(Oct. 1990)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL DRAFT

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: The Orange Show
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 2401 Munger Street
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
CITY OR TOWN: Houston
VICINITY: N/A
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Harris **CODE:** 201 **ZIP CODE:** 77023-5139

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x nomination) (__ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x meets) (_ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (x _ nationally) (_ _ statewide) (__ locally). (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____ _____
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___meets ___does not meet the National Register criteria. (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

___ entered in the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet
___ determined not eligible for the National Register _____ _____

___ removed from the National Register _____ _____

___ other (explain): _____ _____ _____

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: buildings, structures and objects

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:

CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
1	0	BUILDINGS
0	0	SITES
0	0	STRUCTURES
0	0	OBJECTS
1	0	TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE: Work of art

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE: Work of art

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: Folk Art Environment

MATERIALS:

FOUNDATION	CONCRETE
WALLS	CONCRETE, METAL/iron, steel; CERAMIC TILE, STONE, STUCCO, BRICK
ROOF	CONCRETE, CERAMIC TILE, PLASTIC
OTHER	N/A

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-11)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

__ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.

X **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.

X **C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.

D PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: G

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Art and Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1955-1979

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1955, 1956, 1968, 1969, 1979

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Jeff Davis McKissack

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT / BUILDER: Jeff Davis McKissack

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: See continuation sheets 8-12 through 8-21

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY: See continuation sheets 9-22 through 9-23

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):
[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[ ] previously listed in the National Register
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:
[x] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State Agency
[ ] Federal Agency
[ ] Local Government
[ ] University
[x] Other – Specify Repository: *The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art, Houston*

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES **Zone Northing Easting**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Lot 14A (measures 75' x 65'), Section 2, Telephone Road Place Subdivision, Houston

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION
The boundary includes all land and improvements historically associated with the building/work of art.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Gregory W. Smith, Texas Historical Commission)

NAME / TITLE: Rebacca J. Jacobs-Pollez, Lauren Kern, Anna Senechal, Stephen Fox, Susanne Theis, Anna Mod

ORGANIZATION Anna Mod, Historic Preservationist **DATE** December 2004

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 66335 **TELEPHONE** 713-630-1086

CITY OR TOWN Houston **STATE** Texas **ZIP CODE** 77266

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS YES

MAPS YES

PHOTOGRAPHS YES

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Orange Show Center for Visionary Art, ATTN: Susanne Theis

STREET & NUMBER: 2402 Munger **TELEPHONE:** 713-926-6368

CITY OR TOWN: Houston **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 77023

Summary

The Orange Show in Houston, Harris County, Texas, is a one and two-story folk art environment consisting of a walled enclosure surrounding several distinct sections comprised of buildings, objects and sites. Jeff Davis McKissack built the highly decorated, unique and maze-like construction between 1955 and 1979. McKissack was one of Texas' outstanding folk artists and constructed The Orange Show as a monument to the orange. McKissack collected materials during his travels throughout Texas and Arkansas and from the resultant debris of progress as Houston's skyscrapers replaced older buildings. Over a base of concrete and steel, McKissack incorporated all the materials he found plus many he purchased: stone, tile, ornate filigree metal, paint and an assortment of antiques, including numerous wheels and tractor seats. Using skills he had learned during World War II, he welded birds and other figures and placed them throughout the Show. While his artistic touches, repeating patterns that resemble a kaleidoscopic view, make the Show a beautiful place to visit, McKissack had a serious reason to create a monument to the orange. Fascinated by nutrition and believing the orange to be the perfect food, he constructed displays showing how the chemical energy of the orange is converted into energy for the body. He said that he included something for everyone, such as a wishing well for romance, lions with the simple names of Judy and Mike for children, a museum to demonstrate the importance of diligence and hard work and a sideshow for entertainment.

Site

The Orange Show is located on lot 14A, a 75' by 65' lot of Telephone Road Place Section 2 at 2401 Munger Street. The lot extends slightly east of north-south and faces west onto Munger Street. The Orange Show is two blocks southwest of I-45, the north-south interstate that bisects Houston, also known locally as the Gulf Freeway. The surrounding neighborhood, Telephone Road Place, was platted in 1938 and has evolved considerably from its original plan of modest single-family dwellings. It now consists of mixed high and low density housing as well as industrial elements, sometimes existing side by side. A trucking company abuts the Show on the east side. A parking lot, formerly a dead-end section of Sanders Street, forms the northern border of the lot with a one-story single family dwelling adjacent to and north of the lot. On the south side is a one story single-family dwelling. The surrounding neighborhood on Munger Street is predominately comprised of single-family houses that date from the 1940s and 1950s.

Description

The Orange Show is composed of several distinct areas, enclosed within a white cement wall approximately 7.5 feet tall. Because it is enclosed, it is considered a single resource. McKissack's construction style was unique and he built the Show out of other people's junk and learned as he went along. He obtained the steel, structural supports, tile, and much of the decorative metal accents from the buildings being demolished downtown. He built walls using concrete masonry blocks (CMUs) and covered them with a layer of stucco supported by wire mesh and embedded tiles of incredible variety and patterns. Iron rods and angle irons on corners stabilized and strengthened the constructions. He covered several seating areas with corrugated steel awnings.

The following list of resources is keyed to the site map:

A	Front perimeter wall (west)
B	Side Perimeter wall (north)
C	Adjacent Trucking company (east)
D	Adjacent single family residence (south)
E	Entrance
F	Oasis
F2	Oasis, second floor, inaccessible terrace
G	Ladies room
H	Displays
I	Monument to the Orange
J	Original Exit (no longer in use)
K	Gift Shop
L	Museum
L2	Museum, Observation Deck, second floor
M	Fountain
N	Wishing Well
O	Steam Engine (Farm Buggy Pavilion)
O2	Steam Engine, Observation Deck, inaccessible second floor
P	Pond
Q	Terraced Benches
Q2	Seating Area, second floor
R	Terraced Benches
R2	Observation Deck
S	Roof Terrace
T	Fountain
U	Men's Room
V	Entrance to Side Show
W	Tiered seating for Side Show
W2	Tiered seating for Side Show
X	Stage
Y	Exit
Y2	Tiered seating for Side Show

Exterior Walls (A, B, C, D)

The perimeter walls are constructed of concrete masonry units (CMUs) and are covered with stucco. The exterior walls on the front (A) and the north (B) adjacent to the parking lot are decorated. A trucking company occupies the property to the rear (C) and the southern wall (D) abuts a single family residence. These two walls are undecorated.

