

CHID 390 A BAD ART



As a word, art is often taken to be synonymous with a culture's highest aesthetic, and often even ethical values. Institutions devote an enormous amount of time and money to identifying the best art, to preserving or cataloguing it, all in order to educate the masses about how best to appreciate it. But what happens when so-called 'bad art' begins to influence or challenge that process or value system? What do we make of the emergence of everyday or amateur aesthetic practices that explicitly defy the priorities associated with artistic value: formal skill or training, rarity or quality of materials, originality of technique? In this course, we'll have a go at answering these and other questions about 'bad art.' Among other things, we will consider: the forces that produced and, much later, re-defined outsider or 'folk' art, including the works of figures like Clementine Hunter and Martin Ramirez; the pleasures of cult films, like *The Room* and *Show Girls*; the growing influence of the 'poor image' that characterizes many forms of visual production in the last fifty years. We will pay particular attention to the political and cultural questions that seem to be at work when art seems to go bad.

Caroline Simpson | CHID 390 A | TTh 12:30-2:20
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