself from the real. Through his encounters in the mountains of Northern Styria Pilz gets to know a reality and interprets it with the people whom he meets there. (Pilz "asks the peasants, where, when and how they want to have a take done. In front of the farmhouse? Fine. – On Sunday? Fine, we all have time then." Samo Kobenter: Michael Pilz, Georg Buigner – "Himmel und Erde" or "Wie in Österreich ein Film gemacht werden kann". In: UNI-AKTUELL No. 2, Vienna, April 1982). He takes away the preconceived images and expectations from that which he observes, at the same time discovering something lasting in it. At one point in the film it says: "All that we can describe is the outward appearance. The outward appearance changes, while the essence remains the same." Pilz mounts such sentences between the images of the film. These show

people, letting them speak for themselves – people who live and think in a rhythm of their own in their hard work, in the changing seasons, in the special moments of their few holidays. The film takes its time to do justice to this rhythm, to this way of life and expression. The interspersed sentences function like captions for the images, without, however, dominating them. **Heaven and Earth** creates the possibility for both the filmmaker and the spectator of taking his own sweet time to simply see things and their complex transitions. (...)

Elisabeth Büttner, Christian Dewald,  
"Bewegung, Zeit: Bewegung zum Sichtbaren",  
page 409–411,  
ANSCHLUSS AN MORGEN, EINE  
GESCHICHTE DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN FILMS  
VON 1945 BIS ZUR GEGENWART,  
Residenz Verlag Salzburg, 1997

Al weken zit het journaal vol met varkensbeelden. Op angstig-eerbiedige manier wordt het macabere werken aan de kadaverbergen getoond. Niets lijkt griezlicher ononsmakelijker dan een dood varken. Dat is wel anders geweest en nog net eens zo lang geleden. Vlees is nu vaak een anoniem rechthoekig blokje in een hygienische verpakking. Alle dieren verworden zo tot vissticks. De relatie tussen dat rechthoekje op je bord en dat beest op het journaal is verdwenen.

Over die gote verdwijnturc binnen onze cultuur maakte de Oostenrijker Michael Pilz vijftien jaar geleden een monumentale documentaire film. Een film van ruim viereneenhalf uur met de allesomvattende titel **Himmel und Erde**. De film is onderverdeeld in twee grote hoofdstukken. Eerst *Die Ordnung der Dinge* en dan *Der Lauf der Dinge*.

Pilz valt direct met de deur in huis. Op het allereerste beeld buigt een man zich over een reusachtig varken. Eigenlijk is dat varken nog nauwelijks herkenbaar en is ook nog niet goed te zien wat de man doet, maar als je de film kent, wet je het wel omdat het later tot tweemaal toe uitvoerig in beeld wordt gebracht.

De man slacht zijn varken. Zijn eigen varken. Met in zijn linkerhand een bijl en in zijn rechterhand een hamer geeft hij de laatste klap die het nog niet ontvleesde karkas in tweeën splitst. Na de duur van een normale speelfilm komt het openingsbeeld pas weer terug en wordt het in zijn volledige context gezet.

De kijker kent dan de man, de plaats en het dier. Een kleine boer met een hard leven in een klein bergdorp slacht in het najaar voor een lange winterse en rijp varken. Dat tamme zwijn had een leven dat voor een leek niet veel verschilt van dat van de huidige industriële pestvarkens. Her beest kwam ook nooit zijn kot uit, behalve dan om te worden gevild. Voor die gelegenheid wird hij buiten op het erf voor het oog van het uitgelopen dorp op de slachtbank gelegd. Na hetz engen (het wassen van het var-

kentje) en het zorgvuldig afkrabben van zijn haren wird hij met zekere hand ontleed. Heel het varken. Van kop tot staart in bruikbare delen ontrafeld. Hier geen vissticks. De kinderen staan er met hun neus bovenop. De ouderen kijken goedkeurend toe vanaf een bankje. Hier is het kreng niet gruwelijk.

De bergboeren van Pilz (als de bergboeren van John Berger) lijken dichterbij de middeleeuwen ten staan dan bij de varkenshouders van het journaal. Die boeren den Pilz zijn zich dat zeer bewust. Ze kijken ook tv en de banale economie van de varkenscyclus gaat ook aan hun uithoek niet voorbij.

Pilz volgde (vooral in het tweede hoofdstuk van de film) zijn boeren tot in lawaaierige fabrieken waar ze moeten bijverdienen om het bedrijfje hoog op de helling draaiende te houden. Het heeft niet veel zin om er nostalgisch over te doen, maar het herzien van **Himmel und Erde** in de dagen van de pesz maakt toch onontkoombaar dat de verindustrialisering van het boerenbedrijf tot vreemde uitwassen heeft geleid. Uitwassen die te gruwelijk lijken om ze nog in beeld te brengen. Daar kunnen de kinderen niet met hun neus op gaan staan.

