The Chandigarh Rock Garden
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Rock Garden

Text and Photographs
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Unexpected, Delightful
Places:
The Rock Garden comes as a
wondrous surprise. On a
hot, hot summer day, after
you leave the broad-spaced,
cubist, formal structure of
the complex of government
buildings in Chandigarh and
the relentless, shimmering
heat of the open-air business
center, you can find, if you
are lucky, a whimsical wall
and behind it a maze of
outdoor rooms and spaces,
of landscape, of sculpted
people, animals, musicians,
and abstractions that look at
you as you pass. Suddenly,
you are unaware of the heat.
Every landscape scene, every
combination of figures and
shapes that invites visual
dialogue is new. Yet most of
the materials—bricks,
discarded electric fixtures,
broken bathroom fixture
ceramics and pipe tiles—are
old, reused.

When Indian officials
"discovered" the Rock
Garden of Chandigarh they
wanted to tear it down. They
failed and so the garden
remains, a small pause in the
still growing city. Designed
and built in secrecy by Nek
Chaud, a maintenance-yard
worker, the garden is an
expression of individuality
within a strong cultural
context. It may be one of the
most creative urban land-
scrapes of the past 50 years.