

San Jose State University

From the Selected Works of Jo Farb Hernandez

Fall 2009

Watts Towers

Jo Farb Hernandez, *San Jose State University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/jo_f_hernandez/59/

WATTS TOWERS

Genova, Italy, April 2009

The first international conference focusing on the best-known art environment in the United States, Sabato (Sam/Simon) Rodia's Watts Towers of Los Angeles, took place in Genova, Italy. Co-sponsored by the Università di Genova and the University of California-Los Angeles, the 2 day conference featured three films and sixteen additional presentations from academics, public folklorists, and staff from the City of Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs. Although scholarly differences remain regarding whether aspects of Italian traditional culture may have influenced Rodia's work, and to what extent, the most contentious issue continues to be the strategy for conservation work on the Towers as well as the training and professionalism of those entrusted with this work. Conferees are preparing a formal document which will be forwarded to the City requesting answers to specific issues raised by the non-profit Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts (guardians of the Towers for over fifty years), and will also voice concerns about the ongoing and future security and stability of the site. A publication of the proceedings is in preparation, and a follow-up conference in Los Angeles is expected to be convened in 2010.

Jo Farb Hernández: SPACES – Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments



Sue Prince

MEETING OF NAIVE/SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS

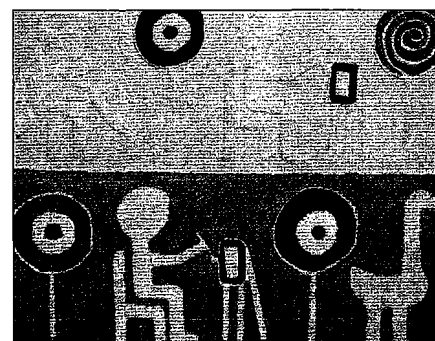
Trebnje, Slovenia, June 13 – 20, 2009

The Gallery of naive/self-taught artists in Trebnje organised the 42nd annual international meeting of naive artists, attended by 7 artists: three sculptors from Slovenia and painters from Bulgaria, Finland, Great Britain and the United States. The aim was to explore new trends and to promote naive art. Several renowned artists, such as Ivan Rabuzin and Joze Horvat-Jaki, have participated in this meeting in the past.

Stane Novak, a local artist, has taken part in the meeting more than ten times, whereas artists Lena Koski (Finland), Tomaz Maurin

(Slovenia), Sue Prince (UK), Joze Protner (Slovenia), Rosen Rashev (Bulgaria), and Matt Sesow (USA) were first time participants. In one week, they created a broad spectrum of works. Tomaz Maurin worked in wood, as did Joze Protner, who utilised parts of old barrels for his reliefs, while Stane Novak created stylised wheat ears in stone. Lena Koski expressed her admiration for the beauties of Finland through the traditional oil techniques while Sue Prince used egg tempera to convey her views on nature conservation, social change and intercultural connections. Her paintings continue the tradition of Swedish bonads (wall hangings), yet infused with contemporaneity. Both Rosen Rashev and Matt Sesow brought a certain new feel to the Trebnje Gallery of Naive Artists. Rosen Rashev worked with different materials, the base, with its distinguishing lines and surfaces, was formed using waxed thread and intensified through an almost monochromatic use of paint. Spontaneously, seemingly only with a few brush strokes, he created simplified lines and shapes. In his art, Matt Sesow chronicles his personal journeys and current themes. With intensive colours, layering and quick strokes, he achieves contrast, reinterprets topical events, and most of all, infuses his works with his personality. His reinterpretation of the painted bee panel, a characteristic feature of Slovene apiaries, is now in permanent collection of the Trebnje Gallery of Naive Artists. The bee panels traditionally tell stories, but he has populated the format of approximately 10ne square meter with several animals – some already familiar to us from his opus (dog, pig, bull, chicken and cowboy), and some new: ibex, bear and bees. The latter represent a recurring element in his works created while in Slovenia.

A.V. Nose



Rosen Rashev

Seymour Rosen

