

California - Emanuelle "Litto" Damonte - Litto's Hubcap Ranch

BIOGRAPHY

- 1892 February 2, born in Arenzano, near Genoa, Italy
Helped father do marble and mosaic (terrazo) floors. Wanted to be a priest.
- 1907/ Moved to U.S. with his mother and sister. The boat took 16 days to New York or 1911 followed by a 6 day train ride to San Francisco, Ferry Building. 1920's-40's Worked as a cement contractor in San Francisco
- 1942 Litto retired. He hated paying taxes and so moved to Pope valley where there was no taxation. He started to build on his property.
- 1943 Litto started his collection of hubcaps. He constructed a barrier of cement, old tires, rock posts and hubcaps to prevent motorists from turning around in his driveway and scattered gravel hauled from the local quarry. Later neighbors began bringing him their unwanted trash. He built wishing wells and bird houses. Washing machines and toilets were incorporated in his environment.
- 1954 Litto's wife, Elizabeth, died.
- 1957 Started to hang hubcaps (according to Smithsonian Magazine article. Check)
- 1976/77 In exhibition "In Celebration of Ourselves" San Francisco Museum of Modern Art curated & photographed by Seymour Rosen
- 1981 May. Hubcap Ranch was nominated as California Registered Historical Landmark #939.
- 1984 3,000 hubcaps (estimate) (source unknown check)
- 1985 Hubcap Ranch was allocated a plaque by the State Historical resources Commission.
- Litto has 3 sons and 4 daughters; 24/25 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren.

Litto has been on Bay Area TV Stations 3,4, 5 and 7.

add plaque dedication

EXHIBITIONS

- 1976/77 "In Celebration of Ourselves" San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
curated & photographed by Seymour Rosen
Triton
St. Helena Mus

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CREASE, Robert and Charles Mann

1983 "Backyard Creators of Art that Says, 'I did it, I'm here'". Smithsonian Magazine.
(Aug)Vol.14, No.5. pp.82-91. *

CURTIS, Robert

Litto's Hubcap ranch

GIBBS, Jocelyn

1986 "Visions of Home: Preserving America's Folk Art Environments" The Whole Earth Review, Fall, no. 52 *

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HILLINGER, Charles

1980 "Collector is a Big Wheel in Hubcaps". Los Angeles Times. (Aug. 8) Part 1, p.3.*

KIRSCH, Jonathan

1978 "Four California Visionaries: Lost and Found Art". New West. Vol13. No. 10.
pp.229-33 *

PENNY, Lynn

1974 "Litto "Collects" and Makes It Art". The Register. (Nappa Valley) (Dec.7) pp.1-2.

? Pope Valley Man Loves Unique Folk Art. p.3. (Newspaper--source unknown)

? 1984 Ripley's believe it or not Hub-a-Hubba

ROSEN, Seymour

1979 In Celebration of Ourselves. San Francisco, California Living Books *

THOLLANDER, Earl

1971 Back Roads of California: Selected Trips and Solo Roads off California's Major Highways. Menlo park: Lane Magazine and Book Co. *

WAMPLER, Jan

1977 All Their Own: People and the Places They Build. New York: John Wiley and Sons. *

WELLS, Bob

Pope Valley Yard a Head Swiveller. (source unknown)

(* - references in SPACES archives)

EXHIBITIONS

1976 "In Celebration of Ourselves". San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

?? "Dreambuilders". Chevron Gallery, San Francisco.

SOURCES

Emanuelle N. Damonte

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South San Francisco, CA

Office of Historic Preservation

Albert L. Hurtado prepared historic resources inventory 10/4/77..

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Saint Helena Star (closest local newspaper)

Pacific Union College, Augwin, CA. (nearest local college)

SPACES

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