

# ABSTRACTS AND AUTHORS

## ENGLISH ANNEX

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### EDITORIAL

*Eva Di Stefano*

Inspired by the exhibition *Flying High* held this year in Vienna, our dossier brings together various contributions devoted to well-known and less well-known women artists, with particular attention to mediumistic art, which today is arousing renewed interest. The protagonists of the dossier include the transgressive Helga Goetze. In the other sections there are new artistic discoveries, among which an interesting ecological environment on the river Po and the painting of the Turinese Cosimo Cavallo, a fine critical essay by Michel Thévoz on Curzio Di Giovanni and some reports from Sicily.

*Eva di Stefano* taught *History of Contemporary Art* at the University of Palermo from 1992 to 2013, and in 2008 she founded the 'Osservatorio Outsider Art' that she directs together with the journal of the same name.

### DOSSIER

*Morteza Zahedi*

#### **Naneh Hassan: legends and colours of Iran**

The tireless Teheran gallery owner presents his latest discovery: an eighty-year-old painter with a poor and very fatiguing life, but a family that gives her plenty of solidarity. Since her infancy she has woven carpets, also making the colours herself from plants, and has listened to the legends and traditional myths of her country. Today with brilliant colours and decorative imagination she paints those legends and her dreams, or transfigures her memories of lived experience. They are naïve and fascinating works, done, as she says herself, "to keep pain away."

*Morteza Zahedi* is an Iranian artist and an award-winning illustrator. Moreover, since 2001 he has been the only Outsider Art collector in Iran and has been engaged in its promotion both in his homeland and abroad. In 2017 he also opened the gallery *Outsider Art Inn* in Teheran, where he lives.

*Gloria Marchini*

#### **Flying High. Artists beyond double marginalization**

An account of a visit to the great Viennese exhibition devoted to Art Brut by women, from 1860 down to our own time: 93 artists from 21 countries and 31 collections. The authoress underlines the correspondence between the narrative pathway of the show and the social pathway of the women from marginalization to the emancipation, also reporting some declarations by one of the people organizing the exhibition, Hannah Rieger. After having underlined the presence of a strong spiritistic current among the creators of Dubuffet's historical collection, the authoress dwells in particular on the contemporary artists that have most struck her, such as Julia Krauser-Harder.

*Gloria Marchini* took a diploma in Valorization of the Cultural Heritage at the Brera Academy; in 2014 she started the blog *outsiderartnow*, to contribute to the diffusion of these themes in Italy. She collaborates with the Rizomi ArtBrut gallery in Parma and is among the founder members of the Artètipi cultural association.

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*Pilar Bonet Julve*

**Medium and visionaries: Clara Schuff, Nina Karesek and Julia Aguilar**

The text stresses that phenomena of spiritism and mediumistic activity, widespread in society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, today constitute a 'repressed cultural element' to re-examine with a new look. For women spiritism has often constituted a place of emancipation and a social alibi for their creativeness. Besides, it is necessary to remember that spiritism was often connected to currents of socialist and libertarian utopian thought. In this outlook the authoress proposes the little known stories of three mediumistic drawers.

*Pilar Bonet Julve, an art historian, teaches at the University of Barcelona and deals with texts, drawings and embroideries by European women born before 1918 and connected to visionary spiritism and healing; she took care of the show ALMA. Médiums y Visionarias, Museum Es Baluard de Palma, 2019; she belongs to the Visionary Women Research Group and is the president of the Asociación Josefa Tolrà (www.josefatolra.org), Josefa Tolrà being a medium and artist on whom she is an expert.*

*Lucienne Peiry*

**The workshop of Jeanne Tripier**

Among medium or clairvoyant artists, Jeanne Tripier in the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne is certainly one of the most famous. In the second half of her life, her spiritistic obsession even took her to a mental asylum, where as an in-patient she created an exuberant set of works with various expressive modalities, doing both unusual textile works (embroidered, sewn and knitted), and atmospheric paintings, drawings and writings, under dictation – according to her – by voices from the beyond. Hers is a case that seems to confirm the profound relationship between spiritism and artistic creation, which for Dubuffet is at the base of all artistic production.