The front wall (A) is 21 feet in length and has half-inch orange tiles that spell "The Orange Show." The bright orange of the letters stands out in sharp contrast to the whitewashed wall. As with most signs in the Show, the words are framed, in this case by two bands of blue tiles. A shelf of Arkansas rocks rests below the bottom band and above the upper band, orange-red tiles are topped by a crest of red metal filigree. On top of the wall is a scrollwork balcony with structures that resemble umbrella frames of red, blue, and white topped with flags.

The sidewalk outside the Show is paved with concrete pavers of various shapes and sizes and from there the visitor steps up onto the entrance patio. The raised patio measures approximately 35 x 13 feet and is formed by a raised floor covered in gray cement bricks blocked into large squares by rows of darker gray bricks. Two half-walls of green CMUs, 5 feet in length and 45 inches high, form the left and right boundaries of the patio. To the left of the entrance stands a bright red and white metal umbrella. Behind the umbrella is a triangular flowerbed with a metal fence forming part of the front wall. In front of the umbrella, the lower patio is also formed of cement bricks in alternating blocks of pink and green.

Wall B on the north side is a 70-foot long CMU structure punctuated by square CMU plinths with terra cotta chimney pots used as planters. Atop the entire wall is fence-like construction of bright primary colors. Walls (C) and (D), 94 and 76 feet in length respectively, are undecorated.

Entrance (E), Oasis and Terrace (F and F2), Ladies Room (G), Displays (H)

The visitor enters the Show through two gates, the first a metal fence gate, 3.5 feet high, followed by an elaborate 7 foot high gate constructed of notched gears and railroad spikes. To the right of the two gates is a 6.3 x 13 foot raised platform, 3 feet high, surrounded by walls of varying height, containing the pillar that supports the "ENTRANCE" sign. Above the shed roof are metal pipes that form a framework canopy with three horseshoes and a directional arrow that leads the visitor into the Show. There are "sidelights" on either side of the entry gate made of cut out metal punctuated with circular recycled pulleys, valves, cranks and spoked wheels. The floor is tile – a mixture of various types and patterns – laid in an irregular pattern. From the entry hall the visitor passes into a vestibule and through a turnstile made of welded metal rods painted purple and white with rubber bicycle handles on their outer-most tips. Once past the entrance, the visitor enters an interior patio area enclosed by the Oasis (F), the Ladies' Room (G) and a series of Displays (H). Appearing in almost every area of the Show are the many wheels, some from the nineteenth century, of which McKissack was so proud. A number and variety of wheels form the Entrance and Display Area (H). Similar wheels and supports also form the wall to the exit (J).

The Oasis (F and F2) is a three-sided open-air concrete structure with a shed roof that faces east to an interior patio. The roof is covered with terra cotta tiles. To reach inside, there is a step up and the interior has concrete floors and two benches with tiled seats. There is an inaccessible second story (F2), an observation deck, on top of the Oasis. The Oasis is designed as a place for the visitor to rest and to take refreshments.

The Ladies' Room (G), approximately 182 square feet, is next to and behind the Oasis. The elaborate inaccessible 8

by 13 foot balcony that is visible from the front surmounts this room. McKissack lavished much care on the Ladies' Room, using eleven different types and colors of tile in numerous patterns to cover the walls and floors.

The Display Area (H), also called Displays, is backed by a 29-foot long and 6.5 feet high wall, built of wheels on a base of Arkansas stone. The stone McKissack brought from Arkansas. On either end of the wall behind the displays are two 3.5-foot square pillars decorated with an assortment of tiles including panels of multicolored mosaic squares.

While sitting in the Oasis, visitors can read the displays (H), located in a courtyard of approximately 555 square feet, in one of the two educational areas created by McKissack. The displays, shaded by orange and white metal umbrellas, demonstrate the nutritional value of the orange. Starting at the left, a clown who never lies explains that he feels alert, symbolizing personal responsibility. Next to him is a map with the locations of orange groves in the United States. In front of this wall are metal models of chemical plants that celebrate the chemistry of the orange: they are labeled "Vitamin C," "Thiamine", "Riboflavin (Vitamin B2)" and Chemical converter Plant." The chemical plants are constructed of miscellaneous plumbing pipes, valves, automotive funnels and toilet bobbing balls. The displays tell the reader that the sea once covered the land where oranges grow and that plants are chemical converters that take nutrients from the ground to feed the body, another chemical converter.

Monument to the Orange (I), Original Exit (J), Gift Shop (K), Museum and Rooftop Observation Area (L and L2)

The Monument to the Orange (I) is a concrete obelisk atop a ziggerat brick base and is next to the original exit (J), extant but no longer in use. The monument is 7 feet tall and a bronze plaque dedicated it to the orange growers of America. Next to the monument is the beginning of a 53-foot long hall that leads to the abandoned exit (J). Since McKissack wanted to make sure that the visitor left with the correct message, he emblazoned the wall of this exit with the words "Be Smart – Drink Fresh Orange Juice." The Gift Shop (K) is located behind the displays and in front of the Museum (L) with its rooftop observation deck (L2).

Similar to the Oasis, the Gift Shop (K) is a three-sided, open-air concrete structure with a shed roof covered with terracotta roof tiles. It is 77-square feet and located behind the Displays. The front of the Gift Shop has a high counter, like a service bar, and is supported by two square columns. There are tiles depicting automobiles from 1877 to 1903 set into the walls on either side of the shop.

The second major educational area is the Museum (L), entered through a tile-covered door. Possibly the oldest wheels at the Show are the two painted yellow and converted to light fixtures inside of the Museum. The wheels now hang from a new ceiling installed during a 1988 restoration. The ceiling rests on large metal poles installed next to the wall, passing to the floor through two raised platforms supporting the displays around the Museum.

