

by 1910, abandoned them and became a wandering laborer, often known as Sam or Simon. In 1921, he purchased a triangular plot of land on the outskirts of Los Angeles in Watts, settled down, and commenced with focused determination a 33-year, day in and day out creative project that he called *Nuestro Pueblo* but which became known to the world as the Watts Towers.

From the start, Rodia's work drew attention from neighbors and visitors. Using only basic hand tools, he built and tore down and rebuilt many towers of cement-encased steel bars, decorated with inlaid seashells, broken tile, and pottery, as well as similarly decorated fountains, ovens, and walls, and a structure he called a ship. The final tower in the complex rose to just short of 100 feet from street level. In 1954, a documentary filmmaker visited Rodia and made a short film about his work on the unusual project. Not long after that, Rodia, having suffered a mild stroke, deeded his property to a neighbor and left Los Angeles.

The neighbor also abandoned the property, and the unusual structure was noticed by an inspector from the city's Department of Buildings and Safety who determined it to be unsafe and saw to it that a demolition order was issued. Shortly thereafter, the property was purchased by a film school student and a young actor who began a campaign to save the Watts Towers, drawing many big players in Hollywood and the art world into a battle with city hall bureaucrats. The city agreed to allow a "safety test" of the condemned towers, and an aerospace engineer volunteered to devise a 10,000-pound dynamic load test. As hundreds watched, Rodia's towers successfully withstood the load test, to the great applause of everyone but the building inspector. But the work of saving the Watts Towers—and the Watts community—was just beginning.

The collected essays in this volume are diverse, ranging from historical analyses of Italian migration in Rodia's time to comparative studies of the creative work of other Italian immigrants in the United States and elsewhere. One theme of particular interest to this reviewer runs through several essays, examining the probability that wood and *papier-mâché* spires

constructed for the annual *Festa dei Gigli* in Nola, near Rodia's Italian childhood home, served as a source of inspiration if not the very model he drew upon for his Los Angeles towers. Italian ethnographer Felice Ceparano writes of the form and construction of the Nolan Gigli in Rodia's time. Katia Ballacchino and Luisa Del Giudice find the unique juxtaposition of obelisks and a ship—featured in both the Watts Towers and the Campanian Gigli dances—compelling evidence that Rodia had seen or known of Gigli before beginning his 3-decade-long project. Joseph Sciorra, a long-time ethnographer of the Gigli Festa in Brooklyn, sees the Gigli correlation as not only strong, but also a pivotal entry into Rodia's Southern Italian immigrant aesthetics and subjectivity.

Another important theme that runs through this collection is the cultural interaction between the Watts community and the Watts Towers. When Rodia was still building the towers, he titled the complex *Nuestro Pueblo* and opened it to his neighbors for weddings and birthday parties. After the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts (CSRTW) was formed to save the structures from demolition, the group immediately set about planning for art classes and an art center. Founding member Jeanne S. Morgan recounts 50 years of CSRTW guardianship and programming in the community, and historian Sarah Schrank describes the often-troubled spatial and cultural politics and relationships between Watts, Rodia's towers, and broader Los Angeles. Several authors tell of their personal experiences working at the interface of the Watts Towers and the community. A panel of artists working in Watts records an open and memory-filled conversation with Rosie Lee Hooks, the current director of the Watts Towers Arts Center Campus.

Other books, most notably *The Los Angeles Watts Towers* by Bud and Arloa Goldstone (Getty Conservation Institute and J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997), have addressed the Watts Towers through various lenses. The only deficiency of *Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts* is that it does not include any color plates, which are necessary to illustrate some of the discussions and to explain the attraction of the Watts Towers to readers who have not visited the site. The Gold-

stones' well-illustrated book is therefore recommended as a visual adjunct to *Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts*.

But for that one shortcoming, this is a substantial collection of top-quality scholarship and archival evidence that stands as the most comprehensive study of Sabato Rodia and his influences and motivations as well as his Watts Towers. Moreover, this collection provides a model exploration into a fascinating convergence of folklore, politics, aesthetics, biography, local community history, and public policy focused on a single enigmatic material artifact.

Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Ed. Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, and Diana Baird N'Diaye. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016. Pp. 304, 71 black-and-white photographs, preface, prologue, introduction, bibliography, index.)

