

COLLECTION DE L'ART BRUT LAUSANNE



BLACKSTOCK

30 September 2011 - 19 February 2012

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L a u s a n n e



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BLACKSTOCK

THE EXHIBITION

The Collection de l'Art Brut is privileged to present the first European show of works by the American creator Gregory L. Blackstock, who will be present at the opening reception. Produced especially for the occasion, a documentary film and a monographic essay (appearing in Issue 23 of the *Art Brut* booklet series launched by Jean Dubuffet in 1964) accompany this exhibition.



Gregory L. Blackstock inventories the world, methodically and minutely classifying all kinds of animals, objects and plants. Each item bears a caption in regularly scripted capital letters. Thus, all his drawings — whether entailing crows, beetles, accordions, whips, shoes or bomber planes — align their subjects, juxtapose them and painstakingly order them into groups, sets or species. Not that this encyclopedist is as much of a stickler as he seems: his to-all-appearances objective categorizations slyly evade scientific rules, flourishing instead in the form of casually poetic variants.

Although Blackstock's source material consists of dictionaries and guide books whose realistic plates lend him inspiration, this self-taught creator also relies on his own phenomenal memory. In no time, however, his compositions take on a life of their own, benefitting from his strong sense of the graphic line and chromatics : order and symmetry enhance the page layouts, as do the serial repetitions and stylization of the figures and motifs. Nor does he shy away from interfering with his multiple lists, taking liberties than can be highly incongruous. Thus he will vary the bird feather colors, or else insert a self-portrait into a row of objects ; or again, in drawing up a general catalogue of shoes, he will stealthily introduce a flick-knife in the hands of a villain straight out of a James Bond film...

A first in Europe, the Collection de l'Art Brut exhibition presents some thirty of Blackstock's works dating from 1991 to the present day, together with an original documentary film specially created for the event.

Gregory Blackstock
The World Landmark Buildings, 2011
Lead pencil, felt-tip pen, wax oil crayon, and colored pencil
112 x 60,6 cm
Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
Photo : Arnaud Conne.
Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.



BLACKSTOCK

THE CREATOR

The American Art Brut creator **Gregory L. Blackstock** (b. 1946) is autistic. He reinterprets the universe in the dim light of his cluttered one-room dwelling place. With the shutters closed and the curtains drawn day and night, he withdraws into the silent seclusion of his at once living and working quarters. And this notwithstanding all the uproar and flashing lights of the surrounding city of Seattle.

Blackstock worked as a pot scrubber for an athletic club during twenty-five years, rounding off his income by playing the accordion on in the street and making drawings that at times appeared in the club newspaper. Gradually, his compositions took up more and more of his time and, since his retirement in 2001, they have become part and parcel of his everyday life — a full-time, feverishly pursued activity.



Photos : Philippe Lespinasse, Seattle, 2010

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THE PUBLICATIONS

Appearing in Issue no. 23 of the *Art Brut* series of booklets devoted to the Collection de l'Art Brut creators is a monographic essay on Gregory L. Blackstock by Philippe Lespinasse, a filmmaker specialized in Art Brut documentaries. This same issue presents essays on the Art Brut creators Guo Fengyi, Helga Goetze, Angus McPhee, Laure Pigeon, Guillaume Pujolle and George Widener. Forthcoming in November 2011, this richly illustrated booklet is published jointly by Collection de l'Art Brut (Lausanne) and Infolio (Gollion).

The museum bookstore carries the sole existing monograph on Blackstock, now including the Collection de l'Art Brut's newly added insert of a French translation : Karen Light-Pinã, *Blackstock's Collections : The Drawings of an Artistic Savant*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006.

THE FILM

Specially conceived for the show in Lausanne, and jointly produced by La Collection de l'Art Brut (Lausanne) and Lokomotiv Films (Le Tourne), the documentary *Gregory Blackstock l'encyclopédiste* (2011) is the only existing account of this creator's life work. In welcoming Philippe Lespinasse to his living quarters, Gregory Blackstock dispels any mystery as to the context and conditions in which he creates.

A **public screening** will take place at the Bellevaux movie house in Lausanne, at 8:30pm on Wednesday, November 2, in the presence of the director of the Cinémathèque suisse (Swiss film archives), Frédéric Maire.

The **DVD** *Gregory Blackstock l'encyclopédiste* Philippe Lespinasse and Andress Alvarez Lausanne/Le Tourne, Collection de l'Art Brut/Lokomotiv Films, 2011, 24 min., English original version with French subtitles, can be purchased at the museum bookstore.

