

KEVIN BLYTHE SAMPSON

(b.1954 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:

- 2019: Kevin Sampson, Residency Exhibition, International Society of Biourbanism Summer School, Artena, Italy
- 2018: Monument Man, Kevin Sampson in Residence, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT
- Kevin Sampson: Black and Blue, Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Summit, NJ
- Kevin Blythe Sampson: Olde Soul, Paul Robeson Galleries, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
- 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
- Kevin Blythe Sampson: An Ill Wind Blowing, City Without Walls, Newark, NJ
- 2001: Blue and Black: New Sculpture by Kevin Sampson, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 1999: Fruit of the Poison Tree, Rutgers University, Paul Robeson Galleries, 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, New York, NY
- 1991: One-Man Exhibit for Black History Month, Elizabeth Public Library, Elizabeth, NJ

1989: Kevin Sampson, Ra-Jon Gallery, New Brunswick, NJ

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 2023: Déplacement et État d'Être, residency exhibition, Espace d'Art Contemporain Les Therme, Bourbonne-les-Bains, France
- 2021: Clarion Call, Mariposa Museum, Oak Bluffs, MA
Trauma and Loss, Reflection and Hope: Selections from the Collection, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
- 2020: We Who Believe in Freedom, Mariposa Museum, Oak Bluffs, MA
American Perspectives: Highlights from the American Folk Art Museum, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY
- 2018: Outsider Art Fair NY, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Mirror Mirror, Paul Robeson Gallery, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
- 2017: Outsider Art Fair NY, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Edgewalkers and Worldbuilders, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Rebel Clay, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
High John the Conqueror: Ain't Got Nothing On Me: American Hoodoo and Southern Black American-centric Spiritual Ways, Rush Arts Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 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 Olympia, Philadelphia Sculptors in conjunction with Philadelphia Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Winter Spotlight: Visionary Edge, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Post Black Folk Art in America, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outside Art, Chicago, IL
- 2015: Rhizome: New Growth at Cavin-Morris Gallery, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Anthems for the Mother Earth Goddess, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
Vodoun, Vodou, Conjure: The Animistic Arts of the African Diaspora, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
In Dreams Begin Responsibilities: 30 Years at Cavin-Morris, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014: This Must Be The Place, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
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(s) Project House, Newark, NJ
Aljira at 30, Dream and Reality, The New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ
- 2013: Dai Costruttori di Babele alla Black Folk Art, Rizomi Art Brut, Torino, Italy

- Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Metro Show, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 An Ill Wind Blowing, Intuit, The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
 Right Here, Right Now, Rutgers University, Paul Robeson Galleries, Newark, NJ
 Restless II: Mix, 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
 54th Venice Biennale 2011, The Roots of Spirit: Kevin Blythe Sampson, Lonnie Holley, Mr. Imagination, and Charles Lucas, L'Espace Revolution, Venice, Italy
- 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, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore Maryland
- 2009: Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Sticks, Intuit, Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL
 Ancestry and Innovation, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY; Traveled to Gibbs Museum, Charleston, South Carolina, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE, Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Montgomery Alabama, Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis, TN, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC
- 2008: Photo Genetics + Sentra Photo Thesis, Cavin-Morris Gallery, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 New Views, Re-Views, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Close to the Edge, a multi-site exhibition and symposium organized by Kevin Blythe Sampson and Reynolds, City Without Walls, Newark New Jersey and Corridor Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (Curatorial)
 Boson Exotic, Rupert Ravens Contemporary, Newark New Jersey
 Internal Guidance Systems, curated by Anne Grgich and Colin Rhodes, USA and Canada Tour
- 2007: Hating 4 Never, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Field Notes, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Red Badge of Courage, Newark Arts Council, 744 Broad Street, 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 Festival (Live Painting), Newark, NJ
 Newark Now, 89 James Street, Newark, NJ
 Fear is a Four-letter Word, Omega Institute, Spring Conference: Being Fearless, Rhinebeck, 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
 Outsider Art Fair, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
 Group Exhibition: Drawings, London Biennial, 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
Internal Guidance Systems USA Art Tour, Mark Woolly Gallery, Seattle, Washington
- 2004: Preview of Upcoming Exhibitions, 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
- 2002: Artists' Artists: Year Review, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
Artists to Artists, an exhibition of works from The Space Program of the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation, ACE Gallery, New York, NY
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, including artworks by Leroy Campbell, Janet Picket, Will Southern, Lonnie Holly, Kevin Sampson and Willie Cole, Morris County Administration and Records Building, Morristown, NJ
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), organized by Tom Patterson, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Queens, NY
Keith Goodhart and Kevin Sampson, The Mennello Museum of American Art, Orlando, FL
- 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, NY
Man-ifest: Visions of Masculinity by Self-Taught Men, Cavin-Morris Gallery, New York, NY
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, NJ
 Labor of Love, organized by Marcia Tucker, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY
 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, represented by Cavin-Morris Gallery, 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:

