An exhibition organized by the American Folk Art Museum and circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

National tour made possible by MetLife Foundation
FRONT COVER
BLACK Matriarch, c. 1970s
Clementine Hunter (1886/1887–1988)
Melrose Plantation, Natchitoches, Louisiana
Oil on cardboard, 24" x 16.5"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of Mrs. Chauncey Newlin, 1991.23.4
Photo by Gavin Ashworth

RIGHT
BLUE CHAIR, LATE-20th CENTURY
Willie LeRoy Elliot (b. 1943)
Detroit, Michigan
Mixed media on wood, 53" x 60" x 29"
Blanchard-Hill Collection, gift of M. Anne Hill
and Edward V. Blanchard Jr., 1998.10.21
Photo by Gavin Ashworth

ABOVE
MOTHER OATMAN, 2000
Kevin Sampson (b. 1955)
Newark, New Jersey
Mixed media, 25" x 21" x 9"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of Jacqueline Loew Fowler, 2000.7.2
Since its inception, the American Folk Art Museum has explored the creativity of African Americans through its exhibitions, collections, and publications. Drawings, sculptures, paintings, and quilts by black artists have become a vital part of the museum’s holdings, and 20th-century artists are represented through significant numbers of works.

The enduring contribution of self-taught black artists to the American visual experience is celebrated in ANCESTRY & INNOVATION: AFRICAN AMERICAN ART FROM THE AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM, a new traveling exhibition organized by the American Folk Art Museum and circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Featuring 39 works by artists from the rural South and the urban North, ANCESTRY & INNOVATION juxtaposes powerfully complex and vibrant quilts with paintings and sculpture by a revered generation of creators, including Sam Doyle, David Butler, Bessie Harvey, and Clementine Hunter, works by contemporary masters such as Thornton Dial Sr., and provocative pieces by emerging artists such as Kevin Sampson and Willie LeRoy Elliott. The traveling version of the much-acclaimed exhibition originally on view at the American Folk Art Museum in 2005 will embark on a six-venue nationwide tour in February 2008.

ANCESTRY & INNOVATION is curated by Stacy C. Hollander, senior curator and director of exhibitions at the American Folk Art Museum, and Brooke Davis Anderson, director and curator of The Contemporary Center at the museum.

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The National Endowment for the Arts provided generous support to the American Folk Art Museum through its American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius initiative.
“A strip divides so you can see plainer ... red shows up in a quilt better than anything else ... you can see red a long while.” – LUCINDA TOOMER

THE AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM’s collection of African American quilts was initiated in 1990 with the gift of Lucinda Toomer’s remarkable corduroy Diamond Strip Quilt. This acquisition inspired a deep investigation into a facet of American quiltmaking that was largely unexplored at the time and that enriched the museum’s commitment to presenting quilts as a significant art form. Toomer’s gift also coincided with a growing interest among scholars and historians in the identification of African influences in creative expressions emerging from black communities, and the specific relationship between African American-made quilts and African textile traditions.

LUCINDA TOOMER grew up on her family’s farm in Georgia. In her elder years she remembered childhood on the farm as a better time, when “Everything people had, they made.” She also recalled being awakened each night during her 12th year, when her mother would come into her room to teach her to sew and quilt.

DIAMOND STRIP QUILT, c. 1975
Lucinda Toomer (1888/1890–1983)
Macon, Bibb County, Georgia
Cotton corduroy, flannel, velvet, and wool, 79.5" x 66.25"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of William Arnett, 1990.7.1
THE MAN RODE PAST HIS BARN TO ANOTHER NEW DAY, 1994–95
Thornton Dial Sr. (b. 1928)
Bessemer, Jefferson County, Alabama
Oil and enamel on canvas with clothing, carpet, rope, wire, and industrial sealing compound, 84" x 120"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of Jane Fonda, 2001.2.1

IN 1990 THE AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to purchase works by the highly regarded contemporary artist Thornton Dial Sr. and other artists within his family constellation.

