



Something to Take My Place: The Art of Lonnie Holley

August 22 - October 10, 2015



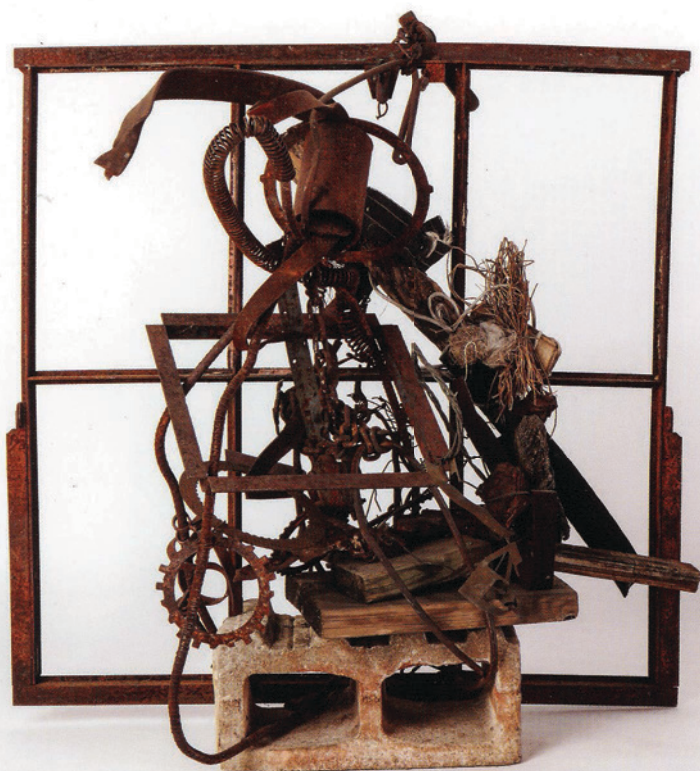


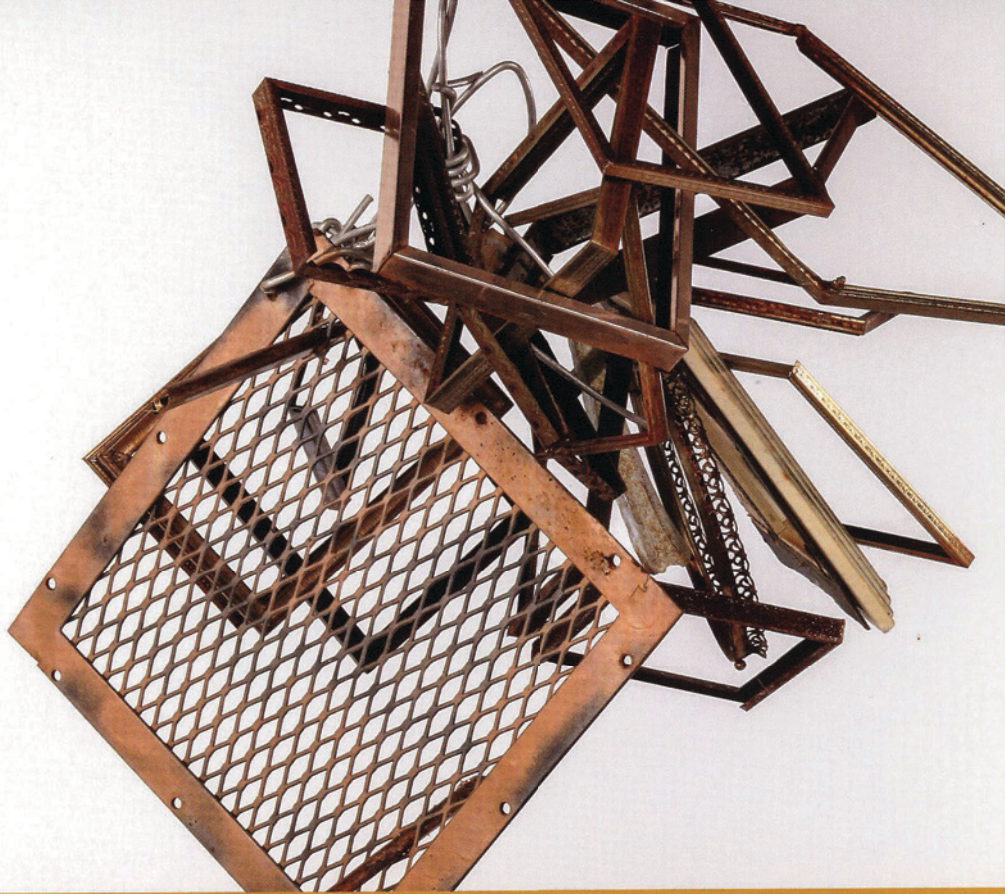
stands today, as hard as it was. With six children preceding Lonnie, Dorothy Mae Holley Crawford (Dot) enlisted the nursing help of a woman, who stole her child away. When this woman brought the little boy back to Birmingham, malnourished and unmoored at the age of four, she traded him to the owner of a whiskey house. Holley speaks of his time at this place as pivotal, roughly two years between the ages of five and seven. Mrs. McElroy's house was situated among the Alabama State Fairgrounds, a racetrack, and a drive-in movie theater. Big Mama, as Holley called her, ran an establishment that was no place for kids; it was all adults, drinking. She was nice, he recalls, but her husband was not.

