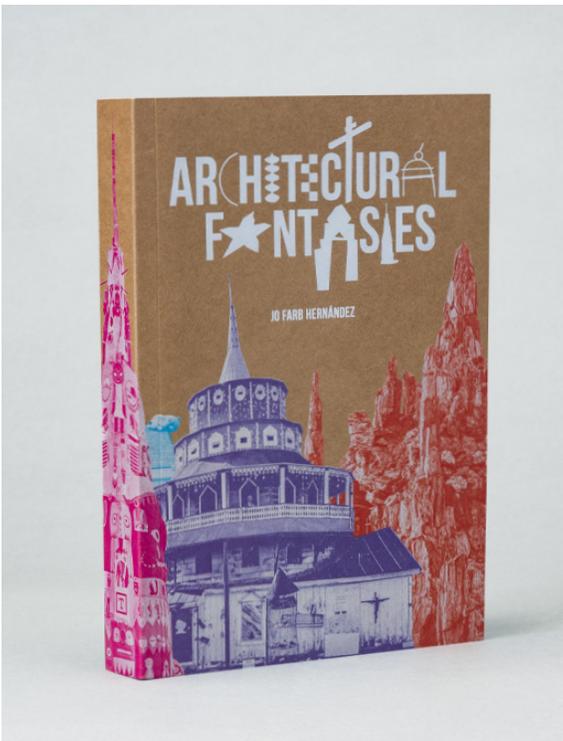


## ***Architectural Fantasies* offers an unconventional look at extraordinary artistic structures in the US**



**Self-taught artists and architects unite function with fantasy in this journey through over 60 visually striking and rarely seen spaces.**

Renowned curator and author Jo Farb Hernández will release *Architectural Fantasies: Artist-Built Environments* on April 14, 2026, during U.S. Architecture Week. This beautifully photographed and illustrated edition documents over 60 homes and structures across more than 30 states, featuring unfamiliar creations as well as renowned landmarks.

An internationally recognized scholar with over five decades in the field of vernacular art environment builders, Hernández is predominantly known for her work in Spain's artist-built spaces, the subject of her *Singular Spaces* series and the 2023 New York Times feature, "Concrete Daisies? There's a Fine for That." One of very few scholars to dedicate her career to this under-recognized group of makers and a leading critic of the label 'outsider art,' she debuts, with *Architectural Fantasies*, a comprehensive documentation of self-taught art environments in the U.S., where artists operate idiosyncratically, independent of recognized movements or conventions.

Coverage spans all major U.S. regions, including the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Mountain West, Southwest, and West. Readers might recognize landmarks such as James Hampton's *Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations' Millennium General Assembly* from the Smithsonian, Florida's *Coral Castle*, or the *Watts Towers* in Los Angeles. But they will also discover creations, including Billy Tripp's *Mindfield Cemetery*, that might be new to them. These structures challenge the modern understanding of architecture and are seldom featured in traditional design books. Each one embraces fantasy, improvisation, and personal expression to defy convention and unveil the extraordinary.

### **PRODUCT DETAILS:**

Architectural Fantasies: Artist-Built Environments

Jo Farb Hernández

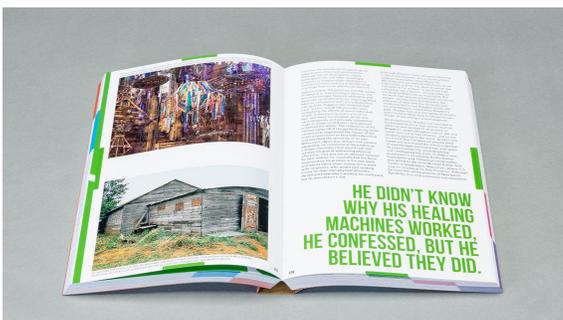
ISBN: 978-1962098298

Softcover | Pages: 456

Dimensions: 7.67 x 10.62 in.

Price: \$55.00 (US)

Release Date: April 14, 2026



Eddie Owens Martin, Pasaquan  
Photo: Fred Scruton



Throughout, detailed photographs by acclaimed principal photographer Fred Scruton accompany Hernández’s narratives. Presented in a lay-flat binding that allows images to be viewed fully and without interruption, each structure is seen and understood on its own terms while displaying characteristics common to the broader genre. “The sites themselves challenge and expand our social, cultural, and aesthetic norms,” writes Hernández. “They help to open a wider appreciation of the remarkable breadth of human creativity in all its exuberance, and in all its spirited and alternative forms.”

