Positioning The Collection: Perspectives On Larry Spring's Vernacular Museum

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Title: Positioning The Collection: Perspectives On Larry Spring's Vernacular Museum
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Abstract: This paper, in partial fulfillment of my Master's in Environmental Studies, represents an effort to build a curatorial framework to position the cultural production (the collection) of outsider and amateur collector Larry Spring. This work and project is focused on the collection of artifacts, objects and demonstration models housed in The Larry Spring Museum of Common Sense Physics, which is located in the town of Fort Bragg on the coast of northern California's Mendocino County. The approaches and methods used here to explore how the Larry Spring collection are aligned with theories of contemporary outsider art, research-creation, and what Donna Haraway has described as 'situated knowledge production', a form of objectivity that accounts for both the agency of the knowledge producer and that of the object of study. In this academic study, my position was simultaneously that of curator of Spring's collection and member of Fort Bragg's multiple networks. My approaches to using research-creation were developed during three month-long site visits and resulted in projects that coalesced custodial-, curatorial-, and research-based activities into print, video, curated performance and a website revisioning of the Larry Spring Museum.

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