

THE MEDIUM'S MEDIUM

SPIRITUALIST ART PRACTICES FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY AND BEYOND



MARIAN SPORE BUSH

c 1944



THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING**
4 CHILTERN STREET, W1

29.09.19 - 24.11.19

FRIEZE MASTERS [STAND G20]
REGENTS PARK, NW1

03.10.19 - 06.10.19

THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

The advent of spiritualist art-making in the 19th and early 20th century is emerging as an important addition to the art historical canon. For many years, the strange scribbles, obscure symmetries, figurative imaginings and floral bouquets transmitted from so-called *other worlds*, were overlooked - even ignored - by the cultural mainstream.

In recent years there has been a significant shift. Exhibitions of **Hilma af Klint** and **Emma Kunz** at the Serpentine Galleries, and **Georgiana Houghton** at the Courtauld Institute of Art, have revealed the impact of Spiritualism far beyond Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian.

Yet these high-profile narratives remain silent on the spiritual essentiality of the material, focussing instead on feminism and abstraction. This critical omission denies art history one of its most radical and forgotten steps. For it was the visuals of Spiritualism which switched artists across turn-of-the-century Europe and America onto a new improvised methodology.

Opening on 29th September 2019, The Gallery of **Everything** will present **THE MEDIUM'S MEDIUM**: a curated survey of late 19th and early 20th century visual Spiritualism. This broad examination of rare historical drawings and paintings will include over twenty artists at its booth at Frieze Masters, alongside a contemporary installation inside the Marylebone space.

Rather than impose a fixed narrative, the project will encourage viewer's to experience the material on its own terms, allowing the work to define its own meaning (as it did to its makers). The display will also contextualise Spiritualism's influence on other artists through Surrealism and Art Brut, and emphasise its connection to other movements, from Occultism to Art Deco.

Considered in this light, spiritualist art-making is revealed as a new pathway into our understanding of 20th century Modernism, and a lateral entry-point for contemporary artists today.

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THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

THE GALLERY OF [EVERYTHING](#)

4 Chiltern Street, London W1

OPENING 4pm, Sunday September 29th 2019

[THE MEDIUM'S MEDIUM](#) opens at The Gallery of [Everything](#) in Chiltern Street with a contemporary examination of Spiritualism.

The installation will include material from the 1950s to the present day, including contributions by artists [Tony Oursler](#), [Jan Švankmajer](#), [Eva Švankmajerová](#) and [Shannon Taggart](#).

[Jan Švankmajer & Eva Švankmajerová](#)

Surrealist filmmaker [Jan Švankmajer](#) and his wife, painter [Eva Švankmajerová](#), were personal and professional partners for almost half a century. These two formidable Czechoslovakian artists were drawn to Spiritualism; and the movement is central to their prolific output.

The Gallery of [Everything](#) will present a rarely seen body of work, featuring guided drawings and paintings by both artists. Executed prior to her demise in 2005, [Švankmajerová's](#) artworks are attributed to a divine force; whereas [Švankmajer's](#) drawings, created intermittently over the last decade, are often attributed to his beloved (and deceased) spouse.

Complementing their work, considerable space will also be given over to the 20th century Czech mediumistic practices long championed by this artistic couple.

[Shannon Taggart](#)

Photographer [Shannon Taggart](#) has spent almost twenty years documenting fragments of spiritualist subculture and shedding light on concurrent practices.

In this, her first major UK exhibition, a limited edition of photographs will be available from *Séance*, her inaugural monograph (also available in preview copies throughout the show).

[Tony Oursler](#)

The Gallery of [Everything](#) welcomes multi-disciplinary artist [Tony Oursler](#), whose critically acclaimed *Imponderable* collection revolves around turn-of-the-century mysticism.

Oursler will support the project with a performative commentary on the artists featured in the show and his own lifelong fascination with Spiritualism and its offshoots.

THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

FRIEZE MASTERS [Booth G20]
Regents Park, London NW1

OPENING 11am, Wednesday 3rd October 2019

THE MEDIUM'S MEDIUM continues at The Gallery of **Everything** at Frieze Masters with a survey of early manifestations of spiritualist art in an installation featuring over twenty makers.

František Jaroslav Pecka

Central to the display, the mesmeric portraits of Czech palaeontologist, **František Jaroslav Pecka**. Previously unseen either by local spiritualist or artistic circles, these rediscovered watercolours depict mystical figures, channelled from above and bathed in swirls of colour. Artworks by **Frantisek Jaroslav Pecka** are now available for sale for the first time in the UK.

Marian Spore Bush

Also featured on the booth, the astounding monochromatic visions of **Marian Spore Bush**, the mystical socialite whose visionary work was lauded by renowned cynic Harry Houdini - and who came to be displayed prominently in New York and London of the 1940s. These works are almost never available and will also be included on the booth.

