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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

March 3, 1987

Mr. Seymour Rosen  
Saving and Preserving Arts  
and Cultural Environments  
1804 North Van Ness  
Los Angeles, CA 90028

Dear Seymour:

I was recently introduced to your organization by two Utah Folk Artists, David Stanly and Steve Sipporin. I was delighted to read the "Summer 1986" copy of Spaces, and would like to become a Spaces member.

I am a landscape architect and an assistant professor at Utah State University. I have enclosed a resume and a copy of a paper proposal and an article written for the student newspaper as a means of introducing myself and my interest in folk and environmental art.

Although my love for folk and environmental art is rooted in my childhood, it has only been within the last two years that I have seen these arts as a crucial part of my profession. I hope to kindle a similar "awakening" in other design professionals.

I have long been concerned about the blandness of most built environments and about the lack of personal and cultural identity in the work of landscape architects. But it wasn't until I visited a Camposanto (Catholic-Hispanic cemeteries in the Southwest) that I had a vision of how built environments could be enriched. I have developed a slide show and several papers comparing the folk art (handmade gravemarkers) of the Camposantos with memorial parks designed by landscape architects. Over 150 landscape architects have seen this presentation, and not one has disagreed that the Camposantos have far greater emotional impact.

I am now expanding on this theme and looking for examples of how people have personalized outdoor space. I have applied for a \$5000 grant from Utah State University and a NEA grant, and am looking for other sources of funding. I am utilizing my four summer months to conduct an inventory of folk and environmental art in the landscape concentrating on the western states. The work I am planning sounds similar to the work being conducted by the Southern Visionary Folk Art project as described in a Spaces article (Summer 1986).

Since I am not a folklorist or folk art specialist, I am looking to these professions for a collaborative effort to bring the folk and environmental arts to the design professions. Millions of dollars are spent each year on incorporating fine art and sculpture into public places. Why not incorporate the work of folk and visionary

artists? There are many plazas and professionally designed places I have forgotten. . . .I have never forgotten those special places created out of pop bottles, bits of colored stone, whirligigs and wire.

I would greatly appreciate any advice or direction you can give me. I would also like to contribute information to your organization. To begin with, would you be interested in a short article on the Camposantos? Although not the work of a single artist, they certainly are works of environmental folk art.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Laura Sue Sanborn  
Assistant Professor

LSS:jw

Enclosures