



Reality and Fantasy from Rotterdam

RIERA STUDIO





**Minke de Fonkert** . 50 cm x 65 cm. Mix media on paper.

This exhibition continues the collaboration between Riera Studio (Havana, Cuba) and Galerie Atelier Herenplaats (Rotterdam, The Netherlands), which resulted in the exhibitions: "The Cuban Connection" (Galerie Atelier Herenplaats, 2023) and "From Mysticism to the Syncretism of Reality" (Riera Studio, 2024). In this new exhibition, we approach the work of five Dutch outsider artists who are exhibiting their work for the first time in Havana.

**Ben Augustus (1960).** After intensely studying the images in nude magazines, Ben puts his pen to paper and slowly but surely fills the page with drawings of these women. The way he works is remarkable, starting a drawing in one corner and slowly working his way to the other. Ben ignores all laws and rules of composition, lines start and stop erratically. He intersperses the figures with seemingly random texts and phone numbers for sex lines.

**Jaco Kranendonk (1951).** His paintings are populated by a constant stream of cars, buses, trams, and metros weaving under and over the city's buildings. The metropolis of Rotterdam offers a vast wealth of images that Jaco has stored in his memory. The city's past and present merge. You see the Maas bridge, Willems bridge and the Erasmus bridge in the same painting. Lumps of paint are ships sailing through the harbor. Each work is an area in or around Rotterdam,

and the titles indicate the location. The dynamism in his work is enormous.

**Livia Dencher (1980).** Livia creates a fantasy world where humans and animals coexist in a dynamic environment, the world of her dreams. The background can be the jungle or the Egyptian desert with its pyramids and pharaohs. In a meticulous process, Livia constructs a balanced but charged scene according to her own rules. For example, there are almost never large objects in the foreground and, as she said, mountains in the background and houses with people in the foreground.

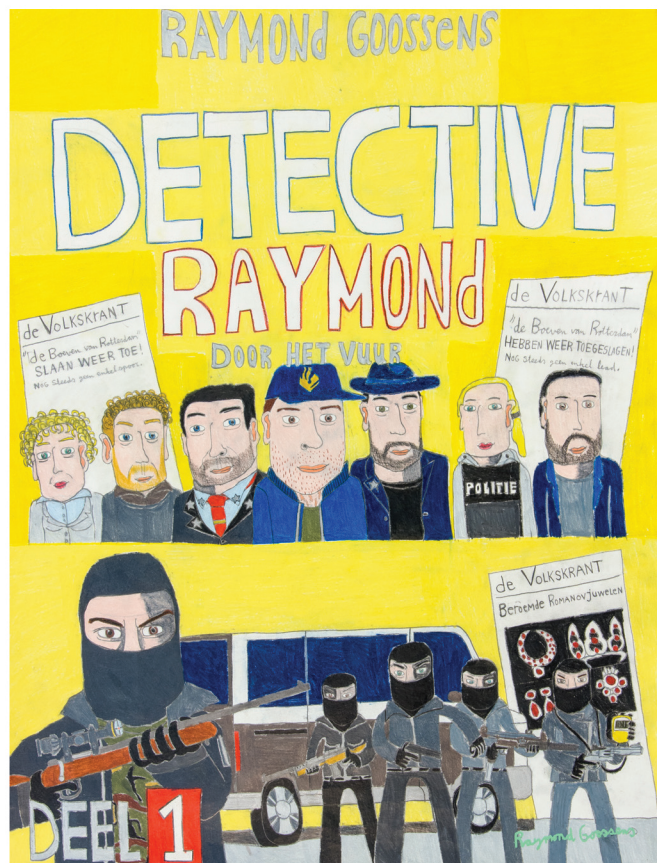
**Minke de Fonkert (1965).** Minke shows us an interesting oeuvre that she has been working on every day for more than sixteen years. The lines in her drawings show thickenings, as if she wanted to emphasize the images in the composition. The lines seem to be alive; this effect makes the picture seem unreal. Minke achieves the same effect in her flat paintings through a layered application of material and by creating depth using color within the contour lines. The motifs for her work are found in her own life and in the strange animals and monsters of her dreams and fantasies. Whether the figures are animals or imaginary creatures, they all seem to come from an enchanted world and are very similar in appearance. Even



