



**For immediate release**

For further information call or write:

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**Visions from the Left Coast:**

**California Self-Taught and Visionary Artists**

Exhibition dates: August 26th through October 21st, 1995

Opening Reception: September 9, 1995, 5-7pm

Scheduled for August 26th through October 21, 1995 at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF) is an exhibition of California visionary and self-taught artists that will celebrate the individuality and artistic efforts of a diverse group of free thinkers from throughout the state. Co-curated by Ginny Brush and Fran Puccinelli, *Visions from the Left Coast: California Self-Taught Artists*, will feature work by 40 artists largely inspired by memory, visions, compulsion or, unbridled creativity. Some nationally recognized, others newly discovered, the work by these artists conveys compelling personal visions, highly individualized and recognizable styles and shares a bold, and timeless quality. Most have no academic training, and many began creating only after retirement. *Visions* will be one of the first exhibitions to focus on and examine aspects particular to California self-taught artists — for example the fact that they are native and immigrant alike, come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and from both urban and rural environments. As such, it will provide a strong basis for comparison to the Southern visionary, and outsider artists.

*Visions..* will include the work of visionaries like recently discovered Achilles G. Rizzoli, whose imaginary "YTTE (Yield To Total Elation) City" was populated with buildings as personifications of his friends and Stockton farmer John Sowell whose drawings and models of airplanes were created in the 1920s to patent his ideas and inventions for flight. Of particular interest to Santa Barbarans is the work preserved from Sanford Darling's "House of a Thousand Paintings," and the paintings of Solvang blacksmith, Andrew "Old Man" Block, that recorded memories of his native Denmark and his Solvang neighbors and friends on scraps of cardboard which he exhibited on his fence.

In addition to paintings, drawings, and sculpture, "*Visions...*" will include elements and photographs of "environments" by Trapper John Ehn, Romano Gabriel, Calvin and Ruby Black's "Possum Trot", Grandma Prisbrey's "Bottle Village" and Simon Rodia's "Watts Tower" that dramatically reflect the pioneer spirit of these individuals.

As part of National Folk-Art Month, CAF will host a day-long symposium scheduled for Saturday, October 7 to begin with a keynote address by internationally recognized scholar Roger Cardinal. Also participating are Phyllis Kind of the Phyllis Kind Gallery; Bonnie Grossman of the Ames Gallery in Berkeley; Susan Larsen-Martin, arts faculty, University of Southern California; and Seymour Rosen, executive director of Spaces. In conjunction with this thought provoking-exhibition are planned: a fully-illustrated catalogue of the exhibit, a film/video series, artist-led gallery talks, as well as a field trip to Watts Towers and to view Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village. **For further information or to make reservations for the symposium (limited to 150 participants), please call the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum at (805) 966-5373.**