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## Why Sam Doyle's Market Is on the Rise

Works by the self-taught Gullah artist from the collection of Bob Roth shine at Outsider Art Fair.



Eileen Kinsella • March 21, 2026 • [Share This Article](#)

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A solo presentation dedicated to the late self-taught artist **Sam Doyle** is a standout at this year's **Outsider Art Fair** in New York, with an immersive display drawing new attention to the late South Carolina painter's work.

Organized by London's **Gallery of Everything**, the booth recreates the setting of Doyle's front yard—where he once exhibited his own paintings—while spotlighting his vivid portraits of both local figures and Black cultural icons.

Born into the Gullah community of St. Helena Island, Doyle took up a paint brush on his own, often using house paint on salvaged wood and metal. His subjects ranged from celebrities such as **Jackie Robinson** and **Joe Louis**—seen in *Brown Bomber* (1975/82)—to local figures like **Dr. Bus Ha.Lo.**, a "root doctor" depicted holding a conch shell to his ear as if speaking to spirits.



“He puts everyone on the same level,” said gallery director **James Brett**. “Here’s **Ray Charles**, and here is a washerwoman who was his aunt.”

The artist’s depiction of Dr Bus Ha.Lo, dating to between 1980 and 1985—the year Doyle died—is being offered for sale for the very first time. It comes from the collection of **Bob Roth**, one of the founding members of Chicago’s **Intuit Art Museum**, which showcases works by self-taught, intuitive, and outsider artists. Priced at \$85,000, it’s the most expensive work at the booth.

According to the Artnet Price Database, Doyle’s record stands at \$204,000, including fees, for *St. Helena’s First Blak Midwife Trane By Dr. White* (1980–89), sold at **Slotin Folk Art Auction** in 2014. His works have consistently outperformed estimates in recent years, with a record number of works going under the hammer in 2022, underscoring growing institutional and collector interest.

One of the artist’s earliest collectors was art star **Jean-Michel Basquiat**, who came across his work in the 1980s at the **Fay Gold Gallery** in Atlanta. Basquiat acquired a few pieces and kept them in his studio, later gifting them to the likes of **Andy Warhol** and rapper **Fab 5 Freddy**.

Doyle’s work is now in the collections of museums including the **High Museum** in Atlanta, the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**, the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, and the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**.