

Dear Members of the EOA,

Thank you all for entrusting me with the position of the president of our organization. During the next two years, together with the great team of the Board, I will work on the agreed goals of the EOA. But first, we will concentrate on securing a European grant so that we can become more flexible and do more. The EOA should become more visible and influential, increasing awareness and respect for Outsider Art in all European countries and beyond.

By electing me, you have voted for a museum person who stands more for an academic, theoretical view of Outsider Art than for an executive position. So during my presidency I will try to deepen and broaden the perspective on works by people who have been marginalized by society, especially those who are categorized as mentally ill and mentally handicapped. I will focus especially on generating conferences and symposia around key issues, open to all members, which will simultaneously also give participants ample opportunities to get in touch with each other. Facilitating networking and exchange on different levels will be another of my central goals.

It seems we are at a crucial point in the history of Outsider Art. The recent hype from collectors, galleries and museums seems to argue for a straightforward integration into the wider field of art. Should we welcome this as a sign of a new consensus, or is it a new form of colonialisation? What measures should be taken to guard our artists from selling out to speculative collectors and dealers? Is the Art Assistant (the new professional who assists artists in *their* professional development) the only solution? And what is meant by "quality" in respect to Outsider art? Is a judgment of this kind based entirely on originality in form and content, or does it also consider authenticity in relation to the social environment the work stems from?

These are three topics I would like to discuss with you and other interested parties. I hope you will all join in!

With kind regards,
Thomas Röske