

DU 29 NOVEMBRE 2019
AU 26 AVRIL 2020

4^e BIENNALE
DE L'ART BRUT

THÉÂTRES

COLLECTION
DE L'ART BRUT
LAUSANNE

PRESS KIT



**Guided tour
(preview version)
for the press**

Thursday 28 November 2019, 11am
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne
Booking : sophie.guyot@lausanne.ch

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4TH ART BRUT BIENNIAL: THEATRE

The fourth Art Brut Biennial invites visitors to further discover the Lausanne museum's wealth of holdings, with an eye to the presence of theatre in Art Brut. Works by a selection of twenty-eight creators are presented through costumes, sculptures, drawings, paintings, photographs and cutouts. These portray various theatrical worlds, be they formal — several by Victorien Sardou come to mind — or contextual, for instance pieces by Helga Goetze. Moreover, the presentation of documents from the museum archival holdings in the form of films, sounds and images adds a further dimension to the selection on display, helping viewers understand the creative process behind the works.

The creators in this show use various theatre codes to build up projects from which they themselves stand to benefit. Several adventure outdoors to find an audience among passersby, who are either intrigued by, or indifferent to these intuitive "performances." Thus, Giovanni Battista Podestà, Vahan Poladian, Dunya Hirschter and Martial Richoz blend theatre venue with public space, using their own bodies as tools of expression and donning self-made outfits and accessories. As such, they grant themselves the right to be in the limelight, reclaiming a part of their life of which they have been robbed by being confined, imprisoned or stigmatized.

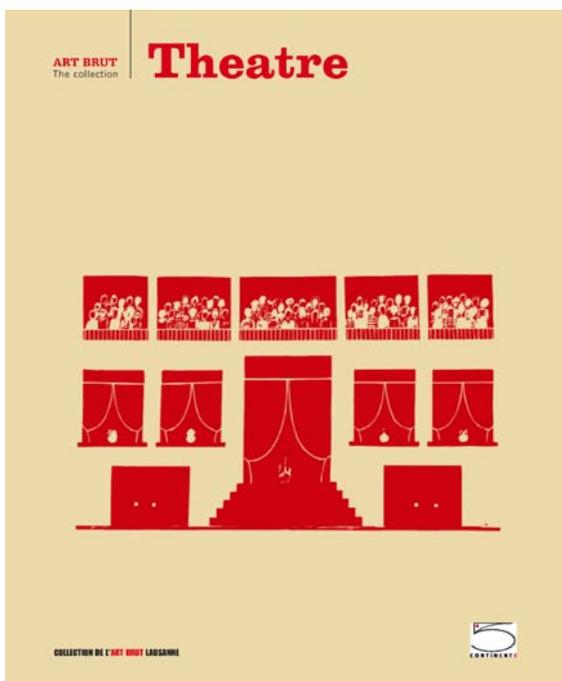
This, the fourth edition of our biennials, also presents several creators with whom the public is already familiar, such as Aloïse Corbaz, Adolf Wölfli and Eugen Gabritschevsky, and this in a new light. As the makers and stage directors of their own worlds, these creators define the context, the figures and the characters, the movements, the stage design, the lighting and the acting in their works. Or, more precisely, their drawings and/or paintings contain the theatre, the stage, the curtains, the theater boxes and/or the rows of seats.

Clearly, the theatre is present in a multitude of ways in Art Brut, as the works on display show. Yet, equally, the artistic endeavors of Art Brut creators blend in with their own daily lives. Thus, for instance, Aloïse Corbaz lives side-by-side with the imaginary characters in her drawings. Likewise, to Guy Brunet his cardboard figures are his own children: he could not bear being separated from them. Or again, Morton Bartlett fantasizes his family as an intimate puppet theatre, fiercely defending the latter against any intruders.

Exhibition Curator: Pascale Jeanneret, Museum Curator for the Collection de l'Art Brut

PUBLICATIONS

This exhibition is accompanied by the fourth volume in our "Art Brut, la collection" publication series, namely "Theatre". The resulting catalog provides viewers with different perspectives on the subject of theatre in Art Brut. Two separate editions (resp. English and French) are available to visitors.



Pascale Jeanneret, Sarah Lombardi and Eric Vautrin, **Theatre**, Lausanne/Milan, Collection de l'Art Brut/5 Continents Editions, 2019, « Art Brut, la collection », under the direction of Sarah Lombardi, 144 pages, over 100 color plates. Available in French and/or English

DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION :

Family Found : the lifetime obsession of Morton Bartlett, by Emily Harris, London, Indivisions Films, 2002, 10 min.

