

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN

Born 1910, Marinette, WI; died 1983, Milwaukee, WI

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910-1983) was a prolific creator of a diverse range of distinctive images and sculptural objects, who produced his art in private over a period of about fifty years at his home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His large and unusual body of work was not discovered until after he died.

In 1939, at the age of 29, Von Bruenchenhein met Evelyn Kalka. She became his wife and muse. Eugene worked at a bakery, and Evelyn, who was nicknamed "Marie," served as his model and the subject of thousands of erotic photo-portraits, which he shot and printed himself in a darkroom he had installed in their home. For these photo images, which emulated girlie-magazine pin-ups with an offbeat air, Von Bruenchenhein designed and created his own background set-ups and costumes for Marie.

Around the mid-1950s, the artist began to make abstract paintings using his fingers or sticks, combs, leaves and other makeshift utensils to push oil paint around the surfaces of Masonite boards or pieces of cardboard taken from packing boxes at the bakery where he worked. Von Bruenchenhein's hallucinatory, abstract images offer explosions of vibrant color and evoke the forms of strange plants or fantasy creatures and architectural structures.

Later in his career, Von Bruenchenhein used clay to produce home-fired crowns and vases. He used chicken and turkey bones to create mysterious sculptures resembling towers or thrones. During his lifetime, only his closest family members and friends knew anything about his artistic pursuits and the works he had conjured up in private. In 1983, after the artist's death, one of his friends called the attention of the Milwaukee Art Museum to Von Bruenchenhein's extraordinary oeuvre. Later that same year, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, began to document Von Bruenchenhein's sizable body of work.

On the occasion of a survey of his work, which opened at the American Folk Art Museum in New York in 2010, the critic Roberta Smith wrote in the *New York Times*, "Von Bruenchenhein belongs among the great American outsider artists whose work came to light or resurfaced in the last three decades of the 20th century..." She placed Von Bruenchenhein's unusual art in the company of that of Henry Darger, Martin Ramírez, Bill Traylor, James Castle and Morton Bartlett.

In addition to showings at various galleries and art fairs in the past, Von Bruenchenhein's work has been showcased in numerous museum exhibitions, including the above-mentioned solo survey at the American Folk Art Museum in 2010-11; "Alternative Guide to the Universe," at the Hayward Gallery in London in 2013, and "The Encyclopedic Palace," the main, international group exhibition at the 2013 Venice Biennale. Public collections include The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum and the American Folk Art Museum, New York.

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Selected Exhibitions

2016 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhien: King of Lesser Lands*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Marie! Marie! I long for you, Delmes & Zander, Berlin, Germany

2015 *When the Curtain Never Comes Down: Performance Art and the Alter Ego*, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

2014 *Raw Vision: 25 Years of Art Brut*, Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, France

Uncommon Folk: Traditions in American Art, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

2013 *Alternative Guide to the Universe*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

The Encyclopedic Palace, 55th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Giardini; the Arsendale, Venice, Italy

Great and Mighty Things: Outsider Art from the Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA

Women's Studies, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

2011 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: From the Wand of the Genii*, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL

Inova/Kennilworth, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Gallery, Milwaukee, WI

2010 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Freelance Artist-Poet and Sculptor-Innovator-Arrow Maker and Plant Man-Bone Artifacts Constructor-Photographer and Architect-Philosopher*, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

Out of this World, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, MD

2008 *After Nature*, Group Exhibition, New Museum, New York, NY

2007 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein*, Feigen Contemporary, New York, NY

2004 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein*, Feigen Contemporary, New York, NY

2001 *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

1999 *Botanical Explosions: The Paintings of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein*, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

Obsession, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein Photography, Aurel Scheibler Gallery, Cologne, Germany

Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century, traveling exhibition sponsored by the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

1998 *Ceramic Sculptures: Eugene Von Bruenchenhein*, Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

Naked, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

1997 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Works in Clay*, Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

1996 Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France

Looking Beyond the Mirror, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Paintings, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

1995 *A World of their Own: Twentieth-Century American Folk Art*, Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

Obsession: Photographs by E. V. B., Michael Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI

1994 *Experience the Fantasy*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

Marie, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

1993 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Fotografien*, Galerie Susanne Zander, Cologne, Germany

E. Von Bruenchenhein Photographs, Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, NY

1992 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Utopic Dreams*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