IN MEMORY OF THE BLOOD

In his sculpture, Holley has memorialized those who underestimated or disrespected him along with those he owes respect and gratitude. He speaks frequently about his family, childhood, and all the things that bloomed into his artistic practice; he honors the journey that brought him where he

Holley was given the backyard to hang out in, not a real yard so much as a small dirt patch behind the house. The alternative was to go look for work at the drive-in, where the manager hired the small boy to pick up trash. To get there, Holley had to crawl through a drainage pipe that connected the





properties. He recalls: "I crawled through those pipes, down in the muck that was in them. It was dark; I learned where to put my hands and feet, learned to understand touch, feel, sounds. It was survival through physical experience."

Holley learned that, along with the garbage people threw away, they also tossed things of value. Careless folks at the drive-in sometimes discarded change with their snack bar refuse and people dropped or left behind personal items, so he learned to look carefully at what he was collecting and keep anything of potential worth. Holley didn't play, know fun, feel safe, or experience much in the way of familial love; he cut his teeth on the harsh reality of poverty and the poetry of trash. This visual environment allowed him to see many objects as inherently beautiful, though—forgotten and misunderstood or undervalued treasures

with real gleam beneath the tarnish. He thought about how a certain item had passed from hand to hand to hand in its time of being. His prize possession was a little red wagon. The positive memories he has of that fleeting childhood was taking his wagon around, rescuing tossed-aside treasures. He reflects on the roots of his aesthetic sensibilities, and indeed a philosophy that has become his mantra: "That was ugly, ugly was what we had. So, I thought, make it as beautiful as possible."

Excerpt from Leslie Umberger's essay "In Memory of the Blood" for the Something to Take My Place catalogue. Umberger is a curator and art historian who has specialized in the work of folk, self-taught, and vernacular artists since the late 1990s. She has sought to delineate tradition-based from autonomous artistic practices and properly situate such makers within a greater American art history.



VIDEO

The Halsey Institute commissioned acclaimed videographer John David Reynolds to create a mini-documentary about Lonnie Holley. In the video, the artist talks about his creative process, his artistic inspirations, and his hopes for the future.

IN-GALLERY GUIDES

Lonnie Holley has written descriptions of his pieces in the exhibition. He presents his concepts poetically, utilizing memory and storytelling to catalyze thought. The power of Holley's work derives from the multiple associations brought forth by new juxtapositions and innovative combinations of familiar objects. We have created an in-gallery guide that contains Holley's thoughts and descriptions. These statements are also available in the *Something to Take My Place* exhibition catalogue.



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

\$39.95
215 pages
hardcover

To accompany the exhibition, the Halsey Institute has published the first monograph of Lonnie Holley's work. The catalogue contains essays by Mark Sloan, director and chief curator of the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art; Leslie Umberger, the curator of Folk and Self-taught Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum; Bernard Herman,

Distinguished Professor of Folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and an "as-told-to" autobiography by noted oral historian Theodore Rosengarten. The publication contains reproductions of over 70 of Holley's assemblage works and provides a comprehensive overview of Holley's art, life, and philosophy. With photographs by John Bentham, the book was designed by award-winning graphic designer Gil Shuler, and edited by Mark Sloan. The catalogue will be distributed internationally by D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers).

To purchase the exhibition catalogue, stop by the galleries, call (843) 953-4422, or visit halsey.cofc.edu/about/publications/. Halsey Institute Members receive 20% off publications and all Halsey Institute merchandise.

