

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OUTSIDER ART FAIR ANNOUNCES EXPANSION  
WITH INAUGURAL EDITION IN BASEL, SWITZERLAND – JUNE 2018**



Henry Darger (1892-1973), *95 At Jennie Richee, Escape down Aronburgs Run River through circle section in storm*; no date; 22 x 81 inches (56 x 206 cm); watercolor, graphite, collage and carbon transfer on pieced-together paper (©Kiyoko Lerner)

**NEW YORK, NY – Wide Open Arts**, the New York-based organizer of the **Outsider Art Fair** – the premier fair championing self-taught art, *art brut* and outsider art – is excited to announce its expansion with the inaugural edition of the **Outsider Art Fair Basel**, which will take place from **June 13 to 17, 2018**, at **Hotel Pullman, Clarastrasse 43, Basel** (conveniently located one block away from Messeplatz).

**Outsider Art Fair Basel** will join its sister events, **Outsider Art Fair New York** (which celebrated its 26th anniversary in January 2018) and **Outsider Art Fair Paris** (which will mark its sixth year in October 2018) in offering a wide-ranging survey of the finest, most imaginative works in the field, featuring approximately 25 dealers from Europe, the U.S.A., Asia and South America.

In keeping with the Outsider Art Fair’s mission to foster an appreciation of the world’s most original self-taught artists, who are now widely recognized in the international art arena, **OAF Basel** will offer collectors from around the world an unmissable opportunity to see dynamic artworks by both newly discovered artists and acclaimed figures, including **James Castle, Aloïse Corbaz, Henry Darger, Madge Gill, Guo Fengyi, Augustin Lesage, Martín Ramirez, Judith Scott, Bill Traylor, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, and Adolf Wölfli**.

The Outsider Art Fair’s new branch in Basel pays homage to Switzerland’s abundance of museums and legendary artists in the field. Important *art brut* artists from Switzerland include **Aloïse Corbaz, Hans Krüsi, Heinrich Anton Müller, Louis Soutter, and Adolf Wölfli**, and many canonical artists, such as **Paul Klee, Meret Oppenheim, and Jean Tinguely**, were inspired by the unique visions they found in art created outside the mainstream. Important Swiss institutions in the field include the **Collection de l’Art Brut** (Lausanne); the **Museum im Lagerhaus** (St. Gallen), which focuses on Swiss *art brut* and folk art forms; the **Adolf Wölfli Foundation** at the Kunstmuseum Bern; and the **Kunstmuseum Thurgau** at the Kartause Ittingen in Warth. Moreover, such groundbreaking Swiss curators as **Daniel Baumann, Josef Helfenstein, Dieter Koeplin, Markus Landert, Sarah Lombardi, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Lucienne Periy, Beatrix Ruf, and Harald Szeeman** (1933-2005) have long championed the work of self-taught art-makers.

Following its acquisition of the fair in 2012, Wide Open Arts, a company founded by the gallerist Andrew Edlin, introduced the “Curated Space” program and “OAF Talks” series, and both will be part of the program in Basel. Past highlights have included a 2016 panel at the **Swiss Institute**, in New York, featuring **Chris Wiley** (artist), **Jens Hoffmann** (curator, the Jewish Museum), **Dan Fox** (journalist, *Frieze* magazine), **Amanda Hunt** (curator, the Studio Museum in Harlem), and **Massimiliano Gioni** (artistic director, the New Museum). In 2014, current Kunsthalle Zürich director **Daniel Baumann** co-organized OAF’s “Curated Space,” which featured works by the self-taught metaphysician, **John Urho Kemp** (1942-2010), the British artist **Sarah Lucas**, the Mexican artist **Dr. Lakra**, and the Ohio outsider **Lewis Smith** (1907-1998). At that time, Baumann noted that “these works share a common ground — a masterfully executed disrespect for social conventions and artistic norms in search of enlightenment and artistic freedom.”

### About the Outsider Art Fair:

Founded in New York in 1993, the Outsider Art Fair is the original art fair concentrating specifically on self-taught art created outside the mainstream and presenting works by acknowledged masters and such living artists as **George Widener**, **Susan Te Kahurangi King**, **Shinichi Sawada**, **Christine Sefolosa** and **Luboš Plný**. Soon recognized for its maverick spirit, OAF played a vital role in nurturing a passionate collecting community and broader recognition for outsider art in the contemporary art arena.

After Wide Open Arts took over the fair, the OAF in 2013 enjoyed rave reviews and more than tripled its previous attendance records. Propelled by this success, Wide Open Arts took the fair to Paris for the first time in October 2013, helping to reinvigorate that city's long tradition in the *art brut* field. After holding the fair during its first two years at Hôtel Le A, a boutique hotel, in 2015 OAF Paris expanded to Hôtel du Duc, a stately, nineteenth-century *hôtel particulier* in the Opéra district.

### About Outsider Art:

In a seminal essay published in 1949, "*L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels*," **Jean Dubuffet** described the term "*art brut*" as follows: "*We mean by this term works created by people uncontaminated by artistic culture, works in which the sense of mimicry, contrary to what happens among intellectuals, plays little or no part, with the result that their makers draw all [...] from their own being and not from hangovers of classical or fashionable art.*"

In 1972, the British art historian **Roger Cardinal** used the term "outsider art" as the title for an important collection of essays. Both researchers were primarily identifying artworks produced by marginalized individuals, psychotics, mediums, and eccentrics, which sometimes led to the common misconception that *art brut* is essentially pathological. In fact, the central characteristic of outsider artists is their lack of conditioning by art history and art-world trends.

A notable development in recent art history has been the global emergence of events and exhibitions featuring the work of self-taught artists. Over the past two decades, experimental curators and commercial art dealers have staged hybrid shows that have brought together works by both outsider and "insider" artists, and this genre of art has earned increasing recognition from institutions of all sizes. They include the American Folk Art Museum (New York), the Brooklyn Museum (New York), the Hayward Gallery (London), the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands), the Watari-um Museum of Contemporary Art (Tokyo), the High Museum of Art (Atlanta, Georgia), the American Visionary Art Museum (Baltimore, Maryland), the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (Sheboygan, Wisconsin), La maison rouge (Paris), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York), the Studio Museum in Harlem (New York), the Museum of Old and New Art (Hobart, Tasmania, Australia), the de Young Museum (San Francisco, California), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid), the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Carnegie International (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), the Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju, South Korea), and the Venice Biennale.

### Outsider Art Fair Basel 2018

Wednesday, June 13 – Sunday, June 17, 2018

#### Hotel Pullman

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<http://www.outsiderartfair.com>

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