Within the 12 by 32.5 foot Museum, McKissack again expounded on the virtues of the orange and provided examples of the benefits of hard work and persistence. A central aisle passes between two 3-foot tall display areas that contain an assortment of objects, many arranged as morality plays. A happy ceramic frog sits atop a butter

churn, under a sign that recounts the story of the two frogs that fell into the churn. One gave up and drowned. The other continued to kick until he had created a cake of butter that saved his life. Next to the frog is a bride, a symbol of purity, standing under a sign that reads, "The orange is absolutely pure. It grows right out of the bloom – protected by the rind." Santa's son standing next to the bride declares his intention of planting an orange grove in McAllen, Texas, so that he can bring oranges to everyone at Christmas. The Indian versus white man tableau next to Santa is composed of a mannequin in polyester slacks standing near a wooden Indian in front of his tepee. Between them, a huge stuffed teddy bear waits quietly. The Indian's dilemma is his suffering at the hands of the "white man" and the bear. His salvation due to the power of the orange is explained on the wall above. A smiling steel scarecrow with a jaunty blue hat guards the exit door. *A Fortune to Share* by Vass Young explains that when the occasional "wise old bird" realizes that the scarecrow is not a threat, the bird can eat his fill and use the scarecrow as a perch. The scarecrow symbolizes the fears of life that can be overcome once understood. The small bird roosting in the center of the blue hat has figured out that the scarecrow is harmless.

Across the aisle is a collection of tools that expand an analogy McKissack began in his book. On the page titled "Exercise Means Oxygen," in which the benefits of exercise are promoted, he ends with a quote from Longfellow's *The Village Blacksmith* that describes the roar of the smith's bellows, implying that we can all have the smith's strength if we only exercise.[1] The tools displayed in the Museum were commonly used for laborious physical tasks during McKissack's childhood and could have been made or used by a blacksmith: plows, an anvil on a stump, a grinding wheel, a portable forge and several lanterns. Above the collection are two signs. One, again a quote from *The Village Blacksmith*, emphasizes the blacksmith's strength. On the second sign we learn the source of that strength: "The late John Brown, the village blacksmith, 1890-1975, said 'I love oranges. They help make me strong and healthy --- delicious and refreshing, too.'" Beyond the collection of tools is the orange-loving Woodsman standing below two deer heads mounted on the wall. Completing the grouping is a lady dressed in a green pantsuit. Scattered around her matching green shoes are small animal yard decorations and a ceramic piggy bank. The last items on this side of the room are two plastic orange trees.

Outside the back door of the Museum is a frog fountain, a row of eight tractor seats and admonishments to "Be Careful," "Be Alert," and "Watch Your Step." The staircase that leads to the Observation Deck (L2) above the Museum is very narrow and made of metal with a brick veneer on the risers. There is a metal plumbing pipe handrail and metal wheels are used as the balustrades. Twisted rebar decorates the staircase. There are reminders on the way up: "Hold On," and "Cautious Now" spelled out in tile framed with a band of heart-shaped tiles. From the Observation Deck there is a good view of the entire Show. A metal rail surrounds the deck and the handrail is welded, twisted rebar and metal pipe with metal wheels used on the east side.

Fountain (M), Wishing Well (N), Steam Engine (O) and Observation Deck (O2), Pond (P), Terraced Seating (Q and R) and Balcony Seating (R2)

Behind the Museum to the north is a Fountain (M) and the Wishing Well (N). The fountain is a small triangle,

[1] Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. *The Village Blacksmith*, http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/longfellow/thevillage.shtml

grotto-like structure with decorative tile bandings and random ashlar stones covering the structure. The Wishing Well is set on top of a painted brick platform that steps up to the circular well structure, approximately 4-foot in diameter, topped by a small gabled corrugated steel roof. There is a central pulley. The white walls on the north and west walls are decorated with alternating red and green hearts, each framed by the contrasting color in delicate shamrock tiles. The south wall bears the identifying words "Wishing Well."

The Steam Engine (O) and its observation deck (O2) are between the Wishing Well and Pond (P). The Steam Engine is a two-story open-air structure with a viewing deck on top. The deck has a small shed roof in the center. There are terraced rows of seating made of tractor seats set on top of concrete blocks that face the Pond on two sides (Q and R). Above benches (R) visitors can view the pond from rows of tractor seats (R2). A stairway at the top of the benches (Q) provides access to another rooftop terrace (S).

Directly behind the Museum is the Steam Engine (O) similar to those McKissack admired during his childhood. The steam engine is housed under a 9.5 x 26 foot roofed area with an observation deck above (O2) that measures 25 x 9 feet. A 2-foot diameter chimney supplies the ventilation for the steam engine. Next to it is a fence of red wheels framed by yellow and white braces surrounding another smaller cherry red steam engine. This second engine sits directly above the larger example below. Near the pond are eight yellow and orange tractor seats in two equal rows from which visitors can watch programs below. Resting above the seats on the outer wall is a purple and white windmill.

The decks and terraces throughout the Show provide views of the whirligigs atop walls (C) and (D).
Mike and Judy, two stern stone lions, guard the entrance to the 27-foot diameter, 34-inch tall pond from atop their 21-inch square pedestals. Behind the pond is a map of the places McKissack traveled while he trucked oranges during the Depression. Beyond the map is a door labeled "Captain's Quarters." A silver eagle looks down from his perch above the door. The door is set into the back wall and leads outside the Show. The sides of the pond, symbolic of the Chattahoochee River, are labeled with the river's four major steamboat stops in three states: Columbus, Georgia; Eufala, Alabama; Fort Gaines, Georgia; Apalachicola, Florida. Within the pond is the 13-foot long, 5-foot wide Tri-States Showboat, once powered a third steam engine. Bench seats (Q and R) with front top edges of terrazzo provide clear views for any programs taking place in the pond area. A balcony area (R2), approximately 307 square feet, holds 43 orange, lavender, white and red tractor seats. The balcony walls are formed from yellow, red, white and lavender wheels. Past the left side of the tractor seats is an approximately 140 square foot landing (S) that overlooks Munger Street.

Down below, a long hall begins with a fountain (T) and ends at the Men's Room (U). Across from the fountain is the entrance (V) to the Side Show. This area is composed of seats (W, W2, Y2) and the stage (X). The exit (Y) is on the lower level, down the hall next to the entrance.