Madge Gill

Monochrome cards and a rare calico scroll by **Madge Gill** will also be on view. These will recall the mid-century South London medium whose channelled output was celebrated during her lifetime at the Whitechapel Gallery, and more recently, at the William Morris Gallery.

Heinrich Nüsslein + Fleury-Joseph Crepin + Augustin Lesage

Other material will reflect architectural visions of the *infinite other*, including the ephemeral palaces of German autodidact **Heinrich Nüsslein** and the pointillist temples of miner **Fleury-Joseph Crepin**. His associate, **Augustin Lesage** - the most known spiritualist painter - will be present in the form of a large-scale performative ascension, rarely seen outside museums.

Other Makers

An assembly of exemplary mid-century material will include interpretations of séances by **Raphaël Lonné** and chalk visions by **Austin Osman Spare**, with **Marguerite Burnat-Provins**, **Fernand Desmoulin**, **Ernst Josephson**, **Hilma af Klint**, **Emma Kunz** and **Victor Simon**.

A number of talks will be held during and after Frieze Week related to the material on display. For more information, please visit the gallery website: www.gallevery.com.

THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

Spiritualism is a movement - sometimes considered a religion - which centres around communication with, and on behalf of, the dead.

Although interest in the afterlife predates the earliest written texts, Spiritualism as it is formally known began only in the mid 1800s. The movement spread rapidly across Europe and America, its growth associated with loss of life due to disease and war.

Independent spiritualist colleges and societies emerged to bring local believers together. These organisations created communities through regular meetings and correspondence. They provided mediumship services, fostered greater understanding and developed a scientific basis for study. They also challenged fraudsters.

Spiritualist champions included writers Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Victor Hugo. Artists drew significant inspiration from the connections to writer and artist William Blake, and the philosophies of Emmanuel Swedenborg and Franz Anton Mesmer.

Other movements grew out of the spiritualist tradition, including Theosophy, founded by (Madame) Helena Blavatsky in 1875, and Anthroposophy, founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1912. Spiritualism itself peaked in the early 20th century, at which time it is reported to have had several million followers and practitioners worldwide.

Visualisations date back to the earliest days of Spiritualism. Drawn and painted images range from fast instinctive mark-making to considered painterly compositions. Many feature manifestations or interpretations of spirits, figurations of specific spirit guides, divine architecture in the form of temples and palaces, as well as automatic writings.

Some of the most unusual visual material predates formal abstraction with its representation of an unknowable cosmos. More traditional visualisations draw their inspiration from world religions and known biblical and other published illustrations.

The impulse common to most spiritualist art-makers combines a search for a universal truth with the submission to another (usually higher) power. The resultant images are not necessarily made by the makers, but with them, and in some cases, through them.

Even among the formal artists, few spiritualist image-makers considered their work to be art. For the majority, it was the result of investigations into, or evidence of, the spirit world. Historic work was rarely preserved, unless archived within of the spiritualist societies.

Notable exceptions are those artists championed by the surrealists, notably André Breton, and by Jean Dubuffet, who incorporated many authors into his evolving Art Brut project.

Spiritualism continues today, with colleges and societies around the world.

THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

ARTISTS

Anonymous (Železničář) (unknown)
Marguerite Burnat-Provins (1972-1952)
Fleury-Joseph Crépin (1875-1948)
Fernand Desmoulin (18563-1956)
Svetlana Dressen (b 1944)
Eva Droppova (b 1936)
Madame Favre (unknown)
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962)
Madge Gill (1882-1961)
Václav Groul (1888-1975)
Anna Haskel (1864-unkown)
Margarethe Held (1894-1981)
Gertrude Honzatko-Mediz (1893-1975)
Ernst Josephson (1851-1906)
Nina Karasek (1883-1933)
Hilma af Klint (1862-1944)
Vlasta Kodříková (1929-2011)
Josef Kotzian (1889-1960)
Joseph Krygel (unknown)
Emma Kunz (1892-1963)
Augustin Lesage (1876-1954)
Raphaël Loné (1910-1989)
Heinrich Nüsslein (1879-1947)
Tony Oursler (b 1957)
František Jaroslav Pecka (1878-1860)
Victor Simon (1803-1976)
Austin Osman Spare (1886-1956)
Marian Spore Bush (1878-1946)
Jan Švankmajer (b 1934)
Eva Švankmajerová (1940-2005)
Shannon Taggart (b 1977)
Comte de Tromelin (1850-1920)
Agatha Wojciechowsky (1896-1986)
Henriette Zéphir (1920-2012)

THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

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www.gallevery.com

The Gallery of **Everything** is a commercial space for non-academic artists, private art-makers and other alternative creators.