Bandes-annonces [compilation], film by Guy Brunet, Viviez, Les Studios Paravision, [s.d.], 86 min.

Alekssander Pavlovitch Lobanov, by Bruno Decharme, Paris, abcd, 2001, 7 min.

Eirijo Miyama, by Philippe Lespinasse and Andress Alvarez, Le Tourne/Lausanne, Lokomotiv Films/Collection de l'Art Brut, 2007, 13 min.

Podestà, by Stefan Burckhard, Bâles, Stefan Burckhard, [s.d.], 5 min.

Monsieur Poladian : en habits de ville, by Jean-Noël Cristiani, Montreuil, Les films de l'homme, 1977, 12 min.

Martial dit l'homme-bus, by Michel Etter, Lausanne, Videal Studio, 1983, 18 min.

Palmerino, by Pascale Ferland, Montréal, Pascale Ferland, 2002, 47 min.

LIST OF THE AUTHORS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

ALOÏSE CORBAZ
MORTON BARTLETT
GUY BRUNET
MARGUERITE BURNAT-PROVINS
PIERRE CARBONEL
BERTHE COULON
GASTON DUF
PAUL END
EUGEN GABRITSCHESKY
MADGE GILL
LOUIS-HENRI G.
HELGA GOETZE,
DUNYA HIRSCHTER
EMILE JOSOME HODINOS

ALEKSANDER LOBANOV
REINHOLD METZ
EIJIRO MIYAMA
GIOVANNI BATTISTA PODESTÀ
VAHAN POLADIAN
LE POSTIER TCHÈQUE
MARTIAL RICHOUZ
VICTORIEN SARDOU
PALMERINO SORGENTE
NI TANJUNG
BERNADETTE TOUILLEUX
EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN
ADOLF WÖLFLI
BROOKS YEOMANS



Vahan Poladian on a terrace
in St-Raphaël, circa 1980
Photo: Eryck Abecassis

EXCERPTS FROM THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

***Raising the Curtain*, by Pascale Jeanneret**, curator of the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne

[...] The fourth Biennale de l'Art Brut highlights the close, and sometimes unexpected, ties that unite theatre and Art Brut. The twenty-eight visual artists in this exhibition are illustrators, painters, sculptors, or photographers. But they are just as much directors, actors, prop masters, puppeteers, and costume designers. Some even use all these skills at the same time. The exhibited works, all of which come from the Collection de l'Art Brut, belong to both of these worlds. Art Brut creators, who are self-taught and non-conformist, do not consider their work to be art. They have been marginalized through internment, imprisonment, or stigmatization, and create in isolation, away from societal norms and conventions. For some, artistic output becomes a stage on which they can project themselves, inhabiting new roles: demiurge, protagonist, or narrator. They experience other realities, temporalities, and personalities in this new space. Through their staging, these Art Brut creators claim an existence and recognition of which they would otherwise have been deprived. They claim the right to be in the limelight, to be someone else, or to be everyone else. As a result of this approach, some create work that comes from a complex, multifaceted thought process. This is the case with Aloïse Corbaz, Adolf Wölfli, and Marguerite Burnat-Provins. All three use writing to develop the dramaturgy of their imaginary cosmogonies. As creators and directors of their worlds, they define the setting, characters, movements, sets, lighting, and acting through their texts. [...]

Adolf Wölfli had a difficult childhood. He was a victim of bullying and abuse while employed at various farms as a stable boy or goatherd. He was sentenced and interned in 1895 to the Waldau Psychiatric Hospital (Bern) after being arrested twice for both indecency and sexual assault. On arrival, and at the request of doctors, he had to face a particularly complex task for an uneducated man like himself: to write his autobiography. Against all odds, this exercise opened doors to writing and drawing, creative forms that were unknown to him until then. Four years later, he embarked on the development of a graphic, written, and musical work of great breadth, singularity, and complexity. The composition, which was first in black and white and then colour, is organized in regular shapes with circles, friezes, and medallions arranged symmetrically. Musical staves loaded with notes flow through the various sections. Wölfli organized his cosmogony in a very precise way, inspired by geographical maps and diagrams. His work is extensive and was created in cycles: his three-thousand-page fictional autobiography *Du berceau au tombeau*, from 1908 to 1912; his *Cahiers géographiques et algébriques*, from 1912 to 1918; the *Cahiers avec chants et danses*, totalling approximately seven thousand pages, completed around 1922; the *Albums-cahiers de danses et de marches* from 1924 to 1928; and, finally, the *Marche funèbre*, which totalled more than eight thousand pages at his death. As early as 1908, Adolf Wölfli used a simultaneously grandiose and modest signature to highlight all facets of his work: Adolf Wölfli – draftsman – poet – writer – composer – ‘Algerian’ – sick –

