

# 'The Spirits as Artists'

An introduction to Dutch Mediumistic paintings of the interbellum and the message they convey.

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'Religious Innovation and Religious Change in the 21st Century'  
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# Agenda: 20 min. talk & 10 min. discussions

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- Short introduction to Outsider Art.
- Mediumistic art in The Netherlands (1900–1940).
- Examples of Dutch Spiritual art painters:
  - Mrs. Wilhelmine Ashmann
  - Miss. J.C. Calkoen 1866 -1944
  - Spiritualistic Museum, Haarlem, 1935-1940
  - Mr. J.H. Verwaal 1889 - ?
  - Mr. H.C. Mansveld 1874–1957
- Discussions



# Outsider Art

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Advertisement for exhibition of mediumistic art held in Amsterdam, Dec. 22, 1918 – Jan. 21, 1919



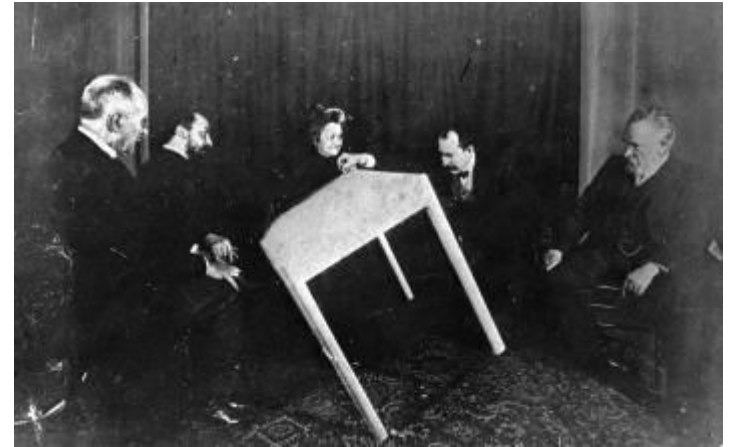
Wikipedia:

'Art Brut' 1948 by French artist Jean Buffet (1901 - 1985):  
Art created outside the boundaries of the official culture, such as insane asylum inmates and by children.

'Outsider art' 1972 by Roger Cardinal:  
Broader applied to include certain self-taught or naïve art makers who were never institutionalized. Typically, those labeled as outsider artists have little or no contact with the mainstream art world or art institutions. In many cases, their work is discovered only after their deaths. Often, outsider art illustrates extreme mental states, unconventional ideas, or elaborate fantasy worlds.

# Mediums, Spirits, Spiritism, Spiritualism & some standard techniques used to contact the 'World behind the Veil'.

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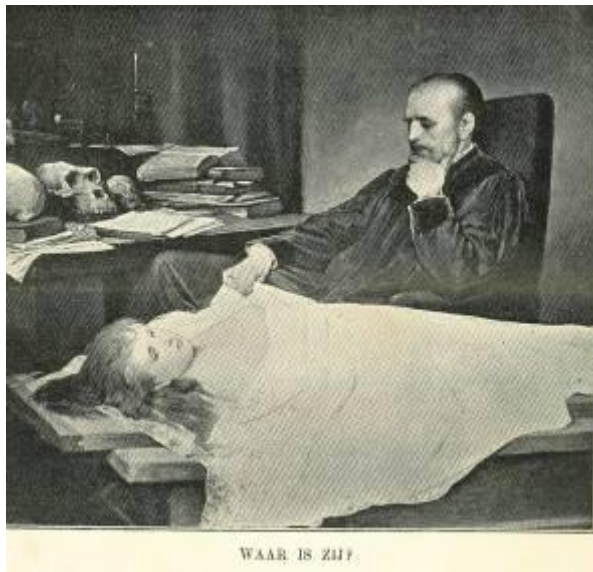


# Dutch Mediumistic art (1900 – 1940)

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Origin not (yet) known but in Holland we find reports in Spiritualistic journals and public magazines from about 1900 onwards of paintings made by deceased art painters using (trance) mediums as their communications channel in order to send (warning) messages to humanity from the 'World behind the Veil'.