*Lucienne Peiry is an international expert on Art Brut who directed the museum Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne from 2001 to 2011. She currently teaches at the University of Lausanne. Among her various books, the essential L'Art Brut (Flammarion, Paris, 1997) has been translated into many languages - including Chinese - and an extended and updated version edition was published in 2016.*

*Marie Jeannet*

**"I was my dress": Jeanne Laporte's enchanted dress**

In the course of time the name and memory of the person that created the so-called 'Robe de Bonneval' were lost. This was a sumptuous embroidered dress coming from a psychiatric institution and now displayed at the French LAM museum. The author of the article, through documentary research, has finally identified the creator of the dress in Jeanne Laporte (1893-1956), a hospitalized seamstress. In the text she reconstructs her strong personality and her life overwhelmed by mental illness that began when she was just over thirty and caused her to be permanently hospitalized, and tries to identify the motivations behind this unusual textile work on the basis of the documentation found.

*Marie Jeannet graduated in history of art at the University of Neuchâtel, going on to do a master at the University of Lausanne; she deals in particular with textile creations in Art Brut.*

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*Eva di Stefano*

**The second life of Helga 'Sophia' Goetze**

Before causing a scandal in Hamburg, Helga Goetze had been a good housewife, a wife and the mother of seven children, but, following an unexpected and amazing erotic adventure during a trip to Sicily, she was to leave her family to preach sexual freedom in public, and was to end up settling in Berlin. Her works, magnificent embroidered tapestries, full of figures and sexual symbols, of heretic and erotic fairytale narrations, were created as a visual support to her preaching. Her story and her thought are to be contextualized in the 1970s, the years of the love revolution, of experiments in community life and multiple love, and of dawning feminism.

*Roberta Trapani*

**Danielle Jacqui and the house of wonders**

The French artist, now eighty-five, is well known today for the fanciful interior and exterior decoration of her house in Provence. Horror vacui, saturation of space, bold juxtapositions, a magma of matter, the mixture of the expressive languages (assemblage, mosaic, mural painting, ceramics, sculpture, textile work, recycling) constitute the elements of a very personal style. Recently with part of her works she created a museum installation at Draguignan in a 13th-century chapel, which she now presents as a phantasmagorical Wunderkammer of the 20th century.

*Roberta Trapani, an art historian specializing in outsider environments and visionary architectures (PhD at the Paris Nanterre and Palermo Universities), lives in France, where she has taught at various Parisian universities and co-founded various associations devoted to Outsider Art, among them PIF (Patrimoines Irréguliers de France) and CrAB (Collectif de réflexion autour de l'Art Brut).*

**EXPLORATIONS**

*Dino Menozzi*

**The filigree Ark of Alberto Manotti "king of the Po"**

Alberto Manotti, who was born in Calabria but lived at Boretto, a village near the river Po, which crosses northern Italy, as a child conceived a special attraction for the river. When he retired from his work as a carpenter, on the shore, recovering pieces of wood (branches and trunks) that had run aground in the loops in the river, he began to build a raised structure enriched by various elements (turret, circular spaces, hut etc.) which it is possible to go through to admire the watercourse from above. Local children use the site, called the 'Jolanda Ship', as a play park.

*Dino Menozzi (Reggio Emilia, 1933) since the 1960s has been one of the main promoters and popularizers in Italy first of naive art and subsequently of irregular art. He founded and from 1974 to 2002 edited the magazine "L'Arte Naïve", opening it up to all expressions of marginal art.*

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*Francesca Renda*

**Roberto Mastai, the uneasy traveller**

Born in Lombardy, but wandering in the world, he spent the last part of his life in Bologna, where he became well known among street vendors, living as a free artist and poet. An anarchic spirit, he obstinately chose an existence on the margin, always anti-conventional and underground. His works, today preserved by his friends, are characterized by surreal lightness, poetic sensibility and playful spirit. With a good knowledge of literature, he collaborated with the small independent publishing company Barbès, for which he did a full 300 covers, in which he freely interpreted narrative interlacements.

*Francesca Renda (1993) studied Teaching of Art at the Fine Arts Academy in Palermo and Visual Arts at the University of Bologna; she has worked at Spanish museums; among her interests are Surrealism, Outsider Art, photography and 21st-century performing arts.*

*Turhan Demirel*

**Fancy Women: drawings and desires of John Henry Toney**

Toney is an African-American artist who has always lived in Alabama, where he worked in a cotton factory or in the fields, living alone in a rundown trailer. From his childhood he loved to draw. Subsequently, as an adult, encouraged by a friend devoted to Folk Art, as a self-taught artist he found a pithy and humorous expressive style of his own. His themes range from the Bible to animals and vehicles, but most of his production is devoted to stylized female figures, curvilinear ones with abundant breasts: amused stereotypes of masculine desire.

