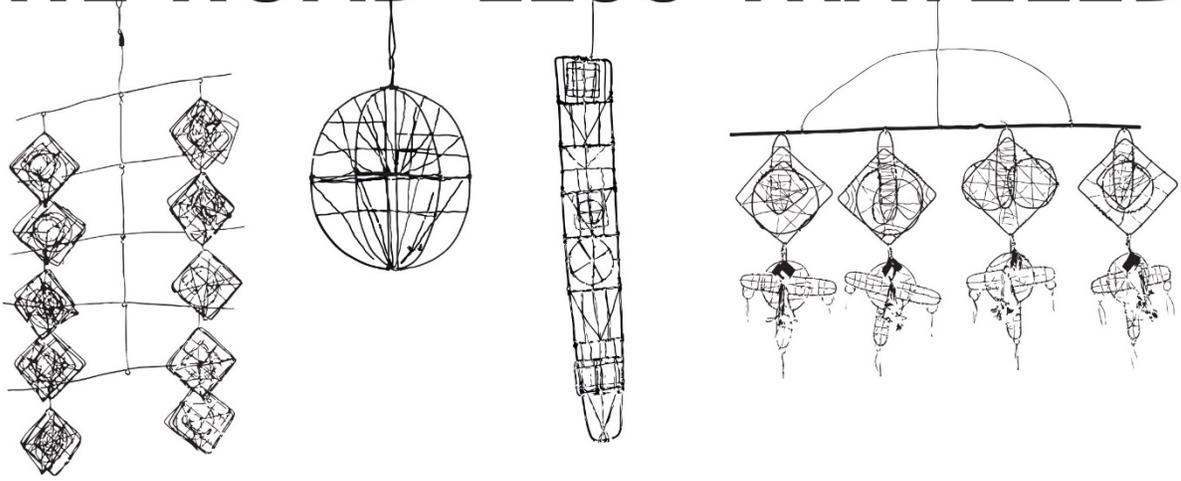


THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED



Sheboygan, WI September 27–29, 2017

Turn Signals Session

Speaker 1:

Turn Signals is about current issues facing site stewardship. This seemed like a perfect panel for me to moderate. As the director of Pasaquan, really, and a representative CSU, I am really a rookie at this. I thought, "Wow, this is something I should be involved in." When Peter Rosin asked me to do it, I said, "Yeah, perfect. This panel sounds like a group of people that has a lot of information to share." I couldn't wait to take part in it. The panelists are going to discuss things like administration, project management, conservation, tourism, zoning laws, landscaping, historic preservation, marketing, and public relation.

Let me first quickly introduce our panelist. Then we're going to get right into the discussion with Erica Nelson. To my left here, I have Erica Nelson. She is going to discuss S.P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden and Lucas, Kansas. She is an independent artist and educator. I'm going to probably mess this up, but she's the creator, and I love this thing, she's the creator of The World's Largest Collection of the World's Smallest Version of the World's Largest Things Traveling Roadside Attraction and Museum. It's here, right now in Sheboygan. I saw it in a parking lot a couple hours ago. If you get a chance, ask her about that. I've met Erica about two years ago when she was doing the restoration of Pasaquan. She'd worked on that. When I found out she's has been involved in site stewardship for years, I took her out for a beer. I realized if I take her out for beer, she will give me a lot of knowledge. She was so generous, if I bought her beer. She has given me so much to think about and helped me deal with the challenges that I was going to face as the new director of Pasaquan.

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To the left of her, we have of Peter Tokofsky. He is going to talk about the rise and fall of Kim Fahey's Phonehenge West. Yesterday evening, I talked to him on the phone. I said, "What do you want me to say in your introduction?" He said, "Well, just one thing. How do we steward a site that primarily does not exist?" I thought this is going to be interesting, but I will talk a little more about Peter. Peter is a senior public program specialist at the John Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and associate adjunct professor of Germanic languages at UCLA. Previously, Peter was the director of Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles and an independent curator of exhibitions. Peter's going to, again, talk about a little bit the rise and fall of Phonehenge West.

To the left of him, we have of Alex Gartelmann. He's going to discuss the developing strategies and stewardship of long-term care of the Mary Nohl House. Many of you probably know the Mary Nohl House. It's about 45 minutes away. Alex is currently the exhibition program coordinator at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Alex is also an amazing artist. Some of you saw him discuss some of his artwork yesterday in a panel. I was just so impressed with his collaborative works. He's exhibited widely across the United States. He received his BFA from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and his MFA school of Art Institute in Chicago. Again, he's going to talk to us a little bit about the challenges at the Mary Nohl House.

Then to his left, we have someone with a lot of knowledge about preservation, Jim Draeger. Jim is Wisconsin State historic preservation officer. He has a wealth of knowledge to share with us. He's going to discuss the relationship between artist built environments and the more mainstream historic preservation movements. He's going to cover principal, strategies, and practices of historic preservation, preservation advocacy, National Register of Historic Places, historic structures and reports, and much more. No pressure, Jim. That's a lot to cover.

I think without any further discussion from me, we're going to turn this over to Erica Nelson and begin this panel discussion. Again, thank you for attending. We hope you can add stick around and add some questions at the end.

Erica Nelson: Clicker advice?

Speaker 1: Arrow right.

Erica Nelson: This one? Okay. Hey, look. There I am. Sweet.

Speaker 1: I should have dome that for you, sorry.

Erica Nelson: It's all right. I live next door to turn of the last century folk art environment called the Garden of Eden. I've been familiar with artist built environments throughout my graduate work. As an exercise in keeping myself sane while teaching grad school, I would take trips to find these places that feed me back.

This Garden of Eden was always one in that little central road trip where you could tell something was different, something wasn't being taught to us as students. We weren't teaching them as instructors. They were inherent in these sites, in these little, tiny, rural towns in Kansas. I kept circling back and circling back to this place until I finally landed in Lucas while living in the bus full-time, on the road for two years searching for integrated arts communities in a rural setting. I spanned up and down the Midwest and over to the West Coast, but kept coming back to this center.