- 2019 Teaching Residency, The International Society of Biourbanism, Artena, Italy
- 2018 Residency, Mystic Seaport Museum, Stonington, CT
- 2016 Residency, Kohler Company Arts and Industry, Sheboygan, WI
 Artist in Residence, Fall 2016, Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans LA
- 2001 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, New York, NY
- 2000 Best in Show Award, New Jersey Center for Visual Arts International Juried Show, Summit, NJ
- 1994 Residency, Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation, New York, NY

Public Collections:

Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outside Art, Chicago, IL
 Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY
 Mennello Museum of American Folk Art, Orlando, FL
 Montgomery Museum of Art, Montgomery, AL
 Newark Museum, Newark, NJ
 Mystic Seaport Museum, Stonington, CT
 Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ

Publications:

Should We Stop Using The Term 'Outsider Art?', Priscilla Frank, Huffington Post, July 25, 2016
 The Many Terms in Our Continuum: 'Outsider Art,' Mark Evans, Brute Force, July 28, 2016
 Outsider Report, N. F. Karlins, artnet, 2016
 With African-American art hot, Newark Museum showcases 'Modern Heroics,' Dan Bischoff, nj.com, August 4, 2016
 An Ill Wind Blowing: Kevin Blythe Sampson, Monica Westin, Bad at Sports, January 25, 2013
 Benneton Cancels Venice Plans, artnet, April 28, 2011
 Folk Art Museum Show for Venice Cancelled, Stephanie Cash, Art in America, April 26, 2011
 Folk Art Magazine, Winter 2006

Folk Art Magazine, July 2005
Folk Art Magazine, May/June 2005
American Scene, House and Garden Magazine, April 2005
New York Folk Museum exhibit has a two-way message, Celia McGee, DAILY NEWS, 2005
Hybrid Roots; Some Artists of African Descent in New Jersey. Transcultural New Jersey: Diverse Artists Shaping Culture and Communities, Margaret Rose Vendryes, Vol I, Rutgers University, 2004
Roberta Smith, Artists to Artists: A Decade of the Space Program, Roberta Smith, The New York Times Art in review, 2003
Trailblazers Series, Urban League of Union County, Elizabeth, NJ, The Star Ledger, 2003
Street Savvy: The Urban Street Art of Curtis Cuffe, Kevin Sampson and Anthony Dominguez, Tom Patterson, Folk Art Magazine, Fall 2002
In the eye of this beholder; garbage becomes a work of art, Lucas, R. Caryl, The Star Ledger; Newark, NJ, April 25, 1999

Lectures:

Paul Robeson Galleries, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
Trailblazers Series, Urban League of Union County, Elizabeth, NJ
Elizabeth Public Library, Elizabeth, NJ
College Art Association, 95th Annual Conference, New York New York
Contemporary Postures to Meaning, Reception, and Integration of Outsider Art, American Museum of Folk Art, New York, NY
Reynolda House Gallery and Gardens, Winston-Salem, NC
Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis, TN
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL
Diversity Class: Race, Politics, and Artmaking, Brook Anderson, Graduate Program at Columbia University Teacher's College, New York, NY

Education:

1986 Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts, Graduate in Pictorial Illustration
Art Students League, New York, NY
1975 Union County Police Academy, Police Composite Art Training Course
1974 Kean College
1972 Lincoln University, PA, studied African American History