

MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN
FOLK ART

May 8, 1987

Fred Zemel
P.O. Box 1280
Newark, NJ 07101

Dear Fred,

Enclosed is some material you might find useful about SPACES and about other folk art environments around the country. It will give you a sense of ~~how~~ widespread this phenomenon is and should give you some concrete ideas about the problems and solutions surrounding other sites.

The following is an answer to the question of "what is Kea's Ark," at least as I see it: Kea's Ark is a work-in-progress. It is not yet finished, and in fact may never be finished in the sense that a painting is finished when you sell it or hang it on a wall. It is a work of sculptural art, of monumental scale, that is taking the form of an ark or boat. It is the unique vision of a self-taught artist who functions outside the mainstream of traditional art. She did not study art, or seek to find her place in the history of art with this work. Rather, she has followed her own internal need to express herself in this way. Because ^{of} her own intuitive sense of design and her own creativity, it is likely to be a work of remarkable aesthetics when it is completed. In the meantime, it has already achieved mythic dimensions, not only as a social symbol of hope for the community, but also as a hauntingly beautiful form on a desolate landscape. While Kea's vision is hers alone, she is part of an American phenomenon of environmental folk art with hundreds of examples all over the country. While these sites are extremely varied in appearance, location, and durability, many have become tourist destinations, community centers, and public gardens. Any of these could be part of the future of the Ark.

I hope that is of some help, Fred. Let me reiterate Seymour Rosen's points: Establish it as a piece of art, not a building; Show neighborhood benefits (music festivals, lectures and art classes; community garden); Show that it will not become a burden to the city; Point out that the nation is watching.

Feel free to call with any questions. I hope if there is an offer of a settlement that we can talk before it's accepted or rejected.

Good luck,

Didi
Didi Barrett

Administrative Offices 444 Park Avenue South New York, N.Y. 10016-7321 (212) 481-3080

P.S. I
apologize for
turning - I'd to this Ark.