



# Henry Darger

By *Klaua Biesenbach*

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## Henry Darger By Klaua Biesenbach

Now available again in a new format, this lavishly illustrated volume presents the iconic American "outsider" artist in a new critical light, locating him as a major figure in the history of contemporary art. Self-taught and working in isolation until his death in 1973, Henry Darger realized an elaborate fantasy world of remarkable beauty and strangeness through hundreds of paintings and an epic written narrative. Angel-like Blengins with butterfly wings, natural catastrophes, innocent girls, and murderous soldiers all appear in Darger's scenes, which are reproduced in this book in double-page and gatefold illustrations. In the volume's introductory essay, Klaus Biesenbach examines the radical originality of Darger's art, including his use of collage, incorporation of religious themes and iconography, and frequent juxtaposition of innocence with violence. An essay by Brooke Davis Anderson illuminates Darger's source materials and techniques, while another by Michael Bonesteel puts Darger's life in the context of his work. The book also includes Darger's autobiography, "A History of My Life," introduced by Carl Watson. The only book of its kind, Henry Darger offers an authoritative, balanced, and insightful look at an American master.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"With scant but dense information about Darger's life and artistic contribution, the book allows viewers all the delight, awe, repulsion, sorrow, and wonder his oeuvre inevitably elicits."

—*Rain Taxi*

#### From the Inside Flap

Self-taught and working in isolation until his death in 1973, Henry Darger realized an elaborate fantasy world of remarkable beauty and strangeness, through hundreds of paintings and an epic written narrative. Angel-like Blengins with butterfly wings, natural catastrophes, innocent girls, and murderous soldiers all appear in Darger's scenes, which are reproduced in this book in double-page and gatefold spreads. In the volume's introductory essay, Klaus Biesenbach examines the radical originality of Darger's art, including his use of collage, incorporation of religious themes and iconography, and frequent juxtaposition of innocence with violence.

#### About the Author

KLAUS BIESENBACH is Chief Curator of Media and Performance Art at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. He has curated a number of exhibitions featuring Darger's work, including the landmark "Disasters of War: Francisco Goya, Henry Darger, Jake and Dinos Chapman." BROOKE DAVIS ANDERSON is Director and Curator of The Contemporary Center of the American Folk Art Museum. MICHAEL BONESTEEL, a critic, is an authority on outsider art. He is the author of *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings*.

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