For more than two decades, THORNTON DIAL SR. has created paintings, assemblages, sculptures, and works on paper greatly admired by the art world. Always “making things” and creating art, he typically expresses in his work his insights on topics ranging from the intimate to the communal, particularly racism and oppression in America.
PECOLIA WARNER learned to make quilts under her mother’s watchful eye. Her first effort was a string quilt, composed of small rectangular pieces of fabric sewn into strips. Warner was born in the Mississippi Delta but lived in New Orleans and Chicago before returning to the South in 1968.

Although she had an early interest in drawing and fashioning cloth dolls, it was not until the death of her second husband, in 1948, that NELLIE MAE ROWE turned her full attention to artmaking. She worked with readily available materials, such as pencil, colored pencil, and felt-tip pen on paper for her drawings, and Styrofoam trays, wallpaper sample books, wood, and chewing gum for her sculptures. Imbued with life-affirming spiritual verve, Rowe’s imaginative works draw on memories of her southern experience.

"Making quilts, that’s my calling... just giving them for the ‘remember me.’” – PECOLIA WARNER
Exhibition Collaborators

**American Folk Art Museum**

Since its founding in 1961, the American Folk Art Museum has been one of the nation’s foremost resources for the study, collection, preservation, and enjoyment of folk art. The museum is home to one of the world’s preeminent collections of folk art dating from the 17th century to the present, including paintings, sculpture, photography, textiles, ceramics, and other decorative arts, as well as the work of contemporary self-taught artists from this country and abroad. [www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

**Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service** (SITES)

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work, and play. [www.sites.si.edu](http://www.sites.si.edu)

*New York Times* critic Margo Jefferson wrote that the original exhibition (above) “points up the complex union of traditions and individual talents.”
Exhibition Specifications

**CONTENTS**  
39 works of art, including quilts, sculpture, framed paintings, and works on paper, pedestals, text panels, labels

**PARTICIPATION FEE**  
$25,000 for 10-week booking period, plus prorated shipping

**SIZE**  
3,000 square feet  
(280 square meters)

**WEIGHT**  
1 truck

**CRATES**  
To be determined

**SHIPPING**  
Prorated, SITES-designated carrier

**SECURITY**  
High

**TOUR BEGINS**  
February 2008

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**PEACOCK, c. 1980–92**  
David Butler (1898–1997)  
Patterson, Louisiana  
Painted tin with plastic and green satin bow, 13" x 25" x 7"  
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York  
Gift of Elizabeth Ross Johnson, 1985.35.9

**ROOSTER, c. 1982**  
David Butler (1898–1997)  
Patterson, Louisiana  
Painted tin and wood with plastic and wire, 24" x 10.5" x 3.5"  
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York  
Gift of Elizabeth Ross Johnson, 1985.35.12

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**Exhibition Support**

- As a host of *Ancestry & Innovation*, you will receive the following:
  - Complete curatorial and registrarial information
  - Complete shipping, handling, and installation instructions
  - Wall-to-wall fine-arts insurance coverage under the Smithsonian’s policy
  - Public relations support, including sample press release, images, logos, and advice on promoting the exhibition and hosting special events
  - Digital graphic templates of promotional poster, invitation, advertisement, and postcard designs for venue to customize and produce
  - Exhibition brochures
  - Promotional and classroom posters
  - Educational and programming resources, educator resources, speaker list, bibliography
  - Ability to link to and from the SITES website.
Registrarial Requirements

This exhibition has been designated **High Security** and will be offered to only those institutions able to meet the Smithsonian’s requirements. High security is required for exhibitions containing objects that are of special cultural significance, highly valuable, sensitive to light or climatic changes in humidity and temperature, or of an especially fragile nature. AAM Standard Facility Reports for exhibitors must be reviewed and approved by both the Smithsonian and the exhibition lender.

This exhibition has special concerns to ensure the proper display and protection of objects displayed outside of cases. Institutions hosting *Ancestry & Innovation* will be required to adhere to the requirements listed below. For any questions regarding this material, please contact the Office of the Registrar (202.633.3170).