Went to an auction, and a house sold for \$1,200. I thought, "You can buy a house in Kansas for cash that has a roof and plumbing and electricity?" I started looking at property, and the house right next door to this place that had served as this source of inspiration was for sale. I called up. I ended up purchasing the house right next door to this turn-of-the-century folk art environment for less than the price of used car. This is just happenstance that I now live next to this thing. This is my neighbor. I see him every day. In seeing something every day, you forget. You forget so easily, because you're thinking about what bill's going to be at the post office. You're thinking about, "I just almost stepped in that dog poop on my way." You forget about these sites as something phenomenal until somebody comes in to see it and gives you that energy back.

Our site is so developed on tourism, because that's how Dinsmoor intended it. That's also what reminds us site stewards that these places are freaking amazing, and they're your neighbors. Your neighbors are making these. Your neighbors come from the same place that you are. You can make one of these environments. This is why I live in Lucas.

For those of you not familiar with the Garden of Eden, Samuel Perry Dinsmoor was a Civil War veteran born in Ohio, near Coolville, so home to James Dean, I believe. He built this two-story log cabin made out of the only building material that was available in our area, which is a layer of limestone. We don't have trees, but we have rock. He decided to treat that rock like you would a tree and had hewn out these giant logs, massive logs of limestone dovetailed into a log cabin form. After that, he started embellishing his environment with three-story concrete structures that reflect populist party politics at the turn of the last century, so not Sarah Palin populism. This is populism that grew out of the Farmers' Alliance, so a much different beast. He built the house as an oddity and always had it open for tours. The sculptures ended up being a way to expand this home built environment into a story.

The reason that is called the Garden of Eden was because of the railroads. The railroads convinced pockets of immigrants to come out into the middle of Kansas. They said, "All right, when you're on the train, you can throw seeds out the train window. By the time you get your bags and get to your homestead, they'll already be growing. That's the kind of Garden of Eden this is." Such a lie. I mean, you can't grow crap there unless you're really, really messing with the soil. I mean, this is high plains prairie. This is where the buffalo roam. These are hard, hard to reach areas. The Farmers' Alliance joined to teach each other how

to work the land and actually not die on your homestead property. That's why it's called the Garden of Eden. Dinsmoor did start out illustrating some of those Garden of Eden stories just as a moral philosophy.

He started building out of this new material called Portland cement. His innovations with the use of Portland cement were so important at the time that he was using them, that they got written up in trade journals of the times. Cement Era Magazine did an article on Dinsmoor's work. This was supposed to be a structural application not a sculptural application. His expansion of this very practical material into a sculptural medium was really mind blowing. He worked on the house up until 1907 and worked on the sculptures from 1907 up until a little bit before his death in 1932. He started out illustrating some of the Garden of Eden story, because that was the title of the environment. At a corner post, he said, "I'm going to only illustrate what's real now, because I don't believe in God or perpetual motion or anything else that can't be proven. Now, I'm going to take this other bend on his other street-side set of sculptures ..."

This is where the political cartooning in 3-D form really started. You'll see an octopus with the word trust written across his belly and those tentacles reaching around a globe to take control of the Panama Canal to start controlling the trade industries. Another tentacle eating a bag of interest, because that's what they were and getting fed on. Its supported by a limb labeled chartered rights, because of the rights that we chartered a way to the bank trust. That was fueling this whole big, social Darwinism that he illustrated in concrete form at the turn of the last century. That octopus has a tentacle around a woman who is reaching for a soldier. That soldier is an aiming down his gun at the next tree, but the octopus also is controlling that soldier's food supply, so he can control the armies of the world. That soldier sighting down his gun is shooting at a Native American who has his bow and arrow pulled back so he can shoot a dog that's after a cat that's after a bird that's after a worm that's eating a leaf. That was this big, long, political thing.

This was not built as an art environment. This was built as political cartooning. This is built as a lesson for visitors. He knew that you needed to have that flimflam to give people in a reason to stay. Why you're there through entertaining storytelling, he could actually affect social change. This is really unique environment. I think people gloss over it, because it's called Garden of Eden. This is populist party politics at the turn of the last century in rural Kansas. It's a really strange, amazing, beautiful place.

These sculptures are 100 years old, concrete, Portland cement mixed with native minerals for the coloration. We did do a massive restoration project. One of our first things that happened was cleaning these hundred-year-old sculptures and realizing that the colors in the sculptures are not paint, but they're within the structures themselves. By mixing white Portland and gray Portland and minerals from the area, you could get this whole range of whites through grays through reds. That's what made at the sculptures, so that the

color is inherent and the text comes out. When they're clean, they are beautiful and vibrant and almost like printed word.

He does go on to add major tableaux in the back that talk about how to affect social change. We have voters exercising their right to vote with a crosscut saw labeled ballot. That's taking down those chartered rights that will take down the bank trust. The bank trust octopus has already been stabbed in the head by the goddess of liberty saying that this is how you free yourself to do more work. Then on the surrounding trees, because he was building this at the turn of the last century, he has the disenfranchised folks. He has a black man pointing to Liberty saying, "I deserve that right too." He has an immigrant laborer pointing to Liberty saying, "I deserve that right too." He has a woman who is unmarried and has no lands pointing to Liberty saying, "I deserve that right too." He gave all of them a path to Liberty with the hopes that they would actually be able to attain that goal that everybody else took for granted.

This is teaching tool today. Any time that we tell the story to somebody else, we're reminded of the story ourselves. I sometimes get into tour guide mode, and I can hear this audible click in my head when it's like, "Are you even listening to what you're saying. You're just doing the tour now." It's so easy to slip into the language and the jargon of the places that we caretake and forget the reason that we do all of these. It takes those visitors eyes as a reminder that, "Holy crap, this is my neighbor. This is so great. I love it. I love it."

