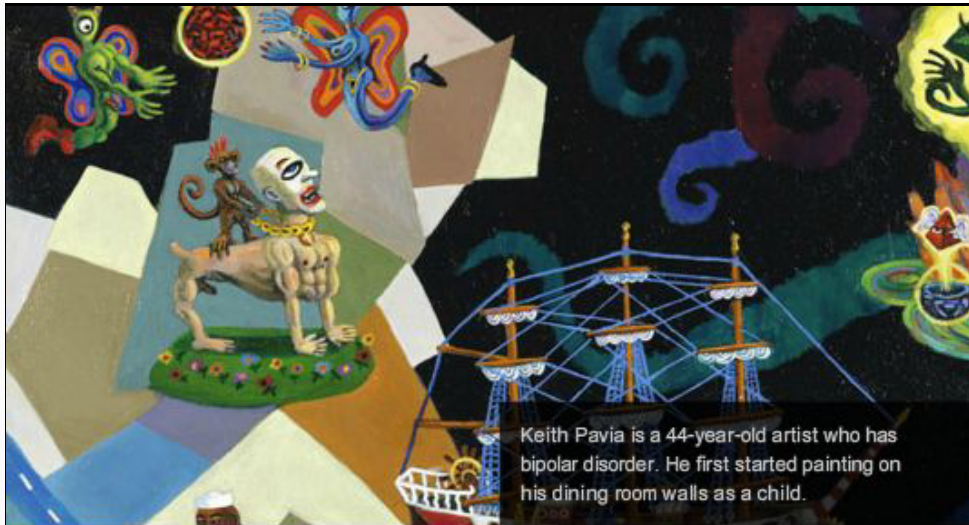


# Showcasing art of the 'uncooked'

By **Cassie Spodak**, CNN

[Twitter](#) | [Share](#) | [Email](#) | [Save](#) | [Print](#)


Keith Pavia is a 44-year-old artist who has bipolar disorder. He first started painting on his dining room walls as a child.

## Keith Pavia - The Last Episode of a Three-Part Adventure HIDE CAPTION

< 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 1 >

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- The "Outsider Art Fair" begins this weekend in New York City
- The fair features untraditional artwork from inmates and the mentally disabled
- Artwork includes calendars made of M&M wrappers and robots made from coffee pots
- When you think of "inside" you think of safe, says one art expert

**(CNN)** -- At first, it was just a way for mental health professionals to treat their patients, but today, it's called "Outsider Art."

French artist Jean DuBuffet first coined the term "L'Art Brut," or literally "Rough Art," in the 1940s when he found psychiatric patients, children and prisoners with unusual artistic skill. The term stood for untrained artists "uncooked" by mainstream society.

It has since been translated to "Outsider Art," but it has also become much more elusive to define.

At the Outsider Art Fair in New York City, which starts this weekend, it means anything from drawings written on stationery from "State Lunatic Asylum No. 3," to calendars made of M&M wrappers and scraps of newspaper, to robots made from coffee pots, irons and sprinkler heads.

John Beardsley, an adjunct professor at the Harvard Design School, describes outsider artists as individuals isolated from the mainstream culture.

"DuBuffet said it's not only separate, but antagonistic to "cooked" culture. Purity always was, or used to be, a key concept," Beardsley said.

But Beardsley questions whether anyone can really be untouched by mainstream culture in today's world of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

"We all grow up touched by culture. Even back in the teens and 20s there was a traffic of images," says Beardsley. "It's only gotten more complicated and more compromised."

So what exactly is Outsider Art in 2011?

First founded in 1992, the Outsider Air Fair is held each February in

ADVERTISEMENT

### Most Popular »

Today's five most popular stories

[Serena Williams 'back from death bed'](#)

['Game of Thrones' shocker: Producers explain horrific twist](#)

[CNN debate: 5 things that could shape the race](#)

[Is Facebook growth stalling in North America?](#)

[10 things you didn't know about Bill Gates](#)

[More](#)

ADVERTISEMENT