

Press release, Tuesday, 6 June 2017

Dubuffet's List | Masterpieces from the Prinzhorn Collection

'A key moment in art history'

The Outsider Art Museum is proud to present Dubuffet's List | Masterpieces from the Prinzhorn Collection. This exhibition allows visitors to discover the origins of Outsider Art – with the renowned Prinzhorn Collection – seen through the eyes of Jean Dubuffet, one of the most prominent artists of the 20th century. The exhibition will be officially opened on Wednesday, 21 June by Beatrix Ruf, Director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

New art historical research has revealed, for the first time, what Jean Dubuffet thought of the Prinzhorn Collection. Recently, a list typed by Dubuffet – long assumed to have been lost – was found, in which he appraises the works in the collection. 'This renowned visit is a key moment in art history', explains Hans Looijen, Director of the Outsider Art Museum (OAM), located in the Hermitage Amsterdam.

Early in the 20th century, the German psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn put together a fascinating collection of art by people being treated at psychiatric institutions. Jean Dubuffet was the first artist to visit the Prinzhorn Collection after World War II. He viewed Prinzhorn's impressive collection as a forerunner of his own 'Collection de l'Art Brut', what he believed to be the purest and most 'non-culturalised' form of art.



In a letter to Pierre Matisse, Dubuffet writes: 'In peace and quiet, and in the best circumstances, I have had the opportunity to view Doctor Prinzhorn's splendid collection, something that I have dreamt of for years'.

The exhibition demonstrates how Dubuffet viewed the art works from a different perspective than that of Prinzhorn, his shining example. Prinzhorn viewed the art through the eyes of a scientist, while Dubuffet viewed the unconventional collection from the perspective of an artist and collector. There was a lot at stake for the French artist: 'art by mad people' and his Art Brut could not be allowed to be confused. In Dubuffet's words: '...there is no more an art of the insane than there is an art of dyspeptics or of those with knee problems'. He assessed the work of August Natterer, one of the highlights of the Prinzhorn Collection, as 'nothing that

special'. In contrast, he was highly impressed by the work of another of Prinzhorn's 'masters', August Klett: 'very interesting and imposing collection with exquisite art'.

The Outsider Art Museum now offers visitors the unique opportunity to compare the visions of these two key figures in the history of Outsider Art, showcasing 100 authentic, unpolished and unconventional art works from the Prinzhorn Collection, complete with Dubuffet's observations.

HANS PRINZHORN

Hans Prinzhorn (1886-1933), a German physician and art historian, analysed and collated works by patients from psychiatric institutions. Prinzhorn broke with the tradition of using patient's drawings and creations purely as material for diagnosing psychiatric conditions. In 1922, he published a groundbreaking book entitled *Bildneri der Geisteskranken (Artistry of the Mentally Ill)*, featuring work by patients. The book became a huge success in artist's circles and influenced surrealists such as Dalí, Breton, Picasso and Max Ernst. Prinzhorn's collection has been preserved and made available to the public at the Prinzhorn Collection museum in Heidelberg, Germany.

JEAN DUBUFFET

Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985) was a French artist. He was hugely fascinated by drawings by children, the less able-minded and prisoners. This fascination ultimately resulted in the foundation of *La Compagnie de l'Art Brut*. Dubuffet described *Art Brut* as: 'raw art: not beautified, almost pure, authentic and of the highest quality, created in complete isolation and not influenced by the outside world'.

OUTSIDER ART MUSEUM

The Outsider Art Museum is the only museum in the Netherlands to display acclaimed works by leading Dutch and international Outsider artists. The museum was opened by Queen Máxima in March 2016, and was made possible thanks to a unique collaboration between care organisation Cordaan, the Hermitage Amsterdam and Haarlem's The Dolhuys | museum of the mind. Benthem Crouwel Architects were responsible for the design and interior; the graphic design was by Kees Peerdeman.

A press preview will be held at 09:30 on Wednesday, 21 June, in the presence of Hans Looijen, (Director of the Outsider Art Museum) and Thomas Röske (Director of the Prinzhorn Collection). The celebratory opening of the exhibition will follow at 11:00, attended by Beatrix Ruf. The exhibition *Dubuffet's List | Masterpieces from the Prinzhorn Collection* runs from 22 June to 24 September 2017. The Outsider Art Museum is located in the Hermitage Amsterdam.

Note for editors, not for publication:

Please register for the press preview by sending an email to herfs@hetdolhuys.nl. If you have any other questions, please contact:

Carine Neefjes (Head of Public Affairs & Education at The Dolhuys | museum of the mind & Outsider Art Museum): neefjes@hetdolhuys.nl / Telephone: +31 (0)23 541 0688 or +31 (0)6 5154 6601.

Tamar Herfs (Public Affairs & Education Assistant at The Dolhuys I museum of the mind & Outsider Art Museum): herfs@hetdolhuys.nl / Telephone: +31 (0)23 541 0692 or +31 (0)6 1594 3535.