In het scenerama van Madame Tussaud hangen de wassen lijken van de gebroeders De Witt. Naakte kadavers als varkens in een slagerij. De wassenbeelden van den gebroeders moeten vooral aantonen dat het vroeger gruwelijk was. Toen werden mensen nog in het openbaar onder het toezien oog van menigte vermoord. Toen werden lijken nog aan de schandpaal gehangen ter lering en vermaak.

Het zou mij niet verbazen als de tijd komt dat er een gevild varken in was bij Madame Tussaud wordt geïnstalleerd. Het Wasservarken zal het bewijs zijn dat onze tijd zo onbeschaafd was om in november voor het oog van jong en oud een dier te slachten. Die nieuwe beschaafdheid zullen we niet danken aan de dierenbescherming, maar aan de varkenshouders. De loop der dingen verandert soms snel tussen hemel en aarde.

*Gertjan Zuilhof, Een varkentje villen,  
De Groene Amsterdammer, Amsterdam, 12 April, 1997*

3sat is showing three new sequels of its series "Dokumentarisch arbeiten" ("Making Documentaries"). This time around, the focus is set on three authors who explore the line between documentary and fictional films with their works: Elfi Mikesch, Michael Pilz, and Thomas Imbach. A visit of several days was paid to each of these film makers, either at their homes, work rooms, or montage tables. Christoph Hübner, who is himself a documentary filmmaker, talks to his colleagues, touching on subjects such as "working into the open" or finding previously unforeseeable scenes. Christoph Hübner: "The conversations and encounters show just how wide the scope of the term documen-

tary has become these days". Thus, Thomas Imbach refers to the process of selecting his "actors" as "castings", a term that up to now was used in the world of feature films only. Michael Pilz takes attentive listening during conversations to be an utterly underrated art of the documentary. As if it were only natural, Elfi Mikesch includes acting and staging of scenes into her films. In this vein, "Träumen, spielen, jagen" ("Dreaming, Playing, Hunting") was chosen as the title of Elfi Mikesch's conversation with Christoph Hübner. As in previous years, 3sat complements these conversations with a selection of exemplary films, which illustrate the overall characteristics of each author's oeuvre. Thus, Elfi Mikesch films presented by 3sat include her latest documentary "Die Markus Family" as well as early productions such as "Was soll'n wir denn machen ohne den Tod" ("What are We Supposed to do Without Death"), her classic "Ich denke oft an Hawaii" ("I often Think of Hawaii") and last, but not least, the documentary "Verrückt bleiben verliebt bleiben" ("Staying Crazy, Staying in Love") which played at movie theaters during the nineties.

"Im Spiegel des Fremden" (In the Mirror of Foreign Parts) is the title of Christoph Hübner's conversation with Austrian documentary filmmaker Michael Pilz. It was aired in February together with his Films "Karl Prantl – DER LAUF DES WASSERS" ("Karl Prantl – The Course of Water") and his five-hour long-term observation "Himmel und Erde" ("Heaven and Earth"). In March, the conversation with Swiss film maker Thomas Imhof will follow under a title highly characteristic of his working method: "Die Kamera als Sonde" ("The Camera as a Probe"). In connection with these broadcasts, 3sat will also show the films "Well Done" and "Ghetto".

To complement the "Dokumentarisch arbeiten" series, Gabriele Voss has published a book titled "Dokumentarisch arbeiten". Just as in Volume I, the sequel documents not only the conversations with authors mentioned above, namely Mikesch, Pilz, and Imbach, but also broadcasts from 1998 featuring Hans-Dieter Grabe, Egon Humer, Reni Mertens, and Walter Marti.

*Making Documentaries –  
Directors in Conversation with Christoph Hübner/  
3sat Presse Special, Cologne, February 2001*

For three years – from 1979 until 1982 – he found American Indians in Austria as it were by sharing the life of mountain crofters in a small village in Styria. The film, that resulted from this extended period of observation is called **Heaven and Earth**, a title that conveys the comprehensive approach of Michael Pilz in this documentary form of a phenomenology of precious impressions, from relaxed play to laborious work, embedded in the eternal cycle of the seasons.

The „Order of Things“, Part 1 of this almost five-hour

film, is preceded by a motto by the Chinese poet Laotse: „Take that which is before you just as it is/Do not wish it to be otherwise, simply be there.“ Simply be there – this imperative might apply to all of Pilz’s films, if one understands it as an attentive steady gaze, which seeks closeness, but without pursuing any intentions, and which comes from within and therefore often begins with careful listening.

The Austrian Michael Pilz, born in Gmuend, Lower Austria, in 1943, has since the early 1960's worked on around 50 films, for most of which he himself performed all the necessary functions. His engagement with the cinematographic image could be described as a gradual retreat into privacy: at first he used 8 mm film, later he switched to 16 mm film, even working for the Austrian Television in the 1970's, but now he confines himself to working with videotape, which allows him complete creative freedom.

