

ABSTRACTS AND AUTHORS

ENGLISH ANNEX

EDITORIAL

Eva di Stefano

The opening dossier, devoted to Sicily, brings together a group of articles devoted to the latest major discoveries of artists and presents the project for an exhibition on Sicilian Art Brut. But, as always, our explorations open up to other territories, and in the following section other fantastic artists unknown till now testify to the present-day geographical amplification of the outsider artistic phenomenon from Europe to Latin America. In the stories told the common element is the self-therapeutic function of creation. A new section devoted to museums, not only Outsider Art ones, but also small eccentric museums born of the 'mania' of a collector, completes this issue, together with critiques of books, conferences and exhibitions of general interest.

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 ON SICILY

Eva di Stefano

Terra matta. Notes for an exhibition in Sicily

The text presents the project for a Sicilian Art Brut and Outsider Art exhibition in Palermo planned for the end of 2018, but not yet confirmed. Sicily, as our researches have shown, is very rich in irregular and neglected expressive productions, though some works by artists like Bentivegna and Bosco are present in international collections. The project, interweaving history of art and anthropology, intends to explore the deep motivations of the authors and their relationship with the territory. Through a selection of works and documents of artists who are no longer alive, made respecting the historicized criteria of Jean Dubuffet, the exhibition has a historical approach and proposes an unusual and eccentric itinerary over the whole island.

Daniela Rosi

Salvatore Accolla: an outsider in the heart of classicism

A metaphysical feeling pervades the works of Salvatore Accolla (b.1946), a painter and poet that lives in conditions of marginality in the historical area of Syracuse, near the ruins of the temple of Apollo. In his works there are intense colours, recurrent symbolic elements, shadow-men, juxtapositions and surreal perspective hierarchies, in a personal figuration that seems to have assimilated cultured Italian twentieth-century painting. According to the artist, there is no spontaneous cultural metabolism in contradiction with his outsider position. Forms and symbols originate in the painter's poor and troubled existence, also marked by psychiatric hospitalisation that lasted twenty years.

Daniela Rosi, a curator of outsider art and contemporary art, teaches at the Fine Arts Academy in Verona; after studies in the field and active experiences on the artistic practices in 'care places', in 2014 she founded LAO, which she now directs; it is a project for research on, support for and promotion of outsider artists.

Domenico Amoroso

The *carnets* of the game-world of Salvatore Zimone

An artist with two faces that every day freely crosses the frontier between inside and outside: alongside the action painting of his public artistic production, the autodidactic Zimone (b. 1957, Caltagirone) practises a different and secret creative dimension. Submitting his most intimate and genuine inspiration to drawings on the pages of small notebooks, he takes over freedom of sign without pre-established models, produced by a sort of psychic automatism of the memory. Sequences of eccentric fairytale, humorous and metamorphic figures, with the colour of childhood games, animate these secret sheets, here disclosed for the first time.

Domenico Amoroso, an archaeologist and historian of art, 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.

Giacomo Lipari and Rita Ferlisi

Giuseppe Bonsignore: myth, mysticism and poetry

The latest discovery of outsider artist in Sicily, Giuseppe Bonsignore (1921-2006) drew all his inspiration and figurative motifs from his village, Palma di Montechiaro (Agrigento province), founded by the Tomasi family to which the author of the famous novel *The Leopard* belonged. The artistic peculiarity of Bonsignore is the relationship with his own roots and the mythical imagination of the place. Suffering from a brain trauma he had at the end of the Second World War, he spent a solitary life as a marginalized person, with eccentric and histrionic behaviours that overflowed into performance. He painted starting from the post-war period with a concise and spontaneously expressionist style on recycled material, fruit crates and abandoned pieces of wood or other materials. He did landscapes, legends, emblems and religious images.

Giacomo Lipari, an anthropologist, since 1999 has worked at the Superintendence for the Cultural and Environmental Heritage in Agrigento for protection and valorisation of the ethno-anthropological and historical-artistic heritage; in addition to numerous publications, he has dealt with aspects of folk and anthropological interest for the Commune of Palma di Montechiaro within the Project "Palma di Montechiaro: frames of memory" (2006-2008).

Rita Ferlisi is an art historian at the Superintendence for the Cultural and Environmental Heritage in Agrigento. She deals with safeguarding of and scientific research on the historic and artistic heritage; she collaborates with the Parco Valle dei Templi for initiatives related to contemporary art; in 2015 she curated the conference Filippo Bentivegna. Storia, tutela e valori selvaggi and edited the relevant book.

