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## SOFA WEST: Santa Fe 2011 New! Spotlight Presentation of The Intuit Show of Folk and Outsider Art Dealer Presentations

Chicago is home to **Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art**, so it is fitting that three seminal Chicago galleries—**Carl Hammer Gallery**, **Russell Bowman Art Advisory** and **Judy. A Saslow Gallery**—lead the way at The Intuit Show at SOFA WEST: Santa Fe, representing many masters of outsider and folk art.

**Carl Hammer Gallery** will represent Chicago's **Henry Darger** (1882-1973) a custodian who attended church regularly but lived a reclusive personal life. His astonishing work was discovered after his death and includes the 15,145-page, single-spaced fantasy manuscript called *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What is known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*, along with several hundred drawings and watercolor paintings illustrating the story. In 2008, the Intuit Center dedicated the Henry Darger Room Collection, an evocation of the living space from the small Chicago apartment in which the reclusive artist lived.

**Carl Hammer** will also offer works by **Martín Ramírez** (1895–1963), the renowned self-taught Mexican-American master, who Roberta Smith of The New York Times referred to as "...simply one of the greatest artists of the 20th century." Born in rural Mexico, he was diagnosed as a catatonic schizophrenic and confined to California state hospitals until his death. His works all date to the last fifteen years of his life, when he rarely spoke. Many were discovered in hospital storage bins after his death. A master of line and compositional control, Ramírez used matchsticks to paint with melted crayons and found pigments on paper fragments glued together with saliva. Recurring motifs in his dream-like work express both vernacular Mexican and American cultural themes and visual tropes, including the mounted and armed *caballero*, the Virgin Mary, trains and tunnels, and cars.

Hammer also represents **Eugene Von Bruenchenhein** (1910–1983), an American outsider artist from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His versatile body of work includes over a thousand colorful apocalyptic landscape paintings, hundreds of sculptures made from chicken bones, ceramic and cast cement; pin-up style photos of his wife, Marie, plus dozens of notebooks filled with poetic and scientific musings. Carl Hammer reports, "Von Bruenchenhein's first paintings were on panels of boxes that he brought home from the bakery (where he worked). He spent hours looking at drops of water through a microscope, and was equally concerned with macrocosmic order, evident in musings and paintings about the worlds beyond ours." Von Bruenchenhein will also be represented at SOFA WEST by **Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago**.

**Carl Hammer** and **Packer Schopf** will also both offer paintings by **Lee Godie** (1908–1994), a bag lady who proclaimed herself *Lee Godie - French Impressionist*, noting how she was "much better than Cezanne." Born in Chicago and three times married with children, most facts of her life remain a mystery. She drew with an ink pen and sometimes colored the images, using recycled material long before it was popular. In the beginning, she created many of her works on canvas window shades (drawing images on both sides of the shade), not because recycling was popular, but because they were cheap and easy to find.

**Russell Bowman Art Advisory** will present outsider artist **Carlo Zinelli** (1916 –1974), a schizophrenic from Italy who was committed to psychiatric hospitals all his adult life. Zinelli drew for eight hours a day with tempera paints and colored pencils, creating about nineteen hundred paintings and a few sculptures. His narratives tell the story of his childhood in the country, frequently repeating figures to cover the entire background in "horror vacui" style. His human figures are always solid shapes drawn in profile, often with holes to represent eyes or other features. By 1964, his work had been exhibited, and he had attracted the attention of art historians associated with Jean Dubuffet and the Compagnie de l'Art Brut.

Also on offer at **Russell Bowman** will be **James Castle** (1899 – 1977) who was presumed deaf and mentally challenged but was likely autistic. On his family's Idaho ranch, Castle sketched, made books, and created his constructions: cardboard figures, furniture and architectural structures. For pens he sharpened sticks and twigs. For ink he mixed stove soot and saliva. Paper was scavenged from discarded or found materials (bulk mail, cardboard cartons, cigarette packages, discarded textbooks). To bind his books the artist borrowed or found thread, twine, string or yarn. After an 'on-again, off-again' exhibition record due to his family's ambivalence, Castle's reputation has been established globally as a major outsider artist.