An initiative of The Museum of **Everything**, the gallery engages with a wide network of institutions, artists and curators to place material into major private and public collections. The gallery's roster includes known historical master artists, as well as newly discovered authors. Events include group and solo exhibitions, talks, readings and happenings.

The gallery has been exhibiting at Frieze Masters since 2012 and opened its London gallery space in 2016. Exhibitions to date include: *Journeys into the Outside*, an installation of environmental art-making with performer Jarvis Cocker; *Le Foyer de l'Art Brut*, an in-depth study of artist Jean Dubuffet's legendary 1947 project in Paris; and *Art + Revolution in Haiti*, an investigation into how self-taught Haitian art influenced the trajectory of Surrealism.

Proceeds from The Gallery of **Everything** help support The Museum of **Everything**, a registered UK charity and non-profit organisation, dedicated to the advancement, integration and celebration of artists and makers beyond the cultural mainstream.

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THE MUSEUM OF EVERYTHING

www.musevery.com

The Museum of **Everything** opened in London in 2009 and has welcomed over a million visitors to its large-scale installations in Britain, Europe, Russia, America and Australia. As the UK's leading advocate for non-academic and private art-making, the museum functions as an international exhibitor, archive and activist, collaborating with artists, curators, writers and institutions. These include Tate Modern (UK), Hayward Gallery (UK), Pinacoteca Agnelli (Italy), Kunsthal Rotterdam (Holland), Garage (Russia) and Mona (Australia).

The Museum of **Everything** is a lobbyist for the inclusion and display of all forms of non-canonical art. As such, it was closely involved with the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, during which it was also profiled in the BBC documentary, *Turning the Art World Inside Out*. It is known for its immersive installations, most recently seen at Mona in Australia in 2017/18.

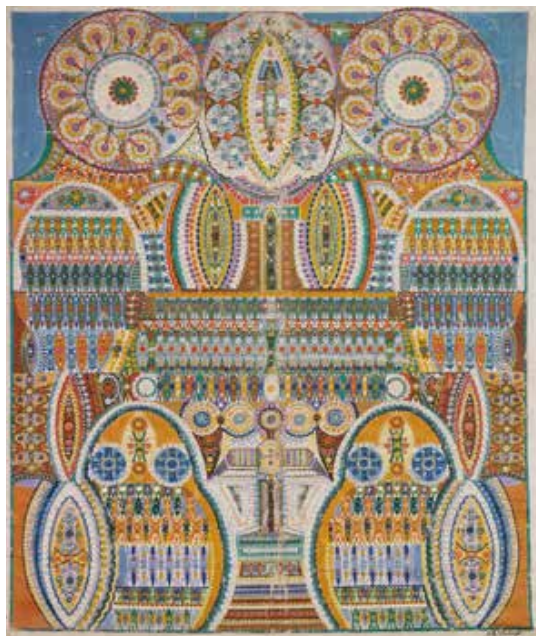
For more information, and for publications, please visit: www.musevery.com

THE GALLERY OF
EVERYTHING

SELECTED IMAGES



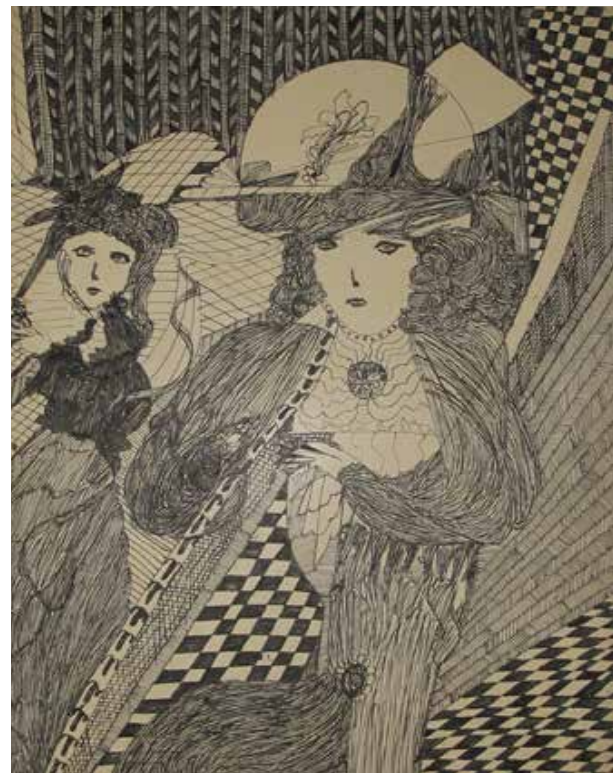
Marian Spore Bush



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