One of his things that he did to ensure the continuation of his site, because he did know that people would come to visit. He knew that to really make it something that would draw people in, he built a mausoleum for himself and had himself interred in a coffin with a glass front. He built his coffin. He would pose in his coffin for an extra quarter whenever he was giving tours. At some point, he was called on tax evasion, because he was running an attraction but not paying an attraction tax. He stopped charging admission, but started requiring that you buy four postcards before he would talk to you about the environment.

Anyway, he built his own concrete coffin. This is a double exposed photograph that he had produced of himself outside the coffee looking in and inside dead. He was using all the tricks in this very serious way, in this humorous way to get a political message across. When he died, he was interred in his coffin, placed in the mausoleum, and place behind glass. He wrote in his will that he wanted this done so that people couldn't see his body for less than a dollar. If he saw you drop a dollar into the hands of the flunky, which is usually me. He might even just give you a smile. He looked at that need for an admission and fantasticality to pay for upkeep of this site. It's been operated as a tourist attraction not every single year, but there's been some ups and down, some ebbs and flows. That's always been written into the building of the site itself.

One of the other fantastic stories is his very young, beautiful wife. When he was 81, he married his 20 year old housekeeper. They did have two children together. Their son, John, just passed away within the last four years. John

Dinsmoor was the youngest surviving offspring of a Civil War veteran. There are so many superlatives attached to this site, it makes for some great storytelling.

In some year fairly recently, I think it was 2011, Kohler Foundation was there for the rescue. Dinsmoor made the environment. The environment went to his second wife, depression hit. She couldn't keep up with it. Garden was sold to the daughter of the first marriage who was older than the second wife, didn't like a second family. She transferred the site to a money making scheme that was not based on tourism or the sculptures. She turned it into a rental unit. Outside sculptures were forgotten. Folk art was an embarrassment at that time. There are trees and vines growing up through these sculptures. You couldn't even see it. It wasn't until, I think it was the Kansas Centennial or maybe Sesquicentennial, the local booster club was like, "Oh, we've got this thing. We've never really torn it down, but it looks pretty crappy. Let's go in there and clean it up and see what's under." They started revealing that the sculptures were okay. That neglect had almost saved them. The fact that his body was there scared the local kids enough that there like, "I'm not going in there. I dare you to go in there." People would run past when it was over grown. This sort of mystique in building it also saved it.

A local man bought it from the bank. He was going to continue the rental unit until his wife saw it and went, "No. We're going to save this. We're going to restore it. We're going to turn it back into a tourist attraction." They took out all the infrastructure that made it into apartments, restored it back to what Dinsmoor intended, in their methods that they had. They ran it for 22 years and retired.

A second group of owners saw this advertised in the farm paper, the free one at the coffee shop that has really big monster trucks and heavy equipment and free goats. Then there's a listing for historic tourist attraction. Man who'd grown up in that area, still had family in the area, but was now teaching at the University of Kansas saw it and went, "Whoa, this can't be the Garden advertise on the back of the Farm Journal." He called up and it was. He got a group of people to band together with their cash, bought it, and they ran it as a business for the next 22 years.

At that point they knew that the sculptures were in great shape, but on the verge of becoming a problem and not so great shape. While we had been doing admission that whole time, it wasn't enough to do that full top to bottom, let's break into it, conservation leeway, not breaking things, but and let's repair and bring this back to full standards of conservation. The only way that could happen was with Kohler Foundation help. Negotiated between that second 22 year owner. Kohler took it over. We spent a year and a half on the site. Then it was gifted to a new nonprofit that was formed specifically to caretake the Garden of Eden into the next hundred years.

While the site is 100 years old, the friends of S.P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden is only five. We are a very young organization. We've tried to honor the legacy of

everybody before us. We do have one of those older owners on our board as a continuation of the knowledge of the relationships that have been up through the relationships that we can build now and move forward on. It's a much more dynamic board, because on its very foundation, we knew we had to be careful with how we structured our next step, so that it doesn't become this one person's voice. It becomes Dinsmoor's voice aided by all of us as facilitators into the next century, so that it can be perpetually turned over and perpetually in care. That Kohler Foundation restoration was the turning point for this site in the middle of a town of 400 people that would not have had this resource, but has springboard us into where we should be or approaching where we should be in stewardship.

Look at those colors. This is the before and after of just washing them. The town was like, "What? Why did you guys paint everything?" I was like, "No, this was here." They're like, "Everybody has nipples. They're blushing and have eyebrows. She looks [inaudible 00:21:58]." These forms have underwear. You can see through the holes that are intentional and see that he built a structure and then he clothed it and then he clothed it again. Just in cleaning and doing that careful, careful restoration that doesn't break anything else around it and is obvious enough that you can tell, "All right, original, original, original. That's where the original stops where we can see the continuation." It's that same team of people mixing cookies at the local clay in the white Portland through the gray Portland and physically taking those around and matching them until everything is right and using historic photographs to put the pieces back together in the least wrong that we can do.

This is a shot from right before a 40 minute hailstorm that pummeled Lucas. Luckily, Garden of Eden fared okay. We've got a lot of pointing fingers that are broken. We've got a lot of stumps going on. We do have a roof that needs to be done by the end of the year. This is a National Register of Historic Places site. I don't remember if Watts Tower is a month ahead or behind us.

Speaker 1: Behind.

Erica Nelson: Behind. Sorry. Let you into that one. Our lighting was destroyed. We've got some fingers to work on. With that National Register designation, I think our new board is really thinking about this in a global context. While there is not a guidebook for restoration for these sites, I do think that is very much in our toxin plans as we fix things and document, document, document, document the fixing through each era and make available those resources. That's my neighbor. See him every day. It takes you guys to remind us that they're awesome. Thanks.

Peter Tokofsky: First of all, I want to again just thank the organizers, Valerie and Peter and anyone else who's been responsible for making this conference so great. One of the things I do at the Getty Museum is I help organize our conferences. I wish they ran smoothly as this one does. I'm going to try to be fairly brief, because I think the conversations are among the best part of what we do here.

