

HUMAN ANIMALS: THE ART OF COBRA and COBRA: CONTEMPORARY LEGACY

University Museum of Contemporary Art, UMASS Amherst, Sept. 15–Nov. 20, 2016
NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, July – Sept., 2017

Karen Kurczynski, Curator, Assistant Professor of Art History, UMASS

Tour checklist with Poems for reading by CRVPT (Connecticut River Valley Poet's Theater):
Ishmael Klein, Greg Purcell, Wilson Yerxa, and David Feinstein

November 3, 2016

• **Poet's Cage INSTALLATION**



LUCBERT "SCHOOL OF POETRY"

I am no sweet rhymer
I am the swift swindler
of love, the hate beneath it heed
and there above a cackling deed.

the lyrical is the mother of the political,
I am none other than the riot reporter
and my mysticism is the putrefied fodder
of deceit used by virtue to purge it all.

I proclaim that the velvet poets
are dying timidly and humanistically.
from now on the hot iron throat
of moved henchmen will open musically.

yet I, who in these sheaves abide
like a rat in a trap, yearn for the cesspool
of revolution and cry: rhyme-rats, deride,
deride always this far too pure poetry school.



2. Carl-Henning Pedersen (Danish, 1913-2007)

Eventyrbilledet (Fairy Tale Picture)

Oil on canvas; 1943

23 ¾ x 15 inches (60.3 x 38.1 cm)

Collection of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection; M-79.33

STATEMENT FROM “ABSTRACT ART OR FANTASY ART,” by the artist CARL-HENNING PEDERSEN, printed in *Helhesten* (1943):

One cannot really apply the term “abstract” to painting.... The common denominator uniting the artists that are labeled as “abstract” is the fact that all of their work is based on the free play of creative imagination. Every artist’s things turn out different, as different as one person from another. A more appropriate common term for this kind of art is “fantasy art,” since such a word immediately conveys the essence of the genre. It will highlight the affinities to ... the free creative play of children. ...As long as we use the word “abstract,” people will think that the artists have invented a new language that the viewers are in no condition to understand. They believe that it is something they have to learn, whereas the whole point of “fantasy art” is that it sets out from something central in people, something which everyone can understand and feel without prior knowledge. Something they themselves have experienced as a child but have forgotten, convinced of the necessity to grow up and follow foolish social traditions.

A painter’s use of color is a world in itself. Color can express any sensory impression that a human being is capable of receiving. A man’s handwriting is an expression of his entire personality. Line registers everything. Color and line join together in the picture to present the painter and his emotions to the viewer. You must look carefully to find what is there.



3. Karel Appel (Dutch, 1921-2006)
Birds on a Rooftop
Gouache on paper; 1953
19 1/4 x 25 inches (48.9 x 63.5 cm)
Collection of Smith College Museum of Art; Gift of
Martha Jackson (Martha Kellogg, class of 1928) in
memory of Louise Eastman (class of 1933)



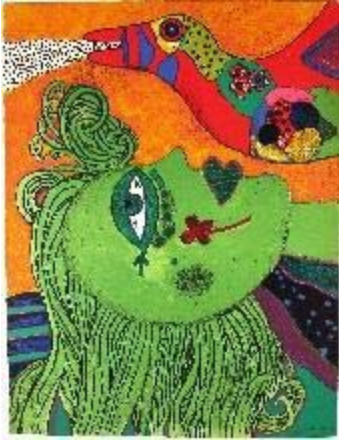
4. Asger Jorn (Danish, 1914-1973)
The Red Earth (Den Røde jord)
Lithograph, 1954
38 1/4 x 53 inches (97.2 x 134.6 cm)
Collection of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, The Golda
and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection; M-148

LUCEBERT "IT'S ALL IN THE WORLD"

it's all in the world it is all
the mad dog's smile of hunger
the witch's fright of pain and
the great vulture and thirst the great
ancient heavy nightingales
it's all in the world it is all

all those who live deprived of light
the libels imprisoned in their iron lungs
have the power and fastness of solid stone watches
inside the broken paper of power
yawns under the stray bullet of peace
yawns before the shortsighted bullet of war
the looted skull
the erosion

it's all in the world it is all
poor and narrow and slowly born
sleepwalkers in a cold circus all
is in the world it is all
sleep



5. Corneille (Guillaume Cornelis van Beverloo, Dutch, 1922-2010)
Sans Titre (Untitled) from the series *Grass (Herbes)*
Gouache and watercolor on lithograph; 1973
28 7/16 x 20 3/4 inches (72.2 x 52.7 cm)
Collection of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection; M-693.f
[ed. of 100, 1972. Catalogue raisonné Donkersloot # 272-281]

LUCEBERT "INDIAN SUMMER"

i have laid my weapons in the grass
and like grass my weapons come to smell
i have laid my body in the grass
my body is fragrant like wood bitter and sweet

this lying down this futile fragile lying down
like a yellowed photo doubled drifting
on the water glistening on the waves
or by the forest dusty of body and shade

o great breath let not the stones rise yet
do not weight their cheeks their eyes
not smaller glassier grayer

let the lovers rest a while and the silence
black between their silver ears and ah well
let the girls settle their feathers and smile