**Space**

- Exhibitors must have a limited-access gallery of sufficient area, ceiling height, and wall strength to accommodate the exhibition. The exhibition requires approximately 3,000 square feet. The largest object in the exhibition is 81”h x 120”w x 12”d uncrated and weighs close to 100 pounds. It hangs on a cleat.

- Functioning fire prevention systems and fire protection devices that alert guards and/or local fire departments must be available in the exhibition gallery, staging areas, and storage spaces.

- Smoking, eating, and drinking are prohibited in exhibition gallery, staging areas, and storage spaces.

- The exhibition gallery, staging areas, and storage spaces must have temperature and humidity controls to guarantee an environment of 50% relative humidity (± 5%) and 68°F–70°F, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- The venue must have recording hygrothermographs in the exhibition gallery, staging areas, and object storage spaces.

- Empty crates and packing materials must be stored in a secure, pest-, humidity-, and temperature-controlled dry area. No part of the exhibition may be stored, crated, or moved off the premises without prior authorization from SITES.

**Collections Management**

- It is extremely important for light levels, temperature, and relative humidity to be controlled at the specified levels while sensitive objects are on display.

- Light damage is irreversible, and the following levels must be maintained: Light must be limited to 5 foot candles for textiles, plastic, and paper and 8–10 foot candles for leather, wood, and metal. No direct sunlight must reach the objects.

- A member of the exhibitor’s professional collections management or conservation staff must make twice-daily checks of the exhibition. Special notice must be given to those objects not encased.

**Protection**

- Trained professional guards, dedicated to the exhibition and in sufficient number to protect the objects and the exhibition structure, must be present during receipt, installation, de-installation, and release as well as during the actual display of the exhibition.

- This exhibition contains quilts and folk sculptures not displayed in cases. A guard whose sole responsibility is the exhibition is required to be in sight of objects not encased or glazed when the exhibition is open to the public.

- Security cameras may not substitute for human guards during public hours. Guard(s) need not be armed.
Protection (continued)

- No photography is permitted in the exhibition.

- Security must be maintained during hours when the exhibition is closed to the public, including either periodic checks of the exhibition space by guard personnel or adequately monitored electronic surveillance to detect motion, heat, and smoke.

Installation and Takedown

- SITES will provide one registrar to supervise installation and takedown. All crates must rest for 24 hours before unpacking. No object crates are to be opened until the arrival of the SITES registrar.

- The exhibitor will provide at least one professional collection manager or registrar for installation and takedown.

- Professional staff members from the exhibitor will handle objects under the supervision of SITES’ staff.

- A team of at least two skilled preparators, ideally with carpentry skills, is required for handling the exhibition crates, installation, and takedown of objects and exhibition structure.

- One object hanging on the wall weighs approximately 100 pounds. The wall capacity must be capable of withstanding the load. We suggest the wall be 3/4" plywood and drywall over wood 4" x 4"s.

- The quilts will be hung on the wall with Velcro strips or on rods provided with the exhibition. It is important that any wall preparation be completed and allowed to dry at least 60 hours before installation.

- The exhibition will ship in one truck. The exhibitor’s facility must have a covered loading dock accessible to 53-foot trailer rigs. Forklifts and pallet jacks are required to move the crates.

As a teenager, Lureca Outland learned to quilt by finishing the tops pieced by her mother. She did not make what she terms “fancy” quilts, however, until joining a senior citizens’ quilting group.

SITES Contacts

**Scheduling**
Shannon Perry  
202.633.3138  
perrys@si.edu

**Content / Design**  
W. Parker Hayes Jr.  
202.633.3113  
hayesp@si.edu
PLAYING CARDS, c. 1970
Clementine Hunter (1886/1887–1988)
Melrose Plantation, Natchitoches, Louisiana
Oil on canvas board, 18" x 24"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
A Gift of the Mildred Hart Bailey/Clementine Hunter Art Trust, 1996.1.2

STAR QUILT, 1977
Nora McKeen Ezell (b. 1917)
Eutaw, Greene County, Alabama
Cotton and synthetics, 94" x 79"
Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York
Museum purchase made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, with matching funds from The Great American Quilt Festival 3, 1991.13.1