Pilz’s work is known today to only a small circle of initiates, probably because he strictly spurns the market and avoids established documentary formats: for example PRISJADIM NA DOROZKU, a travel film that took him all the way to Siberia, is no less than ten hours long. In addition, Pilz’s documentary work often includes experimental elements: already in the second part of **Heaven and Earth** the form becomes more elliptic, scenes reappear in slow motion, daily tasks are interspersed with lyrical images of the landscape.

His most recent works, quite consistently, continue the same reductionist course. In PIECES OF DREAMS Pilz observes the theatre director Jack Garfein as he ruminates in a hotel room over *Ohio Impromptu*, a late Beckett play, and thereby makes use of every possibility offered by a specific space quite like that playwright himself. The travel films INDIAN DIARY and LA HABANA consist of meditative impressions of foreign countries that go on for several minutes and superficially might appear to be insignificant – but in Pilz’s works everything is important, wherever he looks, there is something to be seen.

*Dominik Kamalzadeh,  
How Things Happen. A Notorious Outsider:  
A Portrait of the Filmmaker Michael Pilz  
DER STANDARD, Vienna, 10/11 February 2001*

In his new film INDIAN DIARY– DAYS AT SREE SANKARA – the Austrian filmmaker Michael Pilz sticks to his principles; to watch his object so long that they initiate the conversation. He is an extremist in perception, a prompter for the little things. In an introduction to a seminar that Michael Pilz gave in 1994 at the College for design in Dortmund, Germany, the headliner was of the essence of a film: To free oneself of the „object of desire“ through the

sensitising of one's own perceptual yearnings. Content follows form. Observe until the things speak for themselves. These are the perceptive and aesthetic paradigm that run through the approximately fifty works of the Austrian motion-, documentary- and experimental filmmaker since the mid 60's. His five hour opus **Heaven and Earth** (1982) shows the arcaic life of a small mountain community in Styria, Austria. Here his film perception and narrative tempo are adapted to the inhabitants who live with the cycle of seasons. Pilz has a Laotian proverb "Take what is before you as it is, don't wish for anything else, just carry on". Let things happen as they occur. Don't focus attention on something, just be attentive; the eye of the camera as vigil registrar of the moment which forgets its own existence. As in PIECES OF DREAMS (1988/99) where Pilz observes the theater director Jack Garfein preparing a Beckett piece (*Ohio impromptu*) in his hotel room. The room is filled with dialogue and concentration, the manic repetitions of a single text fragment gives way to long passages of tense silence. For a while Pilz appears in the picture himself and becomes an impresario – part of the act in a chamber theatre formation – in that the documentary almost takes on fictional characteristics.

"Watching until the things start to talk" also applies for Michael Pilz's new film INDIAN DIARY– DAYS AT SREE SANKARA; the chronical of the wellness stay of the filmmaker in the southern Indian small town Changanacherry. It is a sampling of perceptual fragments which follow the drama of an acclimation and the slow exploration of the area around the hospital of Sree Sankara. The long static adjustment from the clinic room, the view from the veranda, the trees in the garden, swing into action with the first trip to town. The shots from the moving rikshaw are reminiscent of Jacques Tatis' TRAFFIC. Soon the nurses walk into the scene and become fixed members of an ensemble which appear throughout the film. Occasionally they even take over the actual filming – first hesitatingly, then with increasing self assurance. They describe a few pages of this diary through their camera style in a very personal manner. Every day rituals are seen – massages, cleansings and meditation – and one slowly begins to find an orientation, even with Pilz himself. Yet once again the frame freezes and shows a precisely organized still life of town and nature. Audiovisual contemplations of almost tactile intensity which let inner and outer perceptions fuse.

This film seems to amaze itself with an almost naive view – without the usual ethnographic or touristic perceptions filter whether it be an grazing elephant being filmed minutes long or a man who handles glowing coals in his bare hands. All observations, even the more unspectacular are given equal footing and don't compete to get the first

place in the photo album. Whoever looks long and hard enough won't need a photo, and if the things start to speak for themselves, then no one needs to talk about them either. Or as Jack Garfein says at the end of *PIECES OF DREAMS*: "There's nothing left to tell".

*Mark Stöhr, Nothing left to tell,  
SCHNITT – Das Filmmagazin, Nr. 23,  
Bochum/Germany, March 2001,*

Austrian director Michael Pilz spent over three years on his two-part documentary on the life of farmers in the Steiermark region at the start of the 80s. His film entitled *HIMMEL UND ERDE (HEAVEN AND EARTH)* lasting over five hours apparently takes as long to do justice to the mercilessly archaic lives of the inhabitants of Sankt Anna as the director himself took to produce the film. Lives which primarily satisfy the most rudimentary needs of human life: work, a good livelihood and long life. The only things providing a change in routine are little events like festivities, processions and slaughters.