*Turhan Demirel, was born in Turkey and lives in Wuppertal. A neurosurgeon, he is one of the most passionate collectors of Outsider Art in Germany, which he seeks to promote through conferences, publications, and exhibitions.*

**IN-DEPTH**

*Michel Thévoz*

**Curzio di Giovanni and the enigma of the human face**

The faces drawn and storied by Curzio Di Giovanni, inspired by famous characters or by advertisements in illustrated magazines, catch you off guard and arouse multiple interpretations. The author analyzes their mechanism of deconstruction and suggests various Gestaltist or psychological explanatory hypotheses, to conclude that these faces are so disturbing, and lend themselves to so many explanatory hypotheses, because they reflect the decomposition of our figurative system itself. They don't give us univocal answers, but instead ask us some essential questions on our modalities of vision.

*Michel Thévoz, an art historian, philosopher, museum conservator, and teacher at the University of Lausanne, in 1976 conceived the museum of the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne, which he directed until 2001; he has published about twenty books that are fundamental for understanding Art Brut and borderline phenomena.*

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*Marzia Capannolo*

**Cosimo Cavallo. The other, beyond, elsewhere**

Cosimo Cavallo lives in Turin, where he is known for his eccentric behaviour. A painter with mature gesture that studied at the Accademia Albertina, he vigorously cultivates researches on Max Ernst and Surrealism, and is defined "a mystic." For about twenty years he has gone round the city streets howling, cursing, gesticulating, and delivering to interlocutory imaginary his deepest reflections on painting and on the ultimate meaning of things. The main theme of his works is the face: ovoidal faces of humanoids and aliens, oil paintings on tapestry, but also innumerable biro drawings on cardboard, defined by the obsessive insistence of the line.

*Marzia Capannolo is an art historian and Art Advisor for collectors. She organizes displays of modern and contemporary art, is a curator of the Gliacrobati Gallery in Turin and collaborates with specialized art magazines. Since 2010 she has done lectures and cycles of thematic meetings within scientific popularization of the History of Art.*

**BORDER STORIES**

*Pier Paolo Zampieri*

**The theatre of Andromeda. The cosmological archisculture of Lorenzo Reina**

Lorenzo Reina, an artist (he studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Palermo), and a shepherd by family tradition, at the centre of Sicily has built with his own hands, on a very panoramic hill that belongs to him, an extraordinary stone theatre devoted to the constellation of Andromeda. Presented at the 16th International Exhibition of Architecture at the Venice Biennale exhibition (2018), this construction is well known today. Zampieri underlines its archetypal quality, the relationship with the landscape and the experience of cosmological synaesthesia, which takes the theatre back to its Greek origins.

*Pier Paolo Zampieri is a sociologist and one of the founding members of Zona Cammarata. He teaches Urban Sociology at the University of Messina and deals with urban phenomena, the imagination, and Outsider Art.*

**REPORT**

*Domenico Amoroso*

**Francesco Cusumano, who wanted to fly**

Creatively recounting Art Brut works opens up new stimulating possibilities, producing new meanings. It is the case of the effective graphic novel on the story of Francesco Cusumano (Caltagirone, 1914-1992), a historical protagonist of Sicilian Art Brut, recently presented at Noto in Sicily. Done in France, in a micro-edition in Toulouse, with drawings by Maxime Jeune and texts by the artist's nephew Niki Ottimofiore, it recounts the extraordinary visions and adversities of the artist with the bright colours of Sicilian folklore and symbolic imagery deriving from tarots.

*Domenico Amoroso, an archaeologist, is the creator and founder of MACC, the Caltagirone Museum of Contemporary Art, which displays the only public collection of Sicilian art brut and outsider art.*

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*Valentina Di Miceli*

**Art mends men and objects**

Among the virtuous practices of inclusion and social recovery, the craft workshop at the Ucciardone prison in Palermo coordinated by Vincenzo Merlo has a major impact. After recovering the simple old stools that for decades constituted part of the furnishing of cells in Italian prisons, the inmates have restored them and decorated them with multicoloured motifs from Sicilian folklore, turning them into symbolic objects. After they were displayed in 2019 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Palermo, a single large stool-cart was made that went through the streets of the city on the occasion of the Feast of Santa Rosalia, the biggest folk feast in the city.

***Valentina Di Miceli**, an art critic, journalist and publicist, is the editor in charge of the journal "Osservatorio Outsider Art."*

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**Traduzione di Denis Gailor**