

The Doors of Perception at Frieze New York

Curated by Javier Téllez

In collaboration with the Outsider Art Fair

"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 artists from five continents, offering a panorama of art created on the margins of society. Whether psychiatric patients, self-taught visionaries, or mediums, each of the artists included here 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 extra-terrestrial beings—might have triggered this impulse to create, opening for them “doors of perception” to a transcendental reality that, in many cases, helped them survive their otherwise unstable life.

These artists are, as Sol Lewitt described conceptual artists, “rather mystics than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.” They subvert the notion of reality as we conceive it. The theme of transformation is recurrent in their works: the human and the animal merge, fantastic architectures grow as if they were part of the natural world, imaginary worlds are filled with extra-terrestrial animals, plants, and minerals in dreamlike landscapes. Inner and outer are perceived as fluid entities. The body 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.

The visionary artists represent the world anew, so they often think of the future as a parallel dimension to the present. For them, time is a perpetual possibility, having invented codes to access a new consciousness beyond the flat world of appearances. As William Blake wrote: *If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite.*”

– Javier Téllez

Participating Artist List:

Horst Ademeit (1937-2010) Germany
Noviadi Angkasapura (1979) Indonesia
Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910-1983) USA
Frédéric Bruly Bouabré (1923–2014) Ivory Coast
Raimundo Camilo, (1939) Brazil
Henry Darger (1892-1973) USA
John Devlin (1954) Canada
Janko Domsic (1915-1983) Croatia/France
Minnie Evans (1892-1987) USA
Guo Fengyi (1942-2010) China
Madge Gill (1882-1961) UK
Ken Grimes (1947) USA
Martha Grunenwaldt (1910-2008) Belgium
William A. Hall (1943) USA
Frank Jones (ca 1900-1969) USA
Susan Te Kahurangi King (1951) New Zealand
Davood Koochaki (1939) Iran
Dwight Mackintosh (1906-1999) USA
Eugène Lambourdière « Maurice » (1948) France
Tarcisio Merati (1934-1995) Italy
Marilena Pelosi (1957) Brazil
Luboš Plný (1961) Czech Republic
Martin Ramirez (1895-1963) Mexico/USA
Bárbaro Rivas (1893 – 1967) Venezuela
Prophet Royal Robertson (1936–1997) USA
Vassili Romanenkov (1953-2013) Russia
Shinichi Sawada (1982) Japan
Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern (1892-1982) Russia/Germany
Judith Scott (1943-2005) USA
Sava Sekulic (1902-1989) Croatia
Charles Steffen (1927-1995) USA
Marcel Storr (1911-1976) France
Ionel Talpazan (1955- 2015) Romania/USA
Melvin Way (1954) USA
George Widener (1962) USA
Scottie Wilson (1888-1972) USA
Agatha Wojciechowsky (1896-1986) Germany/USA
Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930) Switzerland
Joseph Yoakum (1890-1972) USA
Anna Zemánková (1908-1986) Czech Republic
Carlo Zinelli (1916-1974) Italy
Unica Zürn (1916-1970) Germany/France