1991 *Dreams, Lies and Exaggerations: Photomontage in America*, traveling exhibition: The Art Gallery of the University of Maryland at College Park; John M. Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

1990 *Outsiders: Artists Outside the Mainstream*, Octagon Center for the Arts, Ames, IA

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

Chicago New Art Forms Exposition, Chicago, IL

Visions: Expressions Beyond the Mainstream, Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL

E. V. B.: Paintings and Photographs, Edward Thorp Gallery, Chicago, IL

Chicago International Art Exposition, Chicago, IL

1989 *Departures: Photography 1924-1989*, Hirschl and Adler Modern, New York, NY

Paintings of Utopic Vision, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

1988 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Obsessive Visionary*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

Chicago International Art Exposition, Chicago, IL

Chicago New Art Forms Exposition, Chicago, IL

1987 *Chairs as Art*, Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Material Obsessions, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

A Thousand and One Nights, Landmark Gallery, Milwaukee, WI

Chairs, Expressways Children's Museum, Chicago, IL

Chicago International Art Exposition, Chicago, IL

Chicago New Art Forms Exposition, Chicago, IL

1986 *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein*, Carl Hammer Gallery, Chicago, IL

1984 *Von Bruenchenhein: A Retrospective*, Landmark Gallery, Milwaukee, WI

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Wisconsin Visionary, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI

1983 *Remains To Be Seen*, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Selected Bibliography

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Johnson, Ken, Review: Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, 'King of Lesser Lands', *The New York Times*, April 28, 2016.

Angeleti, Gabriella, Defining a King of Lesser of Lands, *Brut Force*, April 18, 2016.

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: King of Lesser Lands, *TimeOut New York*, April 11, 2016.

Ebony, David, "David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for April," *Artnet news*, April 8, 2016.

Ghorashi, Hannah, "Andrew Edlin Gallery Now Reps Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's Estate," *ARTnews*, October 7, 2015.

"Eugene Von Bruenchenhein 1910-1983," *Outsider Art Now*, July 2, 2014.

Heinrich, Will, "'Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: Bits from First World' at Maccarone," *Observer*, March 26, 2014.

Wiley, Chris, "Maccarone's first exhibition of the work of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein opens in New York," *Art Daily*, March 5, 2014.

Anderson, Lamar, "Where Folk Art Meets High Fashion," *Art News*, January 13 2014.

Carroll, Brendan S., "Four Shows to See in Philadelphia: Mario Ybarra Jr, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, KAWS, The Barnes," *Hyper Allergic*, October 24, 2013.

Rugoff, Ralph, ed., *The Alternative Guide to the Universe*, exhibition catalogue, Hayward Publishing, London, 2013.

Prentnieks, Anne, "Eugene Von Bruenchenhein," *Artforum*, October 10, 2013.

Wiley, Chris, "Outside In," *Mousse Contemporary Art Magazine*, No. 40, September 2013.

Littman, Brett, *Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: "Freelance Artist-Poet and Sculptor-Innovator-Arrow maker and Plant man-Bone artifacts constructor-Photographer and Architect-Philosopher,"* exhibition catalogue, American Folk Art Museum, New York, 2011.

Jones, Kristin M., "Eugene Von Bruenchenhein," *Freize*, May 01, 2011.

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

“Eugene Von Bruenchenhein: From the Wand of the Genii,” *Intuit*, September 16, 2011.

Gardner, James, “Eugene Von Bruenchenhein,” *The Antiques Magazine*, October 9, 2011.

Lowenstein, Kate, “An Outsider who was a Jack-of-many-trades, but Mastered only a Few,” *TimeOut*, November 19, 2010.

Schumacher, Mary Louise, “Eugene Von Bruenchenhein’s Moment,” *Journal Sentinel*, November 12, 2010.

Smith, Roberta, “Meager Means, Rich Imagination,” *The New York Times*, November 4, 2010.

Glueck, Grace, “Eugene Von Bruenchenhein at Feigen Contemporary through Oct. 23,” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2004.

Swislow, William, “Three Outsider Photographers: Lee Godie, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein and Morton Bartlett,” *Folk Art Messenger*, Winter 2002.

Squires, Carol, “King of Hearts,” *American Photography*, May-June, 2000.

Stone, Lisa, “Eugene Von Bruenchenhein,” *Raw Vision*, No. 10, Winter 1994-95.

Selected Public Collections

American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Missouri, MO