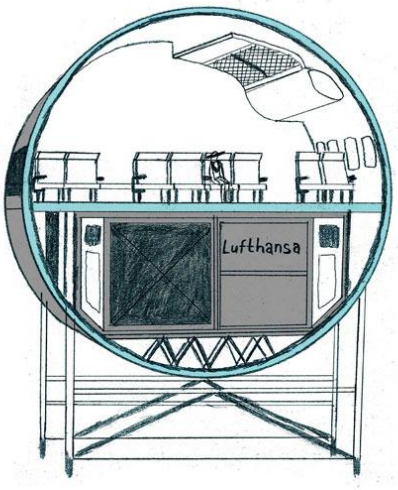
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Airbus A300B and the Rise of Mass Tourism

Laakso, Riikka

The volume of air traffic increased drastically over the past 50 years as a result of globalization and mass tourism. In Germany, the number of passengers traveling to international destinations rose to a record high of 78.9 million in 2013. Worldwide, seven million people travel by air daily and this number is expected to increase to 44 million by 2050. Air travel has a significant impact on climate change: emissions released in the upper atmospheric layers are three times more harmful than the same emissions in lower layers. Although airplanes are becoming more energy efficient, this trend cannot be stopped. Engineers are working on completely new types of airplanes that will be more environmentally friendly and require fewer resources; they will integrate hybrid engines and materials such as light carbon nanotubes. However, while aeronautics experts are confident that these designs are viable, our children's children will probably be the first to actually see them in use.



Airbus A 300B, Fuselage Section and Wing, 1972

Drawn by Riikka Laakso, 2014.

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Around the world in 3 days: Mass tourism

Text and images by Riikka Laakso
University of the Arts (UdK), Berlin



Around the World in Three Days
Munich, 8 p.m. Well, yet again, another weekend is upon me. What should I do this time?

Drawn by *Riikka Laakso* , 2014. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License .



Usangi, 10 a.m. Killing three zebras and a leopard while on a safari.

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Airbus A300B and the Rise of Mass Tourism
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/6630
Print date: 26 November 2026 07:15:39



Himalaya 7 p.m. Climbing the Ama Dablam and buying the most exclusive type of salt.

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San Miguel, 8 a.m. At the rate she's diving, she'll never have enough for a pearl necklace by the end of the day.

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Anchorage, 4 p.m. Dinner at sunset.
Whale filets are half price today.

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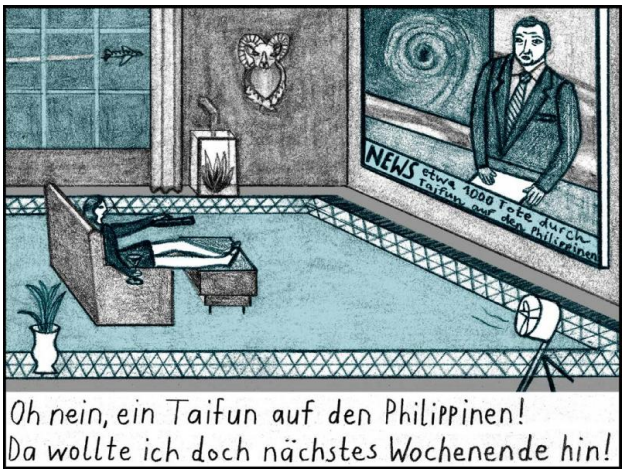
Mombasa, 12 p.m. Date with my lover.

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Munich, 9 p.m. I sure hope my new crocodile leather handbags won't be confiscated at customs.

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Oh no, a typhoon in the Philippines! I wanted to go there next weekend!

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Artist's comment:

Prior to my research into this topic I had never thought about the consequences of air travel and its impact on climate change. I was especially shocked by the absurd last-minute cheap flights such as e.g., a weekend shopping trip to Dubai. For us humans, the time and money we save have priority, but isn't it about time to start thinking about the future and the consequences of our own actions?

How to cite

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The comic also appears in Alexandra Hamann, Reinhold Leinfelder, Helmuth Trischler, and Henning Wagenbreth, eds., *Anthropozän – 30 Meilensteine auf dem Weg in ein neues Erdzeitalter. Eine Comic-Anthologie* (Munich: Deutsches Museum, 2014).

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Further readings:

- Sources and Literature for the Anthropocene Milestone Comics

Related links:

- Welcome to the Anthropocene. The Earth in Our Hands. Special exhibition at the Deutsches Museum http://www.deutsches-museum.de/en/exhibitions/special-exhibitions/archive/2015/anthropocene/
- Welcome to the Anthropocene. The Earth in Our Hands. Virtual exhibition on the Environment & Society Portal https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/6354
- Comic-Anthology, Deutsches Museum Website http://www.deutsches-museum.de/sammlungen/entdecken/comics/

Websites linked in image captions:

- http://www.deutsches-museum.de/en/collections/transport/aeronautics/jets/airbus-a-300/