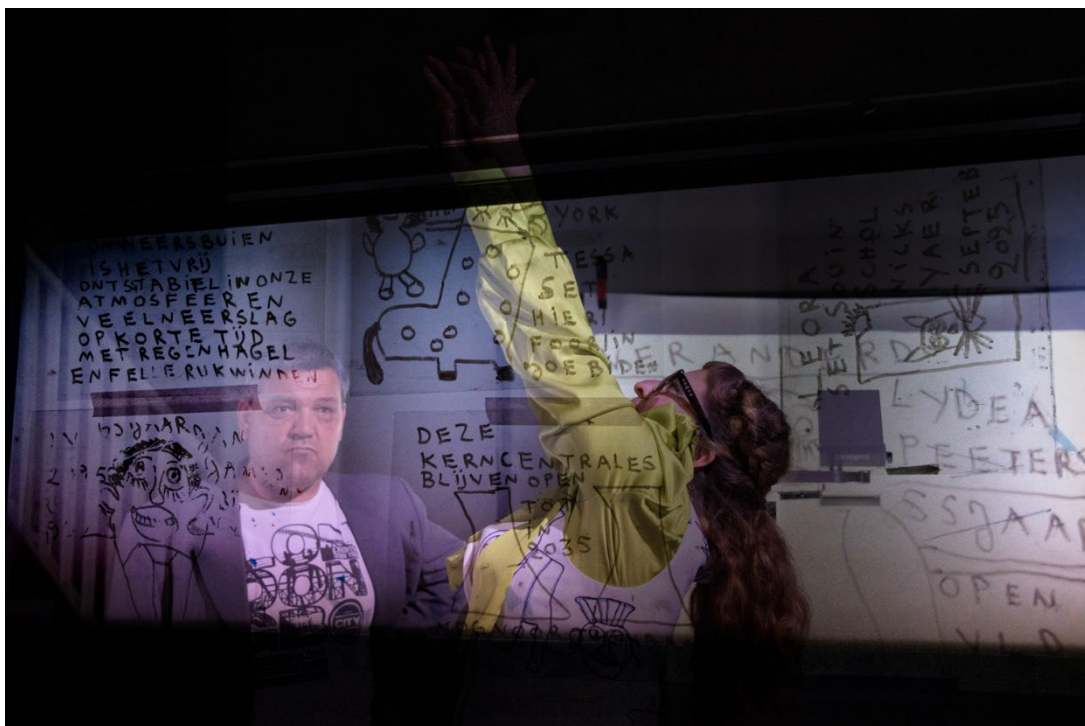


Creation 2024

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CRUDO

Lisi Estaras & Pierre Muylle | laGeste



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“With *Crudo* three individual artists decide to engage in a common search for their place in the art world. In this quest, they collide with terms, wrestle with history and search for a common language.”

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TEXT KLAUS COMPAGNIE

It has to be all medieval art for me because there is more in it. Modern art doesn't speak to me at all.

It must all be from the Middle Ages, with darker colors.

Modern art doesn't say anything to me.

I can look at that much longer in a museum.

The year is also written on it. The year it was made with the dark colors.

I never went to art school.

In 2024, it will be 31 years since I was in school.

I worked for 20 years with acrylic and ink on canvas.

I need an image from the computer for that because without an image, you have to draw from memory.

They started there in the '90s. But there wasn't enough space. We were all crowded together. That was back then in the municipality of Zwevegem.

Ruben was there, and so were other people. He was 22 years younger at the time.

I don't remember anymore.

Laurette van Fleteren, Liliane ... and André Wostyn.

And Conny Declercq was also there.

In different years.

You can't really know when exactly that was.

I can't remember it all because it was too long ago.

Ruben Laflere is 8 years younger than me. I'll be 44 years old in 2024. He's often on the computer.

And he orders the meals for about thirty people. He calls the kitchen and then has to order the meals. And also often handles certain invoices. Dominique sometimes does that too.

In the art library, there are works I made years ago. Some of those works have already been sold. Works that we created years ago.

TEXT PIERRE MUYLLE

Welcome

Art Brut, a term that literally means 'raw art', has intriguing origins dating back to the early 20th century. The term was first used by French artist Jean Dubuffet in the 1940s to describe artworks created by people not trained in traditional art techniques. These artists were often outsiders in society, such as the mentally ill, prisoners, children or people with intellectual disabilities.

That's what Chat GPT has to say about it. That is correct but for me that is not what it is about. I would like to tell you something about Art Brut but before I can do that it is important to outline to you the context in which this term originated.

The thing is, Art Brut was pre-eminently an attack on a concept of art that consisted very exclusively of academic white, Western, Catholic, male art.

Until the end of Romanticism, art was academic or it wasn't art. When we talk about art now, we are very often talking about things that could not possibly have been understood under art before Romanticism.

This is why it is so powerful that Dubuffet came up with the term Art Brut in the late 1950s. He used that term as a crowbar to break open our understanding of art. Of course, there have been other 'attacks' as well. Both from within art itself and from outside. The various avant-gardes certainly also contributed to this. For instance, more and more influence was allowed from non-Western cultures. Those influences were incorporated into the avant-garde and retrospectively named as primitivism. But those objects themselves were never really seen as art by that avant-garde. They influenced their art but were not included as such in our understanding of art.

The same goes for the Prinzhorn collection. Hans Prinzhorn created a collection of drawings and other art objects from the German psychiatric clinics of the time just after the First World War from the University of Heidelberg. He studied those works and wrote a book about them: 'Bildnerei des Geisteskranken'.

