

# WATTS TOWERS COMMON GROUND ART, MIGRATIONS, DEVELOPMENT

OCTOBER 22-24, 2010, UCLA & WATTS  
[www.WattsTowersCommonGround.org](http://www.WattsTowersCommonGround.org)

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2010  
Sequoia Room, Faculty Center, UCLA

### 2:00 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

**Thomas Harrison**, Department of Italian, UCLA • **Olga Garay**, Director, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs • **Keith Parker**, Associate Vice Chancellor of Government and Community Relations, UCLA

*The Watts Towers* • Film by **Michael McNamara**, 2005

**Luisa Del Giudice**, Los Angeles • *The Watts Towers Common Ground Initiative*

### 3:15 THE WATTS TOWERS AND ART MOVEMENTS: LOCAL & GLOBAL I • Chaired by **Paul Vangelisti**, Otis College of Art & Design

**Jo Farb Hernandez**, S.P.A.C.E.S. & San Jose State Univ. • *Local Art, Global Issues: Tales of Survival and Demise Among Contemporary Art Environments*

**Guglielmo Bilancioni**, Univ. of Genova • *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere: Simon Rodia and Fantastic Architecture*

**Amit Wolf**, UCLA • *The Open Macrostructure: Umberto Eco's Semiology of Architecture and The Watts Towers*

### 4:45 Break

### 5:00 THE COMMITTEE FOR SIMON RODIA'S TOWERS IN WATTS (CSRTW): RARE REFLECTIONS BY EARLY MEMBERS • Chaired by **Paul A. Harris**, Loyola Marymount University

**William Cartwright**, Co-Founder CSRTW • In conversation with **Edward Landler**  
**Bud Goldstone** • Film, introduction by **Seth Strongin**, The City Project

**Jeanne Morgan** • Film, introduction by **Edward Landler**, Filmmaker

**6:30** **Timothy Watkins**, Watts Labor Community Action Committee, Los Angeles • “*Don’t Move, Improve!*” *Watts Labor Community Action Committee, Past and Present* (Introduction by **Darnell Hunt**)

**7:00** Opening Reception, with Poet, **Otis O’Solomon**, Watts Prophet

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2010**  
121 Dodd Hall, UCLA

**9:00 THE WATTS TOWERS AND ART MOVEMENTS: LOCAL & GLOBAL II** • Chaired by **Thomas Harrison**, UCLA

**Susan D. Anderson**, UCLA • *Preserving the History of Watts as a Progenitor of the Avant-Garde*

**Paul A. Harris**, Loyola Marymount Univ., Los Angeles • *The Poetic Concrete of Sam Rodia’s Watts Towers and the Concrete Poetry of Ronald Johnson*

**Richard Cándida Smith**, Univ. of California, Berkeley • *An Era of Grand Ambitions: Sam Rodia and California Modernism*

**10:45 ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION** • Chaired by **Rosie Lee Hooks**, Watts Towers Arts Center

**John Outterbridge** • **Judson Powell** • **Charles Dickson** • **Augustine Aguirre** • **Bettye Saar**

**12:00** Lunch, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, 580 Hilgard Ave., LA 90024

**1:15** Visit to Powell Library Exhibition: *Committee for Simon Rodia’s Towers in Watts, UCLA Special Collection No. 1388*, with **Luisa Del Giudice** (optional)

**2:00 CONSERVATION OF THE TOWERS** • Chaired by **Jo Farb Hernandez**, S.P.A.C.E.S.

**Steve Colton**, Art Conservator, Los Angeles • *Conservation Work at the Towers: A Brief Overview of Conditions, Causes, Treatment Campaigns, and Results Over Five Decades*

**Jeffrey Herr**, Hollyhock House/Simon Rodia’s Towers in Watts, DCA • *Simon Rodia’s Towers: A Status Report*

**Mark Gilberg**, and **Frank D. Preusser**, Conservation Center, LACMA • *The Watts Towers – Preservation Impossible?*

3:30 Break

3:45 **Migrations** • Chaired by **Dominic Thomas**, UCLA

**Kenneth Scambray**, Univ. of La Verne • *California and the Italian Immigrant Experience: The Artistic and Literary Contexts of Simon Rodia's Watts Towers*

**Linden Beckford Jr.**, Los Angeles • *The Black Southern Migration in Watts: Post-WWII Facelift*

**Katia Ballacchino**, Univ. of Rome Sapienza • *Towers of Memory: Images and Visual Community Symbols Between Italy and the United States*

5:15 Visit to Powell Library Exhibition: *Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, UCLA Special Collection No. 1388*, with **Susan Anderson** (optional)