*Katharina Koppenwallner  
kid's wear, winter 2002, Cologne*

A ride in a motorized rickshaw, the heads of pedestrians flying by, teeming crowds on the side of the road, the honking of horns, throttling back, stepping on the gas. This could be India. Then all is silent. A door in a pitch-dark room, light behind it; another room, the chairs and tables are covered with white cloths; this place was abandoned a long time ago. A thunderstorm comes up, but in a different place, flashes of lightning x-ray the branches of a tree and plunge it back into darkness. Sometime later a studio, technical equipment all around. A man puts a cassette into the player and adjusts the speaker, we hear smacking sounds as if someone was treading a fine gravel path, the murmur of a spring. A cup comes into view, extensive lingering, accompanied by flowing water as if by music.

Sequences from Michael Pilz' latest film *WINDOWS, DOGS AND HORSES (2005)*. It stands as probably the most enigmatic montage of visual and audio fragments among the oeuvre of over 50 films this Viennese documentary film-maker has created so far. And it most likely forms the most radical apex of his aesthetic program, which renounces narrative linearity and conventional association of meaning with audio and visual content and composes his material according to fundamental parameters of perception such as loud and quiet, bright and dark, far and near. Almost in a spirit of abandon, a strictly personal arrangement already takes shape during the process of filming. According to his own statements, Pilz films his object not from the head, as it were, but acts on a gut feeling and instinctively keeps an eye on image detail and content, on

graphic proportions, light, color, contrasts, and sound; often, he already cuts entire film passages in the camera. His intense listening and looking is borne by what Freud called free-floating attention: Floating free and being attentive and waiting to see what will happen. In a conversation with Christoph Hübner shown in the 3sat TV series „Dokumentarisch Arbeiten“ (“Making Documentaries”, 2000), Pilz gave a good description of this immersion that is oblivious to the world, his complete devotion to his object. Hübner had asked how he, who has never used a tripod, managed to keep the camera so steady: „I don't know how to say it, one moves in so close to these things, physically and emotionally, and reenacts the movement of objects in one's mind, and that way one doesn't shake the camera or blur the images. This can get intense to the point where I don't think about anything. All I do is look, or hear, or I simply am. And I don't even know it. I don't know anything then (...). It's wonderful to come into this freedom. No more thinking. I'm not even doing anything anymore, just letting things be done; It's simply: not doing.“

With *WINDOWS, DOGS AND HORSES*, Michael Pilz not only pushes on with the open and poetic form of his documentary method, he also brings together material from different times and locations in a single cinematic space. It comprises film and sound footage of various events and encounters between 1994 and 2003. Fortunate discoveries he made on the many journeys he took in recent years – to India, Africa, Cuba, Italy, Turkey, or different Austrian regions. The aforementioned studio, for example, belongs to graphic artist and painter Andreas Orttag from Karlstein, Lower Austria. Footage from these trips sometimes resulted in separate films; this one, however, appears as the associative sum of disparate cinematographic diary notes, a mosaic of experiences, a place from which a star-shaped set of vanishing lines leads to different layers and phases of Pilz' work. In spite of all craft professionalism, knowledge, and acquired urbanity, there is a constant theme running through his work to this day: ever-evolving wonderment.

Just as in Africa. In 1997, Pilz made his first visit to Zimbabwe. Participating in a cultural exchange program, he accompanied musicians and composers Peter Androsch, Keith Goddard, Klaus Hollinetz, Lukas Ligeti, and photographer Werner Puntigam on a visit to Siachilaba, a small settlement of the Bantu people of the Tonga. In the previous year, the „Five Reflections on Tonga Music“ had taken shape in Linz, Austria: Electroacoustic variations on the musical tradition of the Tonga. Both European and African musicians now presented their repertoire to each other, and Michael Pilz documented this confrontation of two different cultures. Not as an ethnographer who learns about a foreign world and breaks it down into discursive

patterns, but rather as a body of seeing and hearing that joins in this symphony of the familiar and unfamiliar as an additional audiovisual voice. In creating his imagery, he mostly sets out by listening, as he said once: For his technique of „looking out from the inside“, tones and sounds were as reliable as images as they penetrate deeper into our sensory system. This „looking out from the inside“ creates a reality of its own, one that emerges from Pilz' perception of the outside world and which reaches far beyond a mere documentary style of recording facts. Thus, the footage from Africa that Pilz first included in *EXIT ONLY* (1997/1998) and later in *ACROSS THE RIVER* (1997/2004), focuses on seemingly meaningless details which occasionally turn out to serve as the initial, hardly perceptible trigger points of an entire chain of states of excitement: A man slightly bobs his head and softly hums a tune for himself, almost lethargically; a little later, the entire village is dancing and singing.