I want to talk about a site outside of the city of Los Angeles, in northern Los Angeles County. It's called Phonehenge West. The name isn't that meaningful. Kim Fahey who created it, who you see here, spent his entire working career working for the phone company, so he has a relationship with phones. As you can see in this picture, he makes liberal use of retired telephone and utility poles. It got the name Phone, Phonehenge stuck, but then he learned about the site somewhere in the eastern half United states where someone's taken British phone booths and arranged them in the shape of Stonehenge, and they call it Phonehenge. He dubbed this Phonehenge West.

It was in Acton, California marked there. One of the remarkable things about this site is that probably about 10 million people live within 50 miles of it. As far as I know, only his immediate neighbors knew it existed. He started building it in the early 1980s and worked on it for about 30 years. When I first went to see it, we went to Acton. I didn't have an exact address. Acton is a small place. We drove into the town. When you see more pictures of it, you'll see that we thought that it would be easily visible, and we would find it. We couldn't see it, so we went to town, and we had to ask about 20 people before someone could actually point us in the right direction.

When Kim retired from the phone company, he bought a property in Acton. This house without the bridge on the left there was on the property. Kim is a guy who is very restless and always needs to be doing something. In retirement, he set to work. He decided that the one building was not enough. Over the course of 30 years, he built over a dozen additional buildings and connected them with a series of bridges and ramps and was always very eager to welcome guests to the site.

I'm just going to do a quick tour of some of these buildings. Almost all of the materials that he used were repurposed, found, traded for, acquired in various ways. I'll talk more about that in a few minutes. At one point, he was in a motorcycle accident. He started building the additional units for his children. He's a guy that just people come and stay there, and his kids have friends. He wanted everyone to have their own little space, so he built small structures. At one point after his motorcycle accident, Kim was briefly confined to a wheelchair. It wasn't certain whether he would walk again, so it was partly for himself that he started building the bridges and ramps, so he could get from one structure to another. He's also a collector of all kinds of things from vintage Tonka trucks to rocks to plastic toys. They were scattered throughout the grounds as well.

The project culminated in what he called the tower. This is in the front of all those other buildings. It was the height of about a three-story building. Also, built with lots of utility poles and all kinds of found materials, glass from demolition sites. Every element there has story. We'll talk more about that. This is the front of the tower. To get to it you would have to go up his scissor lift, because there was no ground floor. Here he is on a typical day. Some people have shown up. He takes them up into the tower. It's also beautiful, high desert

country there. If you go on the right day, you can not only get nice pictures, but you can really enjoy the landscape.

Now, the way most of us became aware of it, people like myself, was because eventually around 2009-2010 Phonehenge made it into the Los Angeles Times. The reason it was one of the most viewed stories in the Times in 2011 was because finally the Los Angeles County Building Department heard about this. The tower drew their attention and taking people up to unpermitted building on a scissors lift will tend to draw the scrutiny of building inspectors. Of course, then they got there. They saw that he had about a dozen other unpermitted buildings. That started an extended process of them trying to make him cease-and-desist. That's not gonna work with Kim Fahey. There was a lot of reportage in the paper about what was going on.

He was eventually put on the on trial for building code violations, because he refused to meet their demands. Eventually, he was sentenced to jail and the building was condemned for demolition. He was sentenced for several months. He served six days in Los Angeles County Twin Tower prison. Let's say, he was one of the less hardened criminals in that facility. He does like to say that he thinks he would've served fewer than six days, however, it was in December and he made such a good Santa Claus that the sheriffs wanted him to stick around for their holiday party. He also likes to say that when other inmates asked him what he was in for he'd say, "Building a treehouse" He became known as Santa Claus who built a treehouse.

That's the introduction. The reality is our story could end there. The verdict was executed. We had some video here, but it's not working. If you go online, you can find video of Phonehenge West being torn down. There's nothing there anymore. In a way appreciate the organizers, the panel putting me on a panel about stewardship, because it's not something I thought about myself doing even if it were there, but now it's not there. It gives me a chance to ponder what really is our role in working with sites. I think there's a lot of things about this item, probably comparable stories elsewhere, that still warrants stewardship. For one thing, Kim Fahey is still alive. We like to talk about the makers along with the object. He's an amazingly creative and industrious person. We should still be interested in him even though he doesn't live in this facility anymore. Kim's a person of interest.

There's other things too. He did this remarkable thing. I don't know of many other instances of this. Not only did he get up at the crack of dawn and work on the site until after dark, until his wife would say, "You've got to come back in." When he was done doing that, he would sit down and keep a journal of everything he did on the site that day. There's these incredible volumes, which he still has. I truly hope they'll end up in a museum at some point. We can get the history of Phonehenge and the building of Phonehenge in great detail. Scattered throughout these journals are also clippings, not only about Phonehenge when it made it into the news, but things that he was interested in

on an even day and that he had seen in newspapers, internet, magazines. He would paste them in there.

He also is a model builder, so building 12 structures or three-story towers isn't enough to keep him busy. He built models. Some are fantasy models. Some are models of Phonehenge. Many of these still exist. He's given away a lot of them, but I think some of them are still in his possession, and the others can be found. They too, I think, should be preserved in a museum talking about the incredible creativity of a unique individual. Here he is with a model of Phonehenge.

Kim moved out of Los Angeles County and moved to the north to Kern County on what he now calls Phonehenge North. When he first moved there, he vowed to rebuild the exact same thing. It took him 30 years to build. He's in his 60s. Nobody really thought he could pull it off. Then there was the question of whether he should build the exact same thing or not. About a year after moving there, he also had a stroke. He's lost the use of his right arm. I think because a number of people have doubted that he could build much of anything there, he seems more determined than ever to build stuff. He's busy. He's working. I'll get into this a little bit more. You see the perimeter fencing there is something that he put up himself. The main structure there was on the property. It's a shed. He's done a lot there. I have a few more pictures. Here's his chicken coop. He's still using telephone poles.

He thought he had an arrangement with the demolition company to preserve materials from Phonehenge West. If you watch the video, he talks about that. He believes they went in there with a vengeance to destroy any usable materials. There's very little that he was able to preserve from Phonehenge West. These are all things that he's had to acquire subsequently.

