

Zuzanna Koronka · Feb 1 · 3 min read

# ART BRUT CATALOGUE OF BEAST AND MONSTERS

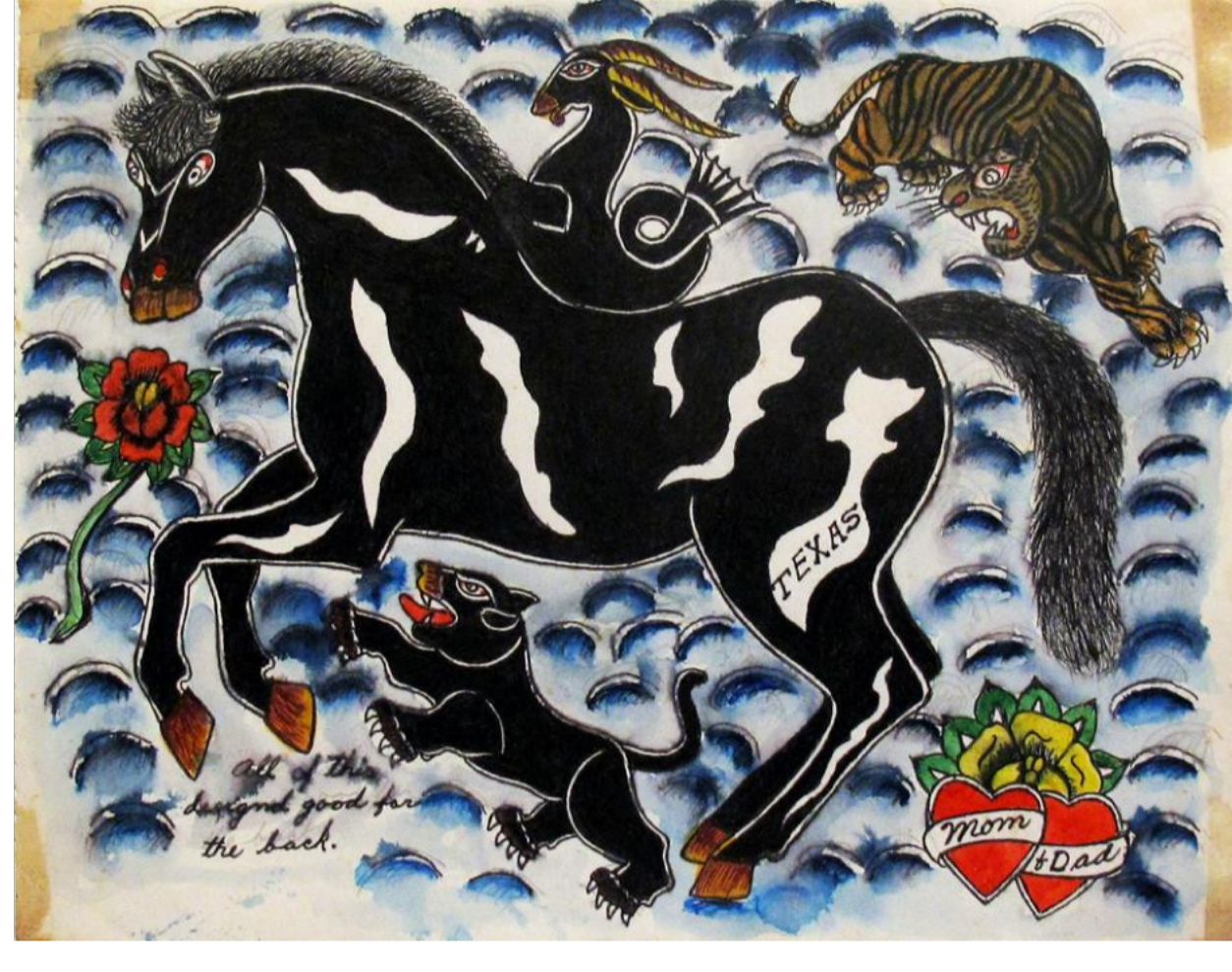
Drawn as if by a child, naive and dreamy – these are how animals in art brut are often portrayed. Mythical creatures, non-existing beasts, sometimes human friends like dogs, cats or horses; other times wild animals. Seldom bearing resemblance to how they look naturally; colourful, in motion, mosaic-style drawn or sculpted seem to be coming from another fantastic realm or long-forgotten fairy tale. Art brut presents a real Bestiary and invites all art lovers to get acquainted with creatures living in artists' imagination.



Madeline Mollet, No title, 2019

Madeline Mollet presents to us her fantastic beast – and no matter how long we were to be guessing which actual animal-inspired her, we wouldn't know. But! We get a hint if we can speak German. Blöde Kuh in German means „bloody cow“. But there is little of the cow how we know it in the magical creature Mollet portrays. It's extremely colourful, seems to be joyful, has a beautiful, gigantic blue eye and something resembling flowers on its head. The whole image is so full of colours that they seem to jump out of the image frame. An explosion of bloom! We realise “the bloody cow” is probably caught happy in the middle of summer. And seeing it, we want to laugh and celebrate.

