



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

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Petullo Collection Debuts at Milwaukee Art Museum

Accidental Genius highlights major gift to Museum, redefines genre

Milwaukee, Wis. – *Accidental Genius: Art from the Anthony Petullo Collection*, an original exhibition of modern self-taught art featuring more than two hundred works opens Friday, February 10, 2012, at the Milwaukee Art Museum. The exhibition includes many of the most important European and American artists in the genre, and celebrates the significant gift of works by Milwaukee collector Anthony Petullo to the Museum.

“*Accidental Genius* showcases an exceptional collection of eclectic modern self-taught art from creators driven by impulse, vision, and necessity, without regard for acclaim, popularity, or profit,” said Margaret Andera, adjunct curator. “The exhibition features drawings, paintings, and objects by leading artists, including Henry Darger, Martín Ramírez, Bill Traylor, Adolf Wölfli, Anna Zemankova, and Carlo Zinelli, among others.”

Previously defined as “outsider art,” “art brut,” or “naïve art,” the works in the Petullo Collection, more often than not, were made by artists whose personal stories and motivations are as compelling as the art itself.



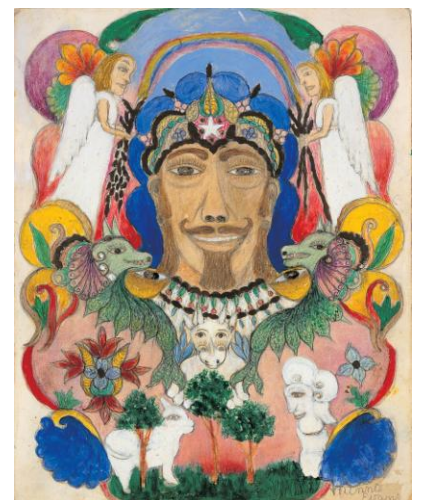
British artist Scottie Wilson’s career began when he started doodling on a tabletop in the back room of the shop he owned. Swiss artist Rosemarie Koczy, who was imprisoned with her family in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, was driven by her experiences in the camp, and by the death of her father, to create her artwork.

Rural Texas native Eddie Arning discovered his artistic ability later in life through an art class offered at his nursing home.

Magazine illustrations and products from advertisements inspired his pastel drawings.

Some of the lesser-known but equally significant artists collected by Petullo include English laborer James Lloyd and Italian draftsman Domenico Zindato.

According to Museum Director Daniel Keegan, *Accidental Genius* will display a portion of Petullo’s gift, which represents one of the most extensive groupings of modern self-taught art in any American museum or private collection. In all, over three hundred works were gifted to the Museum.



“The gift of the Petullo Collection establishes the Milwaukee Art Museum as a leading American institution for the work of untrained creators, and comes at a crucial turning point in the history of the genre,” said Keegan. “The Museum’s commitment to the work of self-taught artists began as early as 1951 with the gift of two paintings by Wisconsin artist Anna Louisa Miller, and expanded through the Hall Collection and the Flagg Collection. With the Museum’s acquisition of the world-class Petullo Collection, its holdings now encompass a more broadly inclusive representation of this genre, and we are challenged to understand this work on a new level.”



Petullo, a retired Milwaukee businessman, built his collection over a span of three decades. Objects from the Petullo Collection have been on display throughout the country, including a six-stop museum exhibition, and various objects have been loaned to museums and galleries around the world.

“My collection reflects the driving passion of both the creators, and the collector,” said Anthony Petullo. “When I began collecting I had no idea the impact that my collection would have on the self-taught art world. I am grateful that I have had the fortune to share these incredible objects with so many, and I am honored that they will continue to be enjoyed at the Milwaukee Art Museum.”

Petullo is a Milwaukee entrepreneur and author, and a longtime member of the Museum’s Board of Directors and the Museum’s Exhibitions Committee. He is also a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee and has received multiple awards for his community service and charitable contributions.

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition and features an essay by Lisa Stone, curator of the Roger Brown Study Collection at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a widely published author on self-taught art, and an introduction by Jane Kallir, a noted scholar and co-director of Galerie St. Etienne, New York.

Generous support for Accidental Genius: Art from the Anthony Petullo Collection is provided by The Anthony Petullo Foundation, Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, Einhorn Family Foundation, and Donald and Donna Baumgartner.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR ACCIDENTAL GENIUS: ART FROM THE ANTHONY PETULLO COLLECTION **12-Hour Member Preview Celebration**

Thurs, Feb. 9, 10 a.m.–10 p.m.

Docent-led tours and free audio guides available

Lectures: 1:30 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. in Lubar Auditorium

Exhibition Lecture with Anthony Petullo

Fri, Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m.

Lubar Auditorium

Gallery Talks with the Curator

Tues, Feb. 14, March 20, April 3, April 24, 1:30 p.m.

Express Talks

Thurs, Feb. 16 and 23, noon

Thurs, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, noon

Thurs, April 5, 12, 19, 26, noon

Thurs, May 3, noon

Thurs, March 1, April 5, May 3, 5:30 p.m.

Target Free First Thursdays

March 1, April 5, May 3

MAM After Dark: Mardi Gras

Fri, Feb. 17, 5 p.m.–midnight

Details and advance admission at www.mam.org/afterdark.

Kohl's Art Generation Family Sundays: Making your Mark

Sun, March 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Accidental Genius: Art from the Anthony Petullo Collection

HOURS AND ADMISSION

The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Thursdays until 8 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults; \$12 for students, seniors, and active military; and free for Members and for children age 12 and under.

The first Thursday of each month is Target Free First Thursday and admission is free for individuals (does not apply to groups).

ABOUT THE MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

The Milwaukee Art Museum's far-reaching holdings include more than 25,000 works spanning antiquity to the present day. With a history dating back to 1888, the Museum houses a collection with strengths in 19th- and 20th-century American and European art, contemporary art, American decorative arts, and folk and self-taught art. The Museum includes the Santiago Calatrava–designed Quadracci Pavilion, named by *Time* magazine as “Best Design of 2001.” For more information, please visit www.mam.org.

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Image credits:

David Pearce (English, b. 1963)

Monkey at the Door, n.d.

Acrylic on board

9 3/8 x 11 1/2 in. (23.81 x 29.21 cm)

Lent from the Anthony Petullo Collection M2012.182

Minnie Evans (American, 1892–1987)

Untitled, ca. 1946

Oil and pencil on paper

14 x 11 in. (35.56 x 27.94 cm)

Lent from the Anthony Petullo Collection M2012.42

James Lloyd (English, 1905–1974)

Among the Grasses (Susanna York), n.d.

Gouache on paper

14 x 15 1/2 in. (35.56 x 39.37 cm)

Lent from the Anthony Petullo Collection M2012.139