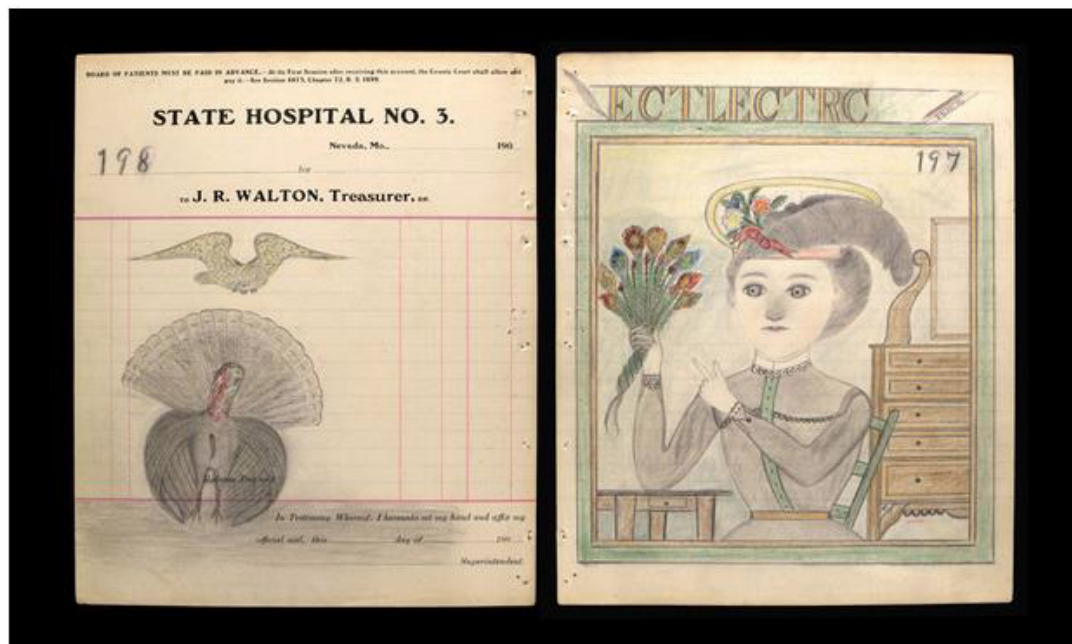


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OUTSIDER ART FAIR 2015



Reportage - October 23, 2015, by Guillaume Benoit

The Outsider Art Fair is held at a beautiful, old townhouse this year and proposes once again an art that is free, emancipated from history codes.

After moving into a bigger venue, the Fair confirms its ambitions and seems to have settled down permanently in the Parisian art week. The Outsider Art Fair was founded 23 years ago in New York around the concept of the "Outsider art" as developed by Roger Cardinal in 1972. Outsider Art was an art category that expanded the Art Brut definition given by Jean Dubuffet. The Outsider Art Fair affirms the vitality of a parallel art scene where obsession, repetition and diversion are all patterns of a self-taught and unique creation. Together with Halle Saint-Pierre (a Parisian institution of Art Brut), the Fair thus invited the most important international galleries of art brut, outsider and folk art to allow us to discover their artists.

This discovery is organized in such great way as to show the contrast between the intimacy and polished elegance of the venue and the explosive fantasies of artists from all backgrounds, animated by visceral artistic impulses perceived in each of the works showcased by the 38 galleries.

This presents an opportunity to see again one of the leading figures of art brut, Henry Darger, whose artworks were recently exhibited at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Some of his superb frescoes are showcased at Carl Hammer Gallery and his paintings are shown by

Andrew Edlin, the very dynamic president of the Fair. It is an opportunity to see again the famous frescoes showing little girls and artworks inspired by a bestiary representing a golden eagle that is believed, according to the artist's mythology, to protect his heroines from danger. Another great figure of art brut, James Edward Deeds, is showcased by the gallery Hirschl & Adler. His 143 drawings forming a book discovered a few years ago are very powerful (see our review of his last exhibition in Paris).

As for the gallery Les Arts Buissonniers, it is showing photographs taken by Miroslav Tichý, whose female characters - shown in the simplicity of their daily life transfigured by the artist's eye - are still captivating art lovers from around the world. Finally, the Andrew Edlin Gallery is showcasing one of the biggest names on the market, France's Marcel Storr. The gallery presents three of his drawings which offer a rare complexity and expressivity and which distorts buildings in vertigo, as well as a wall dedicated to Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's pictures.



The latter never stopped to photograph his wife or to put her on stage. Over the years, he produced a number of portraits and pictures of her in various poses - focusing on a face happy to play his game and seemingly sharing his obsession for the images.

The Outsider Art Fair is also an opportunity to travel around the world thanks to the presence of galleries specialized in some geographical regions. This is the case of the Hervé Perdrille

Gallery which exhibits a solid collection of Indian contemporary art, including a very simple and elegant painting which captivates the eye by Vijay Mashe. This painting is placed next to the artworks of Chano Devi who passed away in 2010.



As for the European artists, there is no doubt that the public will love the works of Paul Amar, who has been a sensation at the Officielle at the Docks art fair (Cité de la mode et du design). His psychedelic, colorful altar finds in the mansion a perfect venue that emphasizes the precision and dedication of this self-taught artist who was able to mix influences from all over the world in his detailed structures. The gallery Les Arts Buissonniers is honoring him with a well-deserved tribute.

As for the Polysemie gallery, it is showing a very convincing body of work by Evelyne Postic which forms an enigmatic ensemble of figurines revealing a unique and disturbing universe where the precision and meticulousness of her lines create hybrid forms and structured fantasies. In an in-depth look into her world, the exhibition focuses on the latest works of the artist, who now uses unique colors for her compositions.

Finally, the work of Marcos Bontempo features a less gloomy world but equally deep and troubled. With disconcerting simplicity and efficiency, the compositions of the artist living in Spain

reveal a profound paradox: scenes of still landscapes full of bright colors contrast with a worrying bestiary whose members, bending in all directions, seem to be engaged in macabre dances that appear as eerie as they look festive. In his book of paintings, the extreme efficiency of the compositions is striking and, page after page, we discover a possible story.

Obviously this third Parisian edition of the Outsider Art Fair has successfully achieved its goal in offering an important visibility to a "continent" of the modern and contemporary art which - even if it seeks to remain separate from it - takes some of its inspiration from that art and influences it in return. In the plush intimacy of the living rooms of this mansion, the visitor meets a festive effervescence. Amid very disparate exhibitions, the visitor understands quickly that each proposal, each artwork presented here is an encounter, a world strangely as open as it was created in a real or imaginary confinement. We hope this event will continue to expand because it offers a useful and salutary counterpoint to the multitude of fairs in Paris which are struggling to find a unifying and coherent theme.