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## HUFFPOST ARTS &amp; CULTURE

## Outsider Art Fair: Andrew Edlin Talks About His 'Lucky Break' And New Chelsea Space (INTERVIEW, PHOTOS)

The Huffington Post | By Priscilla Frank  
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Maybe it's all the talk of the [art market bubble](#) in recent days, but we are especially excited for the [Outsider Art Fair](#) this year. It's time to shake things up!

Outsider artists often have little training and many hurdles in their careers, ranging from geographical isolation to mental disabilities. Yet difficult circumstances give way to unlikely artists who, though still operating outside the mainstream movements and markets of the art world, provide a clear reminder of the power of creative expression. In anticipation of the 21st iteration of the fair we spoke to outsider art dealer [Andrew Edlin](#). Read on to hear about the fair's new location, artists to watch, and whether outsider art is ever in danger of becoming mainstream. **Scroll down for a preview of the works.**

**HP: Does an "outsider artist" have to be an outsider?**

**AE:** When I come upon work with an "outsider style," it often signals to me the artist might be influenced by self-taught artists and so are probably not outsiders themselves, but who knows. Generally, self-taught artists' personal histories play a more central role in their art. They do not rely on art historical references like their trained counterparts do, so there tends to be less distance between the artist and the art with Outsiders.

**HP: How have you seen the popularity and influence of outsider art grow in the past almost 20 years? What happens when outsider art becomes mainstream?**

**AE:** No doubt that the recognition of great artists like Henry Darger and Martin Ramirez has brought more attention to the genre. The works of self-taught artists have been curated into more and more museum exhibitions with established artists. But this work is still being created outside the respected art culture, and therein lies much of its appeal. Outsider artists aren't hanging out together, arguing about aesthetics at a tavern. Like most artists, Outsiders have an innate art drive and are motivated to make art under circumstances that range from the radical to the bizarre, and the results of their efforts can be surprising and magnificent.

**HP: The fair moved this year from the Puck building to the Dia Center for the Arts in Chelsea. How did this decision come about, and how did the new space affect the curation process?**

**AE:** The move to Chelsea was a lucky break for us. The Puck building was awesome but as of some years ago, no longer feasible (the last few years the fair took place at 7 West 34th St). The new Chelsea venue -- Center548 -- is already identified as a home for art and with a layout of three well proportioned floors; it lends itself to having better booths, liberal aisles for guests to pass through and high ceilings to help people experience the art. Also, there is a fun rooftop with views where we will have a heated tent -- a fabulous place for the panel discussions.

**HP: What new galleries are you most excited to add to the fair this year?**

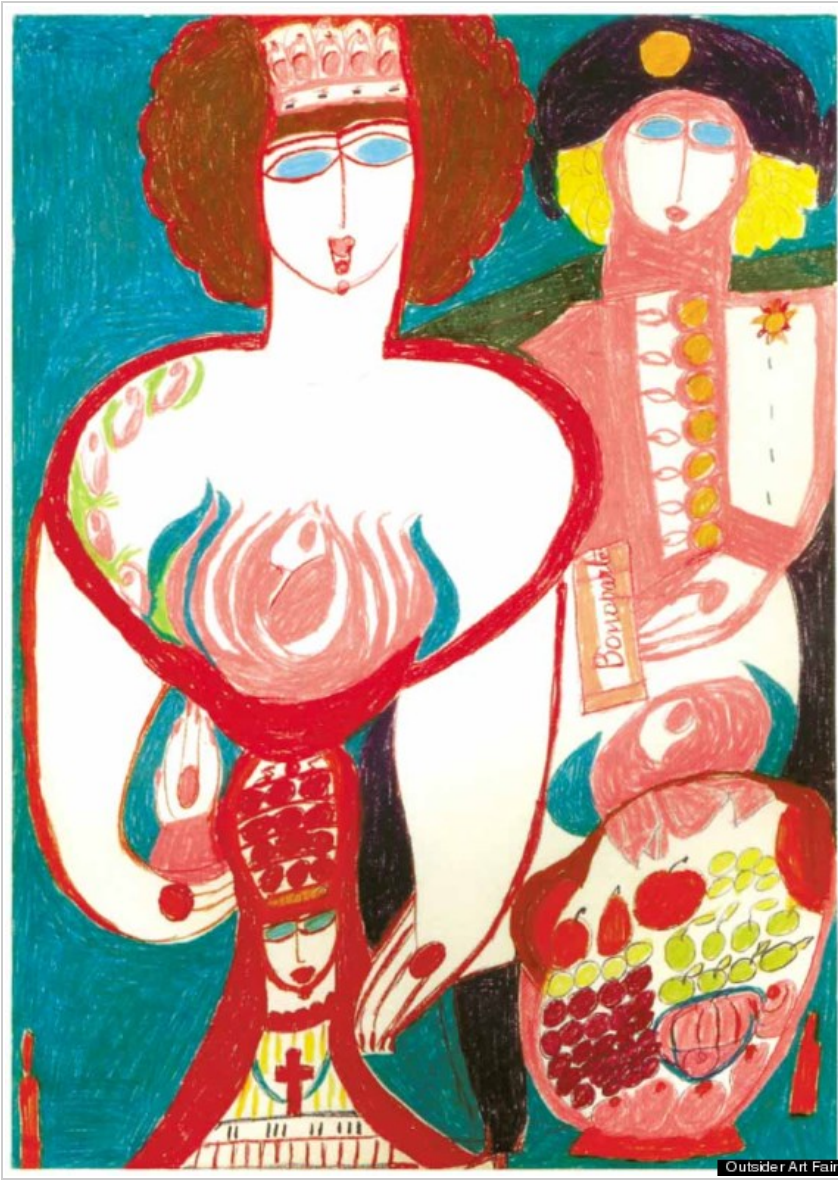
**AE:** Well, I'm really glad to have the most renowned Outsider galleries exhibiting. And for the first time Galérie du Marché from Lausanne will be at the fair featuring the work of legendary outsider, Alôise. I'm especially excited to have new exhibitors like Laurel Gitlen and Feature Inc. Also, I can't wait to see Laura Steward's booth (Steward was the Director of SITE Santa Fe and one of the first curators at Mass MoCA).

**HP: Who is an artist visitors should be watching out for at the fair?**

**AE:** Definitely [Vahakn Arslanian](#). He is great!

[The Outsider Art Fair](#) will run January 31 until February 3, 2013 at the [Dia Center for the Arts](#) in New York.

See a preview of the works below and let us know your favorites in the comments:



*Outsider Art Fair Preview*

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