



ART & DESIGN  
SANTA FE



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

### What is Outsider and Folk Art?

SANTA FE, NM. **Outsider/Intuitive Art:** There is controversy surrounding the exact definition of outsider art (also often called intuitive art, visionary art, and Art Brut). Typically, those labeled as outsider artists fall under the umbrella of self-taught art (as does most folk art), with little or no contact with the mainstream art world or art institutions. In many cases, their work is discovered only after their deaths. Often, outsider art illustrates extreme mental states, unconventional ideas, or elaborate fantasy worlds—art by persons on the fringes of society including the socially maladjusted, mental patients, prison inmates, and the disabled.

The development of the awareness of creative expression that exists outside accepted cultural norms or the realm of 'art' began with the research of psychiatrists early in the century. Dr. Hans Prinzhorn collected thousands of works by psychiatric patients and his 1922 book *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* became an influential work amongst surrealists and other artists of the time.

One artist particularly affected by the works Prinzhorn presented was Jean Dubuffet. Together with others, including Andre Breton, he formed the Compagnie de l'Art Brut in 1948 to collect works of extreme individuality and inventiveness by creators (particularly art by insane asylum patients) who were not only untrained artists, but often had little concept of an art gallery or any other forms of art besides their own.

Jean Dubuffet named the works that he collected Art Brut, which were later adopted by the Collection de l'Art Brut at Lausanne. Art Brut means 'Raw Art,' raw because it is 'uncooked' or 'unadulterated' by culture and the art world establishment—creation in its most direct and uninhibited form. Originally Art Brut was art by psychotic individuals who existed almost completely outside culture and society. Strictly speaking, the term Art Brut refers only to the Collection de l'Art Brut.

The term outsider art was coined by art critic Roger Cardinal in 1972 as an English synonym for Art Brut. While Dubuffet's term is quite specific, the English term Outsider Art is often applied more broadly, to include self-taught or regional artists who were never institutionalized.

**Folk/Vernacular Art:** Folk art originally referred to crafts and decorative skills associated with peasant communities in Europe and Colonial America (sometimes called Americana). Today the term folk art embraces traditional, utilitarian, communal (sometimes, the primitive and naïve) creative expressions of diverse community groups—ethnic, tribal, religious, occupational, geographical, age- or gender-based—who identify with each other and society at large. Folk art, although self-taught (like outsider art) is directly imbued with influences from a particular non-mainstream culture of which the artist is a part. Such influence may come from inherited tradition, and is part of the experience and perception of the artist and evident in the context or composition of the art. Antique or historic folk art is collected today based mostly on its artistic merit, but it was never intended to be art for art's sake.

The varied geographical and temporal prevalence and diversity of folk art also make it difficult to precisely define. The term vernacular art more specifically refers to culturally influenced regional art (for example African American art from the American South). Like outsider art, folk art is rarely influenced by academic or fine art circles and is self-taught or learned by informal apprenticeship. Whereas folk art typically embodies traditional forms and social values, outsider art stands in some marginal relationship to society's mainstream.

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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](http://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).

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