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Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts: Art, Migrations, Development (Critical Studies in Italian America (FUP))

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A multi-faceted exploration of Sabato Rodia's Watts Towers provides an insightful, panoramic study of the man, his monuments, and their cultural/social/physical environments.

The extraordinary Watts Towers were created over the course of three decades by a determined, single-minded artist, Sabato Rodia, a highly remarkable Italian immigrant laborer who wanted to do "something big." Now a National Historic Landmark and internationally renowned destination, **the Watts Towers in Los Angeles are both a personal artistic expression and a collective symbol of Nuestro Pueblo--Our Town/Our People**. Featuring fresh and innovative examinations that mine deeper and broader than ever before, *Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts* is a much anticipated revisitation of the man and his towers.

In 1919, Sabato Rodia purchased a triangular plot of land in a multiethnic, working-class, semi-rural district. He set to work on an unusual building project in his own yard. By night, Rodia dreamed and excogitated, and by day he built. He experimented with form, color, texture, cement mixtures, and construction techniques. He built, tore down, and re-built. As an artist completely possessed by his work, he was often derided as an incomprehensible crazy man.

Providing **a multifaceted, holistic understanding of Rodia**, the towers, and the cultural/social/physical environment within which the towers and their maker can be understood, *Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts* compiles essays from twenty authors, offering perspectives from the arts, the communities involved in the preservation and interpretation of the towers, and the academy. Most of the contributions originated at two interdisciplinary conferences held in Los Angeles and in Italy: "Art & Migration: Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts, Los Angeles" and "The Watts Towers Common Ground Initiative: Art, Migrations, Development."

The Watts Towers are wondrous objects of art and architecture as well as the expression and embodiment of the resolve of a singular artistic genius to do something great. But they also recount the heroic civic efforts (art and social action) to save them, both of which continue to this day to evoke awe and inspiration. *Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts* presents **a well-rounded tribute to one man's tenacious labor of love**.

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