Debuting during Architecture Week and as the U.S. approaches its 250th anniversary, *Architectural Fantasies* offers a counter-narrative to spotlight landmarks created by self-taught builders that generally remain outside the architectural canon, many now at risk of disappearing. Framed by color-trimmed edges, the 450+ page tome grounds itself in an increasingly timely question: What does America look like when its story is told from the margins?

*Architectural Fantasies* will be published by Tra Publishing and distributed worldwide through Simon & Schuster. The title will be available at major bookstores, online retailers, and through Tra Publishing’s official website.

### ABOUT JO FARB HERNÁNDEZ

Jo Farb Hernández, Director Emerita of SPACES (Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments) and Professor Emerita at San José State University, is an internationally recognized scholar of the work of self-taught artists, and an award-winning author, curator, and photographer. Hernández has been particularly focused on the field of vernacular art environment builders for over five decades—first in the U.S. and, for the last 25 years, in Spain—and is one of very few scholars worldwide to dedicate their careers to this under-recognized group of makers. Notably, her series *Singular Spaces: From the Eccentric to the Extraordinary in Spanish Art Environments* (Raw Vision 2013; 5 Continents Editions 2023), based on two dozen years of primary fieldwork in Spain, provides an encyclopedic treatment of the field.

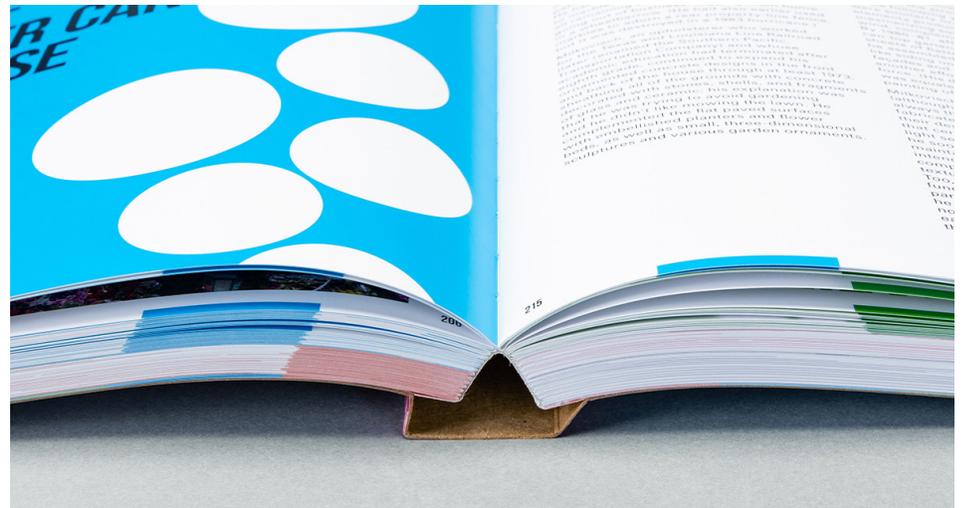
### ABOUT TRA PUBLISHING

Tra Publishing creates beautifully crafted books that inspire social, cultural, and environmental awareness. Particular emphasis is placed on the physical components of the bookmaking process, resulting in books that are both works of art and modes of expression. Tra’s books are distributed worldwide through Simon & Schuster.

Photo: Thomas Sanders



Jim Bishop, Bishop’s Castle  
Photo: Fred Scruton



For more information, visit [www.trapublishing.com](http://www.trapublishing.com). Follow Tra on Instagram @trapublishing.

## SITES AND ARTISTS, BY STATE (Note: Some of the sites have been relocated or are no longer extant.)

### CALIFORNIA

Martín Sánchez – *Tío's Tacos Chapel* – Riverside  
Michael Clarke Rubel – *Rubel Castle* – Glendora  
Cheri Pann and Gonzalo Durán – *The Mosaic Tile House* – Venice  
Louise and Aziz Farnam – *Mosaic House* – Santa Monica  
William Norman “J” Jackson – *Butterfly House* – Pacific Grove  
Emanuele “Litto” Damonte – *Hubcap Ranch* – Pope Valley  
Taya Doro Mitchell – Oakland  
Tressa “Grandma” Prisbrey – *Bottle Village* – Simi Valley  
Sabato Rodia – *Watts Towers* – Los Angeles  
Leonard Knight – *Salvation Mountain* – Niland

### COLORADO

Jim Bishop – *Bishop Castle* – Rye  
Dominic “Cano” Espinoza – *Cano's Castle* – Antonito

### FLORIDA

Edward Leedskalnin – *Coral Castle* – Homestead  
Todd Ramquist and Kiaralinda (The Whimzey Twins) – *Whimzeyland* – Safety Harbor

### GEORGIA

Eddie Owens Martin – *Pasaquan* – Buena Vista  
Howard Finster – *World's Folk Art Church, Paradise Garden* – Pennville

