

## ART BRUT, A HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL MYTHOLOGIES

Art Brut - by referring us to the original creative gesture - is a far more individual act than that which art history has prepared us. Thus, contrary to dominant thinking during many years, art brut doesn't differ from other artistic productions in terms of its form, but above all in terms of its content. It has a very distinct essence.

While works of art are deliberately framed within a great dialogue between artists and society, from a historical and cultural perspective, the nature of art brut is essentially an individual search, in the context of a soliloquy. It is the realm of the intimate. These productions of another order are incantatory, shamanistic, "loaded", magical and self-referential. The spectacular dimension, contrary to the trend of a certain kind of contemporary art, is rare in this artistic tradition, and usually only arises after intense application of unbridled creativity.

Art brut derives its strength from this apparent weakness: artists who have been socially or mentally shunned, who lie outside the traditional promotion and legitimization circuits, but who are busy trying to elucidate the world, sometimes as they try to cure it or give it meaning build another, more "inhabitable" world.

These isolated individuals, who are sometimes reclusive, working in the context of otherness, indifferent to the status of their art, and even the fact of whether their production may be termed art at all, remind us, in a sense, of the warning by Ernst Gombrich, in the preface to his *History of Art*: "art has no separate existence, only artists exist".

So what do these exceptional men and women create, other than individual mythologies, i.e. complex systems that are able to put the universe in order? They become either intermediaries between man and nature (understood as including forces that surpass us, the idea of a God or transcendence) or wise discoverers of new sciences, enlightened commentators who sagely examine our affections and societies, or daring labourers of places and languages (*solus locus* as Raymond Roussel would put it).

They are, in any case, the depositaries of the most vital and universal human creativity that exists.