THE LECTURE EVENING

The Collection de l'Art Brut will host a lecture on the topic of "autism and creation," with as speakers respectively Nouchine HADJIKHANI, neuroscientist, and Olaf BLANKE, neurologist of the Brain Mind Institute of Lausanne's Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL).

Venue and date: Collection de l'Art Brut, Thursday 26 January 2012, 7pm.
A special news bulletin on the event will be published in due time.

This exhibition is made possible by:



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BLACKSTOCK

AVAILABLE ILLUSTRATIONS

Consult "Médias" then "dossiers de presse" at www.artbrut.ch to download the press kit in English. These pictures are available solely to promote the *Blackstock* exhibition. Quotation of the picture captions is mandatory.

Gregory Blackstock
The Ravens, 2009
Lead pencil, felt-tip pen, wax oil crayon, and colored pencil
125 x 46 cm
Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
Photo : Olivier Laffely.
Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.



Gregory Blackstock
The Whips, 2010
Lead pencil, felt-tip pen and wax oil crayon
60 x 46 cm
Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
Photo : Olivier Laffely.
Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.





Gregory Blackstock
The World Landmark Buildings, 2011
 Lead pencil, felt-tip pen, wax oil crayon, and colored pencil
 112 x 60,6 cm
 Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
 Photo : Arnaud Conne.
 Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.



Gregory Blackstock
The Major World Troublemaker Beetles, 2008
 Lead pencil, felt-tip pen and wax oil crayon
 95 x 65 cm,
 Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
 Photo : Olivier Laffely.
 Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.

60 YEARS OF THE ARTIST MODEL PETOSA ACCORDIONS

FULL FRONTAL VIEWS



Gregory Blackstock, *60 Years of the Artist Model Petosa Accordions*, 2011
 Lead pencil, felt-tip pen and wax oil crayon, 124,2 x 79,1 cm
 Gift of the artist and GardeRail Gallery.
 Photo : Arnaud Conne.

Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne.



EXCERPT FROM *L'ART BRUT*, issue 23

Gregory Blackstock, *l'encyclopédiste*.

Come rain or shine, no matter. Bathed in a halo of light, the man sits drawing behind closed shutters and drawn curtains. Outdoors, all the buzz of the giant northwest US city of Seattle. Indoors, framed pictures of actors, newspaper clippings, bowling contest trophies. Over in a corner, four accordion cases, a bike, dozens of photo albums. A bed. Opposite, a hand organ, records, a TV set and — everywhere — reproductions and photocopies of illustration plates juxtaposed so as to cover all the walls. "Dentistry Tools," World War II Bombers," "Major Jails in our County," "Masks," "Shoes," and "Hats." A title and subtitle for each plate. A caption under each drawing and, in the lower right hand corner, a carefully scripted Gregory L. Blackstock.

Blackstock's impressive inventorying harks back to 1976, when the athletic club where he washed pots and pans during 25 years decided to publish his first piece: Batman surrounded by interjections and onomatopoeic expressions: *Boom ! Bam ! Thonk Thonk ! Whoosh ! Whoop ! Schack !* "Drawings should make noise," he says. In the words of his cousin Dorothy Fritsch, "Planes, animals, high heels, grates, saws, hammers and everything that moves, crawls, runs or even brings a shiver, like poisonous plants, attracts his attention! And when he gets going on a plate, his special mind distinguishes between the supporters in one bus and those in another, between one bell and another, one drum and another." Whatever the motif, to him it is endless. All the variations, no matter how tiny, represent an inexhaustible source of renewal to him.

[...]

Blackstock compiles his own documentary holdings by collecting newspapers, technical reviews and photo magazines — all of which he either buys at bookstores or, with the help of a librarian, downloads from the Internet. Equipped with a small camera, he strolls through the streets of Seattle. Indeed, his tiny apartment overflows with dozens of photo albums holding thousands of snapshots. In the same fashion as other creators who assemble their own documentation — Willem Van Genk, Helga Goetze, Aleksander Lobanov or Hidenori Motooka come to mind — Blackstock amasses a wealth of documentation, from which he extracts what is vital to him. After drawing the forms and sketching the layout of the upcoming piece, he sets about filling in the details. Next come the colors — Crayola oil wax crayons, to which he pays special tribute in one of his pieces — and then he finishes it all off by outlining every object inventoried with a heavy black line. Deprived of any background, depth or shaping, Blackstock's world hangs in limbo. Depending on the research he's done for a piece, or any ongoing discoveries, he may at times leave off the plate he's working on and allow it to grow on its own so to speak, through sundry and subtle collages and patches; meanwhile, he will get started on other illustration plates. The mention "complete" at the end of the title — for instance, *The World War 2 US Bombers Complete* — puts a definitive term to an inventory. In like fashion, another inventory is entitled *World War 2 Messerschmitt German Fighter Planes Complete* ; the subtitle to the piece reads "THE LARGEST SINGLE VARIETY OF OUR WARTIME AXIS COMBAT AIRCRAFT KNOWN." Belonging to the land of materialistic opulence and iconographic overabundance par excellence, Blackstock aims to sort out the chaos and keep it from swamping him. He is in the throes of creating a universal non-authoritative inventory.