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The **Ames Gallery, Berkeley, CA** adds **A. G. Rizzoli** to the outsider mix, an unassuming San Francisco architectural draftsman who produced spectacular architectural renderings in grand Beaux Arts style from 1935 to 1944. Done in colored ink on rag paper, many of the drawings were symbolic portraits of friends and family, depicting them as buildings. Five birthday tributes to his mother done during this period (the Kathredals), are among his most elaborate architectural portraits. Other drawings are plot plans for his fantasy "expeau" inspired by the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Rizzoli called his expeau Y.T.T.E., standing for "Yield To Total Elation." The major units or buildings in the Y.T.T.E. comprise another series of drawings; and emblems, signs and elaborate Mother's Day poems (to his dead mother) comprise yet another body of work.

The **Ames Gallery** will also represent **Dwight Mackintosh**, whose apocryphal story began with his birth in Hayward, California in 1906 (d. 1996), which occurred simultaneously with the Great San Francisco Earthquake, and led to his disability. Mackintosh first lived at home but was institutionalized at age 16, where he remained for the next 56 years until the mass release of patients in 1978. Mackintosh's images centered on the figure — initially he drew only boys. Over the years he gradually introduced new elements, including see-through (x-ray) vehicles, animals, and women, and early model cars and high-buttoned boots remembered from childhood. Unintelligible writing was often an element of his drawings—sequences of connected letters moved from left to right as if they were continuous explanatory text, or perhaps one vast sentence or signature. Peppared with dotted 'i's and carefully crossed 't's, but no one, not even Dwight Mackintosh could tell what he had written.

**Packer Schopf Gallery (Chicago)** will present **The Cowboy Constructions of Harry Young, Circa 1930-1950**. The gallery reports, "The Harry Young collection includes hundreds of handmade figures on cardboard that were found in a large wooden box with "Harry Young, 38 Inkerman, St. Thomas, ON" scratched on the inside. The box includes over 350 cardboard figures of cowboys, lawmen, and horses. The vast majority are hand drawn. There are a handful of figures that have "collage" faces, cut from newspaper ads for cowboy movies. The box also contains a lot of other miscellaneous items, including a wearable Marshall's badge and a small, handwritten book of "laws," which establishes rules for cowboy life, morality, and justice. This work is an amazing outsider art discovery. We will have formal framed pieces, along with various ephemera from the complete collection.

Straddling outsider, visionary and folk art, **Joseph Yoakum** (1880 -1972) from Chicago's South Side was a self-taught artist of African American and Native American descent who traveled with the circus in his younger years. Heavily influence by the nomadic lifestyle of circus folk, Yoakum blended the places he visited with landscapes of his imagination through a process of "spiritual unfoldment." He produced over 2000 drawings during the last decade of his life. Unlike some celebrated self-taught artists, Yoakum enjoyed a measure of success and attention for his art while he was alive, often visited by Chicago artists who would become known as Hairy Who and the Imagists. Represented by **Carl Hammer, Russell Bowman** and **Judy A. Saslow**.

**Russell Bowman Art Advisory** will also represent visionary artist **Edgar Tolson** (1904–1984) of Kentucky, one of the most prominent artists to figure in the resurgent art world's interest in American folk art, whose work was included the 1973 Whitney Biennial. After a life of religious service and a stroke in 1957, Tolson created a famous series depicting the "Fall of Man," a frank—and often explicitly sexual—portrayal of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The gallery will also show works by **Rev. Howard Finster** (1916 –2001), a Baptist Reverend and artist from Georgia who claimed to be inspired by God to spread the gospel through the environment of *Paradise Garden* and over 46,000 pieces of art. His creations, like Tolson's, overlap folk, outsider, naïve, and visionary art.

Major African-American vernacular or folk artists represented at the fair include **William "Bill" Traylor** (c. 1854 –1949), on offer by **Russell Bowman** and **Judy A. Saslow**. Traylor was a self-taught artist born into slavery on a plantation near Benton, Alabama. By 1939, he had moved to Montgomery, where he slept in the back room of a funeral home and in a shoemaker's shop. During the day, he sat on the sidewalk and drew passersby and remembered scenes from life on the farm, hanging his works on the fence behind him. Astonishingly, he created most of his works between the ages of 83 and 85.

