

Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments

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## HISTORY OF SPACES

SPACES is a six-year-old, national, non-profit, membership organization concerned with the identification and preservation of America's large-scale folk art environments. SPACES started in California in response to the need for an organization to advocate and take responsibility for the state's many neglected folk art environments. This need was soon recognized as a national one. Consequently, SPACES expanded the scope of its activities.

Since SPACES' beginning, this "art" that so often "falls between the cracks" is finding critical acclaim, book and museum exposure and recognition from the National Register of Historic Places, the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art and scholarly study.

At the time of its founding in 1978, SPACES was the only national organization interested in preserving environmental art in situ. And that is still true. SPACES is a generalist organization that gathers multi-disciplinary data on environmental art for use by art historians, historic preservationists, cultural anthropologists, geographers, folklorists and the media. SPACES does not attempt to directly complete all the preservation work that must be done. Rather, the organization initiates action and then develops organizations and encourages individuals on the local level to accept responsibility for sites within their respective areas. SPACES has contacted each State Office of Historic Preservation and each State Arts Council, and to aid local groups in preservation work, SPACES is developing a workbook for each of the 50 states that will contain basic information on who to contact, where to go for financial aid and how to approach organizations for assistance. Listed in the books will be state arts councils, offices of historic preservation, cultural institutions and the contact person at each.

SPACES is involved in presenting environmental art as valid, creative work, and it supports the publication of data on the genre only after sufficient research has been done to ensure that the artists and their work will not be exploited.

SPACES is the only national organization committed to on-going efforts to gain recognition for artists while they are alive. The organization acts as an advocate and champion for the genre and the artists, and it organizes national support for sites that are endangered. SPACES notifies libraries, museums and other cultural institutions of publications that have presented the work of local artists. And through exhibitions that reach a variety of audiences, SPACES is able to honor artists, give encouragement to others who would like to create environmental art and educate the public about the nature and value of environmental art.

SPACES has conducted a national survey of folk art environments and through this effort has expanded the inventory of environments from approximately 12 well-known sites to nearly 200. SPACES has established this type of art as a widespread phenomenon, and because of this, the genre has gained validity and can now be viewed as a vital movement within the field of visual expression. During the past six years, SPACES has assisted in the research of three California sites that are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has initiated the efforts that gained landmark status for 10 California sites.

SPACES originators are

SEYMOUR ROSEN--professional photographer, member of the Board of Directors of the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, museum curator, consultant and environmental art advocate--serves as Director

ALLEN PORTER--graphic design consultant, founding member of the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, university instructor and exhibition designer--serves as Vice President

PENELOPE KULLAWAY--community relations-, public relations- and program-and-resource development expert--serves as Secretary

RUTH BAKER BRICKER--former Director of Experiments in Art and Technology, Los Angeles, Ph.D. candidate and real estate consultant--serves as Treasurer

JOHN B. SHERRELL--an attorney with special interests in non-profit corporations and preservation--serves as Counsel.