In the course of this first stay in Africa, Pilz got to meet musician and instrument maker Simon Mashoko, a virtuoso on the Mbira, to which magic powers are attributed in Africa and whose sounds often lead the way to a long collective state of trance. In 2002, Pilz visited Mashoko once more. From the resulting footage, he assembled his film *GWENYAMBIRA SIMON MASHOKO* (2002). A nearly four-hour marathon work of music and singing, of ecstasy and exhaustion. Static shots, occasionally continuing for several minutes without cuts, show Mashoko and his melodic spinning of yarns; no subtitles allow us to escape to secure hermeneutic realms. At the moment of shooting, even Pilz doesn't understand what the individual texts talk about. In 1992, together with choreographer and dancer Sebastian Prantl, he had staged a symposium on dance, music, and film, beautifully titled „entering the birdcage without making the birds sing“. This goes back to a wise saying by Tao teacher Chuang-Tzu, according to which the respective meanings of language prove to be ineffective when an elemental and primeval state of consciousness is reached. In *GWENYAMBIRA SIMON MASHOKO*, Pilz translates this valuable proposition into action and uses his film equipment as a coproducer, as it were, of an energetic awareness that is opposed to discursive understanding. As with so many other Pilz films, at first sight, the foreign remains unfamiliar, one has to trust the unknown in order to feel familiar with it. That's what Pilz does.

And one has to trust him. When he embarks on his expeditions, never taking the straight road and stopping here and there to make a discovery. Even the most inconspicuous things are marveled at from all sides, sometimes by taking a turn into a side street out of sheer curiosity — this can be wonderful and irritating at the same time and requires advance commitment and attenti-

on. The effort pays off, which every one of his films goes to show. Because as he walks, Pilz doesn't drag his feet. He is a vigilant flaneur who really does open up new spaces of seeing, both for himself and the viewer. And he doesn't claim to be smarter than his audience, something that sets him apart from many in his trade. A large number of his videos are works in progress. Not only as projects but also in their inner structure. They are marked by his cautious approach, his drawing near, trying to get his bearings as if, at the outset, the filmmaker knew nothing and had to slowly make things accessible for himself. Like in *INDIAN DIARY* (2000), his chronicle of a stay at a health resort in the small South Indian town of Changanacherry. The views from a room are followed by first attempts at exploring the gardens of the Sree Sankara Hospital. Subsequently, the radius of action is expanded by trips into town. A very busy traffic circle, a procession of people with hats resembling colorful Christmas trees on their heads. Pilz' wonderment is, at the same time, our own amazement. The nurses enter the scene and are established as a fixed ensemble of characters that runs through the entire film. Everyday rituals are rendered visible, massages, ablutions, meditations; step by step, a system of coordinates emerges that contains ever more fixed points. Occasionally, things that seem puzzling at first make sense in the course of events. As, for instance, the two men on the flat roof of a hospital, where the washing is hanging out to dry. At first, both are seen lying on mats, apparently basking in the sun; they are nonplussed by the camera. Later, Pilz climbs the roof once more and sees that this is the place where they gather for prayer.

A similar process unfolds in Pilz' other great travelogue, *SIBERIAN DIARY — DAYS AT APANAS* (1994/2003), even though here, reflections on the different ways of perceiving and looking at reality lead up to the actual beginning of the film. Not, however, as an elaborate theorem but in anecdotal form, through the personal notes of Dutch photographer Bertien van Manen, who accompanied Pilz to Siberia. With a certain degree of surprise, she relates how she and her Russian photographer colleague used to frequently call Pilz and tell him to take a look at this or that while he was still or already entirely somewhere else, following his very own tracks. She first begins her narration in English but eventually slips more and more into Dutch, and here, too, one is left with the phonetic body of words, merely listening and giving up on the decoding of meanings. In *Apanas*, a small Siberian village that lies buried under a thick blanket of snow for six months every year and where the film-maker and his two companions spend a few days, we encounter the same (acoustic) image: Pilz hardly understands a word of Russian, nevertheless, he strikes up a conversation — a dialog that does not attempt to fraternize and concedes to alienness. And



again, the camera enters into an almost meditative relationship to things it finds and wasn't looking for, and in doing so, it is always specific. A conventional travel report would have probably shown the locals telling us about their hostile natural environment and the tribulations of their lives, far away from and forgotten by Moscow, coupled with images that illustrate the snowed-in scenery and dilapidation. Pilz makes us feel the hardships, the painfully slow passing of time when one is condemned nearly to inactivity, the steamy air in overheated and smoke-filled rooms, which mists up the lens, or simply how it is to walk through deep snow, how every step requires considerable effort and the body – just as the camera – is thrown off balance. Already in 1994, Pilz brought this material together for the first time in the ten-hour version PRISJÄDIM NA DOROZKU. Even the significantly shorter 2003 version is still two and a half hours long, and it is easy to picture the TV producers' dismissive gesture, especially when faced with an aesthetics, which opts out of any kind of linear dramatization and, from the viewpoint of documentary mainstream, pursues an almost subversive information policy.

