

# Creating Artworks Without A Net

From First Arts Page

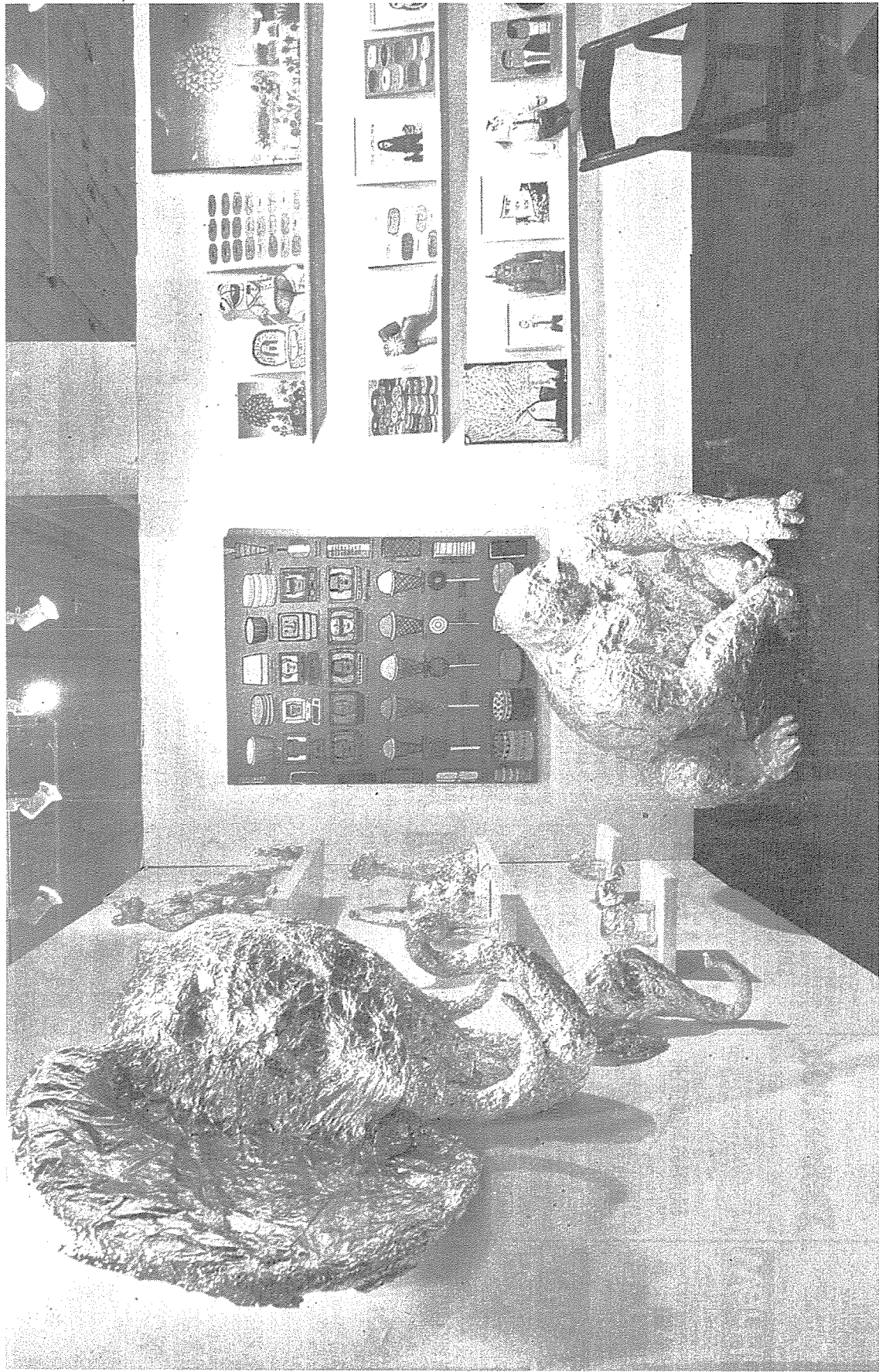
checked herself into Bellevue. After treatment, she started to confront her fear in black-and-white drawings and collages. In the most gripping of these works, the plug is a dragon-like creature that breathes flame from fraying wires.

If Ms. Rockwell's drawings stoke anxiety, a group of drawings by Jim Work, at the Pardee Collection, seem meant to soothe it. Mr. Work, a developmentally disabled artist born in 1944, renders neat ribbons of highway and tidy brick houses in cheerful pink and green crayon on paper grocery bags. He seems to be guided by an inner GPS, drawing arrows on the roads to indicate the direction of traffic.

Some outsider artists have achieved celebrity on par with so-called "insiders"; Martin Ramirez and Henry Darger are examples. Drawings by both men are on view, but the energy of this fair has much to do with the spotlight it shines on many lesser-known figures. C. Grimaldis Gallery has a survey of Giorgos Rigas, a sort of Greek Grandma

Moses who lives in Athens but paints the small mountain village of his birth from memory. And Packer Schopf has a focused presentation on Lee Groban (1947-2011), a self-taught Chicago artist whose intense oeuvre includes comic-psychedelic drawings and a 5,000-page epic poem, "A Cure

*The Outsider Art Fair continues through Sunday at 7 West 34th Street; sanfordsmith.com.*



JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Tin-foil animals by Dean Millien at the LAND Gallery's booth at the Outsider Art Fair. The fair has drawings by famed outsiders like Henry Darger as well.

for Insomnia." In some cases, familiar names are presented in new ways. The proprietor of MAKE Skateboards, Scott Ogden, is selling limited-edition skateboard decks that feature authorized reproductions of art by Adolf Wölfli and Royal Robertson. With Robertson, a Louisiana sign painter who believed in space aliens and the apocalypse, Mr. Ogden found an

artist who easily crosses over from outsider to street art. Also new to the fair are some high-profile institutional collaborators. One is the Collection de l'Art Brut, the Lausanne, Switzerland, museum of outsider art that houses some 5,000 works amassed by Jean Dubuffet, here showcasing its series of DVDs and monographs on outsider artists. Another is El Museo del Bar-

rio, which is timing the opening of its show of "nontraditionally trained" artists, "Testimonios: 100 Years of Popular Expression," to coincide with the fair. And as in previous years, the American Folk Art Museum is holding a series of talks. Then there is an exhibitor called the Museum of Everything, which isn't really a museum but rather a series of exhibi-

tions of outsider art organized, and lovingly preserved in book form, by James Brett, a London curator. For this fair, Mr. Brett has designed an attractive bookshop in which real shelves emerge from a trompe l'oeil wall drawing. Leafing through the four volumes of the Museum of Everything's limited-edition catalog, you can read musings on outsider art by con-

summate contemporary-art insiders (Maurizio Cattelan and Carsten Höller among them). At the Museum of Everything, and at the fair as a whole, enthusiasm for unorthodox creative expression meets disdain for the old-fashioned term that commonly describes it. As the Museum's Web site proclaims, "Death to outsider art! Long live the outsiders!"

*Karen Rosenberga*