

KEVIN BLYTHE SAMPSON

(born November 28, 1954 in Elizabeth, NJ)

Kevin Sampson was raised in Elizabeth, New Jersey as the son of a civil rights leader: he initially trained and joined the New Jersey police force as a sketch artist. He served for 18 years, 10 with police sketching. A series of family tragedies eventually propelled him to heal himself with making art.

Kevin Sampson's work is made of reworked and transformed found objects including cement, bones, tiles, fabric and various painting mediums including acrylics, oils and stains. These objects, the bones, the tiles, the tiny specks and leftovers from day-to-day living, are poetic archaeological elements that he sees as part of a conceptual vocabulary of impermanence and memory.

In his works one gets the feeling of a barely-harnessed, dangerous energy, crackling with political, religious, and racial apprehension. His subjects are the people that he has known; people who had been part of this world; and people who have lived lives that he thought ought to be remembered. By constructing sculptures of physical memory inspired by Caribbean and American Southern styles, he builds works that are about family in all forms. They are at once political and intimate, frightening and freeing.

Solo Exhibitions:

- 2015: Kevin Blythe Sampson: Ironbound, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
- 2013: Kevin Blythe Sampson: An Ill Wind Blowing, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
- 2001: Blue and Black: New Sculpture by Kevin Sampson, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1999: Fruit of the Poison Tree, Rutgers University, Robeson Gallery, Newark, NJ
- 1997: Fruit of the Poison Tree, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1995: Beyond the Canon: Spirit Catchers, Cathedral of St. John the Divine,
- 1991: One Man Exhibit for Black History Month, Elizabeth Public Library, NJ
- 1989: Kevin Sampson, Ra-Jon Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ.

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 2016: Modern Heroics: 75 Years of African-American Expressionism, Newark Museum, Newark, NJ
Maverick!, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Modern Heroics, Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

- Artship, Philadelphia Sculptors, Philadelphia, PA
 Outsider Art Fair, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Artist in Residence, Fall 2016, Joan Mitchell center, New Orleans LA
- 2015: Rhizome: New Growth at Cavin-Morris, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Anthems for the Mother Earth Goddess, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
 Vodun, Vodou, Conjure: Animistic Arts of the African Diaspora, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014: This Must Be The Place, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
 The Roots of the Spirit, Wiegand Gallery, Belmont, CA
 Detour: Self-Taught Artists, The Noyes Museum of Art, Stockton College, Oceanville, NJ
 In-Site: The Creative Process in Plain View, Robeson Center Art Gallery, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
 All That Glitters, Solo House Projects, Newark, NJ
 Aljira at 30, Dream and Reality, The New Jersey State Museum, NJ
- 2013: Dai Costruttori di Babele alla Black Folk Art, Rizomi Art Brut, Torino, Italy
 Outsider Art Fair, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Metro Show, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2011: Art Brut and Then Some, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Twenty-Five Years of Collecting Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Architecture of Hope - the Treasures of Intuit, Intuit the Center for intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
- 2010: New Jersey Craft Arts Annual, Make Me Something Beautiful, Newark Museum,
 Newark, NJ
 Curator's Choice featuring Japanese Art Brut, Cavin Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of happiness. American Visionary Museum, Baltimore Maryland
- 2009: Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY
 Ancestry and Innovation, American Museum of Folk Art Traveling Exhibition, Gibbs Museum, Charleston,
 South Carolina
 Ancestry and Innovation, American Museum of Folk Art the Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Montgomery
 Alabama
 American Folk Art Museum, Lincoln Center Square, New York, NY
 Sticks, Intuit the Center for intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
- 2008: Photo Genetics + Sentra Photo Thesis, Cavin-Morris Gallery, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY
 New Views, Re-Views, Cavin-Morris Gallery, NY
 Close the Edge, Corridor Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
 Close to the Edge," a multi-site exhibition and symposium organized by Kevin Blythe Sampson and Reynolds,
 City with Out Walls Newark New Jersey
 Boson Exotic, Rupert Ravens Contemporary, Newark New Jersey
 Reynolda House Museum of American Art, North Carolina
 Ancestry and Innovation, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY
- 2007: Hating 4 Never, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Field Notes, Cavin-Morris Gallery, NY
 Reynolda House Museum of Art, Winston Salem North Carolina
 The Newark Council of the art "the Red Badge of courage" 744 Broad st, Newark NJ
 The Modified History of Downtown Newark", an art exhibition at New Jersey's School of Architecture,
 Newark New Jersey
 Noah's arc last exit east of Eden: The Shore Institute of The Contemporary Arts , Long Branch, NJ

