

18. January 2019

Dear members and friends of EOA!

Last year was eventful in many ways not least in the field of Outsider Art. It seems that being confronted with the ever growing conservative, reactionary, intolerant and fraudulent forces in politics and society worldwide makes more and more people susceptible to this kind of art – in search not only for truthful and authentic expression but also for examples for how to deal with this confusing irrationality of life today on another, aesthetic level. 2018 started in the USA, as usual, with the Outsider Art Fair in New York, but also with the great traveling exhibition „Outliers and American Vanguard Art“, curated by Lynn Cooke for the National Gallery in Washington and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It is the first show to contextualise naive and Outsider Art within currents of American art since 1900 and to comprehensively name the influences of these „Outliers“ on professional American artists up to the present day – viewpoints which are already quite familiar in European art historical research.

In Europe, there were again many fascinating smaller fairs, festivals, competitions and events as well as exhibitions of single artists or groups in museums, galleries and other spaces. Hardly any prevailing tendencies can be identified; there is still strong interest in Outsider Art from non-European countries, like Japan, China or Cuba. My two headline events of 2018 are the installation of a plaque for Madge Gill (1882-1961) at the London house she grew up in and the alarming news that Nek Chand's Rock Garden in Chandigarh is decaying in spite of all the money given by visitors.

From a personal perspective the most important news regarding European Outsider Art in 2018 was the growing awareness that a lot of historic asylum art is still to be discovered. Gallerists specialising in Outsider Art have always tried to surprise their customers with unknown art from the 19th or the early 20th century and to a lesser extent specialised museums were also able to present new discoveries from different sources. But now art historians and curators have started to look for existing holdings of historic works systematically, detecting them either in neglected collections or within psychiatric patient files, often kept at state or county archives. The Prinzhorn Collection currently presents a selection of historic asylum art from Switzerland which will also be shown in Thun and Linz. A book on historic asylum art in medical files from the Salzburg asylum has just been published. Recently discovered collections of asylum art in Oslo and London are being revised and researched so as to become part of public museums. A conference on this topic in Heidelberg this week will surely be followed by a many others.

A panel discussion devoted to this topic was held at Hôtel Drouot as part of the Paris Outsider Art Fair this October which the EOA participated in. At the fair itself members of the EOA board were again present wearing t-shirts with designs inviting visitors to talk to them and become members of the EOA. We also held our annual board meeting in the welcoming Café of the Halle Saint Pierre during the Fair.

In May, the conference „The Artist's Voice“ took place at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, in conjunction with the general assembly of the EOA. It was a great program of lectures, panels, events and presentations which more than ever placed the artists and their

experience at the centre. Many thanks again to Marc Steene of Outside In and his team in organising this important exchange.

Lotte Nilsson Välimaa and her team at Inuti are preparing the next EOA conference in Stockholm on the topic of „E-Quality in Outsider Art“ this coming May. The program will be selected from an open call for lectures and presentations. As 2019 is the EOA's 10th anniversary, we want to engage all our members and ask for your contribution in the form of pictures and good memories which we would like to put together in a cavalcade or slide show to present at the conference. Please help us to create a colourful celebration of ten years of EOA by sending us your images and memories.

And lastly, I have to break the news gently that we will be raising the EOA's membership fee from this year 2019, this will be the first increase in fees since the founding of the association. The increase is a moderate one: artists will have to pay € 30, individual members € 50 and organisation members € 100.

The benefits of the membership include:

- exchange with other EOA members
- reduced participation fee for the yearly conference
- free entrance to a lot of museums or venues which are EOA members
- presence on the new EOA map and on the information pages of our website
- and the participation on EOA's facebook page.

We are keen to expand our membership and it would be great if you could convince other people and organisations working in our field to become members as well!

I wish you all many exciting encounters with Outsider Art and artists in 2019 and am looking forward to see you all again in Stockholm!

Thomas Röske
President

EUROPEAN **OUTSIDER ART** ASSOCIATION