Or is it just a way for them to continue painting?



Two paintings by the German artist, and Spiritist, Gabriel von Max. An article in the influential Dutch Spiritist magazine 'The Future Life' in 1902, showing these paintings, started the interest in mediumistic art within the Dutch Spiritistic movement.



# Mrs. Wilhelmine Ashmann

- Germany (Halle). Working class family. Discovered her gift in 1904. No formal training.
- Inspired by the spirits of deceased now living on other planets, to show us what the world looks like over there.
- Exhibition in Berlin 1908. Mediumistic drawings in pastel chalk. (50 – 70 cm).
- Exhibitions in Belgium and Holland (Utrecht) 1909.
- Long interview on her work in Dutch Regional Newspaper Jan. 8th, 1909
- In 1909 five long articles discussing her medium ship and drawings were published in the Dutch Spiritualist magazine 'The Future Life'.



Teekening van Frau WILHELMINE ASSMANN in zonnemantel-toestand.

Behoort bij „Het Toekomstig Leven“ van 15 Juni 1909.

*Wilhelmine Assmann*

# Miss. J.C. Calkoen (1866 – 1944)



Well known Dutch medium,  
promoter of Spiritism,  
novel Writer (Spiritualistic)  
and art painter (Mediumistic)



Paintings by Miss J.C. Calkoen at  
Spiritual art exhibition, The Hague, 1931

# Spiritualistic Museum (1935 – 1940)

- Founded around Jan. 1935 as a private collection by Mr. D. Heijnis, living in Haarlem.
- His intention was to build a collection of artifacts, pictures, stories, etc. to proof - beyond any doubt - the reality of the 'world beyond the veil'.
- A 'traveling show' collection for exhibitions all over Holland



Object 1: Proof obtained in séance April 20, 1932 (*HTL*, Feb. 10-th, 1935)



Object 101: dated 1894.  
Message in Italian from deceased girl, ten years old, to her father.





## Examples 2: Flowers (common subject)



No. 318:  
Acryl on carton (30x22).

