

INSANELY BEAUTIFUL

Art Brut is art made by people who are no professional artists.

The exhibition "Insanely Beautiful" shows works of mentally and physically challenged people at the EFA.

"Art Brut is a sort of art aside from the established arts business. Art Brut is something different," said Casper Einem, Vice-President of the EFA, when opening the exhibition "Insanely Beautiful – Art brut in Austria". The British term is raw art. In the US people call it outsider art.

The exhibition is part of EFA's cultural programme and displays works of art often made by mentally or physically challenged people. The paintings result from workshop sessions and are part of the patients' therapies.

Jutta Steinbeiß (39) from Linz, Upper Austria suffers from Down's syndrome and is one of the artists featured in the exhibition in and outside Erwin-Schrödinger-Saal (Pictures of Women, see big picture). Steinbeiß is with a social service that offers artistic workshops. For more than 20 years she has been engaged in artistic work. Two days a week she spends in a studio.

Telling about the origin of Art Brut in Austria, Caspar Einem mentioned psychiatrist Leo Navratil. In the late

1940s, he asked his patients during therapy to draw pictures or to paint, and in the 1970s first exhibitions were held. "I bought one piece of art in '73, so I'm also one of those who liked it from the beginning, and Erhard Busek also bought one of them." Einem said, not without a hint of pride. "I bought three, Sir," Koschka Hetzer-Molden (widow of EFA-founder Otto Molden) called from the auditorium.

It was Günter Koch, curator of the exhibition, who had the idea for the exhibition. He was inspired by the movie "A Beautiful Mind" about schizophrenic Nobel prize winner John Nash. "I was head of a research organization when the movie was released and it intrigued me. The personalities in the film were fascinating."

Koch sees in Art Brut a way for patients to express themselves. "One way is to paint, it's their language." For Koch, Art Brut is one example of support and inclusion of disabled people into society. "I think we should respect these pictures." • paf



Casper Einem. Foto: mp



Jutta Steinbeiß's Images of Women: Schicke Dame, Party Girl, Bikini Girl and Krankenschwester (from left to right). Foto: paf

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