Since 1978 at the latest, Michael Pilz stopped worrying about making his films comply with the format guidelines and rules that competitors on the market adhered to. Before that, Pilz had mainly worked for Austrian Broadcaster ORF. As a co-founder of the „Syndikat der Filmschaffenden“ („Syndicate of Austrian Film Artists“), however, he was, at the same time battling for an Austrian Film Funding Act („Filmförderungsgesetz“), which actually came into effect in 1981 and became an important pillar of Pilz' own projects. In the course of working on FRANZ GRIMUS (1977), the portrait of a farmer, he eventually broke with TV altogether: The producers had scheduled merely four shooting days and four editing days – for Pilz a shockingly short stint for dealing with a person that needed a much longer period of study and involvement. His answer was to follow in 1982: HIMMEL UND ERDE (**Heaven and Earth**), a five-hour opus about life on a mountain farm in Styria – filming had extended over one year and editing had taken him another two years. The film starts with a quote from Lao Tse: „Take what is before you as it is, don't wish for anything else, just carry on.“ This can be taken as a programmatic motto for his open documentary concept, which he unfolded to its full extent for the first time here and has consistently pursued to this day.

Just be there. This also applies for the viewer. In the said interview with Christoph Hübner, Pilz maintained that he, who by now was almost exclusively working with video footage, had come to regard the setting of a monitor and a viewer as his favorite form of presentation. Such an intimate space would best enable him to focus on a Film

and enter into a dialogue on what he has seen with his own self. And if the audience does not go along with his work in the desired manner? „Even if art is not really free, despite this being laid down in constitutions or basic laws, as an artist one is at least free in a certain sense. In the end, someone will listen now and then. And if no one is there at all, then you just listen to yourself.“

*Mark Stöhr,  
The Music of Seeing, A Portrait of Filmmaker Michael Pilz,  
kolik.film, special issue 5/2006, Vienna, March 2006*

Original title .....	<b>Himmel und Erde</b> I. Die Ordnung der Dinge II. Der Lauf der Dinge
English title .....	Heaven And Earth I. The Order Of Things II. The Course Of Things
Country of production .....	Austria
Years of production .....	1979–1982
Date of completion .....	August 1982
Producer .....	Michael Pilz
Production .....	Michael Pilz Filmproduction
Script, Realization, Editing .....	Michael Pilz
Additional research .....	Liane Barnet
Cinematography.....	Michael Pilz, a.o. (Åaton 16mm, Angenieux 9,5–57 and 10–150, Zeiss Distagon 9,5 and 25, Makro Kilar)
Additional cinematography .....	Helmut Pirnat, Wolfgang Simon, Moritz Gieselmann
Original sound.....	Georg Buigner (Nagra IV Stereo, Sennheiser MKH 416P, Agfa PEM 468)
Additional original sound.....	Othmar Eichinger, Herbert Baumgartner, Hans Hoebinger, Beate Koegel-Pilz
Editing .....	Michael Pilz
Additional editing (raw cut) .....	Herbert Baumgartner, Hans Hoebinger
Sound mix .....	Heinz F. Reifenuer (sound-studio Heinz, Vienna)
Featuring, part I .....	Inhabitants of the Austrian mountain region St. Anna, Obdach, Styria – Hermann Damm called Kratzer, Aegidius Reiter called Erma, Elvira Reiter, Margret Reiter, Josef Staubmann, Franz Moitzi, Matthias Leitner, Walter Wieland, Max Freigassner, Johanna Damm, pupils of the primary school in Obdach, Alfred Leimer, Margarethe Leimer, Father Liborius Schäckermann OSB, Heinrich Knoll senior, pupils of the primary school in St. Anna, Peter Moitzi, Heinrich Knoll junior, Wolfgang Bischof, Friedrich Reiter, Friedrich Kreuzer, Johann Sattler, Waltraut Bischof, Ernst Bischof, Hans Wieser, Hans Schatz, Josefa Bischof, Robert Hörmann, Karl Zechner, Jakob Rabensteiner, Christine Reiter, Friedrich Leimer junior, Christl Reiter, Aegidius Reiter junior, Walpurga Staubmann, Mitzi Baumgartner, Vital Staubmann, Josef Baumgartner, Renate Baumgartner, Erhard Baum- gartner, Josef Fössl, Maria Fössl, Hans Fössl, Josef Leitner, Adolf Sattler, Peter Rabensteiner, Ernst Bauer, Hans Staubmann, Vital Moitzi, Urban Kinnesberger, Josef Sattler, Franz Rappitsch, Johann Kreuzbichler, Hans Stocker, Thomas Haselwander, Silvia Haselwander, Christian Haselwander, Paul Schlacher, Wolfgang Schlacher, Fredi Schlacher, Anna Moitzi, Gerlinde Schlacher, Konrad Moitzi, Erwin Moitzi, Manfred Moitzi, Karin Moitzi, Barbara Moitzi, Leonhard Hasler, Sabine Reiter, Isabella Reiter, Claudia Berger, Abbot Benedikt OSB, Ernst Sattler, Norbert Bauer, Renate Bauer, Maria Sattler, Franz Haag, Roman Schlacher, Aegidius Schlacher, Hans Schlacher, Manfred Meier, Karl Schlacher, Erwin Gsodam, Sepp Leitner and others

