

NEW YORK POST

MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008

On the outside, looking in

By BARBARA HOFFMAN

FOR a schizophrenic who'd never taken an art class, Dick Lubinsky was pretty prolific. After his death several years ago, his niece found his apartment, three storage lockers and a car crammed full of paintings, some suggesting an unhinged Edward Hopper.

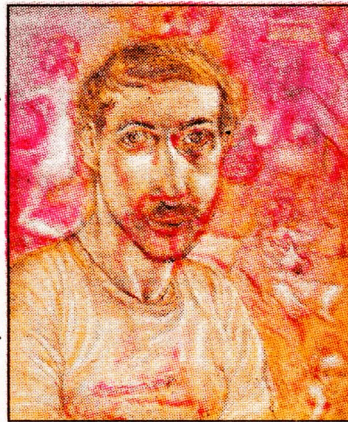
Several Lubinskys — including a red-lipped woman painted on a newsprint real-estate ad and the doleful self-portrait

“Eleven Fingers Are Better Than None” — are now hanging at the Fountain Gallery, which champions the works of New Yorkers struggling with mental illness.

Titled “Autodidactica: Works by Self-Taught Artists,” this new show, curated by Outsider Art collectors Michael and Gael Mendelsohn, features novices who've found release and sometimes joy in their brush with art.

And while they haven't had lessons per

Courtesy of the Fountain Gallery



Dick Lubinsky's “Eleven Fingers Are Better Than None.”

se, the artists' influences are clear: Vladimir Nikol'ski's paintings have the bold reds and shapes of Chagall; Nelia Gibbs' balloon-headed woman recalls Magritte; and Anthony Newton's graffiti-like shapes suggest those of his hero, Jean-Michel Basquiat.

The formerly homeless man has several works in this show, including “When Spirits Cry,” a thickly layered oil of a face with yearning eyes.

“I didn't like it at first, and left it on the easel,” he says. “Someone touched the eyelid, and it looked like a tear. I liked it so much I left it that way. Sometimes, serendipity works.”

The art is for sale — most paintings run about \$1,000 — but you can look all you want for free. Serendipity, indeed.

“Autodidactica” runs through Feb. 27 at the Fountain Gallery, 702 Ninth Ave., at 48th Street; (212) 262-2756.

View the gallery at nypost.com