

## Press Release

***True art is always where it is not expected: Dubuffet, Chassac, Soutter, Wölfli, Gill, Held / Works*** from the Klewan Collection

Curated by Brigitte Hausmann, head of the Department of Culture for Steglitz-Zehlendorf

### **Gutshaus Steglitz**

September 16, 2023–February 25, 2024

#### **Opening: Friday, September, 15, 7 p.m.**

Greeting: Cerstin Richter-Kotowski, Deputy District Mayor and District Councilwoman for Education, Culture, and Sports

**Achim Freyer:** “Where Image Becomes Art”

**Thomas Röske,** head of the Prinzhorn Collection, Heidelberg: “Jean Dubuffet’s View of Art: Its Origins and Its Consequences”

**Christiane Lange,** Director, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart: “Dubuffet in the Klewan Collection”

**8 p.m. "Schubidubidubuffet" dance party with El Klewan and Buffalena** as DJs, playlist from a collection of 6,000 singles

“True art is always where it is not expected,” Jean Dubuffet proclaimed in 1949. Just seven years earlier, the successful wine merchant had left his bourgeois career at the age of forty-one to practice art from an anticultural stance as a “dilettante’s entertainment.” In his artistic work Dubuffet (1901-1985) explored all his life materials, techniques, and forms that led to it being characterized by ever-new series. The thread running through his oeuvre is landscape. It can be nature as well as city, face, body, or scene. In addition to painting, the drawing and the print were Dubuffet’s primary media. The lithograph was particularly well suited to his intentions as it enabled him to pursue wild research with materials. Dubuffet is represented at the Gutshaus Steglitz with twenty-five works from his forty years of artistic creation, during which he repeatedly explored new ground.

He changed the concept of art during the second half of the twentieth century, not only as an artist but also as a theorist and collector of what he called Art brut. He provided a definition of it in the manifesto-like text “L’art brut préféré aux arts culturels” in 1949: “We understand that to mean works executed by people unscathed by artistic culture [...]” The oeuvre of the artist-poet Gaston Chassac (1910–1964) is surprising for its use of nontraditional artistic materials, including boards, printed wallpaper, and many more found and used objects. Louis Soutter (1871–1942), a cousin of the architect Le Corbusier, produced thousands of drawings and later also paintings while institutionalized involuntarily until his death. The oeuvre of Adolf Wölfli (1864–1930), who was committed to the psychiatric clinic in Waldau, near Bern, was seen by Dubuffet as an alternative image of the world. Margarethe Held (1894–1981), too, created a comprehensive cosmic order with pencil and later charcoal and pastel crayons. She saw herself as a medium, as did the English artist Madge Gill (1882–1961), who produced delicate ink drawings at the behest of a spirit. The fifty exhibits in this exhibition curated by Brigitte Hausmann are from the Klewan Collection. A catalogue is being published by the Deutscher Kunstverlag to accompany the exhibition.

#### Gutshaus Steglitz

Schlossstr. 48, 12165 Berlin

Mo–So 10 am–6 pm, free admission

Closed: Oct. 4, Nov. 7, Dec. 5, 2023; Jan. 2, Feb. 6, 2024

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