

REPORT TO THE JUDITH ROTHSCHILD FOUNDATION
Tressa "Grandma" Prisbrey Archive Project
March 27, 2000

In Spring of 1999, SPACES received a Rothschild grant for \$15,000 in support of a project to organize records, photographs, printed materials and artifacts documenting the life and work of Tressa "Grandma" Prisbrey, a California self-taught artist who died in 1988. Her artwork consists of "Bottle Village," a single large-scale assemblage on a one-third acre site north of Los Angeles. Since 1979, it has been administered by the Preserve Bottle Village Committee, a non-profit association dedicated to maintaining the site as a cultural property. Unfortunately, Bottle Village is in a state of serious deterioration due to earthquake damage and the resultant exposure to the elements. The Committee's most recent request for funding to repair the site was denied in January of this year. It remains closed to the public indefinitely and is in danger of court-ordered demolition despite its status as a local, state and national historic landmark. The archive organized and catalogued by SPACES and the Preserve Bottle Village Committee, made possible by the generous support of the Judith Rothschild Foundation, may soon be the only evidence of Grandma Prisbrey's exuberant vision and creative efforts.

5 The electronic catalogue describes the content of two sets of materials currently held in separate locations: the office of SPACES and that of the Preserve Bottle Village Committee. The PBVC holdings focus on the artist's personal life and the administration of the site and include a wide variety of documentation related to the artist and the history of the site. Of particular note to administrators of similar sites, as well as art environment historians, may be the extensive material relating to the divergent, often energetic, degrees of support and opposition from various governmental as well as private agencies and individuals. SPACES' materials are more focused on the site as an art environment and the role the organization has played in photo-documenting the site at several points during its creation as well as supporting ongoing exhibition, fundraising and preservation efforts. SPACES' library includes far more extensive print materials which refer to the site in the context of its art genre.

The database layout for cataloguing materials was created in Filemaker Pro. An outline of the format and a summary of the contents of the Prisbrey archive is attached. Contents of paper files from both SPACES and the Preserve Bottle Village Committee were sorted according to the outline. Contents of the resulting files were described in each cataloguing record with names of associated persons, events, publications, exhibitions, etc. noted for future search and retrieval of information. PBVC paper file contents were compared to SPACES' materials on Prisbrey and Bottle Village, duplicates were created when materials were deemed appropriate to both sets of files. Materials in fragile condition and selected original documents were duplicated on archival paper. Relevant magazine articles and book excerpts were duplicated for PBVC from original materials in SPACES' library. Approximately 30 years worth of newspaper clippings were sorted by date and catalogued according to the headings and subheadings in the catalogue outline. Again, the names of associated persons, events publications, exhibitions, etc. were recorded.

Boxes of building materials and artifacts were removed from substandard storage conditions into a dry, secure storage facility with sturdy steel shelving. Boxes are numbered, contents have been inventoried and matched with inventory sheets done in 1984 after the first earthquake damage.

when applicable

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that works with both the Mac or Windows environments