6. Asger Jorn (Danish, 1914-1973)

Untitled

Ceramic; 1953

Height: 18 ¾ inches (47.6 cm); Widest circumference: 9 inches (23 cm)

Collection of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection; M-224



7. Albert Oehlen (German, b. 1954)

Ein Versuchstier (Test Animal)

Oil on canvas; 1998

109 x 77 1/2 inches (276.9 x 196.9 cm)

JAN ELBURG “NOTHING OF ALL THIS”

Like sailors singing...
but sailors do not sing:
they spit in the sea,
they knowt he backsides of cities
and the front of the cold wind;
sailors don't sing.

like the birds gaily...
but their gaiety is fleeing:
they have been under fire,
their fledgling is dead.
(they know no sadness either.)

like the sun...
but look at the red dust around bucharest.
clouds? are cold mist.
the poppy? a week.
sand: sand.
water: water.

man hardly knows what man is.
the poet knows all about nothing.



8. Karel Appel (Dutch, 1921-2006)

Wafting in the Wind

Oil on canvas; 1975

Framed: 46 ½ x 46 ½ x 2 inches (118 x 118 x 5 cm)

Collection of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection; M-79.7

LUCEBERT "I TRY IN POETIC FASHION"

I try in poetic fashion
that is to say
simplicities luminous waters
to give expression to
the expanse of life at its fullest

if I had not been a man
likes masses of men
but if I had been who I was
the stone or fluid angel
birth and decay would not have touched me
the road from forlornness to communion

the stones stones beasts beasts birds birds road
would not be so befouled
as it can be seen to be in my poems
that are snapshots of that road

in this age what was always called
beauty beauty has burned her face
she no longer comforts man
she comforts the larvae the reptiles the rats
but she startles man
and strikes him with the awareness
of being a breadcrumb on the universe's skirt

no longer evil alone
the deathblow alone makes us rebellious or meek
but also good
the embrace that leaves us fumbling in despair
at space

and so I sought out
language in her beauty
heard there she had nothing human left
but the speech defects of the shadow
but those of the earsplitting sunlight



9. Jacqueline de Jong (Dutch, b. 1939)
Le Salau et les Salopards (Bastard and Scumbags)
Acrylic on canvas, plastic mirror with wood frame; 1966
Three panels; 78 ¾ x 39 3/8 inches each (200 x 100 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe Gallery, Los Angeles

HUGO CLAUS "MARSYAS"

[In Greek mythology, Marsyas was a satyr—half man, half goat—who played the flute so well that he challenged Apollo to a music contest. He lost and, for his hubris, Apollo tied him to a tree and flayed him alive]

The fever of my song, the country wine of my voice
Left him shrinking back, Wolfthroat Apollo,
The god who throttled his lads, and sang like fungi,
Blunt knives, in his wolfthroat, gravel voice.

Then he whirled up, defamed,
And broke my throat.
I was bound to a tree, I was skinned, pierced
Until the water of his long-lipped words flowed in my ears,
That violently burst.

Look at me now, bound by the ropes of a soundless space,
Felled and glued to a copper scent,
Pointed, Doomed, Pinned like a moth
In a flame of hunger, in a morass of pain.
The wind's fingernails reach into my bowels.
The needles of frost and sand ride in my skin.
None now can ever cure me.
My deaf-mute song hangs in the hedges.
The teeth of my voice reach only the virgins,
And who's still a virgin or a virgin bridegroom
In these breakers?

(In clots the blood coral
Rises from my hunger-lips
I damn
The chaff and the clover and the mob striking out
The father's colors on my roofs—but you are of stone.
I sing—but you are of feathers and stand
Like a bittern, a semaphore of mourning.
What are you, a buzzard—there—a dandling buzzard?
Or in the south, lower, a star, a golden Taurus?)

None now can ever cure me.
In my cellars the ore of knowledge begins to fracture.



10. Herbert Gentry (African-American, 1919–2003)
Arrival
Acrylic on canvas; 1999
32 x 44 inches (81.3 x 111.8 cm)
Courtesy of the Estate of Herbert Gentry

JAN ELBURG “BERTRAND DE BORN”

(He was a famous Medieval troubador who wrote many cantos praising war -KK)

This is it, love,
like a rain of soft iron,
like a rain of tears flowing,
this is it.

It is high:
my breath flows too, my eyes
are the drums of mountaintops.
It is low:
I am still panting from the fall.

This is it: velvet stones rolling;
this: water swishing through,
and I am rocking on the rush benches
of a pink rowboat,
I am rocking in a woman’s boat

...

Nothing has been said by this
about her stammering face that recognizes the moon
and gives names that rhyme with mine,
and deep under that a pit full of lovers
climbing on each other to be here
up here, and to be me:
smooth of back, proud and fulfilled.

...

This is it:
love, war, and poetry.