

ABSTRACTS AND AUTHORS

ENGLISH ANNEX

EDITORIAL

Eva di Stefano

The central theme is the epistemological question of the porosity of the border between Outsider Art and contemporary art, the randomness of definitions but the need for them as an orientation tool. The cases of Hilma af Klint, Ursula Bluhm, but also Ligabue are examples of the provisional nature of each label. This is followed, as usual, by new artistic discoveries, a new in-depth analysis of the Chinese situation, and other reports. Of particular note is the publication of an unpublished text by Pierre Restany criticizing Art Brut in the context of the 1960s.

Eva di Stefano taught Contemporary Art History at the University of Palermo from 1992 to 2013; she founded the Outsider Art Observatory in 2008, which she runs together with the homonymous magazine published since 2010; among her many publications on 20th-century art, the volume "Irregolari. Art Brut e Outsider Art in Sicilia" (Kalòs, Palermo 2008) should be noted.

DOSSIER – BOUNDARIES/OVERLAPS

Bianca Tosatti

There is no border that is not a threshold. For Samaneh Atef

Presenting the work of an Iranian artist in exile, Samaneh Atef, who has recently attracted the attention of Outsider Art enthusiasts, the author offers an interesting reflection on the relationship between frame and border, and on the different meanings of each relationship between an inside and an outside. The connection between body and memory is the heart of the artist's expressive research.

Bianca Tosatti is an art historian, authoritative expert and promoter of Art Brut and Irregular Art, on which she has conducted pioneering studies in Italy and curated many important institutional exhibitions, among which we can mention 'Figures of the soul' (Genoa 1997) and 'Beyond reason' (Bergamo 2006); she lives near Parma.

Gavin Parkinson

Hilma of the spirits, neither insider nor outsider

On the occasion of the exhibition *Hilma af Klint and Piet Mondrian: Forms of Life*, which recently ended at the Tate Modern in London, and can currently be seen at the Kunstmuseum in The Hague, the author analyzes the paradigmatic case of af Klint's painting, marginalized due to her spiritualist and mediumistic practice outside the rigid and ideological canons of the history of contemporary art, and in recent years rediscovered and considered an authentic pioneer of abstract art. The comparison with Mondrian, according to the author, attests to her qualitative primacy.

Gavin Parkinson, a professor of Modern Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, is the author of important studies on surrealism; at the center of his research interests are also theory and methods of visual culture, the relationship between art and science, science fiction and occultism; among his numerous publications are 'Futures of Surrealism: Myth, Science Fiction and Fantastic Art in France 1936-1969', (2015); and 'Robert Rauschenberg and Surrealism: Art, Sensibility and War', (2023).

Eva di Stefano

Ursula, a surrealist in her own way

The work of the German Ursula Bluhm, a self-taught painter and creator of fantastically inspired assemblages and objects, is unclassifiable due to its singularity. She was initially included among Art Brut exponents by Dubuffet, despite the fact that the artist moved in the informal avant-garde milieu of the 1950s and 1960s. This unclassifiable nature, her not being part of any movement or current, has led to a historical marginalization despite the presence of works in important German museums, such as the Ludwig in Cologne. 'Individual mythology' is perhaps the only adequate definition for her work which a recent exhibition has brought to light.

Dino Menozzi

Here or there. The Ligabue case

Who is Antonio Ligabue? A naïf, a brut, an expressionist, a visionary? One hundred controversial labels have been slapped on him over time, also for market reasons, and each reflects some element of his work and his biography. The author, a great expert on naïf and marginal art, after an examination of the different critical positions, proposes a recovery of the original meaning of the term *naïf*, corrupted over time by improper use.

Dino Menozzi (Reggio Emilia) is a collector, and since the early 1960s has been one of the main promoters and popularizers in Italy of naïf art first and then of irregular arts; he founded and from 1974 to 2002 edited the magazine "L'arte naïve", opening it up to all expressions of marginal art.

EXPLORATIONS

Giulia Pettinari

Don Maurizio Fileni, a modern-day wall amanuensis

Maurizio Fileni, the parish priest of the church of San Silvestro in Monte Roberto, near Ancona, represents a real discovery: he has developed his own original system of mural writing with which he transcribes literary masterpieces, creating real environmental works in the habitable spaces of the parish. Among the transcriptions, in addition to passages from the Gospel and the Bible, are Don Quixote, The Betrothed, Euripides' Medea, and texts by Guccini, Baricco and Erri De Luca. A unique work of its kind, where the sacred and the profane coexist in the name of the poetic truth of the word.

Giulia Pettinari is an art historian and independent researcher in Outsider Art. She collaborates with the social promotion association McZee, with which she organizes cultural events in her region of origin, Marche. She lives and works in Rome as a support teacher in a lower secondary school.

Turhan Demirel

The merry meditations of Klaus Renken

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of his collection, celebrated in an exhibition in Essen, the Turkish-German collector offers us a brief presentation of an artist from his city, Wuppertal. Klaus Renken is a multifaceted creator, also dedicated to musical performances, inspired by anthroposophy. If the paintings present themselves as luminous visions, his DIY work with elements taken from nature, stones, woods and roots, presents itself as a playful tribute to life and the environment.