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The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is iconic in the field of folklore; however, most people outside the discipline have never heard of it. Folklorists may find this dubious, but as Steve Zeitlin observes, "the Festival has hardly penetrated the consciousness of the American people" (p. 306). He recalls: "Since I left Washington in 1981 and moved to New York City, I have rarely met anyone who has heard of this glorious Festival" (p. 306). *Curatorial Conversations*, edited by Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, and Diana Baird N'Diaye, is a welcome addition to literature on public and applied folklore. Using the Festival as the fabric, this edited collection explores the many threads of public programming, cultural politics, lessons, reflections, history, and the future of this pioneering, large-scale event. For readers who are familiar with the Festival, it is a backstage pass into the making (or unmaking, or *not* making) of various exhibits from the perspectives of the curators. James Early begins his epilogue by noting that the book's publication roughly coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Festival (p. 315). Many key public folklorists

weigh in their voices, and as the editors note, this collection examines the Festival through various lenses, including "places of friction and contestation that arise among the many parties involved in producing it" (p. 20).

The book's excellent introduction sets the collaborative tone of the volume. I was struck by the discussion of the title "curator" and how the curatorial position came to be used and understood in the Festival context (pp. 24–5). Likewise, Kurt Dewhurst and Marsha MacDowell unpack the role of museum curation in their preface. These discussions bring nuance to notions of curatorship over time as well as best practices moving forward. Additionally, the introduction provides historical context to the Festival, from S. Dillon Ripley's declaration—"Take the instruments out of their cases and let them sing"—to the cultural contexts surrounding the Festival throughout the decades, including civil rights activism in the 1960s and 1970s as well as the mid-1970s "watershed moment" when the Folk Arts Program was established by the National Endowment for the Arts and the US Congress created the American Folklife Center. For international readers, these are crucial moments, and they inform our understanding of public folklore in the United States.

Cynthia L. Vidaurri points out in "Cuba—*Confluencias, Creatividad y Color: The Making of a Cuba Folklife Festival Project*" that in Latin American culture, "folklore" and "folklorist" carry different meanings; therefore, when doing fieldwork in Mexico, she refrains "from using the term [folklorist] because it makes people think I professionally perform folklorized traditional music and dance" (p. 143). Instead, she and colleague/co-editor Olivia Cadaval use the terms "*cultura popular* (grassroots culture) and *cultura tradicional* (traditional culture)" (p. 143). Vidaurri's emphasis on language is perceptive and thoughtful, and essentially at the heart of this work are issues of cultural representation: "Language is so charged with values, ideology, particular meanings, and regional specificity that it is constantly necessary to review discussions in order to ensure that all parties share the same understandings" (p. 145).

Along with the introduction by the editors, the book includes a preface, prologue, and epilogue. The rest of the volume is divided into four sections: "Early Vision and Transformations," "Collaborations and Cultural Politics," "The Poetics of Representation," and "The Festival as Catalyst." The authors all have been employed by the Smithsonian and have many years of experience and Festival programming among them. The sections could easily be weekly topics for a course and provide deliberate platforms for—no surprise here—curatorial conversations. As such, the volume may be read as a series of conversations among professionals as well as a springboard for ongoing issues, reflections, thoughts, and concerns about cultural productions. Even though the volume focuses on one festival, the themes and topics are relevant to programmers, classroom instructors, students, observers, participants, fieldworkers, curators, presenters, advisors, and collaborators—anyone who is committed to identifying, documenting, presenting, celebrating, or representing forms of traditional expressive culture. While there is something to be learned from every essay, the strongest chapters not only open up the possibilities for conversation but also give readers a platform to consider the impact this work has on lives, as well as how to move in new directions, asking "Where do we go from here?"

Some essays that stand out include Jack Santino's reflection on the immeasurable value of his Festival experiences, including the mentorship he received as a young folklorist: "Not only my career, but also my entire life was profoundly affected by those years, and by the people I met and with whom I worked" (p. 48). In Part 2, James Deutsch's chapter about federal agencies at the Festival is eye-opening, as he discusses the challenges of presenting groups (such as the US Forest Service, NASA, and Peace Corps) "that stray far from Festivalgoers' conventional perception of who and what constitute 'folk'" (p. 111), turning concerns of power-play in cultural representation on their head. This piece is at once both a primer on occupational folklore and a meditation on the politics, challenges, tensions, and positive experiences that occur in the planning of festivals.

Vidaurri's and Cadaval's chapters both highlight the enormous (and sometimes undervalued) significance of creating and maintaining strong partnerships. While the festivalgoer experience is at the forefront of the public expectations of the Festival, what takes place behind the scenes—lessons learned, collaborations, partnerships, negotiations, and *conversations*—are the puzzle pieces that add depth, warmth, and nuance to every visitor experience. Cadaval explains that her Festival work has been informed by "issues of authority over representation" (p. 157); this is a vital point, and one that guides the entire volume.

