

Delve Deeper into "In the Realms of the Unreal"

A film by Jessica Yu

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Mary Cella of the St Charles Public Library in partnership with the American Library Association, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming P.O.V. documentary "In the Realms of the Unreal" that premieres on August 2, 2005 at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings at www.pbs.org/pov/).

Reclusive janitor by day, visionary artist by night, outsider artist Henry Darger moved through life virtually unnoticed. But after his death, a treasure trove was discovered in his one-room Chicago apartment: a staggering 15,000-page novel and hundreds of illustrations that continue to inspire artists around the world. With dreamlike animation, poignant narration by Dakota Fanning and a haunting musical score, Academy Award winner Jessica Yu fashions a bold and beautiful film. "In the Realms of the Unreal" immerses us in Darger's startling universe of innocence and pain, showing how he forged magic out of the bleakest of lives. A co-presentation with the Independent Television Service (ITVS).

ADULT NONFICTION

Anderson, Brook Davis & Michael Thevoz. *The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001. A basic introduction to Henry Darger and his work, it includes 114 color re-prints of his drawings.

Bonesteel, Michael. *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings.* New York: Rizzoli, 2000. Looks at the world of outsider artist, Henry Darger. Includes excerpts from his diary and his 15,000-page novel *In the Realms of the Unreal*.

Cardinal, Roger. *Outsider Art.* New York: Praeger Publications, 1973. Combines case studies of people who produced artwork while in psychiatric facilities.

D'Agata, John. *Halls of Fame: Essays.* Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2001. John D'Agata explores American

contemporary culture and the meaning of art.

Darger, Henry et al. *Henry Darger: Disasters of War.* New York: KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 2004. Explains the technique and creativity behind Darger's works and draws readers' attention to detail. Also features a selection of 12 previously unpublished excerpts from *In The Realms of the Unreal* and from Darger's diary.

Fine, Gary. *Everyday Genius: Self-Taught and the Culture of Authenticity.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Comprehensive examination of outsider art and the network of self-taught artists, who despite their unique talents, still participate in the traditional world of money and status. Fine explores the differences between folk art, outsider art, and self-taught art, explaining the economics of the self-taught art market.

Hall, Michael. *The Outsider Artist: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture.* Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1994. Contains 19 scholarly essays that critically explore various topics including appreciation of difficult art and art as a tool for the treatment of mental illness.

Hand, Elizabeth. *Inside Out: On Henry Darger.* In Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling's (Eds.), *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* (pp.447-453). New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002. This anthology provides an extensive selection of fantasy and horror stories that include poetry and essays.

Hollander, Stacy C. & Brooke Davis Anderson. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001. Celebrates American folk art from the colonial days through the present in a full volume text that draws upon works from the collection of the American Folk Art Museum.

McGregor, John. *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane.*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

MacGregor utilizes his training in art history, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis to describe the evolution of society's attitudes towards art by the mentally ill and their art's influence on modern art.

McGregor, John. *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal.* New York: Delano Greenidge, 2002. A generously illustrated book that is the culmination of over a decade of research by outsider art expert John MacGregor who explores the life and work of Henry Darger.

Maizels, John. *Raw Creation: Outsider Art and Beyond.* London: Phaidon Press, 2000. Maizels, editor of *Raw Vision*, the international magazine on outsider and self-taught art, details the history of outsider art and its continued evolution towards recognition. The book also discusses the theories and definitions that have been created around the works of visionaries, the insane, and other extraordinary artists.

Oakes, John G.H. *In the Realms of the Unreal: "Insane" Writings.* New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1991. An international compilation of over 300 works of poetry and prose written by individuals who are labeled mentally unstable by society. Most of the contributors to the volume have never been published and most are institutionalized.

Rexer, Lyle. *How To Look at Outsider Art.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005. Provides the ground rules for understanding, appreciating, and evaluating outsider works of art. Includes works that have never been published, including those by Henry Darger.

Rhodes, Colin. *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives (World of Art).* New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000. Colin Rhodes surveys the history and reception of Outsider Art, which is now appreciated by a wide public.

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ADULT FICTION

Ashbery, John. *Girls on the Run: a Poem*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999. A single poem, 96 pages long, inspired by the work of Henry Darger.

Braverman, Kate. *The Incantation of Frida K*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002. Braverman enters the mind of artist Frida Kahlo as she lies on her deathbed at age 46. The novel reflects on people, places, and events from Kahlo's life, as well as discusses topics of art and philosophy.