The most important thing, I think, about this site, but in thinking about sites, is stories. Not only do we have the journals where he records everything. Kim is an incredible storyteller. He's self-published a book about his stories when he was installing phones in Hollywood and in Los Angeles. The greatest stories are the stories of how he gets his materials for these structures. What came down when Phonehenge came down were materials each one of which had a long story embedded in it. I'm embarking on a project, it's hard to keep him on track with this, but to tell the story of how every major building component at Phonehenge was acquired.

As it turns out, in Phonehenge North, he's has a different artistic vision. He's very interested in birdhouses right now. He's discovered Pinterest. He's using that resource. He came up with this colored pencil idea. He's buying these dowels at Home Depot and sharpening and painting them. Those are going to be along the perimeter fence. This is one of the towers along the perimeter fence. He calls them hobbit towers. The main gates are going to be the colored pencil gates. They're not up yet. Mind you, he's doing this with one hand, one arm. It's not his natural arm. There he is. His right arm is not being. He loves tools. He wanted a picture of him with a tool.

These are some old shots of Phonehenge West. All of these materials had back histories on how they got there. That's one of the remnants that he could salvage from Phonehenge West. When I told him I wanted to talk about the stories that were embedded in Phonehenge West, he said, "Oh, you want stories from Phonehenge?" He pulled out this binder, which is separate from his journals. He said, "These are all stories I wrote down while I was building Phonehenge." I'm going to just finish with one typical story about how he gets these materials. This is actually a recent story. It's a Phonehenge North story not a Phonehenge West story.

The circles on the perimeter fence are from cable spools, wooden cable spools. Not far from where he lives there's a wood reclamation center where people bring used wood. It gets chipped up. It gets put on the landscape and so forth. It's the kind of place that he loves to go. He was up there one day, and some guy sees his truck, which is this nice mid-sized Ford flatbed and says, "Hey, your truck's the perfect size. Mine's too big. Would you mind taking a load of chips up to my property for me?"

Kim loves an adventure like this. He said, "Sure no problem." They load up his truck. He ends up taking him two loads of chips. They start talking. It turns out the person who requested this was actually the owner of the reclamation site. Kim said, "Hey, I see all those cable spools lying around. Do you mind if I took a few?" The guy's like, "Sure, how many do you want?" Kim's telling me he ran it through his head. He said, "Well, how many could I ask for that I think he'd really give it to me." He said, "20." He took 20. The guy said, "Yes." Kim's thinking, "Oh, I should have ask for more."

He went, and he put them, he painted them, he put them on the first segment of fence. Sometime later, the owner of the reclamation site drove by and really liked what Kim was doing and said to him, "Hey, you can take more if you want." He's taken several hundred now. A lot of them are lying around on the site. They can't be chipped, because they have metal in them. They were at the reclamation site. He's using those. I think there's about 150 on the perimeter fence. He hasn't quite figured out what to do with the remainder. He likes to talk about the form of his work following the material. He gets what he can, and he puts them in to use on the site.

Really, that story is kind of paradigmatic. Every tale he has about his materials start with him meeting somebody, chatting them up. Often, it's somebody whose truck is broken down by the side of the road. He picks them up. That's how he got the these new telephone poles is that one of the guys working on the replacement of telephone polls, his truck broke down on the way to work. Kim gave him a lift. They started talking. It's always, "If you want this stuff, and you can haul it away, take it. Sometimes it takes stuff, because he sees a barter potential in it. He might not need 400 wooden spools, but he thinks that maybe they can be traded for some boulders at some point or something like that.

The story continues. There's all of these stories that still exist in nonmaterial form from Phonehenge West. There are new stories emerging in Phonehenge North. As stewards, we can think about gathering that stuff as well, not just documenting the physicality. Also, what's interesting about Phonehenge North, I want to say this is my last point, as stewards, we're usually willing to restore, but can we work in a forward-looking way and say, "The man is there. He's got a vision for the site. Could we help him build it? Can we help build Phonehenge North rather than just saving it after he's gone?" Thanks.

Alex Gartelmann:

I'm Alex Gartelmann. I work for the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and, I think, similarly to how Erica landed next to Mr. Dinsmoor, I through series of unforeseen and serendipitous circumstances have ended up living in Mary Nohl's house. Living and working at Mary Nohl. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the site, it is located in Fox Point Wisconsin, which is about 45 miles south of here. The house is 60 feet off of Lake Michigan.

I think of the house in four phases. In 1924, her family erected a summer cottage that was a Sears' kit cottage close to the road. In 1930, they moved that cottage off the road and built an unconnected garage. In the 1943, when her parents retired who were living in Milwaukee at the time, they built that larger structure that you see in the middle to connect the cottage and the garage. The fourth phase is starting in 1963 when Mary's mother was moved into assisted living. She began turning the property into the environment that we now know as the Mary Nohl Home and Arts Environment. This photo which is undated, as many of the photos are, it gives you a sense of what the house looked like while she was working on the environment. It's from sometime between 1963 and 2001.

She as sometimes is maddening for us who are working on the site, did not like to date anything, because she felt that nothing was ever potentially finished. She could always have this opportunity come back into anything she was working on. It is often hard to track where things land in the history of the site. Mary died in 2001. In 1996, this is another view, in 1996, she gifted the home and all of its contents to the Kohler Foundation that when she would pass that thus the home, the property, and all its contents would come to the Foundation and that \$11.3 million will be donated to the greater Milwaukee foundation to be used as annual artist grants for artists in three counties around Milwaukee or maybe just Milwaukee County, three counties.

The house, in 2012, was turned over to the John Michael Kohler Art Center to be the steward for the site. In 2015, it underwent a major renovation, because it was in pretty rough shape where the roof was replaced, the windows were replaced, all the mechanicals were replaced. We actually had to rebuild from scratch, the 1924 cottage. It suffered quite a bit of damage during a massive flooding event that happened in 2010 that put 4 feet of standing mud in the basement. Also, there was extensive termite damage were former collections manager actually fell through the floor into the crawlspace. It was decided that

that section of the house actually need to be totally rebuilt for the health of the building itself.