Turhan Demirel, born in Türkiye, lives in Wuppertal; a neurosurgeon, he is one of the most passionate collectors of Outsider Art in Germany, which he disseminates through conferences, publications and exhibitions.

Laura Baldís

A tea with Guo Haiping, a pioneer of Chinese Art Brut

In the second part of our in-depth analysis of Art Brut in China (the first was published in issue 25), the author proposes an interesting conversation with Guo Haiping, the founder and animator of creative ateliers in Nanjing. The interview retraces his first steps, from the exploration of the concept of psyche and art from the end of the 80s down to the contemporary world: an emotional and intellectual affair at the same time; a story of formation and action in the context of profound cultural and social changes.

Laura Baldís has lived and worked in Beijing since 2018. A researcher on the history of psychiatry in China, she took a Master at the Freie Universität of Berlin with a thesis on Art Brut in the People's Republic of China; she currently works as a freelancer at a mental health social enterprise.

IN-DEPTH

Fabrice Flahutez

Contemporary art versus Art Brut: a debate from 1960 to 1970 with an unpublished text by Pierre Restany

In a text from 1967, previously unpublished, the great critic and curator Pierre Restany takes a stand against Dubuffet and his conception of Art Brut; the text was rediscovered by the author of this article. We present the document in the original French, accompanied by Flahutez's essay, which contextualises the criticism of the influential founder of Nouveau Réalisme in the context of the 1960s: an era of renewal, protest and collective actions, in which artists claimed a social role against bourgeois paradigms, and in the eyes of a militant critic like Restany the anti-cultural notion of Art Brut focused on the individual can only already appear obsolete.

Fabrice Flahutez is a professor of 20th and 21st century art history at the Jean-Monnet University of Sain-Etienne and a member of the Institut Universitaire de France, a specialist in surrealism and post-1945 artistic groups, and a curator of exhibitions. His publications include *Art et mythe* (Les presses de Paris-Ouest, Nanterre 2012); and *Arts drogués, expériences psychotropiques et création artistique* (Les presses de Paris-Ouest, Nanterre 2013).

João Pedro Fróis

The magic of drawing. Collecting and understanding children's drawings

This article gives a brief introduction to the subject of children's art. In the first part of the essay, I focus my attention on the relationship between children's drawings and the theorization of this topic for the scope of outsider art. I discuss here the thoughts of Corrado Ricci, Rodolphe Töpffer, Giulio C. Argan, Cesare Brandi and James Sully on this topic and the studies by Victor Fontes, the founder of Child Psychiatry in Portugal. In the second part, I show a few samples of a rare children's drawings collection organized by Fontes in the forties and fifties of the twentieth century. The graphic expression of the early ages was considered by him as a kind of "mirror" to children's cognitive and emotional development.

João Pedro Fróis is a senior researcher at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon. He studies the relationship between psychology, aesthetics and visual arts, has worked as a mental health and rehabilitation psychologist for children and young adults, coordinated the Gulbenkian Program 'Research and Aesthetic Development', is a member of the International Association of Empirical Aesthetics – IAEA, and an affiliated researcher of the Center for Phenomenological Psychology and Aesthetics of the University of Copenhagen.

MUSEUMS

Eva di Stefano

Visiting the House of Art Brut

'Casa dell'Art Brut' is a private museum promoted and supported by the Bussolera Branca Foundation on an estate in Mairano di Casteggio in the province of Pavia. It has a beautiful international collection, put together by Fabio Cei, and today represents a reality that is consolidating in the sparse Italian context with large-scale initiatives. The new exhibition was inaugurated in June 2023 with an exhibition of the great Serbian artists Sava Sekulić and Ilija Bosilj, in collaboration with MNMA (Museum of Naive and Marginal Art) in Belgrade.

REPORT

Yaysis Ojeda Becerra

Portraits of the soul: an exercise in aesthetic disobedience

Portreto de la animo is an exhibition which, from summer to autumn 2023, has displayed 136 works at the Museo Nacional Soares dos Reis, in Porto, all dedicated to the free practices of portraiture in Art Brut. There are paintings, sculptures, drawings and photographs belonging to the Treger-Saint Silvestre Collection, one of the largest European collections and certainly the most important in the Iberian peninsula. A common trait among the works is the absence of realism, the imaginative interpretation of physiognomies, and reduction to anatomical essence.

Yaysis Ojeda Becerra, who was born in Cuba and lives in Madrid, is an art critic and independent researcher specializing in Art Brut and Outsider Art. She collaborates with various magazines, including "Bric-à-Brac" dedicated to Outsider Art; among the volumes she has published is 'El Aullido Infinito' (La Habana, 2015) on the work of some Cuban brut artists, and the recent 'La piel del Grito' (Hypermedia 2022).

Valentina Di Miceli

The beauty revolution in Librino

The article reports on the collective artistic experience of Librino, a peripheral and marginalized neighborhood of Catania, promoted and conceived by the artist-patron Antonio Presti and the result of years of social work: a participatory action with the involvement of inhabitants, children, art students and professional artists. It is an exceptional example of relational art outside the canons, which transformed a wall, a border that is, into a blue landscape open to dreams.

Valentina Di Miceli, an art critic, freelance journalist and secondary school teacher, is the editor-in-chief of the magazine "Osservatorio Outsider Art."

Traduzione di Denis Gailor
