

## Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University (Paris, 4–11 Jul 22)

Paris, France, Jul 4–11, 2022

Deadline: Apr 10, 2022

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Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University, 8th edition  
Showing/Searching : outsider art and its archival impulse

In a letter addressed to his friend Jacques Berne on the 3rd of August 1970, Jean Dubuffet wrote : "The entire art brut initiative consisted not necessarily in showing art brut after having defined it, but in searching where art brut might be found, in order to accumulate a documentation that could, perhaps, be able to define it."

In conjunction with the historical donation that Bruno Decharme – collection abcd has entrusted to Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou in 2021 and gathering more than 900 major works of art brut, partly shown in the permanent collection, the 8th edition of Bibliothèque Kandinsky Summer University will address the diversity of "connecting" talent spotters of art brut: therapists, researchers, collectors, artists, gallerists, etc., that have lastingly gathered useful documentations and collections and contributed to the visibility and revaluation of art brut.

Under Dubuffet's words, the contrasting terms "showing" / "searching" reveal the great importance he granted to primary sources, understood not as preconditions to research, but as the result of patient fieldwork where works of art and documents often get mixed up and merge. The infinite variability in defining art brut or outsider objects, simultaneously understood as source of aesthetic pleasure and objects of knowledge, invites us to critically address the porosity between the definitions of "work of art" and "document": as art objects, they often document the artistic practices and gestures that created them and represent the sole documentary traces of their singularity; as dynamic objects they embody the work of art and the archive at once; last but not least, numerous artists are inhabited by the archival drive and by the encyclopedic, collecting, impulse as Facteur Cheval, Henry Darger or August Walla.

Art brut, outsider art, naive art, popular/folk/vernacular, psychopathological, medium art: the terminological diversity calls for contextual readings of multiple cultural histories of art brut practices, understood on international scale. What are the primary sources for art brut? Writings, drawings, photography, correspondence, analysis report, diagnosis, literary productions, audiovisual reportages, what kind of documentary sources to understand the artistic work of practitioners whose last names or identities are sometimes unknown or sometimes hidden. Are the collections of these "connecting figures" (collectors, gallerists or therapists), who have seen and valued art brut, enough to explain and analyze their histories and biographies? What were, what are, the current methods of historiographical collecting, study and visibility used to build and compile pertinent

documentation? What are the challenges of an "against the grain" definition of art brut?

During its sessions, the Summer University will explore the long history of art brut practices, starting with pioneer studies of Marcel Réja, Hans Prinzhorn, Jean Dubuffet, Léo Navratil or Roger Cardinal to contemporary studies and creations.

Several stakes are at play in this context:

**Ideologies:** Going beyond Jean Dubuffet's situated historiographical moment, outsider art narrative is filled of institutional resistance, of paradoxical oppositions and contesting views towards different power structures. Tracing back the thread of administrative, literary, psychiatric, public and private archives, which have structured the process of production and classification of works, means to openly break the ideological, discursive mechanisms, which have tried to propose a framework for understanding – sometimes fixed, sometimes repressive, or on the contrary, fundamentally decompartmentalized and open – to the wealth of "other" different practices and visions that exceeded these same power structures. How does the institution respond to different anti-institutional discourses? How are the normative narratives of classification and assignment, undermined by the very practices of art brut? How does art brut create its own structures for display and study? The application proposals are also expected to bring into discussion case studies and specific situations of outsider art, that have been able to reinvent the institutional perimeter.

**Historiographies:** Between the "singularity" of "raw"/ "brut" profiles and the plurality of modern art histories, the Summer University will question, in the light of archival sources, the conditions of production and interpretation of these works of art, that have fundamentally and critically redefined the very canonical art histories (Eurocentric art history, equivocal "primitivism" too often associated with so-called "naïve" productions, terminological shifts towards vernacular practices, etc.) It will therefore be appropriate to shift the question from "how to look at art brut/raw practices" to "how art brut changes the way we look".

**Ethics:** How do the sources testify to the relationship between the artists and those who look at these works? Do these relationships, where the "connecting figure"/"discoverer" embodies authority (critic, therapist, tutor, collector, researcher, etc.), guide the production of works? Between the anonymity of certain artists and the paradox of the "spokesperson" (a voice that one becomes the spokesperson for, is by definition a voice that one does not hear): how to exhibit and perform without endorsing marginalization or concealing the circulation and dissemination of these works, let alone occult and manipulate the reading of these works?

**Display:** what documents inform these collective narratives, how is art brut shown (or even collected, documented) in psychiatric, religious and museum institutions? What collectives of authors and what conditions of creation, what places at the limit between workshop, exhibition space, art market, care institution? What are the different places and approaches worldwide (Asia, South America, Eastern Europe) and other alternative spaces that currently show art brut? What are the conservation issues (material specificity of the works, site specific environments, etc.)?

The Bibliothèque Kandinsky Summer University 2020 will bring together young researchers, curators and artists around documentary material from the library itself—for some part largely unseen—and give its participants the opportunity to put sources 'at work'. It also invites researchers from all horizons to bring up their source material and put it into debate, through historical, cre-

ative and critical discussion.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University is aimed at young fellows (PhD candidates, PhDs, PostDocs or equivalent degree and/or experience): historians, art historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, curators, librarians, graphic designers and artists at large.

Application file:

- written proposal (4,500 characters/700 words) either in English or in French, in PDF format.
- CV which should clearly assess the candidate's language proficiency. In order to apply is important to have a good command in both English and French.

Candidates are expected to bring along a selection of sources used in their research.

The proposal dossier should be sent to: [recherche@centrepompidou.fr](mailto:recherche@centrepompidou.fr) by April 10th 2022.

The proposals will be evaluated by a scientific committee, in charge of drawing up the final Summer University program. The Committee will retain 25 projects.

All applicants, whether selected or not, will be personally contacted before April 19th 2022.

A participation of € 150 will be required from each participant, who will be provided with tuition. The participation will cover transportation on site and institutional entries.

If requested, the Centre Pompidou will be able to issue any required certificate in order to apply for scholarship or funding from foundations, museums, universities or research institutes.

## COMITE DE PILOTAGE

- Cristina Agostinelli, attachée de conservation et responsable de programmation, Collections contemporaines, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Thomas Bertail, chargé de coordination de la recherche, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Bruno Decharme, collectionneur et spécialiste de l'art brut
- Sophie Duplaix, conservatrice en chef des Collections contemporaines, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Mica Gherghescu, responsable du pôle recherche et programmation scientifique, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov, conservateur, chef de service de la Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Anne Montfort, conservatrice, Cabinet d'arts graphiques, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Lucienne Peiry, docteure en histoire de l'art, spécialiste d'Art Brut, commissaire d'expositions
- Mathieu Potte-Bonneville, directeur du Département Culture et Création, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Xavier Rey, directeur du Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Barbara Safarova, productrice de films, docteur ès lettres et en esthétique, présidente de l'association abcd (art brut connaissance & diffusion), directrice de programme au Collège international de philosophie.

- Diane Toubert, archiviste, collections contemporaines, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris
- Aurélie Verdier, conservatrice, Collections modernes, au Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Vous pouvez adresser vos demandes de renseignements à l'adresse / For any inquiry :

recherche@centrepompidou.fr

Tel : +33 (0)1 44 78 46 65

Reference:

ANN: Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University (Paris, 4-11 Jul 22). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 23, 2022

(accessed Jul 8, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36202>>.