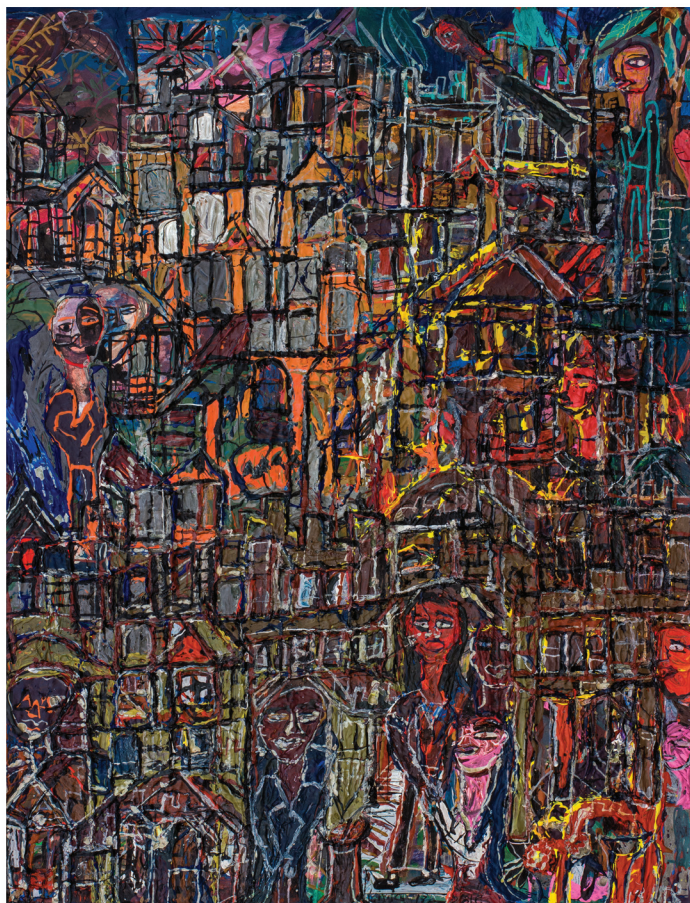
the monsters, in their bright colors, are happy creatures, surrounded by flowers or other two-dimensional flora and fauna that do not threaten the viewer. Minke shows us a world that is by nature more sweet than serious.

**Raymond Goossens (1998).** Raymond's drawings are set in a world of good versus evil. Law enforcement and "the bad guys" are central to his work and can often make his drawings look like the front covers of detective books. It is the world of the cops in Rotterdam and Maastricht, and the crooks lead "extremely dangerous lives," as he explains. The names he gives to the characters in his drawings are in keeping with a detective series theme. He also uses text fragments in his drawings to list the detectives' activities: 1. Search the crime scene, 2. Interrogate witnesses, 3. Collect suspects, 4. Interrogate suspects, 5. Collect evidence, and finally, 6. Imprison the culprit.

Our thanks to Galerie Atelier Herenplaats, especially to its director Richard Bennaars, as well as to the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Cuba for the support offered for the realization of this exhibition.



**Raymond Goossens.** 65 cm x 50 cm. Colored pencil and graphite on paper



**Livia Dencher.** 65 cm x 50 cm. Mix media on paper.



**Jaco Kranendonk.** 32.5 cm x 50 cm. Mix media on paper.



**Jaco Kranendonk.** 50 cm x 65 cm. Mix media on paper.





Ben Augustus . 65 cm x 50 cm. Marker on paper.

**ART BRUT** was created as a term in the late 1940s by the French artist Jean Dubuffet to draw attention to a form of art with little or no connection with existing art styles. Its creators have not had any formal art training but express their personal experiences and deep inner feelings in a very obsessive way. The artists may be affected by mental disorders, traumatic experiences or social isolation.

**OUTSIDER ART** began to be used as an English synonym for Art Brut after the English art historian Roger Cardinal published his book of the same name in 1972. Over time, it became more inclusive to refer not only to the art production of people living in extreme mental or social conditions but also to those self-taught individuals who express themselves on the margin of established cultural mainstreams.

This exhibition is the result of an ongoing collaboration between Riera Studio and Galerie Atelier Herenplaats (Rotterdam, The Netherlands) and is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Cuba.

Exhibition dates: November 22nd, 2024 - February 28th, 2025

Curators: Samuel Riera, Derbis Campos, Richard Bennaars

Text: Derbis Campos

Front image: work detail by Livia Dencher

## RIERA STUDIO | Art Brut Project Cuba

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