

LEGACY CIRCLE PROFILE

NIVEA D'ALBERTO WALL MESSERSCHMIDT



Nivea Messerschmidt admired the Watts Towers throughout her life. Her interest in the work piqued when she read about the monumental sculpture in a 2011 newspaper article discussing LACMA's efforts to develop a long-term preservation strategy for the work.

Nivea's affinity for the Towers was not only based on aesthetics and a sense of place—she identified with their artist, Simon Rodia, who was also an immigrant from Italy. This connection, along with the recognition of the importance of the work to Los Angeles, motivated Nivea to support the conservation and protection of this beloved work and icon of Southern California.

"In 2011, the museum had just begun its fundraising efforts for the conservation project when we received an inquiry from Nivea about including a gift to LACMA in her living trust," said Diana Veach, associate vice president of Gift Planning. "We were honored that she cared so deeply for this iconic Los Angeles monument and for the work that LACMA is doing."

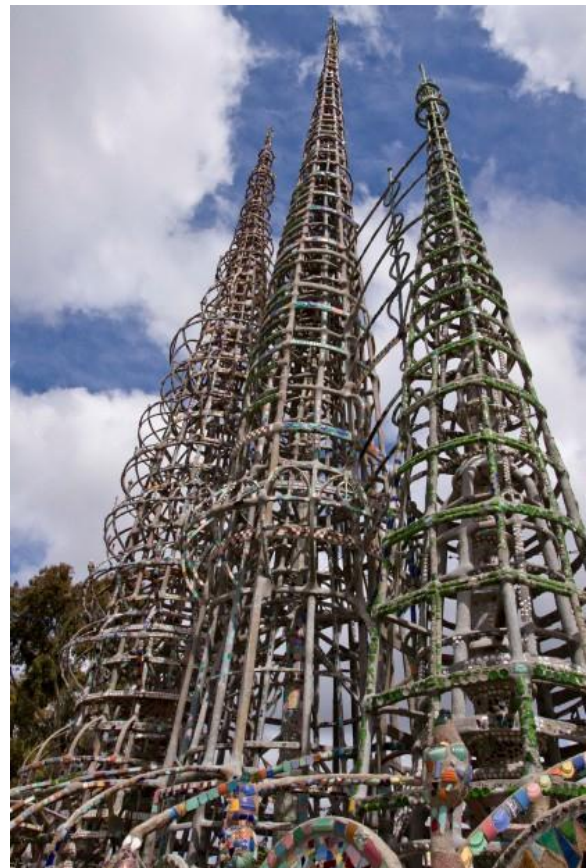
LACMA received Nivea's gift this year, employing the funds immediately to support the museum's ongoing preservation conservation plans at the Towers. "Gifts such as Nivea's are so important in all the work that we do here at the museum. Conservation is a little known but critically important museum activity, and we are very appreciative of Nivea's thoughtful generosity toward our efforts," says Dr. Mark Gilberg, Suzanne D. Booth and David G. Booth Conservation Center Director.

Originally from Trieste, Italy, Nivea adored the sea and was an avid swimmer. In her teens, she trained for the 1944 London Olympics, which were ultimately canceled. After World War II, she moved to the United States with her husband and young son, eventually settling in California, where she

worked for California Bank and then for L. E. Dixon Company, for which she became a corporate officer. Nivea frequently returned to Italy and her hometown, which she considered her jewel by the sea.

Along with other generous donors, Nivea's gift helps LACMA conservators make progress on the conservation of the Watts Towers so they can continue to serve as a landmark and icon of Los Angeles. The museum is grateful for her generous gift to help preserve Los Angeles's own jewel for the enjoyment of future generations of art enthusiasts and city dwellers alike.

The Watts Towers are one of the most widely recognized works of art to come out of Southern California in the last century. LACMA continues to raise awareness and funds for their preservation.



Simon Rodia's *Watts Towers*, photo by Yosi Pozeilov, LACMA