This collection exists but it owes its importance mainly to the influence it had on the avant-garde. Paul Klee and Wasily Kandinsky showed Bildnerei des Geisteskranken to their students at the Bauhaus. Surrealists such as Max Ernst and many others have also been directly inspired by Prinzhorn's book. But the works themselves were never shown as art. Until the Nazis used them for their 'Entartete Kunst Ausstellung' to prove that the avant-garde artists were Jews and Bolsheviks whose works were indistinguishable from that of madmen.

Only after World War II did Dubuffet come up with a much more radical stance. Art Brut attacks the power of the cultural consensus from within by arguing that art arises outside culture and is therefore not dependent on it. In uncut form, Dubuffet recognises art when it is not influenced by culture. He too goes in search of this within psychiatry but also among prisoners, the homeless, housewives, ... among all those who are not admitted to the academy.

Dubuffet uses Art Brut to clarify the difference between art and culture. Art does not allow itself to be domesticated by the conventions of culture. Or in the clear words of Walter Swennen: *'For me, art is something that has yet to be made. Culture is what already exists, ground into uniformity by communication.'*

This is what Dubuffet sought to articulate very strongly with the introduction of Art Brut. Not so much to claim rights for what he himself called marginalised people but to claim freedom in art itself. Dubuffet did so from within, from within art itself. By saying that, as an artist, he does not need anyone's permission to be an artist. He does not depend on a consensus within Western culture any more than art needed our culture to emerge in its purest form, where culture has no influence, in Art Brut.

That's what I have to say about Dubuffet.



What Dubuffet absolutely could not know at that time is that the world would evolve very much. Especially with the translation to outsider art, by Roger Cardinal much later in 1972, the focus of this artistic approach to our concept of art shifts to a more social aspect. Art Brut emerged mainly from an analysis of the art concept. That its creators were often asocial people was an afterthought. With Outsider Art, the emphasis is mainly on that asocial status of its maker, on the fact that those people are often marginalised or excluded from our society and therefore from our culture. As if gradually it became an essential condition for belonging to this new movement. Outsider art is a kind of niche within the art world where we can recover all kinds of outsiders and trade their exotic works. We still take that misunderstanding with us today. It causes social conditions to become a prerequisite for talking about Art Brut.

If you now enter outsider art on chat GPT you get a response that no longer focuses on the power of artistry against the cultural consensus but instead on art made by people with disabilities, from psychiatry, prison, etc... As a result, we have shifted back to a safe consensus.

It is now culturally widely accepted that there is also something like outsider art and that that is art made by neurodiverse people. On top of that came another social development that has a lot of influence on the way we interact with each other and thus with each other's artistic expressions: inclusion. The idea of inclusion ensures that we have also started to give people with mental vulnerability or intellectual disabilities, for example, people whom Dubuffet labelled as fundamentally asocial, a place in our society. Their voice has become part of our shared world and so they also exert influence on it. They are no longer merely direct objects in our world, and therefore our understanding of art.

These two evolutions very much contradict each other. It is counterproductive, on the one hand, to give people a place in our world while simultaneously isolating them in a separate niche.

Culture is a woollen blanket! And this suits us just fine! Because with this, we do not have to look at what we cannot bear! Art! Art doesn't need our permission, it just exists!

Listen to Dubuffet! Listen to the artist!

But we can't! Why? Because we are afraid of losing control. We are lazy and don't realise what we risk losing as a result. Because, yes, if we don't take care of this artistic position then it will disappear again, along with the freedom it was born from.

listen.

In our society, we consider all kinds of positions important. The political, the economic, the legal... Take the political position, for example. Each of us can and does hold it and will pay the price for it. But to make that condition possible, we have made choices, made space. A system has been devised, for us it is parliamentary democracy and we continue to refine and adjust this system. Wages are paid and pensions, a house is built for it. We organise elections and debates, demonstrations and strikes, conferences and political parties.

Well, the artistic position is just such a posture. As necessary as the political, the economic, the legal,... Each of us can also start taking this position and will also pay the price for it.



Why do we consider it important? Because it is radically linked to freedom. That's why we find it so dangerous at the same time.

If we want to give freedom a place, then we must also surround the artistic position with the space and choices it needs to exist. We have to make room for it without eroding it. It needs wages and pensions, it needs houses and conferences and schools and a market and a debate; you name it. I am not talking about surrounding it with culture or safeguarding heritage, no, I am talking about space for the artistic position. Museums, for instance, should not only be responsible for heritage or the public, they should also be responsible for the artistic position. If we lose the artistic position then we kill freedom.

Surely we cannot allow that!

Not for Dubuffet,

But also not for me, for Klaus and also for Lisi and for you and you....

TEXT KLAUS COMPAGNIE

A stroke can be deadly. Because they didn't pay attention at birth, almost 52 years ago, with those suction cups. Because I was pulled out by a very foolish doctor who never paid attention to that in 1972.

I get epilepsy attacks from it and have paralysis on the left side. I can't use that side anymore. In our place in Zandberg, everyone has brain damage. They all have a disability. I don't know why.

You should get yourself a bottle of cognac. It has 40 degrees of alcohol. You can keep it for a long time because it preserves well. Cointreau also has 40 degrees; *you can keep it for a long time too. You drink a glass of whiskey before you sleep. You smoke a cigar before you sleep, not in bed. Ruben laflere is not good at sleeping.*

Ruben laflere is very gray. I take sleeping medication. So I can sleep all night. It takes two hours to take effect. How do you say that in English?

On Sunday, I drink a glass of wine. Also on holidays.

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CREDITS

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