

## **FIVE ACRES OF HEAVEN**

**by: Brooke Hodge**

**The following is a summary of Brooke's case study in the Unsettled catalog.**

**Brooke's case study highlights both the creation of the 1938 Small -Tract Act and one of its prominent residents, Andrea Zittel. Zittel initially purchased a 5 acre plot of land that had a "Jackrabbit Homestead" on it. She remodeled the structure which became her home. Over time she acquired more land and now owns over 50 acres in Joshua Tree. Her company A-Z West is located there. (See pages 168 - 169). In addition to Zittel's presence in Joshua Tree, other artists such as Phillip K. Smith and Doug Aitken have used the land for creating exhibitions for Desert X. (See pages 118, 119, and 171)**

### **Historical Timeline:**

**The article provides an overview of the history of western expansion, which is also a history of land, landscape, and real estate. First divided by the Jeffersonian Grid in 1785, the land in the high desert (parts of Riverside and San Bernardino counties) was further divided by the 1938 Small-Tract "baby" Homestead Act that promised a five-acre parcel free to anyone who would erect a small structure. The Act was repealed in 1976.**

### **Application Process:**

**To own a 5 acre parcel of land a \$5.00 application fee was required. If selected, the applicant/owner was required to spend \$5000.00 in improvements to the land to own the parcel. The improvement process was time-sensitive.**

## **Structures:**

**What came to be known as the “Jackrabbit Homestead” dotted the landscape. These were relatively simple houses.**

## **Who Lived There?**

**Part of the original intent of the ACT was to give Veterans the opportunity to own land. Land sales were promoted in Desert Magazine. This attracted a lot of people from the art community as well as lesbians who were seeking privacy from the public eye.**