

SOUTHERN SOMEBODIES

SUNDAY 4TH JUNE TO SUNDAY 6TH AUGUST 2023



JP SCOTT, *FAMILY REUNION* (1994)
metal, plastic, fabric, paint on wood
64 x 124 x 37 cm, 25 ¼ x 48 ¾ x 14 ½ in

The Gallery of **Everything** presents **SOUTHERN SOMEBODIES**, a group show featuring over a dozen makers from the American South, each of whom has instigated an informal and instinctive art practice.

Curated as a response to, and visual expansion of, **SOULS GROWN DEEP LIKE THE RIVERS** at the Royal Academy, London, **SOUTHERN SOMEBODIES** features material which broadens our understanding of what constitutes a (Black) American vernacular, and highlights the joy, invention and meaning within.

*Together, the 26 artists of the American South included in **SOUTHERN SOMEBODIES** demonstrate with unusual clarity that the act of making is always also the art of making do.*

What Are You Doing? Why Are You Doing It?
excerpt from exhibition essay by Samuel Reilly



The Gallery of **Everything**
4 Chiltern Street, London W1
+44 20 7486 8908

www.gallevery.com
ge@gallevery.com
[@gallevery](https://www.instagram.com/gallevery)

Leroy Almon (Georgia, 1938 - 1997)

One-time apprentice to Ohio master carver, Elijah Pierce, whose graphic paintings and bas-reliefs were known for a Black biblical narrative and devout sense of spiritual enlightenment. The show features several of his painted works, alongside a rare copy of his wooden illustrated bible.

Zebedee Armstrong (Georgia, 1914 - 2005)

Former cotton-picker and labourer, profoundly affected by an angelic vision, who subsequently constructed 1,500 found-object calendars to determine the date of the approaching doomsday. Several of these calendars are available, each piece selected specifically for the project.

Hawkins Bolden (Memphis, 1914 - 2005)

Sightless Creole sculptor, whose fabrication of protective *scarey crows* – utensils with leather tongues and punctured eyes – defined a particular (non) art, intended to keep away avian intruders. Features works by this legendary artist include objects of scale, rarely seen outside museums.

Freddie Brice (South Carolina, 1920 - 1998)

Blue-collar worker and self-taught image-maker, whose painted practice of stark monochromatic interiors and animalia was much feted within the New York art scene of the 1990s. On display within the exhibition is an unusually large-scale painted image on a found wooden door.

Richard Burnside (Maryland, 1944 - 2020)

Visionary painter inspired by epic dreamscapes of *ancient times*, whose salvaged materials and use of house paint on board fleshed out the subjects of his mythic kingdom. Two of the artist's *royal* portraits are included in the show, presented in bespoke frames of salvaged wood.

Vernon Burwell (North Carolina, 1916 - 1990)

A former railroad worker whose post-retirement sculptural hobby developed into a garden of painted and gilded cement figures, from local and national Black culture and history. Although the softly-spoken artist's environment no longer exists, a few examples of his sculptures, which numbered only a few hundred, can still be found in important American collections.

David Butler (Louisiana, 1898 - 1997)

The multi-coloured homestead of this self-taught maker formed a *yard show* of twisted tin, so-called *fanciful* objects, which formed a personal ritual of shape, colour and form. Individual pieces from the original environment are on display, including two whirligigs and a window or *spirit* shield.

William Dawson (Alabama, 1901 - 1990)

Retiree and self-taught whittler, whose multi-faced totems and frontal figurines were fashioned from discarded table legs and wood scraps, and adorned with wigs and other paraphernalia. The artist is of legendary status in Chicago, which is the source for the installation of pieces in this exhibition.

Sam Doyle (South Carolina, 1906 - 1985)

Renowned Gullah folk artist from the St Helena island community, whose elegant roofing-tin portraits of local notables and Black icons adorned his home and inspired Jean-Michel Basquiat. The work on display features a local healer, one of several regularly portrayed by the artist.

Josephus Farmer (Tennessee, 1894 - 1989)

Pentecostal minister whose woodcarvings and banners, often utilising significant negative space, were used not only as preaching tools, but as lessons beyond the Bible to reflect on Black history. The exhibition features a particularly strong work illustrating a passage from the Old Testament.

Dilmus Hall (Georgia, 1896 - 1987)

Homegrown artist, whose war-time experiences led to the production of concrete sculptures, graphic paintings and countless clean-lined narrative sketches. Nine of these characterful morality tales and biblical episodes are featured in the exhibition and form the artist's first UK installation.

Lonnie Holley (Alabama, b 1950)

From his original *Environment*, to the production of wire sculpture and sandstone carving, to his epic contemporary assemblage, this master artist/musician is now considered one of America's greatest. The current exhibition features a beautiful and historic figurative wirework self-portrait.