- Lincoln Park Music, Newark NJ Festival (live painting)
 Newark Now, Newark NJ
 Fear is a Four-letter Word, Omega Institute, New York, NY
 On-Site Art Exhibit at Omega Institute's Spring Conference Being Fearless, New York, NY
- 2006: Where We Come From, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Curator's Choice, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Artificial Afrika, Gigantic Art Space, New York, NY
 Hating for Never, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Ancestry and Innovation Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C
 Jill Rock Gallery, London, UK
- 2005: New Artists, New Works, New Ideas, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Chthonic: Works by Neuve Invention Artists,
 Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Important Works by Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2004: Preview of Upcoming Exhibitions (introducing the work of Pushpa Kumari)
 Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Gallery Review 2004, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Gallery Choices 2004, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003: High on Life, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, MD
 Insights: Self-taught Artists for the 21st Century, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Internal Guidance Systems USA Art Tour Mark Woolly Gallery, Seattle, Washington
- 2002: Artists' Artists: Year Review, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Artists to Artists, ACE Gallery, New York, NY, an exhibition of works from
 The Space Program of the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation
 Between The Nameless and the Named: The Art of Vernacular Homeground,
 Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 New Faces New Work, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Atriums Journey: A Decade, The Atrium Art Gallery, Morris County Administration and Records Building,
 Morris Town, NJ, including artworks by Leroy Campbell, Janet Picket, Will Southern, Lonnie Holly, Kevin
 Sampson and Willie Cole.
 Street Savvy: New and recent works by Curtis Cuffie, Anthony Dominguez, Lonnie
 Holley, Kevin Blythe Sampson, Herbert Singleton, and Gregory Warmack (a.k.a. Mr. Imagination), Jamaica
 Center for Arts and Learning, organized by Tom Patterson
- 2001: Keeping the Faith: Works by Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Transcendentally Material, Mystically Objective, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000: Ignoring Borders: New Artists, New Works, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York
 Man-ifest: Visions of Masculinity by Self-Taught Men, Cavin-Morris Gallery
 20th Anniversary Exhibition featuring Self-Taught Artists for the 21st Century,
 Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York
 International Juried Show 2000, New Jersey Center for Visual Arts, Summit, NJ
- 1999: By Any Means Necessary: Sculpture by African-American Self-Taught Artists,
 Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1998: From the Heart to the Hand: New Ancient Ideas by Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 New Discoveries, New Acquisitions, New Work, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY

Diaspora: Seven African-American Artists, Freddie Brice, Robert St. Brice, Odilon Pierre, Ras Dizzy, Leonard Daley, Thornton Dial, Kevin Sampson, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY

- 1997: Summer Group Show, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Assemblage: More Than Meets The Eye, Organized by D. Dominick Lombardi, Pace University Gallery, Choate House, Pleasantville, NY
- 1996: The Widening Gyre, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Obsession with Line, Archer Locke Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Art: New Jersey, Ben Shahn Galleries, West Paterson College, Paterson, NJ
Aljira Auction, Newark, New Jersey
Labor of Love, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY,
Organized by Marcia Tucker; with catalog
Art and Soul, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1995: The Real Surreal, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Outside the Canon, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Important Works by Self-Taught Artists, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Third International Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY
Hotel Triton Contemporary Art Fair, San Francisco, CA
- 1994: Grouped Show, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1992: Kwanzaa Exhibit, Aljira Gallery, Newark, NJ
African-American Arts Festival, G.S.A.C., Newark, NJ
Group Show, Olaf Clasen Gallery, New York, NY

Awards and Fellowships:

"Best in Show" award for the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts
International Juried Show 2000, Summit, NJ
Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation (Residency) 6/94 - 6/95, New York, NY
The Joan Mitchell foundation Grant, 2001

Public Collections:

The Center for Intuitive and Outsider art, Chicago Ill
Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY
Mennello Museum of American Folk Art, Orlando, FL

Publications:

- 2006: Folk Art Magazine
2005: Folk Art Magazine, July Issue
American Scene, House and Garden Magazine (April issue)
McGee, Celia, New York Folk Museum exhibit has a two-way message, DAILY NEWS
2004: Rose Vendryes, Margaret: Hybrid Roots; Some Artists of African Descent in New Jersey. Transcultural New Jersey: Diverse Artists Shaping Culture and Communities, Vol I, Rutgers University, 2004

- 2003: Roberta Smith: Artists to Artists: A Decade of the Space Program, The New York Times, Art in review New Jersey Star ledger Trailblazers series. Urban League of Union County, Elizabeth, NJ
- 2002 Patterson, Tom. Street Savvy: The Urban Street Art of Curtis Cuffie, Kevin Sampson and Anthony Dominguez, Folk Art magazine, Fall 2002
- 1999 Lucas, R. Caryl: In the eye of this beholder, garbage becomes a work of art, The Sunday Star Ledger, Newark, NJ, April 25, 1999

Lectures:

Trailblazers series. Urban League of Union County, Elizabeth, NJ
 Lecture at the Elizabeth Public Library, Elizabeth, NJ
 College Art Association, 95 Annual conference, New York New York
 Contemporary Postures to Meaning, Reception, and Integration of Outsider Art, American Museum of Folk Art
 Lecture and Panel discussion at Reynolda House Gallery and Gardens, NC
 Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis Tenn.
 Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
 Columbia University Teachers College, NY NY (Masters degree program) Diversity Class (race, politics and art making) Brook Anderson (instructor)
 American Folk Art Museum, Lincoln Square New York
 October-Columbia University NYNY, Teachers College, (Masters degree program) Diversity Class (race, politics and art making) Diversity Class, Brook Anderson (instructor)
 April-Columbia University NYNY, Teachers College, (Masters degree program) Diversity Class (race, politics and art making) Diversity Class, Brook Anderson (instructor)

Education:

- 1986: Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts, Graduate in Pictorial Illustration
 Art Students League, NYC
- 1975: Union County Police Academy, Police Composite Art Training Course
- 1974: Kean College
- 1972: Lincoln University