Chabon, Michael. *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier and Clay: A Novel*. New York: Picador, USA, 2001. Joe Cavalier, a young Jewish artist escapes Nazi occupied Prague to come to America and begins creating comic books with his cousin, Sammy Clay in Brooklyn. Explores topics of art, creation, and comic books.

Chessman, Harriet Scott. *Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper: A Novel*. New York: Permanent Press and Seven Stories Press, 2001. This novel imagines the life and times of impressionist painter Mary Cassatt and her sister, Lydia. Told in the voice of Lydia who is dying at age 41, the novel captures nineteenth century Paris and real life figures. Also includes five full color plates of Cassatt's paintings.

Cooperstein, Claire. *Johanna: A Novel of the Van Gogh Family*. New York: Scribner, 1995. Follows the story of Johanna, the daughter of Vincent Van Gogh's brother, Theo, who devotes her life to preserving Van Gogh's memory.

Dee, Jonathan. *Palladio: A Novel*. New York: Doubleday, 2002. Detailing the story of a couple torn apart, Dee probes themes of lost love and the sources behind artwork.

Enright, Rosemary. *Isobel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. Follows an au pair who struggles to free herself from her past through art, almost reaching madness in the process.

Hand, Elizabeth. *Mortal Love*. New York: William Morrow, 2004. Explores themes of artistic inspiration and its dangerous development into obsession and madness through three interwoven narratives set in late Victorian England.

Maugham, Somerset W. *The Moon and Sixpence*. New York: Penguin Books, 1944. Follows a man, Charles Strickland, who abandons his wife and children to devote himself to painting, yet refuses to exhibit or sell his work. Tortured by illness and his own passion for art he travels around the world and ends up in Tahiti, where blinded by leprosy he produces his most astonishing artwork.

Stone, Irving. *Lust for Life*. New York: Penguin Group, 1984. A fictionalized biography of the Dutch painter, Vincent Van Gogh, based on three volumes of letters Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo.

Urquhart, Jane. *The Underpainter*. New York: Viking, 1997. In Rochester, New York a seventy-five year old painter, Austin Fraser, paints a collection that chronicles individuals who have affected him, taking readers over seven decades and around the world as Fraser recalls his life.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. *Contemporary American Folk Artists*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1975. Outlines the lives and works of twenty-two American folk painters, carvers, and environmentalists.

Kinney, Jean Brown & Cle Kinney. *23 Varieties of Ethnic Art and How to Make Each One*. New York: Atheneum, 1976. Explains the contributions that different ethnic groups have made to American culture, as well as instructions for making folk art.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Anholt, Laurence. *Camille and the Sunflowers: A Story About Vincent Van Gogh*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 1994. Told through the lens of a young boy, this is a great introduction to the works of Vincent Van Gogh with artistic reproductions. Ages 4-8.

Bucholz, Quint. *The Collector of Moments*, translated by Peter F. Neumeyer. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999. A solitary boy is drawn to his mysterious new neighbor, an artist named Max. Max does not let anyone see his paintings until he embarks on a journey, leaving behind his paintings, which are beautiful but also strange and unpredictable. Readers join the boy in this picture book as the power of art makes the ordinary become the magical and unreal. Ages 9-12.

Dionetti, Michelle. *Painting the Wind*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996. Told through the eyes of a little girl in Arle, France who admires Van Gogh's work, the book opens up children's eyes to the shock of the unconventional. Ages 6-10.

Engel, Diana. *Holding On*. New York: Cavendish Children's Books, 1997. Tells the story of a young boy who discovers art as a powerful channel for release as he copes with his parent's divorce through painting. Ages 9-12.

Garland, Michael. *Dinner at Magritte's*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1995. Follows a young boy who discovers the world of surrealist art one summer when he is on vacation with his parents in France. Complete with illustrations.

Guarnieri, Paolo. *A Boy Named Giotto*, translated by Jonathan Galassi. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1999. The book follows the evolution of Giotto, an eight-year old shepherd boy who has a great talent for drawing but whose talents go unnoticed until he meets Cimabue, a painter who teaches Giotto the wonders of painting. Ages 4-8.

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Littlesugar, Amy. *Jonkonnu: A Story from the Sketchbook of Winslow Homer*. New York: Philomel Books, 1997. The authors have fabricated the story behind a painting done by Winslow Homer about ten years after the Civil War. Ages 4-8.

