

BEYOND BAROQUE FOUNDATION is a Literary/Arts Center which has, for 13 years, provided a forum for new art and ideas. The Center presents the work of emerging and established literary, visual, and performing artists and provides services to artists in the community. The Visual Art Exhibitions Program sponsors artists working in narrative and contemporary folk art forms.

The **CRAFT & FOLK ART MUSEUM** was founded in 1973 as a non-profit organization designed to study, document, preserve and exhibit contemporary crafts and folk arts from around the world.

The **CONTEMPORARY CRAFT COUNCIL** was formed in 1979 as a supportive arm of the Craft & Folk Art Museum to promote and implement programs that acknowledge the artists and the current trends of the contemporary crafts. Activities include studio tours, an annual auction, and lectures.

The **FOLK ART COUNCIL** was also founded in May of 1979 as a supportive arm of the Craft & Folk Art Museum and an educational and social vehicle for all those interested in folk arts. Activities include lectures, seminars, workshops and field trips to other institutions.

The **LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY** was founded in 1978 in response to the need for a broad based representative voice for the preservation of our distinctive urban heritage.

The **PRESERVE BOTTLE VILLAGE COMMITTEE** was formed in 1979. It is a committee of working professionals from all over the southern California area who have joined efforts to save the Bottle Village from total destruction.

Craft and Folk Art Museum, 5814 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036 213. 937-5544

B · O · T · T · L · E



By Grandma

V · I · L · L · A · G · E

PROGRAM

Saturday, July 10, 1982

8pm

Sunday, July 11, 1982

2 pm

WELCOME

Amy E. Skillman
Coordinator,
Preservation & Study
of Ethnic Traditions,
Craft & Folk Art Museum

“VISIONS OF PARADISE: THE ART OF TRESSA PRISBREY”

Allie Light and Irving Saraf,
Light/Saraf Films,
Producers

INTRODUCTIONS

Grandma and
The Producers

CLOSING REMARKS

Maureen Michaelson
Executive Board,
Preserve Bottle Village Committee

This program is co-sponsored by Beyond Baroque Foundation, the Craft and Folk Art Museum and its Contemporary Craft Council and the Folk Art Council, the Los Angeles Conservancy, and the Preserve Bottle Village Committee.

The film was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

In 1979 the Preserve Bottle Village Committee was formed to jointly raise funds to purchase and preserve Bottle Village. However, in March 1981, the owner defaulted on his mortgage payments and the property was put up for public auction. The present owner, Phillips Enterprises, has entered into an Option to Buy Agreement with the Committee and the publisher of Glass Studio Magazine, Jim Wilson, who has stepped in to support the Committee's efforts. Phillips Enterprises is asking \$97,500 by August 9, 1982 for the land in lieu of bulldozing the Village for development. To date just over \$23,000 has been raised.

THE HISTORY OF BOTTLE VILLAGE

Tressa Prisbrey was born in 1895 in Eaton, Minnesota to a blacksmith and his wife. After the death of her first husband, Tressa moved to the West Coast with several of her seven children and settled in Simi Valley, California, working odd jobs in the community. While there, she met and married her second husband, Al Prisbrey, and together they bought one-third acre of land. Tressa was nearly 60 years old when she took the wheels off the family trailer on that plot of land, making it clear that she was staying put.

Over the years, “Grandma” had collected some 17,000 pencils and, since her trailer was far too small to accommodate such a collection, she decided to build a house for the pencils. So, like a pioneer, she built her pencil house with available materials, collecting thousands of bottles for use as building blocks. Once she finished her Pencil House, Grandma continued to build until she had filled the entire one-third acre with 13 buildings and 9 major and minor structures. For years she visited the dump daily in her Studebaker truck gathering bottles, shells, dolls, books and any other item that caught her eye — from plumbing fixtures to sash and doors — filling her bottle houses with her treasures. Many of these items, once discarded as junk, are now considered valuable. The only materials Grandma bought for her village were sand, cement, roofing paper and two-by-fours for studs.

In 1972, after the death of her second husband, Grandma sold the property on which Bottle Village is located and moved to Oregon to live with her son. She grew restless and gladly accepted the offer from the owner of Bottle Village to return to Simi and act as curator at the site.

The Bottle Village property was eventually sold to a realtor, who in turn allowed Grandma to live there rent free.

In May 1982, Grandma Prisbrey moved to San Francisco with her daughter, due to failing health. She still visits her Bottle Village when she can.

Grandma's Bottle Village has been declared a California Registered Historical Landmark, #939, and a Ventura County Cultural Landmark, #52.

“The imagery might have come out of the Brothers Grimm, so innocent it is in its harshness. At the same time it suggests families together, a big table set; Grandma creates somehow a festival of the seasons, for in her scheme are the tinsel of Christmas, mica snow; sparklers and pinwheels of the Fourth of July; the dead celebrated on Decoration Day; and a hundred birthday cakes — there is in the VILLAGE all the creative energy that women throw into celebrations when funds are scarce.”

Esther McCoy
from *NAIVES AND VISIONARIES*,
Walker Art Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1974