

IN HOMAGE TO JOHN GIUDICI

"I had in mind to do something big, and I did."
Simon Rodia - Watts Towers

One would think that after working with these grand pieces of sculpture, assemblage, on the landscape for over 30 years, I would have my pat answer to what these self proclaimed non artists were about and why they are worth the attention and notoriety they are now getting.

The artist Gil Henderson felt they were saying "I Am Alive," expressing the joy these artists felt about life - for everyone to see.

"I built this all myself, with my own hands,and imagination."
John Medica - John Medica's Castles and Garden

The eminently quotable R. Buckminster Fuller, (Designer of the Geodesic Dome) felt that sites like Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts best expressed the "spirit of man." These people untrained in the arts, perhaps, but using their exuberance to express their dreams and visions using simple tools and their own imagination, in the public eye. Something new, not an amalgam of the past. Jacob Bronowski, (The Ascent of Man), agreed with Fuller and was overwhelmed with Rodia's Towers, "a monument built by a man who had no more scientific equipment than a Gothic mason."

"Why would anyone want to live in a place where all the kitchens and the hallways are in the same place." (to paraphrase)
Tressa "Grandma" Prisbrey - Bottle Village

My friend Dr. Vernie Greenfield, questioned "What happened to these people that took them out of the norm....to produce these places regardless of social pressures." I would like to amend that slightly and ask what happened to the rest of us to make us lose our whimsy and imagination that we had as children and then allowed others to impose their aesthetics and their philosophies on our personal and daily activities.

That is probably the story of John Giudici, even as an old man, he never lost the whimsy, or the joy, or the excitement of his own invention. He didn't go backward he went forward. He never knew the making of art was only for the young. He remembered the joy of discovery, of making something never ever seen before and went ahead and did it. Without permission!

*Who says I can't do this?
I can do anything I want! I'm the boss here!*
Emanuelle "Litto" Damonte - Hubcap Ranch

The problem in viewing, liking, in understanding these places is that we have to enter their world - knowledge of the current trends, or a extensive background in the history of art offers no help. In fact it might be a hindrance in enjoying the work. You have to enter the environment naked, without crutches.

I'm sorry most of you never got to meet John Giudici and walk his site with him. You still might disagree about his aesthetics but no doubt you would like the man.

Seymour Rosen
Director, SPACES