EXPLORATIONS

Federica Timeto

In the wake of the moon: the painting of Alessandro Santoro

The paintings of Alessandro Santoro (Faenza, 1969-Novara 2007) are analysed here for the first time. His work encompasses more than 300 canvases, for the most part undated, and around 1000 drawings, all done in a period of ten years, starting from

late 1991. Although his style changed with time, going from very simple, definite and flat forms to more complex, detailed and dynamic compositions, a series of themes and figures recur in his paintings, among which the *Eviotali*, the name he gave to his androgynous and enigmatic figures with only one eye, who float in the cosmos watching humans from above, promising them a life beyond guilt following the moon.

Federica Timeto, PhD in 'Aesthetics of the new media' and 'Sociology of cultural and communicative processes', a teacher of History of Art at high school and of 'Sociology of the new media' at the Fine Arts Academy in Palermo, deals with aesthetics, visual studies, and feminist art (*Culture della differenza, Utet, 2008; Diffractive Technospaces, Routledge, 2015*).

Turhan Demirel

Hildegard Wohlgemuth, the Begging Queen

Having survived a tragic war event as a child, but marked by the trauma with psychiatric consequences, Hildegard Wohlgemuth (1933-2003) spent a homeless existence as an eccentric beggar in the streets of Hamburg. She began to draw at 52 doing compositions with lively fairytale colours: a fantastic 'middle world' at the intersection between the psychotic kingdom and the real world evoking illustrations of books for children. The drawings, which she sold or gave to passers-by, became a tool to overcome her isolation and made her a local celebrity to whom documentaries and telecasts were devoted.

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.

Josefa F. Mora Sánchez

The metaphysical drawings of Magali Herrera

Magali Herrera (1914-1992) was an artist and Uruguayan writer who began to draw and paint at thirty-eight, without previous training, in 1952. His work focuses on his visionary capacity to imagine other parallel dimensions. Most of his works were acquired by Jean Dubuffet.

Josefa F. Mora Sánchez, aka *Pepa Mora*, is an artist, curator and historian of art, and a drawing teacher; she took a PhD at the University of Granada, where she continues her researches and has created the specialist course 'Diploma en Art Brut. Mundos paralelos, sinceridad y brutalidad en el arte' (2016, 2018).

Samuel Riera and Derbis Campos

In the jungle of the mind: Federico Garcia Cortizas

The pioneering Art Brut Project Cuba, created in 2012, is one of the projects of the Riera Studio, an art space in Havana. It aims to give visibility to the artistic processes of artists that are vulnerable and marginalized. Among the Cuban outsider creators promoted by the project, Federico Garcia Cortizas (b. 1971) is distinguished by his love for wild nature and his virtuosic, obsessive drawings of twisted vegetable interlacements: trunks, branches and roots that form impassable barriers. These dense woods, with strong roots and with no way out, metaphorically recall the dark

worlds of the mind, as if the weft of the branches was transfigured into arteries, veins and neuronal connections.

Samuel Riera is a founder and general director of the Riera Studio and of Art Brut Project Cuba; he lives and works in Havana.

Derbis Campos is the co-founder and assistant director of the Riera Studio and Art Brut Project Cuba; he lives and works in Havana.

FOCUS

Lucienne Peiry

The oneiric constellations of Marie Lieb, or the mania of the skies

The installations done with shreds of cloth by Marie Lieb (1844-1917) in the Heidelberg mental hospital had an ephemeral nature, and the artist herself periodically took them to pieces and put them together again. Hence all we have of these sky maps done on the floor are some 1894 photographs. Basing on these documents, for the exhibition *Inextricabilia* curated by Lucienne Peiry last year at the Maison Rouge in Paris, an interesting experiment at reconstruction of the work was carried out: the Swiss artist Mali Genest activated, also through gestures, her own physical and sensory perception, going over the creative process of Marie Lieb.

Lucienne Peiry is an international expert on Art Brut who directed the Collection de l'Art Brut museum in Lausanne from 2001 to 2011. She currently teaches at the University of Lausanne. Among her several 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.

MUSEUMS

Peter Dierinck

Secret worlds. The collections of the Dr. Guislain Museum

The Dr. Guislain Museum in Ghent, Belgium, is an important historical museum of history of the psychiatry. Since 1991 it has also had a rich Outsider Art section. In addition to its own collection, since 2002 it has hosted the Dutch collection of the De Stadshof Foundation, comprising no fewer than 7000 works by high quality artists. The article recounts its story, structure and museological philosophy; it dwells on the most recent thematic exhibition, *Anxiety*; and lastly it illustrates some of the most significant artists in the collection: Willem Van Genk, Francis Marshall and Gerard Van Lankved.

