

**SPACES 1804 North Van Ness Los Angeles, CA 90028
(213) 463-1629**

**CLARENCE SCHMIDT: MY MIRRORED HOPE, SILVER FOREST AND MARK II
WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK**

- 1897 Clarence Schmidt born in Astoria, Queens.
- 1928 Acquired property on Ohayo Mountain in Woodstock, New York, due to the illness of a cousin. Summered on Ohayo Mountain. Married by this time to Grace (*who and where?!*)
- Trained as a plasterer and mason, decided to build his own house on the mountain.
- late 1930s Completed first house, "Journey's End." "Journey's End" began as a simple log cabin made of railroad ties. Schmidt tarred the outside, then covered it with cracked glass. Sold "Journey's End" soon after it was completed.
- about 1940 Moved to Woodstock year-round-- *where else had he been living until this time?*
- Created a terraced garden within the retaining walls he had built to contain the slope of the mountain. Planted perennials and shrubs.
- Prepared site for second house.
- after 1940 Built modest one-room log cabin in midst of terraced garden.
- 1948 Began transformation of log cabin. Placed bark on exterior walls. Added to structure in all directions. Simple scaffolding of exterior frames filled in found materials, principally wood window sashes and wood siding. Structure followed the topography of the land. The structure's principal living space was the original cabin, which Schmidt called "the Inner Sanctum."
- The cabin developed into a 5-story, one-sided ziggurat-like structure. Each tier had balconies, walkways, and ramps providing access to the reservoir and terraced gardens.
- 1953 Scale of building increased dramatically as box-like additions were filled in and added to. Exterior walls were shored up in order to serve as the underlying structure for additions.
- During this time Schmidt's concerns on the interior of the structure changed from primarily horticultural and architectural to environmental and sculptural. Interior spaces were clearly articulated, with old entrances connecting with new ones, yet these spaces were not "rooms" in a functional sense.
- Rooms emerged haphazardly from a labyrinth of connecting passageways--spaces to experiment with found objects in a dense, foliated environment. Aluminum foil, paint, plastic flowers, and irregularly shaped pieces of wood and mirror covered the walls and ceiling. Schmidt wrapped branches and objects with aluminum foil, creating an interior garden of spiky, shiny projections.
- ca 1953 Son Michael born
- 1961 Worked on roof garden, which he called "My Mirrored Hope." The garden incorporated mirrors, Venetian blind slats, tires, and wheels, along with other found objects. Objects were wrapped in aluminum foil, and the effect was not unlike that of the interior spaces of the structure. The garden ran from the upper access road of the property down to the top

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of the house.

- 1964 Neighbors sued because he was intruding upon their land, and he was forced to stop work on the roof garden.

Turned his attentions to the "alleyway" in front of the house, placing found objects along both sides of the alleyway, in front, to the side of, and below the house. Groupings of objects were called grottoes, and objects that were individualized with sculptural iconic identities were called shrines. Shrines often incorporated rubber face masks, and were occasionally titled ("Meher Baba," "Cinderella," "The Four-headed Indian") or dedicated (to George Washington and John Kennedy).

Elaborate resurfacing of exterior walls. New planking nailed over old, tar smeared on as a preservative. Aluminum foil pressed over the tar. Elaborate scaffolding erected in front of the house and wrapped in aluminum. Schmidt named this version of the environment "My Mirrored Hope."

Schmidt featured in "Home is Where You Make It," Horizon, magazine Autumn along with Ferdinand Cheval & Simon Rodia; featured in Saturday Evening Post article, September 12.

- 1968 January. "My Mirrored Hope" caught fire. Schmidt then went to a motel in Woodstock, and turned his energies to writing.

Spring. Moved back to Ohayo Mountain.

included in the story "The Grass Roots Artist," Gregg Blasdel in Art in America, Vol. 56, No. 5, September/October.

- 1969 Began work on the second environment--Mark II--on the site, which he built over a Studebaker station wagon.

Created the Silver Forest south of the alleyway--named because of the extensive use of silver paint brushed on small saplings on which dolls' heads and bodies were impaled.

Mark II and Silver Forest were integrated and developed simultaneously, with attention given to an overall continuous pattern of fabric and scale.

