



Janko Domsic, Untitled, n.d., ballpoint pen on cardboard
11.81x 16.33 in (30x41.5cm), Collection: Alain Bourbonnais

THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Curated by Javier Téllez

A project for Frieze NY in collaboration with the Outsider Art Fair
May 2–5, 2019 Randall’s Island Park

NEW YORK, NY – The Outsider Art Fair is excited to announce *The Doors Of Perception*, a unique project in collaboration with Frieze NY curated by the artist Javier Téllez. The exhibition will feature over forty visionary artists from around the world, including works by Noviadi Angkasapura (b. 1979, Indonesia), Frédéric Bruly Bouabré (1923–2014, Ivory Coast), Henry Darger (1892-1973, USA), Janko Domsic (1915-1983, Croatia/France), Minnie Evans (1892-1987, USA), Guo Fengyi (1942–2010, China), Martín Ramírez (1895-1963, Mexico/USA), Judith Scott (1943-2005, USA), Melvin Way (b. 1954, USA), George Widener (b. 1962, USA), Adolf Wölfli (1864–1930, Switzerland), and Anna Zemánkova (1908–1986, Czech Republic), among many others. Works will be sourced through OAF participating galleries including Henry Boxer, Cavin-Morris, Creative Growth Art Center, Andrew Edlin, Carl Hammer, Galerie Pol Lemétais, Polysémie, Ricco/Maresca, SHRINE, as well as borrowed from private collections.

The Doors of Perception focuses on the visionary nature of art commonly known as outsider art, *art brut*, or self-taught art. The exhibition presents a large constellation of works made by exceptionally gifted artists from five continents, offering a panorama of art created on the margins

outsider art fair

of society. Whether psychiatric patients, self-taught visionaries, or mediums, each of the artists in the exhibition felt at some point in their life the need to create an artistic language of their own in order to reveal what they understood to be the true nature of things. Often disenfranchised because of their mental condition or social status and without any previous artistic training, many of the artists exhibited here dedicated their lives obsessively to the creation of complex visual representations, often after experiencing a life-changing epiphany. A meeting with a supernatural power—whether an encounter with the divine, spirits of the dead, or extraterrestrial beings—might have triggered this impulse to create. These remarkable events produced strong centrifugal forces that drove the artists from chaos to order, opening for them “doors of perception” to a transcendental reality that, in many cases, helped them survive their otherwise unstable life.

The artists included in the exhibition are, as Sol Lewitt described conceptual artists, “rather mystics than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.” Their many artistic languages not only question our beliefs about madness and normalcy, but also subvert the notion of reality as we conceive it. The theme of transformation is recurrent in their works: the body is perceived as a multiple entity (Domsic, Fengyi, Charles Steffen, Carlo Zinelli), the human and the animal merge (Angkasapura, Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern, Shinichi Sawada, Sava Sekulić), fantastic architectures grow as if they were part of the natural world (Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, William Hall, Marcel Storr), imaginary worlds are filled with extraterrestrial animal, plants, and minerals in dreamlike landscapes (Darger, Joseph Yoakum, Zemánková). Notions of inside and outside permeate so inner and outer are perceived as fluid entities with internal organs and bones made visible in portraits of the body (Angkasapura, Fengyi, Luboš Plný). Everything is represented in a state of “becoming,” so the boundaries between self and space collapse and a new understanding of reality arises, presenting us with a perception that is characteristic of mystic visions, hallucinatory states, and the delusions of psychosis.

The visionary artist perceives space in a mimetic manner, similar to the way that people living with schizophrenia experience depersonalization through assimilation to space, a phenomenon described with precision by the French writer Roger Caillois: “Space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them ... It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses.”

Truly utopian, the visionary artists represent the world anew, so they often think of the future as a parallel dimension to the present (Hall, Prophet Royal Robertson, Widener, Wölfli). For them, time is a perpetual possibility, having invented codes to access a new consciousness beyond the flat world of appearances (John Devlin, Ionel Talpazan, Way, Widener). As William Blake wrote: “If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite.”

– Javier Téllez

About Javier Téllez:

For the past twenty years, artist Javier Téllez (b. 1969, Valencia, Venezuela) has been making films in collaboration with people living with mental illness. Both of Téllez’s parents were psychiatrists, so he grew up in contact with people affected by mental illness; it was natural that it would become the main subject of his work.

Throughout his career, Téllez has been interested in outsider art */art brut/* self-taught art and has been studying the subject for many years. Previously, he curated an exhibition at the Prinzhorn Collection (Heidelberg) that focused on the works of mentally ill artists that were loaned by the University of Heidelberg to the infamous exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Munich, 1937). In his own work, Téllez reflects a sustained interest in bringing peripheral communities and invisible situations to the fore of contemporary art, addressing institutional dynamics, disability, and mental

illness as marginalizing conditions. Téllez's projects have often involved working in collaboration with people diagnosed with mental illness to produce film installations that question the notions of the normal and the pathological.

Téllez's art has been the subject of many solo exhibitions at numerous venues including the Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester (2018); the San Francisco Art Institute (2014); Kunsthaus Zürich (2014); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2013); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2011); and the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2005). His work has been exhibited at documenta, Kassel (2012); Manifesta7, Trentino-South Tyrol, Italy (2008); Biennale of Sydney (2008); Whitney Biennial, New York (2008); Venice Biennale (2001, 2003); and the Yokohama Triennial (2001). Téllez's work is part of many public collections including those of Tate Modern, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Kunsthaus, Zürich; National Galerie, Berlin; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1999 and the Global Mental Health Award for Innovation in the Arts from Columbia University in 2016. Javier Téllez has lived and worked in New York since 1993.

Notes to Editors:

Frieze is the leading platform for modern and contemporary art for scholars, connoisseurs, collectors and the general public alike. Frieze comprises three magazines—frieze magazine, Frieze Masters Magazine and Frieze Week—and three international art fairs—Frieze London, Frieze Masters and Frieze New York. Additionally, Frieze organizes a program of special courses and lectures in London and abroad through Frieze Academy.

Frieze was founded in 1991 by Matthew Slotover and Amanda Sharp, with the launch of frieze magazine, the leading international magazine of contemporary art and culture. In 2003, Sharp and Slotover launched Frieze London art fair, which takes place each October in The Regent's Park, London. In 2012, they launched Frieze New York, which occurs each May in Randall's Island Park, and Frieze Masters, which coincides with Frieze London in October and is dedicated to art from ancient to modern. Frieze fairs are sponsored by global lead partner Deutsche Bank.

Founded in New York in 1993, the **Outsider Art Fair** is the original art fair concentrating specifically on self-taught art, and exhibits works by acknowledged masters, including James Castle, Aloïse Corbaz, Henry Darger, Thornton Dial, William Edmondson, Martín Ramírez, Judith Scott, Bill Traylor and Adolf Wölfli, as well as contemporary figures like M'onma, Susan Te Kahurangi King, Frank Walter and George Widener. Quickly recognized for its maverick spirit, OAF played a vital role in building a passionate collecting community and broader recognition for outsider art in the contemporary art arena.

In 2012, OAF was acquired by Wide Open Arts, a company formed by gallerist Andrew Edlin. With its debut edition in 2013, the fair established the Curated Space and OAF Talks programs. The 2013 fair enjoyed rave reviews and more than tripled its previous attendance records. Propelled by this success, Wide Open Arts launched Outsider Art Fair Paris, which will return for its 7th edition in October 2019, helping to reinvigorate the city's long tradition of recognizing and championing *art brut* and self-taught artists.

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