Marjorie Hunt's chapter is clear, poignant, and unpretentious. Using case studies and strategies from 35 years of Festival experience, she looks closely at a few programs she curated or co-curated. I was deeply moved by the descriptions of the *Masters of the Building Arts* program (2001), especially how the audience connected with the master stone carvers on such a human level. When Roger Morigi pointed to the beautiful, enormous female figure that he had carved above the entrance of the Commerce Building, saying "See that figure over there? In 1932, I carved that," Hunt recalls that "the entire audience spontaneously rose and gave him a standing ovation." A slice of a curator's work, it was "one of life's transformative moments" (p. 179). Step-by-step, Hunt describes the various collaborations of a successful program: between curators and colleagues, curators and participants, participants and audience—how everyone is connected. Correspondingly, in the same section, Betty Belanus presents a helpful framework for "visitor engagement," which encourages curators to step into visitors' shoes more often.

"The Festival as Catalyst" is perhaps the most pivotal section. Amy Horowitz' reflections on the Jerusalem program are heartfelt: Israeli-Palestinian relations and the making/unmaking/*not* making of the Jerusalem program for the Festival are at once deeply political and personal. Horowitz reveals: "In the narration that follows, I lay bare my evolving subjectivities. I have been writing and rewriting this essay for two decades, cropping segments into neat twenty-minute PowerPoint for aca-

demic and activist presentations" (p. 244). This paper explores the relationships that endure after a program is postponed—indefinitely, most likely—and how researchers continue the dialogue outside of the institutional framework, creating new possibilities.

N'Diaye suggests a new term, "inreach," which, in contrast to the emphasis of "outreach" in public folklore, highlights the applied processes of Festival responsibilities. It works "in communities specifically directed to social change" (p. 278). Finally, Zeitlin provides an apt ending for the volume by highlighting the long-term effects of the Festival: the threads of change that are subtle but, over time, influence and impact how folklore is understood (and celebrated) in the world. He writes: "The Smithsonian's ambitious, annual, multimillion dollar Folklife Festival, like a good diver, may appear to make only a small cultural splash, but its ripples travel deep and far" (p. 312).

Indeed, the Festival, as well as the reflections that make up this volume, offers a wealth of experiences, lessons, and best practices that are both mundane and thrilling—not unlike the ordinary moments of everyday life that we all share.

The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences. By Jason A. Josephson-Storm. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. Pp. xv + 411, preface and acknowledgments, note on texts and translations, introduction, notes, index.)

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Folklorists will not be surprised that belief and interest in magic and other paranormal phenomena have endured beyond the Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, and Age of Reason, which conventional wisdom suggests supplanted those concerns with a fundamentally rational epistemology. Many books and periodical articles in folklore studies have shown the persistence and acceptance of an enchanted cosmos in popular culture and folk tradition, not only among enclaves of old-time culture

wherein the "folk" are believed to dwell but also in various mainstream media. What may surprise some folklorists, though, is how interest in the paranormal permeated the origins of modernity traceable to Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and the eighteenth-century *philosophes*. Moreover, interest in—and often acceptance of—a worldview that did not exclude magic persisted into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when it helped to shape the ideas of many founding figures in sociology, psychology, anthropology, religious studies, critical theory, and other humanities and social science disciplines.

Jason A. Josephson-Storm's aim in this study is to interrogate the assumption that occult interests disappeared from European thinkers' worldviews as they developed toward modernity. He convincingly demonstrates that many iconic figures in the origin and development of modernity avidly turned their attention to examining paranormal issues and that their concerns with these issues informed their general thinking. The "myth of disenchantment," he finds, emerged as a trope, often taken literally, to distance modernity from a European past steeped in medieval mysticism and from the rest of the world, which had not yet received "Enlightenment" (a term that, he notes, attached itself to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a hundred years after such central works in the movement toward reason as the *Encyclopédie* had been published).

Thinkers in the nineteenth century projected onto their forebears a disenchanted stance that they apparently believed they themselves were employing, though they were concurrently turning attention to occultism in their own work. The gallery of philosophers, writers, social scientists, and physical scientists who evinced interest in the enchanted world that they and their intellectual descendants announced they were rejecting includes Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Sigmund Freud, Marie Curie, Theodor Adorno, and Max Weber, from whom Josephson-Storm takes the term "disenchantment of the world." Since Weber's phrase (which the author suggests would be more accurately translated as "*disenchanting* of the world," to convey process) provides focus for