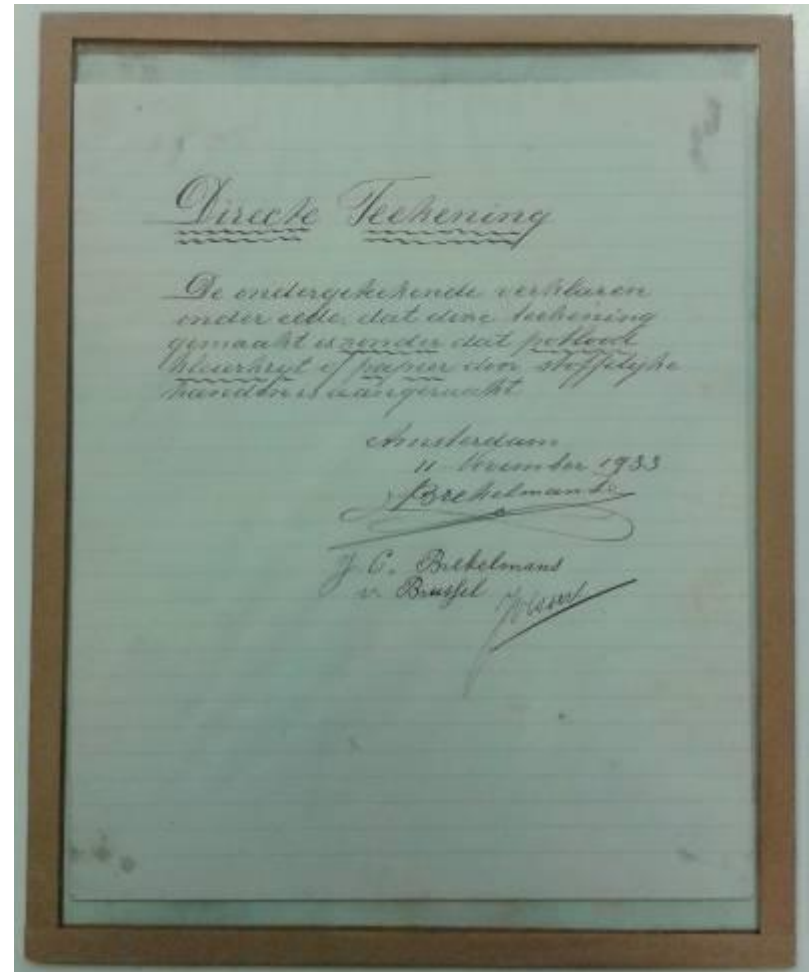
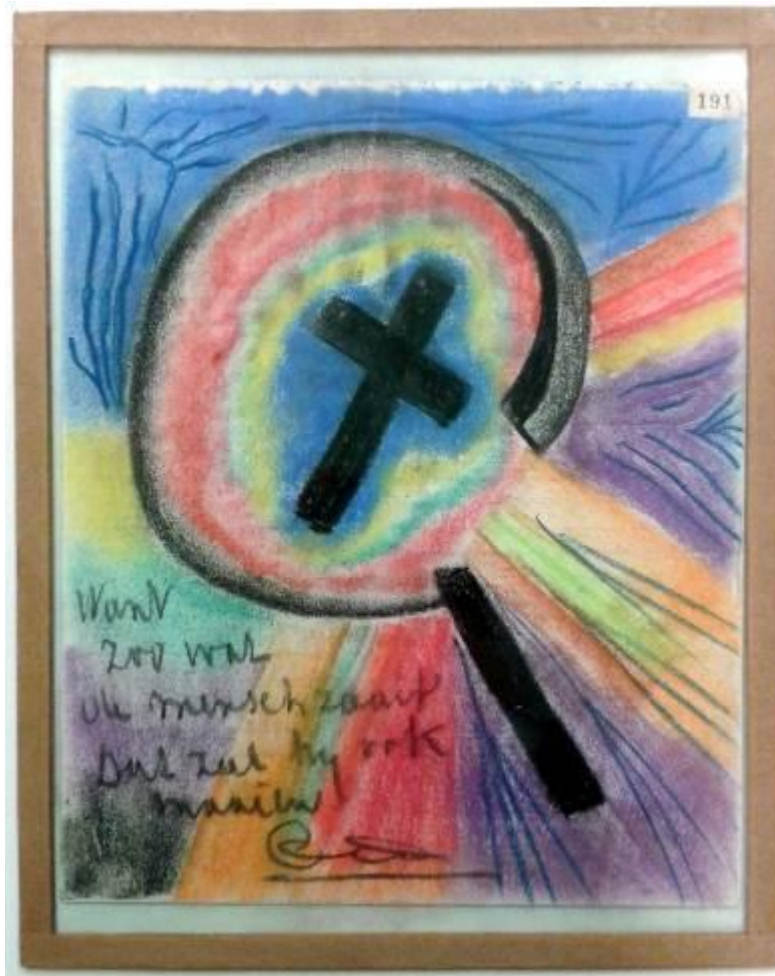


Chalk on paper (31x24).



No. 249: Aquarel on paper (24x18), HTL, No. 9, 1937.

# Example 3: No. 191, Nov. 11th, 1933



Chalk on paper (30x24).

# J.H. Verwaal (1889 - ?)



V04: Chalk on paper (35x25), Sept. 24th, 1939.



Backside: Advertisement in pencil written:  
 geb. 1889, J.H. Verwaal 24-2-39  
 Zondag 12.30 vm  
 Onze helpers. In 37 minuten afgewerkt  
 Hoe somber die wereld!  
 (wie wil. Zal ik licht brengen)

# J.H. Verwaal 2

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V01: Chalk on paper (38x28)  
J.H. Verwaal 24 – 9 – 34

PARATTI



V22: Chalk on paper (48x34)  
Tchuchnowski 10-2-34  
J.H. Verwaal

REVO / FVO / SOS

# J.H. Verwaal 3: July, 20th, 1933

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V27: J.H. Verwaal, 20-7-33 (65x48). On backside: Hugo Staal.