Lowry, Lois. *Gathering Blue*. New York: Laurel-Leaf, 2002. Depicts an anti-utopian future society in which Kira is a girl who has lost both of her parents. Struggling to survive, her extraordinary talents with a needle and thread keep her alive and allow her to get close enough to the inner workings of her society to see its secret horror.

McPhail, David. *Something Special*. Boston: Joy Street, 1988. Sam is the only one in his family who does not have an extraordinary talent, until he discovers his amazing painting abilities. Told with expressive illustrations, ages 4-8.

Place, Francois. *The Old Man Mad About Drawing: A Tale of Hokusai*; translated by William Rodarmor. Boston: David R. Godine, 2004. Takes place in nineteenth-century Edo, nine-year-old Tojiro befriends artist Hokusai and becomes his assistant. Detailed ink and watercolor illustrations are on every page. Ages 9-12.

Seidler, Tor. *Brothers Below Zero*. New York: Laura Geringer Books; HarperCollins, 2002. A tale of sibling rivalry, seventh grader Tim Tuttle is constantly overshadowed by his older brother, until he moves in with his Great-aunt Winifred who is an artist and inspires him to paint portraits of his family. Ages 8 to 12.

Winter, Jeanette. *Josefina*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1996. Winter imagines a day in the life of Josefina Aguilar, an actual Mexican folk artist who makes and sells painted clay figures in her small village. Ages 4 to 8.

VIDEOS AND DOCUMENTARIES

"A Boy Creates." Encyclopedia

Britannica Educational Corporation. 1971. (10 min.) This video follows a young boy on his adventure to a place where things have been discarded. While there he sees many strange creatures that have been created out of the trash, and so sets out to create his own creature.

"Art from Found Materials." BFA Educational Media. 1971. (12 min.) Narrated instruction on how to make art from trash.

"Rare Visions & Roadside Revelations." Randy Mason & Michael Murphy. KCPT. 1995. (60 min.) "Rare Visions & Roadside Revelations" is a television show that seeks out the world of the Visionary arts in a road show format, bringing the artists and the artwork to the viewers of Public Television
www.kcpt.org/rare_visbns

"Recycled, Re-Seen Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap." International Museum of Folk Art (N.M.). Crystal Productions. 1997. (35 min.) This innovative and dynamic program includes a video, an Interdisciplinary Curriculum Guide, and 20 color prints. The 35-minute video follows artists working with recycled materials in five countries and provides innovative ideas for creating recycled art. Students learn that creativity with recycled materials spans global cultures.
http://crystalproductions.com/catalog/product_info.php/cPath/36/products_id/4934

"Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time." Thomas Riedelsheimer. New Video. 2004. (90 min.) Scottish-German documentary about artist Goldsworthy, a Scotsman whose medium is nature and whose studio is the outdoors.

"Through a Glass, Lightly." David Philpot & Kevin Orth. New Day Films. 1994. (21 min.) This program about "outsider art" profiles three, self-taught Chicagoans who search for discarded or abandoned objects. The film follows Mr. Imagination, David Philpot, and Kevin Orth as they search Chicago's streets and alleys for raw materials. The artists

reveal how other cultures have shaped their transformations and visions as artists.
www.newday.com/films/Through_a_Glass__Lightly.html

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Artner, Alan G. "Henry Darger's Outsider Art Is Ill-Served by Uncritical Exhibit." *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 60. (April 10, 1998).

Beer, John. "Poetic Collage." *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 3. (August 1, 1999).

Christensen, Richard. "Entering Darger's Dreams: Recluse's Life and Fantasies Mingle on Stage in 'Jennie Richie.'" *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 6. (February 4, 2001).

Eskin, Leah. "Henry Darger." *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 10. (December 17, 2000).

WEB SITES

www.pbs.org/pov/pov2005/int_herealms/index.html

P.O.V.'s website for "In the Realms of the Unreal"

www.realmsoftheunreal.com/
Filmmaker Jessica Yu's website

www.acer-access.com/~darger@acer-access.com/index.htm

Realm of the Unreal: a page about Henry Darger

www.avam.org
American Visionary Museum in Baltimore, MD

www.folkartmuseum.org
American Folk Art Museum in New York City

www.hammergallery.com/Artist_s/darger/Darger.htm

The Carl Hammer Gallery in Chicago's site on Darger. Includes works of the artist as well as those that are available for sale.

www.saraayers.com/darger.htm

Site discusses the life of Henry Darger with examples of his art and links to information about the artist and Outsider Art.