Sideshow (W)

Near the completion of the project McKissack had realized he needed some live entertainment. He came up with

the idea of a sideshow performance area, like the old time circuses had brought to town. Access to the Side Show (W) is just past another fountain (T) in which a statue of a young child and dog huddling under an umbrella are seen. Further on is the approximately 40 foot long hallway leading to the 7 x 12 foot Men's Room (U) and the 4 x 12 foot storage room. Once past the hall, and up two steps, an elegant foyer of red and white panels set with black and beige tiles leads to decorative iron gates. Three curved steps lead up to a landing. Below, three sets of bench seats, also with terrazzo on the front edge, are set directly in front of the 303 square foot stage. The stage is decorated with large red hearts framed in shamrock tiles. Two staircases give access to more balconies (W2 is approximately 88 square feet holding 11 tractor seats and Y2, 8 by 23 feet holding 32 tractor seats). Many visitors have become confused by the fact that the balcony seats (W2) seem to be connected to the seats over the pond (R2). In trying to pass from one section to another, they discover that a wall of wheels separates the two areas. The exit (Y) is at the end of the hall leading from the Museum to the Side Show.

Summary

The Orange Show is a unique folk art environment. The playful, naïve, happy and fun atmosphere defy written description. Like all works of art, it is meant to be seen and experienced. Built from other people's junk and salvaged materials from his travels around Houston and neighboring states, Jeff McKissack's Orange Show represents the artist's work to create an environment and monument to the orange, which he believed to be the perfect energy source.

Summary

The Orange Show, a folk art environment and namesake of the citrus fruit, was completed in 1979. The Show's creator, Jeff Davis McKissack, believed the orange to be the perfect source of energy for human beings. Folk art environments, also called "Gardens of Revelation," are monumental works of art created by individuals with no formal artistic or architectural training. Such self-motivated artists have no desire or need to conform to society's expectations, and their creations reflect their own vision, based on individual life experiences. Often incorporating discarded or recycled materials, environments possess a "do-it-yourself" charm understood and appreciated by many, especially "traditional" artists who are affected by their scale, devotion and vision. The Orange Show is nationally significant as it embodies a complex of tangible and intangible phenomena associated with certain trends in twentieth-century American Folk Art variously known as Outsider Art and Visionary Art. The Orange Show possesses exceptional value and quality in interpreting the twentieth-century Folk Art heritage of the United States and a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Contextually, it relates to the influence of twentieth-century Folk Art in the United States. The Orange Show meets Criterion B, at the national level of significance for its association with its creator, Jeff Davis McKissack, an important Texas artist. It is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Art as one of the nation's most important folk art environments. Orange Show is also nominated with Criteria consideration G, as a property that has achieved significance within the past fifty years. The Orange Show is not just a physical object; it is also a symbol of dedication, self-belief, creative effort and healing. It represents the work of the individual, untrained artist that feels compelled to improve their world through artistic expression.

Founding of the Community

The Orange Show is located in Houston, Texas, a city popularly known for its new wealth, uninhibited entrepreneurialism, rejection of city planning, and cultural bravado. During the decade of the 1960s, when Jeff McKissack began construction in earnest of The Orange Show, Houston became home to the Manned Spacecraft Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) (Apollo Mission Control Center and Space Environment Simulation Lab, NHL, 1985; Saturn V Launch Vehicle, NHL, 2003), the world's first air-conditioned football and baseball stadium, the Astrodome (1965) that encouraged the invention astroturf, and a host of tall downtown office buildings whose striking architectural modernity appeared to symbolize the city's energy and enthusiasm for the new. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the city's energy economy peaked as a result of high energy prices following the Arab oil embargo, which led to renewed domestic oil and gas exploration. Beneath the surface of this expansionary cycle, Houston had high crime and murder rates, low levels of public service, and a tradition of racial inequality stemming from its history as a Southern city (McComb: 1969, 167-257). Yet Houston also possessed an unusual cultural scene, which profited from the presence of the French émigrés, collectors, and patrons Dominique Schlumberger and John de Menil (Rothko Chapel, NRHP 2001) during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Dominique and John de Menil made connections between the international world of modern art, with which they were intensively involved from the 1940s through John de Menil's death in 1973 and Dominique de Menil's death in 1997, and local artists and collectors. As immigrants, they were especially fascinated by the vernacular cultures of

Houston and they stimulated local interest in artistic practices that, from a high art perspective, seemed marginal, eccentric, and bizarre. In the 1960s and '70s the Menils were joined in appreciation of these phenomena by such figures as the art curators Helen Winkler (Fosdick), Paul Winkler, and James Harithas, the latter director of Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum from 1974 to 1978, and the Houston collector and patron Marilyn Lubetkin, president of the board of trustees of the Contemporary Arts Museum from 1972 to 1978. The Orange Show embodies the energy of Houston in the 1960s and 1970s in an unusual vernacular vein. Jeff McKissack's dexterity as a welder bespeaks the skilled working class culture of oil industry tool making, which was at its height in Houston during the years that McKissack built The Orange Show. The "discovery" of McKissack and his identification as an artist (rather than an obscure eccentric) in 1975 resulted from James Harithas's enthusiasm for and curiosity about parts of Houston not normally associated with the world of art. In this context, The Orange Show makes connections between high culture and the blue-collar world of the East End. In the 1970s these connections were reinforced by the popular celebrity of the Gilley's dance club in nearby Pasadena TX (the setting for James Bridges's film *Urban Cowboy* of 1980), the construction of *The Indeterminate Façade* of 1975 by the New York artists collective SITE at a Best Products Company showroom near Almeda Mall, midway between The Orange Show and the Manned Spacecraft Center, and the florescence of the University of Houston's studio art program at the Lawndale Annex, a former Schlumberger warehouse in the East End, after 1979.

Brief Chronological History of the Property

Jeff McKissack bought the lot on which he built The Orange Show on 12 December 1955. In January 1952 he had acquired a lot at 2406 Munger, where he built a concrete masonry unit house for himself that was demolished after his death in 1980. The construction of Houston's first freeway, the Gulf Freeway (Interstate 45) between Houston and Galveston in 1946-52, affected the Telephone Road Place subdivision, where The Orange Show lies, by severing the southern sector of the neighborhood from the older, northern portion. Construction of the first phase of the freeway, which was completed in 1948, affected land use adjacent to the three-block wide, two-block long subdivision as well. In 1950-53 the Schlumberger Well Surveying Corporation constructed its headquarters and research center on a thirty-six acre tract at 5000 Gulf Freeway that forms the west edge of the subdivision. The east edge was developed in 1953-54 with the multi-acre trucking terminal yard of Yellow Transit Freight Lines at 5300 Gulf Freeway, isolating the narrow subdivision between the freeway and these large, fenced, non-residential tracts.

