

# outsider art fair 2012



Courtesy Dean Jensen Gallery: Eugene von Bruenchenhein "No. 220, May 3, 1955" Oil on art paperboard

## Sanford L. Smith & Associates PRESS RELEASE

7 West 34<sup>th</sup> St. | NY | NY | 10001

Preview January 26: Invitation Only 5-6:30PM • Ticketed 6:30-9PM \$35

Friday January 27: 11-8PM • Saturday January 28: 11-7PM  
Sunday January 29: 11-6PM

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*2012 OUTSIDER ART FAIR MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD'S SHOWCASE ANNUAL EVENT IN THE OUTSIDER/SELF-TAUGHT ART FIELD*

**NEW YORK**—Few fields within the international art market have grown as energetically or been as consistently marked by innovation, unusual discoveries or cutting-edge cool as that of outsider art.

The term refers to works made by artists who never went to art school and who generally make their paintings, drawings, sculptures and inventive, mixed-media creations for themselves or for small, local audiences, outside or removed from the cultural or commercial mainstream. Often, the visionary, deeply personal, soulful character of their work is hard to miss. It is this compelling creative spirit that has attracted the impassioned interest of collectors, dealers, curators, critics and trained artists around the world for more than half a century, and which inspired the founding of the **Outsider Art Fair** in New York 20 years ago.

This year, the fair, which has become the art market's most high-profile venue for the presentation and sale of the newest creations by outsider/self-taught artists from around the world, and a locus for the collecting trends and the lively critical debates that percolate through this still-evolving field, will mark its big anniversary with the participation of dozens of exhibitors from North America, Europe, Asia and the Caribbean, along with a wide-ranging program of related, special events.

A noteworthy roster of new, institutional and gallery exhibitors will be taking part in the fair for the first time this year. Among them: the Collection de l'Art Brut, from Lausanne, Switzerland, the world's leading museum specializing in outsider art; New York's El Museo del Barrio, the foremost museum in the U.S. dedicated to the investigation and presentation of Caribbean, Latino and Latin-American art, which will promote its forthcoming exhibition "Testimonios" (February 1-May 6), featuring works by non-traditionally trained art-makers; and the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Self-Taught Artists, which will present its new online research database.

Once again this year, in conjunction with the fair, the American Folk Art Museum has organized and will present "Uncommon Artists," a series of talks about timely subjects in the outsider field. In addition, the independent scholar Valérie Rousseau, a specialist in outsider art, has organized a series of panel discussions and film screenings that will take place during the run of the fair, featuring such well-known collectors in the field as James Brett, the founder of London's Museum of Everything; Bruno Decharme, a documentary filmmaker and founder of the abcd Collection in Paris; and Lawrence B. Benenson, a New York-based collector and member of the boards of directors of the American Folk Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. Among the roundtable talks, "Collecting Madness" will examine both a collector's passion for outsider art and the fact that several prominent self-taught artists have created remarkable bodies of work despite having suffered from mental illnesses, while "With Dubuffet" will consider the influential legacy of the French modern artist Jean Dubuffet, whose pioneering research and theorizing decades ago helped shape the then-nascent outsider art field. For full program details visit [www.sanfordsmith.com](http://www.sanfordsmith.com).

Sarah Lombardi, the Collection de l'Art Brut's interim director, says: "Our presence at the fair will offer a magnificent opportunity for our museum to become better-known in the U.S." Lombardi notes that the museum will make its extensive research in the field available in the form of a diverse selection of its publications and documentary films (in DVD form) that will be available for sale, including a series called *L'Art Brut* made of monographic articles about self-taught artists that Dubuffet himself created and was first published in the 1960s.

New exhibitors this year will include, among others, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, a New York venue specializing in collage-based and assemblage art; MAKE Skateboards, a Brooklyn-based company whose recent pop-up shops in Manhattan and St. Louis brought together self-taught artists' works, design objects and original, limited-edition skateboards featuring emblematic motifs from outsider artists' works; and Galerie les Singuliers, from Paris, which focuses on the work of artists whose aesthetic sensibilities have been influenced by such sources as punk rock, street-art graphics and so-called ethnic art forms from non-Western cultures.

MAKE Skateboards founder Scott Ogden observes: "The world of self-taught or outsider artists has been an inspiration for me for a long time. This year, in particular, seemed like a great time to introduce a little new blood into the fair, and with that in mind, I'll be releasing new, limited-edition skateboards featuring authorized reproductions of the art of two of the best-known artists in the field. I'll also show original works by several artists who are rarely, if ever, represented at the fair."

New York dealer Pavel Zoubok notes: "I'll be showing the collage drawings of Penny Rockwell, which refer to her obsessive fear of electrical outlets. It's fascinating work, which served a therapeutic purpose for the artist and which viewers will find to be very intriguing." Zoubok, whose gallery is a member of the prestigious Art Dealers Association of America, points out that "the **Outsider Art Fair** provides a terrific setting in which to introduce a new artist to this exciting field, to which many contemporary-art collectors are paying more and more attention."

Other newcomers to this year's fair will include Red Truck Gallery, from New Orleans; Yard Dog Gallery, from Austin, Texas; Pure Vision Arts, Manhattan's first art studio and exhibition space for artists with autism and other developmental disabilities; and Land Gallery, a Brooklyn-based, non-profit organization that presents the work of artists who are living with disabilities.

In his essay in the catalog that will be published on the occasion of this year's **Outsider Art Fair**, the critic Edward M. Gómez, who has long specialized in the outsider field, notes that admirers of this special kind of art "find that it is filled with soul, raw creative energy and an aura of authenticity that they cannot or do not find easily among the deluge of art merchandise that is available on the broader contemporary-art market." He adds: "As many of [them] regularly point out, there is one inescapable aspect of the most compelling work made by self-taught artists that never fails to seize their imagination: That is that it is always profoundly, unmistakably, inexplicably moving."

That inescapable energy that characterizes so many self-taught artists' works is the very lifeblood of the **Outsider Art Fair**. We invite you to stop by and take in the wide-ranging offerings of this year's big event, and, as Gómez notes, "to be deeply moved by some of the most original art forms to be found anywhere on the international market today."

Emily Christensen, *Outsider Art Fair Director*

**Please visit [www.sanfordsmith.com](http://www.sanfordsmith.com) for exhibitor and program details.**

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