Works on offer by other African-American vernacular artists from the South include:

**Mose Tolliver** (c.1918–2006) of Montgomery, Alabama or "Mose T.", as he signed all his paintings, worked menial jobs to support his own growing family, but an ill-fated job in a furniture factory in the late 1960s resulted in his legs being crushed by a marble slab. Tolliver's painting ended a period of inertia, depression, and drinking for him. In the great Southern African American tradition of yard art, Tolliver began displaying his paintings outside his Montgomery home, initially offering them for sale at one dollar each. (**Yard Dog Art Gallery, Austin, TX**)

**Sister Gertrude Morgan** (1900–1980), a legendary figure of the French Quarter of New Orleans, was a preacher, prophet, poet, painter, and gospel singer. Morgan is renowned for her diminutive but ecstatic paintings of biblical and personal divine revelation, inscribed in text and illustrated in images. (**Carl Hammer Gallery**)

**Purvis Young** (1843-2010) whose hometown neighborhood of Overtown—once commonly called 'Colored Town'—in Miami, FL provided inspiration, raw material, and audience for his constructed paintings with their ecstatic, rhythmic surfaces. He used discarded objects as canvases, including doors, cardboard, and pieces of wood. Young often stated that he turned his life around through art, after serving a prison term in the mid-1960s (**Judy A. Saslow**)

**Thorton Dial** from Alabama (b. 1928) who spent thirty years as a railroad welder for Pullman Standard, an experience which informed his later large-scale steel sculpture. Portraiture, animal figuration, and abstraction are recurring motifs in his evocatively titled drawings and assemblages. Dial was included in the 1998 Whitney Biennial and today his large-scale assemblages sell for over \$100,000. (**Russell Bowman Art Advisory**)

**Minnie Evans** (1892–1987) of Wilmington, North Carolina, was a seamstress, domestic servant, and "sunder" (shellfish hawker) in her earlier years. From 1948 to 1974, she served as gatekeeper at Airlie Gardens near Wilmington, selling her small drawings and paintings to Garden visitors. Initially using ink, graphite, and wax crayon, she eventually began to work in oil paint, occasionally collaging her characteristically small-format pieces into larger compositions. (**Russell Bowman Art Advisory**)

**Galerie Bonheur** (St. Louis, MO) represents international folk and outsider art with a special emphasis on the Caribbean, Central and South American countries, and Eastern Europe. The gallery reports it will offer a mix of painting, woodcarving, sculpture and textiles. “We will be bringing many special textiles and forms of folk art seldom seen in the US: woodcarvings from Venezuela; embroideries and special textiles from Romania, Bulgaria, India and Guatemala; oil paintings and woodcarvings from Poland; textiles from Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Many of these pieces have been in our collection for ten to thirty years. We will blend this collection with the many talented American folk and outsider artists that we also represent,” said gallery owner/director Laurie Carmody Ahner. Principal among these artists:

- **Amos Ferguson**, an internationally acclaimed self-taught artist who died in 2009. His obituary in *The New York Times* read: ‘Amos Ferguson (was) a folk artist known for his brilliantly colored Bible scenes and his depictions of the social rituals and the flora and fauna of the Bahamas. Mr. Ferguson, a house painter by trade, did not turn to art until he was in his 40s, when, as he told the story, a nephew came to him and related a dream he had just had. Jesus, the nephew said, came out of the sea with a painting in his hands and said Mr. Ferguson was wasting his talent for painting. Mr. Ferguson heeded the call and, painting with exterior enamel on cardboard, rendered Bible stories or Bahamian scenes in a vibrant Caribbean visual idiom. The work, sold at the Straw Market in Nassau, was discovered by a New York collector in the 1970s, and in 1985 the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford mounted the exhibition *Paint by Mr. Amos Ferguson* — taking the artist’s signature as the title. Mr. Ferguson, previously unknown even to many Bahamians, leapt to the front ranks of the outsider-art genre.’

