

# Le Journal des Arts

## Raw Art - The Outsider Art Fair in Paris

*Visitors and art dealers hail the first Parisian edition of the Outsider Art Fair*

The 24 participating galleries seem to have performed well over the course of the exhibition held October 24-27 at the Hôtel Le A, a four-star chic boutique hotel located a few steps away from the Champs-Élysées. A unique venue to showcase this kind of spontaneous art, long concealed in asylums, spiritist circles and secret gardens of eccentric visionaries. An odd place, if not incongruous, to exhibit artworks often created in deprivation, confinement, illness, by artists driven by an obsessive creative instinct. In a suite with an Eiffel Tower view, a small drawing full of life by former slave, Bill Traylor, was hanging between a flat screen television, a minibar and a safe, not far from the perforated profiles of Carlo Zinelli. Not far away, an inkwork by Jean-Pierre Nadau, displaying an architectural fantasy world can be found above a white-marble bathtub. At the far end of a little corridor, small pieces of paper by New Zealand artist Susan Kahurangi King are spread on a bed. Galerie Christian Berst showcased large scale ink on paper drawings by Guo Fengyi at prices ranging from 11,000 to 14,000 euros and Josef Hofer drawings for 2,000 to 3,000 euros. *"It is a very successful show,"* commented London contemporary art dealer Rob Tufnell who sold artworks by Mary Barnes and David Burton for prices ranging between 400 and 4,000 euros.

### « Better Than New York »

Curators of large public institutions (American Folk Art Museum, LaM of Villeneuve-d'Asq, Collection de l'art brut de Lausanne), private collections (Museum of Everything), art dealers, art consultants, you name it; the Outsider Art world elite was present in full force. Massimiliano Gioni, the artistic director of the 55th Venice Biennale, *"Il Palazzo Enciclopedico,"* showed great interest in the works of ACM and Hervé Bohnert on display at J-P. Ritsch-Fisch Galerie. The quantity of sales seem to have been quite satisfying. Even though some of the dealers seemed not to have sold much by Saturday evening, about a dozen others said they were satisfied and even more, such as Karen Lennox (Chicago) sold several artworks for more than 100,000 dollars, including a drawing by Bill Traylor, and a dozen pictures by Eugene Von Bruenchenhein. *"We've had better results than during the fair in New York,"* said Shari Cavin of the Cavin-Morris gallery. In the room of Galerie du Marché (Lausanne), art dealers Jean-David Mermod and Philippe Eternod were equally satisfied with sales on the selected artworks showcased including pieces by Aloise, Madge Gill, Louis Soutter, Scottie Wilson and Josef Wittlich. It is an *"elitist art for everyone,"* joked Jean-David Mermod just after selling a drawing by Scottie Wilson for 2,500 euros.

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