

EUROPEAN OUTSIDER ART ASSOCIATION

Statement of the Board 2014

In 2013, Outsider Art reached a new level in public and art world awareness through Massimiliano Gioni's exhibition "Palazzo Enciclopedico" at the Venice Biennial. For the first time, a lot of outsider artists were included in this important overview of what seems to be relevant for art now, thus putting Outsider Art on a level with art by professional exhibition artists. Some art critics and experts were still puzzled – but I don't think this wheel can be turned back.

Following the successful Outsider Art Fair in New York at the beginning of 2013, the first Outsider Art Fair in Paris took place in October; both fairs were organized by New York gallerist Andrew Edlin. This year's moving of the New York event to May to coincide with the Frieze Art Fair is a clever idea and I am sure will work in favor of the growing awareness towards Outsider Art. Anyway, a growing number of contemporary art galleries are taking outsider art into their programmes. The art is also blending into private collections. And now that some private Outsider Art or Art brut collections have found their way into public museums over the last few years, even sometimes into custom-built new spaces, the next step will be that art museums purchase single outsider art works and present them simply beside other art.

Another noteworthy recent tendency has been that Outsider Art workshops and (open) studios have opened their own gallery spaces. A forerunner was Gugging, of course. New examples are atelier 23 in Gießen with its "Galerie am Bahndamm", Geyso 20 in Braunschweig with an exhibition space on their own premises, and Atelier Goldstein in Frankfurt with its "Galerie Goldstein". Their programmes are diverse, mostly also open to other artists, and therefore good examples of integration.

European Culture Programme

We are currently preparing another application to the European Culture Programme. This time we decided on a two year project with the attractive name COME for 2015 and 2016, which will concentrate on environments and collections. Connected with it will be two conferences, one in Palermo and one in Katowice, touring exhibitions and new features on the EOA website. The Board will introduce the ideas in Paris and discuss them at the General Assembly.

Annual General Assembly and Interest Groups

At the General Assembly in Paris next week we will elect some new Board members. Some existing members do not want to be reelected. Therefore we have asked some other EOA members to be candidates. I am very grateful to them for agreeing; it is not easy to contribute actively to the work of the Board alongside the existing workload we all have to struggle with in our profession – and since our organisation still cannot cover traveling costs. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank departing members Elisabeth Gibson and Marisol Álvarez for all their hard work, vision and commitment.

Of the Interest Groups which came together for the first time last year in Heidelberg, at least two will continue this year: "Environments" and "Open Studios". We will have to discuss whether or not our members have the interest and motivation to continue the other two Groups ("Collecting and Exhibiting" and "Research").

Secretariat

During Maria Bach's absence from the GAIA museum in Randers the EOA secretariat has been well guided by her cover Jan Ulrik Saksø Juhl, who not only looked after all organizational work for the EOA and participated in our virtual board meetings, but also very actively took part in the first

preparatory meeting for the European Culture Programme application in Copenhagen this January. We are very glad that GAIA Museum is still strongly supporting the work of EOA.

Good Reasons for Membership

And last but not least I have once more to point to the still quite small (if growing!) number of EOA members who have not yet paid their membership fees. Please, show us you care by promptly paying for your membership and advertise our organization to others who may be interested. This support is crucial, especially as long as we have no other funding.

Kind regards

Thomas Röske
President of the European Outsider Art Association