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## Art & Design

### ART REVIEW; A Steady Stream of Outside Artists Come Into the Fold

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Courtesy Judy A. Saslow Gallery

"Babilon," a gouache on paper by Emerik Fejes, at the Judy A. Saslow booth of the Outsider Art Fair.

You could almost call this year's Outsider Art Fair, making its customary January appearance at the grandiloquent Puck Building in SoHo, the Inside-Outsider fair, so familiar have some artists become to the mainstream. Henry Darger, Martin Ramirez, Adolf Wolfli, Bill Traylor, the Rev. Howard Finster, Elijah Pierce and, of course, Grandma Moses, the grande dame of Outsider art in this country, are all names with bells and whistles, so to speak. And pricey examples of their work are here in force

Still, the fair, short on uptown amenities like space and elegance of presentation, retains its air of folksy informality. And the usual suspects (read: classic older artists) it presents are balanced by more recent discoveries. The difference between outsider and mainstream art no longer seems so pronounced, and the category of "outsider" seems less tightly defined. (Is the

man's suit at the Carl Hammer booth, covered with buttons sewn on by a collector, "outsider" or hobby art?)

But over all, the fair still has the freshness and pizzazz of images made by those "outside society, outside the world of art, academies, museums; outside commerce and commercialism," as defined by the British art historian Roger Cardinal, who coined the term Outsider art.

Newer offerings among the 33 dealers participating this year include stunning pattern drawings by Eugene Andolsek at the American Primitive Gallery, intricate symmetrical geometrics of brilliantly colored lines and spaces that bedazzle like kaleidoscopic images. His work, kept in a trunk and never shown by Mr. Andolsek, who worked as a stenographer for the Rock Island Railroad in Pittsburgh and other cities, is also on view in the current "Obsessive Drawing" show at the American Folk Art Museum in Manhattan.

The Galerie Atelier Herenplaats of Rotterdam in the Netherlands shows strong stuff by Hein Dingemans, an autistic artist (as are many in this Outsider show) whose powerful black-and-white ink drawings depict aboriginal and tribal muscle men -- some with heavy-metal guitars -- acting out the artist's vigorous sexual fantasies. More lovable are the fat and fierce sumo wrestlers, displaying different holds and done in bright colors with the aid of a computer by Shinki Tomoyuki, a former wrestler and one of a group of artists from Osaka at the Phyllis Kind Gallery.

European artists making their debuts at the fair include the German-born Josef Wittlich (1903-82), a laborer in a pumice factory, whose lively, cheerfully chromatic images run to people in fancy dress: Swiss Guards, soldiers topped by shakos and carrying bright banners, Queen Elizabeth wearing a tiara, and such. Although Wittlich was self-taught, taking his images from cigarette packs and World War II battle pictures, his work -- at Wasserwerk.Galerie Lange of Siegburg, Germany -- is proficient enough to be confused with mainstream art.

A discovery at the Cavin-Morris Gallery is the Czech artist Zdenek Kosek, who creates small but amazingly detailed "weather maps" of world conditions. In addition to wind shear, storms and other physical factors, these also convey his emotional states, using puns and wordplay. The gallery is also showing for the first time the sculptural work of Emory Blagdon (1907-86), a Nebraskan farmer, whose "healing machines," marvelous concoctions of wire, foil, metal scraps, pieces of board, sliced-

up beer cans, plastic beads and whatever, were made to tap into energy fields that he believed would help heal afflictions like arthritis.

Another magical miracle worker was Fleury-Joseph Cr?n, a French artist (1875-1948) whose small, symmetrical abstract work of 1939 at the J. P. Ritsch-Fisch Galerie of Strasbourg, France, is the long-sought first of a series of 345 "mediumistic" paintings done by the artist in an attempt to stop World War II. This dealer is also showing two paintings, one an abstraction made with cut-up orange skins, the other a figurative rendition made of potato skins, by Philippe Dereux, a close friend of Jean Dubuffet, with whom he used to raid vegetable gardens for material.

As if to prove that older Outsider art exerts its influence on the new, a display of Grandma Moses's work at the Galerie St. Etienne is mounted right across the aisle from that of yet another new discovery, Clarence Swinyer at Maxwell Projects. Swinyer's peaceful rural scenes (including a lively one of men in snowmobiles jumping over a farmhouse) owe much to the Moses brand of nostalgia.

Of course, there is much, much else to see. There are subtle, intricate mazes, each made from a single line by Jonathan Stark, at Art + Community. A sly, almost life-size painting (found buried in the attic of a Christian evangelist's home) depicts a well-coiffed Eve, nude and holding an apple in the Garden of Eden, at Ricco/Maresca. "The Dangerous Black Eagle Hunt" (1949), a literal cliffhanger of a painting by John Roeder (1877-1964), can be found in a small show of this recently discovered artist's work at Luise Ross.

And don't miss, at Yukiko Koide Presents, a Tokyo gallery new to the fair, the flat, colorful pieces of applique?felt by Junko Yamamoto, which give new life to mundane objects like kitchen gadgets, tuna and squid sushi, and a special spring dish: a bowl of rice with green peas.

The Outsider Art Fair continues through Sunday at the Puck Building, Houston and Lafayette Streets, SoHo. Hours: today, noon to 8 p.m.; tomorrow, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission: \$15. Information: (212) 777-5218.