

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Main gallery - "Darger Discoveries"

Project space - "Henry Darger's Room: Photographs by Keizo Kitajima"

March 28 - June 7, 2008

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to announce the forthcoming opening of Darger Discoveries, a concentrated and illuminating new survey of mixed-media works by the legendary Chicago recluse and autodidact Henry Darger (1892-1973).

"Darger Discoveries" will feature several newly available, emblematic works from the self-taught master's oeuvre that have been shown in important exhibitions in the U.S. (including Disasters of War, PS1/ MOMA), Europe and Japan. They include double-sided, panoramic drawings of groups of Blengins in little-girl incarnations, sometimes with parachute-sized butterfly wings. Surrounded by succulent, pop-colored flowers, and infused with collaged cut-outs from magazines, these images evoke 1960s psychedelia and feature many of Darger's signature themes and motifs. Undoubtedly some of his greatest masterpieces, these drawings display an exquisite handling of color and composition, and evoke a mood at once idyllic and oddly foreboding

One of the definitive giants in the outsider art field, Darger, working in self-imposed isolation, conceived and wrote *In the Realms of the Unreal*, an epic fantasy of good versus evil, which he illustrated over many years in a technically innovative and thematically complex series of mixed-media drawings and collages on paper. Darger's imaginary world and the story that unfolds within it feature such vivid characters as the virtuous Vivian Girls; the child-enslaving Glandelinians; and the sometimes benevolent, sometimes ominous Blengiglomeneans, or Blengins—large, winged creatures with curled horns that occasionally take human form. Darger's work has become increasingly recognized internationally, winning praise from critics, art historians, curators and collectors for the originality and prescience of his vision.

Coinciding with this presentation, the exhibition "Darger-ism: Contemporary Artists and Henry Darger" at the American Folk Art Museum in New York (April 15-September 21) will be on view. Since his death in 1973, the artist's work has been particularly inspiring for a new generation of contemporary artists who appreciate Darger's integration of pop-cultural sources such as children's coloring books, comics, and Catholic-biblical imagery, all antecedents of today's postmodernist, appropriationist tendencies.

Andrew Edlin Gallery is also pleased to present "Henry Darger's Room: Photographs by Keizo Kitajima", a selection of limited edition c-prints by the Japanese photographer Keizo Kitajima from the book *Henry Darger's Room: 851 Webster* (Tokyo: Imperial Press, 2007). Kitajima's photographs document the one-room apartment inside the Chicago townhouse where the artist lived and worked for some 40 years. Kitajima's photographs capture the air of isolation and show the contents—stacks of books and papers, shelves lined with religious objects, art supplies and works-in-progress—of Darger's living quarters. Taken 26 years after the artist's death and

six months before the apartment was finally dismantled, these photographs capture an experience of pilgrimage to the unique environment that was rarely visited during Darger's lifetime.

Andrew Edlin Gallery, the exclusive representative of the Estate of Henry Darger, welcomes inquiries from collectors, curators, educators, the media and the general public. For more information or requests for reproductions of works in these two exhibitions, please contact:

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The gallery is open from Tuesday through Saturday, 11 – 6