

Art exhibit "Pioneers in Paradise: Folk and Outsider Artists of the West Coast" opens in Mandeville

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NAIVE ART AT MANDEVILLE GALLERY

The works of 39 artists, some of them gardeners, carpenters, cooks, mechanics, some institutionalized visionaries, will be shown in the nation's first historical survey of West Coast folk and outsider art, beginning on June 1, at the University of California, San Diego Mandeville Gallery, according to gallery director Gerry McAllister.

This powerful traveling exhibition, "Pioneers in Paradise: Folk and Outsider Artists of the West Coast," is the result of three years of effort by curators Susan C. Larsen and her husband, photographer Lauri Robert Martin, who took it upon themselves to delve into historical archives and private collections, talk to artists in inner cities and backwoods, mountain cabins and desert villages. The result of the Martins' labor of love is a collection of 115 works, dating from 1844 to the present.

Larsen said the scholarly quest for West Coast naive and folk art was stimulated by her relationship with the prolific self-taught painter, Jon Serl. She quickly learned how meager was the supply of any published material on the subject.

Except for public works by such artists as Simon Rodia who constructed the Watts Towers, Peter Mason Bond's San Francisco Peace Garden, Sanford Darling's San Francisco "House of a Thousand Paintings," most of the works had rarely, or never, been seen by the public.

What the exhibition shows us, Larsen says, is a look at "the durable, generous, irrepressible qualities of the human spirit."

The Long Beach Museum of Art, the Henry Art Gallery of the University of Washington in Seattle, and the San Jose Museum of Art, have co-sponsored the show. The exhibition is also funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The show will be at the Mandeville Gallery through July 7. Gallery hours are noon to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday (closed on holidays). A catalog is available. For more information, call (619) 452-2864.

(May 16, 1985) For more information contact: Aليxandra Williams, 452-3120