

# The New York Times

## Arts

ART IN REVIEW

### ART IN REVIEW; Outsider Art Fair

By KEN JOHNSON

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Puck Building

Houston Street at Lafayette Street

SoHo

Through Sunday

Among the many more or less intriguing hobbyists, quasi-folk artists, quirky illustrators, exuberantly unskilled expressionists, idiosyncratic tinkerers and semiprofessional eccentrics in the generous embrace of the ninth annual Outsider Art Fair, there are still just a handful of great ones who make the show truly gratifying to visit. The more one sees of Henry Darger, for example, the more impressed one is not by his twisted, pedophilic vision but by his extraordinary aesthetic intelligence. At Carl Hammer's booth there is an 11-foot wonder of narrative complication and formal elegance by that reclusive genius.

Marion Harris presents a multidimensional view of Morton Bartlett, the Harvard-educated businessman who secretly made beautiful half-size sculptures of pubescent girls. Here are two of those eerily animated mannequins, as well as examples of the diminutive clothes he made for them, shadowy photographs he took of them and finely made pencil drawings of preteen fashion models.

James Castle's small, densely worked drawings of lonely rooms and farm buildings are on view at J. Crist, and Phyllis Kind has a large, powerfully abstracted trainscape by Martin Ramirez.

Less familiar to casual followers of the outsider scene may be the wood and metal machines of the French artist François Monchatre at Galerie des 4 Coins; they suggest a partnership between H. C. Westermann and Jean Tinguely. And at Ricco/Maresca there is an interesting newcomer, Judith Scott, a Californian who wraps objects in yarn, string and fabric, creating bulbous bundles that could be mistaken for works by a grad student in a master of fine arts program.

Hours: today, noon to 8 p.m.; tomorrow, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: \$12 a day; \$25 for a three-day pass. Information: (212) 777-5218. KEN JOHNSON