accident – scrapped – misfortune – *doufi*. Combining writing, drawing, and music, he intended to use the fundamental principles of the Universe — history, geography, religion, etc. — as a basis for his work, mastering both space and time. His musical scores, whose staves include an additional line, have been interpreted in several ways. In this way he integrated both musical and staged dimensions into his drawings.
[...]

The Future Theatre of Art Brut - Dramatizing separation, by Eric Vautrin,
playwright, Theater Vidy-Lausanne

[...] In my opinion, there is a drama at play in Art Brut works, one that we can identify to a greater or lesser extent: that of the possible disappearance of these common memory markers that place us within a community. This is not specific to Art Brut; every piece of art (and especially theatre) may challenge our collective memory and then create new foundations through aesthetic experience. Thereby we discover the potential of this collective memory, which enables us to understand and take part in the world. This drama plays out differently in Art Brut works — in a wilder, more childish, and perhaps uncertain way. The creators of such works obviously have an intimate knowledge of the tragic possibility of being separated from collective memory; the resulting works may in turn express the experience of distance from those respective communities. The reason I use the word drama is because I do not see these works as signalling exclusion or as statements of an irremediable otherness. On the contrary, they highlight a conflict, a question, a force trying to reformulate, reinvent, and rebuild a connection between the artist and the community, so that the separation itself is dramatized. It is a tragedy, as the outcome is uncertain and the work is in a sense a self-fulfilling prophecy: that a connection will be established within a shared space. When such a work is exhibited outside the context in which it was produced, this drama is entrusted to us: do we, as human beings, connect to something in the work? This fragile and tenuous link is the root cause of the drama in these works, be it tragic, comic, light-hearted, violent, or childish. It reminds us of our own experience of separation.
[...]

Firstly, theatre can be seen in each of these Art Brut works: they bear a very real theatricality. It is not, however, a theatre we would regard as classical or traditional, akin to that created in sophisticated Paris during the second half of the nineteenth century (which was itself a reinterpretation of seventeenth-century classical theatre, itself a free interpretation of what was then thought to be Greek or ancient Roman theatre), in which actors would recite a text in a specific setting, according to the traditions of a 'well-executed play' with its various scenes, its 'climax', and its more-or-less happy or tragic outcome. But for the past 150 years — and possibly much further back — there has been what has been described as 'art theatre', or today 'creative' theatre (original productions), which continually reinvents these basic theatrical elements in order to adapt, reflect, or take on board the present and topical: a combination of art, a specific time and place, a narrative, and viewers who find

unexpected echoes of their own memories, starting with the collective memory of which they are the guardians. Art Brut works are laden with a theatricality that is close to that of creative theatre — and it is not surprising that such works sometimes inspire creative theatre, even forming one of its legacies, as we will ultimately see. [...]

Restoring the future: Vahan Poladian

Vahan Poladian's work is a personal and cultural reinvention: it is composed both of finery and everyday objects: headdresses, decorated eyewear, sceptres, bags, cigarette holders, and various pieces of jewellery. His costumes and props are fake, made with simple and ordinary objects adorned with gildings and charms. In this way, he created the idea of a different culture, perhaps that of Armenia, his home country, which still traumatized him, or rather an imaginary future Armenia. He was the representative, the pilgrim, the prophet, and the prince of this future Armenia, of this imaginary, idealized country. Nothing in his work, however, claims to be authentic: rather, he imagined a buried or extinct culture. By doing so, he assembled, created, and propelled it into the future. He embodied the spirit of this future Armenia.