**Yard Dog Art Gallery** (Austin, TX) has roots in old-school folk and outsider art from North America, especially the Deep South, but it also shows art by many contemporary artists whose backgrounds run the gamut from self-taught to art school graduate. The gallery will represent the following artists, among others:

- **Fort Guerin**, raised in Mesa, Arizona, struggled in his attempts at writing stories until he tied them to his quirky images with nostalgic characters. The writing, which takes the shape of rambling narrative, forms the background for his paintings and tells stories of the characters that populate his work. Guerin gets inspiration for his paintings from imagery found in vintage magazines and books that he finds in a shop near his home in suburban Washington, DC.
- **Lisa Brawn** has been experimenting with figurative woodcuts for almost twenty years, since being introduced to the medium by printmakers at the Alberta College of Art and Design. Recently, she’s been wrestling with a new challenge: five truckloads of salvaged century-old rough Douglas fir beams from the restoration of the Alberta Block in Calgary and from the dismantling of grain elevators. Unlike traditional woodcut material such as cherry or walnut, the material is ‘ornery,’ with holes, knots, gouges and rusty nails sticking out the sides.

Lisa references popular culture personas and archetypes from 1920s silent film cowboys to 1970s tough guys. Her subjects include Western rustlers and bootleggers in spectacular ensembles from the 1940s, vintage circus culture, and an ongoing series of iconic gender archetypes, antiheroes and divas such as Sophia Loren, Maria Callas, Edith Piaf, Jackie Onassis, Steve McQueen and Clint Eastwood.

- Born in Somerset, Kentucky in 1970, artist **Bruce New** now lives in nearby Richmond, where his wife is a public school art teacher. A self-taught artist, New has been focusing on art full time since about the age of 25, explaining, “I have a compulsive need to make these things, to do this. It ends up going on so long that it just becomes part of your life.” New begins by drawing wings, faces, horses, skulls, and other images, which are then cut out and collaged with forms cut from printed text. His greatest source of inspiration is his wife of 14 years, Robin, and his desire to document their life together. Robin’s name provides the source of the bird imagery, wings and allusions to flight that appear in his work. Other frequent elements are celestial imagery, the hand symbolizing creativity, the letter ‘R,’ and the numbers 1970 and 1975, his birth year and Robin’s.

**Garde Rail Gallery** (Austin, TX, formerly of Seattle, WA) specializes in work by contemporary folk, self-taught, outsider, visionary, and developmentally disabled artists from the Deep South, Midwest, East and West Coasts as well as Canada and Great Britain. The gallery reports it will represent **Gregory Blackstock**, **Holly Farrell**, **Terry Turrell** and **John Taylor**.

- **John Taylor** creates ship models using found object materials. The gallery says, “Taylor’s ships are based on historical vessels but reinvented as the anti-ship model. These are not perfectly painted, gleaming white models with shiny wooden decks and sweet railings; the ships look as if they’ve been excavated from the depths of the ocean. John’s unique vision for each ship reveals itself to him as he’s constructing, guiding him with an intuitive hand. When asked about his work John explained, ‘I prefer work which is not correct or regular, which is divorced from precedents, work that is not fine or fully explained.’” John Taylor’s ship models were the focus of a critically acclaimed solo exhibition titled, *Submerge* at The Boise Museum of Art in 2007-08. In 2003, John was the focus of an exhibition entitled *High Tide* at The Henry Art Museum in Seattle, Washington.

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SOFA WEST: Santa Fe 2011 and spotlight presentation of The Intuit Show of Folk and Outsider Art take place at the Santa Fe Convention Center, 201 W Marcy Street, Santa Fe, NM as follows: Opening Night, Wednesday, August 3 begins with FIRST LOOK Preview, an invitation-only event for Museum of New Mexico Foundation supporters from 5-6:30 pm. SOFA WEST VIP Cardholders may enter at 6:30 pm. Opening Night Public Preview begins at 7 pm. Tickets are \$50 and will be available on sofaexpo.com or at the door beginning at 5 pm. Opening Night continues until 9 pm. General admission fair hours are Thursday, August 4 - Sunday, August 7 from 12 noon-6 pm. Tickets are \$15 for single day general admission and \$25 for a four-day pass. Catalogs may be purchased for \$15 at the exposition. Visit [www.sofaexpo.com](http://www.sofaexpo.com) for more information.

High-resolution images and press releases are available for immediate download at [www.sofaexpo.com/sfpress](http://www.sofaexpo.com/sfpress).