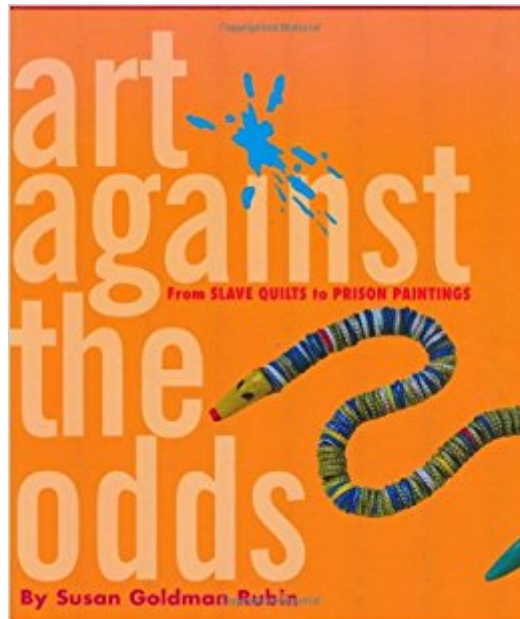




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Art Against The Odds: From Slave Quilts To Prison Paintings



Synopsis

A fascinating exploration of the healing power of art. Children and adults alike find comfort in making things, but never has the act of creating been so poignant as when it is done during times of duress, such as in concentration camps and prisons, during extreme drought and poverty, or while battling mental illness. In this fascinating collection, Susan Goldman Rubin has captured the essence of creating as a way to momentarily escape horrible circumstances. From the drawings of a child imprisoned in Terezin to quilts created by slave women in the United States, history repeatedly shows us people finding solace in crafting beautiful things. This striking introduction to outsider art is illustrated in full color with examples from each time period.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

Grade 5 Up--An engaging survey of outsider art, encompassing the works of patients, slaves, concentration- and internment-camp prisoners, and disadvantaged children living in modern blighted urban areas and developing nations. Each chapter focuses on one of these groups and includes both black-and-white and full-color photographs of the drawings, collages, paintings, toys, and quilts described in the text. The vivid, resilient life force radiating from these works contrasts sharply with the unimaginably bleak conditions under which they were created. Although Rubin does not shrink from detailing the casual violence of a modern ghetto or the cruelty of life in a Civil War prison camp, neither does she let it overshadow the vibrance and quality of the art that

emerged from them. She merely makes the very cogent, inspiring argument that under inhumane circumstances, people are moved to protect and nurture their humanity in whatever way they can. Rubin has emphasized works by child artists, which lends a pleasing, egalitarian subtext to the whole. If young slaves can quilt maps to freedom, and girls in concentration camps can draw moving accounts of their lives, the book seems to say, then you can, too. Indeed, this artwork may speak more directly to some readers than the works on display in fine-arts museums. Back matter includes an excellent set of print references (those appropriate for younger readers are marked) as well as a good selection of links to blessedly stable URLs. This unique offering is a top priority for most libraries.--Sophie R. Brookover, Mount Laurel Library, NJ Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 5-8. Rubin defines "outsider artists" as "children and adults who felt compelled to make different kinds of art despite living under the most awful conditions." In this unique overview, she profiles artists, who often have little or no training, and have suffered incarceration, war, racism, poverty, or mental illness while working. Included are teenage graffiti artists, Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II, and slaves who made quilts patterned with hidden directions to the Underground Railroad. Readers may be frustrated that many of the nicely reproduced images don't match up with the works discussed on the page. But written in clear, accessible language, Rubin's stories about artists who created "against the odds" are gripping, and they show how making art can have a strong, unexpected impact not only on the viewer but also on the artist: "I used to think my skin was dark brown, but I can see now I am a variety of color," says incarcerated painter Charles Mosby. There aren't any notes, but a list of further resources closes this powerful, intriguing book. Gillian Engberg Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I don't know why they sent me 3 copies of this book. I assume I paid for 3 copies as well. I only wanted one.

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