The next four animals were painted by Rosie Carmanga. The artist's tattoo flash art presents us with eccentric and mysterious scenarios. We can easily recognize a horse on his image, but there are also two wild cats, and we can only guess who they are; there is also a small unicorn-like creature – or maybe a seahorse, but with a horn. All four animals are in motion, running, jumping, attacking one another, possibly. There is a dynamic sense of catching them in this act. We can have a feeling that the author plays with us – as soon as we say “this must be a tiger!” do we realise that the whole scene happens in the water (blue waves). Yet again, we are lost between worlds: the one of reality and the one of fantasy, unique to a given painter.



Untitled, Rosie Carmanga, 1950-1960



Stroller The Horse Jumping, James Alison, 2018

James Alison, a contemporary art brut artist, presents his horse in the air, in motion. His distinct use of pen and line captivates the viewer, drawing us into the magical worlds he creates. We ask ourselves: is the horse flying? Where are his wings then? Where is he flying to? The green foreground makes us think that we are in nature, possibly on a farm, and this joyful, striped and colourful creature is just enjoying the circumstances, jumping with joy. How does that make you feel? I hope – joyful as well!

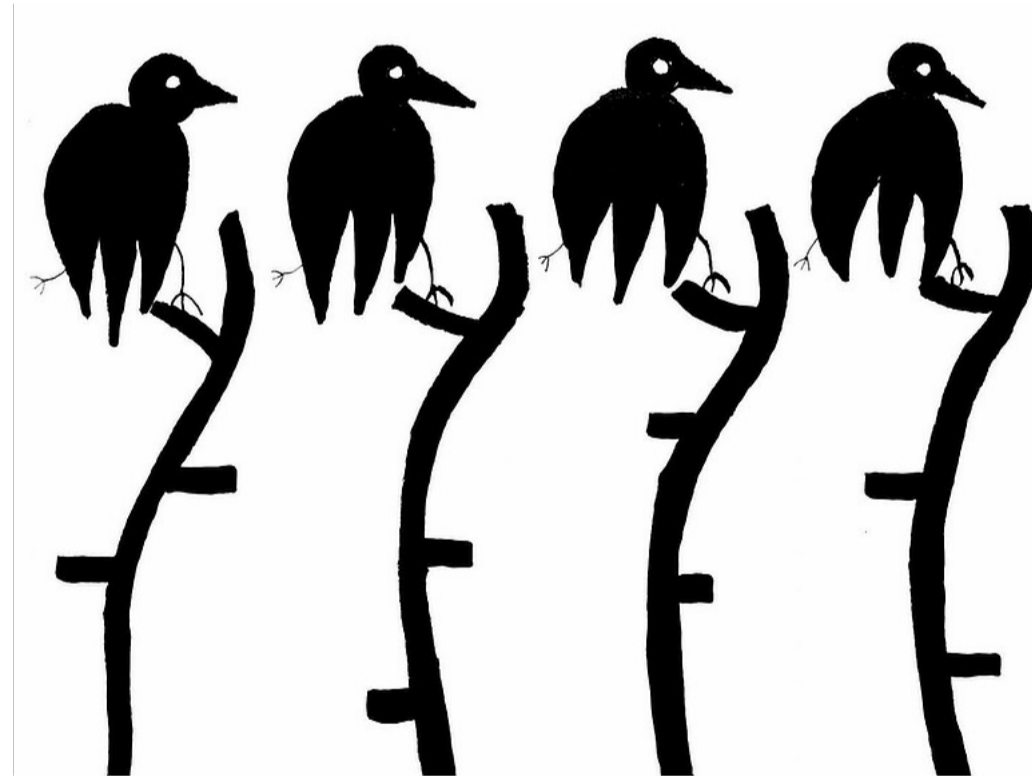
The next animal, this time a sculpture, is not joyful at all. On the contrary, it looks dangerous and we feel as if, it wouldn't be safe to get too close to it. Bearing resemblance to the natural predator (skin colour, scales, teeth, paws), the sculpture is a simplified, not realistic version of a true alligator, brings to mind folk art. Looking as if made from one piece of wood, the beast stands firmly on four feet and looks at us in an attacking pose. Are you scared yet? Leroy Archuleta, Carved and Painted Alligator



Five Gourd Fish, Richard Burnside (n.d.), „paint on gourds

Richard Burnside painted on many found objects and salvaged materials. This colourful gallery of creatures is ... fish. Resembling more totemic masks or totems themselves, these playful beings have no fins or scales, only monstrous like faces with teeth. Every one of them has a different colour, but their mouths are very similar to each other: the same eyes, noses, teeth. This same makes us think of a fish family. They were made out of gourds, painted. They look like children's rattles and would make an exquisite instrument. And again, if we didn't know from the working title these are fish, we would look at them as at some kind of fantasy creatures. So, what are they, really?

We can identify animals this time – we are looking at birds on tree branches. The image is so simplified it reminds us of graphic design, although the technique is markers on paper. No colours, only black and white shapes at the edge of being symbols. The author is of Polish origin and if we look deeper into her inspirations, we will find Polish folk art, namely – Kurpie cutouts. This was a traditional Polish way (from the Kurpie region) to decorate windows.



Dorota Solarska, Birds, 2021



Traditional Kurpie cutout

There are many beasts, animals and monsters in art brut – I encourage you to do your own search and find your own “art brut spirit animal”. I can guarantee it will be a unique guardian or an ally!

Written by Zuzanna Koronka



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