Featuring, part II .....	Inhabitants of the Austrian mountain region St. Anna, Obdach, Styria – Hermann Damm called Kratzer, Aegidius Reiter called Erma, Alfred Leimer, Friedrich Leimer, Margarethe Leimer, Christine Reiter, Hubert Reiter, Friedrich Reiter, Elvira Reiter, Isabella Reiter, Sabine Reiter, Urban Kinnesberger, Johann Kinnesberger, Anna Kinnesberger, Johann Sattler, Johanna Damm, pupils of the primary school in Obdach, Josefa Bischof, Heinz Knoll, Herbert Freigassner, Peter Sattler, Günter Schifferl, Fredi Schlacher, Wolfgang Schlacher, Gerlinde Schlacher, Margret Reiter, Christl Reiter, Franz Leitner, Friedrich Kreuzer, Heinrich Knoll sen., Heinrich Knoll junior, Ralph Burns, Aegidius Reiter junior, Hans Staubmann, Franz Staubmann, Franz Lasserus, Paul Leitner, Peter Schlacher, Wolfgang Bischof, Ernst Bischof, Waltraut Bischof, Matthias Zechner, Leonhard Hasler, Jakob Leitner, Anton Staubmann, Abbot Benedikt OSB, Father Liborius Schäckermann OSB, Father August Ebner SAC, Maria Staubmann, Johann Rabensteiner, Josef Staubmann, Irmgard Staubmann, Manfred Kinnesberger, Johann Rabensteiner, Maria Rabensteiner, Johann Hiebler, Maria Hiebler, Peter Moitzi, Martha Schlacher, Engelbert Kreuzer, Konrad Reiter, Maria Reiter, members of the church choir St. Anna, Lambert Kohlmüller, Vital Moitzi, Peter Bauer, Josef Sattler, Johann Moitzi, Urban Sattler, Sepp Leitner, Norbert Bauer, Renate Bauer, Franz Staubmann, Franz Rappitsch, Adolf Sattler, Matthias Fröhlich, Ferdinand Reiter, Thomas Haselwander, Silvia Haselwander, Christian Haselwander and others
Locations.....	14°40' East Longitude, 47°2' North Latitude, the region of Sankt Anna, Obdach, Styria, Austria
Language of dialogues .....	German, original styrian dialect
Additional citations, commentaries.....	Lao Tzu – <i>Taoteking</i> , with the kind permission of publishers, Heinrich Hugendubel, Munich, Germany Dzuang Tzu – <i>The true book of the Southern Land of Blossoms</i> , with the kind permission of publishers, Eugen Diederichs, Cologne, Germany gospels of the prophet Jessiah, of St. Matthew, St. John, St. Paul, St. Marc, as well as from the Talmud, Stanislaw Lem, Beate Koegel-Pilz, Jerzy Grotowski, Carlos Castaneda Sergej Leonidowitsch Rubinstein – <i>Language and Consciousness</i> , Moscow 1957 a dream by an indian woman of the Papagos
Language of additional words .....	German
Speaker of additional words.....	Michael Pilz
Subtitles (english version) .....	English (Cinety, Luzern, Switzerland)
Original songs, composition and performance.....	Ensemble Bluemchenblau, Vienna, with the kind permission of the publishers, lemon records, Vienna; Jakob Mundl arrangement, voice, lead guitar; Götz Schrage organ; Wolfgang Lachinger guitar; Josef Fencz base; Tschurri percussion; Ernst Seuberth recording and mix (Studer 16), original recordings between January and April 1982, Gorilla studio Vienna