### ILLINOIS

Dr. Charles Smith – *African-American Heritage Museum and Black Veterans Archive* – Aurora (also Hammond, Louisiana)

### IOWA

Father Paul Matthias Dobberstein – *Grotto of the Redemption* – West Bend

### KANSAS

Samuel P. Dinsmoor – *Stone Log Cabin Mausoleum, Garden of Eden* – Lucas

### LOUISIANA

Kenny Hill – *Chauvin Sculpture Garden* – Chauvin  
Juanita Leonard – *Helping Hands Ministry, Holy Land* – Montgomery

Dr. Charles Smith – *African-American Heritage Museum and Black Veterans Archive* – Hammond (also Aurora, Illinois)

### MARYLAND

Clarke Bedford – *Vanadu Art House and Gardens* – Hyattsville

### MICHIGAN

Olayami Dabls – *Dabls Mbad African Bead Museum* – Detroit  
Tyree Guyton – *The Heidelberg Project* – Detroit  
Silvio Barile – *Italian American Historical Artistic Museum and Galleria Belle Arti Cultural Center* – Redford Township

### MISSISSIPPI

Stephen Sykes – *In-Curiosity* – Aberdeen  
Loy Allen Bowlin – *Beautiful Holy Jewel Home* – McComb  
Reverend Herman Don “H.D” Dennis and Margaret Rogers Dennis – *Margaret's Grocery and Market* – Vicksburg

### MONTANA

James C. Phillips – *Jim's Horn House* – Three Forks

### NEBRASKA

Emery Blagdon – *Healing Machines* – Garfield Table

### NEVADA

Frank Van Zant – *Thunder Mountain Monument* – Imlay

### NEW JERSEY

Richard “Ricky” Boscarino – *Luna Parc* – Sandyston Township  
Kea Tawana – *Ark* – Newark

### NEW MEXICO

Robert “Ra” Paulette – *Caves* – Embudo  
Casimiro “Casey” T. Marquez – *Casa De Colores* – Las Vegas

### NEW YORK

Clarence Schmidt – *House of Mirrors* – Woodstock  
Eddie Boros – *The Toy Tower (Garbage Can Tower)* – New York City  
Prophet Isaiah Robertson – *Second Coming House* – Niagara Falls

### NORTH CAROLINA

Henry Gene Dillard – Durham  
Vollis Simpson – *Whirligig Park* – Wilson

### OHIO

Harry Delos Andrews – *Chateau Laroche (Loveland Castle)* – Loveland  
Jeffrey Elersic – Geneva  
Chris Dong Vo – *Flower House* – Cleveland  
Lindsey Alexander – Columbus  
Charles Wince – *Winceworld* – Columbus  
Jim Bowsher – *Temple of Tolerance* – Wapakoneta

### OKLAHOMA

Nathan Edward “Ed” Galloway – *Totem Pole Park* – Foyil

### PENNSYLVANIA

Isaiah Zagar – *Philadelphia's Magic Gardens* – Philadelphia

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Ole S. Quammen – *Petrified Wood Park* – Lemmon

### TENNESSEE

Floyd Jessie Banks, Jr. – *Greenback Castle* – Greenback  
William “Billy” Blevins Tripp – *The Mindfield Cemetery* – Brownsville  
Dionicio Rodríguez – *Crystal Shrine Grotto* – Memphis

### TEXAS

Jonas Perkins – *Vicunta* – Fredericksburg  
Gary Brewer – *Deck House* – San Augustine  
Cleveland Turner – *The Flower Man's House* – Houston  
John Milkovisch – *Beer Can House* – Houston  
Vince Hannemann – *Cathedral of Junk* – Austin  
Rufino Loya Rivas – *La Casa De Azúcar* – El Paso  
Jefferson Davis McKissack, Jr. – *The Orange Show* – Houston

### UTAH

Raphael Plescia – *Christian School* – Salt Lake City

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

James Hampton, Jr. – *The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations' Millennium General Assembly*

### WISCONSIN

Tom “Dr. Evermor” Every – *The Forevertron* – Sumpter  
Father Mathias Wernerus – *Holy Ghost Park (Dickeyville Grotto)* – Dickeyville

H.D. Dennis and Margaret Rogers Dennis, *Margaret's Grocery* / Photo: Fred Scruton



Prophet Isaiah Robertson, *Second Coming House* / Photo: Fred Scruton



Clarence Schmidt, *House of Mirrors* / Photo: Gregg Blasdel, © Spaces Archives, Courtesy John Michael Kohler Arts Center



Eddie Owens Martin, *Pasaquan* / Photo: Fred Scruton



## Q&A WITH JO FARB HERNÁNDEZ

### ***What inspired you to write *Architectural Fantasies*?***

Tra's Publisher and Creative Director, Ilona Oppenheim, had seen a lengthy New York Times article about my work in Spain on art environments, and she approached me about doing a book focusing on architectural sites created by self-taught artists in the United States. But, although that was the "inspiration," I was pleased to turn my efforts again to exploring U.S. sites, which I really hadn't done methodically during the 25 years that I was working in Spain.