Philippe Lespinasse

Philippe Lespinasse, a journalist and documentary filmmaker, lectures at the Institute of Journalism of the University of Bordeaux. He has produced a number of films on Art Brut creators and Art Singulier, and frequently teams up with the Collection de l'Art Brut.

THE EVENTS

- Press conference** Thursday 29 September 2011, 11am
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland,
in the presence of Gregory L. Blackstock
- Opening reception** Thursday 29 September 2011, 6:30pm
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland,
in the presence of Gregory L. Blackstock
- Free guided tours** Sunday 6 November 2011, 11am
Thursday 2 February 2012, 7pm
- For groups and classes: tours upon request (in French, German, English, Italian, Chinese and Japanese)
- Free guided tour for teachers** Gregory L. Blackstock
Thursday 6 October 2011, 5pm
Advance booking recommended
- Film screening** Wednesday 2 November 2011,
Gregory Blackstock l'encyclopédiste Bellevaux movie theater, Lausanne, 8:30pm
- by Philippe Lespinasse and Andress Alvarez Lausanne/Le Tourne, Collection de l'Art Brut/Lokomotiv Films, 2011, 24 min., in the English original version with French subtitles, followed by Rain Man (1989) by Barry Levinson in the English original version with French subtitles.
- A screening set up by Collection de l'Art Brut and l'Association BelEcran, with Frédéric Maire, director of the Cinémathèque Suisse (Swiss film archives), Lausanne, in attendance.
- Lecture evening on "autism and creation"** Thursday 26 January 2012, 7pm
at the Collection de l'Art Brut, with the participation of the Brain Mind Institute of Lausanne's Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL): Nouchkine Hadjikhani and Olaf Blanke, researchers.
- Workshops for children ages 6 to 12** Wednesday 2 November 2011, 3 to 4:30pm
Saturday 12 November 2011, 3 to 4:30pm
Saturday 26 November 2011, 3 to 4:30pm
Wednesday 18 January 2012, 3 to 4:30pm
Saturday 4 February 2012, 3 to 4:30pm
- Fr. 10.- / per child
- Advance booking recommended*
- Activities book for children ages 6 to 12** Offered free of charge with a box of colored pencils
- Interactive tours for children ages 6 to 12** Duration 30 minutes (advance booking required)
Fr. 4.- / per child

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Publications Karen Light-Pinā, *Blackstock's Collections : The Drawings of an Artistic Savant*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006. On sale at the museum bookstore, with a French translation insert. CHF 23.-

L'Art Brut, n° 23, co-published by Collection de l'Art Brut (Lausanne) and Infolio (Gollion), 2011. CHF 48.-

Documentary film *Gregory Blackstock l'encyclopediste* by Philippe Lespinasse and Andress Alvarez Lausanne/Le Tourne, Collection de l'Art Brut/Lokomotiv Films, 2011, 24 min., original English version), French subtitles.
On sale at the Collection de l'Art Brut bookstore. CHF 29.-

Poster, small poster, postcards Standard size poster (47 x 35 in) and A3 size (16 x 12 in) of the exhibition; 4 postcards.

Press kit Illustrations and press kit can be downloaded under >media >dossiers de presse at www.artbrut.ch

The documentary film is available on request.

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Opening hours Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm
Open on holidays, including the Jeûne federal Monday
Closed 24/25 December 2011 and 1 January 2012
No entrance fee the first Saturday of every month.

Entrance fee Fr. 10.-
Reduced price: Fr. 5.-
Groups of six: Fr. 5.-
Unemployed and young people up to 16: free entry

Temporary exhibitions at the Collection de l'Art Brut Nannetti "Astral Colonel," thru 30 October 2011
Guo Fengyi, 18 November 2011 thru 29 April 2012

Accessibility The exhibition is not accessible to persons with reduced mobility.