Words of original songs .....	<i>Weihnachtsmann</i> by Ensemble Blümchenblau, Vienna <i>Ich bin vermutlich wie die Tiere</i> by Konrad Bayer, Oswald Wiener and Gerhard Rühm
Music from archives, interpretation .....	<i>Weil's nocha Zeit is</i> , words and melody by Norbert Wallner, interpreted by the church choir Sankt Anna, conducted by Konrad Reiter <i>Good Old Hollywood is Dying</i> by Waterloo & Robinson (juke-box) <i>Weary Blues</i> by Matthew/Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges <i>2nd Salzburg Symphony</i> by W.A.Mozart, international short-wave-radio on 21 March 1981
Off-voices, effects .....	<i>Professor Verblovsky</i> , words and performance by Ilse Leitenberger, radio/ORF, 3 April 1980 <i>Kreisky, Sweden, Florida</i> , television-news, ORF, 9 May 1980 reports of Adolf Sattler called Großrichter, Bärnthäl, Lavantegg, April 1982 <i>Meine Gedanken zum Beruf des Bauern</i> , school-essay, written and performed by Erhard Baumgartner called Kohlmüller, 26 April 1980 <i>Sauschlacht</i> , performed by Fredi Schlacher called Falterbauer, 28 March 1980 radio-news and commercials, ORF, 13 May 1980 <i>Mein Traum</i> and <i>First dictation</i> , performed by Christl Reiter called Erma, April 1980 Aegiudius Reiter senior called Erma, 20 March 1980 reports by Matthias Zechner, Rothaidenhütte, 30 June 1980 Speaker of the cattle-auctions in Leoben, 19 March and 14 May 1980 International radio-shortwave, 27 October 1980 Father August Ebner SAC in Mariahilf, Carinthia, 13 June 1980 Gospel of St.Markus 13/33, performed by Christl Reiter called Erma <i>Memoiren aus der Badewanne</i> , citation from a novel by Stanislaw Lem, with kind permission of Insel Verlag Frankfurt a.M., performed by Waltraut Bischof called Giebler, 5 March 1980
Water-colours .....	Pupils of the primary school Obdach, class 1/2 d, 1979/80, with kind permission of the director, Mr. Othmar Steiner
Black and White photographs .....	Professor Rudolf Friedrich, 1936, with the kind permission of Paul Leitner, Annawirt in Sankt Anna
Colour photographs .....	Michael Pilz, Fujicolor 24/36, 25 September 1980
Original process and format .....	16mm, Eastman Color Negative II 7247, Fuji Color Negative A 8527, Ilford b/w Negative Mark V, format 1:1,38, 25 i/s, raw material total length 19.300 m
Negative laboratorium .....	Wienfilm Kopierwerk Grinzing
Title, hand-letters .....	Christl Reiter called Erma in Lavantegg
Title, machine-letters .....	Times bold, Alfabet-Studio Vienna
Titles, tricks and slow-motions .....	Rudolf Linshalm, Cinema-L, Vienna
Print .....	<i>Film 16</i> , Helmut Rings, Munich, Germany
Print process .....	Fujicolor Positive HP 8814, blowup 16/35 mm, Color and b/w, 1:1,38 (prints available also in 16 mm) Optical sound, mono (16 mm: magnetic sound) Part I: 697, Part II: 936
Sound system .....	
Number of shots .....	Part I – 3.881 m (7 reels), Part II – 4.261 m (8 reels)
Length (35 mm) .....	
Running time (24 i/s) .....	Part I – 142 minutes, Part II – 155 minutes
Running time (25 i/s) .....	Part I – 137 minutes, Part II – 150 minutes
Weight (35 mm, 15 reels) .....	approx. 75 kg

Financial support .....	Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Sport and Art
Special thanks .....	Hubert Bals, Josefa Bischof, Johanna and Hermann Damm vulgo Kratzer, Georges Devereux, Fritz Falch, Carlo Fedier, Paolo Freire, Jean-Luc Godard, Franz Grimus, Erika and Moritz de Hadeln, Alfred Kohlbacher, Herbert Koller, Peter Konlechner, Josef Kramer, Walter Marti, Reni Mertens, Erika Metzger, Fredi C. Murer, Guillermo Otálora, Familie Reiter vulgo Erma, Helmut Rings, Franz Rohrmoser, Günter Scheer, Gottfried Schlemmer, Franz Zellnik
First screening .....	23 September 1982, 6th Austrian Film Days, Kapfenberg
Festivals, special events, awards .....	Kapfenberg, Styria, Austrian Film Days, September 1982 Nyon, Switzerland, Festival International du Cinéma, October 1982 ( <i>Prix de Jury Oecumenique</i> ) Aurillac, France, Rencontres Cinéma et Monde Rural, November 1982 Vienna, <i>Viennale</i> , International Film Festival, November 1982 Rotterdam, International Film Festival, February 1983 Berlin, International Forum of Young Film, February 1983 Figueira da Foz, Portugal, Festival Internacional du Cinéma, September 1983 ( <i>Grand Prix for Best Documentary</i> ) Montréal, Canada, Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma, November 1983 Paris, Sémaine du Cinéma Autrichien, Cinémathèque Française, November 1983 Edinburgh, International Film Festival, August 1984 San José, California, Cinequest Film Festival, September 1991 Vienna, <i>Films Trespassing</i> , International Documentary Film Festival, October 1991 Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Linz, part of the retrospective <i>Landvermessung, 20 Years of Austrian Film</i> , autumn 1991 until spring 1992 Riga, Latvia, <i>Arsenal</i> , International Film Festival, September 1994 Vienna, <i>Exercise in Reality</i> , December 1996 St. Pölten, Austria, part of the exhibition <i>Über die Berge</i> , 1 March – 30 August 1998 3sat-TV (Germany, Switzerland, Austria), 18 + 23 Feb. 2001 35th Summer Film School Uherské Hradiste (CZ) July, 2009
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# HIMMEL UND ERDE

1979 – 1982

Film von

**MICHAEL PILZ**

I. Die Ordnung der Dinge II. Der Lauf der Dinge

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