Rev JL Hunter (Texas, 1905 - 1999)

Dallas pastor and local lynchpin, whose fishermen, lumberjacks and circus performers, fashioned from branches and wooden off-cuts, formed a distinct population of memory sculpture. Known throughout the South, the artist is represented in the show by a group of his classic painted figures.

Charles Kinney (Kentucky, 1906 - 1991)

Subsistence farmer and part-time painter, whose impressionistic body of work reflected a deep connection with rural Appalachia, its wildlife and culture, as well as his own American identity. Featured artworks include a pair of presidential portraits and a kinetic depiction of a wild boar hunt.

OW Pappy Kitchens (Mississippi, 1901 - 1986)

Visual storyteller whose often comedic parables from oral history through visual means.

Willie Massey (Kentucky, 1906 - 1990)

Tenant farmer who became adept at woodwork for practical uses, before his imagination took over with elaborate birdhouses and miniature furniture made from old fruit crates and tinfoil.

JB Murray (Georgia, 1908 - 1988)

Sharecropper from Glascock who received a religious vision late in life and spent his last days producing vivid gestural abstractions, augmented with a glossolalic *spirit script*.

Prophet Royal Robertson (Louisiana, 1930 - 1997)

Prolific sign-painter and visionary, who clad his home in evangelical warning signs against his ex-wife and then sat inside drawing visions of the future.

JP Scott (Louisiana, 1909 - 2000)

Construction worker and fisherman, who salvaged scrap metal, netting, flotsam and jetsam, to create boats and chapels – elaborate and exacting paeans to the worlds he knew best. One of his monumental sculptures is featured in the show and reveals the complexity and detail of his vision.

Dr Charles Smith (Louisiana, b 1940)

Prodigious and acclaimed citizen historian who, through activism, preaching and vivid figurative sculpture, has dedicated an artistic mission to the memorialisation of Black culture and history. The featured sculpture is a reference to his critically-lauded exhibition at White Columns in New York.

Herbert Singleton (Louisiana, 1945 - 2007)

One-time bridge painter who served time in jail and on his release chiselled wooden weapons for pimps and drug dealers, before finding his voice with visceral narratives carved on discarded doors.

Henry Speller (Mississippi, 1900 - 1997)

Artist whose colourful paintings and drawings illustrate fantasies by turns architectural and sexual, all of them yearning for freedom; also a musician who played with Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

Mary T Smith (Mississippi, 1904 - 1995)

Sharecropper's daughter who acquired her own home and peopled it with corrugated cut-outs, figures painted with a thick brush and cryptic slogans of faith, giving outer form to inner voice.

Jimmy Lee Sudduth (Alabama, 1910 - 2007)

Blues musician and image maker, whose iconic mud and berry finger-paintings were influenced by a herbalist mother and a profound respect for the Mississippi soil.

Mose Tolliver (Alabama, 1925 - 2006)

Painter of rare graphic clarity and fecundity, for whom art was a salve after an industrial accident; fantastical beasts, erotic and religious scenes brought worldwide fame.

George Williams (Mississippi, 1911 - 1997)

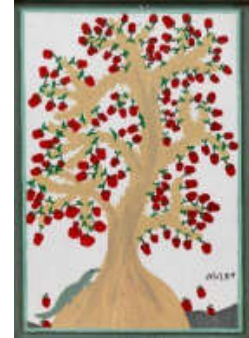
One-time gambler who began carving *Luck Heads*, before graduating to figures of sharp-suited men and buxom women, sculpted with high cheekbones and enlivened with painted dimples.



Hawkins Bolden,
 Untitled (*The Solar System*)
 c 1980
 metal, fabric, rubber tubing
 70 x 53 x 8 cm, 27 ½ x 20 ¾ x 3 ¼ in



Richard Burnside
 Untitled
 c 1990/2000
 paint on wood
 61 x 60 cm, 24 x 23 ½ in



Mose Tolliver,
 Untitled (*Cherry Tree*)
 c 1970/80
 paint on wooden board
 60 x 40 cm, 23 ½ x 15 ¾ in



Royal Robertson
 The ANKIA
 1997
 ink on paper
 71 x 56 cm, 28 x 22 in



Zebedee Armstrong
 Domesday Calendar
 1985
 paint, marker on wood
 53.34 x 43.18 x 15.24 cm, 21 x 17 x 6 in



Sam Doyle
 Witch Dr. Eagle
 c 1970
 enamel on tin
 115 x 64 cm, 45 ¼ x 25 ¼ in



Lonnie Holley
 Untitled
 c 1980/90
 metal
 30.48 x 24 x 17 cm, 12 x 9 ½ x 6 ¾ in



Mary T Smith
 Untitled (*Red Man Colored*)
 c 1980
 paint on metal
 84 x 35.3 cm, 33 x 14 in



David Butler
 Untitled
 c 1970/80
 metal, wood, polystyrene, paint
 53 x 84 x 56 cm, 20 ¾ x 33 x 22 in