Istituto Italiano di Cultura  
1023 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, 90024 (Westwood)  
("Settimana della Lingua Italiana")

6:00 *I Build the Tower* • Film by **Edward Landler** and **Brad Byer** (with Rodia family members, **Virginia** and **Leonard Sullivan, Mary Lou Byer**) • Exhibition: *Sabato Rodia's Watts Towers*

7:30 Reception

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2010

DAY IN WATTS

(by pre-payment only)\*

Watts Towers & Watts Towers Arts Center (WTAC)  
1727 East 107<sup>th</sup> St., LA 90002

&

Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC)  
10950 South Central Ave., LA 90059

8:30 Departure, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1023 Hilgard Ave., LA (Westwood) 90024 Westwood

9:00 **I** - Guided Tour of the Watts Towers, Watts Towers Arts Center, Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center (including Exhibition: *Migrating Towers: The Gigli of Nola and Beyond*), Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, Conservation Headquarters • **II** - Guided Tour of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee campus, including Civil Rights Museum

11:30 Lunch, Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC)

12:30 **ART ENVIRONMENTS & CULTURAL CONTEXTS** • Chaired by **Luisa Del Giudice**

**Joseph Sciorra**, John D. Calandra It. Am. Inst., Queens College, NY • *“Why a Man Makes the Shoes?”: Italian-American Art and Philosophy in Sabato Rodia's Watts Towers*

**Laura E. Ruberto**, Berkeley City College • *A California Detour on the Road to Italy: The Hubcap Ranch, the Napa Valley, and Italian American Identity*

**Alessandro Dal Lago** and **Serena Giordano**, University of Genova • *Art Without Nation*

**Thomas Harrison**, UCLA • *Sam Rodia—Outsider Artist?*

2:30 **ART & DEVELOPMENT** • Chaired by **Edward Tuttle**, UCLA

**Gail Brown**, “Where I'm Standing,” Los Angeles • *From Where I'm Standing Photo-Documentary Workshops at Watts Towers Arts Center: Building Community Through Self-Awareness and Self-Expression*

**Monica Barra**, Rutgers University • *Teaching the Watts Towers, Learning Los Angeles: Public Art, Storytelling, and Urban Pedagogy*

**Darnell M. Hunt** and **Ana Christina Ramon**, UCLA • *Watts This About “Black Los Angeles?” An Anthology on Space, People, Image, and Action*

**Melissa Hayes**, Chicago History Museum • *Watts California; Branding Communities for Cultural Tourism*

4:00 *I Build the Tower*, Film by **Edward Landler** and **Brad Byer**

---

**\*DAY IN WATTS TOUR** - 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (*optional return at 4:15 p.m.*)

*Includes return transportation to Westwood, guided tour & lunch. Reservation by pre-payment only. Payment must be received by **October 20**. To register, send name, telephone number, and*

email to: [info@wattstowerscommonground.org](mailto:info@wattstowerscommonground.org). And send **check for \$15** (payable to “**Italian Cultural Institute**”) to: Watts Tour c/o IIC, 1023 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024

[Made possible, in part, by a grant from S.P.A.C.E.S. - Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments]

---

**LOCATIONS:**

[IIC – Istituto Italiano di Cultura](#)

1023 Hilgard Ave.  
Los Angeles (Westwood) 90024

[St. Alban's Episcopal Church](#)

580 Hilgard Ave.  
Los Angeles 90024

[UCLA – Faculty Center, Powell Library, Dodd Hall](#)

Westholme/Hilgard Ave.  
Los Angeles 90024

[Watts Labor Community Action Committee](#)

10950 South Central Ave.  
Los Angeles 90059

[Watts Towers & Watts Towers Arts Center](#)

1727 East 107th St.  
Los Angeles 90002

**SPONSORS:**

Department of Italian at the University of California at Los Angeles; UCLA International Institute; City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); Italian Cultural Institute of Los Angeles (IIC); Consulate General of Italy in Los Angeles; Armand Hammer Museum; Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments (S.P.A.C.E.S.); Watts Towers Arts Center (WTAC); Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC); Museo Etnomusicale, I Gigli di Nola (Gigli of Nola Ethnomusicological Museum); St. Alban's Episcopal Church; Dept. of Special Collections, Young Research Library, UCLA

**PROJECT COORDINATOR:** Luisa Del Giudice

**UCLA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:** Thomas Harrison, Luisa Del Giudice, Jo Farb Hernandez, Paul Harris, Alessandro Dal Lago

**AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF:** Edward Landler, Rosie Lee Hooks, Edward Tuttle, Rudy Barbee, Janine Watkins

[www.WattsTowersCommonGround.org](http://www.WattsTowersCommonGround.org)