

Press release, Friday 5 February 2016

## **FIRST OUTSIDER ART MUSEUM IN THE NETHERLANDS** **The museum world acknowledges a growing art movement**

For the first time, the Netherlands will have its own Outsider Art Museum, with world-class works of art by national and international outsider artists. This museum will make its home in a new space in the Hermitage Amsterdam. The Dolhuys in Haarlem, health care organization Cordaan, and the Hermitage Amsterdam have joined in a unique partnership to put a substantial collection of outsider art on display for a large international audience.

The new museum, which will open on 17 March, focuses on contemporary outsider art from the growing Dolhuys collection: hundreds of works by scores of artists from Britain, France, Iran, Japan, and the Netherlands. Among these artists, one famous name is Shinichi Sawada (b. 1982). He exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2013, when outsider art took the spotlight there. That event launched this emerging movement into the international art scene. Sawada makes ceramic sculptures in an intensely perfectionistic process.

### **DOLHUYS**

Hans Looijen, director of the Dolhuys, is the responsible for the artistic and business management of the new Outsider Art Museum. He says, 'For the first time, this unique form of art will hold a permanent place in a leading Dutch art institution. This is a tremendous opportunity for us to present talented new artists to a broad public.' For ten years, the Dolhuys has successfully run its 'museum of the psyche' in Haarlem, where visitors discover surprising dimensions of the human mind and spirit. Now it brings its expertise and experience in collecting and exhibiting outsider art to the Hermitage Amsterdam.



### **CORDAAN**

The Hermitage is making space for an Outsider Art Gallery, an art lending centre, and two studios for artists affiliated with Cordaan. Cordaan hopes that its role as a partner in the new Outsider Art Museum will attract new recognition for talented artists with disabilities. The studios will soon host a special programme that forms the seed of a 'national academy' of outsider art.

'Several Cordaan clients have shown exceptional drive and ability. Their work will soon hang in the Hermitage alongside that of other outsider artists. We're delighted, of course. The new museum means recognition, appreciation, and

understanding of people with disabilities,' says Eelco Damen, chairman of the Cordaan executive board.

### **HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM**

In the new Outsider Art Museum, the Hermitage Amsterdam will offer a venue for a growing current in contemporary art. Cathelijne Broers, director of the Hermitage Amsterdam, explains: 'We are creating new exhibition areas in our building for this exceptional outsider art collection. Our relationship with Cordaan goes back a long way; our building used to house Cordaan activities. We are also pleased that we can broaden our partnership by inviting gifted Cordaan artists to workshops in the Hermitage for Children, our programme for talented young people. We already show temporary exhibitions from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the very successful Portrait Gallery of the Golden Age, which draws on the collections of the Amsterdam Museum and the Rijksmuseum. Soon, we will also offer a home to outsider art.'

### **OUTSIDER ART**

'Outsider art' refers to art made by people who did not study at art academies. This movement attracted widespread interest after the First World War. The psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn (1886-1933) published the book *Bildneri der Geisteskranken*, illustrated with a wide range of art works by patients in psychiatric institutions. This book inspired many artists, such as Salvador Dalí, Karel Appel, and Asger Jorn. Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985) later came up with the term *art brut*, meaning 'raw art'. In 1972, the British art historian Roger Cardinal coined the phrase 'outsider art'. The Venice Biennale of 2013 launched outsider art into the international art scene.

### **Note for editors:**

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