McKissack began construction on a foundation at 2401 Munger Street in 1956, when he secured a building permit for a beauty salon. The first time 2401 Munger Street is listed in the Houston City Directory is the 1963 edition, when it was the site of the American Tree Nursery and Worm Ranch, which McKissack operated until 1968. McKissack designed and constructed the high planters that now surround The Orange Show for the nursery so that customers would not have to bend low. Eventually, he modified his permit by writing on the bottom: "Had a permit to build a beauty salon and many closed down. Had a better idea----THE ORANGE SHOW." On May 5, 1969 he obtained a Certificate of Operation under Assumed Name of The Orange Show. In the Martin *Texas Monthly* interview of 1977, McKissack stated that he began working in earnest on The Orange Show in 1968, the year after he retired from the U.S. Post Office, but that it took him two years to formulate the conceptual design of the complex. In 1977 Martin described the complex as nearly completed. McKissack opened The Orange Show on 9 May 1979.

After McKissack's death in January 1980, Marilyn Lubetkin organized The Orange Show Foundation, which solicited funds to buy The Orange Show from his nephew Alex Hurst, conserve the site, and open it to the public. Between September 1981 and September 1982 extensive conservation work was carried out under the direction of Barry Moore, FAIA and Patrick Moore, AIA of Barry Moore Architects of Houston.

Because the site is fragile, the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art has adhered to a conservation plan to ensure the Show's integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In 1983, the Orange Show Foundation began to assemble a professional staff. In 1989, the foundation purchased 2402 Munger, across the street from the Show that is now their offices. The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art is recognized as one of the major centers for the study, identification, preservation, appreciation, and diffusion of knowledge about Folk-Outsider-Visionary Art and environments in the United States.

Jeff Davis McKissack[2]

Jeff Davis McKissack was born in Fort Gaines, Georgia on January 28, 1902. The McKissack family income came from a large general merchandise store where McKissack worked as a boy. Fort Gaines, one of Georgia's oldest towns, looks down on the Chattahoochee River from a tall bluff. The river was a major influence on McKissack's childhood and youth. As a child he was fascinated by the steamboats that were propelled slowly by the paddle wheels. As a young man, he went down to the riverboat landing to attend dances on the brightly lit boats.[3] During the summer of 1918 he began what would become a life-long habit, traveling with his mother and sisters to Hot Springs to bathe in and absorb what they believed were the water's healing properties. After moving to Texas, this yearly trek to Arkansas provided him with opportunities to stop along the winding roads, visit antique shops and junk yards and find many of the objects used to construct The Orange Show.

McKissack attended Mercer College in Macon, Georgia, where he graduated in 1925 with a degree in commerce. He moved to New York in 1926 when he obtained a position in a Wall Street bank. At the same time, he continued his studies in graduate school at Columbia University, but did not graduate. In 1929, national magazines carried Thomas Edison's advertisements for recruitment tests. McKissack applied, but when Edison told him that he would never amount to anything, he seemed to have become dejected, although he later told visitors to The Orange Show that some of his inspiration came from Edison. Also in 1929 his father died and for the next few years he wandered from job to job finally returning to Fort Gaines during the Great Depression. He began trucking oranges and produce from Florida to the Atlanta farmers' markets, driving different routes to sight-see and look for a machine to take juice out of oranges. In 1934, he opened a fruit store and café in Fort Gaines.[4] In 1939 he purchased a small lot of property

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section was compiled by Rebecca J. Jacobs-Pollez in a master's thesis titled: "Eat Oranges and Live:" Jeff McKissack, The Orange Show, and The Orange Show Foundation.
[3] Sellers, Tom. "Old Steamboats Were a Romantic Fleet Here," Unattributed newspaper clipping in Volume 1 of Brown and Brown, 160; India Wilson during interview with Brooksie Brown and India Wilson, 14 May 2001.
[4] Brown and Wilson interview.

next to his mother's house and built a little concrete block house with a detached brick garage which he rented out.[5]

McKissack had a reputation as a likeable but unusual man. His outgoing personality and uncommon interests caused conflict within the family.[6] He moved to Jacksonville, Florida in the early 1940's and joined the Army Air Corps on October 29, 1942. He later decided World War II, was a young man's war and so he applied for and was granted an honorable discharge on March 22, 1943. He continued to support his country building liberty ships after taking a course in welding. He worked for six years at the St. John's River Shipbuilding Company in Jacksonville. At the end of the war he used his G.I. Bill funds to take yet another class and received a beautician's license. While in Florida he made his only proposal of marriage to a lady who turned him down.[7] Around the same time, he also built a second concrete block house which contained some features, such as cement walks surrounded by quarry brick, that he later incorporated into The Orange Show.

The death of McKissack's mother on September 15, 1948 affected him deeply. Adding to his stress were difficulties he experienced with his siblings. He began to display increasingly erratic behaviors. Either driven by true concern, or simply the desire to eliminate his often embarrassing behavior, at least some of his sisters had him committed to an unknown mental institution for evaluation.[8] Released after only a short time, he found continued existence in Fort Gaines intolerable. He returned to Florida and arranged the sale of his house and its furniture. When it finally sold on July 21, 1950, he was ready to begin a new life.[9]

Lured by a potential "land of opportunity," McKissack chose Houston, Texas for his new home in 1950, probably working for a short while as a produce truck driver. He joined the Post Office in 1952, carrying special delivery mail on a route that covered about one third of the downtown area. His route lasted through Houston's oil boom years and during that time he watched as building after building, those only two to ten stories tall, were razed and replaced by soaring skyscrapers. When he first moved to Houston, he rented rooms in a downtown hotel but, dissatisfied there, he moved to a small apartment on Munger Street. On January 7, 1952, he purchased a lot at 2406 Munger and began building another concrete block house that went through several evolutions before he was satisfied with it. On December 12, 1955, he bought property across the street and it was on this land that he later built The Orange Show.