Gij kunt dit werk weren, dan pas zal de welvaart weder keren. Een onbekende soldaat.

## J.H. Verwaal 4: April 9 & 10th, 1933

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Pastel on paper(50x25) BETA

Backside: 'Moet Jezus door het kruis tot God'

Mediumistic received on 9-10th of April 1933 between midnight and two AM. Completed between 8 – 9.30 PM. Names of 7 persons who witnessed the medium / painter.

# J.H. Verwaal 5: No. 20th, 1933

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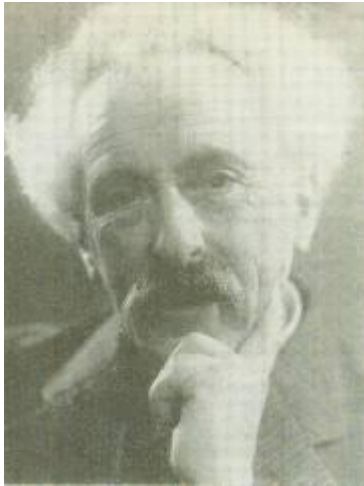


Pastel on paper (55x37), 18 48 Jan Hackaert  
Backside: Het doorbreken van het spiritisme op aarde.



# H.C. Mansveld (1874 – 1957)

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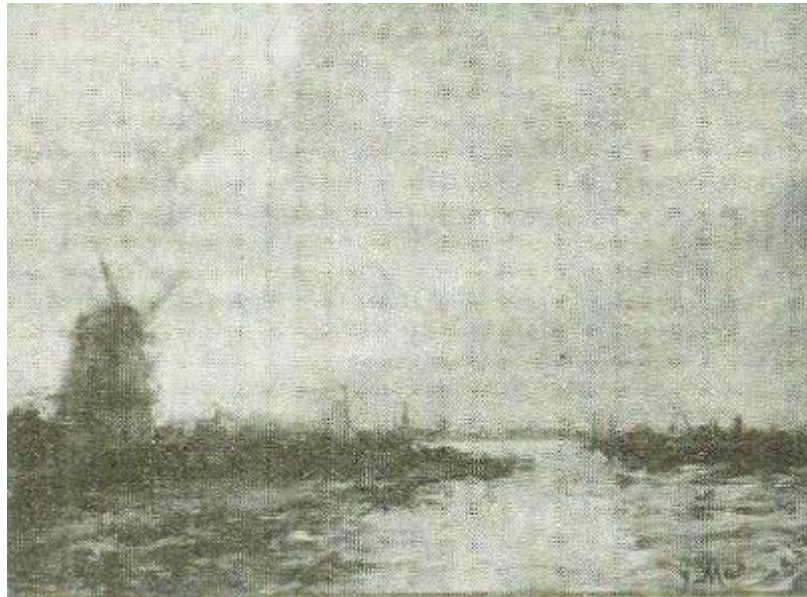


Started mediumistic painting about 1920.

Exhibition Berlin at Hugo Gratz was a big success and breakthrough for him.

Became very famous in Holland but also in other European countries.

There was much demand for his mediumistic art paintings.



Example of a painting Mediumistic received by H. Mansveld from J. Maris (Dutch painter, 1837 – 1899).



Museum B11: Acryl painting on paper (16x10).  
HM - George Varlain

# Example 1: No. 002, April, 22nd, 1930

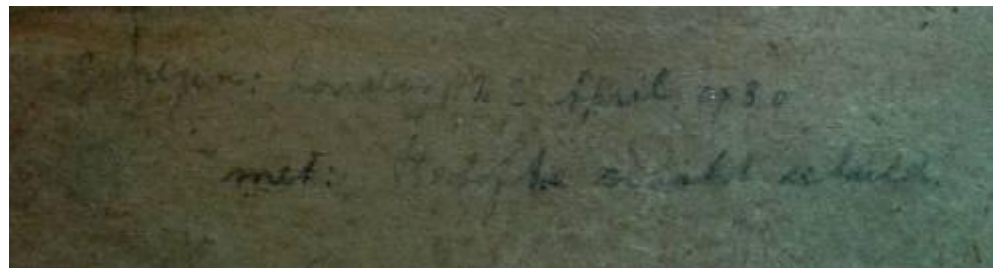
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Drawing pastel on paper (37 x 42).