CONCURRENT EVENTS

GALLERY TALK WITH LONNIE HOLLEY AND CURATOR MARK SLOAN

Saturday, August 22, 1PM
Free and open to the public

Halsey Institute Director and Chief Curator Mark Sloan will walk through the exhibition with Lonnie Holley and discuss his work and life.

LONNIE HOLLEY AT THE CHARLESTON FARMERS MARKET

Saturday, September 12, 9AM – 12PM
Marion Square, 329 Meeting Street
Free and open to the public

Lonnie Holley will talk with visitors and lead them in creating small assemblage works from found objects gathered from the city. Participants can bring their own materials to work with or use some provided. All ages are welcome!

GALLERY TALK WITH ESSAYISTS AND SCHOLARS

Saturday, September 12, 2PM
Free and open to the public

Something to Take My Place essayists Leslie Umberger, Bernard L. Herman, and Theodore Rosengarten will walk through the exhibition with visitors and discuss their varied approaches to and impressions of Holley's works.

MEMBERS ONLY CURATOR-LED GALLERY TOUR

Thursday, October 1, 6PM

Join your fellow Halsey Institute Members for an exhibition tour led by Halsey Institute Director and Chief Curator Mark Sloan.

Note: Three of Lonnie Holley's sculptures will be on view in the Rotunda of the Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library, located at 201 Calhoun Street.

LONNIE HOLLEY IN CONCERT CHARLESTON MUSIC HALL

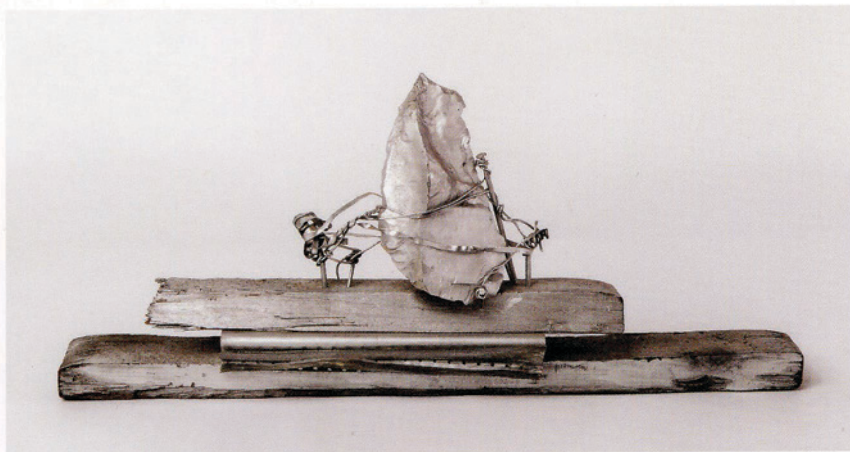
Saturday, September 12
Doors: 7PM | Show: 8PM

Lonnie Holley will be performing with cellist Ben Sollee and multi-instrumentalist Infnitikkiss.

TICKETS \$15 – ADV. | \$17 – DAY OF

Purchase tickets online at charlestonmusichall.com;
in person at the Music Hall Box Office, 37 John St;
or over the phone (843) 853-2252.





LOCATION: The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
161 Calhoun Street, 1st Floor (on the corner of St. Philip & Calhoun Streets)
College of Charleston, School of the Arts, Charleston, SC 29401
HALSEY.COFC.EDU

PARKING: Available in the St. Philip and George Street Garages

GALLERY HOURS: Mon - Sat, 11am - 4pm, or by appointment
OPEN UNTIL 7PM ON THURSDAYS! Free and open to the public.

CONTACT: (843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG: Get insider information! halsey.cofc.edu/EDU/blog

BOOK A GUIDED TOUR: Free tours are led by knowledgeable and experienced guides and can be adapted to different time lengths, group sizes, and ages. Contact our Curator of Contemporary Art and Public Engagement, Lori Kornegay at halsey@cofc.edu or (843) 953-5957.

OUR MISSION: The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

This project is supported in part by the Friends of the Library at the College of Charleston, as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation. The exhibition is a visual arts offering of the MOJA Arts Festival, which is produced by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs. We are grateful for the exhibitor's sponsors: Scott Blackwell and Ann Marshall, Sean Brock, Dr. and Mrs. Robert L. and Lucinda W. Bunnan, Garey and Diane De Angelis, Kate and Lindsay Nevin, Leslie Turner, Tom and Kathleen Wright, Sheila Wertimer and Gary Gruca. Special thanks to William Arnett, Matt Arnett, Laura Bickford, and the Souls Grown Deep Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia.



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