Poladian's works take our day-to-day culture to new places, connecting the signs and language of daily speech to an alternate reality — just as poetry does. They invoke a buried collective memory and symbology, starting with society's self-depiction, reinventing it in response to a lack of identity. In doing so, Poladian's works, like actors on a stage, hover on the boundary between the familiar and the fantastic. In them the unexpected and everyday coexist with an elegance that transcends the mundane. His works are ambassadors, messengers, and representatives of the invisible within the visible. They remain symbolic and artificial, like the activity of an actor or a ritual: they establish and restore symbols through narrative, mediating between the 'real' — including socially structured time and space, and shared mythical elements (made from everyday objects) — and the invisible. The drama performed here is in how the works project our memories into an imaginary future.

IMAGES AVAILABLE TO THE MEDIA

All images : Atelier de numérisation – Ville de Lausanne (AN)
Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne



Giovanni Battista Podestà wearing his coat, Laveno, circa 1970, archives of the Fabuloserie, Alain Bourbonnais



Helga Sophia Goetze
Mytho Sophie, between 1970 and 2007
embroidery on fabric, 87 x 65 x 35 cm
photo : AN – Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne



Émile Josome Hodinos
untitled, between 1876 and 1896
ink on paper. 21 x 16 cm
photo : AN – Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne



Aleksander Lobanov
untitled, between 1960 and 2003
pasted photograph sewn with copper wire on cardboard, plastic, 16 x 11.5 x 1.5 cm
photo : AN – Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne



Vahan Poladian
untitled,
between 1966 and 1982
assemblage of fabric, plastic,
and cardboard,
206 x 214 cm
photo : AN – Collection de l'Art
Brut, Lausanne



Palmerino Sorgente in his workshop, Notre-Dame Street, Montréal, 1999
Photo : Marie-Christine Cyr et Georges Aubin Jr. © Société des arts indisciplinés and Palmerino Sorgente Family

EVENTS

Guided tour (preview version) for the press **Saturday 28 November 2019, 11am**
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne
Bookings: sophie.guyot@lausanne.ch

Opening Reception for the Public **Thursday 28 November 2019, 6:30pm**
Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne

Free guided tours **Saturday 1st February 2020, 2pm**
Saturday 21 March 2020, 2pm
By Pascale Jeanneret, curator at the Collection de l'Art Brut.
Saturday 7 March 2020, 4pm
By Eric Vautrin, playwright, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne.

Free guided tour for teachers **Saturday 16 January 2020, 5pm**

Young People's Workshops (ages 12-14) **Saturday 18 January 2020, 2pm** *Duration: 1h45*
Saturday 7 March 2020, 2pm *Fee: 10.-*

Young People's Workshops (ages 14-16) **Saturday 8 February 2020, 2pm**

Guided tours For classes (from age 4) and groups, in French, German, English and Italian.
Upon request

Guided tours for classes Advance booking required
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 AM to 6 PM
Thursdays from 9 AM to 6 PM

Contact and bookings for all tours and workshops at www.artbrut.ch > *calendar* or phone 021/ 315 25 70
Limited numbers on a first come first served basis

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Press kit Illustrations and a Press Kit can be downloaded at www.artbrut.ch under the heading: media

Media contact Sophie Guyot
Phone +41 21 315 25 84 (Tuesdays, Wednesday mornings, Thursdays)
sophie.guyot@lausanne.ch

Address Collection de l'Art Brut
Avenue des Bergières 11
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www.artbrut.ch

Opening hours Tuesday thru Sunday from 11am to 6pm including holidays
Closed on December 25 2019 and 1st of January, 2020
On December 24 and 31 open from 11am to 5pm
No entrance fee the first Saturday of every month

Entrance fee Fr. 10.-
Reduced price: Fr. 5.-
Groups of 6: Fr. 5.-
Unemployed persons and youngsters up to 16: free admittance

Access By bus

From St-François : bus no. 2, Beaulieu-Jomini stop.
From the railroad station (gare CFF) : bus nos. 3 and 21, Beaulieu-Jomini stop.

By foot: 25 min. from the station; 10 min. from Place de la Riponne.

By car: highway exit Lausanne-Blécherette, follow Palais de Beaulieu. Car park: Parking de Beaulieu.

Wheelchair accessibility:

During the summer of 2019, the Collection de l'Art Brut will be adding an elevator to its premises. We look forward thenceforth to welcoming wheelchair users to all our upcoming temporary exhibitions.

THE COLLECTION DE L'ART BRUT EXTENDS ITS THANKS FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO:



MEMOIRE VIVE
AGITATEUR DE RESEAUX