



Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal

By John M. MacGregor

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Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal is a generously illustrated book that represents the culmination of more than a decade of research into the enigmatic artist's life and work by world renowned outsider art expert John MacGregor. The long awaited monograph is MacGregor's first English-language publication on Henry Darger and the most comprehensive critical investigation of Darger's writings and illustrations available in any language.

Henry Darger was born in Chicago in 1892. Shortly before his death in 1973, his landlord, Chicago artist Nathan Lerner, made a startling discovery in his tenant's room: the history of another world in fifteen volumes, *In the Realms of the Unreal*—at 15,145 type-written pages, possibly the longest work of fiction ever written. In startlingly vivid detail, Darger's *Realms* recounted the role of seven sisters, known as the Vivian Girls, in a violent conflict over child enslavement on an unnamed planet. Amidst the refuse, Lerner also found three huge bound volumes of brightly colored illustrations for the work, many painted on both sides and some over twelve feet in length. In the decades since his death, Darger's alternate universe has attracted the intense interest of collectors, critics, and scholars around the world. His illustrations and writings have been the subject of major museum exhibitions in Europe and North America.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Henry Darger' is an improbable, wrist-wrecking page turner, and John MacGregor is, in a profound sense, a mystery writer." -- *Village Voice*, April 23, 2002

"A book that is part academic magnum opus and part mystery thriller." -- *San Jose Mercury News*, June 9, 2002

"It is a masterpiece. Empathetic and sophisticated." -- *Dr. Leo Navratil*, July 2, 2002

"MacGregor's book is tremendously rewarding for its many excellent color reproductions and its always fascinating, sometimes brilliant insights." -- *Art on Paper*, May-June 2002

"One is in deep waters here, where precedents--William Blake? Lewis Carrol? Balthus?--are remote and few." -- *The New Yorker*, January 14, 2002

"This is the best book we will ever have on the most important artist we almost never had." -- *The Village Voice*, December 11, 2002

From the Publisher

Henry Darger is not yet a household name, however it may become one soon. Darger is considered to be the most important figure in the emerging field of Outsider Art—the name given to work by self-taught and often mentally disturbed or otherwise marginal artists. *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal* is an affordable, accessible, and comprehensive selection of illustrations, images, and texts drawn from the elusive artist's darkly imaginative private world. John MacGregor's accompanying text breathes crucial insight into Darger's life and work and sheds new light on the artist's disturbing visions. This book is destined to become a milestone of both art historical and psychoanalytic literature.

About the Author

John MacGregor is a Princeton-trained art historian who has devoted his career to interdisciplinary studies in psychiatric art and the related fields of art brut and outsider art. In addition to *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal*, MacGregor's books include *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton University Press, 1989), *Dwight Mackintosh: The Boy Who Time Forgot* (Creative Growth Press, 1992), and *The Vivian Girls* (Sakuhinsya, 2000. Available in Japanese only).

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