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ANDREW EDLIN GALLERY NOW REPS EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN'S ESTATE

BY *Hannah Ghorashi* POSTED 10/07/15 3:55 PM

New York's Andrew Edlin Gallery announced today that it now represents the estate of the late artist Eugene Von Bruenchenhein. Though the self-taught artist from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, attempted to exhibit his work throughout his life, none of Von Bruenchenhein's sculptures, drawings, ceramics, paintings, or photos were publicly displayed until after his death, in 1983.

Over the phone, Andrew Edlin said that he is the first dealer to obtain exclusive representation of Von Bruenchenhein's work. "Von Bruenchenhein has been represented by different dealers in different cities over the years, but we are the exclusive dealer now," he said. "His work has been seen largely in outsider contexts but in recent years he certainly has been shown in contemporary contexts."

Von Bruenchenhein's work has indeed appeared in some closely watched museum and gallery exhibitions over the past few years—in a group show at the New Museum in 2008, in a solo retrospective at the American Folk Art Museum in 2010–11, and in the international group show at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

Edlin, who represents mostly self-taught artists, like Henry Darger, Martin Ramírez, Bill Traylor, and James Castle, said, "[Von Bruenchenhein's] estate was well aware of my presence in the market as a dealer and they approached me." He called Von Bruenchenhein a Leonardo da Vinci among outsider artists for his ingenious work in



Evelyn "Marie" Kalka. 1940s-50s. Photo by Eugene Von Bruenchenhein.

radically different mediums, especially photography. In the 1940s, Von Bruenchenhein shot over a thousand intimate photos of his wife, Evelyn “Marie” Kalka, before the pinup photos of the next decade became a hit. “Outsider artists haven’t really gravitated towards photography, probably because it’s such a technical medium,” said Edlin.



A 1940s bone sculpture by Eugene Von Bruenchenhein.
COURTESY ANDREW EDLIN GALLERY

Von Bruenchenhein began creating abstract paintings in the mid-1950s, using his fingers, sticks, combs, leaves, and other sundry items as a makeshift brush, while using the top of Masonite boards or cardboard taken from packing boxes at the bakery where he worked during the day. Later on, he fired his own clay crowns and vases at home and used discarded turkey and chicken bones to create enigmatic sculptures in the form of towers and thrones, the largest of which reached five feet.

The gallery will be presenting a solo show of Von Bruenchenhein’s work in early 2016, but the dates are not set as the gallery is still finishing its move from their Chelsea location to a new space, at 212 Bowery. Regardless, Von Bruenchenhein’s works are set for a busy end to 2015: Edlin will be showing his works at the Outsider Art Fair in Paris in late October and at Art Basel Miami Beach in early December.

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