In 1960, McKissack self-published the book *How You Can Live 100 Years...and Still be Spry* (1960) in which he described himself as the proprietor of the American Tree Nursery, builder, traveler and adventurer. The book is full of the information McKissack absorbed from scouring nutrition guides. Like The Orange Show itself, each page of his book contains supporting evidence in the form of a proverb, poem, or bit of wisdom. The Orange Show in many respects is a physical representation of the beliefs written in the book. Chapters in the book describe how the body processes food while a chemical plant model in the Show demonstrates that the body is a chemical converter

[5] Clay County Deed Record Book O, Page 263, 3 November 1939; Clay County Mortgage Record Book 42, Page 391, 3 November 1939.
[6] Interview with James Coleman, 14 May 2001; Brown and Wilson interview.
[7] Brown and Wilson interview.
[8] Brown and Wilson interview.
[9] Duval County Deed Book number 1448, Page 371, 21 July 1950.

transforming nutrients in to energy. He proudly stated that he always followed and would continue to follow the advice outlined in the book and that one of his goals was to be the oldest man who ever lived in Houston.

McKissack began construction on the property across the street from his house in 1956, when he acquired a permit for a beauty salon and started building a foundation. Following this he opened the American Tree Nursery and Worm Ranch which he operated until 1968. He designed high planters so that customers would not have to bend low. These planters are the same ones that surround The Orange Show today. Eventually, he modified his permit by writing on the bottom: "Had a permit to build a beauty salon and many closed down. Had a better idea----THE ORANGE SHOW." On May 5, 1969 he obtained the certificate to operate The Orange Show.

During the years he constructed the Show, many Houston reporters, including radio reporter Alvin van Black and *Houston Chronicle* art reporter Patricia Johnson interviewed McKissack. McKissack believed that thousands of people would visit his creation every year. The anticipated thousands did not appear and he became a sad, subdued man. On January 20, 1980, he died of a stroke. Because of his oft expressed abhorrence of burial under the ground, his family had him cremated and a portion of his ashes was scattered at The Orange Show.

Historical Context

Folk art environments are monumental works of art created by individuals with no formal artistic or architectural training. Such self-motivated artists have no desire or need to conform to society's expectations, and their creations reflect their own vision, based on individual life experiences. Often incorporating discarded or recycled materials, environments possess a "do-it-yourself" charm understood and appreciated by many, especially "traditional" artists who are affected by the scale, devotion and vision of these environments. There are several folk art environments around the country that have achieved National Historic Register status. These include: Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village, Simi Valley, California; Garden of Eden, Lucas, Kansas; Desert View Tower, Jacumba, California; Shaffer Hotel and Rancho Bonito, Mountainair, New Mexico and Ave Maria Grotto, Cullman, California.

Texas has been home to a number of folk art environments. As an adult, San Antonio resident Eliseo Alvarado, remembering the flour animals he created as a child, populated his yard with a zoo of cement animals corralled behind a fence of wagon wheels. A Dallas man, Willard "The Texas Kid" Watson not only made his yard into a folk art environment, but sculpted, drew autobiographical sketches, sewed lavish costumes and in the 1970s created one of the earliest art cars.

Many Texas environments have been destroyed or allowed to disintegrate once the artist is no longer capable of maintaining the creation. Also, the sites are subject to the destructive effects of weather, vandalism or the family has no recourse but to sell the property, often to those who dismantle them. Two sites that have been saved were created by Beaumont men. Between 1923 and 1948 John J. Gavrelos carved the history of the world from apple crates. Anyone who comes to the J&J Steakhouse restaurant can still view "Eye of the World" which included a miniature Temple of Solomon, Socrates in jail, Diogenes looking for an honest man, Independence Hall and a diorama showing the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In the 1960s Felix (Fox) Harris started turning his

yard into a totem forest created from household junk such as pie plates, coffeepots, spoons, forks, chrome auto parts and Venetian blinds. Upon his death, the Art Museum of Southeast Texas in Beaumont saved his sculptures from destruction.[10]

Houston, the nation's fourth largest city, has an unusually large concentration of folk art environments. Lack of zoning restrictions has been noted as one of the probable reasons, along with a melding of southern, western, and Hispanic traditions of artistic expression. The Orange Show Foundation's Eyeopeners Committee, which actively searches for and documents environments, had identified over fifty in Houston by 1995. Timiteo Martinez, who began to decorate his house soon after he completed it in the mid 1930s, constructed one of the earliest. He added roof ridges, carved faces on the front, painted a trompe l'oeil scene on the front door and pressed broken glass into an arch over the driveway. Sharing the fate of many environments, it has fallen into disrepair.

To save another environment, created by Ida Kingsbury between 1971 and 1990, the Friends of Ida Kingsbury dismantled and conserved her yard full of farm animals and country characters interspersed with an abundance of country quotes. Many of the figures have been displayed at museums and galleries. Another artist, Victoria Herberta, turned her bright purple house into a shrine to her favorite animal, the pig.

One of the most famous Houston environments was created in the late 1960's by John Milkovisch when, tired of mowing the grass, he poured cement in his front yard into which he set 14,000 marbles. Then, in a massive recycling endeavor, he flattened the 50,000 empty beer cans he had stored in his attic and created panels of siding for the house. Atop it all, hanging like Spanish moss from the eaves are chains of interlocking can lids and bottoms. Known locally as "The Beer Can House," it is now owned by The Orange Show Foundation for Visionary Art.

In 1982 Cleveland Turner created another popular environment. Suffering from severe alcohol poisoning, he made a pact with God. If God would help him stay sober, he would create a "house of flowers" in his honor. The verdant garden and vibrantly painted house became a neighborhood landmark. Even the destruction of his first house by vandals could not stop Turner, who began creating a new environment in 1988.[11]

Thematic Context: Folk Art

The primary context for evaluating the exceptional national significance of The Orange Show is that of twentieth-century American Folk Art. The Orange Show represents a twentieth-century type of Folk Art—"Outsider Art" or "Visionary Art"—that came to be recognized in the 1960s and '70s as challenging prior definitions of Folk Art. In his entry on "Folk Art" in the *Dictionary of Art*, James Ayres defines the term to encompass "arts that exist outside the received canons of taste established by or on behalf of the leaders of a given society....Folk art exists in clearly defined geographical regions among peoples with shared characteristics such as language or religion. Tradition usually provides some component, not only in terms of content, subject-matter, or use but also in structure, craft

[10] Information collected by The Orange Show Eyeopeners committee.
[11] Information collected by The Orange Show Eyeopeners committee.

techniques, tools, and materials." Ayres notes that this understanding, premised on pre-industrial, communal cultural models, does not adequately describe the production of "outsider art," which he associates with individuals "confined within their own preoccupations, some of whom have been or are sufficiently obsessional to have been confined in mental institutions" (1996: vol. 11, 239-241).