This is a view from the lake looking at the house. That's the eastern face. The property is 1.36 acres. It is populated with 40-some concrete sculptures that have been under a relative constant conservation effort since about 2003. This summer, we had a conservation crew there working on the sculptures for about six weeks. We just develop a priorities list for where things are at, because they need constant work, because Mary built them with sand and stone from the beach and probably Portland cement as her concrete mix. None of them have actual armatures. They are just stone stacked and muddied with concrete. It's actually amazing that they still are standing, because the property shifts so much, because of where it's located. There's also lots of pine trees, which she built sculptures close to when they were smaller and now they are bigger and encroaching. The roots are also encroaching on the foundations. She also didn't really build foundations for anything, so that's another issue.

This is what the house look like in 2010. These are photos from 2010. Excuse me, these are photos from 2015 right before the renovation happened. You can see that there's a large amount of artwork on the exterior of the home. Before the renovation happened, all of the artwork on the exterior of the home was removed. She nailed everything to the outside of the house, so it was a long process to safely get everything off. Like how she built a concrete sculptures, she was not necessarily concerned with the archival nature of the work with which she was doing. All the work on the exterior of the house is made from pine mounted on Masonite, and so over the course of it's life on the exterior of the house, which sits right on the lake in Wisconsin where we have really pleasant weather during the winter, it has suffered a great deal of degradation. We are in the process of assessing all of that artwork, prioritizing it for critical pieces to go back on the house in a certain order while we do reproduction work on those pieces to put them back in a manner that will have a lasting life well beyond what the pine and Masonite would offer.

One of the interesting things is that as we go through the pile of stuff in our collection storage, often times we find that these Masonite backings were existing paintings that Mary had made that she then decided to just cut down and use as her backing panel. As we flip them over to look at them, we are unveiling new paintings that have not been seen, which is exciting.

Now this is from this summer. This is a massive project. We've had to compartmentalize it. There was so much damage to the cedar siding on the house that it had ... She had painted the house, the entire exterior and the entire interior using carpet squares as sponge applications, so one carpet square at a time over and over and over again. I spent about six weeks doing a pretty extensive research on every different pile of carpet available with different paint densities in different colors and different types of paint to try to understand her method, which in a lot of ways I still don't. I wish I had the book of notes. Mary kept extensive journals in these five-year journals, so every page has the same

date for five years, which leaves you about eight lines to describe what you've done that day. The specifics within her process are rare. We're doing the best that we can with information that we have and working from the fairly large collection of photographs of the house over time.

The house was re-primed, because we had to put so much new siding on it. The focus this summer, I've been there full-time since the end of June, has been to get the exterior of the house repainted before our weather turns to be less amenable towards that activity. Two coats of white exterior, and then areas that have color, we put a coat of color on that, and then the texture treatment, using the highest quality, highest solid count exterior paints that we can to try to extend the life of that beyond. She was painting with whatever she had on top of an unclean surface, and so there was massive amounts of delamination and degradation to her paint treatment. We're going to try to avoid that.

You can see on the eastern face of the garage there behind those sculptures that is my paint treatment. You can see the texture, the mark-making that she was creating. This is what we've done. This is in process this summer. Also, spending a great deal of time color matching, finding locations of the house that we can unobtrusively take paint chips off. I have a really great paint guy who is able to match color for me in an exceptional way. If you find a paint guy, makes your life so much easier. This is where we're at at the end of the summer. I'm almost done around the back of the house as well.

As we move into the less amenable weather, I will move into the reproduction phase of a lot of the exterior artworks, working with Cedar, stainless hardware, and an E panel, which is a composite polyethylene cord panel that will replace the Masonite, and so that all of these things will be mounted back on the house with brackets that we can remove each panel if we need and then individual components of each panel. If work needs to be done or we need something for research purposes, we have those things.

In addition to the exterior, the interior of the home is fully treated by Mary's hand. All of her furniture, it's laden with objects. That's an understatement. All of the furniture is treated with her hand. As a part of this exhibition series this year, we exhibited Mary's living room, and so that furniture has actually just come back. The picture window that you see there below the fish, that entire wall had to be replaced, because it faces the lake and it was under duress. This is what it looks like replaced when I got there this summer. It needed to be repainted, and so these are my test samples of different piles of carpet and paint, color matching. We're bracketing colors based off of the color palette that I get in places where we can get a large enough sample. This is the retreatment. We've brought the furniture back. All that painting work has been done, that's not Mary's original hand, to match what she had there.

In lots of other sections of the interior of the house, there was a lot of plaster damage that was repaired, so we will also have to be matching into those locations. That will, again, happen when the weather changes. We will work in

phases to phase in the first floor of the house, so that we can use the second floor staging. Once the first floor is phased in, we'll phase the furniture into the second floor of the house.

The site has been under what I will refer to as nuanced and complicated local politics. It is closed to the public. I live there as a tenant to restore it, because Fox Point is 90 plus percent residential zoning. It is almost impossible to get commercial zoning there. We would have to get a cultural overlay and change the zoning to allow for public access. There are some neighbors who are not amenable to that idea. We are working to engage the community of Fox Point to find agency in the site within their own community, so it's not just some institution coming in and laying claim to this land, but that the community feels engaged, they feel that it's an important part of their story as well, so that we can change the narrative around the site from being this possible nuisance to the neighborhood that's going to bring in all this traffic, which is an erroneous claim of someone who now lives there full-time, so that we can find a way to get people access to the site. It is an important site.

There are so few sites that are built by women. This is such an extensive and important one. That part of the narrative around Mary's legacy of this houses that she has the unfortunate pejorative colloquialism of being the witch of Fox Point placed on her, because she was a single woman, living by herself, making work. To change the narrative around her and her time there and to look at these very important issues of feminism and gender theory that are really present in this moment and to use the site as a platform for scholarship around those things make it an important place to really focus on bringing back to how Mary had it.

