

Guo Fengyi



Morton Bartlett

Calvin and Ruby Black



Henry Darger

## MUSEUM OF EVERYTHING

Kunsthal Rotterdam, Netherlands  
until May 22, 2016

The latest mega-exhibition of the Museum of Everything collection, showing almost 1,500 works by 100 artists, opened in Rotterdam on March 5. The Kunsthal has been transformed from a spacious, open area which would normally show large-scale contemporary art, into a maze of corridors and galleries linked by arches and doorways. Collector James Brett explained that the design was inspired by the layout of Nek Chand's Rock Garden, where visitors flow from one area to the next.

A combination of the classic works by familiar artists, such as **Henry Darger**, **Nek Chand**, **Martin Ramirez** or **Sam Doyle**, with completely unknown artists whose works were recently acquired for the collection, the exhibition overpowers with its variety and quality. Visitors are greeted by an array of figures from **Possum Trot**, then led into the main exhibition through a narrow corridor of **Dwight Yoakum** landscapes which lead to a huge painting by **Augustin Lesage** and a series of bright portraits by the Dutch artist from the Herenplaats workshop, **Johnson Weree**, while a drawing by **Harald Stoffers** almost reaches the ceiling in its height.

From the group of **Nek Chand** figures and a wall of **Sam Doyle's** paintings on irregular tin sheets, the exhibition continues through different chambers and areas centred around each artists' work, so that their distinctive characters are emphasised by spaces of their own.

This makes each turn and new discovery more dramatic. A large glass case containing a group of naked girl-figures by **Morton Bartlett**, with the clothing hanging nearby, startles. A high-ceilinged gallery allows a group of massive works on paper by the Chinese artist **Guo Fengyi** to hang, almost swaying as if in a breeze, in an environment of their own.

Large areas show a series of complex constructions by **ACM**, a whole wall of large visionary paintings by **Norbert Kox**, a mass of assemblages by **Emile Rattier** and **Paul Laffoley's** esoteric visionary theorems.

Works from the Southern United States include well-known artists like **Elijah Pierce**, whose reliefs show the oppression of African Americans and anonymous carvings of furniture that reflect a powerful presence of slavery. A similar feeling is evoked by a wooden desk by **William Howard**, embellished with individual carvings of tools and implements from a plantation in the 1870s.

One of the most distinctive areas at the far end of the exhibition displays a series of large, double-sided drawings by **Henry Darger** in a hall of great vitrines. These allow the works to be viewed easily from both sides, and show how they relate to one another (Brett has been studying the sequence of Darger's narrative and how it relates to his drawings). Some were once attached to one another, and in one case it is plain to see the image in the work going across from one hanging drawing to another – clearly once part of the same work.

In another, darkened, area, the glowing works of **Marcel Storr** depict his cathedrals and complex edifices of fantasy. Brett has also been assembling works which were intended to be shown together, by the Russian artist **Vasilij Romanenkov** whose highly detailed and ritualistic, and almost sacred, works now hang alongside one another as they were intended.

This is the Museum of Everything's largest exhibition to date and once more proves its importance. Even though the collection eschews the term "outsider art", it is still the first time an exhibition in this field and on this scale has been shown in the Netherlands and it is sure to have a strong impact in the country.  
**John Maizels**

## THE MUSEUM OF EVERYTHING

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The Museum of Everything has travelled to Holland, where it is showing sculptures, paintings, drawings and installations at the Kunsthal Rotterdam. Artists include Willem van Genk, Sam Doyle, Henry Darger, Josef Karl Radler and Anna Zemanova.



KUNSTHAL ROTTERDAM  
Museumpark, Westzeedijk 341, 3015 AA, Rotterdam,  
NETHERLANDS  
www.museumofeverything.com www.kunsthal.nl