Histories of Outsider Art identify two important progenitors: the German doctor Hans Prinzhorn, who in 1922 published a book illustrating artwork produced by patients in German mental institutions, and the French modern artist Jean Dubuffet, who in the mid-1940s began to collect and promote what he called "*art brut*" (literally: raw art). Unlike "traditional" folk artists, Outsider artists tend not to have had a background in skilled artifact production. John Beardsley, in *Gardens of Revelation*, traces the recognition and reception of Outsider Art as "art" by the American art world to a series of publications and exhibitions of the late 1960s and the 1970s, the period in which Jeff McKissack built The Orange Show. The artist Gregg N. Blasdel's documentary photo essay "Grass-Roots Artists," published in *Art in America* in 1968, recorded fifteen sites, most of them in Kansas and Wisconsin and most constructed by creators who were still living. Roger Cardinal's book *Outsider Art* (1972) and Michel Thévoz's *Art Brut* (1975) were reinforced by the exhibitions *Naïves and Visionaries* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (1974) and *An Art Without Precedent or Tradition* at the Hayward Gallery in London (1979).

Blasdel's essay focused not on two-dimensional artwork but constructed environments. The Watts Towers in Los Angeles, built between 1921 and 1954 by the Italian immigrant Sam Rodia, has come to be considered the American archetype of the Outsider Art environment because of its scale and the publicity it attracted beginning in the late 1950s when the City of Los Angeles sought to demolish it as a nuisance. A French example from the turn of the twentieth century, the Palais Idéal of another letter carrier, Ferdinand Cheval, in Hauterives, also attracted international publicity through the efforts of Max Ernst and other surrealists, who championed it. The Watts Towers and the Palais Idéal came to function as standard points of critical reference for interpreting other Folk Art environment because of their homemade construction, imposing size, but obscure and personal symbolism.

Beardsley's survey and interpretation focus on Outsider Art environments in an international context. Beardsley characterizes these sites as "handmade environments that express a personal moral or religious vision typically fabricated of found material by people who aren't necessarily identified by themselves or by others as artists. These environments...often have an obsessive character and are the result of many years of work...Part architecture, part sculpture, part landscape, visionary environments seem insistently and purposefully to defy the usual categories of artistic practice" (1995: 7-8). Among the major U.S. sites surveyed by Beardsley that display affinities with The Orange Show are Cabin Home and the Garden of Eden in Lucas KS by S. P. Dinsmoor (1910s-20s) and the Watts Towers by Rodia. Other analogous sites were constructed during the same time span that McKissack worked on The Orange Show: Fred Smith's Wisconsin Concrete Park in Phillips WI (1950-64), Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village in Simi Valley CA (1950s-'60s), St. EOM's Land of Pasaquan in Buena Vista GA (1960s-'70s), Howard Finster's Paradise Garden in Summerville GA (1960s-'70s), and Rolling Mountain Thunder's Thunder Mountain Monument in Imlay NV (1969-89). Since the late 1970s a number of these sites have been listed in the National Register: Watts Towers (1977; NHL 1990), the Garden of Eden (1977), the Shaffer Hotel and Rancho Bonito in Mountainair NM (1978), Ave Maria Grotto in Cullman AL (1989), Desert View Tower in Ocotillo CA (1980), and Grandma

Prisbrey's Bottle Village (1996).

Outsider Art developed a significant constituency in the 1980s and '90s. The programs of The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art indicate the expansion of an audience for this twentieth-century variant of Folk Art. Since the early 1980s members and staff of the Center for Visionary Art have identified more than fifty additional Outsider environments in Houston, most of them much smaller in scale and even more fragile than The Orange Show. John Milkovisch's Beer Can House and Cleveland Turner's Flower Man installation are the two best-known Houston sites. The foundation rescued the artifacts with which Ida Kingsbury had decorated her front yard in Pasadena TX for nearly twenty years prior to her death in 1990 and they likewise retrieved the work of Bob Harper, the Fan Man, from his rented homesite after his death in 1995. In 2001 the Orange Show Foundation acquired the Beer Can House to ensure its preservation. Since 1988 the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art has organized the annual Art Car Parade, which led to the opening of the Art Car Museum, founded by Ann and James Harithas, in Houston in 1998. The Center for Visionary Art sponsors local, regional, and national tours of folk art environments and related sites and maintains the largest archive on Folk Art in the southwestern US.

The Orange Show meets Criterion B, exceptionally significant at a national level for its association with Jeff Davis McKissack, one of the most significant American Outsider artists of the 1970s.

The Orange Show is a primary site for understanding McKissack's exceptional significance as an Outsider artist. He conceptually shaped its interior landscape; a labyrinthine network of open-air passages connecting roofed interiors, walled open-air amphitheaters, and roof terraces, then personally constructed and outfitted these spaces. McKissack fabricated the brightly painted steel birds, trees, umbrella frames, whirligigs, and anemometers with which he decorated The Orange Show. He arranged and installed such found elements as the brightly painted tractor seats and wheel rims that are characteristic features of The Orange Show. He conceived and executed the numerous tile-set inscriptions on walls and piers that alert, orient, and admonish visitors. He is responsible for fabricating the complex steam-driven mechanisms of the Farm Buggy and Tri-States Showboat. McKissack conceived the complex spaces, artifacts, and mechanisms of The Orange Show to materialize and represent his philosophy of living well. As Beardsley indicates is often true of gardens of revelation, The Orange Show was a consuming work. Apart from occasional pieces, such as steel birds commissioned by collectors, it was Jeff McKissack's only major work.

Beardsley compares aspects of The Orange Show to Howard Finster's Paradise Garden and Herman Rusch's Prairie Moon Museum and Garden (1960s-'70s) in Cochrane WI, as well as Harry Andrews's Chateau La Roche in Loveland OH (begun 1929, 1955-81) and Edward Leedskalnin's Rock Castle Park/Coral Castle in Homestead FL (1936-51). Speaking collectively of The Orange Show and the group of sites with which he linked it, Beardsley wrote: "these are all profoundly symbolic spaces in which their creators sought refuge from the world, creating a safe place in which to articulate idiosyncratic variations on political or moral philosophy, notions of wholesome living, or ideas about love" (1995: 13).

