



ART BRUT: WHAT'S IN IT FOR TODAY'S ARTISTS?

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Many contemporary artists are attracted by the singular voice of Art Brut, both fantastical and fantasized, whether or not their work has a real affinity. What, one may ask, is the nature of this fascination?

Art Brut is everywhere these days: in galleries, art fairs, auctions and major exhibitions. In December it featured at the Parisian municipal art museum's exhibition *L'Art en guerre*, and at the Musée Victor Hugo in *L'Entrée des médiums* and also at Marc-Olivier Wahler's Chalet Society for the exhibition *Museum of Everything*. This spring, at his Parisian press conference, Massimiliano Gioni, curator of the 2013 Venice Biennale, stressed the importance of Art Brut in his *Palazzo Enciclopedico*. Jean Dubuffet coined the term and raised the issue, and today Art Brut has become a token of authenticity as well as a reservoir of forms and ideas. Might it be a new romanticism, or a new humanism?

En haut à gauche /top left:
Ruth Van Haren Noman
Phoenix, 2007
Huile sur toile, 56 x 60 cm
Oil on canvas
Ph. DR

En haut à droite:
Anna Zemánková
Sans titre, 1969

CREATING OUT OF NECESSITY, WITHOUT SEPARATING ART AND LIFE

Creating without separating art from life, that is another of the virtues that many mainstream artist recognize in Art Brut. A frightening virtue. In her paintings, Mireille Blanc often depicts folk art objects collected from flea markets or garage sales, but as if they were something she had hallucinated, baffling perception in an alternation between appearance and disappearance. We guess at their forms more than we actually make them out because their framing is almost abstract. Mireille Blanc's works are not directly inspired by outsider art, but she has taken an interest in Louis Soutter and Séraphine de Senlis, and her canvases exude a strangeness which sometimes suggests a deep anxiety.

Many artists are interested in Art Brut without this necessarily being formally evident in their work. Their fascination is aroused by the sense of an extreme necessity driving the work of Art Brut artists, giving their work a singular power, between beauty and danger. This fall I visited the Museum of Everything in Paris with the painter Jean-Xavier Renaud, and we came to a stop in front of the works of an artistic couple, ACM: vertiginous structures worthy of *Metropolis*, made with small metal parts from radios and typewriters that they had dismantled. In his canvases, Renaud paints scenes of his life in the country with a quirky sense of humor. His broadly brushed bright colors are as far as could be from the meticulousness of ACM and yet here was, fascinated by this virtuosic works. I am sure he would love to have made them himself.

Mathieu Cherkit,
Turtle Zwei, 2012
Huile sur toile, 210 x 240 cm
Oil on canvas
Court. l'artiste et galerie Jean Brolly,
Paris | Ph. DR

