SOMETHING TO TAKE MY PLACE

THE ART OF LONNIE HOLLEY

AUGUST 22 – OCTOBER 10, 2015

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art is organizing a multi-faceted showcase of American artist and musician Lonnie Holley. The comprehensive project features a residency, exhibition, video, concert, and monographic catalogue. This exhibition is Holley’s first solo museum exhibition since 1994. The exhibition will feature a selection of the artist’s assemblage works since the early 1990s, with an emphasis on recent work. For the residency, Lonnie Holley will create works on site, as well as visit with several K-12 school groups and College of Charleston classes. The exhibition will be on view from August 22 – October 10, 2015 with an opening reception celebration at 6:30pm on August 21. Lonnie Holley will also have three works on view in the Rotunda of the Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library concurrent with the exhibition within the Halsey Institute galleries. 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.

The exhibition will feature a selection of 40 works on loan from the artist, collector William Arnett, and the Atlanta-based, Souls Grown Deep Foundation. Lonnie Holley incorporates natural and man-made objects, already imbued with cultural and artistic associations, into narrative sculptures that commemorate places, people, and events. These objects “speak” to Holley, unleashing his creative imagination. Holley believes that art and life are in constant need of renewal so he transforms objects that have been discarded or appear worn and gives them new life. According to catalogue essayist Leslie Umberger, “Like many traditional practices and folkways, his work functions to keep people...
alive in his memory and map his own existence in relation to theirs. It is deeply autobiographical, but encompasses other planes—the conjoined stories of African Americans and all people born into legacies of struggle and oppression; personal history as American history.”

Everything Lonnie Holley creates is spontaneous and improvisational. Editing and repurposing are an integral part of his creative method. He presents 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. These collisions excite the faculties of memory and meaning in the viewer. His works offer a trace of one artist’s raw and honest attempt to turn a thought into a thing.