We had to decide on a date with which to do all this work towards. 1998 was this moment where there was a critical mass. You can see these sculptures on the roof. Working with Karen, and we have a committee within the Art Center that we talk about all these major decisions, both everything from aesthetics to how we deal with the Village of Fox Point. We bring these decisions through the committee to try to do the best in Mary's legacy. '98 is the year that we're working towards since there's such a huge time period that she was working on this. We're going to hopefully, put the sculptures back on the roof and really make the site feel the way that she had at its pinnacle.

These are some of the panels, the Masonite panels, I was talking about. That's the side that had been facing the outside. On the back, you have these paintings. They're unbelievable. These are reproductions. That's an original, those red figures. That's all.

Jim Draeger:

I'm just going to comment on Alex's comment about how there were no foundations, and they weren't necessarily built to last. I have three words to comment on that: Frank Lloyd Wright. It's not just the artists who have issues with permanent.

I think I'll start with the with my personal journey here, because that seems like that's what happens at the conference. People talk about how they came to be interested in this kind of stuff. In 1985, I was living in Pasadena, California. I got a job there as a historic preservation planner. I was a big fan of modern African music. I heard about this African music festival that was going to be happening in Watts. It happened to be at Watts Tower. I had no idea what Watts Tower was. I came there, like many people have commented, just totally destroyed my ... What an amazing property that was. It whetted my appetite for these kinds of environments. While I was living California, I visited some of the better-known ones like Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village and Nitt Witt Ridge.

In the summer of 1987, I decided to take a job at the Wisconsin Historical Society running the National Register of Historic Places Program. We loaded our cats in our un-air-conditioned Toyota Tercel and headed across Death Valley, I wouldn't recommend that with cats in the back, and started driving to Wisconsin. Along the way, we decided to make one stop.

We stopped at the Garden of Eden in Lucas. It was 107° that day. Remember the cats in the un-air-conditioned Toyota Tercel? We drove there. I say, "We just have to stop." We've driven out of our way. It's not straight from California. We've driven out of our way to get there. We parked the car hoping we weren't going to kill the cats while we were touring it. We went inside. I hope it's air-conditioned now, because that second-floor in 1987 was excruciatingly hot. It was so hot that the docent said, "You can go up there, but I'm not going to go up there." We went up there. It was so hot in that attic that you could hardly breathe. I was just gasping for air. That is such an exceptional, exceptional, exceptional site. That was a moment of discovery for me.

I came to Wisconsin, started working the National Register Program. I found in the files a National Register nomination that was written in the early 1980s that attempted to list eight sites in Wisconsin on the National Register all in one nomination form. They used to let you do stuff like that. It was rejected by the National Park Service. They turned it back. What they said in their comments, which I think is a lesson to all of us, is that they lacked the historic context to be able to understand the significance of these sites. Because there wasn't a sufficient historic context, they said, "You can't nominate these things." That stuck in my craw. It seems that the significance of these sites are intrinsic. You can just look at them and you'd know they're significant. When you go to the Garden of Eden, and you glance at those amazing sculptures, you know it's something really special.

That's not how the National Register works. It's based on historical documentation. What they said is, "There's not any real scholarship about this stuff yet. We don't know what defines a good one, what's significant among this work." Those were valid criticisms, I think. I kept thinking about those sites. One day, my wife and I were vacationing up in northern Wisconsin, and on our way back, we decided to go down Highway 13. We visit us this modest little site that you've seen some of called the Wisconsin Concrete Park with its 237 full-size

concrete sculptures. I wandered around the grounds. I'm a cocky guy. I think I know what I'm talking about. I meet this woman on the site, and I start talking to her about it and pontificating about it. She gave me a very swift and brutal dressing down. Her name is Lisa Stone. She is in the room here today. That's where my real education about the sites began. Lisa quite ably demonstrated I had no idea what I was talking about. I've love her to this day for that. That's where my interest began in the site.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the nuts and bolts of how the world of historic preservation integrates with these sites. Because I'm a historian, I have to go back to the beginning. The Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, was a landmark piece of legislation in the history of preservation. Much of the preservation movement as we know it today was founded by the passage of that Act. Before 1966, historic preservation was a local thing. There were no professional standards. There weren't any standards for work. There wasn't really a profession of trained preservationists. It was a very, very poorly organized movement.

The passage of the Preservation Act was really spurred by the role of the federal government and a lot of grant programs that were developed in the 1950s and 60s. The Urban Renewal Program, which we like to call Urban Removal, because that's what it did really well. It tore the hearts out of cities and took neighborhoods that were blighted and destroyed them for new development that never followed. The Interstate Highway Act, which plowed on interstate freeways through farmland and into cities. All of those things were done without any regard for whether there was something historic in their path or not. It was the result of those actions that spurred the federal government to say, "Well, we really need to look at what the role of the federal government is in the leadership of historic preservation. We need to develop a framework for historic preservation."

The slide with these images I'm showing you right here, this is the Plankinton Mansion in Milwaukee, which was one of the finest, perhaps the finest Victorian house in the city of Milwaukee. The second slide was the day after our Marquette University drove a bulldozer into the front porch of the building, purposefully damaging the building, so they could have an excuse to take it down. As a result of that, Milwaukee passed its first historic preservation ordinance. It was a devastating loss for the city.

As a result of the Preservation Act, they created the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register as the Park service likes to say is the nation's official federal list of buildings, sites, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. The idea behind the National Register what started was just a bureaucrat's tool. If you're going to protect properties from federal action, you have to know which ones are historic. Before that, there wasn't any measure really of what significance was and how a property could be considered to be historically significant. The National Register was meant to be that benchmark that says, "This is what historic property is," so that federal bureaucrats, if

you're a highway planner or you work for HUD or the Army Corps of Engineers, you can look at a list and say, "Oh, that building's on that list or that site is on that list. We have to take that into consideration when we're doing our project planning." It was as simple as that. It was meant to just be an objective measure of what was historically significant.