Peter Dierinck, a psychologist, works in Ghent in the rehabilitation service of the Sleidinge Psychiatric Centre; he has collaborated with the magazine 'Raw Vision' and has published the volume 'Hoop Verlenen' (Witsand, 2017), 'giving hope', in which he proposes gradual abolition of psychiatric institutions in Belgium.

Eva di Stefano

Buchheim Museum: the 'ship' of wonders

Created in 2001 to house the eccentric collections of the writer and artist Lothar-

Günther Buchheim, the 'Museum of Imagination' is on the shore of Lake Starnberg, near the village of Bernried, about 50 km. from Munich. In addition to an important collection of Brücke expressionists, it displays sculptures and objects from Africa and the east, folk art and every sort of bizarre object, also contemporary. It is the venue chosen for the final exhibition of the Euward prize 2018 (inauguration on July 21), assigned by the German Augustinum foundation to artists with psychic disability. The prize winners of this edition are the following (in alphabetical order): Michael Golz, Ota Prouza, Tim der Wal and Clemens Wild.

Valentina Di Miceli

The prince of toys. Pietro Piraino Papoff and his Museum

Pietro Piraino is the last Sicilian wax sculptor, having learned the technique in Paris at the Grévin Museum. During his busy life, he never forgot his childhood dream of a world of toys. He collected a great number of them and in the end had one of the richest collections in Italy. The museum, currently housed at the eighteenth-century Villa Valguarnera Chartreuse in Bagheria (Palermo), not only displays rare period toys and nineteenth-century dolls, but also numerous and precious ancient automatons made in France, also by the famous Maison Phalibois. The collection also includes some wax figures done by Piraino himself, which reinforce the impression that the whole museum is above all a total artwork (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) by its founder.

Valentina Di Miceli, an art critic and publicist, is the editor of the "Observatory Outsider Art" magazine and a teacher of history of art at the Abadir academy in Palermo.

BOOKS

Eva di Stefano

Discovering special gardens and eccentric abodes

A presentation of the recent volume by Bruno Montpied, *Le Gazouillis des éléphants* (Éditions du Sandre, 2017), which illustrates 305 self-taught creators of eccentric environments in France, classified by region and in alphabetical order. The author's gaze dwells on socio-anthropological value rather than on aesthetic value, emphasizing the bond with rural folk cultures, though an anarchic *bricolage* with marked individualism distinguishes these authors from the craft teachers, who instead work in a codified style.

REPORT

Enrica Bruno

A wholly individual photographer. Vivian Maier in Catania

The occasion for reflecting again on the unresolved definition of outsider is provided by a recent exhibition in Catania of works by the ingenious American photographer (1926-2009) who in recent years has achieved international fame. The fact is that though adopted by the official history of photography, Vivian Maier has the perfect profile of the outsider artist: with her very personal eye she only took photographs for herself, often not even developing the film; she experienced photography as compulsive action, but entirely private, without aspiring to professional gratifications

or to a public; finally, completing the legend, as in the case of the works of Darger, is the posthumous discovery of an unknown heritage of one hundred thousand snaps.

Enrica Bruno is an art historian. She works as a tourist guide in Palermo and collaborates with the *Osservatorio Outsider Art*.

Sarah Palermo

Balkan turbulences in Paris

Serbian Art Brut, the protagonist of the current exhibition at the Halle Saint-Pierre, curated by Martine Lusardy and Nina Krstic, has an alternative character compared to similar artistic expressions in the rest of Europe. The specificity is given by its being shot through by an obsession with identity, which carries with it the constant weight of the Balkan past marked by dominations, conflicts and national myths. Another element that marks its development is the institutional support of communist Yugoslavia to forms of spontaneous and self-taught art.

Sarah Palermo is an art historian and curator. She works in Rome and Paris, where she also contributes to numerous art magazines; she researches female artists, memory, and identity in contemporary art and *Outsider Art*.

Marilena Calcara

Outsider Art: a symposium in Düsseldorf

In the light of increasing visibility, the problem of the definition of *Outsider Art* and its relationship with mainstream art continue to be the subject of an open debate. The conference organized last autumn by the University of Düsseldorf tried to give some answers: *Outsider Art* is to be considered a historical concept that belongs to the sphere of reception rather than to that of creative production. But, though in museum practice a sensible classification by categories is not always possible, specificity remains a useful tool to appraise the best methodologies of presentation, display and popularization.

Marilena Calcara lives in Düsseldorf, where she is doing a PhD in History of Art at the Heinrich-Heine University; at the same university she is also a contract teacher in 'Italian for art historians.'