As the only public site conceived, constructed, and outfitted by Jeff McKissack, The Orange Show is the primary site for understanding and appreciating his convictions, intentions, and working methods. It is the primary site for

understanding how McKissack came to be accepted as an artist rather than a mentally aberrant obsessive-compulsive, and how his reception as an artist portended broad patterns of change in American art during the 1970s. The Orange Show spatially conserves Jeff McKissack's effort to recover a sense of wholeness and well-being in life and share this understanding with a broad public.

The Orange Show meets Criterion C, significant at a national level in the area of Art as a folk art environment of great significance. It represents the work of an artistic master, possesses high artistic values, and embodies distinctive characteristics of American Folk-Outsider-Visionary Art of the 1970s exceptionally valuable for a study of the style, period, and methods of making.

The Orange Show embodies distinctive characteristics of American Folk Art of the 1960s and '70s. It is a primary site for the study of the Outsider Art movement and corresponds typologically to the context of the Outsider-Visionary environment outlined by Beardsley. Its single-minded dedication to the orange and McKissack's devotion to the orange as a privileged transmitter of nature's energy to humankind represent the idiosyncratic personal vision that seems to motivate Outsider artists to construct such environments. McKissack's concept of orange power gives The Orange Show thematic coherence. The Orange Show is a work of architecture: a constructed landscape containing buildings and structures conceived and built by McKissack. It contains multiple artifacts that McKissack salvaged from demolition sites and antique, junk, and surplus material stores, combined with welded steel artifacts that McKissack made. It contains such decorative details as tile-work displays and railings that McKissack fabricated for didactic and practical purposes, further reinforcing the conceptual and thematic coherence of the site. It is the combination of "vision"—the conceptual planning of a program of exhibitions and performances—and systematic realization through the construction of a network of spaces and contributing details that reinforce and lend coherence to the site's theme and meaning that led art curators and artists in the 1970s to identify sites such as The Orange Show as works of art and their creators as artists.

In its methods of making, The Orange Show is an exceptionally valuable primary site for studying the connections between an artwork and its local subculture, the level of cultural connection at which outsider artists tend to be most intensely involved. The making of The Orange Show relied on craft skills—building construction, steel welding—that were pertinent to the economy of Houston in the 1960s, '70s, and early '80s. Jeff McKissack incorporated explicit thematic references to refining and commercial navigation in The Orange Show, a reflection of the economic importance of petrochemical refining and commercial navigation to Houston. McKissack's version was considerably more benign than the nearby refineries of the Houston Ship Channel, a poignant one-man plea for respecting rather than violating nature. The materials that dominate The Orange Show—reinforced concrete, concrete masonry units, cement tile, welded and molded steel—are a vernacular reflection of the materials and labor processes involved in constructing and maintaining the infrastructure that supported Houston's industrial and transportation economy in the late twentieth century.

The Orange Show possesses characteristics that make it an exceptionally valuable primary site for studying the relationship between Outsider Art and mainstream art practices during this period in American art history. In the 1970s Outsider Art was recognized by mainstream American art culture as a legitimate category of art production.

The Orange Show's enthusiastic reception by Houston's art vanguard in the 1970s represents at a local level the opening-out of the American art world during the 1960s and '70s to art-making that occurred beyond the institutional confines of the academy, the museum, and the commercial gallery. The "discovery" of Jeff McKissack as an artist was paralleled in the 1970s by the Houston art world's "discovery" of the work carried out since 1950 by the art department at Texas Southern University, the historically African-American public university in Houston, and of its foremost faculty members, the painter John Biggers and the sculptor Carroll Simms. The search for alternatives to existing institutional patterns was materialized in Dominique and John de Menil's construction in 1969 of a metal-surfaced shed, the Art Barn, as a gallery and studio for the Institute for the Arts at Rice University, where unconventional directions in art could be explored in the same place that international art exhibitions were organized. Simultaneously, the Menils supported establishment of the Black Art Center in the abandoned Deluxe Theater on Lyons Avenue in Houston's predominantly African-American Fifth Ward in 1971 in a further effort to support art-making and constitute a public for art outside the predominantly Anglo-American, upper-middle class milieu of Houston's art world. The Orange Show derives significance from its participation in these broad patterns of late twentieth-century cultural history as the foremost example of a Folk Art garden of revelation in Houston and Texas.

In this cultural context James Harithas was a key figure nationally in expanding perceptions of what constituted art in the 1960s and '70s. During his tenure as director of the Contemporary Arts Museum, Harithas avidly promoted the national (and, more important, regional and local) reception of artists working in Texas. The take-off of the studio art program at the University of Houston--associated with the artists James Surls, John Alexander, Gael Stack, Derek Boshier, Patricia González, Manual, George Krause, and the program's most celebrated graduate, Julian Schnabel—which was located in an ex-Schlumberger warehouse on Lawndale Avenue in the East End of Houston from 1979 until 1990, resulted in the coalescence of what the curators Barbara Rose and Susie Kalil in 1985 designated a "Houston school" of contemporary art. Like McKissack, many of the "Houston school" artists drew on the industrial detritus of Houston for their imagery and material. In the 1970s, the obscure, obsessive, vernacular, anti-establishment, anti-art status of a creative work such as The Orange Show represented to artists and curators, working restively within the institutional framework of the academy, museum, and gallery, the energy, conviction, independence, and inspiration needed to renew contemporary art. Is it important to note that Sharon Kopriva, first teaching assistant to James Surls at Lawndale Art Center, later worked at The Orange Show Foundation. The Orange Show is exceptionally significant at a national level because its reception as a work of Outsider Art was rooted so profoundly in currents sweeping American art culture in the 1970s. It is a primary site for studying and interpreting the liberating, anti-institutional trends that contributed to the broad pattern of American history in the 1960s and '70s.

The Orange Show is the primary site for understanding and appreciating the work of Jeff McKissack. It is the primary site for understanding his convictions, intentions, and working methods. It is the primary site for interpreting McKissack's expectations about how he could affect the awareness and attitudes of visitors to The Orange Show. The Orange Show spatially and materially conserves Jeff McKissack's effort to illuminate and represent his understanding of the human condition and the value of human life. It is of exceptional national significance as a primary site for studying the phenomena of the Outsider Artist and the garden of revelation.

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