The National Register began just as a friendly bureaucrat's tool, but it became more than that. Once the federal government got in the business of deeming things to be historically significant, people began to understand that there was a whole honorific nature to that designation too. It's not an easy thing to get a property listed on the National Register. The process is somewhat demanding. Going through that process, in the end you get a definitive designation that says that your property is historically significant. I know that's a battle that a lot of you who are stewards of the sites fight, that you're fighting for the validity of the site. That people are saying, "Oh, that's just a pile of junk out there. Why don't you just bulldoze that thing." The National Register gives you some uncontested status that your property is historically significant, and that it's worth preservation.

The National Register is not regulatory to the property owners. The biggest myth about the National Register is you get something listed on the register, you can't tear down and you can't change it without somebody telling you you can change it. All of that's totally false. Every year in Wisconsin, we've got roughly about 4,000 listings on the National Register. Every year, some of those are torn down. There's nothing in the National Register status that that can prevent that from happening.

What it regulates is the government. When there is federal funding, licensing, or permitting involved that affects a property that triggers a process in federal law called Section 106. Section 106 is your friend, because the federal government has their fingers in everything. In my office, we review 4,000 projects a year that are anything from cell phone towers to Army Corps of Engineers permits, farm service loans, small business loans, federal road aids, which go all the way down to the level of local streets. We are the negotiator with that federal agency on what the impact of that project is on historic property. We ask them to look at their project design, see if something can be changed in the project design if it's going to have an effect on a historic property and all that. That can be helpful to you if you're a site steward and you find yourself running afoul of some federal process.

Probably the most important thing about the process of National Register listing is the process of completing the National Register form and going through the documentation to document the significance of the site. Not only do you have to describe what the site is physically, you also have to present the context in which this site was born. Then document in great detail every aspect of the site. Lisa Stone took on the nomination of the Wisconsin Concrete Park, which you see a photo of in my PowerPoint. I think, Lisa, I'm probably accurate in saying you had no idea how much documentation would be required and the arduous

nature of going through that process. In the end, going through it, it's a great exercise, because you understand the site better as a result. It's a good document that glass into the future, archived at the National Archives that gives really good documentation, a good snapshot at that particular point in time of what that property was.

The status of National Register's also something that's very useful in your community. It's useful from an advocacy standpoint. It's also useful in fundraising, because funders want to know that they're giving money to something that's important. That's one of the arguments that you can use for importance in getting it designated.

Now in all that, there are some special issues related to these arts environments. The National Register has something that's called the 50 year rule. A property has to have been around for more than 50 years in order for it to be nominated, unless you can demonstrate it's of exceptional importance. Now the 50 year rule is really a guideline. It's not a rule. If you talk to people in the Park Service, they call it the 50 year rule. It means you have a higher burden of proof if your property is less than 50 years old. You have to do more extensive documentation to make your case for that property. It's not insurmountable. One of the caveats is that if it is the work of an artist, that artist must have stopped working on the work, so it's not evolving anymore. The National Register looks at something as a snapshot of when it's finished. If it's not being finished, you're not at the point where you can nominate it yet.

I think another obstacle is just that the National Register requires that you have historical documentation. As you know, some of these sites are not well documented on in the written, historical record. That can be an issue as well. With the Mary Nohl House, we nominated that a few years ago. The National Register has three levels of significance: locally level, important to the community; statewide level, important to the history of the state; nationally significant.

We tried to nominate Mary Nohl for national significance. I truly believe it's a nationally significant site, partly because it was built by a woman and there are so few of those. The National Register staff turned us down on that and said, "You just don't have significant written documentation that demonstrates from a historical perspective the significance that this particular site has in American history. There's not enough documentation, enough scholars have not studied this site and looked at it from a national perspective." That's my challenge to you folks out in the room there is do that research and do that documentation, because that's so important in getting through the listing process. It's not over till it's over. We can always come back in the future and amend that nomination and add that national significance, which I believe is there.

I'm gonna go really quickly through the process of getting a property on the National Register. The process starts with a state historic preservation office. I'm the state historic preservation officer. I'm just going to make a disclaimer. I

don't preserve squat. I don't preserve anything. The only thing I can take credit for preserving is my 1936 international style house, which I probably saved from being a tear down. It was in really bad shape. It's you folks who preserve things. All of you in this room preserve things. What the preservation officer does is just help to facilitate the process whenever we can be helpful. The process of National Register begins with a state historic preservation office. Every state has one.

Nominations have to run this through a process that typically takes about a year from beginning to end on and culminates with the historic preservation review board. It's a governor appointed board. Every state has one. It's their authority to pass judgment on these properties and whether they are historically significant or not. If they have given it a thumbs up or thumbs down, then the state historic preservation officer is allowed to weight in too. It goes on to National Park Service for approval.

The big picture here, by the way, is Bird Park. It's listed on the National Register. It's a poured concrete structure that was the home of an artist that did bird art. You can see a couple pieces of the peak of the roof. It originally had hundreds of pieces, quite a number of which are now in the Kohler collection.

Then there's another type of designation that occurs locally. This is where the teeth come in for preservation. Local units of government can designate things as historic through the zoning powers of the community. Every time your story about that property couldn't be altered or couldn't be torn down because it was on the National Register, it's actually local landmark listing that controls that, because it's in the zoning part that's important. It regulates property. It can deny changes, and it can deny demolition. That's a photo from the Grandview in Hollandale. All these properties are listed.

I'm just going to wrap up here by saying, we can help. We have advocacy tools on our website. We have a very comprehensive website that was built for preservation advocacy. We tell you everything you need to do to be effective advocates from how do you raise money to how do you talk to local units of government, how do you find the right people for your board. All of that nuts and bolts of advocacy. We have preservation funding sources. Some of these are national. Some are all Wisconsin only. You can search those for historic preservation funding and find a brief overview of all those. We have a lot of historic building best practices. We've done a very comprehensive encyclopedia of preservation practices at that effect historic buildings. Some of these are easily transferable to the sites that tell you how to diagnose problems, what proper treatments are, all of that. With that I'm going to wrap up.