- 1971 December. Mark II caught fire. Site completely destroyed

- 1972 January. Schmidt moved into Woodstock, where he slept in doorways, gas stations. Sent to nursing home in Kingston, New York.

- 1973 Studio International, CLXXXV1, Oct. 1973, 126-7
"All the room in the world; Clarence Schmidt's inhabited landscape"

- 1974 Naives & Visionaries, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. The show traveled to 7 sites between October 1975 and December 1976.

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- 1975 Clarence Schmidt show, Hayden Gallery, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
The show traveled to 6 sites between September 1975 and December 1976.
- 1976 House of Mirrors: Sculpture & Photomurals From the House of Folk Artist
Clarence Schmidt, Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire.
- 1978 Schmidt died.
- 1979 Outsiders, Hayward Gallery, London.
- 1988 Lo! Behold! Visionary Art of the Post Modern Era, Edith C. Blum Art
Gallery, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

_____ "House of Clarence Schmidt, A Retired Mason and Plasterer,"
Progressive Architecture, May 1968.

ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

*1979 Outsiders. London: Arts Council of Great Britain.

BLASDEL, Gregg

*1968 "The Grass Roots Artist," Art in America, Yo. 56, No. 5 September/October.

_____ and William C. Lipke

*1975 Clarence Schmidt. Burlington, Vermont: The Robert Hull
Fleming Museum, The University of Vermont

BUEHR, Wendy

*1964 "Home is Where You Make It," Horizon, Autumn.

CARDINAL, Roger

*1972 Outsider Art. New York: Praeger Publishers.

CREASE, Robert and Charles Mann

*1983 "Backyard Creators of Art That Says: 'I Did It, I'm Here,'" Smithsonian, August.

DANCHIN, Laurent

*1988 "Simon Rodia et Clarence Schmidt," Artension, 5, August.

GOODRICH, David L.

*1964 "Miracle on a Mountain," The Saturday Evening Post, September 12.

HEMPHILL, Herbert and Julia Weissman

*1974 Twentieth Century American Folk Art. New York: E.P. Dutton.

HENRI, Adrian

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*1974 Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance. New York: Praeger Publishers.

SCHUYT, Michael et al

*1980 Fantastic Architecture. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

STERN, Jane and Michael

*1978 Amazing America. New York: Random House.

Studio International, CLXXXV1, Oct. 1973, 126-7

"All the room in the world; Clarence Schmidt's inhabited landscape"

THEVOZ, Michel

*1975 L'Art Brut. Geneva: Editions d'Art Albert Skira. (FRENCH)

*1976 Art Brut. New York: Rizzoli.

THORNDIKE, Joseph J.

*1978 The Magnificent Builders. New York: American Heritage Publishing Company

WALKER ART CENTER

*1974 Naives and Visionaries. New York: D.P. Dutton.

WARD, David Franklin

*1984 Personal Places: Perspectives on Informal Art Environments.
Bowling Green, Kentucky: Bowling Green State University.

* = in SPACES' archives

missing is the article in the Italian magazine

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Emma Landau--Horizon article

John Blasdel, Gregg Blasdel, Grace Schmidt, Spencer Roberts, Joe Covello/Black Star, Patrick Burns (New York Times), Michael Mangelli, Michael Sullivan, Peter Moore, Bill Lipke, Mij Engelhard, John Johansen, R.R. Haines, and Stuart Hitch--Clarence Schmidt by Lipke and Blasdel

Vytas Valaitis--Saturday Evening Post article

EXHIBITIONS

1974 Naives and Visionaries, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

1975 Clarence Schmidt, Hayden Gallery, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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- 1976 House of Mirrors: Sculpture and Photomurals From the House of Folk -
Artist Clarence Schmidt, Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire.
- 1979 Outsiders, Hayward Gallery, London. *Was Schmidt in this show? He is in the catalog.*
- 1988 Lo! Behold! Visionary Art of the Post Modern Era, Edith C. Blum Art Gallery,
Bard College, Annandale-on Hudson, New York. .

See attached records of exhibitions.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Who did he marry, and when?

Where is Michael Schmidt?

According to Saturday Evening Post article, Schmidt received a grant from the Lannan Foundation.
How did he make the original contact with the Foundation, and when did he receive grant money? How
much did he receive?

Was Schmidt in the "Outsiders" show at the Hayward Gallery?