In the course of my research and documentation for Tra's book, I both revisited some sites that I had studied earlier—including some that I had first documented over fifty years ago!—and "discovered" others that I hadn't yet had an opportunity to visit. Some of those, of course, hadn't yet begun to be constructed when I was first working in the U.S.

### ***What were you looking for as you curated the spaces that are featured in this book?***

There are many, many examples of creators around the world—many of whom don't/didn't self-identify as artists or architects—who have chosen to modify their personal spaces. But I was looking for the kind of physical expression that evolved, over time, into something monumental, as it also displayed a unique sensibility or way of organizing materials or spaces, or of telling an important personal or cultural story. It is important to note, however, that this book is not encyclopedic; we could have added at least half again as many sites to present! The creativity displayed in this genre is boundless!

### ***Can you elaborate on your current role in the art world?***

I first began studying/documenting the environments created by self-taught makers when I was still in college, and I have continued, over more than five decades, to explore and analyze these sites, sharing them with a wider public whenever possible by curating exhibitions, writing books and articles, and lecturing to a range of general as well as academic audiences in the States and Europe. Because this career-long commitment to this often-misunderstood genre is rare among scholars, I have become recognized as one of the global experts in this field. While earlier in my career I needed to balance this passion with the demands of my day jobs in museums and the university, now that I am retired I am able to commit more fully to exploring both the big picture and the minutiae; this will help, I believe, to expand the definition of what art can be and where it can be experienced.

### ***As a scholar of outsider art, what stands out most to you about the movement?***

Thanks for asking this question in this way, because it gives me an opportunity to challenge some of the general misunderstandings about the work of self-taught makers. I find the term "outsider art" problematic—equally too restrictive and too broad—which is challenging, because I know that it has become shorthand for a certain genre. But it is not a term that I use. Likewise, there is no "movement," per se, because unlike other art historically defined groupings of art/artists—Impressionists, for example, or Surrealists or Pop Artists—there is very little communication, if any, between/among these makers: there are

Henry Gene Dillard  
Photo: Steve Plattner



William "J." Jackson, Butterfly House  
Photo: Fred Scruton



Cheri Pann and Gonzalo Durán, The Mosaic Tile House  
Photo: Fred Scruton



no masters and disciples, no affinity groups, no classes or apprenticeships, no associations that these artists would join to better their art environment-building skills. Neither is there a way to evaluate these sites in comparison to others: in contrast to folk art, for example, when knowledgeable members of those communities can identify and valorize what makes a good quilt or a well-constructed fiddle or a technically proficient pot, in this field there are no such shared parameters that express the values of a community—indeed, such a community of these makers doesn't exist!

What is impressive about the work is how very unique it is, and how each artist organically interprets their own interests/concerns in their very own multidimensional way, redefining art and architecture as they improvisationally proceed: because of this, their efforts are, perhaps paradoxically, truly undefinable. Yet it is noteworthy how widespread stellar examples of this work are, and how, one by one, they push the envelope of the stale and rather archaic boundaries of the art historical canon.

### ***Would you say there are any similarities in the built environments of self-taught artists?***

Because each environment encompasses an entire personal universe, by definition they are inherently unique. Nevertheless, in general, one similarity is that these makers tend to make use of whatever materials they can easily and cheaply access, in order to tell their own stories through material construction. They also commonly work in an improvisational manner, being inspired to build further as they find success and delight in the work they have already built; it is extremely rare for anything more than a general outline of the site to be envisioned in advance, and oftentimes not even that has taken place. The more I study these sites, the broader my view of the field has become, and the distinctiveness of each artist's work impacts me to a greater extent.

### ***What can these artist-built environments teach us?***

A study of these built environments of self-taught artists leads us to understand that "art" shouldn't be constrained by the academic language of genres or borders or disciplines or categorizations. Humans are creative, period: it is perhaps the most important thing that separates us from other species. And because we are each different, we each manifest our creativity in different ways. What I may appreciate, my neighbor may not, and vice versa, but by taking the time to try to understand the personal, cultural, social, and historical contexts of these sites, we are able to broaden the definition of art itself in a way that more truly reflects the on-the-ground reality of creative expression.



Leonard Knight, Salvation Mountain  
Photo: Jo Farib Hernández