

Statement of the Board

January 2015

Last Year

2014 was a successful year for Outsider Art worldwide. To mention only a few facts from my subjective point of view: The Outsider Art Fair in Paris, a branch of the fair in New York, took place for the second time and is now established, the next one has already been announced for October 2015; in October this year, the first Australian international conference on Outsider Art took place, it was a big event organized by Arts Project Australia and held at the University of Melbourne; the Prinzhorn Collection loaned works to 13 external exhibitions, more than ever – and most of these shows were not specifically about Outsider Art. And last but not least: there is a growing academic interest in the field; in 2014, there were more courses at European universities and more exam papers and PhDs on Outsider Art than ever before!

In May, the EOA conference in Paris on “Curating Outsider Art” was also a success. We gathered speakers from all over Europe and from the USA. The auditorium in the Halle Saint Pierre was well visited, the discussions were lively. And the major overview of outsider art that was the 25th anniversary exhibition for Raw Vision was an excellent bonus to the event. I am glad that we managed it with combined forces and in spite of little money; the EOA still has no proper funding beside the members fees.

Secretariat and Board

This and the staff situation at GAIA museum are responsible for the lack of information about our organization's ongoing work during the last months – for which I want to apologize. We were happy to have Jan Ulrik Saksø Juhl, replacing Maria Bach in Randers during her maternity leave, with us as EOA secretary. And we are very pleased to have Maria back now. Unfortunately, she will not be able to do as much for our organization as she has done in the last few years. Therefore we have decided to employ an additional person with EOA funds to build on the crucial work of the secretariat in Randers.

In this and other decisions, the newly elected board, complemented by Barbara Safarova of abcd in Paris, Lotte Nilsson Vålmaa of Inuti in Stockholm, and Marc Steen of Palant House Gallery in Chichester has worked well together so far, with one meeting of the group in London in September 2014, when we mainly discussed another application to the European Culture Programme.

European Culture Program

Unfortunately, for different reasons, the board was not able to make an application to the European Culture Programme in 2014. We will take the next opportunity and apply in October 2015. If successful, we will develop our bigger project of mapping outsider art in Europe and offering easier access to the many different institutions, museums, studios and galleries. We will be able to talk more about this during our next General Assembly in May, to take place alongside the next EOA conference in Palermo, Sicily.

Conference, Annual General Assembly and Interest Groups

Choosing a different country for the combined General Assembly and Conference every year allows us to get to know more and more outsider art institutions and artists in Europe. During the 2013 conference, Eva di Stefano described how many fascinating and endangered outsider environments there are in Sicily. This makes Palermo the ideal city for a conference about such environments. With an amazing conference space that only Italy could provide, bringing together experts from many European countries, offering tours of different artist's environments in Sciacca, Messina and Castellammare and proverbial Italian hospitality, it will surely be a memorable and unmissable event. Before the conference starts there will be meetings of the four EOA interest groups. Board members who are responsible for them will send out the relevant information soon. After the conference, we will have our Annual General Assembly.

I am looking forward to meeting you in the Palermo sunshine!

Thomas Röske