Text backside:

Gekregen zondag 22 april 1930

met: Belofte inzake schuld



## Example 2: No. 004, Oct, 8th, 1942

Pastel on paper, J. Dulaque et son Amies  
Insp. H. Mansveld, 8 Oct. 1942, (34x40)



Aan Rie Jaarsveld, In opdracht van vele geestenvrienden. Med. Ontvangen H. Mansveld, 8 Oktober 1942.

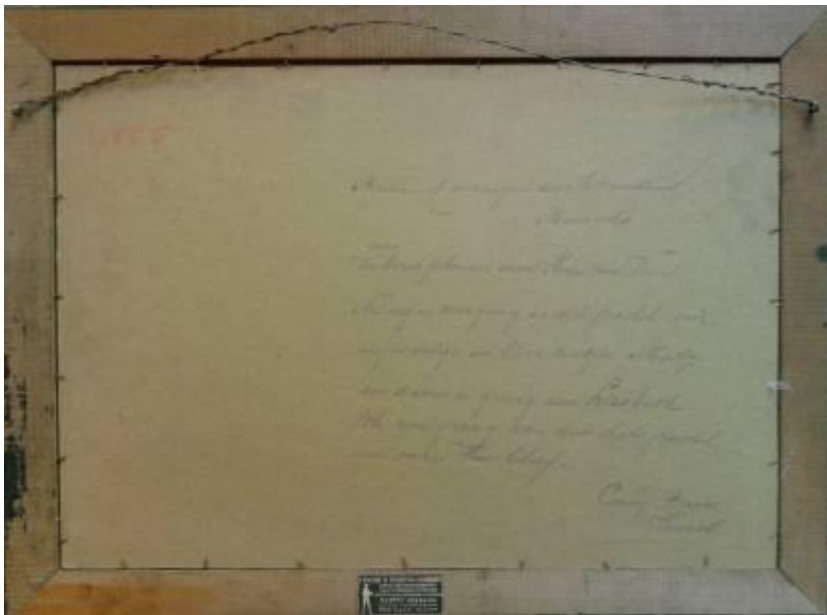
Séance 27 sept. 1942 ... Uit wonderlijke kleuren saamgesteld wordt ons een bloemenpracht geboden, Neem ze aan en geniet er van....

Neem uit de bloemenpracht dagelijks een bloem als bewijs voor de geestelijke groet van je vriend, mij en mijn moeder

# Example 3: 001, No date known

Pastel drawing (43x58)  
J. Dulaque - H Mansveld

On front written:  
Pont St. Bonifacius      Bruges



Mediamiek ontvangen door medium Mansveld. In mijn bezit gekomen door [...] van Veen. Na mijn overgang is dit pastel voor mijn enige en lieve zusje Matty en daarna graag aan Liesbeth. Ik zou graag zien dat het pastel in onze fam. bleef. Conny Baars Verwaal

# Conclusions

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- This presentation is only a first 'quick' encounter with the topic.
- Needs to be investigated more deeply. Also within international context.
- At the intersection of the history of art, psychology, sociology and Spiritualism.
- Does it only reflect the artistic 'Zeitgeist', the emotional / psychological state of mind of the medium or... is it proof - beyond any possible doubt - of the 'World beyond the Veil'?
- In any way it is a form of art that is more common **and exciting** than we ever expected.
- These kind of art paintings are becoming more and more appreciated by art lovers.



Mr. J. Baaleman from Alkmaar. Public painting séance held on Feb. 2nd, 1939 in Amsterdam.

# Discussions

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- Thank you for your attention.
- Any Questions?



Painting No. 11, dated 1913.  
Medium Mrs. W. (35,5 X 25)